JOHNS HOPKINS
GUPTA-KLINSKY
INDIA INSTITUTE

Annual Report 2025

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Message from the

GKII Leadership

“With the continued engagement of our GKII community and partners, 2025 was a year of meaningful progress and new beginnings. The launch of the ***India RISE Fellowship****, our signature program advancing women’s leadership in STEMM, is supporting 41 outstanding early-career researchers across India in its inaugural cohort. India RISE reflects our vision to create a lasting network of women innovators who will shape the future of science and public health, built on the mentorship and collaboration GKII has curated.With support from our advisory board and faculty steering committee, GKII’s flagship programs drive equitable, global impact.”*

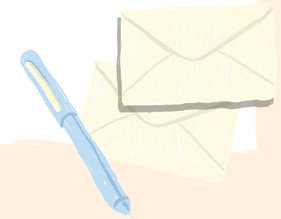
Dr. Amita Gupta

GKII Faculty Co-Chair

“Reflecting on 2025, it’s remarkable to see how far GKII has come in expanding its programs and partnerships across India and the United States. ***The Hopkins India Conference*** *in Washington, DC, our largest convening to date with hundreds of participants across multiple sectors, showcases GKII’s mission as a platform for advancing public health, innovation, and education through India–U.S. partnerships. These connections are already translating into new opportunities for impact and shared learning, and I’m excited to see what the next incarnation in 2026 brings.”*

Dr. Sara Bennett

GKII Faculty Co-Chair



Message from the

Executive Director's Desk

Dear Friends and Members of the GKII Community,

The Gupta-Klinsky India Institute stands at an important moment in its evolution, as our work increasingly moves from foundation-building to sustained impact. As GKII continues maturing as a platform for collaboration between JHU and India, this past year has been defined by a recognition that what we are building has long-term impact.

At its core, GKII exists to do more than support individual projects. Our mandate is to build durable structures that enable sustained collaboration across research, education, policy, and practice. This means investing in partnerships that endure, programs that scale responsibly, and governance that ensures rigor, accountability, and relevance in both countries.

Over the past year, GKII has continued to sharpen its strategic focus while strengthening its role within the broader JHU ecosystem. Across schools and divisions, faculty engagement with India is deepening, and GKII increasingly serves as a connective platform that aligns academic excellence with India's development and innovation priorities. This institutional positioning is essential as global collaboration becomes both more complex and more consequential.

GKII's programmatic portfolio reflects this long-term orientation. Flagship efforts such as the TB Free Schools Initiative, the India RISE Fellowship, and our expanding investments in data science, artificial intelligence, and digital health are designed not as standalone interventions, but as platforms for sustained collaboration.

GKII's programmatic portfolio reflects this long-term orientation. Flagship efforts such as the TB Free Schools Initiative, the India RISE Fellowship, and our expanding investments in data science, artificial intelligence, and digital health are designed not as standalone interventions, but as platforms for sustained collaboration. Each initiative brings together faculty leadership, Indian institutional partners, and advisory oversight to ensure that impact is matched by scientific rigor and policy relevance.

Equally important has been the continued strengthening of GKII's governance and advisory structures. Our External Advisory Board and Faculty Steering Committee play a critical role in shaping strategic priorities, ensuring alignment with Johns Hopkins' academic mission, and anchoring the Institute's work in strategic vision rather than short-term opportunity. In particular, the Board has helped prioritize long-term institutional partnerships, faculty-led research platforms, and programs that balance innovation with durability.

As Executive Director, my focus has been on positioning GKII for its next phase of growth: deepening faculty engagement across disciplines, expanding trusted partnerships in India, and ensuring that the Institute remains a trusted, mission-driven platform for global collaboration at a time of rapid change.

This annual report reflects a year of intentional progress and institution-building. The foundations are stronger, the partnerships deeper, and the path forward clearer. I am deeply grateful to our faculty, advisors, partners, and team across the United States and India who continue to believe in this work and build it with care.

I look forward to the next chapter of GKII's journey and to advancing, together, a model of Hopkins–India collaboration that is principled, impactful, and built to last.

With appreciation,

Kunal Pal
Executive Director
Gupta-Klinsky India Institute

Message from the

Desk of Director India

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I reflect on the past year at GKII, our focus extended beyond immediate outcomes to building strong, durable foundations for long-term impact. This was a year of deepening partnerships, thoughtfully designing programs, and institution-building, grounded in the belief that durable Hopkins-India collaboration in research, education, and policy requires trust, rigor, and shared purpose.

In 2025, our focus in India was clear: to design and launch programs that respond to real gaps in the scientific ecosystem, strengthen leadership pipelines, and advance science diplomacy at a moment of global realignment. Rather than pursuing scale for its own sake, we invested in building models that can endure, replicate, and grow.

In 2025, our focus in India was clear: to design and launch programs that respond to real gaps in the scientific ecosystem, strengthen leadership pipelines, and advance science diplomacy at a moment of global realignment. Rather than pursuing scale for its own sake, we invested in building models that can endure, replicate, and grow.

Four flagship efforts defined this year at GKII.

In this first year of the **TB Free Schools Initiative (TFSI),** we established a multidisciplinary Steering Committee, onboarded strong local partners, built district-level teams, and reached thousands of students through awareness and sensitization workshops. Beyond TB, this initiative demonstrates GKII's ability to integrate research, policy, philanthropy, and on-the-ground action into a scalable public health model.

The **India RISE Fellowship** was launched this year to support early-career women scientists at a critical point in their careers. Embedded within fellows' home institutions, the program integrates research capacity, leadership development, mentorship, and peer learning. Guided by a distinguished Steering Committee including leaders from IISc Bangalore, ICMR, and IITs, India RISE represents a long-term investment in inclusive excellence and institutional change.

Our growing portfolio in **Data Science and AI (DSAI) Breakthrough Research Grants** signaled a decisive move into frontier science. These catalytic grants support high-risk, high-reward research at the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI),health, climate, and technology.

We are excited to extend our breakthrough grant research collaboration with Koita Centre of Digital Health at Ashoka University and IIT Bombay by three more years.

This year also marked the launch of the inaugural **Hopkins India Conference**, convened in Washington, DC, which was exceptionally well-received and reflects our commitment to inclusive leadership. We intend for the conference to emerge as a coveted forum for U.S.-India science diplomacy, strengthening institutional ties and catalyzing meaningful research collaborations.

None of this work would be possible without the guidance of our **Faculty Steering Committee,** whose leadership ensures scientific rigor, ethical grounding, and alignment with national priorities in both countries. We are grateful for our **external advisory board** who inspire us and encourage us to think of bold ideas that can make impact at scale. Equally, none of this would exist without our **extraordinary team across India and the United States.** I am deeply grateful to my colleagues whose dedication, intellectual generosity, and persistence across time zones turned vision into reality.

As we look ahead, we do so with humility and optimism. The opportunity to shape the future of Hopkins-India collaboration through research that serves society has never been more urgent.

Thank you to our partners, supporters, faculty, and team for believing in this work and building it with us.

With gratitude,

Neetisha Besra
Director India, Gupta-Klinsky India Institute

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Who We Are

New Advisory Board Member

Ajit Mohan
Chief Business Officer,
Snap Inc.

New Interns

Himalaya Kadari
Program Intern,
India RISE Fellowship

Anushka Singh
Communications Intern,
India RISE Fellowship

GKII Advisory Board

- **Ashok Agarwal:** BSPH'84, Trustee and Founder, Indian Institute of Health Management Research; Trustee of Johns Hopkins India Foundation
- **Gitanjli Arora:** JHU'98 BSPH'99, Asst. Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California
- **Ritu Chhabria:** Co-Founder and Managing Trustee, Mukul Madhav Foundation
- **Raj Gupta and Kamla Gupta**: Co-Chair, GKII Advisory Board
- **Steven Klinsky:** Founder and Managing Director, New Mountain Capital
- **Sunil Kumar:** President, Tufts University
- **Ellen MacKenzie:** Bloomberg Distinguished Professor and Former Dean, Bloomberg School of Public Health (served on the Advisory Board during 2024–25)
- **Roopa Makhija:** President and Co-founder, GEP
- **Amit Mehta:** Managing Member of Crestwood Capital Management
- **Ajit Mohan:** Chief Business Officer, Snap Inc.
- **Neera Nundy:** Co-Founder and Partner, Dasra
- **Deepak Raj:** Chairman, Pratham USA and Indian Philanthropy Alliance
- **Maureen Sherry:** Novelist and Screenwriter
- **Alexander Triantis:** Co-Chair, GKII Advisory Board; Dean, Carey Business School
- **Sunil Wadhwani:** Founder, Wadhwani Institute for Sustainable Healthcare (WISH) and the Wadhwani Institute for Artificial Intelligence (WIAI)

GKII Faculty Steering Committee

- **Smisha Agarwal,** PhD, MPH, MBA; Associate Professor, International Health, Bloomberg School of Public Health
- **Rina Agarwala,** PhD; Professor & Director of Undergraduate Studies, Krieger School of Arts and Sciences
- **Ritu Agarwal,** PhD; Wm. Polk Carey Distinguished Professor of Information Systems and Health, Carey Business School
- **Sara Bennett,** PhD, MPhil; Professor & Vice Chair, Department of International Health, Bloomberg School of Public Health; GKII Faculty Co-Chair
- **Robert Bollinger,** MD, MPH; Raj & Kamla Gupta Professor of Infectious Diseases; Professor of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing, JHU School of Medicine
- **Rama Chellappa,** PhD; Bloomberg Distinguished Professor, Whiting School of Engineering
- **Nilanjan Chatterjee,** PhD; Bloomberg Distinguished Professor, Bloomberg School of Public Health
- **Ellen Chow,** MA; Associate Vice Provost for University Enrollment Management, Johns Hopkins University
- **Amita Gupta,** MD, MHS; Dr. Florence Sabin Professor in Infectious Diseases, Professor of Medicine and Public Health; Director, Division of Infectious Diseases; JHU School of Medicine; GKII Co-Founder & Faculty Co-Chair
- **Pravin Krishna,** PhD; Chung Ju Yung Distinguished Professor of International Economics and Business, SAIS
- **Somesh Kumar,** MBBS, MScPH, PhD; Senior Director, Jhpiego Global Health
- **Uttara Bharath Kumar,** MHS; Associate Faculty, Bloomberg School of Public Health
- **Anju Malhotra,** PhD; Distinguished Professor of the Practice, Bloomberg School of Public Health
- **Vidya Mave,** MD, MPH & TM; Associate Professor, JHU School of Medicine; Director, Indo-JHU Research Program, Pune, India
- **Shruti Mehta,** PhD; Dr. Charles Armstrong Chair & Bloomberg Centennial Professor in Epidemiology, Bloomberg School of Public Health
- **Chirag Parikh,** MBBS, PhD; Ronald Peterson Professor of Medicine, JHU School of Medicine; Professor, Bloomberg School of Public Health; Director, Division of Nephrology; Director, Precision Medicine Center of Excellence for Kidney Diseases
- **Kunal Parikh,** PhD; Assistant Professor, JHU School of Medicine
- **Nagpurnanand Prabhala,** PhD; Francis J. Carey, Jr. Endowed Professor in Business & Professor of Finance, Carey Business School
- **Nancy Reynolds,** PhD; Professor & Associate Dean, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing
- **Sridevi Sarma,** PhD; Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering & Vice Dean for Graduate Education, Whiting School of Engineering
- **Anita Shet,** MD, PhD; Director of Child Health, International Vaccine Access Center, Bloomberg School of Public Health
- **Nakul Singh Shekhawat,** MD, MPH; Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology, JHU School of Medicine
- **Sunil Solomon,** MBBS, PhD, MPH; Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology; Vice Chair for Research, JHU School of Medicine
- **Joshua White,** PhD; C.V. Starr Distinguished Professor of Practice; Director, U.S.-ASEAN and U.S.-Pacific Institutes for Rising Leaders, School of Advanced International Studies

GKII Core Team

- **Neetisha Besra:** Director India
- **Colter Billings:** Communications Specialist
- **Molly Bowen:** Senior Communications Manager
- **Arjun Chhetri:** Administrative Manager
- **Jon Goldstein:** Senior Associate Director of Development, International Programs
- **Srishti Kapil:** Communications Consultant
- **Siddharth Mohite:** Program Coordinator
- **Kunal Pal:** Executive Director
- **Ira Pundeer:** Senior Communications Expert
- **Beth Romanski:** Program Manager
- **Meghashish Sharma:** Senior Program Manager
- **Hunter Tereyla:** Budget Analyst
- **Leslei Tian:** Senior Financial Manager
- **April Wilson:** Administrative Coordinator

GKII Alumni Ambassadors

Indu Bhushan, PhD, MHS, CFA
Ex-IAS Officer ('83 batch) and Former CEO Ayushman Bharat Government of India

Anand Bang, MPH, MBBS
Health Advisor, Tata Trust & Honorary Health Advisor to Chief Minister, Maharashtra

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What We Do

GKII was established in 2020 to foster collaborations among JHU and Indian institutions across government, academia, civil society, and the private sector. Our mission is to harness collective expertise and resources that advance human knowledge and cultivate innovative solutions that benefit the global community. GKII's work is guided by three strategic priorities:

01

Lowering barriers to collaboration in research, education, training, and policy engagement.

02

Amplifying existing JHU-India partnerships through targeted initiatives that stimulate innovation and knowledge sharing.

