



NEWSLETTER |

ISSUE NO. 14

April – June 2026



HONOURS & RECOGNITION

DR BHUTTA APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF NIH BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Dr Bhutta has been appointed Chairman of the Board of Governors of the National Institute of Health (NIH), Pakistan. The appointment was approved by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and notified by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination on June 11, 2026. Prof Bhutta was selected from among the members of the NIH Board of Governors under Section 6(4) of the National Institute of Health (Reorganisation) Act, 2021.

The constitution of the NIH Board of Governors marks an important step in strengthening the governance of one of Pakistan's leading public health institutions. The newly constituted board includes senior public health, medical, and institutional leaders, alongside ex-officio members, and brings renewed focus to NIH's role in advancing national health priorities.

Dr Bhutta's appointment recognises his longstanding contribution to public health, research, policy, and institutional leadership in Pakistan and globally.

[Click here](#) to read the full article, visit:

INTERNATIONAL
THE NEWS



HONOURS & RECOGNITION

DR BHUTTA FORMALLY INVESTED AS OFFICER OF THE ORDER OF CANADA

Dr Bhutta was formally invested as an Officer of the Order of Canada during an official ceremony held at Rideau Hall on June 25, 2026.

The ceremony was presided over by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Louise Arbour, Governor General of Canada. The formal investiture follows Dr Bhutta's appointment as an Officer of the Order of Canada in October 2024, one of Canada's highest civilian honours.

Dr Bhutta received the honour in recognition of his exceptional contributions to maternal, newborn, and child health. His pioneering research has helped shape public health strategies, strengthen community health systems, and improve health outcomes for women and children in underserved communities around the world.

The formal investiture marks another proud moment for IGHD, AKU, and the wider global health community, celebrating Dr Bhutta's contributions to research, policy, and practice.

Click the Image Below to Watch the Ceremony



DR BHUTTA CO-AUTHORS NATURE PAPER ON GLOBAL OBESITY TRENDS

Dr Bhutta is among the contributors to a major paper published in Nature on global obesity trends. The paper, titled “Obesity rise plateaus in developed nations and accelerates in developing nations,” was published online on May 13, 2026, and appeared in Nature, Volume 653, pages 510–518. The study was conducted by the NCD Risk Factor Collaboration and analysed 4,050 population-based studies with measured height and weight data from 232 million participants to assess obesity trends across 200 countries and territories from 1980 to 2024.

The findings show that the rise in obesity has slowed, plateaued, or possibly begun to reverse in many high-income countries, particularly among school-aged children and adolescents. In contrast, obesity prevalence has continued to rise steadily or accelerate across many low- and middle-income countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Pacific Island nations.

The paper highlights the growing public health challenge facing developing nations, where health systems are already managing overlapping burdens of undernutrition, maternal and child health concerns, infectious diseases, and non-communicable diseases.



To read the full publication, visit

nature

IGHD FACULTY CONTRIBUTE TO THE LANCET GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY PAPER ON CLIMATE CHANGE, WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Dr Jai Das and Dr Bhutta contributed to a Health Policy paper published in The Lancet Global Health on research priorities for understanding and addressing the impact of climate change on the health of women and children in low- and middle-income countries.

The paper, titled “Setting research priorities to understand and address the impact of climate change on the health of women and children in low-income and middle-income countries using the Child Health and Nutrition Research Initiative method,” was published online on March 25, 2026. It highlights climate change as a major global health threat, with women and children in low- and middle-income countries facing heightened risks due to existing vulnerabilities, weaker health systems, and limited adaptation measures.

The study consulted 88 climate and health researchers between 2022 and 2024, after which 52 experts prioritised 70 research questions using the Child Health and Nutrition Research Initiative method. The top priorities included vulnerability mapping, integrating climate measures into health surveys and surveillance systems, and understanding the long-term effects of heat exposure on vulnerable populations.

The paper also highlighted key gaps around nutrition, pregnancy and early infancy, infectious disease risks, mental health, gender inequality, sexual and reproductive health, and community-level adaptation.



To read the full publication, visit

THE LANCET
Global Health

IGHD TEAM CONTRIBUTES TO BMJ OPEN PUBLICATION ON HEAT EXPOSURE AND MATERNAL, FETAL AND NEWBORN HEALTH

A new publication co-authored by multiple members of IGHD has been published in BMJ Open, focusing on the biological impacts of rising temperatures on maternal, fetal, and newborn health.

The publication, titled “Biological impacts of rising temperatures on maternal, fetal and newborn health: protocol for a cohort study (BIRTH-Cohort),” outlines a prospective cohort study that will recruit 6,000 pregnant women from three districts in Sindh, Pakistan. The study aims to better understand how environmental heat affects pregnancy outcomes and examine the biological pathways through which heat stress may contribute to adverse maternal, fetal, and newborn health outcomes.

Participants will be enrolled from early pregnancy and followed until 12 months postpartum. The study will assess outcomes including low birth weight, small vulnerable newborns, preterm birth, small for gestational age, miscarriage, stillbirth, and maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality, using fetal scans, Doppler assessments, wearable sensors, biomarkers, and other monitoring tools.

