

EMPOWERING CHANGE

INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND
DEVELOPMENT'S YEAR-END REVIEW



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH
AND DEVELOPMENT



ANNUAL 2025



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dr Zulfiqar Bhutta

DIRECTOR IGHD

AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

“ As we reflect on 2025, I am deeply proud of the collective journey of the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD). This year reaffirmed our belief that rigorous science, when grounded in equity and partnership, can drive meaningful change. Across research, policy engagement, and capacity building, our teams worked at the frontlines of some of the most urgent challenges of our time—climate change, maternal and child health, nutrition, and health system resilience—always guided by a commitment to evidence, compassion, and impact.

Throughout the year, IGHD strengthened its global and regional footprint. Our researchers contributed to major international policy platforms, global reports, and guideline-shaping evidence, while continuing to generate locally grounded research in climate-vulnerable communities across Pakistan and beyond. From advancing climate-health research in South Asia, Africa, and Central Asia, to supporting national dialogue on newborn survival, nutrition, and disease elimination, our work consistently bridged science and action. Equally important was our investment in people—supporting women scientists, mentoring early-career researchers, and engaging students and communities as partners in change.

This newsletter captures the breadth of that work, but more importantly, it reflects the values that underpin it: collaboration, integrity, and a deep sense of responsibility toward vulnerable populations. I am grateful to our faculty, researchers, staff, partners, and supporters whose dedication makes IGHD’s mission possible. As we look ahead, we remain committed to shaping solutions that are locally relevant, globally informed, and rooted in equity—working together toward a healthier, more resilient, and sustainable future.

”

INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

ORGANIZED BY IGHD

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT: PROMOTING RESILIENCE & ADAPTATION IN LOW-INCOME SETTINGS

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT: Promoting Resilience & Adaptation in Low Income Settings

A conference by the Institute for Global Health & Development at AKU
and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Pakistan



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The IGHD Annual Conference 2025, held on **November 28–29, 2025** at the Aga Khan University Auditorium in Karachi, convened leading policymakers, researchers, architects, urban planners, and development practitioners to examine the role of the built environment in advancing climate resilience and adaptation in low-income settings. Organized by the **Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD)** in collaboration with the **Sustainable Development Solutions Network Pakistan (SDSN-PK)**, the conference served as a national platform for interdisciplinary dialogue on climate-responsive design, infrastructure, and health systems.

Under the theme *“Climate Change and the Built Environment: Promoting Resilience & Adaptation in Low-Income Settings,”* the two-day conference explored how rural and urban architecture, housing, and public infrastructure can safeguard health and well-being amid intensifying climate risks. The inaugural session featured **His Excellency Tariq Khan**, High Commissioner of Canada to Pakistan, and **Professor Ahsan Iqbal**, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, as Chief Guest. Keynote addresses by **Professor Sajida Haider Vandal (THAAP)**, **Christopher Burman and Joseph Augustine (University College London)**, and **Dr. Zahra Hussain (Laajverd Organization)** highlighted indigenous knowledge, climate-smart architecture, and community-led adaptation approaches.

“AKU is committed to advancing climate research that directly informs practice and policy. The insights generated here will help strengthen Pakistan’s climate readiness for years to come.”

- Dr Sulaiman Shahabuddin
PRESIDENT
AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

The conference also brought together senior leadership from Aga Khan University, including **Dr. Sulaiman Shahabuddin**, President of AKU, who emphasized the University’s commitment to interdisciplinary research and evidence-based solutions for climate adaptation. Across thematic sessions, participants engaged in in-depth discussions on urban planning, rural and indigenous innovations, climate-resilient health systems, and policy frameworks to support sustainable and inclusive development.



The conference concluded with a high-level policy dialogue and actionable recommendations aimed at strengthening climate-resilient infrastructure, housing, and health systems across Pakistan. The 2025 IGHD Annual Conference reaffirmed IGHD’s leadership in convening cross-sectoral expertise and advancing research-driven solutions to one of Pakistan’s most pressing development challenges—building resilient, equitable, and sustainable communities in the face of climate change.

SUPPORTING WOMEN IN SCIENCE: BUILDING RESEARCH LEADERSHIP ACROSS AFRICA AND SOUTH ASIA

The Supporting Women in Science (SWIS) initiative reached two significant milestones in 2025 with the successful convening of regional conferences in **Nairobi, Kenya (September 2025)** and **Karachi, Pakistan (November 2025)**. Organized by the Institute for Global Health and Development at the Aga Khan University, in collaboration with the University of Oxford, these conferences reflect IGHD's sustained commitment to advancing women's leadership in health research across low- and middle-income settings.

Nairobi Conference: Strengthening Networks Across Sub-Saharan Africa

The SWIS Conference in Nairobi brought together early- and mid-career women scientists from across Sub-Saharan Africa, creating a dynamic platform for sharing research, building professional networks, and fostering regional collaboration. Fellows presented work spanning maternal, child, and adolescent health, nutrition, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases, mental health, and climate-related health risks—highlighting both scientific rigor and contextual relevance.

Through keynote addresses, thematic sessions, and interactive discussions, participants explored pathways for translating research into policy and practice, while candidly addressing the structural and gender-based barriers that continue to shape women's scientific careers. A strong emphasis was placed on mentorship, peer learning, and cross-country collaboration, reinforcing the importance of sustained support systems in nurturing women's research leadership across the region.

“When women scientists are empowered to lead, they do more than advance their own fields—they redefine research agendas, strengthen institutions, and expand the boundaries of what science can achieve. The Supporting Women in Science initiative is about cultivating leadership that is confident, connected, and capable of shaping change at scale.”

- Dr Tania Bubela | Provost & Vice President Academic, AKU



SWIS 2025 Nairobi, Kenya



Karachi Conference: Advancing Research Leadership in South Asia

The SWIS Conference in Karachi, held on **26–27 November 2025** at the Aga Khan University, represented the largest convening under the Supporting Women in Science initiative. Bringing together early- and mid-career women scientists from across Pakistan and the wider South-Central Asian region, the conference offered a robust platform for scientific exchange, leadership development, and institutional engagement.

Over two days, participants presented research across maternal, child, and adolescent health, nutrition, infectious and non-communicable diseases, mental health, climate-related health risks, and health systems research. The program featured keynote addresses, thematic and flash sessions, and panel discussions that highlighted the growing contribution of women scientists to evidence generation and policy-relevant research.



SWIS 2025 Karachi, Pakistan



A strong presence of senior academic and institutional leadership from across the AKU system and partner institutions reinforced the importance of mentorship, interdisciplinary collaboration, and sustained institutional support. Discussions emphasized how women researchers can play a central role in shaping resilient health systems, advancing gender-responsive research agendas, and contributing to national and regional development priorities.

“Advancing women in science requires more than opportunity—it requires sustained mentorship, institutional commitment, and environments that allow talent to thrive. Through SWIS, we are investing in the next generation of women researchers and clinician-scientists, ensuring that excellence in science and medicine is shaped by diverse perspectives and inclusive leadership.”

- Dr Karim Damji | Dean, Medical College, AKU



“Supporting women in science is not only a matter of equity—it is fundamental to the quality, relevance, and impact of research. Initiatives like SWIS reflect Aga Khan University’s commitment to creating enabling research ecosystems where women can lead, innovate, and contribute fully to solving complex global challenges. Strengthening pathways for women researchers strengthens science itself.”

- Dr Salim Virani | Vice Provost, Research, AKU

FIELD IMMERSION IN MATIARI: BRINGING RESEARCH TO LIFE

Following the IGHD Annual Conference, the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) hosted a field immersion visit to its rural research hub in Matiari, bringing together a distinguished group of national and international participants. The delegation included senior academics and practitioners from leading global institutions such as SickKids, The Bartlett, UCL, University College London, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, representatives from the Canadian High Commission, and colleagues from the International Development Research Centre. The visit also included invited observers and media representatives, reflecting broad global interest in IGHD's community-based climate and health work.



MATIARI
Research & Training Centre

Organized at the initiative of Dr Bhutta, the visit was designed to complement conference discussions by grounding global policy and research conversations in lived community realities. Participants were welcomed at the **Matiari Research and Training Centre** with an overview of IGHD's long-standing engagement in the district, where the Centre serves as a focal point for research on climate adaptation, maternal and child health, nutrition, and health systems strengthening, developed in close partnership with local communities.



Climate Resilience Project
Heat interventions

The delegation then visited surrounding villages to observe **climate resilience interventions** focused on heat adaptation. These site visits highlighted practical, low-cost solutions—such as secondary roofing and passive cooling designs—demonstrating how locally generated evidence is translated into tangible strategies to reduce heat exposure and vulnerability in rural households.



Lady Health Workers Programme
Adolescent Health & Nutrition

Participants also engaged with frontline workers from **the Lady Health Workers Programme**, gaining insight into community-based delivery of adolescent health and nutrition initiatives. These interactions underscored the central role of trusted local health workers in advancing equitable, people-centred health interventions.



Bhit Shah
Lunch and Community Interaction

In addition to research activities, the visit offered cultural context through interactions with local communities in **Bhit Shah**, followed by visits to **Sindhi handicraft artisans**, including rilli makers. This segment highlighted the interconnectedness of livelihoods, cultural heritage, and sustainable development before the group returned to Karachi.



Overall, the Matiari field immersion reinforced IGHD's commitment to translating rigorous research into meaningful action, while demonstrating the value of exposing global decision-makers, funders, and academic leaders to community-anchored evidence that can inform policy dialogue and climate-resilient development pathways.



INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

IGHD'S CONTRIBUTIONS
AND PARTICIPATION

DR. ZULFIQAR A. BHUTTA'S GLOBAL ENGAGEMENTS IN MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Throughout 2025, **Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta**, Founding Director of the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), remained actively engaged in international platforms addressing critical issues in maternal, newborn, and child health. His participation in global academic and media forums reflects IGHD's broader commitment to advancing evidence-based dialogue and strengthening the connection between research, policy, and practice.

In March 2025, Dr. Bhutta delivered a lecture at the University of Adelaide, hosted by the Robinson Research Institute, titled *"The Past, Present, and Future of Global Maternal and Child Health: Opportunities for Change."* Addressing an audience of healthcare professionals, researchers, and students, he traced the evolution of maternal and child health globally, highlighting major achievements alongside persistent challenges. His lecture emphasized the importance of evidence-based interventions, community health programmes, and the integration of research findings into national and global policy frameworks to improve outcomes for women and children.



The interview was aired on April 7, 2025, and is now available online across CGTN America's digital platforms:



[Click Here](#)



[Click Here](#)



[Click Here](#)

Building on this academic engagement, Dr. Bhutta also joined a global televised panel on CGTN America as part of World Health Day 2025 coverage. Appearing on *The Heat Show*, he contributed to discussions around the theme *"Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures,"* focusing on maternal and newborn health and women's long-term well-being. Drawing on his extensive research and policy experience, he underscored the need for integrated health systems, community-based approaches, and sustained investment in women's health, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

Together, these engagements highlight Dr. Bhutta's continued leadership in global health discourse and reinforce IGHD's role in contributing to international conversations that shape policy, practice, and innovation in maternal and child health.



“ Advancing maternal and newborn health requires more than individual interventions. It demands integrated health systems, community-based approaches, and political commitment to address inequities that continue to place women and children at risk, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. ”

- Dr Zulfiqar Bhutta | Director, IGHD

GLOBAL & REGIONAL ENGAGEMENTS IN 2025

Throughout 2025, **Dr. Jai K. Das**, Associate Director at the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) and Associate Professor of Paediatrics and Child Health at Aga Khan University, contributed to high-level academic, policy, and development platforms focused on disease elimination, climate change, and the health of vulnerable populations.

Disease Elimination & Global Health Leadership

In **January 2025**, Dr. Das delivered a session on *Polio Eradication: Global Perspectives and the Pakistan Experience* during the **Geneva Weeks** component of the Injaz Fellowship for Disease Elimination, hosted by the Global Institute for Disease Elimination (GLIDE). He shared lessons from Pakistan's eradication efforts, emphasizing leadership, implementation challenges, and community engagement.

