

# Ben Jaques-Leslie

AGENCY POLICY SPECIALIST

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## Education

### Coleridge Initiative

APPLIED DATA ANALYSIS TRAINING PROGRAM

New York, New York, USA

2020

### School of Global Policy & Strategy, University of California, San Diego

MASTER OF PACIFIC/INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

La Jolla, California, USA

2010

- Career focus: Development and Non-Profit Management
- Regional focus: China
- Honor: Most Valuable Teaching Assistant
- Development Club Treasurer
- Net Impact Chapter Director of Club Development

### Beijing Normal University

SUMMER CHINESE LANGUAGE INTENSIVE

Beijing, China

2009

### University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS

Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA

2002

- Major: Pure Math
- Minor: History
- Honors: Dean's List and Pi Mu Epsilon Math Honors Fraternity

### Shandong University

SANTA BARBARA CITY COLLEGE PACIFIC RIM STUDIES PROGRAM

Jinan, China

2001

## COVID-19 response activities

### Minnesota Department of Human Services

AGENCY POLICY SPECIALIST

Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA

2016 - present

- Extracted, cleaned, and analyzed daily application and participant data into documents, presentations, and spreadsheets for division, department, and state leadership, including weekly food security presentations to the governor
- Created data infrastructure to implement Emergency SNAP, calculating the appropriate increases to food grants, adjusting for unique and changing policies, providing more than \$20,000,000 in food support to all eligible Minnesota families monthly
- Provided data support to Pandemic EBT, providing food support to children receiving free and reduced price lunch, fuzzy matching application data to administrative data, constructing application information for help line staff and for outreach to applicants, sending more than \$70,000,000 in food support to students in Minnesota

## Research and data experience

### Minnesota Department of Human Services

AGENCY POLICY SPECIALIST

Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA

2016 - present

- Produce the Self-Support Index, the statewide performance measure for the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), using R and SQL to extract state administrative data, merging with other data sources, and developing a predictive model of county performance
- Develop reports using data from Minnesota's public assistance programs for internal and external stakeholders used for developing legislation, responding to federal inquiries, making operations and policy decisions, and answering research questions
- Collaborating with external research partners, including the Minneapolis Federal Reserve, the University of Minnesota, Indiana University, and ideas42 to use agency data
- Member of the Minnesota 2-Generation Policy Network, acting as evaluation contact for White Earth Nation, providing technical assistance to use data from WECARE, the public assistance assessment tool developed by the tribe
- Training state and local officials on the Self-Support Index, reaching over 300 staff people
- Member of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLS), which makes aggregate data on children birth to third grade from across state agencies, in particular working on the Data and Research Committee, the Family Ecology project, and MN Kids Explorer
- Project coordinator for Minnesota's participation in the TANF Data Collaborative, a effort to increase data analysis capacity and use in state governments

## **Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), MIT**

*Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA*

SENIOR RESEARCH AND TRAINING MANAGER

2014 - 2016

- Lead restructuring of J-PAL staff development, including major changes to the style and content of in-person staff training, and developing new systems for personalized staff development
- Writing, launching, and analyzing biannual surveys of J-PAL staff
- Tracking and developing plans to improve engagement with J-PAL's affiliate network, including running biannual surveys
- Coordinating other J-PAL Sector Program Managers at J-PAL to improve systems and consistency in initiative management, sector outreach, matchmaking with researchers and implementers, and internal training, including development and management of the Initiative Coordinator
- Continued much of the work assigned as a Research manager, listed below