By generating evidence on how heat exposure affects pregnancy and early life health, the BIRTH-Cohort can help inform climate-resilient maternal health strategies and public health preparedness in high-risk settings.

To read the full publication, visit

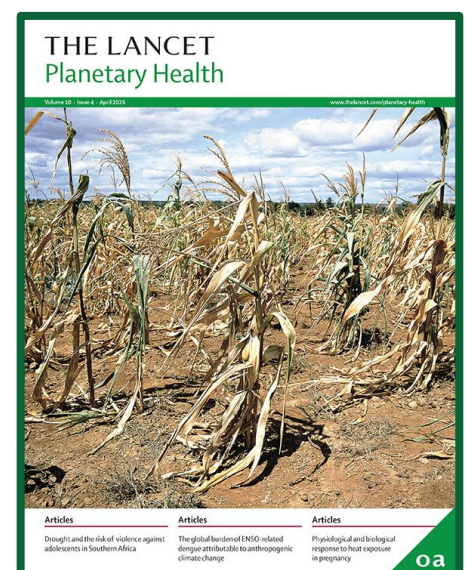
BMJJournals

IGHD RESEARCHERS CONTRIBUTE TO THE LANCET PLANETARY HEALTH REVIEW ON HEAT EXPOSURE IN PREGNANCY

Dr Jai Das and Asma Abdul Malik Qureshi from IGHD were part of the research team that contributed to a new publication in The Lancet Planetary Health on the physiological and biological effects of heat exposure during pregnancy.

The publication, titled “Physiological and biological response to heat exposure in pregnancy: a systematic review and meta-analysis,” reviewed evidence from 27 studies involving 201,906 pregnant women. It examined how environmental heat affects maternal, placental, and fetal physiology, and identified key biological pathways through which heat exposure may influence pregnancy and fetal health.

The review found consistent acute physiological stress responses to heat exposure, including increases in maternal heart rate, maternal core temperature, maternal skin temperature, and fetal heart rate. It also highlighted greater vulnerability among pregnant women with pre-eclampsia, pointing to the need for further research on how heat exposure contributes to adverse pregnancy outcomes.



To read the full publication, visit

THE LANCET
Planetary Health

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This review shows that heat exposure can place measurable physiological stress on both pregnant women and their babies, highlighting the need for stronger protection in a warming climate

— Asma Abdul Malik Qureshi | Research Specialist, IGHD



ASMA QURESHI PHD SYNOPSIS DEFENCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEAT STRESS, GESTATIONAL WEIGHT GAIN AND FETAL GROWTH

Asma Abdul Malik Qureshi successfully defended her PhD Synopsis in Population and Public Health, with research focused on the intersection of climate change, maternal health, and fetal health.

Her thesis, titled “Impact of Environmental Heat Stress on Gestational Weight Gain and Fetal Growth: A Prospective Cohort in Sindh, Pakistan,” examined how environmental heat stress may affect pregnancy outcomes, including gestational weight gain and fetal growth.

The defence marks an important academic milestone and contributes to the growing body of research on climate change and maternal and newborn health in Pakistan.



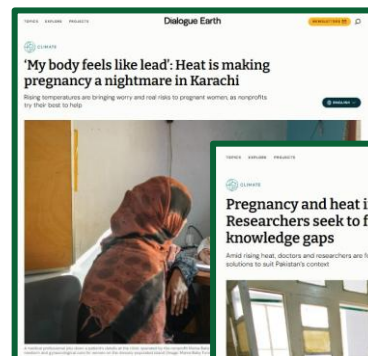
IN THE MEDIA

IGHD'S HEAT AND PREGNANCY RESEARCH FEATURED BY DIALOGUE EARTH

IGHD's work on heat exposure, pregnancy, and climate adaptation was featured in a two-part series published by Dialogue Earth. The stories explored how rising temperatures are affecting pregnant women in Karachi and highlighted the urgent need for context-specific, low-cost solutions to protect vulnerable communities.

The first story, “My body feels like lead”: Heat is making pregnancy a nightmare in Karachi, examined the lived experiences of pregnant women facing extreme heat, poor ventilation, limited access to electricity, and inadequate cooling options. The second story, Pregnancy and heat in Pakistan: Researchers seek to fill dangerous knowledge gaps, focused on IGHD's ongoing research on heat and pregnancy.

The coverage also highlighted IGHD's practical heat-adaptation work in Karachi and Matiari, where researchers, engineers, and field teams are trialling low-cost cooling interventions in vulnerable households. Anjum Abbas Naqvi, Manager on the project, shared early observations, noting that the team had observed a 3–4°C decrease in ambient temperature inside homes where interventions had been trialled.



Click here to read the full article 'My Body feels like Lead'

Dialogue Earth

Click here to read the full article 'Pregnancy and heat in Pakistan'

Dialogue Earth

“The early results from the intervention sites are encouraging. Even a small reduction in indoor temperature can make a meaningful difference for families living in extreme heat, especially pregnant women, children, and other vulnerable groups. Our focus is on testing practical, low-cost solutions that communities can adopt and sustain within their own homes and neighbourhoods.