GLOBAL
INSTITUTE FOR
DISEASE
ELIMINATION



CGTN
AMERICA



Media & Global Advocacy

Dr. Das also appeared on **CGTN America's *The Heat*** as part of **World Health Day 2025** coverage, contributing to discussions on maternal and newborn health under the theme *Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures*, with a focus on women's health in low- and middle-income countries.

Climate Change & Public Health

At the **3rd Public Health International Conference** hosted by the APPNA Institute of Public Health at Jinnah Sindh Medical University, Dr. Das delivered a plenary on *Climate Change and Public Health*, highlighting health system resilience and protection of vulnerable populations.



Gender & Heat Stress

In **February 2025**, Dr. Das served as a keynote speaker at the **ADB workshop on Gender and Heat Stress in Pakistan**, leading discussions on inclusive adaptation and health-centered approaches to heat action planning.



Regional Climate & Health Dialogue

Dr. Das further contributed to regional discourse at **ADB's "Rising Heat, Rising Action" convening in Bangkok (June 2025)**, emphasizing the disproportionate impacts of extreme heat on women and children in low-resource and informal work settings.



SickKids | Centre for Global Child Health



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY



Central Asia Collaboration

Later in the year, Dr. Das represented IGHD at the **Conference on Climate Change and Human Health in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan**, where he delivered opening remarks, led technical sessions, and supported the launch of the **Central Asia Climate and Health Network**, strengthening regional research collaboration.

Together, these engagements reflect Dr. Das's continued leadership in advancing climate-resilient, equity-driven health systems and reinforce IGHD's growing role as a trusted contributor to global and regional health policy dialogue.

"The greatest health challenges of our time—polio, climate change, and inequity—cannot be addressed in isolation. They demand integrated, evidence-driven action that places vulnerable populations at the center of policy and practice."

- Dr Jai Das | Associate Director, IGHD



CLIMATE, HEALTH & EQUITY ENGAGEMENTS IN 2025

In 2025, Farhana Tabassum, Manager Research at IGHD, actively participated in diverse dialogues and convenings focused on the social and health dimensions of climate change, with particular attention to gender and vulnerable populations.

Societal Impacts of Extreme Heat

In **February 2025**, Farhana represented IGHD at a workshop on *Societal Impacts of Extreme Heat*, hosted by the Karachi Urban Lab (IBA) in collaboration with King's College London. The workshop marked the launch of a research initiative on heat vulnerability in **Jacobabad**, with discussions centered on co-designing a stakeholder-driven research agenda.



Pakistan's Climate Prosperity Plan

Farhana participated in a **roundtable on Pakistan's Climate Prosperity Plan (CPP)** hosted by the Climate Action Centre Karachi in collaboration with the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) and V20. The discussion focused on urban climate risks, health impacts, climate finance, and pathways toward climate-resilient economic growth.

“ Understanding how climate change shapes health and well-being means listening closely to communities while grounding our work in strong evidence and policy. ”

- Ms Farhana Tabassum | Assistant Manager, IGHD



Climate Trauma & Women's Mental Health

In **April 2025**, Farhana was invited as a guest speaker at a workshop titled *The Impact of Climate Change on Women's Mental Health*, organized by Faroozan in collaboration with the University of Karachi. She highlighted trauma-informed approaches and the importance of centering women's voices in climate, health, and media narratives.



People-Centered Climate Adaptation

In **May 2025**, Farhana joined a roundtable on *Climate, Health & Population Vulnerability* under the Climate Dialogue Series, hosted by the Population Research Centre (IBA) and Karachi Urban Lab. Discussions emphasized inclusive, evidence-based adaptation strategies for vulnerable urban populations.

Climate, Culture & Creative Engagement

Farhana represented IGHD at the inauguration of **Imagining Life**, a multiyear initiative by the Climate Action Center, Karachi, held in **August 2025**. The event brought together scholars, artists, and activists to explore climate futures through cultural and interdisciplinary engagement.



Sustainable Energy Transition & the Built Environment
Later in **August 2025**, Farhana participated in **Cohort 10 of the Green Zameen Fellowship**, organized by the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI). The session focused on the role of the built environment in Pakistan's energy transition, including energy-efficient design, policy implementation, and green financing.

IGHD ENGAGES IN GLOBAL HEAT ADAPTATION DIALOGUE THROUGH HEATNEXUS

In February 2025, Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, Dr. Jai K. Das, Dr. Ana Bonell, and Abbas Jaffer from the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) participated in the **HeatNexus Network Convening in Cape Town, South Africa**. The convening brought together nine Wellcome-funded research projects working to advance evidence-based heat adaptation and reduce the health impacts of extreme heat in low- and middle-income countries.



HeatNexus (Heat Adaptation Research for Action) is a global network supported by the **Institute of Development Studies (IDS)**, focused on bridging research and real-world action through cross-cohort learning, capacity building, and engagement with policymakers and practitioners. Projects within the network span diverse contexts and interventions, including community-based heat responses, housing innovations, agricultural adaptation, and public health systems strengthening.

Led by **Aga Khan University**, IGH D's HeatNexus project evaluates the effectiveness of heat adaptation and heat reduction interventions for vulnerable populations in urban and rural Pakistan. During the convening, the IGH D team shared project updates through flash talks and engaged with global partners to strengthen collaboration and collective learning—reinforcing IGH D's role in advancing applied climate–health research.

For More About the
HeatNexus Network,
Click Here



IGHD TEAM BUILDS GIS CAPACITY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH

In **May 2025**, Dr. Kanza Naqvi and Ms. Humaira Nazir from the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) participated in a two-day training titled *"Mapping the Data: Introduction to Geographic Information System (GIS) for Public Health Research"*, organized by the **Section of Environmental-Occupational Health & Climate Change (EOHCC)** at Aga Khan University, Karachi.



The workshop introduced participants to core GIS concepts and their application in public health research and planning, combining interactive sessions with hands-on training. Dr. Naqvi and Ms. Nazir developed practical skills in spatial analysis and data visualization using **QGIS**, including mapping health indicators, layering spatial data, identifying vulnerable populations, and visualizing risk patterns.

This training strengthened IGH D's internal capacity to apply geospatial tools in research, supporting more robust analysis and evidence generation for public health policy and practice.



IGHD'S DR. AMMAD QAZI DELIVERS KEYNOTE AT AKU CLIMATE DIALOGUE

In 2025, Dr. Ammad Waheed Qazi, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), delivered the keynote address at a **Climate Dialogue** hosted by the **Student Society of Climate Change** at Aga Khan University. The event brought together students and faculty to engage in critical discussion on the impacts of climate change and the need for evidence-based adaptation and mitigation strategies.



As Chief Guest and keynote speaker, Dr. Qazi shared insights on climate risks, urban resilience, and the importance of translating research into practical action. His address encouraged student engagement with climate science and policy, sparking dialogue on collective responsibility and locally relevant solutions.

The event also showcased student-led innovation, including the launch of **Terracool**, a sustainable, eco-friendly cooling system developed using natural materials. Dr. Qazi's participation reflected IGHD's commitment to engaging with emerging leaders and supporting youth-driven climate solutions through mentorship and knowledge exchange.

IGHD CONTRIBUTES TO URBAN HEAT PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS IN SINDH

In June 2025, Dr. Kanza Naqvi from the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) participated in **HEAT: Emergency Awareness and Treatment**, a focused workshop organized by the **Centre of Excellence in Trauma & Emergencies (CETE)** at Aga Khan University, in collaboration with the **Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh**. The initiative formed part of broader efforts to strengthen preparedness and response to heat-related public health risks in climate-vulnerable urban settings.



The workshop convened representatives from heat-prone districts across Sindh—including Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Dadu, Naushero Feroz, and Larkana—to discuss localized heat action planning, identify high-risk populations, and improve early recognition and management of heat-related illness. As extreme temperatures increasingly threaten urban health systems, the sessions emphasized coordinated, multisectoral responses and the importance of community-level preparedness.

Dr. Naqvi's participation supported CETE's ongoing work to develop a **City Heat Action Plan** aimed at building resilience in urban districts across Sindh. Her engagement reflects IGHD's continued commitment to intersectoral collaboration, evidence-informed climate adaptation, and strengthening local capacity to respond effectively to heat-related health emergencies.

IGHD CONTRIBUTES TO NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON DIARRHOEAL DISEASE PREPAREDNESS

In June 2025, Dr. Jai K. Das, Associate Director, and Dr. Kanza Naqvi, Assistant Manager Research, from the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) represented the Institute at the **1st National Health Preparedness and Resilience Conference on Diarrhoeal Diseases**, held in Islamabad.

Organized by the **National Institute of Health (NIH)**, the conference convened senior representatives from federal and provincial health departments, development partners, and public health experts to address the persistent burden of diarrhoeal diseases in Pakistan, particularly among children under five. Discussions focused on strengthening preparedness, translating evidence into policy, and improving implementation strategies.



During the conference, **Dr. Kanza Naqvi** presented findings from a systematic review and meta-analysis on *zinc supplementation for acute and persistent watery diarrhoea in children*, contributing critical evidence to national treatment discussions. **Dr. Jai K. Das** delivered a talk on community-driven approaches to policy and advocacy and participated in a high-level panel on implementation challenges. Their engagement reflects IGHD's continued leadership in shaping evidence-informed national dialogue on child health and disease prevention.

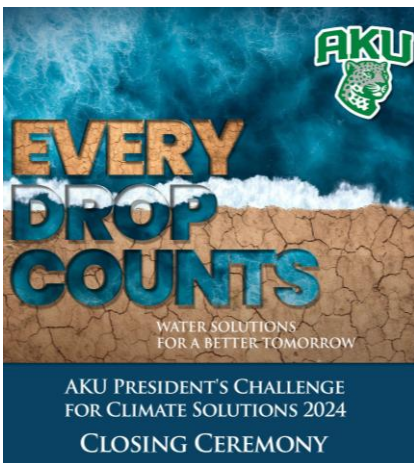


From left to right: Dr. Jai Das and Dr. Kanza Naqvi speaking at the 1st National Health Preparedness and Resilience Conference on Diarrhoeal Diseases in Islamabad.

IGHD SUPPORTS YOUTH INNOVATION THROUGH AKU PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE FOR CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

In May 2025, Ms. Humaira Nazir, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), participated in the closing ceremony of the **AKU President's Challenge for Climate Solutions 2024**, a flagship University-wide initiative held simultaneously across AKU campuses. The event marked the culmination of a months-long programme designed to encourage innovation, climate literacy, and problem-solving among students and young learners.

The Challenge brought together university students and high school participants to develop practical and creative responses to climate change under the theme "Every Drop Counts – Water Solutions for a Better Tomorrow." Over the course of seven months, participants worked on solutions addressing both water scarcity and excess, including smart conservation technologies, nature-based approaches, and community-driven awareness initiatives. The programme provided a platform for interdisciplinary collaboration and hands-on learning, fostering a strong link between climate science, innovation, and real-world application.



As a mentor in the programme, Ms. Nazir played an active role in supporting student teams, guiding them through idea development, refinement of concepts, and preparation for their final presentations. Her engagement contributed to strengthening students' confidence, analytical thinking, and understanding of climate challenges, while reinforcing the value of mentorship in nurturing the next generation of climate leaders.

By participating in the closing ceremony, Ms. Nazir represented IGHD's commitment to advancing youth leadership, innovation, and climate education. Her involvement underscores the Institute's belief that interdisciplinary mentorship and student-led solutions are critical to building sustainable, climate-resilient communities, particularly across the Global South.

IGHD LEADS SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS & META-ANALYSIS BOOTCAMP

In **June 2025**, members of the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) played a leading role in the **Systematic Reviews & Meta-Analysis Bootcamp**, organized by the **Department of Paediatrics & Child Health**, Aga Khan University, in collaboration with **Cochrane Pakistan**. The three-day programme brought together researchers and early-career scholars to strengthen skills in evidence synthesis and research methodology.

