



unesco

# REPORT



18-19 MARCH 2024

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## 1. Introduction

On the 18th and 19th of March 2024, the Roundtable of UNESCO Chairs in South Asia was held at the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India. The purpose of this meeting was to bolster the UNESCO Chairs network and engage in discussions regarding key priority areas for the region, as well as exploring how UNESCO Chairs can contribute to these endeavours.

The event was convened under the distinguished leadership of Prof. Amareswar Galla, UNESCO Chair on Inclusive Museums and Sustainable Heritage Development at Anant National University, Gujarat, also serving as the Pro-Chancellor and Distinguished Professor of Indigeneity and Inclusive Museum & Heritage Studies at the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences Deemed to be University (KISS-DU), Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Among the distinguished attendees were 16 UNESCO Chairs hailing from India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, along with Mr. Tim Curtis, Director and UNESCO Representative for the UNESCO Regional Office in New Delhi, and his team from the UNESCO New Delhi Regional office. This convergence of South Asian UNESCO Chairs underscored the organisation's commitment to harnessing collective wisdom in service of regional development.

The event served as a testament to the enduring legacy of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs programme, which since its inception in 1992, has been at the vanguard of international cooperation among universities. With a noble aim to bridge knowledge divides and galvanise higher education institutions worldwide, the programme has emerged as a beacon of collaboration towards realising the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Boasting participation from over 850 institutions across 117 countries, this global network epitomises the spirit of solidarity in confronting shared challenges and fostering societal progress.

UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks occupy a pivotal role in nurturing the intellectual capital of higher education systems. Through their multifaceted approach encompassing research, teaching, training, and community engagement, these Chairs serve as catalysts for interdisciplinary knowledge dissemination and innovation. Presently, the global landscape is adorned with 950 UNESCO Chairs and 45 UNITWIN Networks, each led by eminent scholars in their respective domains. In India alone, the presence of 16 accredited UNESCO Chairs, including three from the South Asian region, underscores the pivotal role of academia in shaping the socio-cultural fabric of nations.

This report encapsulates the proceedings of this momentous gathering, delving into the rich tapestry of discussions and deliberations that transpired over the course of two enlightening days.

## **2. Objectives of the Roundtable**

The primary objectives of the roundtable were to:

- Facilitate collaboration and networking among UNESCO Chairs in South Asia.
- Discuss and align initiatives with UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Explore opportunities for contributing to UNESCO's strategic objectives within the region.

## **3. Roundtable Proceedings**

### **3.1 Opening Session**

The roundtable commenced with opening remarks by Mr. Tim Curtis, Director of UNESCO New Delhi Regional Office, highlighting the importance of collective action and knowledge sharing in advancing UNESCO's goals. Prof. Amareswar Galla, UNESCO Chair on Inclusive Museums & Sustainable Heritage Development, provided insights into the significance of the roundtable and the role of UNESCO Chairs in fostering inclusive and sustainable development.

### **3.2 Presentation by Mr. Tim Curtis**

Following the opening session, Mr. Tim Curtis, Director and UNESCO Representative for the UNESCO Regional Office in New Delhi, delivered a comprehensive presentation outlining UNESCO's objectives, plans, and strategic priorities. His presentation covered various key aspects of UNESCO's role and functions, as well as its strategic objectives and cross-cutting themes.

### **Objectives and Plans for UNESCO**

Mr. Curtis outlined UNESCO's overarching objectives, emphasising its commitment to promoting quality education, sustainable development, cultural diversity, and technological innovation. He highlighted UNESCO's role as a laboratory of ideas, a clearing house, a standard setter, a catalyst for international cooperation, and a capacity builder.

### **Strategic Objectives**

He elaborated on UNESCO's four strategic objectives:

1. Ensure quality, equitable, and inclusive education for all, promoting lifelong learning opportunities.
2. Work towards sustainable societies and environmental protection through the promotion of science, technology, and innovation.

3. Build inclusive, just, and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, and education for global citizenship.
4. Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind by developing knowledge, skills, and ethical standards.

### **Cross-Cutting Theme**

Mr. Curtis also emphasized UNESCO's commitment to crisis preparedness and response, highlighting the importance of addressing challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and disaster risk reduction.

### **Strategic Objectives of UNESCO**

He outlined UNESCO's strategic objectives, which encompass various thematic areas and priorities:

1. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all.
2. Strengthen international coordination for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 and develop the global education agenda.
3. Enhance knowledge for climate action, biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction.
4. Advance international cooperation in science, technology, and innovation.
5. Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions.
6. Promote freedom of expression and the right to information.
7. Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech, and stereotypes.
8. Foster knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age.

### **New Strategy for the New Delhi Office**

Mr. Curtis informed the participants about the ongoing development of a new strategy for the UNESCO New Delhi office. He expressed the importance of understanding the priorities and competencies of the stakeholders to ensure effective delivery on UNESCO's outcomes in the region.

Mr. Tim Curtis's presentation provided valuable insights into UNESCO's objectives, strategic priorities, and future plans, underscoring the organization's commitment to addressing global challenges and promoting sustainable development through education, culture, science, and communication.

A brainstorming session followed, wherein participants deliberated on how UNESCO Chairs could contribute to UNESCO's strategic objectives, particularly in education, social sciences, natural sciences, and culture sectors. Discussions revolved around enhancing inclusive

education, promoting environmental sustainability, fostering cultural diversity, and leveraging technology for societal benefit.

### **3.3 Group Work Sessions**

Participants engaged in group work sessions, divided into two rounds of four thematic discussions. Each group discussed specific action plans and initiatives aligned with UNESCO's priorities, emphasising collaboration, innovation, and inclusivity.

## 4. Key Themes and Recommendations

The first round of group work covered themes of Education, Human & Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Culture led by the UNESCO Programme Specialists in charge of each sector.

### 4.A First Round of Group Work:

#### 4.A.1 Education

The discussion within the Education subgroup during the Roundtable Gathering of UNESCO Chairs underscored the critical role of primary and secondary education in shaping the character and mindset of citizens. Recognizing the transformative power of education, participants deliberated on various aspects of the education system, emphasising the need for inclusivity, equity, and social justice. This section encapsulates the key takeaways from the discourse, highlighting actionable strategies to enhance the quality and impact of education in the region.

#### Key Takeaways

##### I. Content and Syllabus

- **Textbook Audits:** Regular audits of textbooks are essential to ensure they are free from biases and stereotypes related to rights, equity, and gender.
- **Environmental Consciousness:** Promote environmental consciousness and empathy through experiential learning and values education.
- **Digital Literacy:** Emphasise digital literacy and ethical use of AI in education to prepare students for the digital age.

##### II. Context

- **Inclusive Selection:** Encourage schools to adopt inclusive practices in student selection to prevent exclusion and promote diversity.
- **Special Education and Inclusion:** Ensure the presence of special educators in schools and promote team teaching to avoid the segregation of students with disabilities.
- **Nutritional Justice:** Advocate for nutritious and balanced mid-day meal programs to promote a culture of nutrition and ensure nutritional justice for students.

##### III. Teacher Training

- **Transformation of Teacher Education Programs:** Focus on transforming teacher education programs to emphasise equity, inclusion, and social justice, ultimately improving classroom dynamics.

- **Support for Teachers:** Provide support for teachers, including resources and training, to address the lack of necessities in classrooms and improve the quality of education.

#### **IV. Recognition and Promotion**

- **Recognition of Best Practices:** Recognize and promote best practices in schools, including awards and publicity, to encourage the adoption of successful educational approaches.

#### **V. Values and Representation**

- **Value-Based Education:** Emphasise the importance of education for developing better human beings and promoting global citizenship.
- **Representation and Participation:** Ensure representation of marginalised communities and all cross-sections of society in decision-making bodies related to education.

#### **VI. Sex Education and Gender Sensitivity**

- **Sex Education and Gender Sensitivity:** Promote sex education and gender sensitivity as per students' developmental stages, including parental education to address misconceptions and taboos.

#### **VII. Financial Planning and Training**

- **Financial Planning:** Encourage adequate financial planning to avoid last-minute fund availability, enabling effective planning and implementation of educational programs.
- **Inclusive Training:** Implement periodic in-service training programs for teachers, focusing on cultural sensitivity and inclusivity.

#### **VIII. Collaboration and Training**

- **Collaboration and Training:** Collaborate with the UNESCO chairs network to conduct training programs that highlight togetherness, unity, and universal values through education.

The discourse within the Education subgroup underscored the imperative of reevaluating and enhancing the primary and secondary education system to foster inclusivity, equity, and social justice. By implementing the actionable strategies delineated above, UNESCO Chairs can play a pivotal role in reshaping education paradigms and nurturing empowered and enlightened citizens for the future.

## 4.A.2 Social & Human Sciences

**Introduction:** The Social & Human Sciences group at the UNESCO Chair Roundtable convened to discuss priority areas and strategies for addressing key societal challenges through interdisciplinary collaboration. The group explored various topics including artificial intelligence (AI) governance, behavioural change measurement, sports, disability inclusion, and gender sensitization.

### **Key Outcomes:**

- **AI Governance and Ethics:** The group discussed UNESCO's collaboration with government ministries to develop ethical guidelines for AI governance. They emphasized the importance of ensuring ethical standards in AI development and implementation.
- **Behavioral Change Measurement:** Participants delved into methodologies for measuring behavioral change, highlighting the need for robust metrics to assess the impact of social interventions and policies.
- **Sports:** The group recognized the potential of sports as a tool for social inclusion and community development. They discussed ways to leverage sports programs to promote gender equality, youth empowerment, and social cohesion.
- **Disability Inclusion:** Addressing disability inclusion, the group proposed the development of inclusive toolkits for schools and communities to support the educational and social inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- **Engaging Men and Boys:** To promote gender equality, participants emphasized the importance of engaging men and boys in discussions and initiatives. They suggested collaborating with governmental departments responsible for training programs to incorporate gender sensitization modules.
- **Consultation Process:** Participants highlighted the role of UNESCO Chairs in facilitating consultation processes and leveraging their networks to amplify UNESCO's priorities. They emphasized the importance of mapping activities to UNESCO's goals and utilizing hashtags for effective communication.

### **Recommendations:**

- Develop comprehensive ethical guidelines for AI governance in collaboration with government ministries and international stakeholders.
- Establish standardized metrics for measuring behavioral change to evaluate the effectiveness of social interventions and policies.

- Implement sports programs that promote gender equality, youth empowerment, and social cohesion, leveraging UNESCO's network and resources.
- Create inclusive toolkits for schools and communities to support the educational and social inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- Incorporate gender sensitization modules into governmental training programs to engage men and boys in promoting gender equality.
- Foster collaboration among UNESCO Chairs to facilitate consultation processes and amplify UNESCO's priorities through effective communication strategies.

**Conclusion:** The Social & Human Sciences group underscored the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and innovative approaches in addressing societal challenges. By focusing on AI governance, behavioral change measurement, sports, disability inclusion, and gender equality, the group outlined actionable recommendations to advance UNESCO's objectives and promote social justice and inclusion.

#### 4.A.3 Natural Sciences

The Natural Sciences group convened at the UNESCO Chair Roundtable to explore collaborative initiatives aimed at addressing environmental challenges and promoting sustainable development across South Asia. Participants discussed a range of topics including climate science literacy, science-based environmental education, biosphere reserves, geoparks, disaster risk reduction, and marine pollution management.

##### **Key Outcomes:**

1. *Permanent Exhibition on Climate Science Literacy:* The group proposed establishing permanent exhibitions on climate science literacy in each sub-regional country, with initiatives already underway in India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. These exhibitions aim to enhance public understanding of climate science and its implications for sustainable development.