— Anjum Abbas Naqvi | Manager, IGHD



EXTREME HEAT AND CLIMATE DISASTERS PLACE PREGNANT WOMEN AT GROWING RISK

The growing impact of climate change on maternal and newborn health was highlighted in a recent Dawn EOS feature, which examined how extreme heat, floods, and fragile living conditions are increasing risks for pregnant women, newborns, and frontline maternal health workers in Pakistan.

The article noted that during the 2022 floods in Pakistan, nearly 33 million people were affected, including 6.1 million pregnant women. It highlighted how disasters can increase the risk of miscarriage, preterm birth, low birth weight, and other complications, while reproductive health is often overlooked during emergency responses.

The feature also drew attention to the role of community midwives in crisis settings and featured Dr Jai Das, Associate Director at IGHD, who has been studying the effects of extreme heat on pregnant women since 2024. Dr Das highlighted that global evidence links heat exposure to several maternal and newborn complications, including pre-eclampsia, eclampsia, gestational diabetes, low birth weight, prematurity, stillbirths, and congenital defects.

To read the full article, visit

DAWN

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It is no rocket science to plan schedules to reduce the impact of heat, since it is a climate reality now. Simple steps such as adjusting work hours, following work-rest cycles, staying hydrated, avoiding peak heat, and maximising rest can help reduce risks, especially for pregnant women.

— Dr Jai Das | Associate Director, IGHD



DR BHUTTA JOINS CGTN AFRICA PANEL ON US–AFRICA HEALTH DATA AGREEMENTS

On April 20, 2026, Dr Bhutta appeared on CGTN Africa's Talk Africa for a panel discussion examining the implications of the United States' new America First Global Health Strategy. The discussion focused on how this emerging approach marks a shift from traditional NGO-led health assistance toward direct government-to-government agreements with African countries, raising questions around health data, sovereignty, financing, and public accountability.

The programme explored concerns surrounding the increasingly transactional nature of these agreements, under which African governments may be asked to share real-time health data and biological samples in exchange for continued funding and support.

During the discussion, Prof Bhutta cautioned against the fragmentation of global health coordination and stressed that bilateral arrangements cannot substitute for multilateral cooperation and international consensus. He emphasized that agreements involving health data and public health systems must respect national constitutions, domestic laws, and the will of the people.

CGTN
AFRICA

To View the Full Episode, Click the Image on the Right to Watch the Recording



DR JAI DAS INTERVIEWED BY DIALOGUE EARTH ON SIMPLE SOLUTIONS FOR COOLER HOMES

Dr Jai Das, Associate Director at IGHD, was interviewed by Dialogue Earth as part of its “This is a CATCH story” series.

The series is part of Dialogue Earth’s work on the Community Adaptations to City Heat (CATCH) project, in partnership with Boston University and funded by Wellcome. The project focuses on community-based responses to extreme urban heat, including practical ways to help households and vulnerable communities adapt to rising temperatures.



In the interview, Dr Das discussed how simple, low-cost solutions can help keep homes cooler in Pakistan, particularly in communities facing extreme heat, poor ventilation, and limited access to reliable electricity.

[Click here to read the full article ‘My Body feels like Lead’](#)

Dialogue Earth

FARHANA TABASSUM INTERVIEWED BY BBC NEWS ON HEATWAVES AND MATERNAL HEALTH

Farhana Tabassum from IGHD was interviewed by BBC News for a story on excessive heat and its impact on maternal health.

The interview focused on how climate change and rising temperatures are affecting the human body, particularly the health and wellbeing of pregnant women during periods of extreme heat. The discussion also explored the increasing burden that heatwaves place on healthcare systems, especially in vulnerable communities where access to cooling, timely care, and essential health services may be limited.



The story also highlighted the important role of Lady Health Workers during the ongoing heat crisis, including their contribution to community awareness, early identification of risks, and support for maternal health at the household level.



IGHD RESEARCH FEATURED IN RADIOLAB DISCUSSION ON IMMUNIZATION IN PAKISTAN

Farhana Tabassum from IGHD was invited by Radiolab, a podcast produced by WNYC/New York Public Radio, for an exploratory discussion on immunization efforts in Pakistan.

The conversation focused on conditional collective community-based incentives for encouraging immunization, drawing on Farhana's publication in *Frontiers in Public Health* on the subject. The discussion also explored the current landscape of community-based approaches to supporting vaccine uptake in Pakistan, particularly in relation to polio eradication efforts.



FARHANA TABASSUM JOINS CLIMATE ACTION CENTER KARACHI PODCAST ON URBAN HEAT AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Farhana Tabassum from IGHD was invited as a guest speaker for a podcast by the Climate Action Center Karachi, focused on climate resilience, urban heat, and public health in Karachi.