Dr. Jai K. Das, Associate Director of IGHD, served as **Workshop Director**, providing overall academic leadership and guiding participants through the conceptual foundations and practical applications of systematic reviews and meta-analysis. **Dr. Rahima Yasin** (Research Coordinator, IGHD) and **Dr. Kanza Naqvi** (Assistant Manager Research, IGHD) contributed as facilitators, leading interactive sessions and hands-on exercises on heterogeneity assessment, bias evaluation, and methodological rigor.

By leading this intensive training, the IGHD team strengthened local and regional research capacity while reinforcing the Institute's commitment to promoting high-quality, evidence-based research that informs policy, health systems, and practice.



IGHD RESEARCHERS PRESENT AT THE 13TH WORLD CONGRESS ON DEVELOPMENTAL ORIGINS OF HEALTH AND DISEASE (DOHaD)

In **September 2025**, researchers from the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) contributed to the **13th World Congress on Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD)**, held in **Buenos Aires, Argentina**. The Congress convened global experts to examine how early-life environments influence lifelong health and disease outcomes.



Representing IGHD, **Dr. Jai K. Das**, Associate Director, delivered **Plenary Key Lecture 01**, titled *"From Womb to World: How Climate Change Affects Women's Health and Fetal Development."* His address highlighted the growing evidence linking environmental stressors with maternal and fetal health, particularly in low- and middle-income settings, underscoring IGHD's leadership at the intersection of climate science and maternal and child health research.

Dr. Khadija Vadsaria also presented her research through both oral and poster presentations, showcasing work on maternal nutrition and behaviour change during pregnancy. Together, these contributions reflect the growing international recognition of IGHD's research and its role in shaping global discourse on health, development, and climate resilience.



13th World Congress DOHaD Buenos Aires, Argentina



IGHD REPRESENTATION AT D4N 2025: TOWARDS NUTRITION IMPACT AT SCALE



Two members of the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) represented Aga Khan University at the **Delivering for Nutrition in South Asia Conference 2025: Towards Impact at Scale (D4N 2025)**, held in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 2–4 December 2025. Both **Dr. Arsalala Jameel Farooqui** and **Farhana Tabassum** attended the conference with **full funding support**, including airfare and accommodation, following the acceptance of their abstracts.

Arsalala Jameel Farooqui, Research Coordinator and Course Manager for **IGNIT3 Pakistan**, delivered an **oral presentation** during *Thematic Session 3A: Bridging Knowledge & Action: Nutrition Education for All Stakeholders*. Her presentation highlighted the progress and scale-up potential of the IGNIT3 online nutrition courses in Pakistan, showcasing how institution-led digital learning platforms can strengthen nutrition capacity among early-career professionals and students. The session attracted an audience of over **300 nutrition stakeholders**, generating strong interest and discussion around scaling digital education for improved nutrition outcomes.



Farhana Tabassum presented a **poster** titled "*Persistent Anemia Among Women of Reproductive Age in Pakistan: A Qualitative Lens on Barriers and Systemic Gaps.*" Drawing on qualitative research across all four provinces of Pakistan, the study examined why anemia reduction among women of reproductive age has stagnated despite existing interventions. The findings highlighted persistent structural barriers—including poverty, gender inequality, governance gaps, and climate shocks—as well as flaws in nutrition programs such as iron–folate supplementation, flour fortification, and social safety nets.



The conference brought together **over 500 participants**, including policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and students from across South Asia and beyond. It provided a valuable platform for IGHD to share evidence-based insights, strengthen regional collaborations, and contribute to critical conversations on translating nutrition research into scalable, sustainable impact. Participation at D4N 2025 reflects IGHD's continued commitment to advancing nutrition, equity, and implementation-focused research in South Asia.

INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

WEBINARS HOSTED BY
IGHD

WEBINARS 2025

In 2025, the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) at Aga Khan University continued to strengthen its global engagement through a dynamic series of webinars focused on climate change, health, and sustainable development. Building on the momentum of previous years, these sessions convened researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and advocates from across regions to share evidence, exchange perspectives, and advance practical, interdisciplinary solutions to pressing global challenges.



ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AND CLIMATE FINANCE: UNLOCKING PAKISTAN'S SELF-SUFFICIENCY

IGHD WEBINAR
ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AND CLIMATE FINANCE: UNLOCKING PAKISTAN'S SELF-SUFFICIENCY

PRESENTERS:

- DR. ALI TAUQEER SHEIKH**
Climate Change and Sustainable Development Expert
- MS. IMRANA TIWANA**
Head Climate Change, Environment & Sustainability, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore

MODERATOR:

- DR. ZULFIQAR BHUTTA**
Distinguished Professor and Founding Director, Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD)

CLOSING REMARKS

- DR. ABID QAIYUM SULERI**
Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)

THURSDAY 28th March 2025 | **4:00 PM PAKISTAN STANDARD TIME** | **ONLINE ON MICROSOFT TEAMS**

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

On March 28, 2025, the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) convened a timely webinar titled Environmental Governance and Climate Finance: Unlocking Pakistan's Self-Sufficiency, bringing together leading national experts to examine how Pakistan can strengthen climate resilience amid shifting global political and financing landscapes. The session was moderated by Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, and attracted a diverse audience of researchers, policymakers, students, and development practitioners from Pakistan and abroad.

The webinar featured a substantive presentation by Ali Tauqeer Sheikh, who examined Pakistan's climate finance challenges through the lens of governance, domestic resource mobilisation, and private-sector engagement. He emphasised that climate change has become not only an environmental concern, but an economic and development imperative, underscoring the need for policy coherence, improved data systems, and innovative financing instruments to reduce vulnerability and enhance competitiveness.

Concluding reflections were provided by Abid Suleri, Executive Director of SDPI, who highlighted the rapidly changing international donor landscape and the urgency of recognising and strengthening indigenous sources of climate finance. An engaging question-and-answer session explored issues of climate governance, taxation, equity, and the role of communities in resilience-building. Together, the discussions reinforced the central message that Pakistan's climate response must be grounded in strong institutions, credible data, and national ownership to secure a sustainable and resilient future.

To Watch The Full Recording, Please Click The YouTube Link Below



199
ATTENDEES



14
COUNTRIES

IGHD HOSTS HIGH-LEVEL WEBINAR ON PAKISTAN'S WATER CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

On June 26, 2025, the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) at Aga Khan University hosted a thought-provoking webinar titled "Pakistan's Water Challenges & Solutions: From Within and Beyond Borders". The session brought together distinguished speakers to explore Pakistan's increasingly complex water security issues—both internal and transboundary—and their implications for peace, policy, and sustainable development.

IGHD WEBINAR | PAKISTAN'S WATER CHALLENGES: FROM WITHIN AND BEYOND BORDERS

PRESENTERS

- MR. NASEER MEMON**, Consultant Climate Change and Disaster Management
- DR. MOEED YUSUF**, Vice Chancellor, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore.

MODERATOR

- DR. ZULFIQAR BHUTTA**, Director, Institute for Global Health and Development, AKU

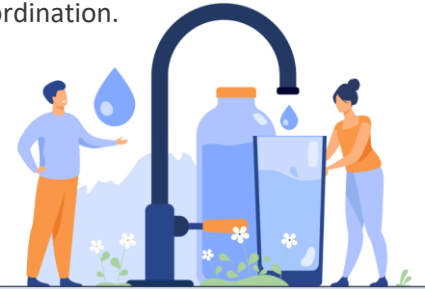
CLOSING REMARKS

- DR. ALI TAUQEER SHEIKH**, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Expert

THURSDAY 26th JUNE 2025 | 4:00 PM PAKISTAN STANDARD TIME | ONLINE ON MICROSOFT TEAMS | THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The webinar featured presentations by Dr. Moeed Yusuf, Vice Chancellor of Beaconhouse National University and former National Security Adviser of Pakistan, and Mr. Naseer Memon, a consultant in climate change and disaster management. Moderated by Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, Founding Director of IGHD, the session also included closing reflections by renowned climate expert Dr. Ali Tauqeer Sheikh. Speakers addressed the geopolitical tensions surrounding the Indus Waters Treaty, internal governance and water mismanagement, climate-driven glacial melt, and the urgent need for reform in water use practices and institutional coordination.

Dr. Moeed Yusuf emphasized the strategic dimensions of water as a national security issue, calling for a renewed diplomatic and regional approach to preserving the Indus Waters Treaty. Mr. Naseer Memon highlighted severe inefficiencies in Pakistan's water governance and infrastructure, underscoring the need to improve crop choices and water pricing. Dr. Sheikh offered a forward-looking two-pronged strategy: strengthening domestic water reforms while engaging regional and global stakeholders to protect shared water resources.



To Watch The Full Recording, Please Click The [YouTube](#) Link Below



The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface with four video thumbnails. The top-left thumbnail shows Dr. Zulfiqar Bhutta, the top-right shows Dr. Moeed Yusuf, the bottom-left shows Mr. Naseer Memon, and the bottom-right shows Dr. Ali Tauqeer Sheikh. A red play button is overlaid on the center of the grid. On the right side, there is a list of participants with their initials and names, including NR, SA, A, AA, MA, HN, MA, AR, HG, SK, and a '+47' button indicating more participants. The 'aku.edu' logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the meeting window.



177
ATTENDEES



11
COUNTRIES

THE RECENT CLIMATE CRISIS IN PAKISTAN ACT OF NATURE OR ACT OF MAN?

IGHD WEBINAR | **THE RECENT CLIMATE CRISIS IN PAKISTAN: ACT OF NATURE OR ACT OF MAN?**

PRESENTERS

- MR. NASEER MEMON**
Consultant Climate Change and Disaster Management
- ARCHITECT JAHANGIR KHAN SHERPAO**
Architect & Urban Development Specialist
- DR. ALI TAUQEER SHEIKH**
Climate Change and Sustainable Development Expert
- DR. ZULFIQAR BHUTTA**
Director, Institute for Global Health and Development, AKU

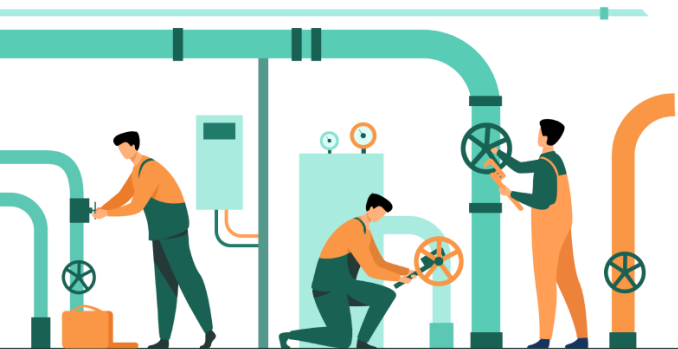
MODERATOR

FRIDAY 24th OCTOBER 2025 | 4:00 PM PAKISTAN STANDARD TIME | ONLINE ON MICROSOFT TEAMS

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

On October 24, 2025, the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) hosted a timely and thought-provoking webinar titled *The Recent Climate Crisis in Pakistan: Act of Nature or Act of Man?*, examining the extent to which recent climate-related disasters are driven not only by extreme weather, but also by long-standing governance, planning, and institutional failures. The session was moderated by Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, Founding Director of IGHD, and brought together leading experts in climate policy and disaster risk management

Mr. Naseer Memon highlighted how human actions—particularly encroachments on waterways, weak land-use planning, and inadequate enforcement of building codes—have significantly amplified the impacts of floods and extreme rainfall. His presentation underscored that while climate hazards are increasing, much of the resulting damage remains preventable through better siting of infrastructure, protection of natural drainage systems, and routine maintenance of urban and rural waterways.



Building on this, Dr. Ali Tauqeer Sheikh provided a critical assessment of Pakistan’s post-2022 flood recovery and preparedness efforts, questioning whether lessons from earlier disasters have translated into meaningful reform. Drawing on evidence from recent flood assessments, he pointed to persistent gaps in climate integration within development planning, weak institutional mandates, and the absence of enforceable implementation pathways. The discussion emphasised that Pakistan’s climate vulnerability is less a consequence of insufficient knowledge, and more the result of systemic governance and enforcement failures.