2. *Seminar on Science-Based Environmental Education:* Plans were discussed for organizing seminars on science-based environmental education in three locations, focusing on pollution management, water and waste management, and plastic waste engineering. These seminars aim to promote environmental awareness and action through education and knowledge exchange.

3. *World Biosphere Reserved Congress:* The group proposed jointly organizing a co-session for South Asia and Central Asia at the World Biosphere Reserved Congress in China in September 2025. This initiative aims to strengthen collaboration on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development among UNESCO Chairs and institutes.

4. *Biosphere Reserves and Geoparks:* Efforts are underway to develop Biosphere Reserves and Geoparks in collaboration with governmental agencies in India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

These initiatives aim to promote biodiversity conservation, sustainable tourism, and community development in designated natural areas.

5. *Disaster Risk Reduction*: A joint certificate program for training in disaster risk reduction and community-scale disaster resilience will be developed and launched. This program, supported by UNESCO Chairs, aims to build capacity and enhance resilience to natural disasters in South Asian communities.

6. *International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction*: The group plans to organize a joint workshop and training programs in conjunction with the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction on October 13, 2024. These activities aim to raise awareness and build capacity for disaster risk reduction efforts.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Establish permanent exhibitions on climate science literacy in collaboration with UNESCO Chairs in each sub-regional country, focusing on local climate impacts and solutions.

2. Organize seminars on science-based environmental education in multiple locations, addressing key environmental challenges and promoting sustainable practices.

3. Jointly organize sessions at international conferences and congresses to enhance collaboration on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development among South Asian countries.

4. Collaborate with governmental agencies to establish Biosphere Reserves and Geoparks in India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, fostering biodiversity conservation and sustainable tourism.

5. Develop and launch a joint certificate program for disaster risk reduction training, leveraging the expertise of UNESCO Chairs and institutes in South Asia.

6. Organize joint workshops and training programs to commemorate the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, raising awareness and building capacity for disaster resilience in South Asian communities.

The Natural Sciences group outlined a series of collaborative initiatives aimed at addressing environmental challenges and promoting sustainable development across South Asia. By focusing on climate science literacy, environmental education, biodiversity conservation, and disaster risk reduction, the group aims to enhance public awareness, build capacity, and foster cooperation among UNESCO Chairs and institutes in the region.

#### 4.A.4 Culture Sector

The Culture group convened at the UNESCO Chair Roundtable to explore collaborative initiatives aimed at promoting cultural diversity, heritage preservation, and community development across South Asia. Participants discussed a range of topics including community-based heritage research, cultural arts in education, intercultural dialogue, and the integration of indigenous knowledge systems.

##### **Key Outcomes:**

1. *Community-Based Heritage Research:* The group emphasized the importance of community involvement in heritage preservation and sustainable development. Initiatives such as community-based heritage research aim to empower local communities to identify, document, and preserve their cultural heritage.
2. *Cultural Arts in Education:* Participants discussed the integration of cultural arts and heritage education into school curricula and higher education programs. By incorporating cultural arts and heritage, students can gain a deeper understanding of their cultural identity and heritage, fostering intercultural dialogue and respect.
3. *Intercultural Dialogue:* The group highlighted the importance of intercultural dialogue in promoting understanding and cooperation among diverse communities. Initiatives such as community radio programs in local languages aim to foster intercultural understanding and appreciation.
4. *Indigenous Knowledge Systems:* Efforts are underway to integrate indigenous knowledge systems into education and research programs. By recognizing and valuing indigenous knowledge, societies can benefit from traditional practices and sustainable approaches to resource management.
5. *Community Development around World Heritage Sites:* The group discussed strategies for promoting community development around World Heritage Sites. Initiatives such as community-based tourism and local artisanal crafts aim to generate income for local communities while preserving cultural heritage.

##### **Recommendations:**

1. Support community-based heritage research initiatives to empower local communities in identifying and preserving their cultural heritage.
2. Integrate cultural arts and heritage education into school curricula and higher education programs to promote intercultural dialogue and understanding.

3. Promote intercultural dialogue through community radio programs and other grassroots initiatives in local languages.
4. Recognize and value indigenous knowledge systems in education and research, integrating traditional practices into sustainable development efforts.
5. Support community development initiatives around World Heritage Sites, promoting sustainable tourism and local economic empowerment.

The Culture group outlined a series of collaborative initiatives aimed at promoting cultural diversity, heritage preservation, and community development across South Asia. By empowering local communities, integrating cultural arts and heritage education, and fostering intercultural dialogue, the group aims to strengthen cultural identity, promote sustainable development, and build bridges between diverse communities.

#### **4.B Second Round of Group Work Sessions**

In the second round of group work sessions, participants delved into emerging issues and specialised topics, aiming to devise strategies and action plans to address specific challenges. The following thematic areas were covered:

##### **4.B.1 Gender Equity**

The Gender Equity group convened at the UNESCO Chair Roundtable to address key issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment in South Asia. Participants discussed various challenges and opportunities, including intersectionality, gender mainstreaming, and the spectrum of gender identity.

##### **Key Outcomes:**

1. *Intersectionality*: The group emphasized the importance of understanding intersectionality and its role in addressing gender equality issues. Recognizing the intersections of gender with other factors such as class, ethnicity, and sexuality is vital for developing inclusive and effective policies and programs.
2. *Gender Mainstreaming*: Participants highlighted the need to integrate gender mainstreaming into all approaches and initiatives. By ensuring that gender perspectives are systematically incorporated into decision-making processes and program implementation, organizations can promote gender equality and women's empowerment.
3. *Spectrum of Gender*: The group underscored the importance of recognizing the spectrum of gender identities and expressions. It is essential to adopt a systematic approach to

addressing gender diversity, ensuring that efforts are not tokenistic but genuinely inclusive and representative of diverse gender identities.

4. *Collaborative Feedback Sessions:* Participants emphasized the importance of regular feedback and collaborative sessions to enhance collaboration and coordination among UNESCO Chairs and partner organizations. These sessions provide opportunities for sharing best practices, addressing challenges, and amplifying gender equity initiatives.

5. *Leveraging Networks:* The group discussed strategies for leveraging each other's networks and amplifying gender equity conversations. By collaborating effectively and sharing resources and expertise, UNESCO Chairs can maximize their impact and promote gender equality across South Asia.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Incorporate intersectional approaches into gender equality initiatives to address the complex and interconnected nature of gender discrimination.
2. Integrate gender mainstreaming into all policies, programs, and initiatives to ensure that gender perspectives are systematically considered and addressed.
3. Promote inclusivity and representation of diverse gender identities and expressions in all activities and initiatives, avoiding tokenistic approaches.
4. Facilitate regular feedback and collaborative sessions among UNESCO Chairs and partner organizations to enhance coordination and collaboration on gender equity initiatives.
5. Leverage networks and partnerships to amplify gender equity conversations and promote gender equality across South Asia.

The Gender Equity group outlined a series of recommendations aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment across South Asia. By adopting intersectional approaches, integrating gender mainstreaming, and promoting inclusivity and representation, the group aims to advance gender equity and foster a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

### **4.B.2 Priority Africa**

The *Priority Africa* subgroup's discussion during the UNESCO Chair Roundtable emphasised the importance of supporting peace, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and upholding the ideals of the United Nations (UN) and UNESCO in the African context. Participants highlighted the significance of collaboration between UNESCO Chairs in South

Asia and African universities, as well as the need to address key issues such as human rights, gender equality, and environmental sustainability.

## **Key Outcomes**

### **I. Support for Peace and SDGs**

- Recommendations emphasised supporting peace initiatives and advancing the SDGs in Africa, aligning with the principles of the UN and UNESCO.
- Examples were shared of collaborative efforts involving specialists from Rwanda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and the African Union Commission with UNESCO Chairs in Asia and the Pacific.

### **II. Cooperation with African Universities**

- Recognition of existing cooperation between some UNESCO Chairs and African universities, indicating the potential for further collaboration in addressing regional challenges.

### **III. Key Focus Areas**

- Keywords such as geoparks, drinking water, plastic management, and climate science literacy were highlighted, underscoring the importance of science-based environmental education.
- Mention of the India-Africa-Hackathon organised by India in collaboration with UNESCO, demonstrating a commitment to addressing shared challenges.

## **Recommendations**

### **I. UNESCO Chair Conference on SDG Issues in the Indian Ocean**

- Proposal to organise a conference in Pune, India, focusing on SDG-related issues in the Indian Ocean region, inviting UNESCO Chairs and institutes from East Africa.
- Break-out sessions planned on various thematic areas including communication and information, culture, education, natural sciences, and social and human sciences.
- Co-organization suggested with UNESCO, MRC, UNESCO Chairs, and the African Union Commission, with potential involvement of other UN agencies such as FAO, UNDP, and UNEP.
- Consideration of seed funding from UNESCO New Delhi's SC Unit budget to support the initiative.

## **Objectives**

- Facilitate outreach to Africa through collaborative efforts between UNESCO and UNESCO Chairs in South Asia.
- Contribute to transforming rhetoric into action by fostering improved mindsets aligned with the SDGs and promoting concrete initiatives for sustainable development in Africa.

## **Conclusion**

The African subgroup's deliberations underscored the importance of concerted efforts to support peace, achieve the SDGs, and address key challenges facing Africa. By implementing the recommendations outlined, UNESCO Chairs and collaborating institutions can play a significant role in advancing sustainable development and fostering meaningful partnerships between South Asia and Africa.

### **4.B.3 Misinformation & Disinformation**

The proliferation of misinformation and disinformation posed significant challenges to societal cohesion and informed decision-making. Participants underscored the importance of media literacy education, fact-checking initiatives, and collaborative efforts to counter misinformation through digital platforms and community engagement.

## **Introduction**

The Misinformation/Disinformation (Mis/Disinformation) Group convened during the Roundtable Gathering of UNESCO Chairs in South Asia to address the pressing challenges posed by the proliferation of false information in contemporary society. Recognizing the detrimental impact of misinformation on social cohesion and democratic discourse, the group deliberated on strategies to counter this phenomenon effectively. Encapsulated below are the key insights and recommendations put forth by the Mis/Disinformation Group, aiming to inform future initiatives and foster a more discerning and informed public sphere.

## **Key Takeaways**

### **1. Empowering Youth Engagement in Countering Mis/Disinformation**

- Collaboration with youth groups as partners in combating misinformation at the community level, leveraging platforms such as community radios.
- Recognition of the proliferation of fact-checking operations with varying standards, emphasising the importance of credibility and trustworthiness.
- Advocacy for ethical journalism and media literacy to instil a scientific understanding of misinformation among young people.

### **2. Promotion of Intercultural Dialogue**

- Emphasis on fostering commonality among diverse communities rather than accentuating differences.

- Distinction between "fact" and "truth" to facilitate constructive dialogue.
- Utilisation of nonviolent communication techniques rooted in values such as those espoused by Mahatma Gandhi.

### **3. Collaboration with Fact-Checking Organisations**

- Integration of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and Nonviolent Communication (NVC) principles across diverse UNESCO Chairs' initiatives.
- Exploration of the impacts of misinformation in future community engagements, with specific Chairs designated for this purpose.

### **4. Integration of Mis/Disinformation Awareness in Education**

- Recognition of the presence of misinformation in pedagogy and curricula, advocating for interventions at the educational level.
- Addressing the "hidden curriculum" problem and promoting scientific information in social sciences discourse.
- Incorporation of critical thinking development in existing training programs, exemplified by initiatives such as the introduction of "critical scholarship" in Teacher Education at Kathmandu University.