## **Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), MIT**

*Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA*

AGRICULTURE SECTOR PROGRAM MANAGER

2011 - 2016

- Managing the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab's Agriculture Program including the Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative (ATAI), funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and the UK Department for International Development, (DFID) in collaboration with the Center of Evaluation for Global Action at UC Berkeley
- Overseeing subawards from ATAI to researchers at universities and research centers globally as well as monitoring progress and reporting.
- Managing relationships with donors, including biweekly calls with program officers, developing new proposals, and annual reports, resulting in new awards of over \$8 million to dates
- Presented on research in agriculture at forums in the United Arab Emirates, the United States, India, Morocco, and Sierra Leone to government officials, researchers, private sector partners, and non-profit staff
- Developing a variety of materials for disseminating results of agriculture research including a short film about a project on weather index insurance in northern Ghana
- Writing and editing policy briefs and blog posts, including a bulletin on weather index insurance and a post on the Next Billion blog
- Running conferences providing evidence to policymakers about effective interventions in agriculture and hosting opportunities to develop partnerships between researchers, NGOs, and governments
- Organizing, producing materials, and teaching at working shops for CIMMYT in Texcoco, Mexico to train their researchers in randomized evaluations looking at social outcomes including profitability
- Maintaining the various resources associated with the Agriculture Program including the ATAI website and a white paper on barriers to technology adoption in agriculture
- Managing a competitive request for proposal process to fund research projects in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, including organizing board meetings, supporting the award process, and receiving reports on projects

## **Innovations for Poverty Action**

*Freetown, Sierra Leone*

ACTING COUNTRY DIRECTOR

2011

- Acted as in-country representative for Innovations for Poverty Action in Sierra Leone
- Met and negotiated projects with a variety of partners including the International Rescue Committee, Fombul Tok, Search for Common Ground, Campaign for Good Governance, UNICEF, the International Growth Centre, IFAD, ChildFund, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, and the World Bank
- Managed a staff of 30 people including international project associates, local research assistants, and office staff
- Supported the activities of randomized evaluations and other methods focusing on rice cultivation using NERICA, village-level health clinic quality, community reconciliation, micro-loans for palm oil producers, rice traders in local markets, contract design in the cocoa industry, village-level child protection, and performance of MPs
- Performed the above while maintaining oversight of HR, recruitment, and reporting tasks associated with the position as Research manager at the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab

## **Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), MIT**

*Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA*

RESEARCH MANAGER

2010 - 2014

- Oversaw global recruitment efforts for J-PAL and partner organizations, managing a database of over 100 job opening per year, and receiving applications from over 4,000 global candidates
- Developed and leaded a global review system of applicants to J-PAL's database reviewing more than 1,800 candidates by over 40 staff located around the world and in different organizations
- Supported the development and management of MIS, using Salesforce and Sharepoint
- Introduced new affiliates to J-PAL's services and policies and systematically collected affiliates' regional and sector research interests
- Prepared content and presenting at staff trainings on field research methods in Kenya, India, and the US
- Tracked and maintained over 500 research projects taking place around the world coordinating with professors from top university, managers in central offices, and researchers in the field.
- Researched and wrote general-funding grant proposals and annual reports for major donors contributing several million dollars yearly
- Designed and implemented human resource procedures for staff based at the labs regional offices and for professor's newly affiliated with the lab including orientation to SharePoint

## **University of California, San Diego**

*La Jolla, California, USA*

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

2010

- Assisted professors from UC San Diego and UC Berkeley with the organization and operation of experimental research investigating consumer demand of Fair Trade coffee
- Established and managed relationships with coffee shops in the San Diego area where the experiments took place
- Designed materials and survey instruments used in the experiment

## Grameen Foundation

Washington, DC, USA

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS INTERN

2009 - 2010

- Performed regression analysis looking at covariation between Grameen's Progress Out of Poverty Index and several microfinance indicators
- Examined and cleaned provided data in order to ensure valid results
- Organized and set goals for the team of interns working jointly on the project

## PlaNNet Finance

Beijing China

GRADUATE STUDENT INTERN

2009

- Led and assessed a group of interns producing a book describing the experiences of microfinance loan recipients
- Researched and compiled a list of potential donors to PlanNet Finance
- Designed a draft questionnaire to evaluate interns sent to assist microfinance banks in rural areas
- Evaluated English translation of the articles of association of a new microfinance bank in Ningxia province
- Designed and produced a PowerPoint presentation and other promotional materials for fundraiser raising over 30,000 RMB for projects in Gansu province related to reconstruction after the 2008 earthquake