The discussion explored the growing challenges of heat stress and heat stroke in Karachi, the importance of public health preparedness during extreme heat events, and the need for urban cooling and heat resilience strategies. Farhana also shared reflections on the Karachi Cooling Plan and the broader future of climate adaptation in the city.

The conversation aimed to make these urgent climate-health issues more accessible to policymakers, practitioners, students, and the wider public, while highlighting practical pathways for building a safer and more climate-resilient Karachi.



To View the Full Podcast, Click the Image on the Right to Watch the Recording



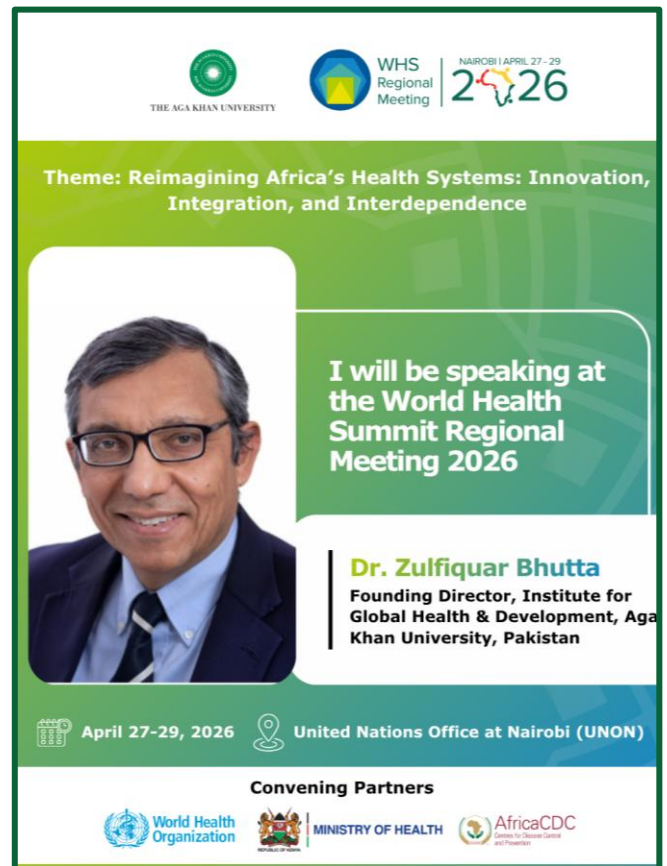
DR BHUTTA SPEAKS AT WORLD HEALTH SUMMIT REGIONAL MEETING 2026

Dr Bhutta participated as a speaker at the World Health Summit Regional Meeting 2026, held from April 27–29, 2026, at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, Kenya.

The meeting was convened under the central theme “Reimagining Africa’s Health Systems: Innovation, Integration, and Interdependence.” It brought together global health leaders, researchers, policymakers, innovators, and practitioners to discuss key challenges shaping health systems in Africa and beyond.

Prof Bhutta contributed to a session titled “Women and Children in Conflict and Fragile Settings,” which focused on the urgent health needs of vulnerable populations affected by instability, displacement, and humanitarian crises. The session brought together speakers from diverse regional and global institutions, including representatives from the Kenya Red Cross, Afrika Kwanza Health Impact, Africa CDC, and Aga Khan University.

The World Health Summit Regional Meeting provided an important platform for cross-regional learning, collaboration, and exchange on how health systems can become more innovative, integrated, and resilient.



To Learn More About the Event,
Click the Image on the Right



IGHD PARTICIPATES IN KARACHI COOLING PLAN CONSULTATION

Dr Syeda Kanza Naqvi and Farhana Tabassum attended the first stakeholder consultation meeting on the Karachi Cooling Plan, organised by the Climate Action Center Karachi on May 8, 2026.

The Karachi Cooling Plan is a coordinated city-wide initiative focused on addressing extreme heat in Karachi. The consultation brought together stakeholders from local government, civil society, communities, academia, and media to discuss practical and coordinated strategies for responding to the city’s growing heat crisis.

The meeting focused on understanding Karachi’s current heat situation, developing a focused city-wide plan, identifying institutions responsible for implementation, and establishing mechanisms for monitoring progress. Key areas of discussion included strengthening early warning systems, expanding public cooling spaces, improving heat-ready healthcare facilities, promoting climate-sensitive urban design, and increasing urban greening initiatives across Karachi.



Click here to read
the full article



IGHD TEAM PARTICIPATES IN WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2026 EVENT AT UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI

An IGHD team participated in the World Environment Day 2026 event organised by the Institute of Environmental Studies, University of Karachi, on June 22, 2026.

The event, held under the theme “Inspired by Nature. For Climate. Forever Future,” brought together students, faculty members, researchers, practitioners, and environmental organisations to discuss climate action, environmental stewardship, and sustainable development. Discussions focused on environmental awareness, practical climate solutions, and the need for collective action to build healthier and more resilient communities.



