



# NEWSLETTER | ISSUE NO. 12



## DR. BHUTTA AWARDED THE VIRCHOW PRIZE 2025 FOR GLOBAL HEALTH

We are delighted to share that Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, Founding Director of the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) at Aga Khan University, has been awarded the prestigious Virchow Prize 2025 for Global Health (<https://virchowprize.org/virchowprize-2025/>). This distinguished honour, awarded annually by the Virchow Foundation, stands among the most respected global recognitions in health and celebrates leaders whose lifelong work has transformed 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 achievements underscore 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**, which accompanied the award ceremony, can be viewed by clicking on the image to the right or by clicking here: [Watch the Lecture](#)

Conferred by the **Virchow Foundation**, the Virchow Prize celebrates exceptional accomplishments that align with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the vision of *Health for All*. This recognition not only honours Dr. Bhutta’s decades of leadership and scholarship but also reaffirms **IGHD’s commitment** to advancing health equity, resilience, and sustainable development through research, innovation, and collaboration across borders.



*“Receiving the Virchow Prize is a profound honour, but above all it recognises the colleagues, students, and communities who have shared this journey. Together we have confronted inequities in the health of women and children, and this award reinforces our responsibility to turn science into action for the most vulnerable. It also serves as a reminder that lasting change is only possible through collective commitment, compassion, and perseverance.”*

- Dr Zulfiqar Bhutta | Director, IGH



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

## THE PREPARE PAKISTAN PROJECT – PROMOTING CLIMATE RESILIENCE, PREPAREDNESS, ADAPTATION, AND RESPONSE

As Pakistan continues to face intensifying climate threats—from glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) in the north to heatwaves and salinity intrusion in the south—the **PREPARE Pakistan Project** has taken a pivotal step in advancing data-driven climate resilience planning. Led by **Dr Bhavita Kumari**, **Ahmed Atiullah**, and **Abdullah Baber** under the supervision of **Dr. Jai K. Das** at the **Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD)**, **Aga Khan University**, the one-year project seeks to measure, map, and strengthen community resilience in the country's most hazard-prone regions.

### PREPARE PROJECT TEAM



**Dr Bhavita Kumari**  
PROJECT MANAGER



**Ahmed Atiullah**  
RESEARCHER



**Abdullah Baber**  
RESEARCHER

**Dr Jai Das**  
PROJECT SUPERVISOR



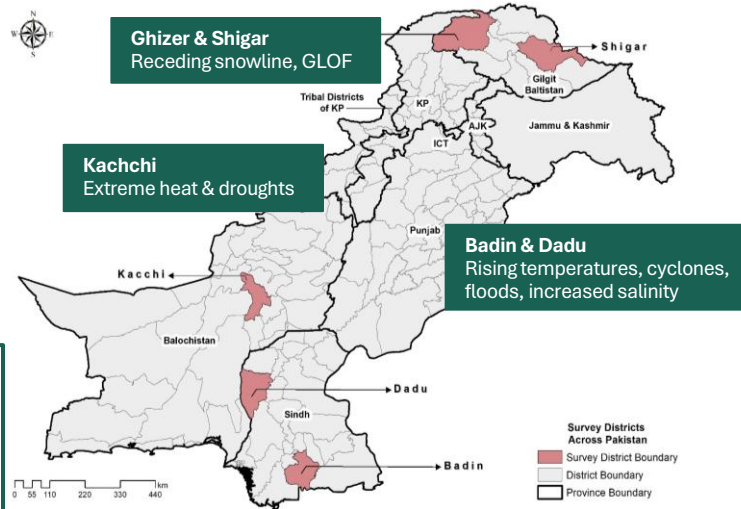
Conducted across **five high-risk districts**—**Ghizer and Shigar** (Gilgit-Baltistan), **Kachchi** (Balochistan), and **Dadu and Badin** (Sindh)—the study assessed how communities experience, respond to, and recover from climate shocks such as glacial melt, extreme heat, droughts, cyclones, and flooding. The research used two internationally recognized tools—the **Multidimensional Livelihood Vulnerability Index (MLVI)** and the **Disaster Resilience Index (DRI)**—to quantitatively evaluate exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity at both household and community levels.