## Teaching experience

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### University of California, San Diego

La Jolla, California, USA

ECONOMETRICS TEACHER'S ASSISTANT

2010

- Lead bi-weekly course reviews of material covered in class including econometrics theory and the data analysis program STATA
- Grade homeworks and tests for a class of over 100 students
- Address individual students' questions and concerns in class as well as by email and instant message
- Contribute to weekly meetings with course professor to improve instruction and tackle student concerns

### University of California, San Diego

La Jolla, California, USA

STATISTICS TUTOR

2009

- Led small group tutoring sessions covering the basics of probability theory including several probability distributions and hypothesis testing
- Taught students how to use Excel in questions concerning probability
- Tracked student performance in order to address and highlight specific issues with the instructor

### Santa Barbara City College

Jinan, China

ENGLISH TUTOR

2001

- Highlighted nuanced aspects of conversational English by crafting presentations and class plans
- Expanded students' knowledge of English beyond the classroom utilizing a variety of improvised settings
- Overcame language and cultural obstacles to capably teach students

### University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA

MATH TUTOR

2001 - 2004

- Clarified complex mathematical concepts to students with a wide range of abilities, yielding exceptional academic achievement
- Crafted individualized teaching techniques to address wide ranging gaps in mathematical learning

## Mangement Experience

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### Joe Van Gogh

Hillsborough, North Carolina, USA

RETAIL MANAGER

2004 - 2008

- Designed a company-wide detailed training program to ensure that staff at all levels had the knowledge and skills necessary for outstanding drink preparation and customer service
- Strategically managed a staff of 30 employees utilizing each individual's unique strengths to increase productivity and overall morale reducing staff turnover to 5% per year
- Generated budgets and established fiscal goals resulting in reduced shrink, increased profitability and more efficient allocation of resources leading to 5% increase in company income
- Communicated company objectives and addressed specific employee concerns leading to standardized procedures, improved operations, and increased quality of service
- Rose through the store hierarchy from barista to store manager in 9 months

## Other activities

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### National Association of Welfare Research and Statistics (NAWRS)

Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA

NAWRS VIRTUAL COMMITTEE MEMBER

2020 - present

- Developed presentation ideas and invited speakers to online presentations about a variety of human services topics

### Global Innovation Fund

London, UK

PROPOSAL REVIEWER

2015

- Reviewed proposals for agriculture development studies in the developing world

## Other honors

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### Minnesota Department of Management and Budget

EMERGING LEADERS INSTITUTE

- Leadership development program designed to prepare future leaders in Minnesota state government

*Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA*

2019

### US Office of Personnel Management

PRESIDENTIAL MANAGEMENT FELLOWS FINALIST

- Flagship leadership development program for US federal government positions

*Washington, DC, USA*

2010

## Selected Presentations

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### Twin Cities Research Group (TCRG)

TCRG WEBINAR

- Variance of MFIP Grants in Minnesota

*Saint Paul, MN, USA*

2020

### National Association of Welfare Research and Statistics (NAWRS)

NAWRS 2019 ANNUAL WORKSHOP

- Variance of MFIP Grants in Minnesota

*New Orleans, Louisiana, USA*

2019

### Minnesota Financial Worker & Case Aide Association

MFWCAA 2018 CONFERENCE: PASSPORT TO EXCELLENCE

- Pressures and Tensions of Living on a Low-Income

*Minneapolis Minnesota*

2018

### Minnesota Department of Human Services and Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

JOINT COUNSELOR TRAINING

- Pressures and Tensions of Living on a Low-Income

*Rochester, MN, USA*

2017

### Global Development Network (GDN)

AGRICULTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR A NEW 'GREEN REVOLUTION'

- Stimulating Smallholder Technology Adoption: Lessons from Randomized Trials in Credit and Insurance