03

Shaping the future through interdisciplinary scholarship and investment in emerging and underexplored areas withhigh impact potential.

We foster community among stakeholders by raising awareness about activities and developments. We convene events to maximize outcomes and promote knowledge exchange, collaboration, and connections among individuals and groups at JHU who are interested in India. These efforts focus on initiatives that benefit JHU, Indian partners, and the global community. Guided by a distinguished Advisory Board and a Faculty Steering Committee representing JHU schools, the core team is based in Baltimore at JHU and in New Delhi, India.

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2025 Program & Event Highlights

Student Engagement – Projects, Interns and Travel Awards

- **08** Students – Girish & Himangi Rishi Student Travel Grant
- **06** Students – CBID Summer Immersion Program and Indurate Project
- **03** GKII Interns and RAs
- Granted in travel and project awards

Research Grants and Fellowships

- **41** India RISE Fellows
- **05** Active Breakthrough Research Grants
- **02** Sunil Kumar and Sumati Murali Research Award Grantees
- **01** GKII-CBID TFSI Fellow
- **$320,000+** – Granted for collaborative faculty research
- **$57,000+** – Granted for student research fellowships

Community Engagement

300+ Students; **1800+** Alumni; **300+** JHU faculty; **100+** Collaborators / Partners; **40+** Education Liaison Service members; **2500+** students and parents sensitized on Pediatric Tuberculosis

Social media and Newsletter*

5000+ LinkedIn Followers; **4,600+** Newsletter Subscribers; **~50%** Open rate

Events and Convenings

80+ Speakers; **30+** Sessions; **100+** Participating Organizations; **1000+** Sign-Ups

20+ Seminars & Workshops Organized

- **TB Awareness Workshops (Pune & Chennai)**
- **TB Free Schools Initiative Workshop (Chennai, with YRG MERF)**
- **“Decoding Health Behavior” Workshop (NIHFW, with CCP & CCC–I**
- **NIHFW–GKII Capacity Building Workshops (with BSPH)**
- **TB-DASH Convening in Hyderabad**
- **Higher Education Seminar by Dr. S. Somanath**

*Cumulative

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Policy & Practice

Inaugural Hopkins India Conference

Forum

Organizers at the Hopkins India Conference 2025

In May 2025, GKII hosted the inaugural Hopkins India Conference in Washington, DC, centered on the theme "Innovations & Partnerships for Global Progress." Participants and speakers representing academia, industry, government, and civil society convened to explore ways to strengthen India–U.S. collaboration. The two-day program featured keynote addresses and panel discussions. Distinguished speakers **including Amb Vinay Mohan Kwatra, Former Union Minister Smriti Irani, Shri Yogendra Yadav, and Dr. V. Anantha Nageswaran** represented a wide spectrum of fields and offered a rich diversity of perspectives.

The theme reflects the evolving character of India–U.S. relations, grounded in mutual democratic values and shaped by a growing commitment to shared prosperity and global leadership. The theme also captures a shift in how global partnerships are conceived, moving from aid-based models toward relationships anchored in reciprocity and co-creation. India brings scale, ingenuity, and local knowledge, while the U.S. brings cutting-edge research, capital, and policy infrastructure. Together, the partnership serves as a model for equitable collaboration that respects sovereignty while investing in collective progress, an approach that defined the agenda and spirit of the inaugural Hopkins India Conference.

Convened in the Heart of D.C.

May 9-10, 2025, Bloomberg Center, Washington, DC

Partners:

INDIASPORA

AIF AMERICAN INDIA FOUNDATION

Funded through the generosity of:

Johns Hopkins Nexus Awards
Girish & Himangi Rishi Fund

Media Partners:

The South Asian Times, Diya TV, The American Bazaar, India Abroad South Asian Herald

We are grateful to the many volunteers whose support made the event possible

Hopkins India Conference: By The Numbers

80+ Speakers
Including policymakers, academic experts, industry CEOs and community leaders

24% C-suite Executives
Nearly a quarter of conference attendees were C-suite executives

600+ Participants
Representing academia, corporate sector, NGOs and UN, government, finance, media and the Indian diaspora

100+ Institutions
Attendees and speakers represented organizations from the U.S., India, and beyond, showcasing a truly global gathering

>50% Women Speakers
Women composed more than 50% of the speakers, a result of deliberate practice to ensure women's leadership at the forefront

Speakers

- **Noora-Lisa Aberman**, Research Lead, Gender Unit, The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
- **Soumyadipta Acharya**, Graduate Program Director, Centre for Bioengineering Innovation and Design (CBID), Johns Hopkins University
- **Damini Agarwal**, Chief Technology Officer, Infinite Biomedical Technologies, LLC
- **Smisha Agarwal**, Director, Center for Global Digital Health Innovation, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- **Ritu Agarwal**, Wm. Polk Carey Distinguished Professor, Carey Business School, Johns Hopkins University
- **Rina Agarwala**, Professor of Sociology, Krieger School of Arts and Sciences, Johns Hopkins University
- **Lawrence Appel**, David Molina Professor of Medicine; Director, Welch Center for Prevention, Epidemiology and Clinical Research, Johns Hopkins University
- **Yan Bai**, Economist and Data Scientist, Development Data Group, The World Bank Group
- **Sara Bennett**, Professor and Vice Chair, International Health Department, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Faculty Co-Chair, Gupta-Klinsky India Institute at JHU
- **Neetisha Besra**, India Director, Gupta-Klinsky India Institute at JHU
- **Chris Beyrer**, Professor of Medicine and Director, Duke Global Health Institute, Duke University
- **Shereen Bhan,** Leadership Development Director, WomenLift Health
- **Rajika Bhandari**, International higher education expert and Co-Founder: South Asia-IEN (South Asia International Education Network)
- **Ashwin Bharath**, CEO, Galent; Co-Founder and CEO, Revature
- **Uttara Bharath Kumar**, Senior Program Officer, Center for Communication Programs CCP
- **Nisha Biswal**, Partner, The Asia Group
- **Richard Chaisson**, Professor of Medicine, Epidemiology and International Health, Johns Hopkins University
- **Nilanjan Chatterjee,** Professor of Biostatistics and Genetic Epidemiology, Johns Hopkins University
- **Rama Chellappa**, Bloomberg Distinguished Professor and Interim Co-director of the Data Science and AI Institute
- **Lisa Curtis**, Senior Fellow and Director, Indo-Pacific Security Program, Center for a New American Security
- **Moupali Das**, Vice President, Clinical Development, HIV Prevention and Virology Pediatrics, Gilead Sciences
- **Sadanand Dhume**, Senior Fellow, Senior Enterprise Institute
- **Alka Dwivedi**, ostdoctoral Research Fellow, National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health
- **Cathy Feingold**, International Director, AFL-CIO; Deputy President, International Trade Union Confederation
- **Monica Gandhi**, Professor of Medicine and Associate Division Chief, Division of HIV, Infectious Diseases, and Global Medicine, UCSF
- **Carolin Elizabeth George**, Head, Community Health Palliative Care & Research Division; Member Secretary, IRB BBH; Chair, IBSC BBH Bangalore Baptist Hospital
- **Veena George**, Minister for Health and Women and Child Development, Kerala
- **Marelize Gorgens**, Lead, Digital and AI for Human Capital, The World Bank Group
- **Gigi Gronvall**, Professor, Department of Environmental Health and Engineering, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- **Sumona Guha**, National Security Expert and Former Senior Director for South Asia, National Security Council
- **Raj Gupta**, Co-Chair, Gupta-Klinksy India Institute at Johns Hopkins University
- **Dr. Florence Sabin,** Professor of Infectious Diseases; Director, Division of Infectious Diseases, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine; Founder and Faculty Co-Chair, Gupta-Klinsky India Institute
- **Katherine Hadda**, Visiting Fellow, Chair on India and Emerging Asia Economics Center for Strategic & International Studies
- **Smriti Irani**, Former Minister of Education and Women & Child Development
- **Dhruva Jaishankar**, Executive Director, ORF America
- **Sanjeev Joshipura**, Executive Director, Indiaspora
- **Kalpana Kanthan**, Chief Development Officer, American India Foundation
- **Anand Kapai**, VP, Global Marketing, Siemens Healthineers
- **Pravin Krishna**, Chung Ju Yung Distinguished Professor of International Economics and Business, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University
- **Sunil Kumar**, President, Tufts University
- **Somesh Kumar**, Senior Director, New Initiatives and Innovations, JHPIEGO
- **Neha Kumar**, Senior Fellow, Nutrition, Diets, and Health Unit, International Food Policy Research Institute
- **Vinay Mohan Kwatra**, Ambassador of India to the United States of America
- **Uma Mahadevan**, Additional Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner, Government of Karnataka
- **Tanvi Madan**, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy Program, Center for Asia Policy Studies, Brookings Institution Institution
- **Leah Mason**, Deputy Director, Research, Education, and Learning; Institute of International Education (IIE)
- **Shruti Mehta**, Dr. Charles Armstrong Chair and Bloomberg Centennial Professor in Epidemiology, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- **Aishwarya Nagar**, Senior Analyst, Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security
- **V. Anantha Nageswaran**, Chief Economic Advisor of India, Government of India
- **Dinesh Nair,** Senior Health Specialist, Health, Nutrition, Population, Global Practice, The World Bank Group
- **Reema Nanavaty**, Director, Self-Employed Women's Association of India (SEWA)
- **Kunal Parikh**, Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
- **Chirag Parikh**, Professor of Medicine; Director, Division of Nephrology, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine
- **Avani Prabhakar**, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine
- **M. R. Rajagopal**, Chairman Emeritus, Pallium India; Adjunct Professor of Global Oncology, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada
- **Krishna Rao**, Associate Professor, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- **Vijayendra Rao**, Lead Economist, Development Research Group, The World Bank Group
- **Prabir Roy-Chaudhury**, Professor of Medicine; Co-Director, UNC Kidney Center, University of North Carolina
- **Hanan Saab**, Associate Vice President for Government Relations & Public Policy, Association of American Universities
- **Sridevi Sarma**, Vice Dean, Johns Hopkins Whiting School of Engineering

- **Bhavna Seth**, Assistant Professor of Medicine; Director of Global Health, Investigator, Dorothy P. and Richard P. Simmons Center for Interstitial Lung Disease; Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, Critical Care, and Sleep Medicine, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
- **Surendranath S. Shastri,** Professor, Department of Health Disparities Research, MD Anderson Cancer Center, University of Texas
- **Anita Shet**, Research Professor, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- **Sanjay Shete**, Betty B. Marcus Chair in Cancer Prevention, Professor of Biostatistics and Epidemiology, Deputy Division Head, Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences, University of Texas
- **Jordan Shuff,** Founder and Executive Director, Visilant
- **Arun K. Singh**, Senior Counsellor, The Cohen Group
- **Kanta Singh**, Deputy Representative, UN Women India
- **Sunil Solomon**, Vice Chair, Department of Medicine; Co-Director, Center for Infectious Diseases India, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine
- **Shuchita Sonalika**, Director and Head, North America, Confederation of India Industry
- **Soumya Swaminathan**, Chief Scientist, WHO
- **Tara Thiagarajan**, Founder and Chief Scientist, Sapien Labs
- **Sweety Thomas**, Chief of Staff, Ajit Isaac Foundation
- **James Thurlow**, Director, Foresight and Policy Modeling, International Food Policy Research Institute
- **Alexander Triantis**, Dean, Carey Business School, Johns Hopkins University
- **Kriti Upadhyaya**, Founder, IndUS Tech Council, C2C Advanced Systems
- **Rajani Ved,** Director of Health, Gates Foundation India
- **Shibu Vijayan**, Chief Medical Officer, Qure.ai
- **Manuela Villar Uribe**, Senior Health Specialist, Health, Nutrition, and Population Global Practice, The World Bank Group
- **Kala Visvanathan**, Professor in Epidemiology and Oncology, Johns Hopkins University
- **Joshua White**, Professor of the Practice, International Affairs, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies
- **Yogendra Yadav**, President, Swaraj India
- **Youseph Yazdi**, Executive Director, Center for Bioengineering Innovation and Design; Program Director, Wallace H. Coulter Translational Research Partnership Program, Johns Hopkins University

Conference Highlights

Ambassador Vinay Mohan Kwatra

India's envoy to the U.S., whose opening keynote depicted the bilateral partnership as one of the 21st century's most consequential alliances, rooted in shared values and strengthened by enduring "habits of cooperation".

Former Union Minister, who emphasized in her keynote that women's empowerment is indispensable for India's progress, citing successful schemes that have uplifted women and urging, "If you see an Indian woman, trust her, fund her, and follow her leadership."

Smriti Irani

V. Anantha Nageswaran

India's Chief Economic Advisor, who outlined the reforms and global partnerships required for India to become a $30 trillion economy, while maintaining that inclusive growth through education and skilling is crucial for sustainability.

Public intellectual who challenged conventional development paradigms, advocating a shift toward a locally defined, equitable model of growth – a "deep politics" of development rooted in grassroots wisdom and ecological sustainability.

