JACK THIEMEL

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EDUCATION

London School of Economics, London U.K.
MRes/PhD in Economics, July 2027 (expected)

Georgetown University, Washington D.C.
B.S. Mathematics and Economics, May 2018
Magna Cum Laude

REFERENCES

Oriana Bandiera
Professor of Economics
London School of Economics
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Robin Burgess
Professor of Economics
London School of Economics
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Gharad Bryan
Associate Professor of Economics
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WORKING PAPERS

Salting the Earth: Shrimp Farming and Agricultural Externalities in Bangladesh
Job Market Paper
(with Krittika Ray)
Funding: IGC, STICERD, Hub for Equal Representation

Jobs to End Poverty: Evidence from Bangladesh
(with Oriana Bandiera, Menna Bishop, Robin Burgess, Stefano Caria and Munshi Sulaiman)
Funding: USAID - Development Innovation Ventures

WORK IN PROGRESS

Beliefs About Climate Change and Migration Intentions in Bangladesh
(with Gharad Bryan, Robin Burgess and Stefano Caria)
Funding: King Climate Action Initiative, IGC

Adaptation to Climate Change for the Ultra-Poor in Bangladesh
(with Oriana Bandiera, Gharad Bryan, Robin Burgess and Stefano Caria)
Funding: King Climate Action Initiative, Gates Foundation

Peer Learning and Productivity Across NGOs
(with Michelle Rao)

Passing the Baton: Supervision and the Scale-Up of Early Learning
(with Smitin Brid and Michelle Rao)
Funding: The Weiss Fund

PUBLICATIONS

Microfinance and Diversification
(with Oriana Bandiera, Robin Burgess, Erika Deserranno, Ricardo Morel, Imran Rasul, Munshi Sulaiman)
Economica 89 (2022): S239-S275

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

$*$ = *scheduled*

2026 - Interdisciplinary PhD Workshop in Sustainable Development (Columbia), BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, IFS-LSE-UCL Development WiP Seminar, Oxford Development Economics Workshop, Heartland Environmental and Resource Economics Workshop (UIUC)

2025 - Machine Learning in Economics Summer Institute Attendee (Chicago Booth)

2023 - IFS-LSE-UCL Development PhD Workshop

HONORS AND AWARDS

LSE Class Teacher Awards, Highly Commended (2022)
Economics Department Scholarship, LSE (2020)
NSF, Graduate Research Fellowship Programme Honorable Mention (2020)
Dahlgren Medal, Georgetown Department of Mathematics (2018)
Presenter, Carroll Round Conference for International Economics (2018)
Tatiana S. Gau Scholarship for International Study (2016-2017)
National Merit Scholarship (2014)

SERVICE

LSE Environment Camp Organizing Committee (2024, 2025)
LSE Environment Week Organizing Committee (2024)
PhD Cohort Representative (2020 – 2025)
PhD Applicant Mentoring Programme Mentor (2020 - 2026)
PhD Applicant Mentoring Programme Co-Chair (2023 - 2024)

TEACHING

PP455E - Empirical Methods for Executive MPA, LSE (2024 - 2026)
PP440E - Economic Policy Analysis for Executive MPA, LSE (2023 - 2026)
G^2LM—LIC Online Development Economics (2024 - 2026)
EC307 - Development Economics, LSE (2021 - 2026)
Math Camp for Executive MPA, LSE (2022 - 2024)
MA135 - Multivariable Calculus, Georgetown (2017 - 2018)

REFEREEING

Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization

PAPER SELECTION

LSE Environment Camp (2024, 2025)
LSE Environment Week (2024)
European Association of Young Economists (2024, 2025)

ABSTRACTS

Salting the Earth: Shrimp Farming and Agricultural Externalities in Bangladesh
(with Krittika Ray)
Job Market Paper

Climate change is raising groundwater salinity across coastal regions globally, threatening smallholder livelihoods. In southern Bangladesh, a common adaptation is to convert freshwater rice paddies into saltwater shrimp ponds. However, this adaptation comes with an externality: saltwater from shrimp ponds may seep into neighboring fields, damaging rice. This paper considers whether such private adaptation generates negative externalities on neighboring rice farmers and whether those externalities accelerate further adoption. Combining a novel household survey with a satellite panel of 73,300 plots over nine years, we document that a neighbor's conversion reduces vegetation health on adjacent rice plots and raises own conversion probability by 18.0 percentage points. Interpreted through a model of land use based on comparative advantage and a boundary externality, these results imply an adaptation cascade: 51.5 percent of ponds exist only because a neighbor converted, and a tax on conversion would raise aggregate farm profit by 11 percent. Private decisions that promote climate resilience for some can erode it for others.

