

## PRESS RELEASE

### Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab at MIT to expand refugees' access to higher education

- *New bespoke learning program for refugees announced, opening doors and knocking down barriers to higher education*
- *Follows launch in Amman, Jordan, earlier this year of new computer science and entrepreneurship programme for refugees*

**Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, May 1, 2018:** The [Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab](#) (J-PAL) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is launching a new scheme to help refugees access higher education in development economics.

The goal of this new collaboration is to empower refugees with training that will enable them to leverage their local knowledge, build their technical skills, and become experts in the fields of development economics and public policy.

Starting in the summer of 2018, J-PAL is teaming up with MIT's Refugee Action (ReACT) initiative to provide access for selected refugees to the online MicroMasters programme in [Data, Economics and Development Policy \(DEDP\)](#) offered by J-PAL and MIT's Department of Economics. ReACT, which aims to connect refugees with higher education, will sponsor selected learners and provide access to:

- Five online MicroMasters DEDP courses on development economics;
- In-person workshops on business skills, and;
- Paid internships to put their skills into practice.

A MicroMasters is a professional and academic credential, accredited by MITx, MIT's online learning platform, and offers individuals a route to applying for a full Master's degree program at MIT or other universities.

The new initiative uses a carefully crafted model of blended learning - with financial support for online courses and in-person workshops, as well as strong emphasis on community building - to specifically target and overcome the educational challenges facing refugees. This track within ReACT aims to provide refugees with the tools they need to engage as technical experts with the problems facing their communities.

Hassan Jameel, President of Community Jameel Saudi Arabia said: "Education and learning are fundamental to a strong society, and providing access to MIT's MicroMasters is a foundation upon which to rebuild the disrupted education and careers of refugees worldwide.

"Building on the computer science and entrepreneurship support for refugees in Jordan, this collaborative effort between J-PAL, MIT, and ReACT, creates another bespoke learning opportunity for refugees, opening doors and knocking down barriers to higher education for learners."

The J-PAL initiative follows the launch in January 2018 in Amman, Jordan, of a one-year course of study in computer science and entrepreneurship, designed by MIT, for a class of students from Jordan, Lebanon and the Occupied Territories. Accredited by ReACT, the programme earns the students a certificate that, along with internships with local companies

## PRESS RELEASE

throughout the programme, could help them advance to better-paying positions in the region. That programme also involved J-PAL, as well as the Abdul Latif Jameel World Education Lab (J-WEL), cofounded by Community Jameel and MIT in 2017, and the MIT Enterprise Forum Pan Arab Region, which has partnered with Community Jameel on the annual Arab Startup Competition since 2007.

Community Jameel, the social enterprise organisation, has supported and partnered with J-PAL since 2005 to tackle the root causes of poverty, including issues related to health, education, youth employment, and financial inclusion. For more information on the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab and its work, click [here](#).

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### Notes to Editors

Community Jameel is a social enterprise organisation that helps communities transform themselves through a wide range of initiatives. It works to create job opportunities, tackle unemployment, promote arts and culture in the Middle East and around the world, enable research for poverty alleviation and food and water security, and provide education and training opportunities. Community Jameel was formally established in 2003 to continue the Jameel family's tradition of supporting the community, a tradition started in the 1940s by the late Abdul Latif Jameel, founder of the Abdul Latif Jameel business, who throughout his life helped tens of thousands of disadvantaged people improve their lives.