**Savings Monitors: Evidence from a Field Experiment**

**Data Collection Summary**

**Researcher:** Emily Breza

**Country:** India

**Summary:** This project explores how existing peer networks might help individuals in developing countries mitigate psychological barriers (such as time inconsistency) and better mobilize savings. Savings accounts will be opened for villagers from three districts in Karnataka, India in order to test the effectiveness of different peer and incentive structures. Villagers will decide on a savings goal and will either be in a control group or will be randomly assigned to a savings monitor. Each savings monitor will be informed of the saver's goal as well as his or her weekly progress towards attaining that goal. A subsample of savers will choose the identity of that savings monitor. In an additional treatment, savings monitors will receive a small monetary incentive upon successful attainment of the saver's goal. Using extensive covariate and network data previously collected from these villages, characteristics that are possessed by the most effective savings referees will be identified. Findings will be used to consider the design of a better savings product or independent, locally-run savings account overlay.

**Survey Time Frame and Rounds:**

- July 2011: Individuals make 6-month savings plans and are randomized into six different treatment groups
- August 2011 - January 2012: Experiment takes place

**Modules:**

- Treatment and control groups
- Six-month savings plan
- Savings Monitors

**Sample:** Villagers from three districts in Karnataka, a southwestern state in India.

**Survey size:** 1,250 individuals from 50 villages.

**Intervention:** In the first two treatment groups, individuals will save without a monitor. In the other four treatment groups, a peer will be selected to monitor the saver. Half of the monitors will be randomly chosen, and the other half will be selected by the saver. In each of the monitoring treatments, peers will be given weekly updates of the saver's progress. In a random subsample, some of these monitors will also receive incentives based on the attainment of the saver's goals.