### Findings from the survey reveal striking regional contrasts.

- **Shigar and Badin** exhibited *low adaptive capacity* and *high livelihood vulnerability*, driven by limited diversification, weak infrastructure, and restricted access to financial resources.
- **Ghizer**, while highly exposed to GLOF-related hazards, demonstrated *stronger social cohesion* and better adaptive mechanisms, resulting in relatively higher resilience scores.
- Across all sites, **economic dependence on climate-sensitive livelihoods**, *inadequate access to credit and savings*, and *governance and reconstruction gaps* emerged as the most significant vulnerability drivers.

The analysis underscores that resilience in Pakistan's climate-vulnerable regions cannot be achieved through isolated interventions. Instead, **cross-sectoral policies** integrating **infrastructure improvement**, **social protection**, **financial inclusion**, and **participatory governance** are critical. The project also highlights the importance of **data-driven vulnerability mapping** as a tool for local governments and development partners to design targeted adaptation programs.

With nearly a thousand climate-related deaths reported in northern Pakistan since mid-2025, the PREPARE Pakistan Project arrives at a crucial juncture. By combining rigorous scientific assessment with local realities, the initiative seeks not only to identify the country's most at-risk populations but also to lay the groundwork for **equitable, community-based climate resilience**.



# CHOICE PROJECT DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP HELD IN NAIROBI,

## ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARDS HEALTH AND HEALTH-RELATED SDGS

The Aga Khan University hosted the **CHOICE Project Dissemination Workshop** on **September 1, 2025**, at the Mövenpick Hotel, Nairobi, bringing together policymakers, researchers, and development partners to advance dialogue on achieving the health and health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through evidence-informed policy engagement.

**Prof. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta**, Founding Director of the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), presented an overview of the Global CHOICE Project, highlighting data-driven collaboration for equitable health outcomes. **Dr. Jai K. Das**, Associate Director of IGHD, shared the project's quantitative analysis, while the CHOICE team and Think Tank members discussed key findings and recommendations.

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



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



The Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at Aga Khan University held its Annual Research Week on **August 23, 2025**, highlighting innovative research in child health, nutrition, and development.

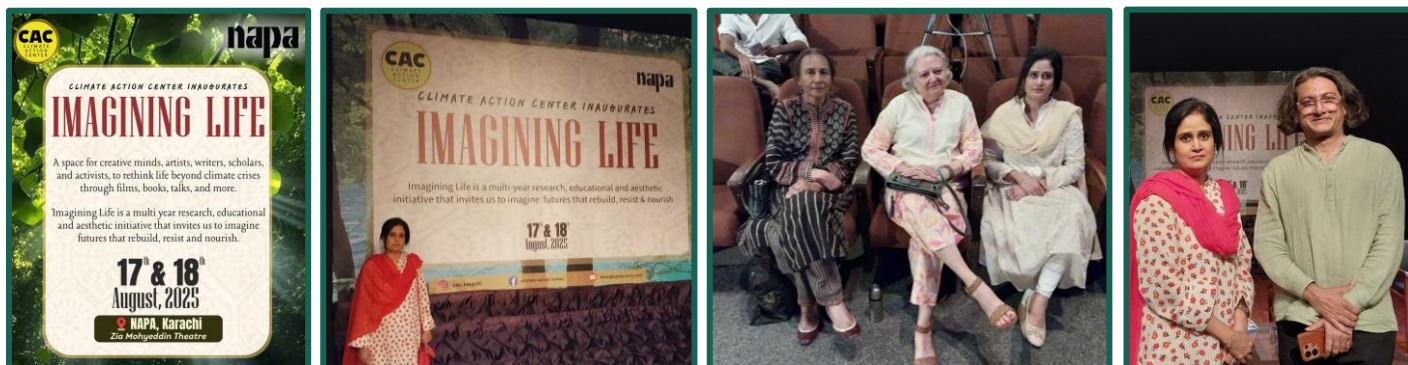
Representing the **Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD)**, **Dr. Rahima Yasin**, Research Coordinator, had the honour of presenting the findings of the **EZAFFAW trial** — a study evaluating the *efficacy of agronomically zinc biofortified wheat flour in improving zinc status and metabolic health*. Her presentation underscored the study's potential to inform public health strategies aimed at addressing zinc deficiency in resource-limited settings, reflecting IGHD's ongoing commitment to advancing nutrition research for community health improvement.