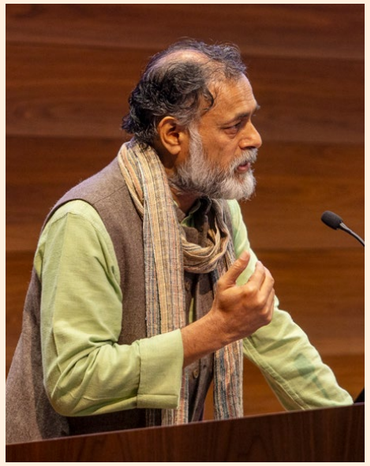
Yogendra Yadav












Voices from the Conference

"In my work connecting Indians and the Indian diaspora, being in the same room is how we break barriers, find common ground, and build lasting collaborations. It's not just about new connections but also rekindling older ones and seeing young people excited about India's future. That's where our real opportunity lies."

*- **Swathi Nuli**, MPH, Ashoka Diaspora Networks*

"What's exciting about this conference is how it brings together international relations and public health, two areas of strength for Johns Hopkins, and creates a unique space for interdisciplinary dialogue."

*- **Dhruva Jaishankar**, Executive Director ORF America*

"Unlike similar conferences, the Hopkins event has a geographic edge. Being in the nation's capital, it taps directly into Washington's rich ecosystem of policymakers, think tanks, embassies, and global institutions, giving the event unique access to decision-makers and influencers."

*- **Abhik Sengupta**, Program Associate North America, Confederation of Indian Industry*

"As an Indian in the United States, I'm thoroughly enjoying the conference, especially in these tumultuous geopolitical and economic times. It's been invaluable to hear directly from experts and gain insight into areas I'm not familiar with. I'm grateful to Johns Hopkins University for creating this opportunity to broaden our horizons."

*- **Asif Ismail,** CEO and Publisher, The American Bazaar*

Read the full Conference Report

IN THE NEWS

Strengthening U.S.-India ties amid rising world tensions
ET Health, May 30, 2025
By Johns Hopkins University
Rea More: http://bit.ly/4owXzVE

C-SPAN: Johns Hopkins University Hosts India Conference
By CSPAN
Watch here: https://bit.ly/4elmerq

Watch Youtube Playlist
HIC 2025
Watch here: https://bit.ly/4evQdx1

WATCH NOW

6

2025 Priorities & Activities

1. TB-Free Schools Initiative

Research | Policy | Practice

Tuberculosis (TB) remains one of the most persistent public health threats facing children and adolescents in India. Despite accounting for nearly one-quarter of the global pediatric TB burden, many children in India are never diagnosed, and only a fraction of those at risk receive preventive treatment. ngaging children in care earlier, before illness progresses, requires solutions that reach them where they already are: in schools.

TFSI Steering Committee Appointed

- Dr. Urvashi Singh, Former Deputy Director General, Central TB Division (Chair)
- Dr. Manoj Murhekar, Director, ICMR - National Institute of Epidemiology (ICMR NIE) (Co-Chair)
- Blessina Kumar, CEO of the Global Coalition of TB Advocates (GCTA)

The TB-Free Schools Initiative (TFSI) does just that by bringing TB prevention, early detection, and care directly into schools. Led by Johns Hopkins University through the School of Medicine, the Bloomberg School of Public Health, and the Gupta-Klinsky India Institute, and implemented in India by YRG MERF, TFSI is a three-year effort to screen students aged 6–18 years in schools located in districts with a high TB burden. A partnership-driven effort, the initiative works closely with India's Central TB Division, state and district TB programs, education departments, philanthropic partners, and private-sector collaborators to ensure alignment with national TB elimination priorities and effective integration within school systems.

The TB Free Schools initiative integrates structured TB screening directly into schools, helping detect the disease early and protect children before illness disrupts their education. This reduces transmission, and creates a model aligned for scale through state and national public health systems.

Create Awareness

We start by educating teachers, parents, and students about TB symptoms, risks, and the importance of early action so no child's illness is ignored or misunderstood.

Screen Early

We conduct annual school-based screening using symptom checks, safe digital chest X-rays, and TB tests to identify children before symptoms become severe or those who are at risk of developing disease.

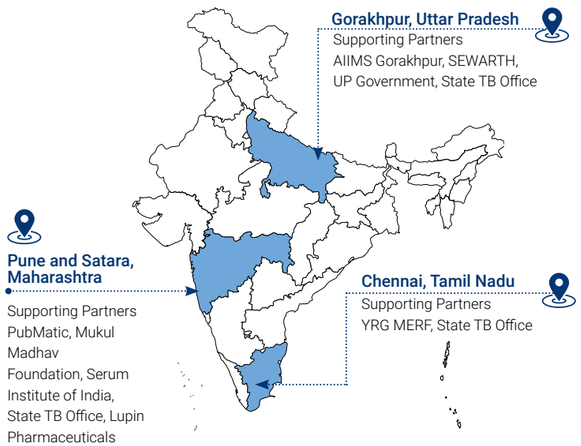
Link to Treatment

Any child diagnosed with TB is immediately linked to free government treatment with structured follow-up support to ensure they complete the full course and recover completely.

Prevent Future TB

Children with latent TB receive short, safe preventive treatment, stopping the disease before it ever starts and protecting them through adolescence and adulthood.

TFSI builds on the success of the India-JHU team led by **Dr. Kunchok Dorjee**, working on an intervention project which included TB education, screening, treatment and preventive therapy in mobile service delivery models using cutting-edge technology such as artificial X-ray enabled reading, molecular diagnostics, and short-course preventive treatment for the Tibetan population in Himachal Pradesh. TFSI will deploy school-based TB screening intervention across four sites in three states (Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh) in partnership with Indian national and state governments, NGOs, and local communities.



**The above MAP depicts only pictorial representation of India and the States of India and does not purport to be the political map of India or its states*

To learn more about this project, donate or explore collaboration opportunities, please reach out to jhii@jh.edu

2025 Milestones

Representatives from project sites gather to discusss protocol and MOP training in Chennai

The Gupta-Klinsky India Institute has initiated the preparatory activities towards the launch of the initiative in January 2025. The institute and our partners are committed to driving meaningful changes and improving the health outcomes for children across the country. Our recent milestones are outlined subsequently.

Pre-Launch Workshop Held in Chennai

In July 2025, project teams came together in Chennai for a two-day preparatory workshop to align efforts and finalize operational plans for the upcoming TB Free Schools Initiative (TFSI). Led by GKII at Johns Hopkins University in collaboration with implementing partner YRG MERF, the initiative focuses on identifying, treating, and preventing tuberculosis among school-going children.

Project team members from YRG MERF, Johns Hopkins, and representatives from the Pune, Satara, Chennai, and Gorakhpur sites meet to discuss TFSI implementation procedures

Training for TFSI Human Resources for Health (HRH)

Outreach, clinical, data, and research teams participate in structured training sessions on school sensitization, participant recruitment and consent, clinical screening, data management, research ethics, and safe use of diagnostic tools.

CyTB Clinical Staff Training in Chennai

Radiology Training for TFSI Radiologists

IN THE NEWS

Fighting active and latent TB in schools: A keystone in India's TB elimination strategy?

ET Health, Jan 6, 2025

Amita Gupta, M.D., M.H.S., Dr. Florence Sabin Professor of Infectious Diseases, Director, Division of Infectious Diseases, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

Dr. Padmapriyadarshini Chandrasekaran, Director (Former) ICMR-National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis. Read more: https://bit.ly/4uG3cCj

School-level Sensitization activities

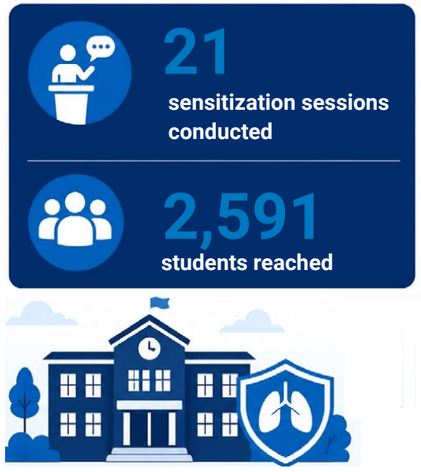
Awareness session on TB at Kidwai Nagar Urdu school, Bhavanipeth

Awareness session on TB at Radhakrinan school, Bopodi, Pune

Awareness session on TB at Corporation Middle School, Madavaram High Road, Perambur

Awareness session on TB at Corporation High School, Ammaiammal Street Pulianthope

TB-Free Schools Initiative Progress



In Pune

14 sensitization programs across multiple urban locations reached **1,930** students in both primary and secondary schools

In Chennai,

7 sensitization sessions in corporation-run high and middle schools across Purasaiwalkkam, Pulianthope, and Perambur, reaching **661** students.

We thank our donors for their support to the program:

- Ujala Foundation
- Steven Klinsky and Maureen Sherry
- Makhija Foundation
- Wyncote Foundation
- Tanya Arora
- Deepak Raj
- Pubmatic
- Mukul Madhav Foundation
- Lupin Pharmaceuticals
- Serum Institute of India

CBID Project: Transforming TB Skill Test Reading Through Design and AI

CBID students at the Government Senior Secondary School Bandhwari in Haryana, where they discussed TB prevention, symptoms and treatment.

One of the biggest barriers to scaling TB infection screening is not the test itself, but how it is read. Conventional TB skin test readings depend on visual inspection and manual measurement by trained clinicians 48–72 hours after administration. This process is subjective, time-intensive, and requires repeat visits, leading to loss to follow-up and limiting large-scale screening among children and adolescents. GKII partnered with the Center for Bioengineering Innovation and Design (CBID) at Johns Hopkins University to develop a practical, low-cost solution for use in school and community settings.

Over two years, CBID faculty and students conducted field immersion across Pune, Chennai, Mumbai, and Delhi in collaboration with TFSI partners. The team observed screening workflows, interviewed frontline workers, and tested early prototypes in real-world environments, leading to the co-creation of an AI-enabled system called “InduRate” that combines a tactile hardware tool to distinguish true skin induration from surrounding tissue with software that analyzes images to produce standardized, objective measurements. The solution was designed to be affordable, intuitive, and scalable, with a per-student cost below that of the TB skin test itself.

Next, the innovation will be integrated into TFSI screening activities for feasibility and validation studies, subject to regulatory approvals. Early modeling suggests it could increase screening capacity, reduce loss to follow-up, and optimize limited clinical resources.

As implementation expands in 2026, the initiative will focus on actionable evidence for policymakers and demonstrate how coordinated, school-based approaches can play a critical role in advancing India’s TB elimination goals.

2. India RISE Fellowship

Policy | Education | Research

India has made progress in STEMM education, with women now accounting for 43% of enrollments (DST 2024). However, this does not translate to the workforce. Women represent just 27% of the STEMM sector and under 19% of scientists, which is well below the global average of 31% (UNESCO 2024, WEF 2023). The gap is wider in academia: only 16.7% of STEMM faculty are women, with just 11.2% at IITs and 27% at universities. Fewer than 10% advance to leadership roles in academia and industry. Closing this "leaky pipeline" is not just a social imperative but a strategic one. As India moves toward its Viksit Bharat 2047 vision, unlocking the potential of women in STEMM is vital to driving innovation and sustained growth.

India RISE Fellowship (Research & Innovation STEMM Empowerment) is a 12-month program designed to empower the next generation of 40+ women leaders in science. Through advanced research training, dedicated mentorship, and leadership development, the fellowship helps participants build the skills, networks, and confidence to thrive in their scientific careers.

The Ujala Foundation donated $500,000 to pilot the first edition of India RISE Fellowship Program.

Raj and Kamla Gupta, GKII Advisory Board Co-Chairs

The program is anchored under the U.S.-India Alliance for Women's Economic Empowerment and delivered in close collaboration with leading Indian partners including the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Government of India (GoI).

Research Skills
Enhance research skills through specialized education and training programs

Leadership
Develop leadership competencies to help overcome barriers to success in research

Mentorship
Provide personalized group and peer mentorship for career growth

Access
Offer access to networks & resources for collaborations and exposure

Advocacy
Create space to build awareness and advocate for supportive workplaces

IN THE NEWS

An equitable future for women in science, in India

The Hindu, Mar 8, 2025

Anita Shet, India RISE Program Director, Professor, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health,

Kamini Walia, India RISE Steering Committee Co-Chair, Senior Scientist, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Read more: https://bit.ly/4a4zKOT

"Lasting change arises not from individual successes, but from pathways where women scientists lead and cultivate the next generation."

Dr. Anita Shet, India RISE Steering Committee Co-Chair and Professor, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

40 Fellows

12 Months

INDIA RISE FELLOWSHIP COMPONENTS

- **8 modules of online core curriculum** for learner-centered, outcomes-driven competency-based education
- **USD 50,000 research grant** challenge for each cohort
- **4 hands-on training workshops** for experiential learning and real-world application
- **500+ curated resources** including grants, fellowships, conferences and networking opportunities
- **8 group mentorship sessions, 2 one-on-one** sessions for individualized career guidance
- **2 in-person networking events** with leadership and career-development sessions
- **Supplementary masterclasses** & expert trainings for specialized research & leadership skills

FELLOWSHIP BENEFITS

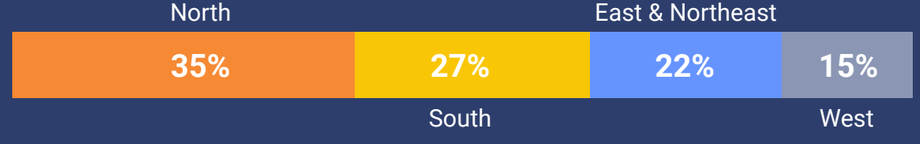
- **JHU Fellowship Certificate**
- **Travel Funding Support**
- **Access to USD 50k Grant Challenge**
- **Premium LinkedIn Courses**
- **Access to JHU's Online Learning Content**
- **Membership to India RISE Network**

About the Fellows: Scientific excellence, regional representation, disciplinary diversity, inclusion

Cohort spans **16 states** and **Union Territories**

30% are first-generation college graduates

Geographic distribution (mirrors national population patterns):



First cohort of India RISE Fellows 2025-26, at IISc Bangalore during the program launch ceremony

India RISE seeks not only to support individual careers, but also to contribute to a more inclusive research and innovation ecosystem in India. It is built on a collaborative, multi-sector model that unites academia, government, philanthropy, and industry to advance women's leadership in STEMM. To promote this agenda, GKII convened stakeholders during Hopkins India Conference in Washington, DC in May 2025.

