

A Lab in Your Pocket: A Conversation with Komal Dadlani
April 11, 2019
5:00 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.
Meeting Halls A&B, IMF HQ1

Opening Remarks:

Jianhai Lin, Secretary, IMF

Moderator:

Sabina Bhatia, Deputy Secretary, IMF

Speaker:

Komal Dadlani, Co-Founder and CEO, Lab4U

For the 2019 Spring Meetings Inspirational Event, Komal Dadlani introduced her start-up company, Lab4U, which produces cell phone apps that allow students to perform science experiments without costly equipment. She provided a demonstration of her company's apps and discussed her experience as a child of immigrants in Chile, and a female scientist and entrepreneur in Latin America.

Key Points:

- **Meeting a need, having an impact.** According to the IDB, 88 percent of schools in Latin America lack science labs, creating an opportunity and imperative for low-cost solutions. Lab4Physics, the company's flagship app, currently has 120,000 users across a number of countries, including Chile, Mexico, and the United States. An IDB study found that students who conducted more than three experiments using Lab4U's apps measurably increased their performance in physics and their interest in science.
- **A higher bar.** With less than 2 percent of venture capital money going to companies founded by female entrepreneurs, women face an additional hurdle in proving themselves to investors—a fact borne out by *Dadlani's* personal experience with Lab4U. However, *Dadlani* was optimistic given the increase in grants and funds going to female founders.
- **Social responsibility.** *Dadlani* remarked that she did not see a division between entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, and that all corporations had a duty to act in a socially responsible manner.
- **Seek models of success.** In response to a question from the audience about the lack of representation of women of color in the sciences, *Dadlani* encouraged young girls to find models for inspiration and success, whether they be teachers, friends, or historical figures. The world is filled with successful women achieving their goals and living their dreams.

Quotes:

"You cannot learn how to ride a bicycle by reading a book. You have to live the experience...In science, you have to live that experience of scientific experimentation." **Komal Dadlani**

"Failing is just a step towards success, it's not the end." **Komal Dadlani**

Contributor: John Bishop