ON BEHALF OF IGHD



Humaira Nazir



Shameer Qamar



Anjum Abbas Naqvi



Farhana Tabassum



Aadarsh Muhammad



Rana Usama



Sibghatullah Siddique



HUMAIRA NAZIR WINS SECOND POSITION AT CLIMATE PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION 2026

Humaira Nazir, Postdoctoral Fellow at IGHD, secured Second Position at the Climate Photography Exhibition 2026, organised as part of World Environment Day celebrations under the theme Climate Action (#NowForClimate) at AKU Karachi.

Her photograph was selected from submissions received across AKU's global community and displayed alongside entries from students, faculty, and staff across Pakistan and East Africa. The award recognised the photograph's compelling visual representation of climate-related challenges and its contribution to raising awareness about environmental sustainability.

The photograph captures a home surrounded by rainwater, reflecting the difficult realities faced by families during heavy rains and flooding. The exhibition was held from June 5–12, 2026, across AKU campuses in Pakistan and East Africa.



FARHANA TABASSUM PARTICIPATES IN EXPERT HORIZON SCAN ON EXTREME HEAT IN PAKISTAN

Farhana Tabassum from IGHD participated in an expert horizon scanning exercise on extreme heat risk in Pakistan, organised by researchers from the Karachi Urban Lab, Institute of Business Administration, and King's College London.

The exercise brought together experts and practitioners to identify and assess plausible high-impact heatwave scenarios in Pakistan, particularly in the context of rising temperatures, dense populations, outdoor labour, and constraints in energy, water, and healthcare systems.

Participants were invited to submit scenarios exploring how an unprecedented and severe heatwave could lead to cascading impacts across systems such as health, energy, water, labour, and governance. The top-ranked scenarios were discussed during a multi-stakeholder workshop held on June 17, 2026, at IBA Karachi, with online participation also available.

**KARACHI
URBAN
LAB**



IGHD TEAM ATTENDS 5TH KARACHI CLIMATE FESTIVAL ON WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

IGHD team members attended the 5th Karachi Climate Festival, held on June 5, 2026, to mark World Environment Day. The event took place at Auditorium II of the Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi, and brought together experts, activists, environmental groups, students, and citizens for discussions on sustainability, climate action, and community advocacy. Co-organised in collaboration with local environmental groups, including Joint Forest and Faroozan Digital, the festival built on earlier city-wide climate initiatives such as Climate Week Karachi, led by the Climate Action Centre. Sessions and activities highlighted the importance of public engagement, local partnerships, and community-led approaches in responding to the climate crisis.



DR JAI DAS PARTICIPATES IN UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA CONFERENCE ON MOUNTAINS, CLIMATE AND HEALTH

Dr Jai K. Das, Associate Director at IGHD, participated in the International Conference on Mountains, Climate and Health in Central Asia, held from June 18–19, 2026, in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. Organised by the University of Central Asia, the conference brought together researchers, policymakers, development practitioners, and representatives of multilateral institutions to examine the links between climate change, mountain ecosystems, and public health.



UNIVERSITY
OF CENTRAL ASIA

Dr Das contributed to the plenary session titled “Climate, Cryosphere and Health – From Evidence to Implications,” where he presented on the AKDN climate and health MOOC. The session explored how environmental and climatic changes affecting mountain systems can influence population health and highlighted the importance of translating evidence into practical responses.

The conference provided a platform for regional and international exchange on strengthening climate-health resilience, particularly for communities living in environmentally vulnerable mountain regions.



DR JAI DAS SPEAKS AT INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN NAIROBI

Dr Jai K. Das, Associate Director, IGHD, attended and spoke at the Institute for Human Development International Conference, held from June 8–10, 2026, in Nairobi, Kenya.

The conference, titled “Unlocking Human Potential for Optimal Development across the Lifespan: A Decade of Evidence, Innovation, and Policy Impact,” marked the tenth anniversary of AKU’s Institute for Human Development and brought together researchers, practitioners, policymakers, development partners, civil society organisations, and funders to reflect on evidence, innovation, and partnerships in human development.



Dr Das spoke during a session on climate and human development, presenting on “Climate Change and Maternal Newborn and Child Health (MNCH): Perspectives from Asia.” His presentation highlighted the growing implications of climate change for maternal, newborn, and child health, particularly in vulnerable and resource-constrained settings.

To Learn More About the
Event, **Click the Image**
on the Right



IGHD ESTABLISHES FIRST PROJECT OFFICE AND STORAGE FACILITY IN GILGIT-BALTISTAN

IGHD has established its first project office and storage facility in Gilgit-Baltistan to support the PICCTURE Pakistan Trial in District Astore. Located in a rented building in Eidgah, Astore, the extendable facility will serve as a local base for project staff, field operations, community engagement, and implementation activities.

The PICCTURE Pakistan Trial—Preparedness, Integrated Community Capacity, and Transformative Understanding for Resilience Enhancement—is a cluster randomised controlled trial focused on strengthening community preparedness and resilience in climate-vulnerable settings.

Establishing the office required extensive coordination due to the area's remote location, limited transport access, and challenging terrain. Despite these logistical difficulties, the team successfully completed the necessary assessments and arrangements to establish IGHD's presence in the region.