Women in STEMM panel led by Dr. Anita Shet, Chair of India RISE program at Hopkins India Conference 2025

Partnerships

Kunal Pal, Executive Director of GKII with Vy Tran, President of Asia Pacific & Japan and Valerie Sinden, Head of Government Affairs Asia Pacific & Japan, at Siemens Healthineers, at the 80th UNGA in New York to formalize our partnership on the India RISE Fellowship

Strategic Partners

Anchor Institution: GKII, Johns Hopkins University, U.S.–India Alliance for Women's Economic Empowerment

Primary Partners: Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Ujala Foundation

Fellow Support and Enrichment: IIHMR Foundation and GEP Worldwide

Industry Collaboration: Siemens Healthineers, Becton Dickinson, LinkedIn and Marriott

India RISE Program Team

1. **Neetisha Besra**, Program Director
2. **Aastha Kant**, Lead, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning
3. **Siddharth Mohite**, Program Coordinator
4. **Kunal Pal**, Program Advisor
5. **Beth Romanski**, Curriculum Director
6. **Anita Shet**, Co-Chair, India RISE
7. **Srishti Kapil**, Communications Consultant

India RISE Steering Committee and Program Mentors

Anita Shet
Steering Committee Co-Chair
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Kamini Walia
Steering Committee Co-Chair
Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Government of India

Prabhdeep Kaur
Steering Committee Co-Chair
Indian Institute of Science (Bengaluru)

Anita Vernekar Shankar
Associate Scientist
Johns Hopkins University

Anju Malhotra
Distinguished Professor of the Practice, International Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Senior Gender and M&E Advisor, GFF, The World Bank

Damini Agarwal
Chief Technology Officer
Infinite Biomedical Technologies (IBT)

Bushra Ateeq
Professor and Dean of International Relations
Department of Biological Sciences and Bioengineering
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

Ritu Agarwal
Wm. Polk Carey Distinguished Professor
Carey Business School, Johns Hopkins University

Steering Committee Program Mentors

Anurag Agrawal
Dean, BioSciences and Health Research, Trivedi School of Biosciences, Head,
Koita Center for Digital Health, Ashoka University

Narendra M Dixit
Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering
Associate Faculty, Department of Bioengineering
Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru

Robert Bollinger
Raj & Kamla Gupta Professor of Infectious Diseases, Professor of Medicine,Public Health, and Nursing, Johns Hopkins University

Smisha Agarwal
Associate Professor and Director, Center for Global Digital Health Innovation
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Sridevi Sarma
Associate Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering, Vice Dean for Graduate Education, Johns Hopkins Whiting School of Engineering

Vidya Mave
Co-Director, Johns Hopkins Center for Infectious Diseases in India; Director and Leader, BJGMC-JHU Clinical Research Site, Pune, India

Neetisha Besra
Program Director,
India RISE Fellowship
Director India, GKII

Steering Committee Program Mentors

3. Data Science and AI Initiative

Policy | Education | Research

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping the future of health, improving diagnostics, predicting disease outbreaks, optimizing health systems, and expanding care for underserved communities. With India's rapidly growing digital health ecosystem and its rich clinical and population datasets, GKII is helping position India and Johns Hopkins University at the forefront of responsible AI innovation for global health.

GKII–KCDH Partnership: Breakthrough Research Grants (BRG)

Through formalized partnerships with the Koita Centre for Digital Health (KCDH) at IIT Bombay and Ashoka University, GKII established the Breakthrough Research Grants (BRG) program, which advances interdisciplinary, bilateral research in digital health and AI. With 50-50 cost sharing from JHU and partnering Indian institutions, each program cycle supports two to three collaborative projects involving researchers from India and JHU. Grants awards are approximately $60,000 over 18–24 months and prioritize multidisciplinary collaboration, real-world application, and mentorship of early-career researchers to build sustained research capacity.

Across the first cycle, four pilot projects were funded generating $240,000 in co-sponsored research.

PROJECT 1

Leveraging India's digital surveillance system for tuberculosis to assess the effectiveness and impact of novel interventions

Problem Statement: With over 2.8 million incident cases and over 300,000 deaths from TB each year,1 TB control is a top priority for India. To tackle the epidemic, systematic screening among high-risk groups is essential, however the current program misses a key high-risk group: individuals who recently completed TB treatment. An analysis of India's 2019-2021 TB prevalence survey found that 27% of the TB cases detected were recurrent.

Intervention: Clinics across India have been capturing patient-level data about the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of TB using the online portal Nikshay, which serves as backbone for India's TB surveillance system and informs programmatic decisions. Researchers from the School of Medicine at JHU and the Koita Center for Digital Health at Indian Institute of Technology Bombay are trying to leverage Nikshay data and apply novel analytical methods to assess the effectiveness and impact of post-treatment TB screening, while also paving the way for future research using Nikshay.

Principal Investigator and Researchers at JHU:
Dr. Emily A. Kendall, Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases &
Dr. Jonathan E. Golub, Professor of Medicine, Epidemiology, and International Health

Principal Investigator and
Researchers in India:
Dr. Mithun K. Mitra, Professor of Physics at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-Bombay), Faculty at the Koita Centre for Digital Health (KCDH).

PROJECT 2

Developing a breast cancer risk prediction tool for the Indian population

Problem Statement: Breast cancer is the most common form of malignancy among women worldwide. According to the global cancer report, the number of incident cases in 2020 alone was 2.3 million, representing 11% of all cancer cases.The breast cancer rate in India has been steadily rising over several decades and is now the most common form of cancer across all states in the country. According to Globcan report, the estimated number of new cases is 178,000 (14% of all cancer cases), and deaths are 90,000 (10% of all cancer deaths) for the year 2020 in India.

Intervention: While it is understood that screening strategies need to move towards a risk-based approach rather than a broad age-based recommendation, no breast cancer risk prediction model has been developed or validated to date, specifically for the Indian population. This collaboration across Johns Hopkins, IIT Mumbai and the Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH) is developing the first risk prediction tool for breast cancer among Indian women

Principal Investigator and
Researchers at JHU:
Dr. Nilanjan Chatterjee, PhD, Bloomberg Distinguished Professor, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Principal Investigator and
Researchers in India:
Dr. Saket Choudhary, Assistant Professor, Koita Centre for Digital Health, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay.

PROJECT 3

Leveraging language models and a common data model to unlock real world evidence from unstructured electronic health record data in India

Problem Statement: The widespread adoption of Electronic Health Records (EHR) in India through initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and ABHA ID marks a pivotal moment in the country's healthcare evolution. With its vast and diverse population, India's healthcare system faces unique challenges, such as access disparities, uneven quality of care, and high demand for medical services.

Intervention: Researchers from Johns Hopkins University and Ashoka University are using natural language processing (NLP) and large language models (LLM) to extract symptoms, comorbidities, clinical findings, diagnoses, and medications from clinical notes to develop Common Data Models (CDM) such as the Observational Medical Outcomes Partnership (OMOP) model. Such CDMs allow investigators to perform reproducible research using structured data across healthcare systems.

Principal Investigator and
Researchers at JHU:
Dr. Matthew Robinson, Assistant Professor, Division, of Infectious Diseases School of Medicine.

Principal Investigator and
Researchers in India:
Dr. Rintu Kutum, Faculty Fellow of Computer Science, Ashoka University.

PROJECT 4

Machine learning methods for enhanced forecasting of antiretroviral therapy demand in india

Problem Statement: HIV/AIDS remains a significant public health concern in India, with approximately 2.4 million people living with HIV (PLHIV), according to the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO). While the country has made considerable progress in controlling the epidemic over the past few decades, several challenges persist, particularly in terms of prevention, treatment access, and addressing social stigma. The NACO in India oversees the distribution of antiretroviral therapy (ART) to approximately 1.5 million people living with HIV through about 700 public sector ART centers. India, with its large and diverse population, faces unique challenges in managing ART supply. Geographic disparities, migration, logistical challenges, and non-real-time tracking of ART stocks complicate demand forecasting. These factors underscore the need for a robust and adaptable forecasting method that can handle the complexities of the Indian context.

Principal Investigator and Researchers at JHU:
Dr. Steven J. Clipman, Assistant Professor Division of Infectious Diseases at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Principal Investigator and Researchers in India:
Dr. Debayan Gupta, Assistant Professor of Computer Science at Ashoka University

Intervention: A collaborative project among Johns Hopkins University, Ashoka University, and NACO aims to develop a machine learning (ML) based model to enhance ART demand forecasting in India. The initiative, leveraging a multidisciplinary team's expertise, seeks to create an ML model capable of learning complex patterns from extensive historical data and a range of influencing factors to produce more accurate and robust forecasts compared to traditional methods. The project aims to develop an adaptable ML model to predict the annual demand for each ART drug in India, validate the ML model using historical data from 2017-2020, and design a user-friendly interface for healthcare administrators.

Data Science and AI Initiatives Phase II

Phase II: Under the Data Science and AI initiatives, GKII will fund 10+ projects over two years, each ranging from $50,000 to $100,000, with a strong focus on building AI solutions to improve health outcomes and consequently build an AI-ready talent pipeline. Projects embed early-career fellows including doctoral students, postdoctoral scholars, and junior faculty who receive joint mentorship and training in advanced AI and responsible innovation. Beyond research funding, this initiative represents a strategic investment in the Hopkins research enterprise, strengthening global collaboration and advancing the responsible use of AI to address pressing health challenges.

Partnership Extension: Four New Projects with Koita Centre for Digital Health

GKII has extended its partnership with the Koita Centre for Digital Health at Ashoka University and IIT Bombay for three years each, targeting priority areas such as AI-enabled diagnostics, disease surveillance, health systems optimization, digital health records, maternal and child health, noncommunicable diseases, and AI for equity.

7

Breakthrough Research Grants Program

Project Impact Report

Research

The Breakthrough Grants Program is program offering competitive awards to junior faculty at JHU for collaborative research with Indian partners. Over four funding cycles, the program has supported pioneering initiatives in digital health, climate change, and non-communicable diseases, fostering collaborations with leading institutions such as IIT-Bombay, Koita Center for Digital Health (IIT Bombay and Ashoka University), the Department of Biotechnology (Government of India), and D.Y. Patil Medical College, Hospital and Research Centre. Collectively, these grants have generated more than USD 300,000 in cofunding.

This year we look at the impact the first cycle of four breakthrough grants have generated.

PROJECT 1

Effect of glycaemic control on MAFLD in persons with type 2 diabetes mellitus in a high-risk ethnicity

This study, led by **Dr. Prasanna Santhanam** in collaboration with **Dr. Anoop Misra**, examines how blood sugar control influences metabolic dysfunction–associated fatty liver disease (MAFLD) among people with type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM). South Asians are at particularly high risk for MAFLD due to central obesity, metabolic stress, and urban environmental exposures. The findings carry important implications for clinical practice and public health strategies.

Noncommunicable Diseases

Project: AI and machine learning to predict cardiovascular and metabolic outcomes in South Asian urbanized population with Type 2 diabetes mellitus

JHU Principal Investigator

Prasanna Santhanam
MBBS, MD. Associate Director, Communications, Division of Endocrinology and Associate Professor, JHSOM

India Partner

Anoop Misra
Chairman, Fortis-C-DOC Centre of Excellence for Diabetes, Metabolic Diseases and Endocrinology; Chairman, National Diabetes, Obesity and Cholesterol Foundation (N-DOC)

"Using AI techniques, this research hopes to identify factors like environmental pollution and socioeconomic status that might contribute to cardiometabolic disease in partnership with Indian clinical researchers based in New Delhi"

- Prasanna Santhanam

Why This Matters

MAFLD, previously referred to as NAFLD (non-alcoholic fatty liver disease), is one of the most common liver conditions globally and is closely linked to diabetes. Between half and two-thirds of people with T2DM develop MAFLD, compared to about a quarter of the general population. In South Asians,

prevalence is are even higher, ranging from 48-63%. This dual burden means that diabetes and fatty liver disease often reinforce one another, accelerating complications such as cardiovascular disease, liver fibrosis, and cancer. Understanding how glycemic control impacts MAFLD progression is critical for designing prevention and treatment strategies for this high-risk population.

Key Findings

The results show that better blood sugar control can reduce fat buildup in the liver. Patients with tighter glycemic regulation had lower levels of hepatic steatosis, suggesting that diabetes management plays a protective role against fatty liver. However, this did not translate into improvement in liver fibrosis. In fact, some analyses suggested a slight worsening of fibrosis despite improved glycaemic control, highlighting that fibrosis may progress through mechanisms independent of blood sugar regulation, such as chronic inflammation or genetic susceptibility.

