



SENIOR POLICY ASSOCIATE: PROJECT DEVELOPMENT IN CLIMATE & URBAN POLICY, J-PAL AFRICA

(Payclass 09, T1, 24 months, Soft-Funded)

J-PAL Africa in the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, School of Economics
Faculty of Commerce

The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) consists of a global network of academics who specialize in conducting randomized evaluations of social policies/programs to generate scientific evidence about what works in the fight against poverty. J-PAL staff support the implementation of research projects, analyze and disseminate research results and build partnerships with policymakers to ensure that policy is driven by evidence, and effective programs are scaled up.

J-PAL Africa seeks a Senior Policy Associate to support its mission of promoting evidence-based policymaking. We are looking for a strategist with a strong quantitative background, a passion for rigorous evaluation, an eye for opportunity, a dedication to quality, an interest in urban environmental policy and research, and a passion for helping people.

The position will be based at the University of Cape Town and embedded within the Economics Team at the City of Cape Town (CCT). This position will work with J-PAL Africa and across CCT Departments to deepen cross-organizational relationships and to identify and develop new research projects and scaling opportunities as part of the newly established [J-PAL Air and Water Labs](#). This role provides an excellent opportunity to engage with decision-makers and researchers at the forefront of urban policy innovation and to create an institutional framework for evidence use and research.

The J-PAL Africa team provides supportive management structures and offers flexibility for accelerated growth by supporting proactivity and encouraging top performers to expand and develop their portfolio.

Requirements for the job:

- An Honours Degree in Public Policy, Economics, or another similar social science including courses in econometrics/statistics, microeconomics, and development economics
- Minimum one year but strongly prefer two or more years of relevant work experience, e.g. public or social policy and/or research experience within a government body (preferred), NGO, non-profit, think tank, research, or consulting company
- Proven ability to handle multiple diverse assignments at one time, coordinate several contributors, successfully complete assigned tasks and meet deadlines while conducting high-quality work with minimal oversight
- An entrepreneurial mindset and demonstrated ability to be self-motivated, learn, and identify new, high-value opportunities and mobilize individuals to collaborate on new project creation
- Ability to create and cultivate relationships with external stakeholders, such as researchers or policymakers
- Advanced writing and oral presentation skills in English, particularly the ability to communicate technical research to policymakers in a non-technical manner
- Demonstrated ability to analyze rigorous quantitative research
- Strong skills in Excel, Word, and PowerPoint
- Experience analyzing administrative data and competency in statistical analysis tools (Stata or others)

Advantageous

- Demonstrated ability to build cross-organizational partnerships and/or identify and develop new projects. Strong plus if related to research, particularly randomized evaluations.
- Demonstrated interest and/or experience in urban and/or climate policy, particularly on issues related to access to electric and water service delivery, clean air, water, and energy policies and programs
- Experience with randomized evaluations, particularly field experience running randomized evaluations of social policies and/ or policy experience interpreting and sharing policy lessons from randomized evaluations
- Experience working within a government-embedded policy team/unit

Responsibilities include:

- Deepen the institutional partnership between J-PAL and the City of Cape Town by cultivating relationships with key CCT government partners across Departments and within the Policy and Strategy Team.
- Identify, design, and support opportunities for rigorous, policy-relevant research generation related to CCT's air, water, and energy policies. This includes working with policymakers and researchers in the J-PAL network to promote the generation of new randomized evaluations which answer key questions for policymakers, working with them to get identified research projects off the ground, and serving as a bridge between the research and implementation teams as needed.
- Match CCT policy priorities with evidence, share policy lessons, and design strategies to apply policy lessons of effective interventions in the urban policy space. This work includes maintaining expertise and command of the policy lessons generated by randomized evaluations across the [environment, energy, and climate change sector](#) as well as deep, careful analysis of the local context.
- Explore and develop creative ways in which administrative data could be better used by policymakers to identify needs, improve implementation, and identify policy priority evidence matches.
- Work with J-PAL Education & Training team to identify and meet demand for training CCT staff on evidence use, impact evaluations, and related topics, including participation in the planning, organization, and delivery of training events.

- Manage specific tasks related to the Air, Water, and Energy Lab including, for example, drafting reports for donors, developing materials for further fundraising efforts, and leading quarterly working group meetings between stakeholders at J-PAL Africa and the City of Cape Town.
- Coordinate lab-related communications and activities with J-PAL Global, other relevant J-PAL regional offices, the lab's scientific advisor(s), donors, and potentially others.
- Scope opportunities to share learnings from the lab and potentially expand workstreams in different South African cities and perhaps elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa.

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

To apply, please complete [this short application form](#).

As part of the application, you will be required to attach a **single PDF file** containing the following documents:

- UCT Application Form HR201 (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) (no more than 3 pages)
- Transcripts of your university degrees. Note this is required even though it is not called for in the HR201.
- Please ensure that the PDF is named "Yourname_JPALSPA".

An application which does not comply with the above requirements will be regarded as incomplete. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted and will likely be required to undergo an assessment process before interview rounds. Kindly reach out to mandersen@povertyactionlab.org if you have any questions.

As the cost of employment is being paid for from externally derived funds, this appointment is subject to the availability of funding. Recruitment will follow UCT's hiring procedure and remuneration is commensurate with UCT pay-scales.

Website: www.povertyactionlab.org
Reference number: E231081
Closing date: 03 December 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.