### **5. Enhancing Information Verification Skills**

- Provision of awareness training on tools for verifying information, including gamified approaches.
- Acknowledgment of the correlation between misinformation spikes and significant events, underscoring the importance of countering misinformation in educational settings.

## **Analytic/Summative Conclusion**

The deliberations of the Misinformation/Disinformation Group underscored the multifaceted nature of the challenge posed by false information and the imperative for collaborative, multi-level interventions. By empowering youth, promoting intercultural dialogue, fostering collaboration with fact-checking organisations, integrating misinformation awareness in education, and enhancing information verification skills, the group articulated a comprehensive approach to address this pressing issue. These insights serve as a blueprint for future endeavours aimed at nurturing a more informed, resilient, and inclusive society in South Asia and beyond.

### **4.B.4 Green Education**

In light of growing environmental concerns, discussions on green education focused on integrating environmental sustainability into educational curricula, promoting eco-friendly practices, and fostering environmental awareness among students and communities. Recommendations included developing interdisciplinary environmental programs, establishing eco-schools, and supporting initiatives for sustainable development.

## 5. Recommendations & Way Forward

Building upon the insightful discussions and outcomes of the conference, several recommendations emerge to guide future actions and collaborations among UNESCO Chairs in South Asia.

1. *Establish Regular Communication Channels:* It is imperative to establish regular communication channels among UNESCO Chairs in South Asia to facilitate information sharing, collaboration, and coordination. This can include setting up virtual meetings, email newsletters, and online forums to ensure ongoing dialogue and exchange of ideas.

2. *Utilize Social Media Platforms:* Leveraging social media platforms can amplify the impact of UNESCO initiatives by reaching a broader audience and engaging stakeholders across South Asia. By sharing updates, success stories, and relevant resources on platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, UNESCO Chairs can raise awareness and mobilize support for their initiatives.

3. *Foster Collaboration with Government Agencies:* Collaborating with government agencies and other stakeholders is essential to maximize outreach and effectiveness. By forging partnerships with ministries, departments, and local authorities, UNESCO Chairs can leverage resources, expertise, and networks to implement initiatives and address pressing challenges in the region.

4. *Conduct Specific Conferences or Workshops:* To delve deeper into the priority areas identified during the roundtable gathering, UNESCO Chairs can organize specific conferences or workshops focused on these topics. These events provide opportunities for in-depth discussions, knowledge exchange, and capacity building, ultimately contributing to advancing UNESCO's goals and objectives in South Asia.

5. *Share Best Practices and Successful Initiatives:* Sharing best practices and successful initiatives is crucial for inspiring and informing future endeavors. UNESCO Chairs can compile case studies, reports, and resources showcasing innovative approaches and impactful interventions. By disseminating these insights widely, Chairs can inspire others, foster learning, and catalyze positive change across the region.

By implementing these recommendations, UNESCO Chairs in South Asia can strengthen their collaboration, enhance their impact, and contribute to building more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable societies in the region. Through concerted efforts and collective action, UNESCO Chairs can play a pivotal role in advancing UNESCO's mission and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in South Asia.

## **6. Conclusion**

The Roundtable of UNESCO Chairs in South Asia provided a valuable platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange. Participants identified key areas for action, worked towards aligning their efforts with UNESCO's strategic objectives and developed recommendations to advance UNESCO's objectives in the region. The roundtable underscored the importance of collective efforts in addressing complex challenges and reaffirmed the commitment of UNESCO Chairs towards key areas such as advancing sustainable development, fostering inclusive education, and promoting cultural diversity in the region. Moving forward, participants emphasised the need for regular communication, leveraging social media for outreach, and aligning activities with UNESCO's strategic goals.

By fostering partnerships and leveraging expertise, UNESCO Chairs in South Asia are poised to make significant contributions to achieving the SDGs and advancing UNESCO's mission of building peace, eradicating poverty, and promoting sustainable development globally.

## 7.0 Appendix

### 7.1 Annexure 1: Detailed Agenda for Event

#### Round Table of UNESCO Chairs

Dates: 18-19 March 2024

Venue: Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, Bhubaneswar

#### DAY 1

18th March 2024	
10.00 - 10.10am	Opening remarks - Mr. Tim Curtis, Director, UNESCO New Delhi Regional office
10.10 - 10.20 am	Remarks by Prof. Amareswar Galla UNESCO Chair on Inclusive Museums & Sustainable Heritage Development
10.20 - 10.45 am	Tea
10.45 -11.15am	Presentation: Mr. Tim Curtis, Director - Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 - Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 - 2030 Agenda
11.15 - 11.45am	Q and A
11.45am -1.00pm	Brainstorming session - How can Chairs contribute to these objectives?
1.00 - 2.00pm	LUNCH
2.00 – 5.00pm	Chairs work in different groups
<i>Cultural Evening by Indigenous performers followed by Founder's dinner at Trident Hotel</i>	

#### DAY 2

19th March 2024	
10.00am – 1.00pm	Joint activities in achieving Global priorities

1.00 - 2.00pm	LUNCH
2.00 - 4.00 pm	Wrapping-up Key priority areas for the Region and how can Chairs contribute individually and collectively to UNESCO's work?
<i>Departures or sightseeing followed by dinner</i>	

## 7.2 Annexure 2: Participant List

### UNESCO Delhi Office

1. Mr. Timothy Curtis, Director and Representative of UNESCO New Delhi Regional Office for Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka
2. Mr. Hezekiel Dlamini, Advisor for Communication and Information for South Asia
3. Ms. Joyce Poan, Programme Specialist and Chief of Sector – Education
4. Ms. Eunsong Kim, Programme Specialist and Chief of Sector – Social and Human Sciences
5. Ms. Sarita Jadav, National Programme Officer
6. Mr. Benno Boer, Programme Specialist and Chief of Sector – Natural Sciences
7. Mr. Anand Kanitkar, National Programme Officer

### UNESCO Chairs

1. Professor M.D. Nalapat, UNESCO Chair for the Promotion of the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence; Manipal Academy of Higher Education
2. Professor Priyankar Upadhyaya, UNESCO Chair for Peace and Intercultural Understanding, Banaras Hindu University
3. Professor Vinod Pavarala, UNESCO Chair on Community Media, University of Hyderabad
4. Dr. Rangaraj Giridharan, UNESCO Chair in Inclusive Adapted Physical Education and Yoga, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University
5. Giuseppe Musumeci, UNESCO/Cardinal Paul Poupard Foundation Chair on Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, St Andrew's College of Arts, Science and Commerce
6. Dr. Bhavani Rao, UNESCO Chair on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, Amrita University
7. Prof. Baby Shari P.A, UNESCO Chair on Community Based Disability Management and Rehabilitation Studies, University of Calicut, Prof in Psychology
8. Dr. Maneesha Vinodini Ramesh, UNESCO Chair on Experiential Learning For Sustainable Innovation and Development, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham
9. Prof. Pramod. K. Nayar, UNESCO Chair in Vulnerability Studies, University of Hyderabad,

10. Dr. E. Pushpalata, UNESCO Chair on Indigenous Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development, University of Calicut, Kerala
11. Ms. Pragya Chaube, Nominated by Mr. Rajesh Tandon, UNESCO Chair on Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), New Delhi
12. Prof. Bal Chandra Luitel, UNESCO Chair in Teacher Education, Kathmandu University, Hattiban, Lalitpur, Nepal
13. Dr. Dhiraj Pradhananga, UNESCO Chair on Mountain Water Sustainability, University of Calgary.
14. Prof. Lalith Rajapakse, UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Water Resources Management in South Asia, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka
15. Prof. Amareswar Galla, UNESCO Chair on Inclusive Museums and Sustainable Heritage Development, Anant National University
16. Dr. Shahbuddin Nuramahamad Pathan, Former Vice Chancellor, Nagpur; Former Vice-President, ICCR, New Delhi; (Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India); Strategic Advisor & National Coordinator; World Peace Centre (Alandi), MAEER's MIT, Pune, Bharat.

### **Scribes**

1. Ms. Nizni Hans, Director, Project & Research, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences
2. Ms. Adiroopa Mukherjee, Deputy Director - Projects, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences

### 7.3 Annexure 3: Scan of Attendance Sheets

**REGISTRATION SHEET**

Round Table of UNESCO Chairs  
18-19 March 2024

Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, Bhubaneswar

Sl.No	Name	Institute / Organization / University	Signature	
			18 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
1	Pranav K Nayyar	U of Hyderabad		
2	Prof. L. Pichpalaha	University of Calicut		
3	Dr. Pragna Chawke	PRIA		
4	M.D. Malarat	MATE		
5	Kripankar Upadhyay	BHU		
6	Dr. S.N. Pathan	World Peace University		
7	Lalith Rajapakse	UNESAWM/UNOS		
8	Dr. Manesha Vinodini Ramu	Amrita University		
9	Tim CURTIS	UNESCO		
10	Herakiel Dlamini	UNESCO		

Sl.No	Name	Institute / Organization / University	Signature	
			18 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
1	Joyce Pagan	UNESCO New Delhi		
2	Vinod Ravarala	UNESCO Chair on Community Medicine, Univ of Andhra		
3	Balchandra Smitel	UNESCO Chair on Teacher Education, Kathmandu Univ.		
4	Eunsoy Kim	UNESCO New Delhi		
5	Dhiraj Raacharanga	Tribhuvan Chiesrity		
6	Anand Kanitkar	UNESCO New Delhi		
7	M.D. Malarat	MATE		

Sl.No	Name	Institute / Organization / University	Signature	
			18 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
	Prof. BABY SHARI. P.A	University of Calicut		
	Bhavani Rao R.	Amrita University		
	GRODHANAN RANGARAJ	Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Education and Research Institute		
	Bruno Böer	UNESCO		
	Giuseppe Musu area	UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMANITIES		
	Savitri Jadhav	UNESCO.		
	Pranav K Nayyar	U		

## 7.4 Annexure 4: Chairs' Significant Achievement Results & Plans for 2024-2025

### 1. Prof. Pramod K Nayar

Round table of UNESCO Chairs

KIIT, Bhubaneswar 18-19 March 2024

Name of Chair: UNESCO Chair in Vulnerability Studies

<https://ucvulnerabilitystudies.uohyd.ac.in>

Chairholder: Pramod K Nayar

Institution: University of Hyderabad

Country: India

Date of Establishment: 30 September 2022

#### **Significant achievements /results**

This Chair is a 'teaching and research unit'.

In terms of research output, the Chairholder has published two books (*Nuclear Cultures*, Routledge 2023; *VulnerableEarth*, Cambridge 2024), over two dozen pieces of journalism and 9 scholarly essays in journals and academic anthologies worldwide. Of these, three (in *Photography and Culture*, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* and *Gothic Studies*) are pandemic-related and examined the 'the systemic fragility' and 'compound inequalities' (Major Programmes III: 04014).

In terms of teaching, the Chair has offered 3 MA Electives at UoH (total enrolment: 55), one Faculty Development Program (enrolment: 485), conducted one workshop (enrolment: 15), one Online Course of 2 credits on the Ministry of Education's NPTEL (enrolment: 840). It has co-organised two National Conferences on the theme, with NIT-AP (participants: 69) and in the Department of Urdu in UoH (participants: 45). It has offered a course on Ageing and Literature with Queen's University Belfast's continuing education program (enrolment: 22).

