



Azim Premji University Colloquium Series
presents a lecture on

"The Social Observatory: Building Adaptive Capacity in Large-Scale Projects"

Speaker

Vijayendra Rao

Lead Economist, Development Economics Research Group, World Bank

Date: January 21, 2016 (Thursday)

Time: 2.00pm to 3.30 pm

Venue: 10th Floor Auditorium, Pixel A, Azim Premji University

Watch the live broadcast of the talk by clicking <http://lectures.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/>. It can be accessed from Android and iOS devices too.

About the Lecture

"Scaling-Up" is one of the biggest challenges in development. Interventions that work well with small populations routinely face challenges in expanding to a larger number of communities. This is particularly true of participatory and community-based interventions. Such projects hinge upon their adaptive capacity—the ability to be nimble, to learn by doing, and to make mid-course corrections in management and design—in order to be effective. The Social Observatory has been working for four years with livelihoods projects in Bihar and Tamil Nadu to improve their capacity to adapt. An inter-disciplinary team of economists, sociologists, behavioral scientists, and management information system specialists have been embedded within project offices in order to help improve implementation on the frontlines.

In this talk, Dr. Rao will describe this approach and highlight findings from impact evaluations and in-depth long-term qualitative research to show the "how and why" of when livelihoods interventions succeed and fail. He will also demonstrate a new method of Peer-Tracking that allows communities to generate census data with which they can monitor their own progress, make better allocation decisions, and provide a source of information to engage with the government to improve public services.

About the Speaker

Vijayendra Rao is a Lead Economist in the Development Economics Research Group of the World Bank. His research integrates economics with sociology and political science to understand how culture, politics and social structure interact with economic constraints to affect poverty. His last book, *Localizing Development* was described by the Nobel laureate Roger Myerson as “one of the most important books in development in recent years,” and as “a seminal contribution” by Robert Chambers. He is a member of the prestigious Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, and serves on the editorial boards of *World Development*, *Journal of Development Studies*, and the *World Bank Economic Review*. Website: <http://www.vijayendrarao.org>