The study also found that inflammatory markers like high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (HS-CRP) were strongly associated with liver fat, underscoring the role of systemic inflammation in MAFLD progression. Patients with acanthosis nigricans — a visible sign of insulin resistance — had higher liver fat and stiffness, reinforcing the link between metabolic dysfunction and liver disease severity.

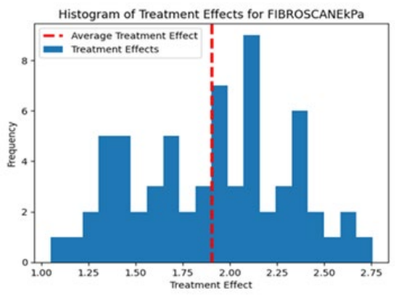


Figure 1. Histogram of treatment effects on Fibroscan CAP increase

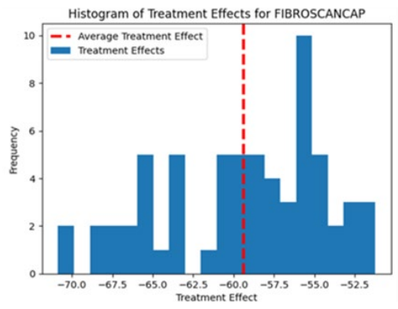


Figure 2. Histogram of treatment effects on Fibroscan kPa showing a slight in fibrosis showing reduced hepatic fat

What This Means

The findings suggest that while improved diabetes control is crucial for reducing fat accumulation in the liver, it is not enough to halt or reverse fibrosis. This distinction is critical for patients, clinicians, and policymakers. Programs focused solely on glycaemic control may miss the larger challenge of preventing progression to advanced liver disease. Broader strategies targeting inflammation, obesity, and lipid abnormalities will be necessary to reduce the long-term burden of MAFLD in South Asian populations.

Next Steps

The study highlights the need for more holistic approaches to MAFLD care. Future research will explore how lipid control and other metabolic interventions influence disease progression. The team also plans to validate these findings using larger datasets such as the CARRS (The Center for cArdiometabolic Risk Reduction in South Asia) cohort and to further refine predictive models using machine learning.

Impact of the Study

This work provides new insights into the complex relationship between diabetes and fatty liver disease in South Asians. It shows that glycaemic control helps in reducing fat accumulation but does not significantly impact fibrosis, suggesting that fibrosis is driven by additional factors beyond glucose regulation. These findings can guide future interventions, combining diabetes management with anti-inflammatory and metabolic therapies, to better protect vulnerable populations from the dual burden of T2DM and MAFLD.

Project Team

Johns Hopkins University	Prasanna Santhanam	Associate Professor of Medicine and Oncology, Associate Director, Communications, Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes, and Metabolism Department of Medicine
	Rexford Ahima	Director of Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism, Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of Diabetes
	Martin Lindquist	Department of Biostatistics, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Fortis Hospital, India	Anoop Misra	Chairman, Fortis-C-DOC Centre of Excellence for Diabetes, Metabolic Diseases and Endocrinology, Chairman, National Diabetes, Obesity and Cholesterol Foundation (N-DOC)

PROJECT 2

Formative assessment for peer-led mental health and TB services integration in india

This collaborative study, conducted by teams from Johns Hopkins University, the Center for Infectious Diseases in India, and D.Y. Patil Medical College, Hospital and Research Centre Pune explores how mental health (MH) care can be integrated into tuberculosis (TB) services in Pune, India. The research builds on the understanding that people living with TB face an elevated risk of depression and anxiety, and that addressing mental health alongside TB care can improve outcomes for both conditions.

Project: Formative assessment for peer-led mental health and TB services integration in India

JHU Principal Investigator

Christopher Kemp
Assistant Scientist
BSPH

India Partners

Nishi Suryavanshi
Deputy Director for the BJGMC-JHU Pune Clinical Research Site

Arjun Kakrani
D.Y. Patil Medical College, Hospital and Research Centre

"There are many barriers to effective mental health care in India, and most people who need care and treatment never receive it. The grant program has provided us with the opportunity to partner with people with lived experience of both tuberculosis and mental health conditions to co-design a peer-led mental health integration model for use in India's tuberculosis treatment centers."

- Christopher Kemp

Key Findings

Interviews revealed that **family support** plays a critical role in TB treatment journeys, while stigma remains a powerful barrier to care for both TB and mental health. Many patients reported that their families minimized or dismissed mental health concerns, and stigma around visiting psychiatrists discouraged help-seeking. A lack of awareness about government mental health services and available treatments also emerged as a major obstacle.

Sakshi
(pseudonym)

Tuberculosis unit: Sahkarnagar, Pune, India

Mental health condition screening: Sakshi scored 17 on PHQ-9 and 12 on GAD-7

Sakshi's journey with TB disease and mental health condition

- Visited a private health facility when she experienced persistent coughs. She found her way to a public sector facility at the suggestion of a relative. Here, she was diagnosed with TB.
- Sakshi's diagnosis left her feeling stressed as she feared for her life and the life of her newborn child. Sakshi experienced suicidal thoughts and tried her best to stay positive.
- Her family asked her to move back to her maiden home. They did not allow her to consume meat or eggs.
- TB health providers offered her guidance and assured her that TB is curable. They asked her to communicate if she felt anxious or tense.
- After completing her treatment, Sakshi continues to feel anxious about TB recurrence. Her body remains weak.

Figure 3. Journey map: female TB survivor with depression and anxiety

Focus group discussions pointed to the potential value of integrating mental health into TB programs. Participants highlighted that routine screening for depression and anxiety at the time of TB diagnosis, coupled with ongoing counseling, could help patients cope better. TB survivors suggested that peer-support models—where former patients share their recovery stories—would reassure current patients and reduce fear and uncertainty. Providers emphasized the importance of early identification of mental health concerns and continuous counseling to support adherence.

Consensus on Implementation Strategies

Through co-design discussions, a structured package of strategies was developed. These include:

- Awareness and stigma reduction through campaigns, media, and community health worker engagement.
- Routine screening and counseling for mental health at TB diagnosis and during follow-up visits.
- Peer-led models, with TB survivors providing guidance and psychosocial support.
- Tailored approaches for rural areas, involving private practitioners, ASHAs, and mobile health teams to extend services beyond urban centers.

Stakeholders agreed that embedding mental health support within existing TB programs was the most feasible and scalable approach, given India's limited mental health workforce.

What This Means

The study shows that TB-MH integration is both necessary and feasible. While stigma and workforce shortages remain major barriers, peer-led and health worker-supported approaches offer a practical path forward. Importantly, these strategies resonate strongly with patients, families, and providers, suggesting that co-designed models will have higher acceptability and sustainability.

Next Steps

The findings point toward piloting integrated TB-MH interventions in real-world settings. Future work should test peer-led and health worker-supported models for feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness, while also developing monitoring frameworks to ensure sustainability. Broader public awareness campaigns will be essential to address stigma, and tailored approaches are needed for rural populations.

Impact of the study

Turning Lived Experience Into Community Support

One of the most meaningful outcomes was the journey of a 38-year-old woman TB survivor, Seema (name changed for confidentiality). Initially hesitant to participate, she gradually found confidence and purpose through the study.

Seema went on to share her story with other women facing TB and mental health challenges, offering support, encouragement, and practical advice on dealing with stigma, staying on treatment, and attending follow-ups. She spoke at local community forums to raise awareness and later joined the Community Advisory Board, becoming a voice for others like her.

This project helped improve the care and wellbeing of people living with tuberculosis (TB) by addressing an often-overlooked issue: mental health. This study showed that integrating mental health services into TB treatment is both possible and valuable.

This study underscores the urgent need to address mental health in TB care. People with TB are at high risk for depression and anxiety, yet stigma and lack of services prevent them from receiving

adequate support. Co-designed, peer-led approaches offer a promising solution to integrate care in a way that is both scalable and responsive to patient needs. Embedding mental health within India's National TB Elimination Program has the potential to improve treatment adherence, recovery rates, and overall well-being for millions of patients.

Project Team

Johns Hopkins University	Christopher Kemp	Assistant Scientist and Branch Co-Director Center for AIDS Research Implementation Science Core
	Nishi Suryavanshi	Deputy Director of Johns Hopkins Center for Infectious Diseases in India
D.Y. Patil Medical College, Hospital and Research Centre	Arjun Kakrani	Director of Academic Collaborations & Professor of Clinical Eminence, D.Y. Patil Medical College, Hospital and Research Centre

PROJECT 3

Maternal metabolites in pregnancy and child growth in India

This project investigates how maternal blood metabolites during pregnancy influence birth outcomes, maternal health, and child growth and development in India. The research is led by Dr. Sara Benjamin-Neelon from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in collaboration with Dr. Giridhara Babu from the Public Health Foundation of India, alongside a multidisciplinary team in the U.S. and India.

Why This Matters

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are a growing challenge in India, and evidence increasingly points to their roots in early life. The maternal metabolome—the full range of small molecules produced in the body during pregnancy—may hold critical clues to how a mother's health and environment shape child growth, neurodevelopment, and long-term risk of chronic diseases. While research in other populations has shown associations between maternal metabolites and outcomes such as gestational diabetes, hypertension, and preterm birth, little is known about these pathways in South Asian populations, who face distinct metabolic risks.

Key Findings to Date

Preliminary analyses identified over 1,500 metabolites from maternal samples, of which more than 1,400 were consistently detectable in at least 10 percent of participants. Statistical comparisons revealed that 11 metabolites were more frequently detected in mothers who experienced preterm birth, while 27 metabolites were more common in those delivering full-term infants. In addition, relative abundance testing showed significant differences across more than 200 metabolites when comparing preterm and full-term groups.

These findings suggest that specific metabolic signatures in pregnancy may help predict adverse outcomes such as preterm birth. They also reinforce results from international studies that identified maternal metabolites linked to accelerated fetal growth and preterm risk, while adding valuable new data from South Asian populations.

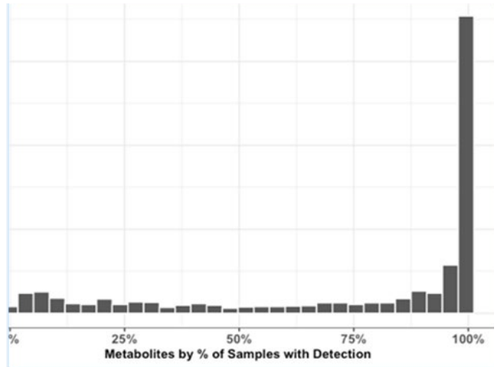


Figure 4. Results- Among 1552 metabolites identified, 1423 (91.7%) detected in ≥10% of samples, 1162 (79.4%) in ≥50% of samples, and 544 (35.5%) in 100% of samples

What This Means

The results highlight the potential of metabolomics to identify biological markers of risk for adverse maternal and child outcomes in India. If validated, these markers could be used to detect at-risk pregnancies early, tailor interventions, and inform maternal health programs. The work also contributes to understanding the developmental origins of health and disease, with implications for reducing India's long-term NCD burden.

Next Steps

The team is continuing to refine data through multivariable models and plans to examine all metabolites across outcomes of preterm birth, maternal postpartum depression, and child growth and neurodevelopment. Three manuscripts are in development to share findings with the scientific community. Future funding proposals will expand this work, including integration with microbiome studies and broader lifecourse research.

Impact of the Study

The project has strengthened U.S.-India research collaboration, engaging students and early-career scientists on both sides. Fellows have already contributed to data analysis, publications, and training. In 2024, the team convened an in-person workshop, and in 2025, a new microbiome sub-study is being piloted in a tribal cohort in India. Importantly, the collaboration contributed to the launch of the Centre for Developmental and Lifecourse Research at the Public Health Foundation of India, which will focus on translating findings into evidence-based policies and interventions across the lifespan.

This project demonstrates the power of cross-institutional partnerships to advance cutting-edge maternal and child health research in India. By linking maternal metabolomics with birth and child outcomes, the study provides new pathways for prevention, intervention, and policy. Ultimately, the findings may help reduce the intergenerational transmission of NCD risk and improve health outcomes for mothers and children in India and beyond.

Project Team

Johns Hopkins University	Sara Benjamin-Neelon	Professor, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
	Noel Mueller	Associate Professor, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Public Health Foundation of India	Giridhara Babu	Professor and Head
Indian Institute of Public Health – Bengaluru	Debarati Mukherjee	Additional Professor

PROJECT 4

Policy actions for India–U.S. collaborations on climate and health

This project led by **Dr. Gigi Gronvall**, Professor of Environmental Health and Engineering, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, examined opportunities to strengthen collaboration between India and the United States at the nexus of climate change and health, with a focus on advancing shared health security goals. At a time when government-to-government engagement has faced constraints due to evolving political priorities and broader bilateral tensions, this work sought to identify practical, future-oriented pathways for sustained cooperation.

Key Findings

The project identified 39 existing bilateral policy actions and collaborative initiatives touching the climate–health nexus. While collaboration exists, it is often fragmented and siloed.

1. Shared Priority Areas

India and the U.S. demonstrate strong alignment in several domains:

- Extreme heat and air pollution
- Vector- and water-borne diseases
- Zoonotic spillover and One Health implementation
- Pandemic preparedness and response
- Equitable access to medical countermeasures
- Strengthening surveillance and early warning systems
- Addressing disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations

A comparison between India's National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Climate Action Plan revealed substantial convergence in goals and structure.

