



Institutionalizing evidence and experimentation in policymaking

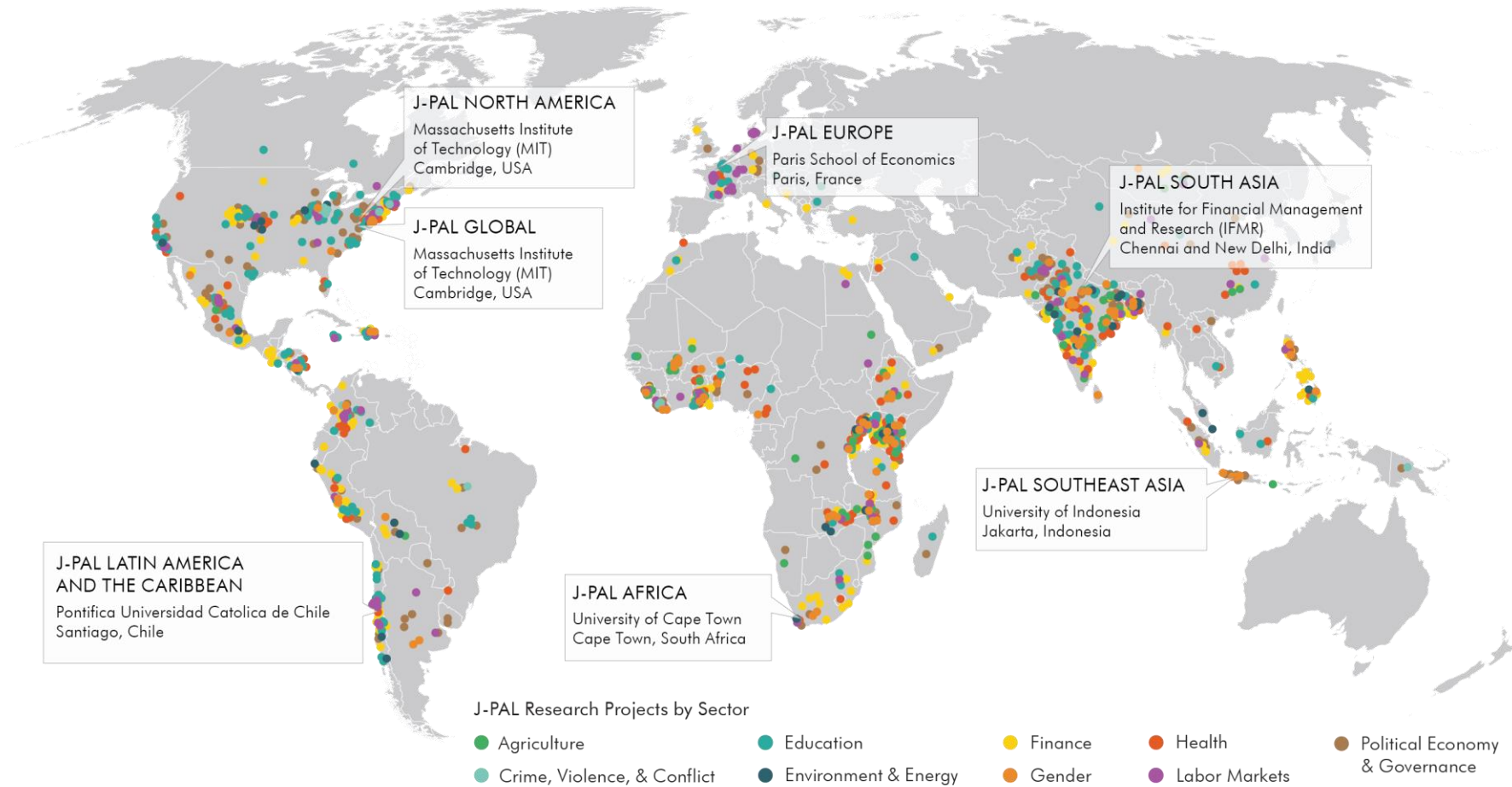
Iqbal Dhaliwal

Executive Director, J-PAL

IGL Global Conference 2018



J-PAL was founded at MIT's Economics Department and includes over 160 professors with 909 RCTs in 81 countries