The event brought together leading researchers, faculty, and students, fostering exchange and collaboration across diverse areas of paediatric and maternal health research.



## FARHANA TABASSUM ATTENDS THE INAUGURATION OF “IMAGINING LIFE” AT THE CLIMATE ACTION CENTER, KARACHI

Representing the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), Farhana Tabassum attended the inauguration of *Imagining Life* — a multiyear initiative launched by the Climate Action Center (CAC), Karachi, on August 17–18, 2025 at the Zia Mohyeddin Theater, NAPA.



The event brought together scholars, artists, filmmakers, and activists to reimagine life amid the climate crisis through creative, cultural, and intellectual collaboration. Organized under the theme of “Against Ruin,” the two-day program featured talks, panel discussions, and film screenings exploring how imagination can help societies move beyond present constraints toward sustainable and equitable futures.

Highlights included the screening of *Indus Echoes*, Pakistan’s first Sindhi feature film in nearly three decades, directed by Rahul Aijaz, and an online address by Professor Dipesh Chakrabarty of the University of Chicago, author of *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*. The initiative underscores CAC’s commitment to bridging art, academia, and activism—an effort that aligns closely with IGHD’s vision of addressing climate and development challenges through multidisciplinary engagement.

## IGHD PARTICIPATES IN THE GREEN ZAMEEN FELLOWSHIP ON SUSTAINABLE ENERGY TRANSITION



Farhana Tabassum from the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) participated in the Green Zameen Fellowship Program – Cohort 10, held on August 28, 2025, at Avari Towers, Karachi. Organized by the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) under its Just Energy Transition (JET) project, the fellowship brings together policymakers, parliamentarians, academics, and climate advocates to advance Pakistan’s transition toward clean and sustainable energy.

The Karachi session focused on the built environment’s role in the energy transition, featuring thematic discussions on Integrated Energy Planning and Demand-Side Management, Green Design and Architecture, and Policy Implementation for a Green Built Environment. Experts Eng. Umer Farooq and Hafiz Talha Saeed from the LUMS Energy Institute led the sessions, emphasizing the need for efficient building designs, enforcement of energy codes, and green financing mechanisms to reduce Pakistan’s energy burden and support its Net-Zero goals.



Farhana’s participation reflects IGHD’s commitment to fostering dialogue between science, policy, and practice in addressing climate resilience, sustainable urban design, and energy-efficient development across Pakistan.

# IGHD TEAM LEADS SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS & META-ANALYSIS BOOTCAMP

Members of the IGHD team played a central role in the Systematic Reviews & Meta-Analysis Bootcamp, held from June 26–28, 2025 and organized by the Department of Paediatrics & Child Health at Aga Khan University in collaboration with Cochrane Pakistan. **Dr. Jai K. Das**, Associate Director of IGHD, served as Workshop Director, providing overall academic leadership and guiding participants through the theoretical foundations and applications of systematic reviews and meta-analysis.

Alongside him, **Dr. Rahima Yasin** (Research Coordinator, IGHD) and **Dr. Kanza Naqvi** (Assistant Manager, IGHD) contributed as facilitators, helping to deliver interactive sessions and practical exercises that strengthened participants' skills in evidence synthesis, heterogeneity assessment, and bias evaluation. Their involvement underscored IGHD's commitment to building local and regional research capacity through hands-on mentorship and training.

By leading this three-day intensive program, the IGHD team not only advanced critical methodological skills but also reinforced the Institute's mission to promote high-quality, evidence-based research that informs health systems, policy, and practice.



## EMPOWERING RESEARCH IN MATERNAL HEALTH

### DR. KHADIJA VADSARIA COMPLETES HER PHD AT AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

The Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) is proud to share that **Dr. Khadija Vadsaria**, Senior Instructor at IGHD, has successfully defended her doctoral dissertation at the Faculty of Health Sciences, Aga Khan University. Her PhD in **Population and Public Health** marks a significant milestone in her academic and professional journey.