An engaged question-and-answer session reinforced the need to move beyond assessments and rhetoric toward operational frameworks that embed climate risk screening, accountability, and resilience financing into everyday planning and decision-making. The webinar reflected IGHD’s continued commitment to fostering informed public dialogue and advancing practical, evidence-based pathways for building a more climate-resilient Pakistan

To Watch The Full Recording, Please Click The YouTube Link Below

YouTube

aku.edu



156
ATTENDEES

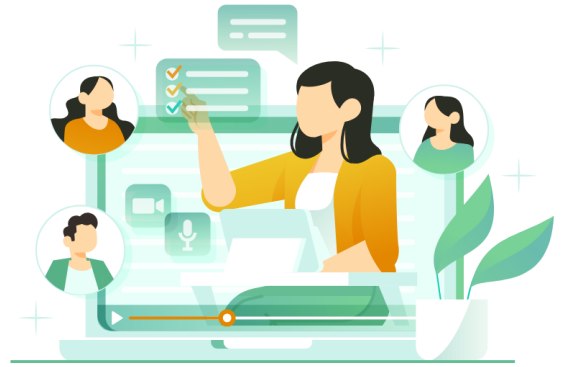


16
COUNTRIES

SHAPING DIALOGUE, DRIVING ACTION

In 2025, IGHD's webinar series emerged as a powerful platform for shaping critical conversations on climate governance, water security, and resilience in an increasingly uncertain world. Through three high-impact webinars, IGHD convened **over 532 live participants from more than 22 unique countries**, fostering inclusive, cross-regional exchange among policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and students.

The strong engagement reflected a growing global appetite for IGHD's evidence-driven perspectives. Across the year, the webinars generated 4,836 registration page views and 1,332 registrations, demonstrating sustained interest in thoughtful, solutions-oriented dialogue on climate and development challenges facing Pakistan and the wider region.



532
ATTENDEES



22
COUNTRIES



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH
AND DEVELOPMENT



Together, these engagements highlight IGHD's evolving role as a trusted global convener—connecting knowledge to action and bridging research, policy, and practice. By creating spaces for informed debate and collaboration, IGHD continues to contribute to climate-resilient, equitable, and sustainable development pathways that extend well beyond the webinar room.

INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

SHINING LIGHT ON ACHIEVEMENT

MEDIA STORIES, AWARDS,
AND ACHIEVEMENTS

CLIMATE CHANGE AND MATERNAL HEALTH: DR. JAI DAS FEATURED IN THE ECONOMIST

The Economist recently highlighted the pioneering work of **Dr. Jai K. Das**, Associate Director at the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) and Associate Professor at Aga Khan University, who is leading one of the world's largest cohort studies examining the effects of extreme heat on maternal and newborn health.



Based in Sindh, Pakistan, the study follows thousands of women from early pregnancy through childbirth to understand how rising temperatures influence pregnancy outcomes. Participants undergo regular ultrasounds and health assessments and use wearable devices that continuously record temperature and humidity exposure. The research also includes advanced biological sampling and analysis, conducted even in remote settings with limited access to phones or reliable internet connectivity.



“ Climate change is no longer a distant threat—it is already shaping the health of mothers and babies in Pakistan and beyond. By closely tracking pregnancies in some of the hottest regions of the world, we hope to generate the evidence needed to design simple, practical solutions that can save lives. It is vital that maternal and newborn health is placed at the center of climate action and resilience planning.”

- Dr Jai Das | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, IGHD

Globally, more than 4.5 million women and newborns die each year during pregnancy, childbirth, or the early postnatal period, with extreme heat increasingly recognized as a contributing factor. Evidence shows that even a 1°C rise in temperature is associated with higher risks of preterm birth, stillbirth, maternal hypertension, and gestational diabetes.



Supported by the Wellcome Trust, Dr. Das's research is helping to uncover the biological pathways linking heat exposure to adverse outcomes, while also testing practical, low-cost interventions—such as reflective roofing and household shading—to reduce heat stress among pregnant women.



By placing maternal and newborn health at the center of climate resilience efforts, this work reinforces the need to integrate health considerations into national and global climate strategies, ensuring that the lived experiences of women in Pakistan inform evidence-based policy and action worldwide.



To read the full *Economist* article “A burning threat to pregnant women” visit *The Economist* website:



<https://www.economist.com/international/2025/08/21/a-burning-threat-to-pregnant-women>

PAKISTAN URGED TO MAKE BOLD NUTRITION PLEDGES AT N4G SUMMIT 2025

**NUTRITION
FOR GROWTH
PARIS 2025**

In **March 2025**, national media coverage ahead of the **Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit** in Paris highlighted growing calls for Pakistan to take decisive action on malnutrition, food insecurity, and maternal and child health. In commentary reported by **The News International**, **Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta**, Founding Director of the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), emphasized the need for strong, evidence-based national commitments to improve nutrition outcomes, particularly in the country's most vulnerable districts.

Prof. Bhutta underscored the urgency of prioritizing nutrition as a national development and equity issue, calling for comprehensive policies that address food security alongside maternal and child nutrition, education, poverty alleviation, and environmental determinants of health. Experts also urged Pakistan to advance key commitments at the Summit, including increased domestic financing for nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions, strengthened food fortification programmes, and recognition of nutrition as a fundamental right.

The N4G Summit served as a critical platform for reinforcing Pakistan's commitment to tackling malnutrition and advancing sustainable health and development policies, reflecting IGHD's continued engagement in shaping national and global nutrition discourse.

To Learn More
About This Event,
Please [Click Here](#)

INTERNATIONAL
THE NEWS

CLIMATE CHANGE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTS WOMEN AND CHILDREN

In **March 2025**, **The Express Tribune** featured insights from **Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta**, Director of the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), on the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and children. Drawing on evidence from low-income and marginalized settings, Prof. Bhutta highlighted how rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events are intensifying health risks for vulnerable populations.

He noted the growing burden of malnutrition, stunted growth, and adverse developmental outcomes among children exposed to sustained heat stress and limited access to healthcare and nutrition. Prof. Bhutta also emphasized the heightened risks faced by pregnant women, including increased exposure to extreme heat, poor air quality, food insecurity, and unsafe water—factors linked to low birth weight, preterm birth, and impaired fetal development.



To Learn More
About This Event,
Please [Click Here](#)

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE

Calling for urgent action, Prof. Bhutta advocated for investment in climate-resilient health systems, expanded access to essential services, and community-based education. His commentary reinforced the need for coordinated action across policy, health, and community sectors to protect women and children at the frontlines of climate change.

NATIONAL SEMINAR ADVANCES AGENDA FOR NEWBORN SURVIVAL AND CARE IN PAKISTAN

In **September 2025**, the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), Aga Khan University, in collaboration with national partners, convened the **National Seminar on Accelerating Newborn Survival and Care in Pakistan** in Islamabad. The two-day seminar brought together policymakers, clinicians, researchers, and development partners to address Pakistan's persistently high neonatal mortality rate and strengthen collective action to improve newborn outcomes.

Discussions highlighted critical gaps in the availability, quality, and equitable coverage of essential newborn services, while aligning stakeholders around practical, evidence-based solutions. Sessions focused on district-level delivery challenges, strengthening advanced newborn care (Level II services), and scaling up proven, low-cost interventions such as newborn resuscitation, early breastfeeding, and skin-to-skin care.



Keynote addresses by **Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta**, Founding Director of IGHD, and **Prof. Shabina Ariff** emphasized the need for equity, consistency, and accountability across provinces and districts. As Chief Guest, **Prof. Ayesha Isani Majeed**, Federal Director General Health, announced the establishment of a **National Technical Working Group on Newborn Care**, reinforcing government commitment to prioritizing newborn health. The seminar underscored that while Pakistan has the knowledge and tools to prevent most newborn deaths, sustained implementation and accountability remain essential to achieving lasting impact.



DR. ZULFIQAR BHUTTA CONTRIBUTES TO NATIONAL DISCOURSE THROUGH OP-ED

INTERNATIONAL
THE NEWS

TNS
the news on sunday

In 2025, **Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta**, Founding Director of the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), published an opinion piece titled "*Déjà Vu*" in **The News on Sunday**, reflecting on the recurring challenges that have shaped Pakistan's development trajectory.

In the article, Prof. Bhutta examined how cycles of political instability, weak governance, and short-term policymaking have constrained long-term progress, placing a disproportionate burden on vulnerable populations—particularly women and children. He highlighted the consequences of underinvestment in health, education, and nutrition, and the urgent need to break these patterns through stronger institutions and sustained reform.

Calling for a renewed commitment to **evidence-based policymaking, accountability, and equity-driven solutions**, the op-ed reinforced IGHD's role in shaping national dialogue at the intersection of governance, health, and development. The piece exemplifies the Institute's commitment to translating evidence into public advocacy that informs policy and advances sustainable progress.

INTERNATIONAL
THE NEWS

To read the full 'The News on Sunday' article "*Déjà Vu*" please click on the Link

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/tns/detail/1346762-dj-vu>

DR. ZULFIQAR BHUTTA RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATION LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

In **March 2025**, Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, Founding Director of the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), Aga Khan University, was named recipient of the **International Pediatric Association (IPA) Lifetime Achievement Award**, recognizing his extraordinary contributions to global child health and decades of leadership within the Association.



Over the course of his career, Dr. Bhutta has been a transformative figure in maternal, newborn, and child health. His research and advocacy have shaped global health policy, strengthened health systems in low-resource settings, and advanced equity-driven approaches to care worldwide. In addition to his leadership at IGHD, he serves as **Co-Director of the Centre for Global Child Health at SickKids** and holds the **Robert Harding Chair in Global Child Health**.

A long-standing leader within the IPA, Dr. Bhutta previously served as **President (2016–2019)** and **Treasurer (2007–2013)** and currently chairs the **IPA Working Group on School-Age Children**. The award will be formally presented at the **31st IPA Congress**, to be held in **May 2025 in Mexico City**, marking a milestone in a career dedicated to improving the lives of children globally.

DR. ZULFIQAR BHUTTA HONOURED WITH THE NILS ROSÉN VON ROSENSTEIN MEDAL

In **April 2025**, Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, Founding Director of IGHD, was awarded the **Nils Rosén von Rosenstein Medal**, one of the most distinguished international honours in paediatrics. The medal was presented at **Uppsala University, Sweden**, by the **Swedish Paediatric Association** and the **Swedish Society of Medicine**.



Awarded once every five years, the Rosén von Rosenstein Medal recognizes exceptional, life-long contributions to children's health and is named after the 18th-century pioneer of modern paediatrics. Dr. Bhutta joins a select group of global leaders whose work has fundamentally shaped paediatric research, policy, and practice.

A graduate of the **Karolinska Institute**, Dr. Bhutta is internationally recognized for his pioneering contributions to maternal, newborn, and child health, with a particular focus on nutrition, health systems strengthening, and equity in low-resource settings. This honour reflects the global impact of his scholarship and advocacy, and underscores IGHD's leadership in advancing evidence-driven solutions for child health and development worldwide.

DR. ZULFIQAR A. BHUTTA NAMED AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR NUTRITION (ASN) DISTINGUISHED FELLOW 2025

In 2025, Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, Founding Director of the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), Aga Khan University, was inducted into the **American Society for Nutrition** as a **Distinguished Fellow**—the Society’s highest honour.



American Society for Nutrition
Excellence in Nutrition Research and Practice

This designation is awarded to individuals who have made outstanding and sustained contributions to nutrition science, research, and policy. Dr. Bhutta was recognized for his decades of leadership in maternal, newborn, and child health and nutrition, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, where his work has helped shape global nutrition strategies and inform responses to child malnutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and food insecurity.



This recognition reflects Dr. Bhutta’s enduring influence on global nutrition policy and practice, and reinforces IGHD’s role in advancing evidence-driven solutions for improving health and nutrition outcomes worldwide.

DR. BHUTTA AWARDED THE VIRCHOW PRIZE 2025 FOR GLOBAL HEALTH

Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, Founding Director of the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) at Aga Khan University, was awarded the **Virchow Prize 2025 for Global Health** (<https://virchowprize.org/virchowprize-2025/>). Conferred annually by the Virchow Foundation, this distinguished honour is among the most respected global recognitions in health and acknowledges leaders whose lifelong work has shaped policy, practice, and outcomes for vulnerable populations worldwide.