*Casablanca, Morocco*

2015

### International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)

DELHI SEMINAR

- Emerging Policy Lessons in Agriculture

*New Delhi, India*

2015

### Massachusetts Institute of Technology

OCP EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

- Emerging Policy Lessons in Agriculture

*Cambridge, MA, USA*

2015

### US Department of Agriculture

WORLD FOOD PRIZE PRECONFERENCE

- Emerging Policy Lessons in Agriculture

*Des Moines, Iowa, USA*

2015

### OCP Policy Center

ATLANTIC DIALOGUES

- Emerging Policy Lessons in Agriculture

*Marrakesh, Morocco*

2014

### Sierra Leone Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security

SEMINAR ON RANDOMIZED EVALUATIONS IN AGRICULTURE

- Emerging Policy Lessons in Agriculture

*Freetown, Sierra Leone*

2014

### Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action and Innovations for Poverty Action

EVALUATING SOCIAL PROGRAMS

- Emerging Policy Lessons in Agriculture

*Doha, Qatar*

2013

## Publications

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1. *Digging For Answers: Examining the Effects of Rainfall Index Insurance for Farmers in Ghana.* (2015). Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, Center for Effective Global Action,; Innovations for Poverty Action. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWwx2h-b3v4>
2. Jaques-Leslie, B. (2016). Making it Rain: The forecast on weather index insurance. In *NextBillion*. <https://nextbillion.net/making-it-rain-the-forecast-on-weather-index-insurance/>

3. Jaques-Leslie, B. P. (2017). *Self-Support Index Methodology Update* (p. 72). Minnesota Department of Human Services. <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-6724A-ENG>
4. Jaques-Leslie, B. (2019). *Income variability of families on cash assistance in Minnesota* (No. 1; p. 4). Minnesota Department of Human Services. <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-3927A-ENG>
5. Jaques-Leslie, B. (2020). *Using master leasing to support Olmsted County families* (No. 1; p. 3). Minnesota Department of Human Services. <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-7346A-ENG>
6. Jaques-Leslie, B. P. (2020). *Minnesota Family Investment Program Performance Measures by Racial/Ethnic or Immigrant Group and by County or Tribal Provider* (p. 53). Minnesota Department of Human Services. <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-4214AF-ENG>
7. Jaques-Leslie, B. P. (2020). *Self-Support Index: Recommended Changes to the Model* (p. 32). Minnesota Department of Human Services. <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-7355A-ENG>
8. Jaques-Leslie, B. P. (2020). *Self-Support Index Future Work* (p. 5). Minnesota Department of Human Services. <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-7355B-ENG>
9. Jaques-Leslie, B. P. (2020). *Minnesota Family Investment Program 2020 Annualized Self-Support Index* (p. 12). Minnesota Department of Human Services. <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-4651G-ENG>
10. Jaques-Leslie, B. (2021). *Minnesota Family Investment Program Management Indicators Report*. Minnesota Department of Human Services. <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-4042AF-ENG>
11. Nikolla, D., & Jaques-Leslie, B. (2019). *The effect of child support disregard on MFIP grant* (No. 2; p. 4). Minnesota Department of Human Services. <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-3927B-ENG>
12. Schickele, A. (2016). *Make it Rain* (B. Jaques-Leslie, Ed.; p. 12). Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, Center for Effective Global Action,; Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative. <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/publication/make-it-rain.pdf>

## Additional information

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- **Computer Skills:** R, SQL, STATA, MS Office, Salesforce, SharePoint, Git (limited), ArcGIS (limited) Python (limited), Julia (limited)
- **Volunteer Activities:** Amnesty International, First Church Somerville, MIT SHASS, People's Self-Help Housing, Lutheran Family Services, International Rescue Committee
- **Leadership:** Judge, Southeast Regional Barista Competition
- **International Experience:** Kenya, Morocco, Sierra Leone, China, India, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Brazil, Mexico, Canada, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey, and UK