The Chair has also delivered 24 talks since its inception. The Chair's website has 12 interdisciplinary audio-visual OERs on various aspects of vulnerability (gender, health, unorganized labour, ageing, language vulnerability, climate crisis, migration fiction, informational vulnerability, Human Rights, etc), 3 text-based OERS (climate change, ageing, war and vulnerability). It has collaborated with 9 institutions nationally and internationally. This is a part of the 'global education agenda based on research, foresight & innovation' and 'Enhance knowledge for climate action, biodiversity, water & ocean management, & disaster risk reduction' (Major Program IV: Strategic Objective 1 and 2).

#### **Plans for 2024-2025**

The Chair is working, in accordance with its mandate, towards theorising vulnerability through an understanding of the ‘complex interconnected systems’ and by ‘promoting a people-centred approach that enhances human dignity and compassion’ (04008). Its preferred method is the OER and the approach is of the Public Humanities, and aims to ‘foster knowledge sharing and skills development’ to ‘ensure more effective and inclusive learning’ (Outcome 8 Ed 8).

As part of its teaching plans, the Chair has submitted two proposals to the Global Initiative of Academic Network (GIAN) of the Government of India. The first, on Eco Precarity, has sections on Animal Vulnerability, Plant Vulnerability, Extinction Literature and Environmental Fiction. The second, on Posthuman Vulnerability, has sections on Robot Rights, Robot Care, Moral Enhancement, among others. Both programs, if approved, will receive GoI funding and will host at least 60% content from international speakers. (The second also fits Strategic Objective 4, O9.)

Also in the pipeline are an NPTEL/SWAYAM Course on Early Modern Literature/Shakespeare and Vulnerability, and a Lecture Series, Siting Vulnerability (season III) that will become an OER. Workshops have been planned in at least three institutions across the country, and at least one and one Faculty Development Program, to enable skill-development in researching and teaching vulnerability. National Conferences are under discussion.

As part of ongoing research also aimed at theorising and different forms of vulnerability, the faculty are working on a commissioned book on disasters in colonial India and a commissioned book on Ecology, Precarity and Poetry from the Global South. A third is under discussion.

Lectures, academic papers and journalism, we expect, will continue. We shall also seek collaboration with other HEIs.

## **2. Prof. Madhav Das Nalapat**

UNESCO Chair for the Promotion of the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence

Chairholder : Prof. Madhav Das Nalapat

Institution : Manipal Academy of Higher Education, India

Established : 1999

### **Significant Achievements**

The UNESCO Chair at Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE) actively promotes cooperation and knowledge sharing across various crucial areas that align with UNESCO's priorities. The focus is on Peace, Sustainable Development, International Cooperation, Research, Outreach, and Cultural Heritage preservation. Through its constituent units, MAHE

organises conferences, dialogues, and seminars, emphasising action-oriented approaches. It has facilitated initiatives such as vocational education promotion, water conservation efforts, fostering community engagement and youth empowerment. Rather than remain in a silo, the Chair has worked in an "All of University" mode, harnessing the strengths of the entire institution to move towards furthering the objectives set by UNESCO.

MAHE's advocacy efforts include organising workshops and symposiums addressing UNESCO's key messages, such as rediscovering humanity and promoting dialogue. Its constituent units have contributed significantly to research on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), producing over 500 publications, including books, articles, and documentaries. These efforts are integrated into MAHE's curricula to advance UNESCO's goals, promoting science communication, intercultural studies, and sustainability solutions.

The Chairholder has facilitated and mentored institutional collaborations with universities worldwide, enhancing teaching, research, and capacity-building initiatives. MAHE affiliates have received prestigious fellowships and awards, highlighting their contributions to cultural studies, foresight research, and sustainability initiatives. Moreover, MAHE actively works towards achieving SDGs, with specific targets like attaining net zero emissions by 2040 and promoting gender equality. It has been recognized globally for its efforts, ranking fourth in SDG-5 Gender Equality in 2023. MAHE's commitment includes providing equal access to education and employment, developing gender-responsive curricula, and conducting research on gender equity and justice. Overall, MAHE's UNESCO Chair plays a vital role in advancing UNESCO's mission through collaborative partnerships, research, and advocacy efforts across diverse domains.

### **Plans for 2024-2025**

In a period marked by uncertainty and conflicts, the UNESCO Chair at MAHE is committed to advancing the Chair's mission through its activities. In terms of research and knowledge production, the Chair plans to continue existing projects and to fashion new ones, so as to support initiatives such as preserving cultures and languages. There remains emphasis on conducting high-quality research that connects science with society and engages various stakeholders. Additionally, the Chair aims to promote multidisciplinary research, and to increase through guidance and mentorship the number of peer-reviewed publications by colleagues. This includes leveraging partnerships with publishers such as Springer Nature, Manupal Universal Press, Rupa and Penguin Random House for wider dissemination of concepts and findings.

In terms of online presence, the Chair actively utilises social media platforms to promote its activities and aims for broader outreach during the fresh period, should this be approved. The teaching and lecturing aspect of the Chair involves conducting lectures across India and abroad, as well as integrating peace studies into various disciplines within MAHE. Efforts are being made to expand outreach through digital platforms, and to devise new courses aligned with UNESCO's goals.

The Chair, including through associated colleagues, is involved in training and institutional capacity development, collaborating with organisations for grassroots capacity building and organising various programs. Regarding student mobility and exchanges, the Chair is establishing partnerships for student exchanges and international collaborations, including twinning programs and research initiatives.

There are also initiatives in place for visiting professorships and fellowships, with funding opportunities for international scholars to visit MAHE and facilitate opportunities for faculty members to go abroad. Conferences, events, seminars, and webinars are regularly conducted under the auspices of the UNESCO Chair, focusing on SDG-related themes with international participation. Finally, the Chair actively engages in networking, partnerships, and inter-institutional cooperation to mobilise funding, organise events, and enhance research outcomes. Efforts are being made to promote inclusivity in partnerships and foster cooperation between universities through exchanges and joint initiatives.

### **3. Prof. Budd Hall and Dr. Rajesh Tandon**

UNESCO Chair in Community - Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education

Chairholder: Prof. Budd Hall; Dr. Rajesh Tandon

Institution: University of Victoria, Canada; Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), India

Country: Canada, India

Established: 2012

#### **Significant Achievements:**

##### *Capacity building*

- UNESCO Chair CBRSR conducted Mentor Training Programs for cohorts 6-8 and 9 of the flagship Knowledge For Change consortium in community-based participatory research (CBPR), training 51 mentors. <https://www.unescochair-cbrsr.org/k4c-2/>
- Prof Hall and Dr Tandon led a faculty enhancement residency in CBPR at the University of Ibague, Colombia in December 2023.
- Berhampur University hosted a 6-day Faculty Development Program (FDP) in CBPR from October 9-14, 2023, in collaboration with UNESCO Chair, PRIA, and CYSD, attended by 23 faculties from the university and affiliated colleges. <https://www.unescochair-cbrsr.org/events/faculty-development-programme-at-berhampur-university-odisha/>
- To support UGC's mandate for social responsibility and community engagement in higher education, UNESCO Chair partnered with UGC to provide CBPR training across seven networks in India. Training sessions were held in Nagpur, Madurai, Koraput, Bhopal, Agra, Kurukshetra, and Tezpur between April and July 2022.

[https://pria.org/knowledge\\_resource/1690619972\\_University%20Grants%20Commission.pdf](https://pria.org/knowledge_resource/1690619972_University%20Grants%20Commission.pdf)

- Under UGC Guidelines 2.0, UNESCO Chair CBRSR organized a 5-day FDP from March 13-17, 2023, at S.K.M.U., attended by 42 teachers from 21 colleges. <https://www.unescochair-cbrsr.org/events/training-of-master-trainers-in-community-based-participatory-research-in-dumka/>
- In the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary International Conference of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs (held in UNESCO Paris during November 3-4, 2022), we made an appeal for collective mobilisation of all higher education institutions, UNESCO Chairs, UNITWIN Networks and UNESCO National Commissions present to take action on Agenda 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals in “Transforming Knowledge for Just & Sustainable Futures”.  
[https://www.unescochair-cbrsr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/English\\_Invitation\\_for\\_Collective\\_Mobilization\\_to\\_Transform\\_Higher\\_Education.pdf](https://www.unescochair-cbrsr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/English_Invitation_for_Collective_Mobilization_to_Transform_Higher_Education.pdf)

### *Research*

- The UNESCO Chair-led Knowledge for Change (K4C) Global Consortium on Training Community-Based Participatory Research (BKC) conducted a comprehensive five-year project (2017-2022) involving twelve K4C hubs across nine countries. The initiative focused on examining the dynamics of knowledge production in higher education while addressing power imbalances. The research culminated in an open access book: Bridging Knowledge Cultures.  
Link: <https://brill.com/display/title/69418?language=en>

### *Policy Advocacy*

- UNESCO World Higher Education Conference 2022 took place 18-22 May 2022 in Barcelona, Spain. UNESCO Chair organized four side events that culminated in policy briefs. An important output was in the culmination of “Indigenous knowledge & Higher Education Report”.  
<https://www.unescochair-cbrsr.org/policy-briefs-and-event-notes-for-whec-2022/>
- The Consultation on UNESCO Open Science Draft Recommendations took place on 17 April 2021. Dr. Tandon provided his expert opinion on Open Science Recommendations from an Indian perspective.
- Dr Rajesh Tandon spoke in the expert consultation for the 5<sup>th</sup> draft national Science, technology, and Innovation Policy in the consultations organized by DST-CPR IISc Bengaluru on 24th January 2021.

## **Proposed plans for 2024 – 2025**

### *Capacity building*

- The third faculty enhancement residency in CBPR at the University of Ibagué, Colombia is currently ongoing (March 16 – 23, 2024).
- The calls for the 10<sup>th</sup> cohort for the K4C MTP in CBPR would be out in late 2024.
- With UGC, more regional FDP in CBPR would be conducted at the designated Malviya Mission Teacher’s Training Centers.
- The UNESCO Chair would provide workshops on different aspects of open science to early career researchers to create awareness and promote adoption of open science practices.

### *Research*

Funded by IDRC in 2023, the aim of the DECODE project is to provide evidence of the impact of community-led and Indigenous-led research or knowledge creation in the broad context of the climate crisis. The Project aims to systematise indigenous-, community-knowledge, develop protocols for ethical engagement of working with community-knowledge, and develop an open access platform for long-term sustenance and accessibility of the knowledge.

### *Policy Advocacy*

Through our research activities, we aim to develop:

- A framework for ethics committees to assess the research methodologies, protocols and data ethics thereafter on community-based research.
- A guideline for the funding agencies to assess community-based research, especially in the context of SDGs and climate action.

## **4. Prof. (Dr.) E. Pushpalata**

UNESCO Chair on Indigenous Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development, University of Calicut. Established on 18th June, 2021.

Chair holder: Prof. (Dr.) E. Pushpalatha Institution: University of Calicut

State and Country: Kerala, India

### **Significant Achievements in Last Two Years**

#### 1. *Skill Development for Indigenous Youth*

The Chair could equip students from Indigenous communities in Kerala at the postgraduate level with the latest tools and techniques in research methods, integrating opportunities in artificial intelligence with emerging methods aligned with the indigenous worldview and the preservation of indigenous cultural heritage.

#### 2. *Promoting Quality Education and Equality of Access for Indigenous Students*

The Chair tried to bridge the ‘career gap’ experienced by indigenous students, signifying their inability to access opportunities in leading premium central institutes

in India after completing their higher secondary education. With a particular focus on girl students, the Chair identified the reasons behind this gap and provided necessary career guidance and follow-up programs named 'Gyan Deepam' (Light of Knowledge), ensuring that every student in selected schools can pursue their higher aspirations.

