APD 1210 RESEARCH PRACTICUM COURSE

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS 2023-24 FALL/WINTER

Name and Title: *Kaja Jasinska, Assistant Professor*

Lab Website: *https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/boldlab/*

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: *Supporting children's learning with home- and school-based interventions in communities with high risk of illiteracy and child labor.*

NUMBER OF STUDENT PLACES AVAILABLE: *1*

PRIMARY MODE OF RESEARCH PLACEMENT PARTICIPATION (circle one option and describe):

X IN PERSON   ___REMOTE (ONLINE)   ____HYBRID/FLEXIBLE

Please describe: Research placement will involve in-person placement only. 8-10 hrs weekly must be completed in the laboratory. All meetings with PI and other students will be in person in the lab.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY: *Côte d'Ivoire ranks 171 of 188 countries in the Human Development Index, a statistic measuring life expectancy, education, and health of the population (PNUD, 2015). It is also the largest producer of cocoa in the world. In some rural cocoa-producing communities, the poverty rate reaches 61.2% (Fonds monetaire international, 2009), with many households surviving on $1-2 a day (Côte d'Ivoire, 2015). It is estimated that 1.3 million school-aged children (out of a population of 3.7 million) are working in cocoa production, which can interfere with education even if children are enrolled in school. The government is committed to expanding educational access through universal basic education for all children ages 6-16. Yet the majority of children who attend school fail to achieve basic literacy and numeracy skills; enrollment and attendance rates remain low, and a large portion of children repeat grades and drop out before completing primary school.*

This project directly addresses the two primary reasons for this learning crisis: poverty and child labor (which leads to low school enrollment and attendance), and poor teaching quality. To address child labor, this project tests the effects of the most extensively implemented and evidence-based approach—cash transfers (CTs)—which will offer families small amounts of money monthly to ease economic hardship and potentially permit the family to hire an adult farm labor support, in turn increasing the chance that their child will attend school, rather than working on a family plantation. To address educational quality, this project develops and tests the impacts of teacher training and electronic-coaching for teachers in rural communities and explore the utility of using adaptive information and

communication technology (ICT)-based interactions for teacher professional development. Understanding if such a platform can affect behavior change and improve professional development will inform the use of similar programs across a range of settings and sectors beyond education.

This project is an ongoing randomized control trial that evaluates the impact of poverty reduction (through cash transfers) and quality education on child labor and learning outcomes of children in rural Côte d'Ivoire.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION: *Student's activities will include data analysis using R of collected behavioural data that includes assessments of children's cognitive abilities, academic outcomes, and labor activities, as well as family background information. Student's duties will also include literature reviews, abstract and conference submissions, and manuscript preparation. Student should be prepared to contribute significantly to a manuscript with the aim of a journal-ready manuscript that will be submitted at the end of the practicum.*

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED SKILLS/BACKGROUND (OPTIONAL): *REQUIRED:*

Student must have completed or be concurrently enrolled in JOI1288*. Student must be willing to learn data analysis using R over the course of the Research Practicum. The student will receive support from the faculty advisor, but must be prepared to work independently as well.*

PREFERRED:

Strong preference for student who has previous neuroimaging data collection experience and previous experience using MATLAB and R.

DAY AND TIMES OF LAB MEETINGS: *Lab meetings are held for 1 hour each week (time TBD). Student will also have a 1 hour meeting with the faculty advisor every other week between September and April.*