2. Strategic Opportunities

Experts highlighted opportunities to:

- Launch long-term jointly funded research programs
- Integrate climate and health data systems
- Embed One Health principles into workforce training
- Leverage emerging technologies and private-sector partnerships
- Strengthen subnational and institutional collaborations

Sustainability and Next Steps

The team has drafted a policy-focused manuscript translating findings into actionable recommendations and is actively pursuing expanded funding from major global health and climate funders to scale the work.

Future phases are expected to include:

- Pilot joint research initiatives
- Institutional partnerships at state and subnational levels
- Development of integrated climate–health surveillance frameworks
- Workforce training modules incorporating One Health and climate literacy

Even amid geopolitical uncertainty, the project demonstrates that resilient collaboration models—anchored in shared technical priorities—can sustain progress at the climate–health nexus.

Impact of the Study

The Breakthrough Grants Program enabled a timely and strategic exploration of India–U.S. cooperation at the intersection of climate change and health. By systematically mapping experts, policies, and collaborative initiatives, the project transformed a fragmented landscape into a coherent policy framework.

Additionally, at the Hopkins India Conference 2025, **Gigi Gronvall, Aishwarya Nagar,** and one of the project's subject matter experts, **Katherine Hadda**, presented this work and engaged in dialogue around its key findings.

As climate-driven health threats accelerate, sustained collaboration between India and the United States will be essential—not only for bilateral resilience but for global health security.

Panelists Katherine Hadda, Aishwarya Nagar and moderator Gigi Gronvall discuss India-U.S. collaborations in climate and health policy at Hopkins India Conference 2025

Project Team

Johns Hopkins University	Gigi Gronvall	Department of Environmental Health and Engineering, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
	Aishwarya Nagar	Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, Department of Environmental Health and Engineering, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
	Taran Kaur Deol	Department of International Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (affiliation during the project)
India Partner	Department of Biotechnology	Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India

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Sunil Kumar & Sumati Murali
Research Award

Research

The Sunil Kumar & Sumati Murali Research Award program was established to advance Johns Hopkins University's commitment to training global scholars and supporting high-impact, India-focused research. The program reflects the values of academic excellence, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and mentorship exemplified by **Dr. Sunil Kumar**, former Provost of Johns Hopkins University and current President of Tufts University, and **Dr. Sumati Murali**, a leading scholar and educator. The grant empowers emerging scholars to pursue original research that deepens understanding of India's health, governance, and development challenges while building lasting global partnerships

Through this endowed fund, GKII provided annual merit-based awards of $8,000 each in 2025 to two PhD students from Johns Hopkins to conduct fieldwork and research in India. Inaugural recipients Rose Pollard Kaptchuk and Prakhar Misra's projects represent the diverse and interdisciplinary nature of Hopkins research in India. Their work combines rigorous academic inquiry with field-based engagement and a commitment to social impact.

A Community-Led, Person-Centered Approach

Rose Pollard Kaptchuk's research focuses on improving healthcare access for transgender and gender-diverse communities in India. Her project, Aligning HIV Services with Transgender and Gender Diverse Community Needs in India, investigates how inclusive healthcare models can reduce systemic inequities in HIV services and strengthen trust in health systems among marginalized communities.

"There is a huge diversity of transgender identities and communities across India, and they continue to experience negative interactions and mistreatment from health providers. A person-centered care model that goes beyond HIV and creates a safe place to receive care offers a way forward."

– Rose Pollard Kaptchuk

Closing the Bureaucratic Gap

Prakhar Misra is examining a central puzzle in Indian governance: why do chronic vacancies persist in government bureaucracies despite high public demand for these jobs? His project, Patronage v. Meritocracy: Recruitment in the Indian Government, investigates how recruitment institutions and administrative processes vary across states and how these variations shape the capacity of the Indian state to deliver essential public services.

"Through my interactions with bureaucrats and politicians across eight Indian states, it has become clear that the urgency of reforming recruitment institutions is only increasing. I therefore hope that my work will lay a foundation for future thinking and institutional development within the Indian context, contributing to more informed and effective public sector recruitment practices.
– Prakhar Misra

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Girish & Himangi Rishi
Student Travel Award

Education & Training | Research

The Girish & Himangi Rishi Student Travel Award (GHRSTA) focuses on building future generations of thought leaders and researchers to work on issues of importance to India. Through the generous support of **Mr. Girish Rishi**, an alumnus of the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), and **Mrs. Himangi Rishi**, the award provides opportunities for Johns Hopkins students to conduct research and immersive field studies at **Global Health Established Field Placement (GHEFP)** sites in India established by the **Center for Global Health.**

GHRSTA employs a global experiential learning approach, pairing students with JHU faculty mentors and India Placement Sites to promote co-learning, shared leadership, and long-term impact. The program includes mentorship, reflective learning tools, and standardized reporting, enhancing both the student experience and the quality of project outcomes and impact. Evaluation data show strong results: students consistently report improved research skills, deeper cultural competence, and greater career clarity. Their work has contributed to peer-reviewed publications, field-level impact, and sustained academic-community partnerships.

In 2025, **seven** Hopkins students traveled to India for GHRSTA supported projects. To date, the program has supported **60** JHU students, JHU faculty, and India partners (**22 students** across **19 faculty-led India projects**), advancing GKII's mission to strengthen global experiential learning and foster equitable collaboration between Johns Hopkins and India.

In 2025, GHRSTA program engagement was expanded by incorporating a virtual orientation for new awardees, a peer mentor program was piloted, and GKII facilitated a GHRSTA Scholar Presentation webinar event with past award recipient presentations for the JHU community and program donors. View: https://bit.ly/3QplwkT the recording of the event to learn more about our GHRSTA student experiences.

Showcasing the GHRSTA Program as a Model for Global Education

At the American Association of Colleges and Universities Conference on Global Learning, a leading global forum on equity and innovation in international education held in December, GKII Program Manager **Beth Romanski** presented GHRSTA as a model for partnership-driven global learning, highlighting how the program has evolved from a travel grant into a structured experiential learning initiative that places Johns Hopkins master's students in applied research roles with faculty mentors and local partners across India. The program now integrates standardized learning frameworks, peer mentorship, evaluation systems, and donor impact reporting.

The presentation underscored GKII's commitment to equitable, skills-based global education through co-created partnerships with the JHU Center for Global Health, faculty mentors, and India-based institutions, demonstrating how GHRSTA strengthens student outcomes while supporting community-based research and collaboration.

2025 Cohort

Janhvi Parsai
MSPH candidate, Health Policy and Management, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health ‘26

Faculty mentor: Amita Gupta

Theme: Infectious Diseases

Project: Protecting Households on Exposure to Newly Diagnosed Index Multidrug-Resistant TB patients (PHOENIx MDR-TB)

Janhvi supported the PHOENIx MDR-TB Study, a Phase 3 clinical trial comparing delamanid and isoniazid for preventing MDR-TB in high-risk household contacts. Her work involved analyzing concordance between manual pill counts and electronic monitoring to assess treatment adherence, and contributing to a report and manuscript to inform adherence strategies.

Anupama John
MSPH candidate, Health Systems, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health ‘26

Faculty mentor: Anita Shet

Theme: Children Living with HIV

Project: The I’mPossible Program

Anupama contributed to the evaluation of the I’mPossible Fellowship by developing survey and interview tools, collecting and analyzing data, and facilitating research capacity-building workshops for peer fellows. Her work supports efforts to measure the program’s impact on education, health, livelihoods, and psychosocial well-being.

Isha (Ishita) Mohan
MSPH candidate, Global Disease Epidemiology and Control, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health ‘26

Faculty mentor: Anita Shet

Theme: Children Living with HIV

Project: The Positive Running Program

Isha Mohan supported the Positive Running Program by documenting the program’s implementation, helping organize fitness camps, and assisting in developing tools to evaluate its impact —particularly on gender equity, resilience, and health outcomes. Her work will inform ongoing efforts to strengthen holistic, community-based interventions for youth affected by HIV.

Prachi Singh
MSPH candidate, Global Disease Epidemiology and Control, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health ‘26

Faculty mentor: Jonathan Golub

Theme: Infectious/Communicable Diseases, NCDs

Project: TB-SPIRIT Formative Research

Prachi Singh supported the TB-SPIRIT study, which aims to improve care for people with TB by addressing non-TB health conditions and promoting recovery. She was responsible for mapping existing services and rehabilitation resources and for conducting interviews with clinicians, outreach workers, and trained TB survivors to inform person-centered care strategies across multiple sites in India.

Yifeng Zhao
MSPH candidate, Health Systems, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health ‘26

Faculty mentor: Krishna Rao

Theme: Health Systems

Project: India Primary Health Care Support Initiative (IPSI)

Yifeng supported the India Primary Health Care Support Initiative (IPSI), focusing on technical assistance for implementing the Health and Wellness Centre program in Odisha under the Demonstrate pillar. His data contributed to training for district managers, and he developed tools for SARA metrics and analyzed national health surveys to support data-driven primary care planning.

Vaishnavi Mathur
MSPH candidate, Global Disease Epidemiology and Control, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health ‘26

Faculty mentor: Nishi Suryavanshi

Theme: Social and Behavioral Interventions

Project: Hybrid trial for Alcohol reduction among people with TB and HIV in India (HATHI)

Vaishnavi supported the HATHI study in Pune, a randomized controlled trial evaluating an intervention to reduce alcohol use and improve TB and HIV/TB care outcomes. She assisted with qualitative data analysis, data cleaning, transcription, and literature reviews. Her work contributes to manuscript preparation and inform future interventions for patients with co-occurring HIV, TB, and substance use challenges.

Yash Shroff
MSPH candidate, Global Disease Epidemiology and Control, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health ‘26

Faculty mentor: Nikhil Gupte

Theme: Infectious/Communicable Diseases

Project: Protecting Households On Exposure to Newly Diagnosed Index Multidrug-Resistant Tuberculosis Patients (PHOENIx MDR-TB)

Yash supported the PHOENIx study in Pune by conducting geospatial analysis and heat mapping of TB case data to identify transmission clusters. He worked with local teams to clean and visualize surveillance data, helping inform targeted, evidence-based interventions to interrupt TB transmission.

HEAR FROM OUR FACULTY MENTOR

“For ten years I’ve had the honor of mentoring JHU students through the GHEFP program. These students do more than fulfill academic requirements – they bring energy, compassion and innovation to our project sites. Their presence inspires underserved youth in India to dream bigger and uplift entire communities, leaving a lasting impact that extends far beyond their time on the ground.”

-Dr. Anita Shet, GHRSTA JHU Faculty Mentor

Scan to read the 2023-2025 Girish & Himangi Rishi Student Travel Award Impact Report

Read more: https://bit.ly/4v8tkGR

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Johns Hopkins Center for Infectious Diseases in India (CIDI)

Policy | Education & Training | Research

GKII continues its partnership with CIDI and YRG MERF at the Suniti Solomon Centre in Chennai, a state-of-the-art infectious diseases laboratory established with generous support from GKII Advisory Board members **Raj and Kamla Gupta, Maureen Sherry, and Steven Klinsky**. Formally dedicated in October 2024, the center is a four-story, 15,000 sq. ft. healthcare and research facility housing a 7,500 sq. ft. laboratory equipped with next-generation sequencing, flow cytometry, real-time PCR, and cryostorage infrastructure.

In 2025, GKII and CIDI initiated funding to support the renovation and modernization of the facility, translating this partnership from vision to reality. The lab serves as a critical platform for collaborative research on HIV, viral hepatitis, tuberculosis, and emerging pathogens, driving innovation in viral discovery and evolution, drug resistance, and pathogenesis. Together with CIDI's forthcoming Pune hub, the Suniti Solomon Centre anchors a growing research corridor across India, advancing cutting-edge prevention and treatment strategies for the populations who need them most.

11

IAS Mid-Career Training Program at LBSNAA

Education & Training

In partnership with the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), GKII conducted the fourth Friday Night at the Emergency Room (FNER) leadership training session. Fifty-four mid-career IAS officers from 14 state cadres participated in an immersive simulation of high-pressure public health crisis scenarios, strengthening skills in systems thinking, interdepartmental coordination, and evidence-based decision-making. Developed through a collaboration initiated by Johns Hopkins alumnus **Dr. Rakesh Gupta (IAS '97)** and led with support from **Dr. Brian Wahl** (Yale University), the program has evolved over three iterations with India-specific case studies and refinements based on participant feedback. Officers from diverse sectors, including health, education, rural development, and postal services, applied lessons from the simulation to broader governance challenges beyond healthcare, reinforcing the value of systems thinking across public administration.

