CEGA
Center for Effective Global Action

New insights and tools to improve lives

The Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA) is a hub for research, training, and innovation headquartered at the University of California, Berkeley. We generate insights that leaders use to improve policies, programs, and people's lives. Our academic network includes hundreds of faculty, scholars from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), and graduate students–from across academic disciplines and across the globe–that produce rigorous evidence about what works to reduce global poverty.

OUR MOTIVATION

Every year, governments, NGOs, and philanthropists around the world invest billions of dollars to reduce poverty. Good intentions aside, how do they know if their investments work? While private companies regularly invest 10 to 15 percent of their revenue in research and development, social sector actors spend far less to rigorously test their policies and programs. This leaves policymakers to make highly consequential decisions without rigorous evidence about what worked—or didn't—in the past and what is most likely to drive intended outcomes in the future.

OUR APPROACH

CEGA was established to generate more empirical research about the impacts of economic and social development programs, and to ensure those insights inform policymaker decisions. Central to CEGA's approach is bringing ideas and techniques from diverse academic disciplines—economics, psychology, computer science, engineering and more—and including more people with first-hand experience with the problems and solutions our work addresses.

BY THE NUMBERS

160
affiliated researchers

28
universities

$45M
competitively awarded research grants since 2008

535
studies

57
countries

65
researchers from low- and middle-income countries

OUR WORK

CEGA builds portfolios by funding policy-relevant research studies, organized by topical sector or cross-cutting theme. Each portfolio includes investments in research projects as well as training and policy outreach activities. The data and evidence resulting from our work are synthesized to create actionable insights and tools for decision-makers.

GENDER & AGENCY

TRANSPARENCY

GLOBAL NETWORKS

DATA SCIENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

AGRICULTURE

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

FINANCIAL INCLUSION

GOVERNANCE & CONFLICT

HEALTH & PSYCHOLOGY

TECHNOLOGY

EDUCATION & LABOR

EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICY

Job displacement is a major hardship faced by refugees. More than 700,000 Syrian refugees have migrated to Jordan since 2012, and finding work remains a challenge. In response, the Jordanian government offered 200,000 work permits to refugees in 2016. However, to maximize limited opportunities for both refugees and unemployed Jordanians, jobs need to be appropriately targeted using labor market constraints and participant characteristics (such as age, gender, job experience, education, etc.). To address the job-matching challenge, Stefano Caria, Grant Gordon, Max Kasy, Simon Quinn, Soha Shami, and Alex Teytelboym tested a novel targeting method called "adaptive targeted treatment allocation."

With a competitive grant from CEGA, the research team developed an algorithm that adaptively targets policy interventions to maximize the welfare of participants. The experiment made use of the International Rescue Committee's job-matching platform, Project Match, and explored how interventions such as cash transfers, psychological support, and information could improve employment outcomes.

In 2022, the Jordanian Ministry of Labor and the World Bank launched the National Employment Programme (NEP) that builds on the research team's work with Project Match. In particular, a new approach to registering and matching job-seekers was adopted by the NEP after the reseach team provided its open-source code and communicated findings with the Ministry of Labor and the World Bank. The government also adopted the platform in combination with cash packages for Jordanian job-seekers, mirroring the research team's most effective intervention.

Encouraged by the success of the program, the NEP aims to hire 63,000 new employees. A third of these hires will be women and half will be youth, ages 18-24. The application of the findings demonstrates how adaptive targeted experiments can generate relevant and actionable policy information for decision-makers, enabling them to improve the lives of their citizens and refugees seeking new lives in their adoptive lands.

LEARN MORE

CEGA improves the lives of people living in poverty by generating insights and tools for decision-makers backed by rigorous, inclusive, and transparent research. Learn more about our work at **cega.berkeley.edu**.