Dr. Bhutta’s selection reflects his pioneering and sustained contributions to advancing maternal, newborn, and child health equity through community-centred and evidence-based research. He shares this year’s award with **Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim** of South Africa, an internationally acclaimed scientist and advocate for HIV prevention and women’s health. Together, their work underscores the shared global responsibility to strengthen health systems, promote equity, and advance sustainable development.

The award ceremony, held in Berlin, can be viewed by clicking the image on the Left or via the link: **Watch Prize Ceremony**

In addition, **Dr. Bhutta’s Virchow Prize Lecture**, delivered alongside the ceremony, is available clicking on the image to the right or by clicking here: **Watch the Lecture**

Aligned with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the vision of *Health for All*, the Virchow Prize recognizes contributions that extend beyond individual achievement. In this context, the award reflects both Dr. Bhutta’s decades of leadership and scholarship, and IGHD’s ongoing commitment to advancing health equity, resilience, and sustainable development through research, innovation, and cross-border collaboration.



INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

EMPOWERING GLOBAL HEALTH THROUGH
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

ACADEMIC MENTORSHIP & CAPACITY BUILDING: MASTER'S SUPERVISION IN 2025

In 2025, **Dr. Jai K. Das**, Associate Director at the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), served as **Principal Supervisor for three postgraduate students** across public health, epidemiology, and health policy disciplines. These supervisions reflect IGHD's sustained commitment to academic mentorship, applied research, and capacity building, particularly in areas intersecting climate change, social vulnerability, and population health in Pakistan.

Dr. Hafsa Azhar completed her **Master of Science in Public Health** with a qualitative thesis titled "*Lived Experiences of Youth Amidst Heat Stress: A Qualitative Exploration of Mental Health Challenges in a Rural District of Pakistan.*" Conducted in Dadu, Sindh, the research examined the mental health implications of climate-induced heat stress among rural youth. Under Dr. Das's close mentorship—marked by regular guidance, trust, and academic autonomy—Dr. Azhar successfully navigated the challenges of field-based qualitative research. Following the completion of her degree, she joined IGHD as a **Research Coordinator**, contributing to ongoing work on climate change, mental health, and community-based public health interventions.

DR. HAFSA AZHAR **MASTER OF SCIENCE** **IN PUBLIC HEALTH**

Thesis Title:
Lived Experiences of Youth Amidst Heat Stress: A Qualitative Exploration of Mental Health Challenges in a Rural District of Pakistan



Dr. Ramsha Tahir completed her **MSc in Epidemiology and Biostatistics** with a thesis examining the *association between maternal working conditions during pregnancy and birth outcomes in Karachi*. Her research generated evidence on how workplace stress and physical job demands influence birth weight, offering important insights for maternal health policy and occupational health practices in urban Pakistan. Notably, she completed her thesis during a personally challenging period—balancing new motherhood alongside academic commitments—supported by flexible and empathetic supervision that enabled her to complete her degree on time.

DR. RAMSHA TAHIR **MSC IN EPIDEMIOLOGY** **AND BIOSTATISTICS**

Thesis Title:
The association between maternal working conditions during pregnancy and birth outcomes in Karachi



Dr. Rabia Bashir Ahmed completed her **Master of Health Policy and Management (MHPM)** with **Distinction**. Her mixed-methods thesis, "*Exploring the Effects of Rising Cost of Living on Quality of Life and Health Outcomes Among Urban Working-Class Individuals in Karachi,*" assessed how economic pressures shape health and wellbeing in urban populations. Through rigorous mentorship and access to interdisciplinary guidance at IGHD, she was encouraged to push beyond perceived limitations and develop policy-relevant analytical skills.

Collectively, these supervisions highlight IGHD's role in **nurturing early-career researchers through responsive, context-sensitive mentorship**, and Dr. Das's sustained contribution to developing skilled public health professionals equipped to address complex health challenges in Pakistan and other low- and middle-income settings.

DR. RABIA BASHIR **MASTER OF HEALTH POLICY** **AND MANAGEMENT**

Thesis Title:
Exploring the Effects of Rising Cost of Living on Quality of Life and Health Outcomes Among Urban Working-Class Individuals in Karachi



Congratulations to Our Master's Graduates

IGHD congratulates **Dr. Hafsa Azhar, Dr. Ramsha Tahir, and Dr. Rabia Bashir Ahmed** on the successful completion of their Master's degrees. We are delighted to welcome **Dr. Hafsa Azhar** as a **Research Coordinator** at IGHD, and we wish **Dr. Ramsha Tahir** and **Dr. Rabia Bashir Ahmed** every success as they move forward in their professional journeys.

SUPPORTING WOMEN IN SCIENCE PROGRAM ADVANCES THROUGH COHORT 4 EVALUATION

In **February 2025**, the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) completed the **Phase II evaluation** for **Cohort 4** of the **Supporting Women in Science (SWIS) Programme**, marking an important milestone in the programme's ongoing efforts to strengthen women's participation and leadership in science and research. Of the **179 participants** initially enrolled, **86 candidates** progressed to the Phase II examination stage.



Evaluation results reflected a strong cohort, with **twelve participants** achieving scores of **80 percent or higher**. These candidates were subsequently selected to advance to the **Phase III fellowship**, representing a significant step forward in their academic and professional development within the programme.

In addition, the **English evaluation examination** for Cohort 4 was conducted in **March 2025**, completing another key component of the programme's rigorous selection and capacity-building process. Together, these milestones underscore the continued growth and impact of the SWIS Programme, reinforcing IGHD's long-term commitment to promoting gender equity, excellence, and leadership in science.

Selected Fellows Advancing to Phase III:



AFREEN SADIA

Aga Khan University
(Pakistan)



CHRISTINE NAITORE MARETE

Embu County Referral Hospital
(Kenya)



KANZA SHUJAET

Aga Khan University
(Pakistan)



KHADIJA ISLAM TISHA

ICDDR,B
(Bangladesh)



MARIA ISHAQ KHATTAK

Khyber Medical University
(Pakistan)



MILCAH ASHIALI

Teacher Service Commission
(Kenya)



SAMINA AKHTAR

Aga Khan University
(Pakistan)



SHAHIDA PERVEEN

Foundation University Islamabad
(Pakistan)



TEHNIAT FARAZ AHMED

DUHS
(Pakistan)



SYEDA RAMLAH TUL SANIA

Aga Khan University
(Pakistan)



STEPHANIE WAKABA

Gertrude's Children's Hospital
(Kenya)



ZILLAH MORAA MALACHI

Kisii University
(Kenya)

LALA RUKH MATTIES CONTRIBUTES TO IGHD'S CLIMATE AND HEALTH AGENDA

In **2025**, **Lala Rukh Matties**, a globally experienced architect and graduate of the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore, continued her engagement with the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), contributing expertise at the intersection of **architecture, sustainability, and health systems design**. Now based in the United States and affiliated with a firm specializing in healthcare facility design, she visited Pakistan to support several IGHD initiatives.

During her visit, Ms. Matties toured IGHD field sites and provided technical input to ongoing activities, including advisory support for the **IGHD Annual Conference**, where sustainable design and climate-resilient infrastructure are key thematic priorities.



Architect Lala Rukh Matties



Ms. Matties has been actively engaged with IGHD for over a year and serves as **co-mentor to postdoctoral fellow Humaira Nazir**, whose research focuses on climate-resilient healthcare facilities in a district of Sindh. She has also provided technical guidance on upgrading existing infrastructure and developing a **prototype health facility for peri-urban Karachi**, supporting IGHD's broader efforts to advance environmentally sustainable health systems.

UNDERSTANDING HEAT STRESS IN PREGNANCY: IGHD ADVANCES LANDMARK STUDY IN RURAL SINDH

As climate change accelerates, extreme heat events are becoming increasingly frequent and pose growing risks to maternal and child health—particularly in low-resource settings where evidence remains limited. In response to this critical gap, the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) at Aga Khan University initiated a major research effort in **2025** examining the **effect of heat exposure and thermal stress on maternal, fetal, and infant health**.



Funded by the **Wellcome Trust**, this prospective cohort study is the first of its kind in Pakistan. It is designed to investigate the biological and physiological pathways linking heat stress to adverse pregnancy and neonatal outcomes. The study employs a rigorous methodology, including wearable technologies, serial ultrasounds, Doppler imaging, and structured antenatal assessments, and will follow **6,000 pregnant women** from early pregnancy through six months postpartum.

“ A remarkable outcome of this project has been the transformation of local doctors into skilled providers of antenatal and ultrasound care. With some earning international certification, the study has not only ensured data quality but also contributed meaningfully to local capacity building and the professional growth of young clinicians. ”

- DR. ZAHEENA SHAMUL ISLAM
DEPARTMENT OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY
AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL



Since its launch in **April 2025**, more than **200 participants** have been enrolled across three climate-vulnerable districts of Sindh—**Matiari, Tando Muhammad Khan, and Mithi**. A sub-cohort of **1,000 women** is undergoing more intensive monitoring, including maternal and fetal echocardiography, heart rate analysis, physical activity and sleep tracking, and biospecimen collection. By generating robust, locally grounded evidence, this study is expected to inform climate-resilient maternal health strategies and support policy and programme development across South Asia and other low-resource settings.

IGHD ADVANCES RESEARCH ON SUSTAINABLE HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE IN LMICS

In **2025**, the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) at Aga Khan University launched a research initiative focused on developing **climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable healthcare infrastructure** in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), with a particular emphasis on **Sindh, Pakistan**.

Led by **Dr. Jai K. Das** as Principal Investigator, alongside **Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta** and **Humaira Nazir** (Postdoctoral Fellow, IGHD), the project responds to a growing global challenge: ensuring that health systems can withstand and adapt to increasingly frequent climate-related shocks, including heatwaves and flooding. Such events place significant strain on healthcare facilities, particularly in resource-constrained settings where resilience is limited.

The research aims to develop **practical architectural and policy guidelines** to support health facilities that can operate effectively in extreme climates while reducing environmental impact. Core components include energy-efficient design, renewable energy integration, sustainable waste management, and resilient water and food supply systems, with particular attention to the needs of vulnerable and indigenous communities disproportionately affected by climate change.



IGHD RESEARCH TEAM



DR. JAI DAS

Principal Investigator



DR. ZULFIQAR BHUTTA

Research Team



MS. HUMAIRA NAZIR

Research Team

By integrating traditional building knowledge with contemporary climate science, the project seeks to inform both the design of future healthcare facilities and broader policy and planning efforts across South Asia and other LMICs facing similar climate and infrastructure challenges.

MAPPING CLIMATE VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE ACROSS PAKISTAN'S HIGH-RISK DISTRICTS

As Pakistan faces intensifying climate threats—from glacial lake outburst floods in the north to heatwaves, drought, and salinity intrusion in the south—the **PREPARE Pakistan Project** marked an important step forward in strengthening **data-driven climate resilience planning** during 2025. Led by **Dr. Bhavita Kumari, Ahmed Atiullah, and Abdullah Babar**, under the supervision of **Dr. Jai K. Das** at the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), Aga Khan University, the one-year initiative focused on measuring, mapping, and understanding community-level vulnerability and resilience in some of the country's most climate-exposed regions.

