



SENIOR POLICY ASSOCIATE: J-PAL AFRICA

(Payclass O9; T1, 2 years, Soft Funded)

J-PAL Africa in the Southern Africa Labour and Development

Research Unit

School of Economics,

Faculty of Commerce

J-PAL Africa seeks a Senior Policy Associate to support its mission of promoting evidence-based policymaking on a 2 year fixed term contract.

The position will be based at J-PAL Africa, the Africa hub of J-PAL Global, which is located in the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) in the University of Cape Town, School of Economics. The [Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab \(J-PAL\)](#) is a global network of academics who specialise in conducting randomised evaluations of social policies/programmes to generate scientific evidence about what works in the fight against poverty.

The Education & Training team at J-PAL Africa is responsible for supporting policymakers and researchers who are interested in conducting randomized evaluations with the best learning materials, tools and resources available. One of our main pathways is the African Scholar Programmes, piloted under the DigiFI initiative and now expanding to others in labour, agriculture, and education. The Senior Policy Associate will support the management of the Regional Scholars Programs of two J-PAL initiatives, namely the Digital Agricultural Innovations and Services Initiative (DAISI) the forthcoming Learning for All Initiative (LAI). They will also be expected to participate in these initiative's efforts to share available evidence with policymakers and the wider public.

This role provides an excellent opportunity to engage with decision-makers and researchers at the forefront of evidence-based policymaking and to grow new opportunities to improve programmes and policies, thereby improving the lives of citizens across Africa. The J-PAL Africa team provides the flexibility for accelerated growth by supporting proactivity and encouraging top performers to expand and develop their portfolio. At the same time, the position is rooted in rigorous, careful evidence and backed by a system of scientific oversight and supportive management structures to promote both global sharing of ideas and the local contextualization and empowerment of policymakers and researchers on the ground.

Responsibilities include:

- **Management of the Regional Scholars program:** Lead on the conceptualization and operationalization of a Regional Scholars program, liaising with J-PAL Global and other initiatives that host a scholars program. Create and maintain a collaborative network of African and South Asian scholars working on randomized evaluations. Identify demand for training and other forms of support for African and South Asian Scholars to conduct more randomized evaluations on the continent. Build relationships with top economics and related departments at universities across the continent, and other evidence focused organizations. Identify and connect with talented African and South Asian researchers working on RCTs and with an interest in conducting experimental research. Understand and leverage J-PAL existing projects and initiatives to create more opportunities for African and South Asian researchers to access J-PAL resources and funding, including engaging with top academics from the J-PAL network who may have control and/or influence over such opportunities.
- **Evidence Communication and Dissemination:** As a member of J-PAL's Agriculture and Education sector teams, develop technical knowledge of the academic literature related to: 1) digital tools and bundled services for small-scale agricultural producers, as well as 2) foundational literacy and numeracy, pedagogy, and holistic skill development in basic education to develop partnerships for the initiatives. Write publications that "translate" economic research into lessons for policymakers around the world. Senior Associates will have the opportunity to create materials for policy outreach, including publications, evaluation summaries, presentations, grant proposals, policy memos, blogs, social media content and newsletters and website content among other sector-specific work.
- **Event Planning:** Organize events and further your communication skills by presenting at conferences and participating in meetings with policymakers and partner organizations. Senior Associates can also organize convenings with key partners in the private sector, government agencies, NGOs, foundations, and academia designed to spur new research collaborations and share policy lessons from completed research.

Requirements for the job:

- NQF8/ Honours degree including training in microeconomics, development economics, econometrics and statistics.
- A minimum of two years of relevant work experience in conducting field research in developing countries, or experience in economics or social science research, with a background in randomized evaluations.
- Demonstrated ability to analyze rigorous quantitative research
- Strong written and oral presentation skills in English, particularly the ability to communicate technical research to policymakers in a non-technical manner
- Proven ability to manage multiple diverse assignments at one time, coordinate several contributors, successfully complete assigned tasks and meet deadlines while conducting high-quality work with minimal oversight. Detail oriented and able to deliver high quality work consistently
- Ability to create and cultivate relationships with external stakeholders, such as researchers or policymakers
- Entrepreneurial spirit and ability to self-motivate and learn
- Strong skills in Excel, Word and Powerpoint, as well Google Suite, Salesforce, and Foundation Connect (or willingness and ability to learn quickly if not already familiar).

Advantageous

- Comfortable and adept at working in a diverse and multicultural work environment, with colleagues, partners and policymakers from around the world.
- Sector knowledge on education and/ or agriculture.
- Knowledge of Hindi, Swahili, French, Portuguese, or other languages spoken in sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia.

The annual cost of employment is between R465,633 and R547,802 depending on qualifications and experience.

To apply, please e-mail the below documents in a **single pdf file** to africanscholar2023@vula.uct.ac.za

- UCT Application Form (download at <https://forms.uct.ac.za/hr201.doc>)
- A letter of motivation clearly addressing your qualifications for the various responsibilities listed above
- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Transcripts of your university degrees. Note this is required even though it is not called for in the HR201.

Please ensure the title and reference number are indicated in the subject line.

An application which does not comply with the above requirements will be regarded as incomplete. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted and will be required to undergo competency assessments. However, you should receive automatic confirmation that your application has been received.

Website: www.povertyactionlab.org

Reference number: E23404

Closing date: 07 April 2023

UCT is a designated employer and is committed to the pursuit of excellence, diversity and redress in achieving its equity targets in accordance with the Employment Equity Plan of the University and its Employment Equity goals and targets. Preference will be given to candidates from the under-represented designated groups. Our Employment Equity Policy is available at www.hr.uct.ac.za/hr/policies/employ_equity

UCT reserves the right not to appoint.