The AKU team was led by Muhammad Siddique from IGHD and included Major Basit Arshad from Safety and Security, Syed Babar Shah from Construction, and Khurram Ismail from Housing. Their combined expertise helped ensure that the site was suitable and ready to support the project.

The establishment of this first IGHD base in Gilgit-Baltistan marks an important step in expanding the Institute's field presence and strengthening its capacity to work directly with remote and climate-vulnerable communities.



IGHD-DEVELOPED IGNIT3 NUTRITION COURSES TO BE HOSTED ON HEC-NAHE PLATFORM

The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan, and Aga Khan University signed a Memorandum of Understanding on July 1, 2026, to host the IGNIT3 online nutrition courses on the Learning Management System of HEC's National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE).

The IGNIT3 courses, developed with IGHD's technical and academic leadership, are designed to strengthen nutrition education and faculty capacity across Pakistan. Under the agreement, AKU has provided seven SCORM-compliant online nutrition courses for hosting on the NAHE platform.

The courses cover foundational nutrition concepts, assessment and management of malnutrition, intersectoral issues, climate change, and gender. They are intended for a wide range of faculty cadres, including lecturers, instructors, demonstrators, professors, associate professors, professors, senior instructors, and directors.

Speaking at the signing, Prof Dr Zulfiqar A. Bhutta thanked all those involved and expressed hope that the Pakistan context-specific IGNIT3 courses would help build a nutrition-knowledgeable workforce in the country. The MoU will remain in effect until March 31, 2029.



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH
AND DEVELOPMENT



IGHD TEAM PARTICIPATES IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE SHORT COURSE

Five representatives from IGHD participated in the Occupational Health and Climate Change Short Course, organised by the Department of Community Health Sciences, AKU, on June 8–9, 2026, in Karachi.

The two-day training focused on the growing impact of climate change on occupational health and workplace safety. Sessions covered occupational health principles, climate-related workplace hazards, occupational cancers, and the development of occupational health, safety, and well-being plans.



The interactive sessions provided opportunities to engage with experts in occupational and environmental health, exchange experiences, and explore strategies for building climate-resilient workplaces.

IGHD PARTICIPANTS



Shameer
Qamar



Humaira
Nazir



Anjum
Abbas Naqvi



Asma
Qureshi



Arsala
Farooqui

IGHD CONDUCTS RENEW TRAINING OF TRAINERS WORKSHOP IN GILGIT

IGHD conducted a four-day Training of Trainers workshop from May 11–14, 2026, at the Professional Development Center, North, in Gilgit, under the RENEW project: Recovery and Climate Resilience in Flood-Affected Areas of Pakistan.

The workshop strengthened the capacity of health professionals, community health workers, volunteers, and district health managers to deliver integrated reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, nutrition, mental health, and disaster risk reduction services during emergencies.

The training covered RMNCH in emergencies, Nutrition and Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, and Disaster Risk Reduction in Health Systems. Sessions combined lectures, group work, case discussions, practical exercises, and pre- and post-tests.

Special recognition is due to Akber Ali from the IGHD Administration team, who managed the extensive logistical arrangements. His coordination and administrative support were central to ensuring the smooth planning and delivery of the training in Gilgit.



IGHD FACILITATION TEAM



Dr Jai
Das
LEAD



Dr Khadija
Vadsaria
FACILITATOR



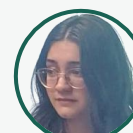
Asma
Qureshi
FACILITATOR



Dr Arsala
Farooqui
FACILITATOR



Ahmed
Atiullah
FACILITATOR



Zoya Navid
Ansari
FACILITATOR



Rehan Ali
Kango
FACILITATOR

SPECIAL RECOGNITION



Akber
Ali
ADMINISTRATION

IGHD TEAM VISITS MATIARI HEALTH SERVICES TO EXPLORE RESEARCH COLLABORATION

An IGHD team led by Dr Jai K. Das, Associate Director, visited Matiari Health Services, a private healthcare facility in Matiari headed by Dr Syed Hasnain Ali Shah.

During the visit, the team toured various departments of the hospital, including the outpatient department, radiology department, pharmacy, and clinical laboratory. The visit provided an opportunity to observe the facility's infrastructure, healthcare services, and commitment to delivering ethical, affordable, and patient-centred care.

Following the tour, the IGHD team met with the management of Matiari Health Services to discuss potential areas of collaboration in public health research. Discussions focused on engaging Matiari Health Services in upcoming research studies and exploring how its clinical and diagnostic services could support research activities in District Matiari.



IGHD DELEGATION



Dr Jai Das



M. Khan Jamali



Dr Kanza Naqvi



Dr Suneel Piryani



Sana Khatoon



Shameer Qamar

PICCTURE TRIAL ADVANCES IMPLEMENTATION PREPARATIONS IN BADIN AND ASTORE

Over the last quarter, substantial progress was made in preparing for the implementation of the PICCTURE trial, Promoting Interventions for Climate Change to Upscale Resilience, in the climate-vulnerable districts of Badin and Astore.