Beliefs About Climate Change and Migration Intentions in Bangladesh
(with Gharad Bryan, Robin Burgess and Stefano Caria)

Global warming will cause adverse changes to the climate faced by the world's poorest. Individuals can mitigate the impacts of these shocks by adopting new technologies, working in less-exposed occupations, or migrating to safer areas. However, it is unclear whether exposed populations are sufficiently informed about future shocks to undertake these investments. We use a survey experiment (N=5,992) among a large sample of rural Bangladeshis to show that concerns about climate change are widespread; that individuals plan to invest in new technologies in-situ (rather than migration and occupation change); and that a large flood is associated with stronger demand for in-situ adaptation policies. Providing information about future shocks does not affect adaptation intentions or policy demand. Overall, the rural poor are highly concerned about climate change and would like vigorous investments in in-situ adaptation. Alternative policies aiming to support migration or occupation need to raise beneficiary interest to be effective.

Adaptation to Climate Change for the Ultra-Poor in Bangladesh
(with Oriana Bandiera, Gharad Bryan, Robin Burgess, Stefano Caria and Munshi Sulaiman)

Climate change increasingly threatens the productive assets on which the rural poor depend, yet we know little about how best to protect them. We study this question in rural Bangladesh, where livestock is a primary source of income and savings for the poor. In partnership with BRAC, a large NGO, we work with recent graduates of its ultra-poor graduation program, each of whom received a cow, as well as with other livestock-owning households. We randomly offer households one of two interventions: livestock insurance and loans or assistance with community-level coordination. Insurance and loans are private adaptation tools that help households absorb and recover from asset losses. Community coordination instead supports a local public good that can reduce exposure to damage in the first place. Comparing these approaches allows us to assess whether private or collective adaptation better protects vulnerable households, and whether the answer differs for program graduates and other livestock owners.

Jobs to End Poverty: Evidence from Bangladesh
(with Oriana Bandiera, Menna Bishop, Robin Burgess, and Stefano Caria)

Do the poor have high returns from trainable human capital? Can they afford to pay for it? And are they differentially targeted by the organizations that offer training? We provide unique evidence on these questions by combining a household census (N=42,895) in urban Bangladesh, a randomized controlled trial of an on-the-job training intervention, unique data on the targeting of the implementing partner, and a structural model. We find that take-up of the training at full price is minimal, and there are no effects on labor market outcomes. The poor, however, increase employment and consumption under a 70% discount. We also document that, for the same program, the implementing NGO would have selected richer beneficiaries who are more likely to enroll in training. Our structural model rationalizes these findings by estimating that the poor have higher-than-average returns to training, but they also experience higher participation costs, and are hence targeted less frequently by an implementer that wants to maximize take-up. We confirm the central finding that the poor have higher-than-average returns to training in a re-analysis of previous training experiments, using machine learning predictions of outcomes and treatment effects.

Passing the Baton: Supervision and the Scale-Up of Early Learning
(with Smitin Brid and Michelle Rao)

Many promising education interventions lose effectiveness when they move from NGO delivery to government delivery at scale. We study the scale-up of a Pratham early learning program for young children and their mothers to roughly 110,000 government-run daycare centers in Maharashtra, as supervision passes from NGO staff to government officials. We examine when program quality declines after this handover and whether light-touch support can sustain high-quality delivery.

Peer Learning and Productivity Across NGOs
(with Michelle Rao)

How can small NGOs can learn from more successful organizations? We partner with the nonprofit arm of a major insurance company to randomly assign funded NGOs to working groups and study the effects of networks on organizational performance. Representatives from these NGOs attend monthly meetings to discuss best practices and share information on monitoring and evaluation, among other topics. We examine whether forming these networks affects outcomes for the funder, as well as organizational performance and decision-making among the beneficiary organizations.