3. *Promoting Scientific Imagination for Indigenous Students in Schools through science workshops*

4. *Conservation of Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Heritage through Research and Training*

The Chair worked in line with the conservation of indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage by conducting in-depth studies on indigenous methods of paddy cultivation, regional diversities in craftsmanship, and indigenous methods of vector control. Additionally, the Chair equipped researchers with the necessary expertise to study and conserve the indigenous knowledge of fishing communities in northern Kerala. These research endeavours are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) put forth by UNESCO, aiming to conserve indigenous cultures.

5. *Building Strategic Partnerships with State and National Organizations and Institutions*

Partnerships with like-minded NGOs and institutions provided a joint platform for the UNESCO Chair to effectively conduct programs on the indigenous cultural heritage of Kerala, pooling human resources and expertise.

### **Plans For the Year 2024-2025**

1. Through synergies and a multi-sectoral approach, prioritising education, the Chair plans to launch an education program aimed at providing inclusive and equitable education. This initiative will promote lifelong learning opportunities through comprehensive and flexible pathways that integrate formal, non-formal learning opportunities for indigenous women in Kerala, with the goal of enhancing the employability of indigenous youth and ensuring gender equality.

2. In response to the digital divide exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Chair plans to launch a joint initiative to provide digital competence and skills, focusing on Artificial Intelligence, to indigenous youth, preparing them to face new challenges in education, research and building career.

3. Through collaborations with NGOs and research institutions, the Chair plans to initiate a major interdisciplinary research project focusing on the indigenous knowledge and practices of fishing communities in Coastal Kerala and Lakshadweep. This project aims to address challenges posed by sea-level rise, ocean pollution, acidification, loss of marine biodiversity, and coastal erosion through utilising time-tested indigenous methods of marine conservation.

In unity, the fusion of diverse knowledge systems holds the potential to inspire more resilient solutions and suitable policy measures, all the while fostering a culture of

peace, reverence, and inclusivity. United Nations Agencies focused on climate and environmental issues have acknowledged the significance of indigenous and local knowledge systems. Yet, a significant gap does persist in the methods and facilitation required to effectively harness and applying this invaluable knowledge in synergistic ways.

4. Launching an education program to deliver STI (Science, Technology, and Innovation) in alignment with the strategic objectives of UNESCO to higher secondary level students from indigenous communities, with the aim of fostering socio-economic transformation within indigenous communities.

The Chair plans to initiate a course on Museum Studies in the University of Calicut in alignment with UNESCO's policies and strategic objectives, aiming to strengthen the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions. This endeavor seeks to identify, safeguard, and promote living heritage, while also assessing the role of culture in fostering sustainable development.

## **5. Professor Priyankar Upadhyaya**

UNESCO Chair for Peace & Intercultural Understanding (912)

Banaras Hindu University

Est Dec 2010

### **Significant achievements /results**

The UNESCO Chair at BHU, founded in 2010, has developed into a regional hub dedicated to exploring the potential of culture and religion in peacebuilding. Supported by a committed team comprising five tenured faculty, two dozen researchers, and over ninety master's students, the Chair provides state-of-the-art teaching and research opportunities. In its current phase, the Chair has redoubled its efforts to train and empower peace researchers, scholars, and activists, focusing on leveraging religious and cultural diversity for peacebuilding endeavours.

Prof. Upadhyaya, the incumbent Chair, is deeply engaged in a spectrum of UNESCO-sponsored initiatives. He is spearheading the creation of a comprehensive global compendium on Interreligious Dialogue and has led a significant research project culminating in the publication of 'Long Walk of Peace: Towards Preventing Conflict.' His involvement extends to international platforms, where he has contributed to UNGA roundtable discussions and moderated a UN Conference on media literacy.

Moreover, the Chair maintains a close collaboration with UNESCO headquarters' Section for Intercultural Dialogue, actively participating in research projects such as 'Research on the Peace: UN Agenda' and 'Interreligious Dialogue: Good Practices, Challenges and Future Directions'. Prof. Upadhyaya's influence also extends to serving on the UNESCO UniTwin Executive Committee on Inter-religious Dialogue and Intercultural Understanding (IDIU).

Furthermore, he holds the position of Global Fellow at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (Oslo), where he contributed to research projects like Women Count for Peace, Peacebuilding, Diversity, and Human Security and Digital Designs in Peace Building. Additionally, as Senior Advisor at the UNESCO Chair for Human Rights, Democracy, and Peace at MIT Pune, Prof. Upadhyaya plays a pivotal role in shaping Peace Studies programs, reaffirming the Chair's dedication to fostering dialogue and promoting peace across diverse cultural and religious landscapes.

### **Plans for 2024-2025**

During 2024-25, the Chair will heighten efforts to promote intercultural peace and understanding, emphasizing the peacebuilding potential of cultural and religious diversity. Key initiatives include:

- Organizing university workshops to integrate cultural and religious dimensions into academic peacebuilding curricula.
- Collaborating with UNESCO Chairs and academic institutions to develop resources fostering religious and cultural cohesion through textbooks and digital content.
- Leveraging media and digital tools for research, teaching, and training in peacebuilding to disseminate knowledge on protecting inclusive heritage.
- Facilitating networking among scholars and activists to encourage interreligious and intercultural dialogue, sharing insights and best practices.
- Encouraging innovative research to highlight the importance of inclusive public spaces like Sufi shrines, emphasizing their role in preserving harmony.
- Continuing Training and Sensitization Programs to promote interest and skills in interreligious peace work, fostering collaborations with other UNESCO Chairs and institutions like the Peace Research Institute Oslo.
- Conducting workshops across regions to develop interdisciplinary teaching materials for intercultural peacebuilding, aiming to produce comprehensive textbooks and training materials on interreligious dialogue and understanding.
- Strengthening research collaborations with international NGOs like Religions for Peace and United Religion Initiative to generate valuable insights through projects like 'Interreligious Dialogue: Good Practices, Challenges and Future Directions.'
- Exploring social media's role in promoting interfaith action and solidarity, while combating misinformation and stereotypes through partnerships with initiatives like the UNESCO/UNAOC-MILID Network.
- Integrating films depicting everyday interreligious understanding into our framework for interfaith peacebuilding, collaborating with organizations like the Institute of Harmony and Peace Studies.

Through these initiatives, the Chair aims to advance intercultural peace and understanding, addressing contemporary challenges in religious peacebuilding locally and globally.

### **6. Dr. Dhiraj Pradhananga, Tribhuvan University, Nepal**

UNESCO Chair in Mountain Water Sustainability, University of Calgary, Canada

Chairholders:

- Dr. Kerry Black, Univ. Calgary
- Professor James McPhee Torres, Universidad de Chile
- Professor John Pomeroy, Primary Chairholder, Univ. Saskatchewan
- Dr. Dhiraj Pradhananga, Tribhuvan University, Nepal
- Dr. Corinne Schuster-Wallace, Univ. Saskatchewan
- Professor Frederick Wrona, Corresponding Chairholder, Univ. Calgary

The UNESCO Chair in Mountain Water Sustainability links Canada, Chile, Nepal, and mountain water communities around the world to the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP) in the quest to achieve sustainability of high mountain waters under the stress of climate change. The Chair adopts a transdisciplinary, inclusive approach by collaborating and codeveloping with users, rightsholders, and stakeholders to promote knowledge co-creation, solutions, capacity building, and dissemination around innovations in science, policy, and sustainable management of waters towards long-term social, ecological, and environmental benefits. This is an opportunity to address the differentiated vulnerabilities and opportunities for mountain water-dependent urban, rural, and Indigenous communities, and their needs for food, energy, livelihoods, health, and wellbeing. This Chair bridges geographic regions, disciplines, research methods, and voices to better understand changing water resources in high mountain regions and develop solutions towards sustainable water management within the context of sustainable communities and ecosystems.

This Chair will bridge geographic regions, disciplines, research methods, and voices to better understand changing water resources in high mountain regions and develop solutions towards sustainable water management within the context of sustainable communities and ecosystems. It will focus on the interplay between changing climate, cryosphere, hydrology, ecology, and water resources of high mountains and community sustainability and wellbeing.

The Chair will address three major questions:

- 1) How will mountain headwater rivers that are currently dominated by snow and glaciers provide secure freshwater for humanity and ecosystems under climate change?
- 2) How and to what degree are mountain ecosystems and communities impacted by changing climate and hydrological regimes?
- 3) How can mountain river basins be collaboratively managed to build equitable, sustainable, inclusive, and resilient communities' economies, and ecosystems whilst respecting and advancing Indigenous rights?

**A: Significant achievements /results –**

*The UNESCO Chair in Mountain Water Sustainability*

This Chair connects Canada, Chile, Nepal, and mountain water communities worldwide with the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP). Our mission is to achieve the sustainability of high mountain waters facing climate change pressures.

*Our Approach:*

- **Transdisciplinary and Inclusive:** We collaborate with users, rightsholders, and stakeholders to co-create knowledge, solutions, and capacity for sustainable water management.
- **Focus on Equity:** We strive to break down barriers in knowledge mobilization, promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion through the use of multiple knowledge systems, including indigenous knowledge.

*Our Impact (2023-2024):*

- **Established a Strong Foundation:** We held virtual and in-person meetings to develop the Chair's values, principles, and engagement protocols.
- **Increased Awareness:** We launched the Chair through a webinar (27 November 2023) introducing our objectives and initial activities in the context of the UN International Year for Glaciers' Preservation – 2025.
- **Built Local Capacity:** In Nepal, we organized capacity-building workshops for early career professionals, intergenerational dialogues on disaster resilience, and an international seminar on transdisciplinary approaches.
- **Advanced Research:** We hosted the International Conference on Mountain Hydrology and Cryosphere in Nepal (November 2023).

*Initial Activities in Nepal:*

- **Advanced the Chair's mission** by organizing capacity-building workshops for early career professionals in Nepal. Collaborations included Tribhuvan University, The Small Earth Nepal (SEN), UNESCO, the University of Colorado Boulder, and others.
- **Facilitated an intergenerational dialogue** on mountain water sustainability through disaster resilience practices in Nepal. Explored the potential of local and indigenous knowledge and technologies for sustainability.
- **Empowered early career professionals** by collaborating with the WISIONS Innovation Lab team on a seminar focused on transdisciplinary concepts and methods.

**B: Plans for 2024-2025 –**

*Our Focus:*

- **Research:** Understanding changing cryosphere, water, ecosystems, and communities in high mountain basins.

- Education: Launching a global training program integrating social and physical sciences, with a focus on ethical, equitable, and inclusive research methods.
- Capacity Building: Building knowledge and skills of researchers, professionals, and communities in sustainable water management.
  - Networking: Collaborating with international organizations like the International Network for Alpine Research Catchment Hydrology (INARCH, [www.usask.ca/inarch](http://www.usask.ca/inarch)) and Women Plus Water (<https://gwf.usask.ca/women-plus-water/>).

*Key Activities:*

- Launch the Chair website and student/researcher recruitment.
- Develop research and engagement strategies, including co-developing community-based frameworks for water sustainability.
- Advance hydrological model development and testing for flood and drought tolerance assessments.
- Offer training courses on ethical, equitable, and inclusive research, and physically based cold regions hydrological models for high mountains.
- Link with relevant international networks and programs. Ongoing funding proposal development.
- Support the UN International Year of Glaciers' Preservation (2025) through activities aligned with UNESCO task forces on international conferences, capacity building, and research initiatives (TFs 2 and 3).