Capacity building at J-PAL

J-PAL has trained over **7,000 local research staff** in conducting randomized evaluations

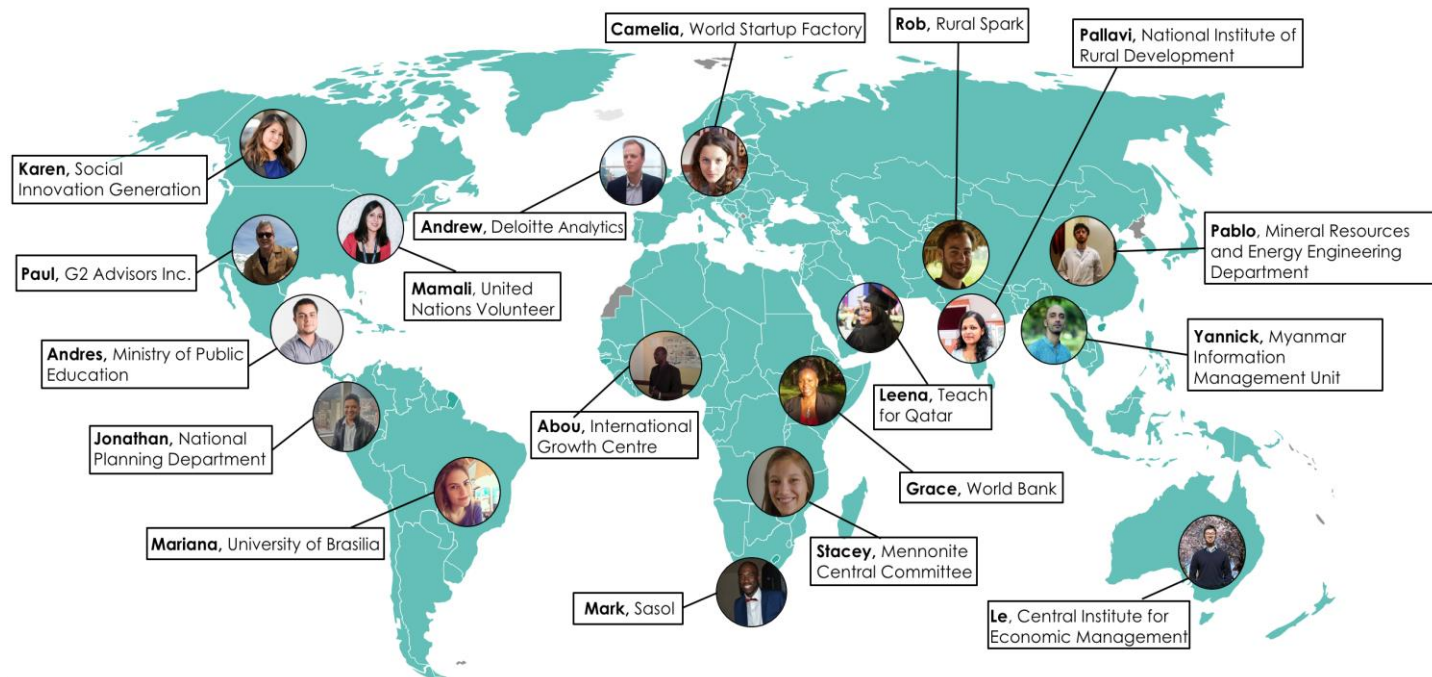
MITx Micromasters: Over **10,000 learners** from more than **180 countries**

In-person courses

- Executive Education: Evaluating Social Programs
- Measurement and survey design
- Other advanced courses
- Custom/Private courses

Online training course (MOOCs)

- JPAL 101x: Evaluating Social Programs
- JPAL 350x: Measuring Health Outcomes in Field Surveys
- MOOC for Brazilian National School of Public Administration