Her dissertation, titled *“Efficacy of a Personalized Mobile Health Coaching Program on Maternal Diet, Micronutrient Supplement Use, and Physical Activity During Pregnancy: A Parallel Group Randomized Controlled Trial,”* explored digital health intervention in improving dietary intake, micronutrient supplement use and physical activity among pregnant women. Her research contributes valuable evidence to the growing body of work on maternal health behaviours and behaviour change during pregnancy. By integrating mobile health coaching with personalized guidance, the study demonstrates how digital health intervention can promote healthier lifestyles and improve maternal outcomes in low- and middle-income settings.



- Dr. Khadija Vadsaria | Senior Instructor, IGHD

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



MATERNAL DIET



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



SUPPLEMENT USE

Congratulating her on this achievement, **Dr. Jai K. Das**, Associate Director at IGHD, remarked, *“We are incredibly proud of Dr. Khadija's accomplishment. Her research exemplifies the innovation and scientific rigor that IGHD strives to promote. This milestone not only celebrates her dedication but also reinforces our collective mission to generate impactful evidence that advances maternal and child health.”*

Reflecting on her journey, Dr. Khadija shared, *“Pursuing this PhD has been a deeply rewarding experience — one that strengthened my commitment to improving maternal health through evidence-based, locally relevant solutions. I am grateful for the guidance and support I received from my mentors and colleagues at IGHD and AKU.”*

Dr. Khadija's achievement stands as a testament to IGHD's dedication to nurturing excellence in research and advancing the next generation of scholars committed to health and development. The entire IGHD team extends its heartfelt congratulations on this remarkable accomplishment.

# 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 IGHD and Associate Professor at Aga Khan University, who is leading one of the world's largest studies on the impact of extreme heat on maternal and newborn health.



The study, based in Sindh, Pakistan, is following thousands of women from early pregnancy through childbirth to examine how rising temperatures influence pregnancy outcomes. Participants undergo regular ultrasounds, health monitoring, and wear devices that continuously track temperature and humidity. The project also involves advanced sampling and analysis, even in remote settings where access to phones or reliable internet is limited. This ambitious research is designed to provide urgently needed evidence on how climate change is worsening risks for pregnant women and their babies worldwide.

“ 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



Each year, more than 4.5 million women and babies die during pregnancy, childbirth, or the weeks immediately after birth. Increasingly, heat is a contributing factor. Global studies have shown that even a 1°C rise in temperature can increase the risk of pre-term birth, alongside greater risks of stillbirth, maternal hypertension, and gestational diabetes. Dr. Das's work, supported by the Wellcome Trust, is helping to uncover the biological mechanisms driving these outcomes and to test practical, low-cost measures such as reflective roofing and shading in homes to protect vulnerable women.

By placing maternal and newborn health at the heart of climate resilience, this research underscores the urgent need to integrate health considerations into national climate strategies. Dr. Das's work is ensuring that the voices and experiences of women in Pakistan contribute directly to the global evidence base and policy response on climate change and health.



The Economist

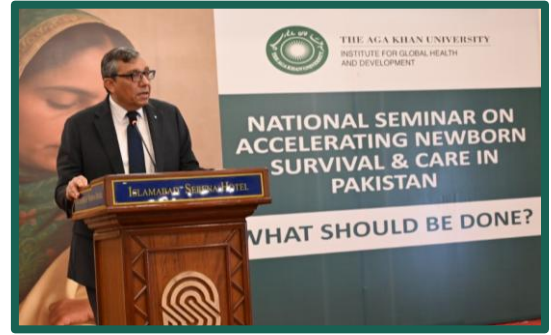
To read the full Economist article “A burning threat to pregnant women” visit The Economist website:



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

# NATIONAL SEMINAR ON ACCELERATING NEWBORN SURVIVAL AND CARE IN PAKISTAN

The Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) at Aga Khan University, in collaboration with national partners, hosted the National Seminar on Accelerating Newborn Survival and Care in Pakistan on September 10–11, 2025 at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad. The two-day seminar brought together policymakers, clinicians, researchers, and development partners to address Pakistan’s unacceptably high neonatal mortality rate of 40 per 1,000 live births.