**7. Professor R. L. H. Lalith Rajapakse, Sri Lanka**

- Name of Chair: UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Water Resources Management in South Asia, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka (ID 2023LK1690)
- Chairholder: Professor R. L. H. Lalith Rajapakse
- Institution, Country: University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka
- Date of Establishment: 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023

**Significant achievements (2022 – 2024)**

The University of Moratuwa's UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Water Resources Management in South Asia attached to the UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Centre for South Asia Water Management (UMCSAWM) has achieved significant milestones from 2022 to 2024. Notable accomplishments include the commencement of the 7<sup>th</sup> Intake of Fulltime Masters of Science Degree Program in Water Resources Engineering and Management, welcoming six participants from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan, along with 25 local/part-time postgraduate candidates. The South Asian Foundation (SAF)-Madanjeet Singh Scholarships were awarded to selected full-time students, fostering academic excellence and regional collaboration. The "Knowing Water Better" conference/workshop provided a platform for

knowledge exchange, with SAF scholars actively participating under the guidance of distinguished faculty members. The UMCSAWM's involvement in the establishment of the Higher Education Centre of Excellence for Climate Change in Sri Lanka facilitated strategic discussions with key stakeholders, including representatives from the Asian Development Bank. Additionally, UMCSAWM hosted the inauguration ceremony of EXMO 2023 thematic exhibition, promoting water conservation through art and quiz competitions for school children. Further engagements included participation in international conferences, field visits, and collaborations with UNESCO and other esteemed institutions. Notably, UMCSAWM's nomination as the Focal Point for Sri Lanka to the International Hydrological Program reflects its growing recognition and expertise in water resources management. These achievements underscore UMCSAWM's commitment to advancing knowledge, fostering regional cooperation, and addressing critical water challenges in South Asia.

### **Plans for 2024-2025**

From 2024 to 2025, the UMCSAWM and its UNESCO c Chair on Sustainable Water Resources Management in South Asia at the University of Moratuwa plan to reach significant milestones, demonstrating its commitment to advancing water resources management and sustainable development in the region. One notable achievement is the expansion of UMCSAWM's Masters program in water resources management, with an ongoing intake and a countrywide admission quota, enabling more regional participants to benefit from quality education and training. Additionally, UMCSAWM launched a Water Resources Management Masters program aimed at scientists, training them to serve as water ambassadors and aligning UMCSAWM activities with UNESCO's short-term and long-term targets, including Sustainable Development Goals SDG 13, SDG 6, SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 2. Furthermore, UMCSAWM has enhanced its irrigation water management and groundwater conservation study programs by introducing short-term courses and conducting training-of-trainers workshops. These initiatives aim to build capacity and expertise in water management practices, contributing to sustainable water use and conservation efforts. Moreover, UMCSAWM is actively promoting thematic research on Climate Action for Advanced Inclusive Education Project (CAFIED), fostering regional and international collaborations in education, science, and capacity building. These efforts prioritize gender balance and aim to address pressing climate challenges through innovative research and education initiatives, positioning UMCSAWM as a leading institution in advancing water management and sustainable development in South Asia.

### **8. Dr. Maneesha V. Ramesh**

UNESCO Chair on Experiential Learning for Sustainable Innovation and Development

Chairholder: Dr. Maneesha V. Ramesh

Institution: Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham

Country: India

Date of Establishment: 12 Jun 2020

### **Significant Achievements/Results**

The UNESCO Chair on Experiential Learning for Sustainable Innovation and Development has achieved significant milestones since inception in 2020. The development of a global curriculum on sustainable development, enriched with experiential learning, stands out as a key accomplishment. This curriculum, crafted through collaboration with 300+ experts from 80 HEIs across 20 disciplines, spans multiple thematic areas and serves as the foundation for the flagship program Live-in-Labs®.

Live-in-Labs®, the multidisciplinary experiential learning program offered for students at undergraduate, graduate, and PhD levels has empowered 1 Million rural beneficiaries across 25 Indian states by addressing transdisciplinary challenges.

Amrita School for Sustainable Futures (ASF), launched in 2019, offers the E4LIFE scholarship program (USD 5.1 million in scholarships annually) for doctoral students in eleven thematic areas. The program has attracted 108 students from 20 countries.

The establishment of 14 Community Covid Resilience Resource Centres (CCRRC) nationwide, in collaboration with the DST, Govt. of India, has benefited over 100,000 beneficiaries by leveraging technological advancements for sustainable and resilient solutions.

Aligned with UNESCO's mission of promoting education for sustainable development and fostering inclusivity, the Chair's efforts have been acknowledged through various symposiums and community engagements. Ten symposiums, involving 50 UNESCO Chairs & HEI Partners from over 35 countries, have contributed to the formation of knowledge societies aimed at fostering science and innovation for a sustainable future.

Additionally, the Chair launched the International Network on Sustainable Innovation and Resilient Futures (SustIN), comprising 60 members across 24 countries, including 35 UNESCO Chairs, in line with UNESCO's priority of enhancing institutional capacities through international cooperation and networking.

Collaboration with ESRI India led to the launch of the Mera Gaav Hamara Jal program, translating to My Village, Our Water, promoting communal water resource ownership across India. The program utilizes Amrita's Empower Community App to empower communities in mapping and monitoring water sustainability, with data analysis conducted through ESRI's ArcGIS platform.

The Chair is actively engaged in the Tsunami Ready Program in Alappad, Kerala, in collaboration with INCOIS to promote tsunami readiness. It has also contributed to policy dialogues by engaging with Civil 20 India 2023. By virtue of its Live-in-Labs® and E4Life PhD program, the Chair has 140+ publications to its credit. The Chair has established 4 joint research centers with HEI, public institutions and private organizations. Additionally, the chair has fostered national and international collaboration through 10 MoUs with HEI's and 11 with CSO's. Several community level training programs have been conducted for over 1200 participants.

## **Plans for 2024-2025**

The UNESCO Chair on Experiential Learning for Sustainable Innovation and Development proposes a comprehensive strategy for 2024-25 to address urgent sustainable development challenges. With a distinct emphasis on education that transforms life, the chair will continue to address the UN 2030 Agenda with an emphasis on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education through the creation of knowledge societies by ensuring science and innovation for a sustainable future.

Aligned with UNESCO's priorities of education for sustainable development, the Chair aims to integrate experiential learning to understand and solve the developmental challenges faced by remote communities. The Chair aims to engage these communities in co-creating sustainable solutions, aligning with UNESCO's pursuit of peace, poverty eradication, and sustainable development.

SustIN Network will act as a collaborative platform for research and policy advocacy. Through joint initiatives, the Chair seeks to promote sustainable innovation and inclusive knowledge societies. Faculty, students, and practitioners will be equipped with tools for sustainable development through interdisciplinary curricula and specialized courses, fostering a culture of innovation. The Chair aims to create inclusive knowledge societies through SustIN, empowering remote indigenous communities with shared information and knowledge access.

Partnerships with UNESCO Chairs, HEIs, CSOs & industries, will be expanded to support interventions and capacity building in key priority areas such as disaster risk reduction, climate action, biodiversity conservation, water and ocean management.

Initiatives such as Live-in-Labs® and community interventions will be scaled to other under-developed communities in Africa and other countries to ensure community resilience, guided by data-driven analysis. Globalizing the Live-in-Labs® program through collaborative partnerships and designing interdisciplinary workshops for universities worldwide are part of efforts to promote education for sustainable development. Training and certificate programs along with MOOCs will be developed to empower communities at various levels.

The Chair has conceptualised Sustainability and Resilience by Community Engagement and Empowerment (SREE) Platform, which will be further developed into a crowd-sourced AI-based mobile platform for community sustainability assessment capable of providing recommendations for multiple stakeholders. This platform will provide data-driven policy recommendations, supporting local interventions for sustainable development.

In conclusion, the UNESCO Chair's strategy for 2024-25 prioritizes experiential learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and collaborative partnerships to address sustainable development challenges. By aligning with UNESCO's goals and leveraging collaborative networks, the Chair aims to foster a sustainable future grounded in science and innovation.

## **9. Dr. R. Giridharan**

Title of the Chair: UNESCO Chair in 'Inclusive Adapted Physical Education and Yoga (1004)'

Host Institution: Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational & Research Institute (RKMVERI), Belur, Howrah-711202, India.

Date of establishment of Chair: December 2012

Chairholders:

1. Chairholder - Dr. R. Giridharan, Head, Department of General and Adapted Physical Education & Yoga, RKMVERI Coimbatore.

2. Co-Chairholder - Dr. Arkadeb Dutta, Head, Department of Sports Science & Yoga, RKMVERI Belur.

### **Significant achievements /results –**

Over the past two years, the UNESCO Chair at RKMVERI – University has achieved significant milestones in the fields of inclusive adapted physical education and yoga, demonstrating a strong commitment to empowering individuals with disabilities and fostering inclusivity in sports. Highlighted accomplishments include:

#### *-Pioneering Initiatives in Adapted Sports Education*

RKMVERI – University has been at the forefront of adapted sports education, launching proactive initiatives in 2022 to address gaps in research and innovations for individuals with disabilities. These initiatives include research focus areas, faculty-led developments, and tangible outcomes, aiming to create an inclusive sports platform and encourage research and development in adapted sports.

#### *- Empowerment through Specialized Coaching and Training*

Seventy-six individuals with disabilities have been enrolled for specialized coaching and training in Paralympic sports at the Vivekananda Inclusive Sports Academy, exemplifying a targeted effort to foster social inclusion and participation opportunities. Additionally, the implementation of the 'Train the Trainers Programme' aims to enhance capacity building within the community, by fostering an understanding of inclusive adapted physical education and rehabilitation services.

*-Organizing national-level conferences and workshops on "Recent Trends: Research in Sports Science and Yoga"* in collaboration with esteemed national institutes to facilitate knowledge exchange and advancement in the field.

*-Organizing annual events* such as the International Day of Yoga, and International Day for Persons with Disabilities to promote a culture of inclusivity, while the establishment of the 'Vivekananda Inclusive Sports Complex' provides specialized and inclusive sports infrastructure, offering coaching and training for individuals with disabilities, thus promoting sports as a viable career option.

### **Plans for 2024-2025 –**

*-Breaking Barriers: Advancing Equitable and Inclusive Education through Adapted Physical Education and Yoga: Unified Play Day Program*, an initiative is designed to cultivate functional skills for individuals with disabilities through synchronized physical and rhythmic activities, paired with multi-sensory therapies. The objectives encompass empowering students with disabilities for holistic development, creating synchronized physical activities for both disabled and non-disabled students, fostering an understanding of the supportive role of integrated therapies, establishing collaborative strategies for the overall development of disabled children, and assessing the program's effectiveness.

*-Establishing an Interactive Fitness Lab for Children with Special Needs: RKMVERI University*, in collaboration with a fitness company, plans to install and utilize recently developed AI-based Interactive Fitness equipment to stimulate diverse brain and body domains, scientifically proven to enhance visual, cognitive, and motor skill performance. The university is dedicated to developing data-driven brain-body fitness solutions for individuals with diverse levels. RKMVERI University is committed to developing a curriculum utilizing interactive fitness products, engaging staff and students in training with these products, and creating state-of-the-art infrastructure facilities for their installation. Additionally, the university will initiate research and publication in renowned journals and books. Moreover, it will focus on the practical application of theoretical concepts, specialized course offerings, the integration of research-based projects, experiential learning opportunities, faculty-led training modules, and professional development workshops.