Key preparatory activities included the completion of cluster mapping, verification, and randomisation to establish study clusters and intervention allocation. Recruitment of field staff was also completed, followed by training on study procedures, data collection protocols, quality assurance, and research ethics.

The project team held consultations with key stakeholders, including the Lady Health Worker Programme and Emergency Rescue Service 1122, to strengthen collaboration and finalise plans for training Village Management Committees on disaster preparedness, emergency response, and community resilience. Development of intervention manuals and information, education, and communication materials also progressed substantially.

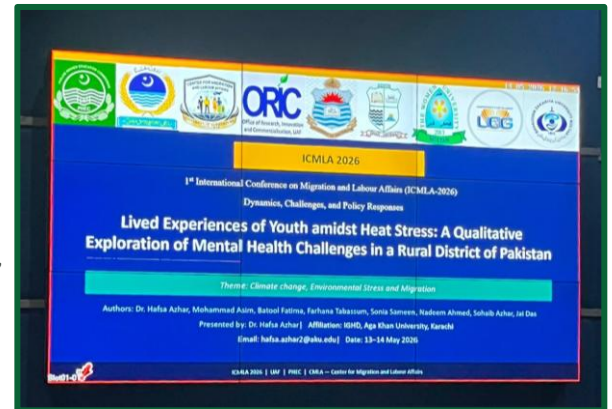
Baseline household surveys were initiated and completed in both Badin and Astore to establish pre-intervention measures of household resilience, vulnerability, food security, and related outcomes. Community engagement activities identified eligible Village Management Committee members in intervention clusters, laying the foundation for intervention rollout in the next quarter. Overall, the project remained on schedule, with major preparatory milestones completed as planned.



DR HAFSA AZHAR PRESENTS RESEARCH ON HEAT STRESS AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AT ICMLA-2026

Dr Hafsa Azhar, Research Coordinator at IGHD, participated in the 1st International Conference on Migration and Labour Affairs (ICMLA-2026), held from May 13–14, 2026, at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad.

During the conference, Dr Azhar delivered an oral presentation titled “Lived Experiences of Youth Amidst Heat Stress: A Qualitative Exploration of Mental Health Challenges in a Rural District of Pakistan.” The study was co-authored by Mohammad Asim, Batool Fatima, Farhana Tabassum, Sonia Sameen, Nadeem Ahmed, Sohaib Azhar, and Dr Jai Das.



The presentation formed part of a technical session focused on displacement, vulnerability, digital transformation, and the social, psychological, and governance dimensions of migration. It highlighted the mental health challenges experienced by young people living in rural communities affected by increasing heat stress and environmental pressures.

Dr Azhar’s participation provided an opportunity to share IGHD’s emerging research at the intersection of climate change, youth wellbeing, and mental health with researchers, academics, and practitioners from Pakistan and abroad.

IGHD RESEARCHERS HELP DEVELOP WELLCOME-FUNDED HEATSHIELD PROJECT THROUGH COHERE WORKSHOP

Researchers Dr Jai Das and Hassan Naqvi, Data Manager at IGHD, participated in the COHERE workshop — Co-designing Heat-Resilient Responses through Biomolecule-sensing Wearables in Low-Resource Settings — held from June 2–5, 2026, in Nairobi, Kenya. Hosted by the Wellcome Trust, the interdisciplinary workshop brought together clinicians, engineers, environmental scientists, behavioural scientists, public health researchers, and data scientists to develop innovative research addressing the health impacts of extreme heat.



Participants worked in multidisciplinary teams to explore how wearable devices, sweat-based biosensors, environmental monitoring, biomarkers, and data science could be combined to measure heat exposure and its physiological effects in real-world settings.

A major outcome of the workshop was the development of HEATShield, a multidisciplinary research project subsequently selected for funding by the Wellcome Trust. The project will investigate how occupational heat exposure affects the health, wellbeing, and livelihoods of informal women workers in Karachi, Pakistan, and Ahmedabad, India.

Through Fitbit smartwatches, sweat-based biomarker analysis, environmental sensing, and longitudinal health assessments, HEATShield will generate evidence to support Heat Health Action Plans, occupational health interventions, and climate-adaptation strategies for populations particularly vulnerable to extreme heat.



IGHD RESEARCH ASSOCIATE LEADS ENUMERATOR TRAINING IN ARUSHA

Abdullah Babar, Research Associate at IGHD, travelled to Arusha, Tanzania, to lead a five-day enumerator training programme held from April 20–24, 2026. The training was conducted in preparation for the launch of field activities under the project “Assessing Climate-Sensitive Health, Nutrition and Environmental Vulnerabilities in Arusha and Monduli Districts, Tanzania.”

Working alongside the AKU-ACER team and the Department of Population Health, Abdullah helped deliver training sessions for enumerators, Community Health Workers, and phlebotomists. The programme covered research ethics, informed-consent procedures, household engagement, administration of data-collection tools, and digital data management.