The seminar highlighted persistent gaps in the availability, quality, and equitable coverage of essential newborn services, and aligned stakeholders around practical, evidence-based actions to save newborn lives. Sessions covered district-level solutions, strengthening advanced care (Level II services), and scaling up simple but proven practices such as newborn resuscitation, early breastfeeding, and skin-to-skin care.



Keynote addresses were delivered by Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, Founding Director of IGHD, who emphasized the urgent need to reduce disparities across provinces and districts, and Prof. Shabina Ariff, who underscored that consistent implementation and accountability are critical to achieving progress. Chief Guest Prof. Ayesha Isani Majeed, Federal Director General Health, announced the establishment of a National Technical Working Group on Newborn Care and reaffirmed the government’s commitment to prioritizing routine immunization within the National Immunization Management System.

With rich discussions, provincial case studies, and international perspectives — including evidence from the Integrated Newborn Care Kit (iNCK) trial — the seminar reinforced that Pakistan has the knowledge and tools to prevent most newborn deaths. The challenge, as highlighted throughout the event, is ensuring quality, consistency, and accountability in implementation so that every mother and newborn receives timely, life-saving care.

## DR. ZULFIQAR BHUTTA PUBLISHES OP-ED IN THE NEWS ON SUNDAY



We are pleased to share that Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, Founding Director of IGHD, recently published an op-ed in The News on Sunday titled *Déjà Vu*. In this insightful piece, Dr. Bhutta reflects on the recurring crises that have long shaped Pakistan’s trajectory—political instability, weak governance, and chronic economic uncertainty—and their implications for long-term national progress.

Dr. Bhutta draws attention to how repeated cycles of mismanagement and short-term policymaking have hindered development and undermined opportunities for reform. He underscores the disproportionate burden that these systemic shortcomings place on the most vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, and highlights the pressing need for stronger institutions and sustained investment in health, education, and nutrition.

The article calls for a shift towards evidence-based policymaking, greater accountability, and a renewed focus on equity-driven solutions. By situating Pakistan’s challenges within both a historical and developmental context, Dr. Bhutta provides a compelling argument for why breaking these cycles is essential to achieving resilience and sustainable progress.

This publication is a strong reflection of IGHD’s mission to influence public discourse and advocate for practical solutions at the intersection of governance, health, and development.



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>

# SUPPORTING WOMEN IN SCIENCE CONFERENCE – NAIROBI 2025

The Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) at Aga Khan University, in collaboration with the University of Oxford, convened the **Supporting Women in Science (SWIS) Conference** on **September 2, 2025**, at the Aga Khan University in Nairobi. This landmark event formed part of **Phase III of the SWIS Initiative**, which supports early- and mid-career women scientists from Sub-Saharan Africa and South-Central Asia in building research capacity through mentorship, training, and funded research implementation.



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OXFORD

The conference was inaugurated by **Dr. Jacqueline Kitulu**, President-Elect of the World Medical Association, who emphasized the importance of strengthening health systems and supporting women’s leadership in science. Keynote speakers included **Dr. Tania Bubela** (Provost, AKU), **Prof. Marleen Temmerman** (Director, Centre of Excellence in Women & Child Health, AKU Nairobi), **Prof. Amina Abubakar** (Director, Institute for Human Development, AKU), **Prof. Mansoor Saleh** (Chair, Department of Haematology/Oncology, AKU Nairobi), and **Dr. Zeenat Sulaiman Khan** (Regional CEO, Aga Khan Health Services, East Africa). Together, they highlighted how women leaders are reshaping the future of global health through innovation, research, and advocacy.



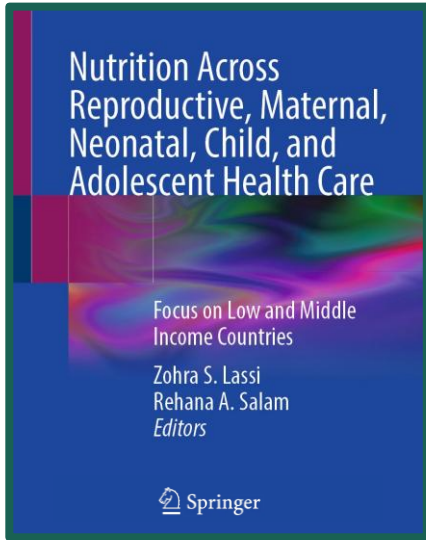
Throughout the day, SWIS fellows from Cohorts 1 and 2 presented their research spanning maternal and child health, infectious diseases, chronic conditions, and health systems. Their projects showcased cutting-edge findings while addressing pressing health challenges in their communities — from improving maternal and newborn care to strengthening adolescent health and nutrition.