PREPARE PROJECT TEAM



Dr Bhavita Kumari
PROJECT MANAGER



Ahmed Atiullah
RESEARCHER

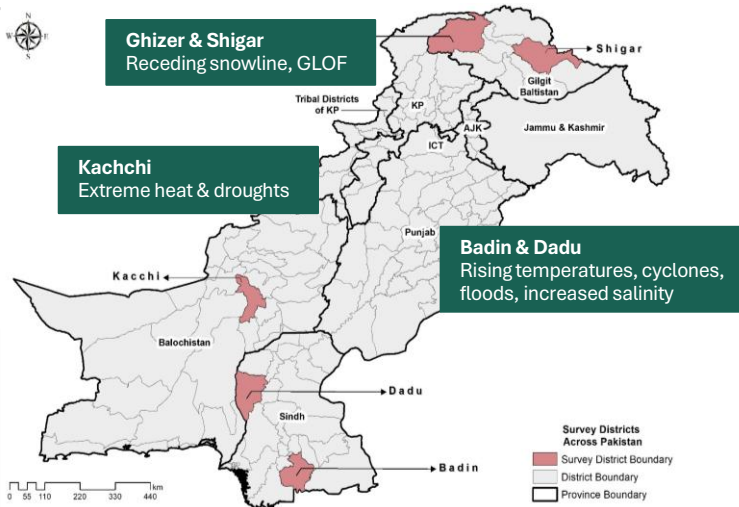


Abdullah Babar
RESEARCHER

Dr Jai Das
PROJECT SUPERVISOR



The study was conducted across **five high-risk districts**—**Ghizer and Shigar** in Gilgit-Baltistan, **Kachchi** in Balochistan, and **Dadu and Badin** in Sindh—capturing a diverse range of climate hazards including glacial melt, extreme heat, drought, cyclones, and flooding. Using two internationally recognized tools—the **Multidimensional Livelihood Vulnerability Index (MLVI)** and the **Disaster Resilience Index (DRI)**—the research quantitatively assessed exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity at both household and community levels.



Key findings revealed marked regional contrasts.

- Shigar and Badin demonstrated **high livelihood vulnerability and low adaptive capacity**, driven by limited livelihood diversification, weak infrastructure, and constrained access to financial resources.
- Ghizer, while highly exposed to glacial lake outburst flood risks, showed **stronger social cohesion and adaptive mechanisms**, resulting in comparatively higher resilience scores.
- Across all study sites, reliance on climate-sensitive livelihoods, limited access to credit and savings, and governance and reconstruction gaps emerged as the most significant drivers of vulnerability.

The analysis underscored that resilience in Pakistan's climate-vulnerable regions cannot be achieved through isolated or sector-specific interventions. Instead, the findings point to the need for **integrated, cross-sectoral approaches** that combine infrastructure investment, social protection, financial inclusion, and participatory governance. The project also highlighted the value of **granular, data-driven vulnerability mapping** as a practical tool for local governments and development partners to design targeted and context-specific adaptation programmes.



With nearly a **thousand climate-related deaths reported in northern Pakistan since mid-2025**, the PREPARE Pakistan Project concluded at a critical moment. By combining rigorous scientific assessment with local realities, the initiative contributes essential evidence to inform equitable, community-centred climate resilience planning and strengthens IGHD's broader commitment to advancing climate adaptation research grounded in lived experience.

CHOICE PROJECT DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP IN NAIROBI: ADVANCING EVIDENCE-INFORMED ACTION ON HEALTH-RELATED SDGs

In September 2025, Aga Khan University convened the **CHOICE Project Dissemination Workshop in Nairobi**, bringing together policymakers, researchers, and development partners to strengthen dialogue on advancing health and health-related **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** through evidence-informed policy engagement

During the workshop, **Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta**, Founding Director of the **Institute for Global Health and Development**, presented an overview of the **Global CHOICE Project**, emphasizing the role of data-driven collaboration in promoting equitable health outcomes. **Dr. Jai K. Das**, Associate Director of IGHD, shared insights from the project's quantitative analyses, while members of the CHOICE team and affiliated think tanks discussed key findings and policy-relevant recommendations.

Inaugurated by the **Principal Secretary, State Department for Economic Planning**, the workshop featured thematic breakout sessions on SDG data systems, gender and equity, mental health, and climate action. A concluding panel, "*Visioning CHOICE 2.0: The Future of the Think Tank and Beyond*," reaffirmed collective commitment to strengthening partnerships, data systems, and regional collaboration in support of sustainable health development.



DR. RAHIMA YASIN PRESENTS EZAFFAW TRIAL FINDINGS AT AKU'S ANNUAL RESEARCH WEEK 2025



In August 2025, the **Department of Paediatrics and Child Health** at Aga Khan University hosted its **Annual Research Week**, showcasing advances in child health, nutrition, and development research across the University.

Representing the **Institute for Global Health and Development**, **Dr. Rahima Yasin**, Research Coordinator, presented findings from the **EZAFFAW trial**, which evaluates the efficacy of **agronomically zinc-biofortified wheat flour** in improving zinc status and metabolic health. Her presentation highlighted the trial's relevance for informing public health strategies to address zinc deficiency in resource-limited settings

The event brought together faculty, researchers, and students from across disciplines, fostering dialogue and collaboration in paediatric and maternal health research. Dr. Yasin's contribution reflected IGHD's continued commitment to translating rigorous nutrition research into evidence that can inform policy and improve community health outcomes.



NEW STUDY ADVANCES EVIDENCE ON COMMUNITY-BASED HEAT ADAPTATION INTERVENTIONS

Community-Based Heat Adaptation Interventions



In **2025**, a study led by **Dr. Jai K. Das**, Associate Director at the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), in collaboration with international partners, was published in **BMJ Public Health**. Titled “*Evaluation of Community-Based Heat Adaptation Interventions: A Systematic Review*,” the paper synthesised evidence from **185 studies worldwide** to assess the effectiveness of interventions aimed at reducing health risks associated with extreme heat.

The review demonstrated that relatively simple, community-level measures can meaningfully reduce heat exposure. Structural interventions such as **green roofs** were associated with surface temperature reductions of nearly **11°C** and indoor cooling of approximately **2.4°C**, while reflective paints and modified pavements also showed significant benefits. In parallel, individual- and community-focused approaches—including heat education, early warning systems, and heat action plans—were linked to reduced illness and mortality, alongside improved awareness and preparedness.

As one of the most comprehensive analyses in this area to date, the study provides robust evidence on which interventions are most effective and feasible. The findings reinforce the importance of integrating community-based heat adaptation strategies into **urban planning and public health policy**, particularly in climate-vulnerable settings, and contribute to IGHD’s broader work on evidence-informed climate resilience.



BMJ
Public
Health

The full article is available open access in *BMJ Public Health*: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjph-2024-002332>

CONSULTATION WITH MS. YASMEEN LARI EXPLORES CLIMATE-RESILIENT, COMMUNITY-CENTRED SOLUTIONS

In **July 2025**, the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) convened a consultation meeting with Ms. **Yasmeen Lari**, Founder of the Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, at Aga Khan University, Karachi. The meeting brought together IGHD faculty and leadership to explore potential areas of collaboration on heritage-informed, community-centred approaches to climate resilience and development.



The session opened with remarks by **Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta**, Founding Director of IGHD, followed by an overview of ongoing IGHD research and initiatives presented by Dr. Bhutta and **Dr. Jai K. Das**, Associate Director. Ms. Lari shared insights from the Heritage Foundation’s work in eco-friendly architecture, disaster-resilient housing, and women-led community empowerment, highlighting the role of traditional knowledge and low-carbon design in equitable climate adaptation.

Discussions focused on opportunities to integrate **sustainable design, public health, livelihoods, and climate adaptation research**, with a shared emphasis on locally grounded and inclusive solutions. The consultation concluded with a mutual commitment to exploring joint initiatives that align research, practice, and community engagement in advancing climate-smart development pathways.



ADVANCING CLIMATE AND HEALTH RESEARCH: HOBO ADVANCED WEATHER STATION INSTALLED AT AKU



The Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) has enhanced Pakistan’s climate–health research capacity with the installation of a HOBO U30-NCR Advanced Weather Station on the rooftop of the Women and Child Health (WCH) building at Aga Khan University. This installation marks an important step in strengthening IGHD’s ability to generate high-resolution, real-time environmental data to better understand the health impacts of climate change in dense urban settings such as Karachi.

As climate extremes intensify, the station will provide continuous monitoring of key environmental parameters, including temperature, humidity, solar radiation, wind, rainfall, and atmospheric pressure. These data enable the calculation of critical heat stress indicators—such as the Heat Index and Wet-Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT)—supporting more accurate assessments of human heat exposure and associated health risks, particularly for women, children, and other vulnerable populations.

The weather station will directly support IGHD’s ongoing research on heat stress and environmental exposure, improving exposure modelling and strengthening links between climate data and health outcomes. Beyond research, the evidence generated will inform climate-responsive interventions, urban planning, and heat preparedness strategies. Led by Zulfiqar A. Bhutta and Jai K. Das, with technical guidance from Junaid Ahmad, this initiative reflects IGHD’s broader commitment to building sustainable, policy-relevant climate–health research infrastructure in Pakistan.

Beyond immediate research applications, the HOBO Advanced Weather Station strengthens IGHD’s long-term climate–health research infrastructure at Aga Khan University. By enabling continuous environmental surveillance within an academic health setting, the station supports interdisciplinary collaboration across public health, climate science, and urban resilience research, while also serving as a training resource for students and early-career researchers. Looking ahead, the integration of ground-level data with satellite imagery and advanced analytics will enhance the identification of urban heat hotspots and high-risk populations—ensuring that locally generated evidence informs climate-resilient health planning, policy dialogue, and targeted interventions in Pakistan.

EXPLORING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN PAKISTAN

The Indigenous Knowledge (IK) Project seeks to understand how traditional wisdom and local practices contribute to climate change adaptation and resilience in Pakistan—particularly in the context of extreme heat and flooding. Implemented in three phases, the project aims to identify, document, and translate indigenous insights into evidence-based strategies that can strengthen community-level adaptation and resilience.



Phase 1 focuses on documenting traditional practices and local wisdom through knowledge synthesis and qualitative research. The findings from this initial phase will inform Phases 2 and 3, which will build on these insights to develop and disseminate practical, evidence-driven strategies to empower vulnerable communities.

As part of the project’s first phase, pilot interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in Mithi and Nagar Parkar from 24th to 26th September 2025, engaging local participants to capture their lived experiences and adaptive practices. This initiative represents a vital step toward integrating indigenous knowledge into national climate resilience efforts.



IGHD WELCOMES NEW ASSOCIATE FACULTY MEMBERS TO STRENGTHEN CLIMATE, HEALTH, AND DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

In **May 2025**, the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), Aga Khan University, was pleased to welcome **Dr. Ana Bonell** and **Ms. Lala Rukh Matties** as **Associate Faculty members**, further strengthening the Institute's growing network of global collaborators advancing evidence-based research and policy on climate, health, and development.

NEW ASSOCIATE FACULTY MEMBERS



DR. ANA BONELL

RESEARCHER

LONDON SCHOOL OF
HYGIENE & TROPICAL
MEDICINE

**MS. LALA RUKH
MATTIES**

**DEVELOPMENT EXPERT
ARCHITECT**

Dr. Bonell, a researcher at the **London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine**, brings deep expertise in maternal health, climate change, and occupational health, with a particular focus on the impacts of environmental heat on pregnancy outcomes. Her continued collaboration with IGHD enhances the Institute's work at the intersection of climate science and maternal and child health.

Ms. Lala Rukh Matties, a development expert and gender specialist, contributes extensive experience in community engagement, climate resilience, and gender equity. Her association with IGHD reinforces the Institute's commitment to inclusive, participatory, and equity-centered approaches to health and development. IGHD looks forward to meaningful and sustained collaboration with both Associate Faculty members as part of its broader academic and research mission.

FROM APPOINTMENT TO ACADEMIC MILESTONE: DR. KHADIJA VADSARIA

The Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), Aga Khan University, welcomed **Ms. Khadija Vadsaria** as a **Senior Instructor** in **February 2025**, strengthening the Institute's expertise in maternal and child health, nutrition, digital health, and public health research. Trained in epidemiology, biostatistics, and nursing at Aga Khan University, she brought a multidisciplinary perspective shaped by prior roles at AKU, The Indus Hospital, and consultancy experience with the World Bank.

Over the year, Dr. Vadsaria made notable scholarly contributions, including leading systematic reviews on childhood diarrhoea that informed **WHO guidelines**, contributing to competitive grant development, and conducting country case studies on postpartum haemorrhage. She also presented award-winning research at international platforms such as **Delivering for Nutrition 2024** in Colombo and the **13th World Congress on Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD)** in Buenos Aires, and actively mentored **IGHD Summer Interns**, supporting early-career research development.