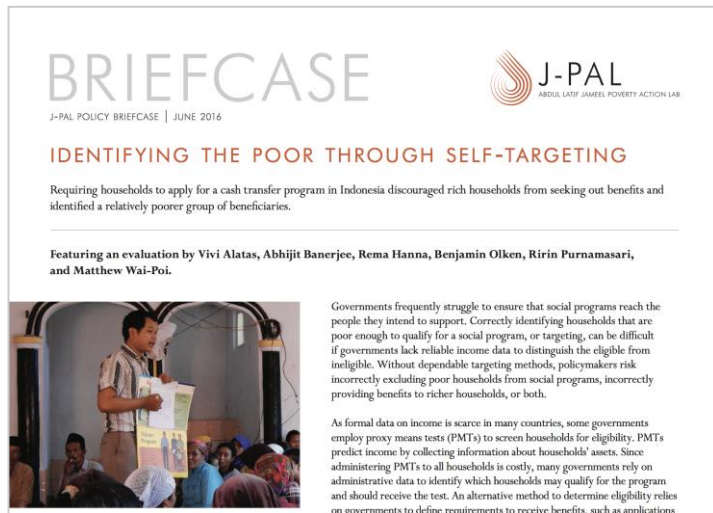
The policy group at J-PAL

$$E_0[V_2^*(z_2)] = (1 - \Phi_Y) \{E_0[V_2^*(z_2) \mid y_1 < \underline{y}(f_1, s_1)]\} + \Phi_Y \{E_0[V_2^*(z_2) \mid y_1 > \underline{y}(f_1, s_1)]\}.$$

Denote the first term in curly brackets as A and the second term in curly brackets as B . Note that $B \geq A$.

Using this expression, we can, for example, rewrite the first order condition with respect to f_1 as:

$$\beta \left\{ (1 - \Phi_Y)A' - \frac{\partial \Phi_Y}{\partial f_1} A \right\} + \beta \left\{ (\Phi_Y)B' + \frac{\partial \Phi_Y}{\partial f_1} B \right\} - u'_1(p_f - v) \leq 0.$$



J-PAL's research and policy outreach work has contributed to cost-effective programs being scaled up to reach over **300 million people**

