

Search...



THE ROXBURY LATIN SCHOOL

An Independent Boys' School



Economics As A Force for Good: Iqbal Dhaliwal Delivers Wyner Lecture

4/18/2019

What is poverty? With so many organizations aimed at combating poverty, how do you measure impact? These are the two critical questions posed to students on April 16 by this year's Wyner Lecturer, Mr. Iqbal Dhaliwal—executive director of the Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL). J-PAL is a global anti-poverty center, founded in 2003 and based in the economics department of MIT.

Mr. Dhaliwal began his Hall talk on Tuesday by stating what his presentation would and would *not* be about: "This economic approach is *not* about inflation, interest, production, or profit maximization. However, it *is* about supply, demand, cost, and human behavior. It is about doing something about poverty, and doing it now." Mr. Dhaliwal shared troubling statistics about the number of people living in poverty around the world, and what their daily struggles entail—that 50% of the world lives on less than \$2.50 a day, and that poverty is a vicious cycle that keeps people in a trap of deprivation when it comes to food, shelter, health care, and education. "So, what do we do? And better yet, how do we do it? How do we know what actually works? That's where the work of J-PAL comes in." Using economic strategies and research, randomized evaluation and counterfactuals, J-PAL can help to accurately assess—and then enhance—the efficacy of anti-poverty initiatives around the world.

To date, J-PAL has conducted nearly 1,000 evaluations in more than 80 countries—focused on agriculture, education, energy, gender, health, labor markets, governance. Programs evaluated by J-PAL have scaled to reach more than 400 million people. "It is a false choice that you must focus either on science or the humanities," Mr. Dhaliwal concluded. "You can do so much good when you choose a career that engages both the head and the heart." After his Hall presentation, Mr. Dhaliwal joined Erin Dromgoole's senior elective *Contemporary Global Issues* to continue the conversation.

A career economist, Mr. Dhaliwal earned his degree from the University of Delhi; his master's from the Delhi School of Economics; and a master of public affairs from Princeton. He serves as a board member of J-PAL and of two international NGOs—Noora Health and Evidence Action. His wife and fellow economist, Gita Gopinath, is chief economist of the International Monetary Fund. Their son, Rohil, is in Class III at Roxbury Latin.

The Wyner Lecture was established at Roxbury Latin in 1985 by Jerry Wyner, Class of 1943, and his sister, Elizabeth Wyner Mark, as a living memorial to their father, Rudolph Wyner, Class of 1912. Past speakers in the series include historian and author Doris Kearns Goodwin; “Schindler’s list” Holocaust survivor Rena Finder; Billy Shore, founder of Share Our Strength and the No Kid Hungry campaign; and Mark Edwards, founder of Opportunity Nation. This spring Mr. Dhaliwal continued the tradition of shedding light on important social issues through the generous benefaction of the Wyner Lecture.

BACK





101 Saint Theresa Avenue, West Roxbury, MA 02132 - 617.325.4920