The event concluded with reflections from IGHD leadership, a panel discussion on advancing women’s leadership in science, and recognition of mentors who have supported the fellows on their journey. By providing this platform, IGHD and its partners reaffirmed their commitment to closing gender gaps in research and enabling women scientists from the Global South to contribute meaningfully to global health and development.



# NUTRITION ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE

## IGHD FACULTY CO-EDIT NEW BOOK ON REPRODUCTIVE, MATERNAL, NEWBORN, CHILD, AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH



We're pleased to announce the publication of *Nutrition Across Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child, and Adolescent Health Care*, a comprehensive volume on nutrition across the life course—spanning reproductive and maternal health to newborn, child, and adolescent care. Edited by **Dr. Zohra S. Lassi** and **Dr. Rehana A. Salam**, the book brings together global expertise to translate evidence into strategies for reducing malnutrition and addressing 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)

Together, these chapters span systems-level food security and agricultural resilience, large-scale fortification and biofortification strategies, and child nutrition—offering practical, evidence-based guidance for policy and programs across settings. While **Dr. Jai K. Das** and **Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhutta** were also involved, we are especially proud to recognize **Dr. Hussain, Dr. Yasin, and Dr. Kumari** for leading these IGHD-authored contributions.

## SPRINGER NATURE

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

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

IGHD proudly participated in the **13th World Congress on Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD)**, held from **September 7–10, 2025, in Buenos Aires, Argentina**. The event brought together global experts to discuss how early-life environments shape lifelong health outcomes.

Representing IGHD, **Dr. Jai K. Das**, Associate Director, delivered the **Plenary Key Lecture 01** titled *“From Womb to World: How Climate Change Affects Women’s Health and Fetal Development.”* His talk emphasized the urgent need to understand the intersection of environmental stressors and maternal-fetal health, particularly in low- and middle-income settings. His contribution underscored IGHD’s leadership in linking climate science with maternal and child health research.



**Dr. Khadija Vadsaria** also presented her research abstracts as both oral and poster presentations at the Congress, showcasing her work on maternal nutrition and behavior change during pregnancy. IGHD takes great pride in the growing international recognition of its researchers, whose work continues to shape the global discourse on health, development, and climate resilience.

# ADVANCING REGIONAL COLLABORATION ON CLIMATE AND HEALTH

## IGHD PARTICIPATES IN CONFERENCE IN KYRGYZSTAN

The Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD), Aga Khan University, participated in the **Conference on Climate Change and Human Health: Challenges and Adaptation in Kyrgyzstan**, held on **August 18–19, 2025**, in **Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan**. The two-day event was organized by the **University of Central Asia (UCA)** in collaboration with **Aga Khan University** and supported by the **Centre for Global Child Health at The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto**. The conference gathered experts, policymakers, and researchers to discuss the growing impact of environmental change on health and well-being in Central and South Asia.

**SickKids** | Centre for Global Child Health



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

Representing IGHD, **Dr. Jai K. Das**, Associate Director, delivered the **opening remarks** on the first day and later led a technical discussion on *Study Design and Planned Project Outputs* during the follow-up workshop, *“Climate Change and Human Health: Concepts and Methodologies.”* His participation underscored IGHD’s leadership in advancing research on the intersection of climate change, maternal and child health, and sustainable development across the region.



The sessions explored diverse themes such as health-related SDGs in Kyrgyzstan, the health effects of atmospheric particles, climate adaptation and water scarcity, and social behavior change in climate resilience. The conference concluded with the launch of the Central Asia Climate and Health Network, a new regional initiative to strengthen collaboration and research capacity in addressing climate-related health challenges.

IGHD’s engagement in this event highlights its growing partnerships across Central Asia and its continued efforts to integrate evidence-based research into climate and health policy dialogues.

