

ENABLING POLICIES TO IMPROVE LIVES

EDUCATION 

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By PROF REMA HANNA



It is a great honour to hold the Jeffrey Cheah Professorship of South-East Asia Studies Chair at Harvard Kennedy School, a position that I have held since 2015. My research focuses on improving the provision of public services in developing and emerging nations. The Evidence for Policy Design programme, for which I currently serve as faculty director, also aims to improve the lives of the very poor by designing, testing and enabling better policy in developing countries.

My work, like the work of many scholars of our Kennedy School faculty, is international in scope, which is why I feel deeply fortunate to be a part of the Sunway Group and the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation's (JCF) global network of educators. The JCF is guided by the principles of giving back to society and bringing high quality education to communities and the mission of Harvard Kennedy School - to improve public policy and leadership so people can live in safer, freer, more just and more prosperous societies - aligns closely with these principles.

Given the ongoing challenges that many communities face from the Covid-19 pandemic, I have



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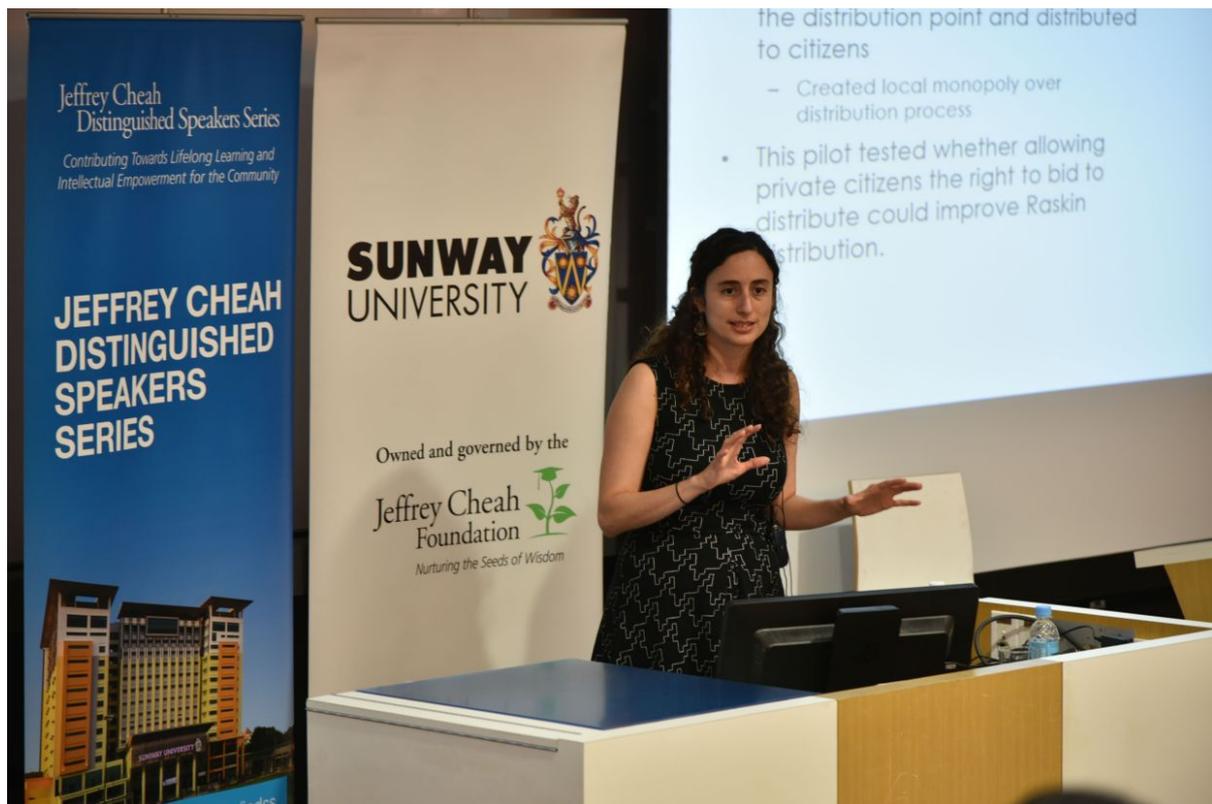


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that their citizens require.

My Evidence for Policy Design research team is finding ways to help by, for example, developing methods for collecting real-time data to measure the true economic impact of the crisis that governments can utilise when responding with informed policy decisions. In Indonesia, my team has developed and is currently disseminating rapid, repeated surveys to assess factors such as job loss, reduction in work hours, food insecurity and other economic indicators. I am also advising governments during this period of economic downturn and have offered guidance to the governments of Indonesia and Pakistan on social policy response.

Particularly in times such as these, scholars and researchers across globe must guide and support one another and the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation has enabled this collaboration and two-way flow of research through its generous support of my chair and of South-East Asia Studies more broadly.



About Prof Rema Hanna

A highly distinguished economist, Hanna is the Jeffrey Cheah Professor of South-East Asia Studies and Chair of the International Development Area at the Harvard Kennedy School.

Part of her research focuses on improving overall service delivery, understanding the impacts of corruption, bureaucratic absenteeism and discrimination against disadvantaged minority groups on delivery outcomes.

Her work has been published in leading economics journals such as the American Economic Review, the Quarterly Journal of Economics and the Journal of Political Economy, among others.

She is also faculty director of Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD) at Harvard's Center for



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She holds a PhD in Economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and a B.S from Cornell University with Honours and Distinction.

This article is part of a series in conjunction with the 10th anniversary of Jeffrey Cheah Foundation.

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