- Dr. Khadija Vadsaria | **SENIOR INSTRUCTOR, IGH**

EFFICACY OF A PERSONALIZED MOBILE HEALTH COACHING PROGRAM ON A PARALLEL GROUP RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIAL



MATERNAL DIET



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



SUPPLEMENT USE

In **September 2025**, she successfully defended her doctoral dissertation at the **Faculty of Health Sciences, Aga Khan University**, earning her **PhD in Population and Public Health**. Her research on personalized mobile health coaching during pregnancy provides valuable evidence for improving maternal health behaviours and outcomes in low- and middle-income settings, reflecting IGHD's commitment to research excellence, mentorship, and impactful, evidence-driven global health solutions.

ONWARD AND UPWARD: HONOURING TRANSITIONS AND NEW BEGINNINGS AT IGHD

As we mark the close of the year, the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) reflects on a period of meaningful transition—celebrating colleagues embarking on advanced academic journeys and acknowledging those moving on to new professional chapters. These transitions reflect IGHD’s commitment to mentorship, growth, and lasting impact, and underscore the enduring relationships and shared purpose that extend well beyond time spent at the Institute.



Pursuing Higher Education and Academic Advancement

IGHD takes particular pride in supporting colleagues as they progress to advanced academic and clinical training at leading institutions worldwide—an integral part of the Institute’s mission to nurture future leaders in health, science, and development.

We extend our warmest congratulations to **Ayesha Arshad**, whose time at IGHD was marked by her dedication to impactful research and her strong commitment to advancing health equity for vulnerable populations. Reflecting on her experience, Ayesha shared that IGHD was “much more than just a workplace; it has been a community of support, learning, and innovation.” She has now begun an exciting new chapter as an **Internal Medicine resident at Lincoln Medical Center**, a major academic teaching hospital affiliated with Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City and known for serving one of the most diverse patient populations in the United States. We are immensely proud of Ayesha’s achievement and confident that her clinical training in this rigorous, high-impact environment will further strengthen her contributions to global and population health.

“ I am truly grateful for the opportunities to grow both professionally and personally alongside such a compassionate and inspiring team. ”

- AYESHA ARSHAD



In **June 2025**, IGHD also marked the departure of **Zayaan Delawalla**, who served as a Research Associate with the Institute. During his time at IGHD, Zayaan contributed to research at the intersection of urban environments, climate, and health, bringing a strong analytical lens to issues of urban vulnerability and development. He has since moved on to pursue a **Master’s degree in Urban Studies at Université libre de Bruxelles**, one of Europe’s leading public research universities with a strong tradition in urban policy, planning, and social sciences. This next academic step will allow Zayaan to further deepen his expertise in urban systems, governance, and climate-responsive planning within an international and interdisciplinary setting.

“ I am truly grateful for the opportunities to grow both professionally and personally alongside such a compassionate and inspiring team. ”

- ZAYAAN DELAWALLA



We are also pleased to celebrate the next academic milestone of **Ali Salman Sheikh**, reflecting IGHD's continued commitment to nurturing early-career researchers. After joining IGHD as a Research Coordinator in February 2023 following his MPhil in Biological and Biomedical Sciences at Aga Khan University, Ali contributed—under the supervision of **Dr. Jai K. Das**—to research on zinc deficiency among school-going children, agronomic influences on nutrition, and systematic reviews examining biomarkers associated with heat stress. In **2026**, he will begin his **PhD at Aga Khan University**, focusing on the role of **Epstein-Barr virus (EBV)** in the onset and progression of prostate carcinoma.

During his time at IGHD, Ali also played an active role in supporting interdisciplinary research and academic outputs, contributing to data synthesis, manuscript preparation, and collaborative projects spanning nutrition, climate stress, and maternal and child health. His work reflected a strong ability to bridge laboratory science with population-level public health questions—an approach that has been central to IGHD's research ethos. As he transitions to doctoral training, Ali carries forward a solid foundation in translational research, shaped by close mentorship, collaborative teamwork, and exposure to policy-relevant global health research.



Moving On to New Professional Pathways



Alongside these academic transitions, we also bid farewell to **Dr. Ammad Waheed Qazi**, who concluded his tenure as a Postdoctoral Fellow at IGHD. Ammad's time with the Institute was marked by interdisciplinary research, policy engagement, and a collaborative spirit. He expressed deep gratitude to **Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta**, **Dr. Jai K. Das**, and colleagues at IGHD for their mentorship and support. As he moves forward in his professional and academic journey, Ammad carries with him valuable experiences and lasting professional relationships formed during his time at the Institute.

Looking Ahead

While we will miss **Ayesha**, **Zayaan**, and **Ammad** as colleagues, we celebrate their achievements and wish them every success ahead. We also take pride in **Ali's** next academic step, which reflects IGHD's enduring commitment to mentorship, excellence, and the development of impactful research careers.

We look forward to staying connected as each of them continues to advance health, science, and development in their respective fields.

FAREWELL TO OUR SUMMER INTERNS



During the year, the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) concluded the **ASPIRE Summer Internship Programme**, marking the completion of a six-week engagement that brought together a group of motivated and curious interns to explore key issues in global health, climate change, and development. Throughout their time with IGHD, the interns engaged with research, discussions, and field-based learning, contributing thoughtfully to the Institute's work.



Zara Hayat | UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

"My time at IGHD has been both fulfilling and insightful. Not only was there such a welcoming and supportive environment but having started and working on a publication under the mentorship of Khadija and Dr. Das truly has been a very rewarding experience. I will sincerely always be very grateful for this opportunity, as it gave me access to the larger environment of healthcare and increased my empathy and respect for the sector as a whole."

Hana Rehan Khan | HABIB UNIVERSITY

"I am truly thankful for the support and guidance I received during my six weeks at IGHD. It has been a truly rewarding experience that made my research skills stronger and also helped broaden my perspective on topics like global health and climate change."



Jaint Kumar | ALTAMASH INSTITUTE OF DENTAL MEDICINE

"My time at the IGHD offered a first-class working environment, surrounded by supportive mentors and colleagues. It was such a joy seeing how my work connected to a larger vision that has the potential to change millions of lives."

The interns' enthusiasm, fresh perspectives, and willingness to engage with complex challenges added meaningful value to the IGHD team. Their reflections on the programme highlighted the importance of mentorship, exposure to real-world research, and interdisciplinary learning in shaping early academic and professional journeys.

IGHD extends its sincere appreciation to all the interns for their commitment and contributions. We wish them continued success in their future academic and professional pursuits and look forward to the positive impact they will make as the next generation of leaders in health and development.



Left to right: Zara Hayat, Shanzay Rizvi, Hana Rehan Khan, Ayman Jafri, Aleezeh Siddiqui, and Jaint Kumar.

INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES

BUILDING STRONGER TEAMS
THROUGH COLLABORATION

IGHD DEPARTMENT PICNIC: A DAY OF SUN, SAND, AND SMILES



As part of Team Picture Day on **March 27, 2025**, the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) brought colleagues from across the office together for our official institute photograph. The session provided a welcome opportunity to pause from day-to-day work, reconnect as a team, and reflect on the shared purpose that unites our research, programs, and partnerships.

More than a photo opportunity, the gathering captured the people behind IGHD's work—highlighting the strong culture of collaboration and mutual support that drives the Institute forward. The official institute picture will serve as a lasting record of this collective spirit and a reminder of the teamwork underpinning IGHD's impact.

IGHD DEPARTMENT PICNIC: A DAY OF SUN, SAND, AND TEAM SPIRIT

On April 26, 2025, the IGHD team took a well-earned break from the workplace and gathered at Sandspit for the department's annual picnic. With transport arranged from Aga Khan University, colleagues and their families spent the day by the sea, enjoying the fresh breeze, sunshine, and a range of informal outdoor activities.

The picnic provided a relaxed setting to unwind, reconnect, and strengthen bonds beyond the office environment. Shared meals, beachside games, and easy conversations created a warm and inclusive atmosphere throughout the day. Organized by Akber Ali with departmental support, the outing brought together staff and their families in a celebration of teamwork and collegiality.

Such moments of shared time play an important role in nurturing team cohesion, reinforcing interpersonal connections, and sustaining a positive and supportive workplace culture at IGHD.



SHINING BRIGHT: CELEBRATING THE STELLAR ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR STANDOUT STARS IN 2025

This year, we proudly celebrate the remarkable accomplishments of our team members who have gone above and beyond, bringing dedication and purpose to their work. Through their commitment, they have helped set new benchmarks in global health and development while strengthening the collaborative spirit that defines IGHD. Their achievements inspire us to aim higher and continue working together toward meaningful impact.



AKBER ALI | ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER AT IGHD

Akber Ali is a highly valued member of the Aga Khan University community, with **over 20 years of dedicated service** to the institution, including **the past 10 years with the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD)**. Over the course of his career, he has consistently demonstrated professionalism, reliability, and a strong commitment to supporting institutional excellence.

In his role as Manager – Administration at IGHD, Akbar works closely with the Institute’s leadership to ensure the smooth day-to-day functioning of operations. His responsibilities include administrative coordination, operational support, and managing grant-related and institutional processes that enable teams to focus on research, partnerships, and impact.

A distinctive aspect of Akber’s role is the **geographic breadth of his work**. He supports IGHD activities across multiple locations, including **Pakistan (Karachi), Kenya (Nairobi), Kyrgyzstan, Tanzania, Ghana, the UAE (Dubai), and the United Kingdom (London)**. Managing administrative functions across such diverse settings requires adaptability, precision, and deep institutional knowledge—qualities Akbar brings consistently to his work.

Recently acknowledged by Aga Khan University for completing **two decades of service**, Akbar is widely respected for his quiet leadership, institutional memory, and willingness to go above and beyond to support colleagues and programmes.

“Akber’s contribution to IGHD goes far beyond administrative support. His consistency, integrity, and deep understanding of institutional processes have been invaluable in enabling our work across multiple countries. He is someone the Institute relies on implicitly.”

- Dr Zulfiqar Bhutta | **Director, IGHD**



“Akbar is one of those individuals who ensures that everything works smoothly behind the scenes, allowing teams to focus on research, impact, and delivery. His experience, responsiveness, and commitment to excellence make him an indispensable part of IGHD.”

- Dr Jai Das | **Associate Director, IGHD**

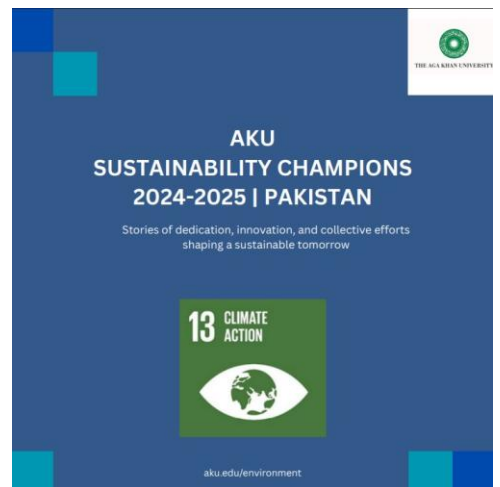
At IGHD, Akber Ali is not only respected for what he does, but deeply valued for how he does it—with dedication, humility, and an enduring commitment to service. His work continues to strengthen the Institute’s ability to operate effectively across borders and deliver meaningful impact in global health and development.



DR. AMMAD WAHEED QAZI AND MS. HUMAIRA NAZIR AKU SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPIONS (2025)

In 2025, **Dr. Ammad Waheed Qazi** and **Ms. Humaira Nazir** from the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), Aga Khan University, were recognized as part of the inaugural **AKU Sustainability Champions Programme (Pakistan)**—a year-long, University-led initiative implemented by the **Office of Environment and Sustainability**. The programme was designed to build institutional capacity, strengthen environmental literacy, and empower staff members across departments to actively contribute to AKU’s sustainability agenda in alignment with the **AKDN Environment and Climate Commitment** and AKU’s **Strategic Plan 2024–2028**.

As Sustainability Champions, Dr. Qazi and Ms. Nazir served as volunteer change agents within their respective workspaces, observing patterns of resource use, identifying opportunities for improvement, and initiating practical, locally relevant sustainability actions. The programme combined structured learning, cross-departmental collaboration, and applied engagement, encouraging participants to move beyond awareness toward action and to foster climate and sustainability conversations within their teams.