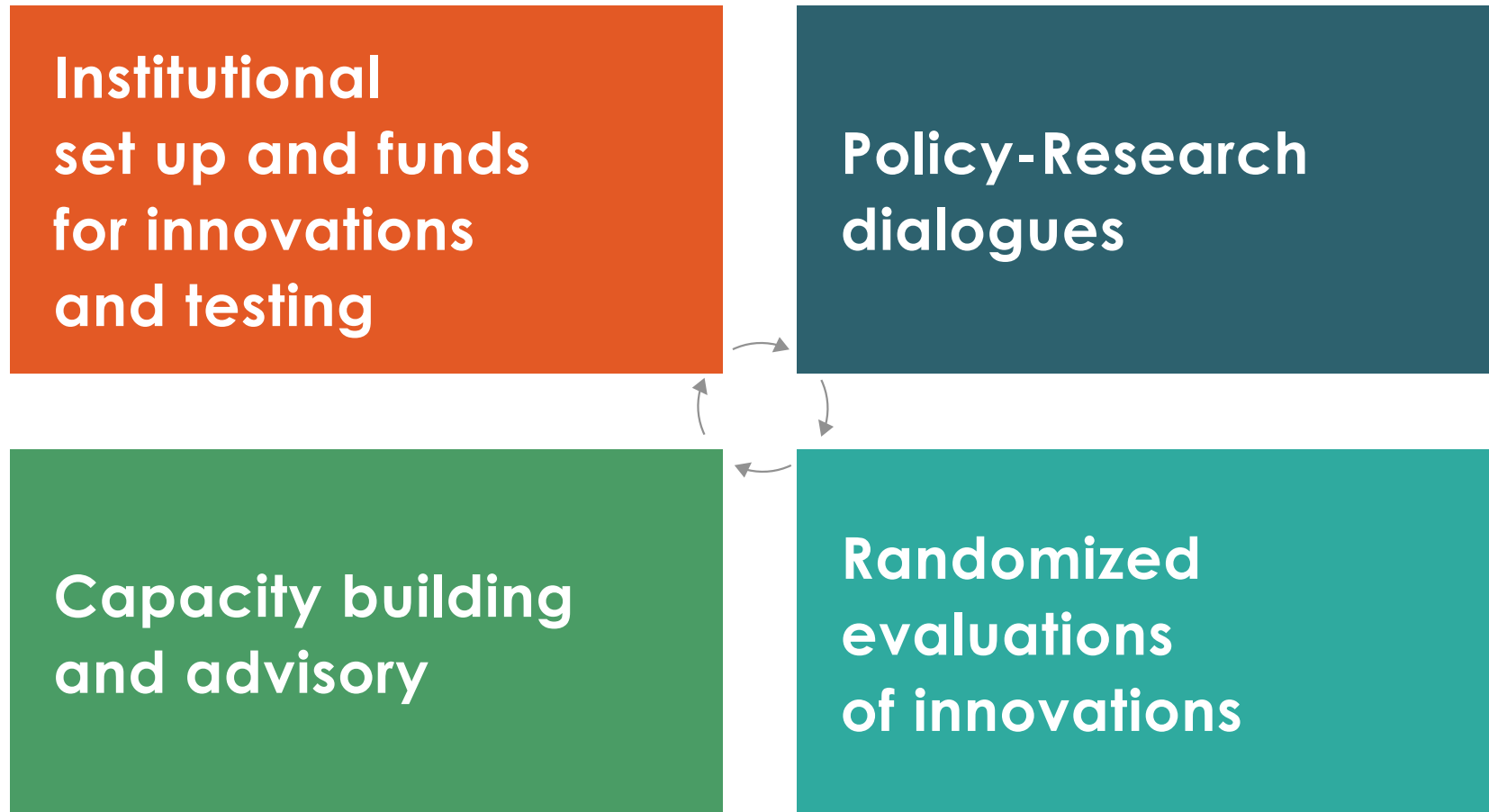


Tamil Nadu state

- Population (2016): 72 million
 - California: 39 million
 - Germany: 81 million
 - Thailand: 68 million
- GDP per capita (2015): US\$2,030
 - California: US\$53,855
 - Germany: US\$50,200
 - Thailand: US\$17,800



Goal: Culture of evidence-informed policymaking



Institutional Framework – Legal Cover and Continuing Ownership

Institutional set up and funds for innovations and testing

Steering Committee

Advisory Committee

Innovation Fund

Regular meetings:

- Quarterly update to Advisory Committee
- Monthly updates to Department



- Engagement started October 2013
- Chief Minister's Budget announced & MOU signed 2014
- Strategic programs required to undergo impact evaluations
- Demand from departments for high-quality evidence
- Expanded list of topics

Understand context and priorities, map to existing evidence and identify new ideas

Policy-Research dialogues

Formal discussions between policymakers and researchers to:

- Identify priority questions
- Use existing evidence to inform program design/implementation
- Identify new areas for study



- Dialogues with 5 departments
- Existing evidence fed into government decisions on CCTs, education, SME growth, & urban issues
- New scoping studies on health & unemployment

Test New Ideas and Interventions

Randomized evaluations

Feedback loops from research to policy:

- Sharing existing evidence
- Scoping
- Impact evaluation + interim outputs
- Scale-up recommendations

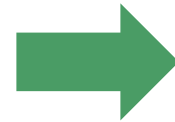


- 8 ongoing evaluations with 7 departments and 21 researchers, e.g.
 - Reducing burden of NCDs
 - Improving sleep for urban poor
- 7 completed scoping studies, e.g.
 - Designing appropriate contracts for public toilets
 - Long-run panel study on aging

Building capacity within the government, institutionalizing a “culture” of evidence

