

EPoD holds 4-day staff training

With 6 core faculty, 17 Cambridge-based staff, 15 Research Fellows, 15 staff at our India-based partner organization, 2 staff in Saudi Arabia, and close collaboration with a research center in Pakistan, it's a rare treat to find the larger EPoD team together in one place. EPoD's 2016 internal training achieved just that, bringing about 40 EPoD team members and collaborators together in Cambridge, MA from October 11-14, 2016. Visitors from overseas included representatives from the EPoD India team at the Institute for Financial Management and Research (IFMR) in Delhi, the Center for Economic Research in Pakistan (CERP) in Lahore, and EPoD's team in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.



The internal training aimed to provide EPoD staff, fellows, and partners with practical tools for success in their roles, foster a better understanding of EPoD's work, and strengthen the sense of community within EPoD and across its partner organizations. The four-day training featured presentations on EPoD's mission, history, research, and processes; substantive lectures from EPoD's faculty co-directors and affiliates; and technical sessions on programs like Python and LaTeX. Visitors from overseas offices provided overviews of EPoD's partner organizations, and participants completed group activities designed to foster effective collaboration and communication. Participants particularly enjoyed sessions utilizing a "hands-on" approach. As one EPoDer said,

"Instead of listening to a lecture/watching a PowerPoint on communication, we actually experienced it!"





Staff, fellows, faculty, and partners also enjoyed various social activities throughout the week, including a gathering at Professor Pande’s house, a reception for current and former [Research Fellows](#), and a night of bowling and pizza. On the final day of the training, teams of EPoDers from across the globe raced around Harvard Square in a photo scavenger hunt that allowed Cambridge and non-Cambridge staff alike to

learn more about the area’s history—and take some goofy photos. Besides being “lots of fun,” participants found that these bonding events led to “great discussions with people who [they] normally don’t interact with on a daily basis.”

The training was well received, with trainees particularly enthusiastic about faculty lectures and group activities. Participants enjoyed learning about a wide range of topics and gaining skills applicable to their daily work. Importantly, they also walked away with a sense of being part of the larger team, and a better understanding of EPoD as a whole. In the words of one Cambridge-based participant, “The range of topics and the fact that our overseas partners were with us for the training helped me get a better sense of the work EPoD does overall. That was incredibly valuable.” Following the success of this training, EPoD looks forward to holding similar programs in years to come!