*-Empowering Parents of Children with Special Needs: A Capacity Building Programme for Reducing Maladaptive Behaviors: To equip parents with ideas for supporting their child's education at home and school, to enable better communication with educators and specialists in reducing maladaptive behaviors, and to increase understanding and capability in applying intervention programs. This aims to help parents understand the importance of student involvement in behavior training and to strengthen their self-confidence in supporting their child's tasks at home and school.*

### **10. Professor Bal Chandra Luitel, PhD**

UNESCO Chair in Teacher Education Kathmandu University (1996, NP0299)  
Scope: Teacher Training; Curriculum Development

Chairholder: Professor Bal Chandra Luitel, PhD

Dean, School of Education, Kathmandu University, Nepal

### **Major Outcomes**

The UNESCO Chair in Teacher Education at Kathmandu University, established in 1996 and currently presided over by Professor Bal Chandra Luitel, PhD, Dean, has undergone various phases of activity. Initially active until 2014, it was revitalized in 2022 with the inception of the Continuing Education and Professional Center (CPEC). During its first phase (1996-2014), the Chair spearheaded numerous research and intervention initiatives, including educational needs assessments within Dhulikhel Municipality, capacity enhancement for local teachers and headteachers, evaluations of adult literacy programs, development of intervention strategies for community learning centers, and the creation of environment education and sustainable development curricula. Additionally, it focused on the production of mathematics resource materials that integrate the daily practices of indigenous communities and initiated a Master's program in Sustainable Development.

Post-2022, the Chair has embarked on extensive community engagement endeavors via CPEC, in partnership with local governments. These initiatives encompass over 100 schools and revolve around STEAM Education employing inter/multi/transdisciplinary pedagogical methods, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) with an emphasis on entrepreneurial activities within basic and secondary education, School Garden/Green School projects that align gardening activities with educational curricula and SDGs, as well as Yogic Sciences.

The UNESCO Chair's team is also actively involved in community research aimed at fostering indigenous knowledge within various teacher preparation programs. A recent addition under the Chair's leadership is the Master of Indigenous Education and Development program, inaugurated in August 2023. Further information about the UNESCO Chair team can be found at their official website (<https://soed.ku.edu.np/unesco-chair>).

### **Plan for 2024-25**

Engaging with the local governments towards improving the equity and quality of learning	This involves proactive engagement with local governments to enhance the equity and quality of educational opportunities. This entails collaborating closely with policymakers, educators, and community leaders to develop and implement strategies that address the unique challenges faced by their localities. Our goal is to ensure that every learner, regardless of their background, has access to high-quality education that is inclusive and equitable.
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<p>Developing teachers' professional development programs with the focus on participatory and green pedagogy</p>	<p>The Chair is being involved in the development of teacher professional development programs. These programs are designed with a strong emphasis on participatory and green pedagogy, ensuring that educators are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to foster an inclusive, sustainable learning environment. We aim to empower teachers to become facilitators of change, encouraging active engagement and environmental stewardship among students.</p>
<p>Continuing policy advocacy for quality, inclusive and equitable school education in Nepal</p>	<p>One of our key initiatives is to continue policy advocacy for quality, inclusive, and equitable school education in Nepal. This involves a multi-tiered approach, engaging with provincial, local, and federal governments to ensure that educational policies are aligned with UNESCO's global standards. Our activities include organizing workshops, publishing policy briefs, and collaborating with educational institutions to foster an environment that supports the holistic development of every student.</p>
<p>Developing policy briefs on the basis of ongoing community engagement</p>	<p>Policy briefs are crafted following extensive community engagement, ensuring that they reflect the nuanced perspectives and insights gained from ongoing interactions with various stakeholders. The process begins with identifying key issues that resonate with the community, followed by in-depth research and discussions to gather a wide array of viewpoints.</p>
<p>Publications – journal articles and an anthology on our ongoing work</p>	<p>A key initiative includes the dissemination of knowledge through scholarly publications. This encompasses the production of journal articles and anthologies that detail the findings and progress of our ongoing research projects. These publications serve insights with the academic community and beyond, fostering a culture of continuous learning and intellectual exchange.</p>

### 11. Prof. Vinod Pavarala

UNESCO Chair on Community Media, University of Hyderabad, India

Established 2011; renewed 2015, 2019, 2023.

Chairholder: Prof. Vinod Pavarala;

Faculty Fellows: Prof. Kanchan K. Malik; Prof. Vasuki Belavadi

#### **Significant achievements /results: 2021-2023**

- UNESCO IPDC Project on development of a Manual on Strengthening Gender-Sensitive Practices and Programming for Community Radio Stations (PI: Prof. Kanchan K. Malik). Manual available now in English, Hindi, and Tamil, 2020-2021. Download from UNESCO Digital Library: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379941>
- Capacity building of community radio stations in Bangladesh and Mongolia through Master Classes on Social Media Broadcasting, supported by UNESCO Bangladesh and UNESCO China, December 2020 & May 2021. Chief Trainer: Prof. Vasuki Belavadi
- The Chair partnered with UNESCO offices in Dhaka, Nepal, and Beijing to organise a two-day regional policy dialogue on strengthening community radio in South Asia and Mongolia, August 25-26, 2021.
- The Chair partnered community radio stations in the UK through network meetings with the Community Media Association, UK and by conducting capacity-building workshops on self- assessment and peer review for stations in the Devon region of the country, June 2022.
- The Chair team brought out an edited book published by Routledge - Malik, Kanchan K. and Pavarala, V. (Eds) (2021) *Community Radio in South Asia: Reclaiming the Airwaves*. London; New Delhi: Routledge. (Global Edition & the South Asia Edition – 2021) ISBN-10:1138558532; ISBN-13: 978-1138558533.
- The Chair team participated in a South Asia conference on 25 Years of Community Broadcasting in South Asia organised by AMARC Asia-Pacific in Kathmandu, Nepal, August 8- 9, 2023, with CR stations from Nepal, Bangladesh, India, and Bhutan in attendance. During the visit, the team held discussions with the Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (ACORAB) of Nepal and with the Bangladesh Minister of Information & Broadcasting, Mr. Hasanul Haq Inu on policy matters related to community radio in the region.
- 1 Ph.D. awarded: Aniruddha Jena: “Politics of Identity, Knowledge, and Culture in Community Media,” 2022. Supervisor: Prof. Vasuki Belavadi
- *CR News*, a half-yearly newsletter on community radio brought out by the UNESCO Chair on Community Media team. Editor: Prof. Kanchan. K. Malik (Faculty Fellow)
- Prof. Vinod Pavarala appointed as Co Principal Editor of the prestigious international *Journal of Alternative and Community Media*, published by Intellect.
- Prof. Vinod Pavarala has been re-elected the Chair of the Community Communication and Alternative Media Section of the International Association for Media & Communication Research (IAMCR), 2023-2027.
- Prof. Kanchan K. Malik spent 9 months as the Fulbright-Nehru Fellow at University of Texas- Austin, USA, 2022.
- Prof. Vinod Pavarala spent a month at the Institute of Media & Creative Industries, Loughborough University, London, UK as a DUO-India Exchange Fellow, 2022.

### **Plans for 2024-2025**

- Substantial part of the year will be spent on the UNESCO IPDC project granted to the Chair (2023-2025) on Indigenous Languages and Community Radio in India: Strengthening Capacities of Community Radios to Promote and Revitalize Indigenous Languages (PI: Prof. Vinod Pavarala). The key objectives are to develop, through a participatory learning process, a handbook on the subject and organize validation and dissemination workshops with CR stations in India.
- The Chair has been awarded a SPARC (Scheme for Promoting Academic and Research Collaboration), Government of India collaborative international project on Community Media, Participation & the Decolonisation of Knowledge Systems. We are collaborating with scholars at the University of Queensland, Australia. 2024-2025.
- A field visit to Bhutan to assess the state of community radio (opportunities and challenges) since the Chair team conducted the first ever capacity-building workshop on community radio for NGOs in the country in 2015.
- A preliminary survey among community radio stations in Nepal, India, and Bangladesh (about 700 of them) to understand their responses to and preparedness for the so-called digital turn in community radio. This will be done in collaboration with AMARC Asia-Pacific, ACORAB (Nepal), and BNNRC (Bangladesh).
- Prof. Vinod Pavarala to spend 2 weeks as George Watson Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Communication and Social Change, School of Arts & Communication, University of Queensland, Australia.
- Publication of *CR News*, the periodic online newsletter on community radio in South Asia and elsewhere.

## 12. Dr Bhavani Rao R

UNESCO Chair on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Dr Bhavani Rao R  
Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (Amrita University)

India

October 27, 2016, renewed in 2020 for an additional 4-year period

*"Women and men are of equal value, like two wings of a bird.*

*For without the two in perfect harmony, humanity cannot progress."*

- Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi, (Amma) Chancellor, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (University)

### **Significant achievements/results**

Our Chair is proud to have closely collaborated with UNESCO, resulting in the publication of two books: "Transforming Mentalities: Gender Equality and Masculinities in India" and "Braided River: The Universe of Indian Women in Science". In 2023, we launched the UNESCO Menstrual Health Campaign in four states of South India. We also actively participated in one of the first reports on Gender and AI in 2019 in Paris.

We took the initiative of organizing the very first Global Summit of Gender-related UNESCO Chairs in 2021, gathering 300 participants from 46 countries over 2 days with 19 Gender-related UNESCO Chairs attending and signing a declaration.

In 2023, we coordinated the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Working Group of Civil20, the official engagement group of the G20 focusing on civil society, and included several UNESCO Chairs in the process. In 6 months, we organised 60 policy dialogues and 1,230 outreach activities with 604,500+ participants from 73 countries. This led to the gathering of 1,000+ policy recommendations and 64 best practices from NGOs and other institutions.

Our Chair delivers key gender-related education programmes within the Bachelor, Master's and Ph.D programs of Amrita's School of Social and Behavioural Sciences and publishes in top-ranked journals, including on innovative topics such as our system's thinking-based approach to mapping women's vulnerabilities.

Finally, beyond academics, our Chair's commitment to SDGs 4 and 5 is implemented through field projects to empower women, girls and transgenders in rural areas of India and Africa. Over the past years, we have provided vocational and life skills training, with more than 239,000 beneficiaries in 23 states of India. We work with the communities to address all areas of vulnerabilities: education, economics & livelihoods, health, society and culture, environment and safety & security. Finally, we work with men, and have been providing gender-related training to 27,000+ police forces personnel in several states of India.

### **Plans for 2024-2025**

Our Chair is committed to advancing UNESCO's strategic objectives, particularly focusing on gender equality and including Africa, which are the two global priorities of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029. For 2024-2025, our plan includes the following:

#### 1. Gender and Technology - Inclusive Participation in Digital Transformation and AI

*Addressing UNESCO Strategic Objective 4 - Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development of ethical standard*

- Conference: We plan to organise a conference in 2024 on gender and technology, with a focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI). Collaborating with UNESCO, the Government of India, and other international stakeholders, this event will address various challenges and opportunities such as AI and technology for healthcare, education and economic empowerment; AI and technology to address sociocultural issues; Technology, vulnerability and protection; Women and technology in the blue and green economy; Gender data for gender equality; Technology designed by women for women; and Gender-sensitive financing. This will also allow UNESCO to advocate and explore solutions to the multifaceted challenges presented in its Artificial Intelligence and Gender Equality Report of 2020.

- **Publication:** Following the conference, we plan to disseminate the outcomes of the conference through a publication, in collaboration with UNESCO.
- **Gender and Data:** Our framework - Advancing Women’s Empowerment through Systems Oriented Model Expansion (AWESOME) - is a comprehensive framework that marries social and data sciences. The planned outcome is a comprehensive toolkit that begins with community profiling and results in data-driven intervention design and simulation to ensure optimal results toward gender equality and sustainable development. Drawing from our field and research projects in rural India and Africa, in the coming years, we are refining our field methodology, scaling our data collection, and designing data systems to improve decision-making and intervention design for women’s empowerment. We also plan to develop better data portals for social programs.