The FNER trainings have been delivered by the JHU India team constituting **Dr. Raghukul Pandey, Dr. Meghashish Sharma, Dr. Aman Mohan Mishra, Swati Srivastava, Neetisha Besra, Ira Pundeer and Siddharth Mohite.**

"The initiative is vital for public administration in India because IAS officers operate in highly complex, dynamic environments with limited resources, where decision-making often requires managing a multitude of factors under pressure. Hospitals, often at the center of public health systems, are some of the most intricate systems to navigate. The FNER training equips officers with the skills to approach such challenges using systems thinking — an approach that extends far beyond healthcare to sectors like infrastructure, education, and disaster management."
- Aman Mohan Mishra

"The methodology used in FNER has the potential to serve as a model for other training programs within LBSNAA and beyond. By institutionalizing systems thinking as a foundational module in civil service training, we could promote better decision-making and collaboration across all levels of public administration. There's also potential for expanding this model internationally, adapting it for other countries with similarly complex governance structures."
- Neetisha Besra

"Many of the officers who come from backgrounds outside healthcare initially approach the simulation with some uncertainty. However, their fresh perspective often allows them to think outside of traditional silos, focusing purely on the systems thinking framework. They engage deeply with the challenges presented in the simulation and apply the principles learned to scenarios in their own sectors. This cross-pollination of ideas helps all participants see beyond the confines of their specialized knowledge and apply the lessons to broader governance challenges."
-Kanchan Pandey

12

Strengthening Public Health Training with NIHFW

Education & Training

The National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW) and Johns Hopkins University (JHU), through the Gupta-Klinsky India Institute (GKII), are collaborating on training and capacity development in India's public health system and hosted multiple Friday Night at the ER sessions.

Setting the Foundation: Training of Trainers

The NIHFW and Johns Hopkins School of Nursing (JHSON) co-organized the Training of Trainers (ToTs) on Leadership in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) for nursing professionals. The first five ToTs prepared 191 master trainers from every state and union territory. These trainers will cascade their learning to 4,578 nurses through 153 state-level training programs now being rolled out with State Nodal Agencies. NIHFW's Department of Community Health Administration continues to coordinate with states and monitor progress to ensure the effective implementation of national health programs, build capacity for health workers, and strengthen overall healthcare systems across the country.

Professor Sara Bennett at NIHFW's Strategic Meeting in New Delhi in March 2025

The collaboration aligns with NIHFW's strategic priorities, reaffirmed in March 2025, when Union Health Minister **Shri J.P. Nadda** commended NIHFW as "the frontrunner in conducting training, research, and capacity-building activities for public health professionals, policymakers, and administrators in the country." NIHFW plays a national role as an apex technical institute and think tank, guiding public health education, research, and advisory services. JHU has supported these goals, including contributing to curriculum design for NIHFW's MPH program.

"This collaboration reflects GKII's long-standing commitment to strengthening India's public health workforce through sustained institutional partnerships. By working with NIHFW, we are supporting national priorities while creating opportunities for innovation in training and systems strengthening."

— Professor Sara Bennett, GKII Co-Chair and Professor at the Bloomberg School of Public Health

Expanding the Collaboration: Behavioural Science Workshop

In July 2025, NIHFW hosted a workshop on "Decoding Health Behaviour: Why We Do What We Do," co-organized with the Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs (CCP), the Center for Communication and Change–India (CCC-I), and GKII. Facilitated by **Uttara Bharath Kumar (CCP)** and **Sanjeeta Agnihotri (CCC-I)**.The session introduced behavioural science tools to understand how cognitive, social, and structural factors shape health decisions.

Uttara Bharath Kumar (CCP) and Sanjeeta Agnihotri (CCC-I) facilitate a workshop on behavioural science at NIHFW

"We see real value in introducing behavioural science frameworks into our training programs. Sessions like this enhance our ability to prepare public health professionals with the skills needed for today's complex challenges."

— Dr. Sunil Vilasrao Gitte, Director (Additional Charge), NIHFW

Participants described the workshop as engaging, practical, and deeply relevant to their training. Their reflections highlighted how the session connected theory to real-world application and encouraged critical thinking.

"The session offered several important take-home messages — particularly the ability to accurately identify the core problem statement, the power of positive influence and persuasion for long-term change, and the practical application of behavioural insights in both professional and personal life."

— Dr. Suryaprakash, MD Student, NIHFW

Workshop Sharpens Systems Thinking Skills

In October 2025, GKII and NIHFW hosted **“Systems Thinking through Friday Night at the ER”** at the NIHFW campus in New Delhi. The workshop was led by **Dr. Cyrus Engineer**, DrPH, Distinguished Professor of the Practice at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; **Dr. Shweta Jindal**, MD, MPH, Chief of Party at Johns Hopkins India Private Ltd; and **Aman Mohan Mishra**, Director, Training and Stakeholder Engagement at Johns Hopkins India Private Ltd. Forty-six NIHFW students from MPH, PhD, and MD programs participated.

Through the Friday Night at the ER simulation, participants engaged in a fast-paced, hands-on exercise illustrating how interdependent decisions affect outcomes across a health system. The session emphasized collaboration, innovation, and data-driven management, helping participants translate theory into practical systems thinking and leadership skills.

Participants described the experience as eye-opening and deeply relevant to real-world public health challenges. “It not only strengthened our teamwork but also tested our priorities,” said Shruti Manmode, MPH student. Melody Lalenkawl Pudaite added, **“The workshop combined theory, fun, and hands-on learning. It reminded me that teamwork is easier said than done, but it’s what makes or breaks public health.”**

This engagement sits at the heart of GKII’s broader strategy to build enduring interdisciplinary institutional partnerships in India. Alongside collaborations with the Central TB Division, Indian Council of Medical Research, and the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, the NIHFW partnership reflects GKII’s mission to strengthen workforce capacity and public health systems at scale.

Dr. Cyrus Engineer and the JHU team leading the workshop on systems thinking at the NIHFW campus in New Delhi

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Palliative Care for Rural India

Policy | Practice | Research

The JHU–Ajit Isaac Foundation partnership represents a strategic effort to expand access to high-quality, community-centred palliative care for underserved and terminally ill patients in rural India. The initiative focuses on establishing and strengthening rural palliative care centers, beginning with a flagship **63-bed Palliative Care Centre in Tumkur, Karnataka**, supported by the Ajit Isaac Foundation and guided by technical expertise from Johns Hopkins University.

Niram–RIMH Palliative Care Centre Inauguration

In October 2025 we joined family members, donors, partners, and community leaders to inaugurate the Niram–RIMH Palliative Care Centre in Tumkur. The event marked the transition from planning to implementation and reflected the deep philanthropic commitment of the Isaac and Anchan families.

The Changing Reality of Palliative Care in India: From Margins to Mainstream Healthcare

This panel examined the transition of palliative care in India from a marginalized service to an essential component of mainstream healthcare, shaped by national policy progress and successful community-based models. Chaired by **Avani Prabhakar**, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, the discussion featured **Uma Mahadevan**, Additional Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner, Government of Karnataka; **Carolin Elizabeth George**, Head, Department of Community Health, Palliative Care and Research, Bangalore Baptist Hospital; **M R Rajagopal**, Chairman Emeritus, Pallium India and Adjunct Professor of Global Oncology, Queen’s University, Canada; **Bhavna Seth**, Assistant Professor of Medicine and Director of Global Health, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center; and **Sweety Thomas**, Chief of Staff, Ajit Isaac Foundation. Speakers highlighted persistent gaps in access, workforce capacity, and integration into public systems, particularly in rural areas, and emphasized embedding palliative care within governance and medical education to ensure dignity, relief, and compassionate, person-centered care across the continuum of illness.

IN THE NEWS

Integrating compassion, prioritising palliative care

The Hindu, Jul 3, 2025

By Dr. Naresh Shetty, Orthopaedic Surgeon, Hospital Administrator and Project Director, Niram-RIMH Palliative Care Centre in Tumkur, Karnataka, supported by the Ajit Isaac Foundation (AIF), and Dr. Avani Prabhakar, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Read more: https://bit.ly/3Sd6f7t

14

Education Liaison Service

Education & Training

GKII's Education Liaison Service (ELS) was established to strengthen Johns Hopkins University's engagement with India's dynamic higher education landscape. Building on decades of collaboration through research, academic exchanges, and institutional partnerships, ELS supports faculty and divisions across JHU in advancing India-focused education and research initiatives.

"As India emerges as a global hub for research talent and knowledge-driven industries, the opportunities for academic partnership have never been greater," **Beth Romanski**, GKII Program Manager for India Education Liaison Services said. "Strengthening our collaborations in India with intuitions, industry, faculty, and students allows Johns Hopkins to contribute to, and learn from, one of the world's most vibrant education ecosystems."

Since 2024, ELS has conducted **30+ consultations** and hosted **12+ India Education Opportunities Workgroup** meetings

Engagement included participants from 12 Johns Hopkins divisions, including:

- Provost's Office
- Undergraduate Admissions
- Bloomberg School of Public Health
- School of Medicine
- School of Nursing
- Carey Business School
- Whiting School of Engineering
- School of Advanced International Studies
- Peabody Institute

Curated sessions offer a university-wide forum for knowledge-sharing and insights into India's regulatory environment, partnership frameworks, and student mobility and international marketing trends, supporting the university's global education strategy and expanding opportunities for collaboration with India.

Through this work, ELS has become a central hub for strategic engagement and India education market trends, helping JHU faculty and administrators develop multidisciplinary collaborations, establish new academic and lifelong learning programs, recruit and support students from India, and explore innovative education and research partnerships with Indian institutions.

2025 ELS Events & Activities

Hopkins–India Conference: Higher Education Panel with the Institute of International Education

Chaired by **Rajika Bhandari**, Co-Founder, South Asia International Education Network, this session brought together senior leaders to examine how higher education strengthens India–U.S. ties and drives innovation and global competitiveness. Panelists **Sunil Kumar**, President, Tufts University; **Leah Mason**, Deputy Director, Institute of International Education; **Hanan Saab**, Associate Vice President, Association of American Universities; and **Shuchita Sonalika**, Director and Head–North America, Confederation of Indian Industry, highlighted opportunities created by India's National Education Policy 2020 for deeper collaboration through joint degrees, research centers of excellence, skilling programs, microcredentials, and virtual exchange initiatives. The discussion underscored the mutual value of student and faculty mobility, academia–industry linkages, and institutional partnerships in building innovation capacity and advancing the next phase of India–U.S. relations.

Watch here: https://bit.ly/4elxeXf

L-R: Neha Kumar, Noora-Lisa Aberman, Beth Romanski (panel manager), James Thurlow, and Yan Bai presented on global food systems policy at the Hopkins India Conference 2025

Education Market Insights

In September 2025, the GKII India Education Liaison Service (ELS) convened its 12th meeting with Keystone Education Group to share data on Indian student recruitment trends and engagement behavior. The session, led by GKII Program Manager Beth Romanski, convened representatives from across JHU to review insights on student motivations, communication preferences, and shifting demand patterns.

Key findings highlighted the importance of career outcomes, transparent cost information, and rapid, personalized communication, particularly through WhatsApp, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Nearly half of surveyed students expect responses within 24 hours, while interest in online-only programs continues to decline globally.

The discussion reinforced ELS's role in providing timely market intelligence to strengthen Hopkins' education engagement with India and advance a coordinated "One JHU" approach to global education partnerships.

Seminar on the Future of India's Education

L-R: Dr. S Somanath, Beth Romanski, and Dr. Ninad Kothari

In partnership with the Solomon H. Snyder Department of Neurosurgery, GKII hosted a seminar in the Neuroscience Postdoctoral Career Guidance Series titled "The Changing Landscape of Higher Education in India." The session featured **S. Somanath**, Chancellor of Chanakya University and former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization, who led India's historic Chandrayaan-3 Moon mission. Organized by Johns Hopkins postdoctoral fellows, the seminar examined India's evolving academic and innovation ecosystem, highlighting the impact of the National Education Policy 2020, the country's rise as a startup nation, and opportunities for research collaboration and educational partnerships. Dr. Somanath discussed India's Viksit Bharat@2047 vision and invited Hopkins faculty, students, and postdoctoral scholars to engage with Chanakya University as a growing hub for research and technology.

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JHU Education Initiatives in India

Forum Education & Training

Krieger School of Arts and Sciences Expands Academic Engagement in India

The **Johns Hopkins Krieger School of Arts and Sciences (KSAS)** strengthened ties with India's higher education sector. **Veronica Donahue**, Associate Dean of the Advanced Academic Programs, travelled to Sonipat, Haryana, to visit **Ashoka University,** one of the country's leading liberal arts institutions. During a graduate fair, she shared information about KSAS master's and PhD programs with students interested in diverse fields such as psychology, economics, astronomy, and physics.

Panelists at the FICCI Summit

Dean Donahue also represented Johns Hopkins at the **19th Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) Higher Education Summit 2024** in New Delhi, themed *"Changing Paradigms of Higher Education in the Global Landscape."* Her presentation explored how universities can adapt their missions to address emerging societal challenges, highlighting the evolving role of higher education in driving innovation and sustainability worldwide.

Next Generation of Health Tech Innovators Join WSE Hackathon

The Johns Hopkins Whiting School of Engineering and Vellore Institute of Technology, Bhopal, jointly hosted the Health Hackathon 2025, providing a venue for students to develop solutions for real-world healthcare challenges. Themed "Improving Health Through Accessible and Empowering Innovation," more than 2,600 students from top institutions across the world participated. Neha Verma and Damini Agarwal, two India-affiliated Hopkins alumni, represented MedTech companies incubated at Johns Hopkins.

WSE and VIT, Bhopal participants at the Health Hackathon 2025

16

Community Engagement

Forum

Students

Third Annual Student Community Welcome

GKII hosted more than 100 Johns Hopkins University students, alumni, faculty, and staff for this year's India–JHU Community Mixer. The annual gathering welcomes incoming students from India, celebrates the University's vibrant diaspora, and connects those interested in building bridges between Johns Hopkins and India. The evening included presentations, informal networking, and dedicated time for students to meet faculty, alumni, and peers who share an interest in India-focused work.