[Click Here](#) to view the booklet



Dr. Ammad Qazi
POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, IGHD

Within this framework, **Dr. Ammad Waheed Qazi** focused his efforts on advancing **SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)** and **SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)**. Through his research and public engagement, he contributed to discussions on urban flood resilience, the use of geospatial analysis and remote sensing, and the potential of nature-based solutions to strengthen sustainable city planning. By extending these insights beyond academic settings and into public discourse, his work helped bridge research, policy, and community understanding around urban climate resilience.

Within the Sustainability Champions framework, **Ms. Humaira Nazir** focused her engagement on **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)** and **SDG 15 (Life on Land)**, reflecting the close links between environmental integrity and population health. Her contributions emphasized the integration of sustainability considerations into health research practices, particularly in relation to environmental exposures, ecosystem impacts, and community well-being. Through internal engagement and programme activities, she supported conversations around environmentally responsible research implementation and the importance of safeguarding natural systems as part of broader efforts to protect human health. Her role reinforced IGHD’s commitment to viewing climate, environment, and health as interconnected priorities.



Ms. Humaira Nazir
POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, IGHD



THANK YOU TO OUR TEAM

With sincere appreciation, we thank Akber, Ammad, Humaira, and all colleagues featured across these sections for their dedication, commitment, and contributions to IGHD. Your efforts—often beyond formal roles—continue to strengthen our work, enrich our community, and advance the Institute’s mission. We are grateful to have you as part of the IGHD team.

INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

KEY PUBLICATIONS
AND FINDINGS

DR. BHUTTA CONTRIBUTES TO LANDMARK LANCET GLOBAL HEALTH SERIES ON PAEDIATRIC CLINICAL TRIALS

In March 2025, Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, Founding Director of the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), Aga Khan University, co-authored a major paper in *The Lancet Global Health* as part of its special series on **Clinical Trials in Global Health**. Titled “*Strengthening the Paediatric Clinical Trial Ecosystem to Better Inform Policy and Programmes*,” the publication examined critical gaps in evidence generation for child health and outlined strategies to improve the quality, coordination, and equity of paediatric clinical research globally.

The paper emphasized the urgent need for stronger research infrastructure, child-specific ethics frameworks, and regional research consortia to ensure that clinical trials better reflect local health priorities. It also called for closer alignment among governments, researchers, communities, and funders to address the persistent mismatch between disease burden and research activity in low- and middle-income countries.

As part of a six-paper series emerging from the **first WHO Global Clinical Trials Forum**, this contribution represents a significant step in shaping global policy dialogue on paediatric research and advancing more equitable approaches to child health. Prof. Bhutta’s involvement reflects IGHD’s continued leadership in influencing global health research agendas and evidence-informed policy.

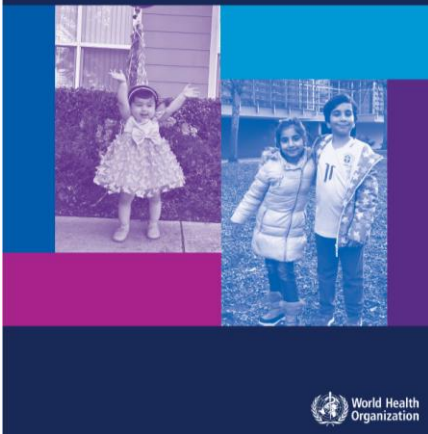


THE LANCET

For more information or to obtain a copy, please [Click Here](#)

IGHD RESEARCH INFORMS WHO GUIDELINES ON CHILDHOOD DIARRHOEA TREATMENT

Guideline on management of pneumonia and diarrhoea in children up to 10 years of age



In February 2025, research led by Dr. Jai K. Das, Associate Director at the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), Aga Khan University, contributed to the **WHO Guideline on the Management of Pneumonia and Diarrhoea in Children up to 10 Years of Age**. The research team included Kanza Naqvi, Ayesha Arshad Ali, Mustafa Zubairi, and Zain Hasnain, whose work supported evidence-based updates to global treatment recommendations.

The team conducted systematic reviews on key aspects of diarrhoea management, including **zinc supplementation, antibiotic use, and oral rehydration strategies**. Their findings informed deliberations of the **WHO Guideline Development Group**, directly shaping several updated recommendations within the guideline.

The revised WHO guidance introduces important changes, including refined criteria for antibiotic use, updated zinc dosing protocols, and expanded recommendations for children aged **5–9 years**, a group previously underrepresented in global treatment strategies. This contribution highlights IGHD’s role in translating rigorous research into global policy action to improve child health outcomes worldwide.

[Click Here](#) to download the report

IGHD RESEARCH TEAM



DR. JAI DAS
Principal Investigator



KANZA NAQVI
Research Team



AYESHA ARSHAD ALI
Research Team



ZAIN HASNAIN
Research Team



MUSTAFA ZUBAIRI
Research Team

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR POLIOVIRUS ERADICATION IN PAKISTAN



In **January 2025**, **Prof. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta**, Director of the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), published a commentary in *The Lancet* examining the persistent challenges facing poliovirus eradication in Pakistan. Despite decades of immunisation efforts and substantial investment, Pakistan reported **70 polio cases in 2024**, alongside rising environmental surveillance positivity, with **31% of samples testing positive for wild poliovirus**.

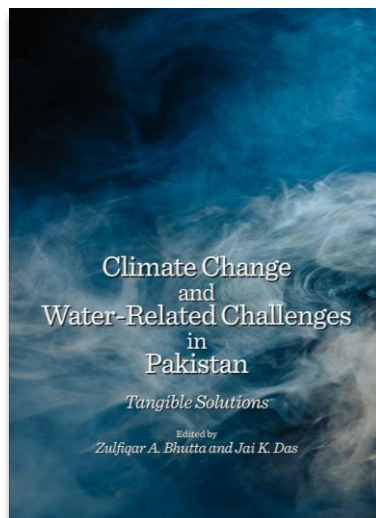
The commentary highlighted systemic barriers to eradication, including low routine immunisation coverage, insecurity, vaccine hesitancy, and fragmented programme management. Prof. Bhutta called for a strategic reset, advocating the integration of poliovirus eradication and routine immunisation under unified leadership, alongside stronger community engagement through grassroots organisations, private healthcare providers, and closer links with maternal and child health services.

Emphasizing the importance of political stability and security as prerequisites for sustained public health gains, the article reinforced Pakistan's pivotal role in achieving global poliovirus eradication. Prof. Bhutta's contribution reflects IGHD's continued leadership in shaping evidence-based policy dialogue on disease elimination and health systems strengthening.

THE LANCET

[Click Here](#) to read the full commentary in The Lancet

DR. ZULFIQAR BHUTTA AND DR. JAI K. DAS PUBLISH BOOK ON PAKISTAN'S CLIMATE AND WATER CHALLENGES



In **March 2025**, **Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta**, Founding Director of the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), and **Dr. Jai K. Das**, Associate Director at IGHD, published *Climate Change and Water-Related Challenges in Pakistan: Tangible Solutions* with **Cambridge Scholars Publishing**. The book represents a significant contribution to national and global discourse on climate resilience and sustainable development.

The volume brings together insights from leading experts to examine the interconnected challenges of climate change and water security in Pakistan, with a focus on water safety, agricultural impacts, human nutrition, and gender dimensions of climate vulnerability. Emphasizing practical and evidence-based approaches, the book offers actionable pathways to address some of the country's most pressing environmental and public health challenges.

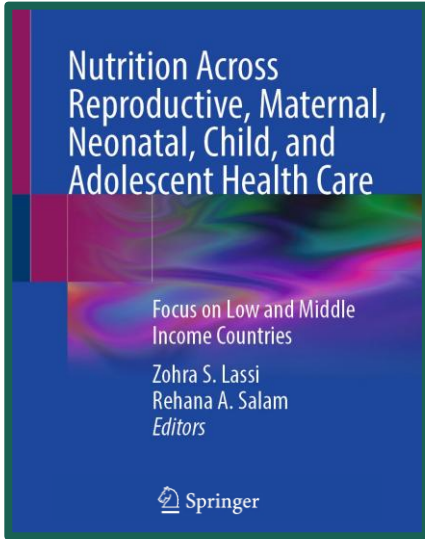
This publication underscores IGHD's leadership in advancing interdisciplinary research and policy-relevant solutions at the climate–water–health nexus, reinforcing the Institute's commitment to informing sustainable development efforts in Pakistan and beyond.

For more information or to obtain a copy, please [Click Here](#)



**Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing**

IGHD FACULTY CO-EDIT MAJOR VOLUME ON REPRODUCTIVE, MATERNAL, NEWBORN, CHILD, AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH



The Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), Aga Khan University, is pleased to share the publication of *Nutrition Across Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child, and Adolescent Health Care*—a comprehensive volume addressing nutrition across the life course, from reproductive and maternal health to newborn, child, and adolescent care. Co-edited by **Dr. Zohra S. Lassi** and **Dr. Rehana A. Salam**, the book brings together global expertise to translate evidence into practical strategies for reducing malnutrition and addressing health inequities in low- and middle-income countries.



Dr. Zohra Lassi
ASSOCIATE FACULTY
INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND
DEVELOPMENT



Dr. Rehana A. Salam
ASSOCIATE FACULTY
INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH
AND DEVELOPMENT

This publication features multiple contributions from **IGHD** scholars as chapter leads:



DR. RAHIMA YASIN
Nutritional
Empowerment Through
Food Fortification and
Biofortification. (Click To
View)



DR. BHAVITA KUMARI
Nutritional Health of
Children Under the Age of
Five. (Click To View)



DR. NARJIS FATIMA HUSSAIN
Food Security and
Agriculture. (Click To
View)

The chapters address key themes such as food security and agricultural resilience, large-scale fortification and biofortification, and child nutrition, offering practical, evidence-based guidance for policy and programme implementation. While **Dr. Jai K. Das** and **Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta** also contributed to the volume, IGHD is especially proud to recognize **Dr. Hussain**, **Dr. Yasin**, and **Dr. Bhavita Kumari** for leading IGHD-authored chapters that strengthen the Institute's contribution to this global resource.

SPRINGER NATURE

[Click Here](#) to view the 'Nutrition Across Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child, and Adolescent Health Care' Book

DR. JAI DAS CONTRIBUTES TO ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK'S ASIAN WATER DEVELOPMENT OUTLOOK 2025

The Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) proudly highlights the contribution of Dr. Jai K. Das, Associate Director at IGHD, to the Asian Development Bank's flagship publication, *Asian Water Development Outlook (AWDO) 2025*, which was officially launched at the International Water Association (IWA) event in Bangkok.

Dr. Das served as a contributing expert to the chapter titled "*Unseen Impacts: Gendered Dimensions of Heat and Water Stress*" (p. 169). The chapter examines how rising temperatures and increasing water insecurity disproportionately affect women and vulnerable populations across Asia and the Pacific, with particular attention to gendered health impacts, labour burdens, and caregiving responsibilities.

The chapter underscores the importance of **gender-responsive water governance and climate adaptation strategies**, emphasizing the integration of equity, health, and social protection into water security planning. Dr. Das's contribution reflects IGHD's continued commitment to evidence-based research that informs regional and global policy dialogue, with *AWDO 2025* serving as a key resource for policymakers, development partners, and researchers across more than 50 economies.



[Click Here](#) to view the Asian Development Bank's publication, 'Asian Water Development Outlook (AWDO) 2025' report

ADB

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BOOK

Zulfiqar A. Bhutta and Jai K. Das. *Climate Change and Water-Related Challenges in Pakistan: Tangible Solutions*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, April 2025. ISBN: 978-1-0364-4073-2

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BOOK CHAPTERS

Ali S, Bhutta ZA, Das JK. *Climate Change and Water Resources in Upper Indus Basin (UIB), Pakistan*. In: Das JK, Bhutta ZA (eds). *Climate Change and Water-Related Challenges in Pakistan: Tangible Solutions*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. April 2025.

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THANK YOU



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