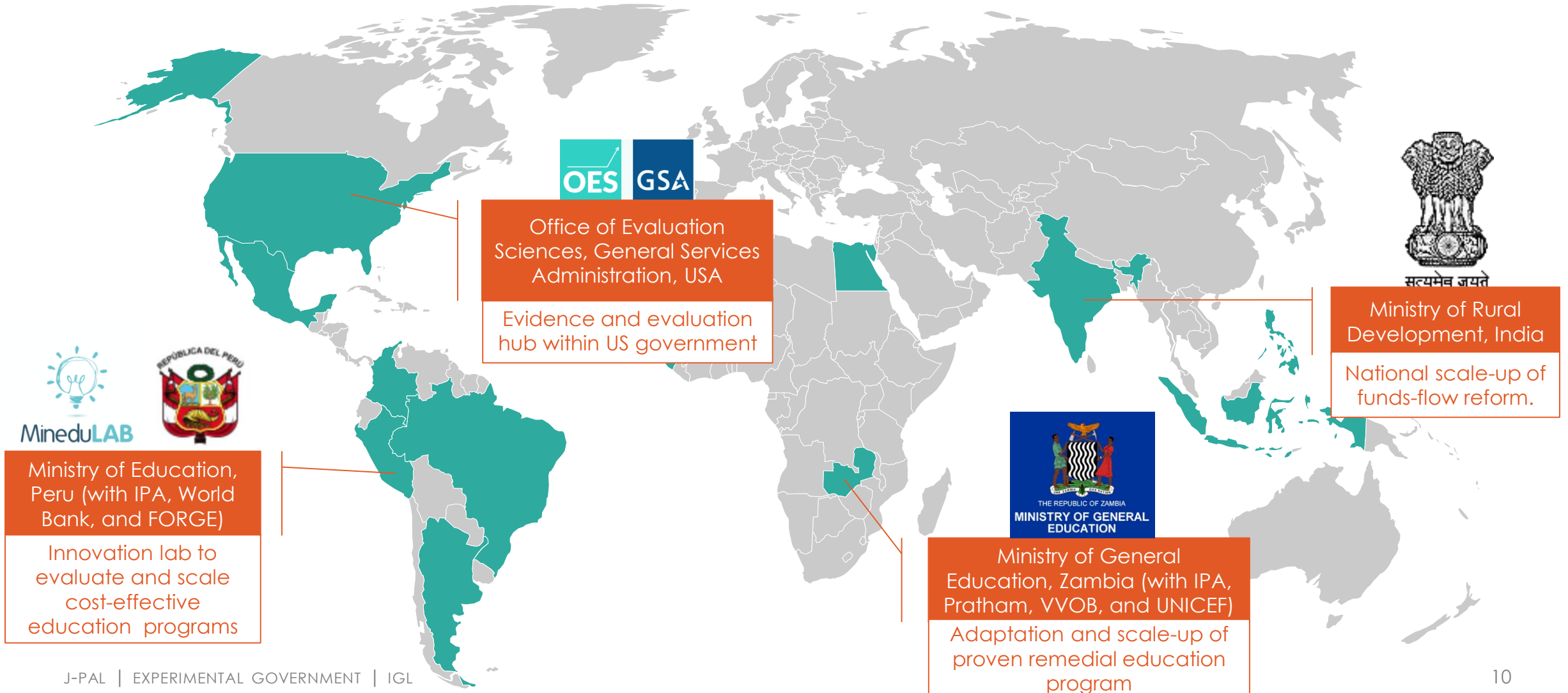
Capacity building & advisory

Data Analytics Unit
Evaluation guidelines & manuals
Customized workshops & trainings



- Data Analytics Unit with 6 staff + Steering Committee
- Evaluation methods manual
- 3 ongoing & 2 completed data analysis projects, e.g.
 - Linking datasets on unidentified bodies & missing persons
 - Bus route optimization

Similarly, J-PAL has worked with 50+ governments to increase the use of evidence in policymaking



Some Key Learnings partnering with governments?

- Invest in long-term relationships
- Need significant financial & human resources to invest in relationship
- Support champions for evidence use in government
- Create institutional framework
- Combine global evidence with deep contextual knowledge
- Make use of data the government already collects
- Develop well thought-out theory of change for entire partnership
- Respond to policy windows
- Continuous dialogue



Thank you

Iqbal Dhaliwal

IqbalD@mit.edu

PovertyActionLab.org