## 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.



# NEW STUDY ON COMMUNITY-BASED HEAT ADAPTATION INTERVENTIONS

## Community-Based Heat Adaptation Interventions



A new study led by Dr. Jai K. Das, Associate Director at IGHD, together with colleagues and collaborators from international institutions, has been published in *BMJ Public Health*. The paper, “*Evaluation of Community-Based Heat Adaptation Interventions: A Systematic Review*,” synthesises evidence from 185 studies worldwide to assess the effectiveness of strategies designed to reduce the health risks of extreme heat.

The review highlights that simple community-based interventions can substantially lower both surface and indoor temperatures. For example, green roofs were shown to reduce surface temperatures by nearly **11°C** and indoor temperatures by about **2.4°C**, while reflective paints and modified pavements also demonstrated significant cooling effects. Beyond structural measures, individual-level interventions such as heat education, early warning systems, and heat action plans were associated with reduced illness and mortality, alongside improved community awareness and preparedness.

This study is among the most comprehensive analyses to date, offering robust statistical evidence on which interventions are most effective at reducing heat exposure. It underscores the urgent need to integrate these strategies into urban planning and public health policy, particularly in climate-vulnerable regions. By identifying practical, cost-effective measures, the findings will help guide governments and communities in protecting populations from the growing health risks of extreme heat.



BMJ  
Public  
Health

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

## CONSULTATION MEETING WITH MS. YASMEEN LARI ON HERITAGE, CLIMATE, AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

The Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) hosted a **consultation meeting with renowned architect and humanitarian Ms. Yasmeen Lari**, Founder of the Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, on **July 12, 2025**, at Aga Khan University, Karachi. The discussion brought together key IGHD faculty and leadership to explore pathways for collaboration on sustainable, community-centered approaches to climate resilience and development.



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

A dynamic discussion followed on potential areas of collaboration between IGHD and the Heritage Foundation, particularly in integrating sustainable design with public health, livelihoods, and climate adaptation research. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to developing joint initiatives that advance climate-smart, locally rooted, and inclusive development solutions.



# FAREWELL TO OUR SUMMER INTERNS



This quarter, we bid farewell to our Aspire Summer Internship Program interns, who spent six weeks with IGHD exploring critical issues in global health, climate change, and development. Their contributions and enthusiasm added great value to our work, and we are pleased to share some of their reflections on the experience.



### 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.”

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our interns for their hard work, enthusiasm, and fresh perspectives throughout their time with IGHD. Their curiosity, commitment, and eagerness to learn have left a lasting impression on our team. The entire IGHD family wishes them every success in their future endeavors and looks forward to seeing the meaningful impact they will continue to create in the years ahead.



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

# RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS & KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTIONS: PUBLICATIONS FROM IGHD (APRIL – JUNE 2025)

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

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Patwardhan S, Boncyk M, Avula R, Blake CE, Akter F, Das JK, S... Creating and validating measures for household food practices in LMICs: a scoping review of assessment tools. *Advances in Nutrition*. Sep 2025.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2161831325001565?via%3Dihub>

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# UPCOMING EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

**SWIS CONFERENCE** November 26–27, 2025 | Main Auditorium, AKU

## SUPPORTING WOMEN IN SCIENCE (KARACHI)



The **SWIS Conference** will convene fellows, mentors, and partners to showcase research outputs and lessons from the program’s regional cohorts, with sessions on mentorship, publication pathways, and policy engagement. **To register, click the flyer or use the link below.**

[Click Here for Registration](#)

**IGHD ANNUAL CONFERENCE** November 28–29, 2025 | Main Auditorium, AKU

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

IGHD’s **Annual Conference** will explore how design, planning, and policy can promote resilience and adaptation in low-income settings—spotlighting scalable solutions for homes, schools, and clinics. **To register, click the flyer or use the links below.**

[Click Here for In-Person Registration](#)

[Click Here for Virtual Registration \(Zoom\)](#)



**Please Note:** Participants attending both days (in-person or virtual) will be eligible for a Certificate of Attendance. In-person participants who are eligible healthcare professionals may also apply for CME credits; however, please keep in mind that an application fee for CME credits will apply and must be covered by the applicant.

# THANK YOU



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