## 2. Women and Skills in the Blue and Green Economy

*Addressing UNESCO Strategic Objectives 2 - Work towards sustainable societies and protecting the environment through the promotion of science, technology, innovation and the natural heritage and Outcome 3 - Enhance knowledge for climate action, biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction*

- **Research and Field Projects:** We started and will develop research and field projects addressing the needs for both environmental preservation and gender equality, through technology-based vocational and life skills training. Developed in coastal areas of India, one of these projects focuses on coastal and marine biodiversity and provides women’s self-help groups with skills in seaweed cultivation. Additional projects focus on developing other “green skills” for women, including water quality, sustainable agri-forestry practices, beekeeping and sustainable upcycling. Most of these projects will be developed with international partners.
- **Event at CSW 2025:** Collaborating with UNESCO and other Chairs, we plan to organise an event in March 2025 at the 69th annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) in New York, the UN's largest annual gathering on gender equality and women's empowerment, focusing on the importance of women and skills in the blue and green economy sectors.

## 3. Engaging Men and Boys

*Addressing UNESCO Strategic Objective 3: Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage and Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes.*

- **Cross-cutting agenda:** Engaging Men and Boys.

Building upon our longstanding collaboration with UNESCO on this topic, we are committed to engaging men and boys in promoting gender equality. This cross-cutting priority will be enacted across:

- Academics: with the integration of dedicated courses and the development of specific curricula, and extending them to schools and colleges.
- Research: Conducting publications and field projects to further explore and support this crucial aspect of gender equality.

A significant aspect of our efforts revolves around a flagship project to train personnel from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Srinagar, CRPF South and the Telangana State Special Police (TSSP). Recognised with an award from the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), our training program encompasses mental health and gender discussions. It not only involves male personnel but also incorporates a phase dedicated to engaging with their families and the spouses of police force members. Following the success of this program, we also plan to actively engage men and boys to address gender-based violence.

#### 4. Vocational and Life Skills Training for Women in Africa

*Contributing to UNESCO Strategic Objective 1 - Ensure quality equitable and inclusive education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, in order, inter alia, to reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies, particularly in the digital era.*

- Research and Field project on TVET in Africa: Drawing from our vocational and life skills training model successfully implemented in rural India, we aim to bring this expertise and work with women's groups and communities in rural Africa (most likely Kenya or Zambia). We are currently exploring collaborations with private partners in solar energy, to empower women with technology-based skills which also address the current context of climate change.

## **7.5 Annexure 5: Cultural Performances & Visit to KISS**

The following performances were scheduled for the Cultural Performance segment of the delegates' visit to KISS. However, due to shortage of time before another engagement for the group, only a few of these dances were performed.

### **Live Opening Song and Dance in Kuvi Language**

Kuvi is a South-Central Dravidian language spoken in the Indian state of Odisha. It is one of two languages spoken by the Kandhas, the other being the closely related and more dominant Kui language. According to the 2011 Indian census, there are around 155,000 speakers. The orthography uses the Odia script. The grammatical structure of Kuvi is comparable to other Dravidian languages such as Kui.

The song in Kuvi language, "Kuvi loku mambi mulu loku..." conveys reverence to the motherland as the great witness of the Kuvi and other indigenous people. It emphasizes gratitude for birth and the abundant, bountiful nature bestowed upon them. The lyrics portray a simple and humble life, marked by reverence for ancestors in every fair and festival.

### **Kandha Paraja (Adivasi Ame) by young student of KISS**

The Kandha Paraja people reside in the Koraput and Rayagada districts of Odisha. They speak Desia dialects and worship nature. Throughout the year, they celebrate various festivals like Chait Parab, Toki Parab, and Diali Parab. During these festivities, the entire village engages in singing and dancing. Young boys play traditional instruments like Tamak, Dhap, and Turi, while young girls dance in a half circle, following the rhythm.

### **Live Santal Dance by KISS Students**

The Santals, one of India's populous tribal communities, are mainly found in Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, and Balasore districts in Odisha, as well as neighboring states like Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, and Assam. Their language, Santali, belongs to the Munda group of Austro-Asiatic languages and is written in the Ol Chiki script invented by Pundit Raghunath Murmu. Santal attire and adornments distinguish them, with men wearing handloom loin cloths and shirts, and women wearing green or blue check sarees. Traditional heavy silver ornaments have given way to modern alternatives like plastic, glass, and lightweight silver.

Lagren Enej (Santal dance) is a common dance performed, especially on moonlit nights. Santal men and boys play drums and madals, gradually joined by girls and women who dance merrily in circles. The dance continues for about half an hour, with short breaks before resuming until late into the night or even the morning.

### **Kalasa Dance by KISS Students – Santal Dance**

Santal, a major tribe of Odisha, is concentrated mainly in Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, and Balasore districts. Their culture is rich with festivals, dances, songs, and music, with agriculture as their primary economic activity. The Kalasa dance, usually performed in January, celebrates their freedom from subjugation during the feudal regime. In this dance, male folk play musical instruments like drums and flutes, while women dance to the music wearing traditional costumes.

### **Chait Parab by KISS Students**

Chait Parab is the most important festival for tribal people in Koraput District, Odisha, observed in the month of Chaitra (April in the English calendar). It's a month-long celebration filled with joy and festivities. During this time, tribal communities refrain from fieldwork, wear new clothes, and engage in feasting, visiting friends and relatives, singing, and dancing. Men traditionally go hunting, testing their prowess, and return with whatever they catch for communal feasts. Women perform the traditional dance form "Dhemsā" to the beats of the Mayura drum. The festival holds deep cultural significance, symbolizing unity and reverence for nature.

## 7.6 Annexure 6: Brief Profile of Host Organisation

The Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), with its vision of a world free of hunger, poverty and illiteracy, is home to 80,000 indigenous students – this includes 30,000 at our main campus in Bhubaneswar, 10,000 at satellite centres in different districts of Odisha and over 40,000 alumni. KISS upholds affordable and accessible quality education as the key to mitigating the transmission of cycles of poverty that place India’s indigenous communities at a disadvantage. It is powered by a belief that a better world – free from hunger, poverty & illiteracy – is possible.

By providing holistic quality education, skill development, nutrition security, healthcare, equity and inclusion to all its students, KISS enables tribal communities to understand their rights, thereby protecting them from the influence of forces who could take advantage of their isolation from urban communities. In this endeavour, KISS addresses the visions of some of India’s founders such as Nehru, Ambedkar and Gandhi, as well as recommendations of some of India’s earliest policies on tribal education and development, such as the 1952 Nehru’s Panchaseela Niti, 1960 Dhebar Commission Policy Review and the 1986 National Policy on Education. The visions and recommendations of these policies laid the foundation for tribal development and the promotion of education for tribal students while celebrating their rich cultural identity and promoting their creative talent. These ideas form the very core of KISS’ relationship with its students, who are empowered – through culturally sensitive, quality curricular and extra-curricular education – to become torch-bearers of peace and progress in their communities. The New Education Policy 2020 emphasises the need for holistic education as a benchmark for educational institutes across the country, and this has been central to KISS’ education model - since its inception – thanks to the innovation and foresight of its Founder.

Since its humble inception with merely 125 students in 1993, KISS has grown to its present strength and diversity, representing 62 tribes of Odisha and more from neighbouring States. Its constituent, KISS Deemed to be University, is the first and the largest exclusive university for indigenous children. It has also been in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations since 2015.

KISS has produced more than 5,000 athletes and sportspersons participating in and winning various national and international events. The students of KISS have performed well academically, with their pass percentage being higher than the state average for tribals. KISS stands for Gender Equity, Vocational Empowerment and Women’s Empowerment based on the 3E formula of “Enable, Educate and Empower.” The most important principle of the success of this model is the indigenous control of education, where importance is given to preserving the culture, heritage and traditions of tribal communities.

Through partnerships with various UN bodies, corporate houses, NGOs and civil society, KISS has gained over 20 years of collaborative experience within the development field. Since its inception, it has consistently promoted analysis, advocacy and local action for the

SDGs – from implementing innovative initiatives to ensure its campus & learning environments nurture empowered youth who can pave the path for a sustainable future, to strategising and implementing community-level projects with the vision of propelling tribal Odisha towards the transformative 2030 Agenda shared by the United Nations. For over 2 decades, KISS has worked to empower & engage tribal youth and tribal community members by amplifying their voices in multi-stakeholder & multi-platform conversations about the path to a sustainable future - voices that are often underrepresented in global discussions.

The unique vision and effective execution of the KISS Model have been lauded by planners and administrators both nationally and internationally, with a call for replication of its innovative approach to indigenous controlled empowerment through education. As KISS' students successfully graduate as empowered alumni with competitive jobs and degrees, the demand for education among tribal communities is also burgeoning. As a result, KISS has been working to increase its outreach in the State by setting up model schools in all districts of Odisha, beginning with districts that have larger populations of marginalised communities. Due to its inherent limited resources, to realise this ambitious vision of educating and empowering millions of disadvantaged children, KISS' new schools are being made sustainable and financially self-sustaining through partnership and collaboration with government and non-government agencies. Thus far, KISS is pleased to have inaugurated campuses in Balangir, Baripada, Balasore and Kalahandi. Apart from Odisha, KISS also has a campus in the National Capital Region of Delhi in partnership with the Delhi Government and has also incorporated KISS Foundation USA and KISS Foundation UK as charitable organisations to receive international donations, grants and contributions towards supporting the education and facilities for its 60,000 indigenous students.

Moreover, to make its main campus financially sustainable, KISS follows a unique financial model, wherein its growth has been linked to the growth of its sister institute Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), which is a prestigious private university in the same city. As per the resolution passed by the KIIT Society, 5% of the total turnover of KIIT is donated to KISS as a charitable work/social responsibility. As per the statutory rules of the KIIT Deemed to be University, each staff member contributes 3% of his/her gross salary to KISS for the welfare of tribal children in KISS. The contractors/vendors of the KIIT Group of Institutions contribute 2% to 3% of their profits to KISS. Additionally, KISS receives approximately Rs. 15 crores annually in the form of donations from various generous individuals, corporate houses and organizations, like Give India. Other stakeholders of KIIT, including guardians of its students, contribute benevolently to this noble cause. Besides this, approximately Rs. 3 crore is realized from the sale of vocational products produced by KISS in its vocational training centres.

KISS is one of only 14 NGOs in India to have been awarded the Guide Star India Champion Level-Platinum Certification by Guide Star India for its financial transparency. This recognition follows KISS' inclusion recently in the Top 500 NGOs in the world, widely regarded as the 'non-profit Ivy League', and one of the top 10 NGOs in India by Geneva-based organisation, NGO Advisor. In 2022, KISS was conferred the prestigious

UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for its contribution to the preservation of indigenous languages.

KISS is the brainchild of philanthropist and educationist, Dr Achyuta Samanta, who founded the institute in the early 90s to ameliorate the suffering of impoverished tribal communities. He faced severe hunger, abject poverty and deprivation as a child, and this inspired him to make it his lifelong mission to diminish the suffering of others, particularly Odisha's many tribal communities. Dr Samanta firmly believes that accessible and affordable education is key to this, and thus, KISS was created as a completely free-of-cost model from this selfless dream. With his support and guidance, over the last 2 decades, KISS has learned and grown alongside the indigenous community, working with more than 150,000 individuals, and nurturing the dream of educating over 2 million of India's marginalised youth over the next decade.

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