L-R: Kunal Pal, Sara Bennett, Chirag Parikh, Amita Gupta, Uttara Bharath Kumar

Upasna Mohapatra, IFS, from the Political and Education Wing of the Embassy of India in Washington, DC, joined as the event's guest speaker. Ms. Mohapatra shared Diwali greetings with the community, spoke about the importance of having a "home away from home," and underscored her support for the Indian student community at JHU. She also reflected on how her work to strengthen the India–U.S. partnership parallels the contributions of JHU's India-focused scholars, researchers, and leaders.

L-R: Sara Bennett, Upasna Mohapatra, Amita Gupta, Kunal Pal

Facilitating India–JHU Student Engagement in Washington

GKII facilitated a unique student networking event in Washington, D.C., when several Johns Hopkins University students gathered at a reception hosted by **Vinay Mohan Kwatra**, Ambassador of India to the United States. The event brought together student-leaders from across JHU schools and the Indian-diaspora community in the U.S., offering a unique forum to build connections, share cultural ties, and explore academic and professional pathways spanning India. U.S. Ambassador Kwatra discussed the importance of student ambassadors and offered the Embassy's support for the Indian-student community at Johns Hopkins. **"It was a wonderful experience meeting with members of the community and speaking with Mr. Vinay Kwatra. I truly hope that the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health can continue to engage in such meaningful events in the future."** — Drishti Mukherjee, BSPH, President, Johns Hopkins Indian Student Association

JHU Students at Amb. Kwatra's reception with Namgya C Khampa, the Charge d'Affaires at the Indian Embassy in Washington, DC

"It was an excellent platform for social networking, and for graduates like me, opportunities like this are incredibly valuable for building connections and shaping our next career steps." — Vidur Kumar, Secretary, SAIS South Asia Society

Student Voices

"I chose Johns Hopkins University because it's globally renowned as a leader in public health, offering unmatched expertise and resources. Receiving the World Bank Scholarship was instrumental in enabling this journey, allowing me to deepen my knowledge in health economics and digital health—both critical to advancing healthcare policy in India."

- Piyush Singla BSPH '25 (IAS 2012)

"I appreciate the School of Medicine's attention to holistic, comprehensive patient-centric care, and hope to carry this through the rest of my career in serving the patients and communities around me."

- Mihir Kumar SOM '28

"I wasn't initially planning to apply to JHU, but a gentle nudge from a friend convinced me to give it a shot. What drew me to Hopkins was how it doesn't force me to choose between neuroscience and public health. I've been equally interested in brain and sleep research and in grassroots health initiatives. Hopkins' strength in both fields, its openness to undergraduates in research, and its culture of turning ideas into action made it the right place for me."

- Satya Chaudhary KSAS '29

"JHU is one of the few institutions where there's both diversity in the patient population and in the range of conditions patients have. Here, I have the unique opportunity to interface with patients from all walks of life and patients whose conditions could only be seen in textbooks."

- Medha Majety SOM '32

Faculty

GKII supports Johns Hopkins faculty community engagement through:

Regular convenings of the **GKII Faculty Steering Committee**, the members of which represent all Johns Hopkins Schools and provide strategic guidance on opportunities for faculty engagement and collaboration

The **Breakthrough Research Grants** program, which supports multidisciplinary collaborations among faculty who often haven't worked together before

Development and maintenance of the **JHU-India Faculty Research Compendium**, which documents ongoing research being conducted in India or on topics related to India's priorities, and which serves as a tool for engaging collaborators and funders

High impact events, university-wide panels, and webinars that promote knowledge sharing and dialog

Faculty Voices

"India has a wealth of engineers, programmers, and analysts, making it an ideal place to build healthcare infrastructure. By combining expertise from Johns Hopkins with the needs in India, I believe we can expect immense progress in improving care and expanding access."

Chirag R. Parikh; *Director, Division of Nephrology; Director, Precision Medicine Center of Excellence for Kidney Diseases; Ronald Peterson Professor of Medicine*

"In India, we are very proud of frugal innovation. Jugaad. It's basically workarounds, shortcuts. We can improvise and do things in a more creative and unscripted way that allows us to find solutions to problems which a traditional approach may not necessarily yield. This whole notion of jugaad is central to the Indian psyche: we can make things happen. My hope is that India will take the lead in building out the infrastructure for digital health services, and for showing the rest of the world there's a feasible model for doing it."

Dr. Ritu Agarwal; *Wm. Polk Carey Distinguished Professor and Co-Director of the Center for Digital Health and AI*

"India's cultural diversity has resisted many forms of oppression throughout colonization. Rather than approaching diversity as a force getting in the way of progress, it should be celebrated as an asset for any future development. That is how interventions will be able to be sustained at scale in India. The conventional approach to standard replication doesn't work. We need new approaches to sustainable development."

André Nogueira; *Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing*

Alumni

Alumni played a significant role in strengthening GKII programming and activities through leadership, partnerships, and subject-matter expertise. **Vishal Mundlye**, a Carey Business School alumnus, volunteered to support sponsorship engagement, reinforcing alumni commitment to advancing institutional initiatives. **Anand Kapai (CBS '14)**, representing Siemens Healthineers, and **Damini Agarwal (WSE '17)**, representing Infinite Biomedical Technologies, participated in a panel discussion 'Innovation and Health Technology Interventions in India' at the Hopkins India Conference. **Mohua Chakraborty Choudhury (BSPH '24)**, Specialist Scientist, IISc Bangalore, played a significant role in formalizing the collaboration with IISc Bangalore for the India RISE Fellowship. These engagements underscored the value of alumni as collaborators, connectors, and ambassadors for convenings and programs.

Resurgence of COVID-19: Alumni Perspectives on Preparedness and Response

In July 2025, the Gupta-Klinsky India Institute hosted a webinar on the resurgence of COVID-19, featuring leading voices from the Johns Hopkins India alumni community. Speakers included **Dr. Brian Wahl**, Assistant Professor, Department of Epidemiology of Microbial Diseases at the Yale School of Public Health; **Dr. Ashish Goel**, Professor and Head, Department of Medicine at the Ambedkar State Institute of Medical Sciences; and **Mona Sharma Rana**, Mental Health Advocate and Founder of the Manorathi Foundation. The session was moderated by **Dr. Nitish Dogra**, Public Health Physician, author, and JHU alumnus.

The discussion examined clinical preparedness, public health systems, and the importance of integrating mental health into pandemic response. Speakers highlighted the continued effectiveness of vaccines, the need for institutional readiness, and the value of clear public communication. The event highlighted JHU alumni as critical partners in GKII's efforts to advance public health knowledge and practice in India.

Alumni Voices

"As one of my mentors had highlighted – knowing the logistics, operations and methodology behind policy making is just as important as the research part. We often tend to think of the latter but not the former."

Srujan Palkar *SAIS '23*

"Working at NCDC has given a powerful platform to my purpose-driven mindset, scientific curiosity, and aspirations to create meaningful, systemic change. I feel fortunate to have contributed to the programme's growth during its formative years, and to have helped shape India's heat-health response."

Purvi Patel *BSPH '06*

"I never had formal business training before Hopkins, so the finance degree was a critical bridge. It allows me to speak fluently across both strategy and execution and to engage confidently with investors, their LPs, CFOs, and technologists alike."

Kriti Upadhyaya *CBS '25*

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Events & Convenings

February 23

GKII at the Indiaspora Forum for Good & Global AI Summit: Deputy Director **Neetisha Besra** participated in discussions focused on diaspora philanthropy and women's health.

March 1

Advancing Public Health: Priorities, Innovations & Global Leadership: GKII Co-Chair **Dr. Sara Bennett** joined a strategic meeting hosted by the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare in New Delhi, where she emphasized workforce development, institutional resilience, and data-driven innovation in public health systems.

March 7

Breakthrough Grant Presentation Webinar: GKII hosted a webinar featuring two Breakthrough Grant awardees: **Dr. Sara Benjamin-Neelon** presented on maternal metabolites and child growth in India, and Dr. **Christopher Kemp** presented on peer-led mental health and TB services.

Watch Webinar: https://bit.ly/4uA6SFt

September 23

GKII at the United Nations General Assembly 80: GKII Executive Director **Kunal Pal** joined UNGA 80 in New York to spotlight the Institute's bridge-building mission between India and the world. GKII formalized a partnership with Siemens Healthineers on India RISE and joined sessions on climate, health, and nutrition to advance global collaboration.

August 5

Prosperous Many: A Model for Inclusive and Scalable Village Development: GKII joined a roundtable led by LEAP and Transform Rural India in Mumbai, highlighting an integrated rural development model focused on livelihoods, health, and women's empowerment.

July 1

Resurgence of COVID-19: Clinical Preparedness, Public Health Lessons, and the Road Ahead: JHU Indian alumni and public health experts were convened by GKII to discuss preparedness strategies, clinical readiness, and lessons from the recent COVID-19 surge in India.

May 8–9

Hopkins India Conference 2025: The GKII inaugural Hopkins India Conference in Washington, DC, brought together more than 600 participants and 80+ speakers to advance India–U.S. collaboration across public health, technology, education, and economic policy. Read more on pages 15.

April 29

Startup Bazaar: DC Climate Week Forum: The American Bazaar and GKII co-hosted a global gathering for climate action to spotlight how climate tech startups are scaling bold, sustainable solutions to address the climate crisis.

September 23

Lessons Learned and New Approaches at the India Philanthropy Forum:
Dr. Amita Gupta joined a panel on responsible innovation and data-driven philanthropy at the India Philanthropy Forum in New York. She discussed bridging the gap between innovation and implementation, emphasizing inclusive systems and strong data infrastructure.

September 22–23

TB-DASH Workshop: JHU and GKII, partnered with the UCSF Center for Tuberculosis and sponsored by Johnson & Johnson to host a workshop for the Developing a Global Framework to Enhance Demand, Access, and Seeking of TB-related Healthcare Services (TB-DASH) initiative. The workshop convened nearly 30 in-person participants from 11 countries across South and Southeast Asia, along with partners from the United States, to engage community representatives, front-line healthcare workers, and policymakers to contribute to the development of the Global Framework.

September 25:

Education Market Insights
The GKII Education Liaison Service hosted its 12th meeting with Keystone Education Group to review trends in India's higher education market and support JHU's academic partnerships.

October 25:

Student Reception with the Indian Ambassador:
JHU students attended a reception hosted by Ambassador **Vinay Mohan Kwatra,** connecting with embassy officials, think-tank leaders, and industry professionals.

October 23

India-JHU Community Mixer: The annual GKII mixer, brought together more than 100 Johns Hopkins students, alumni, faculty, and staff for an evening of connection and collaboration. **Upasna Mohapatra,** IFS, from the Political and Education Wing of the Embassy of India in Washington, DC, was the guest speaker.

October 5

Indiaspora U.S. Forum 2025 Panel on Global Health: Dr. Amita Gupta spoke at the Indiaspora U.S. Forum 2025 on global health equity alongside WHO Foundation CEO **Anil Soni.** The panel explored collaboration, innovation, and investment as drivers of a healthier world.

October 4

Seminar on the Future of India's Education: GKII and the Johns Hopkins Department of Neurosurgery co-hosted a seminar on India's changing higher education landscape, featuring **Dr. S. Somanath,** Chancellor of Chanakya University and former ISRO Chairman, who discussed India's National Education Policy 2020 and long-term education goals.

TB-DASH Workshop: A Global Framework for TB CARE

Forum

In September 2025, the Gupta-Klinsky India Institute, in partnership with the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Center for Tuberculosis, hosted the first regional convening of the Developing a Global Framework to Enhance Demand, Access, and Seeking of TB-related Healthcare Services (TB-DASH) initiative in Hyderabad, India. Supported by Johnson & Johnson, the two-day workshop brought together nearly 65 participants who joined both in person and virtually from 11 countries across South and Southeast Asia, along with collaborators and partners from the United States.

The workshop focused on strengthening demand for and access to TB-related healthcare services by incorporating the perspectives of TB-affected communities, frontline healthcare workers, researchers, implementers, and policymakers. Participants examined barriers that continue to limit timely diagnosis, treatment access, and sustained engagement in care across diverse settings, while also discussing approaches to improve uptake of TB services and patient experiences within health systems.

A central goal of the convening was the co-creation of a global framework to support more person-centered TB services. Through a combination of preference studies and community-based participatory research approaches, TB-DASH is working to develop an evidence-informed framework with practical strategies to improve healthcare-seeking behavior, increase uptake of TB services, and strengthen the quality of care for people affected by TB.

The workshop also provided an opportunity for participants from across the region to share implementation experiences, compare approaches to community engagement and service delivery, and identify common challenges across national and local TB programs. These discussions helped inform the ongoing development of the TB-DASH global framework and marked an important early milestone in the initiative's broader effort to strengthen demand, access, and care-seeking for TB-related health services.

Key JHU Projects in India

Access a detailed compendium of all ongoing and completed JHU projects in India, highlighting the work of our faculty and collaborators across disciplines.

Indian Partner Organizations

Support Our Work

Select "Other – Please Specify" and enter "GKII Operating" or "GKII TB Free Schools."

To learn more about our projects and to contribute:
Contact: jhii@jh.edu

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