He also supported a pilot field exercise conducted before the full rollout of data collection. The training helped prepare field teams to collect high-quality evidence on interconnected climate, health, nutrition, and environmental vulnerabilities in Arusha and Monduli.



HUMAIRA NAZIR SERVES AS JURY MEMBER FOR ARCHITECTURE THESIS EVALUATIONS

Humaira Nazir from IGHD served as a jury member for the final presentation and evaluation of Bachelor of Architecture thesis design projects at several higher education institutions in Sindh.

She contributed to thesis examinations at NED University of Engineering and Technology, Indus University, Dawood University of Engineering and Technology in Karachi, and Shaheed Allah Buksh Soomro University of Art, Design and Heritages in Jamshoro.

The engagements provided an opportunity to assess students’ research and design work, offer academic feedback, and exchange knowledge with faculty members and built-environment professionals. Her participation also supported the academic development of emerging architects and strengthened IGHD’s engagement with institutions working across architecture, urban development, and the built environment.



IGHD BIDS FAREWELL TO DR JANTA KUMARI

Dr Janta Kumari joined IGHD in October 2024 as a Medical Officer at the Mithi centre, contributing to the Wellcome Trust-funded BIRTH-Cohort project, which is examining the effects of extreme heat exposure on maternal and fetal health among 6,000 pregnant women.

A recent medical graduate when she joined the Institute, Dr Janta demonstrated a strong commitment to learning and professional growth. Following an intensive three-month training programme in basic obstetric ultrasound at the Fetal Medicine Unit, Aga Khan University Hospital, under the mentorship of Dr Zaheena Islam and Dr Nuruddin, she began providing ultrasound services at the Mithi centre.

During her time at IGHD, she continued to strengthen her expertise through the ISUOG Basic Obstetric Ultrasound Course and an Advanced Fetal Echocardiography Course at SIUT, Karachi. She also obtained Fetal Medicine Foundation accreditation in nuchal translucency, nasal bone assessment, ductus venosus Doppler, and uterine artery Doppler studies.

Dr Janta's professionalism, dedication, and eagerness to excel made her a valued member of the IGHD team. She left the Institute in March 2026 after securing a government position at Civil Hospital Mithi, where she continues to advance her medical career and serve her community.



“My time at IGHD was an important period of learning and professional growth. I am deeply grateful for the mentorship, training, and opportunities I received, and for the support of colleagues who encouraged me throughout my journey. The experience has strengthened my commitment to maternal and fetal health, and I will carry these lessons with me as I continue serving the community in Mithi.

— Dr Jai Das | Associate Director, IGHD



While we will miss her presence at IGHD, we are proud to have been part of her professional journey and wish her continued success in this new chapter.

From all of us at IGHD, we wish Dr Janta a bright and rewarding future filled with continued growth, achievement, and success.

- Team IGHD

PUBLICATIONS FROM IGHD (APRIL – JUNE 2026)

Peer-reviewed journal articles authored and co-authored by IGHD faculty, fellows, and research staff during the quarter.

- 01 **GBD 2023 Diarrhoeal Disease and Enteric Infectious Diseases Collaborators.**
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- 02 **Nazir F, Munir T, Das J.**
Household water, sanitation, and hygiene access and its impact on nutritional outcomes in children under five: evidence from Pakistan. *PubMed*. April 2026.
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- 03 **Lassi S, Niaz M, Ansari ZN, Jafri SK, Das JK, et al.**
Assessing childhood development: systematic review and meta-analysis on the validation of local assessment tools in the context of developing countries. *Psychology International*. June 2026.
<https://www.mdpi.com/2813-9844/8/2/35>

- 04 **Hashmi M, Rehman N, Rizvi A, Padhani ZA, Das JK, et al.**
Double burden of malnutrition and its associated factors among adolescents aged 10–19 years in a rural district of Pakistan. *PLOS Global Public Health*. June 2026.
<https://journals.plos.org/globalpublichealth/article?id=10.1371/journal.pgph.0006457>

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Systematic review and meta-analysis of interventions for mental health in extreme weather events. *BMJ Global Health*. May 2026.
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- 06 **Keats EC, Majumdar T, Kim C, et al.**
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- 07 **Moin M, Farhan Z, Naqvi S, Lassi Z, Das J.**
Interventions for promoting physical activity among adolescents in school settings: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *PubMed*. April 2026.
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Prevalence of primary dysmenorrhea and its associated factors among adolescent girls in a rural setting of Pakistan. *PLOS Global Public Health*. April 2026.
<https://journals.plos.org/globalpublichealth/article?id=10.1371/journal.pgph.0006162>

- 09 **Syal R, Alfven T, Ashorn P, Das J, Rudan I, et al.**
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- 10 **Lohana S.**
Asynchronous teledentistry for caries detection: a diagnostic accuracy study. *International Dental Journal*. February 2026.
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- 11 **Zaki U, Qazi SH, Mehdi SS, Hashmi M, Das JK, et al.**
Neonatal gastric perforation: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Pediatric Surgery Open*. June 2026.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2949711626000316>

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Biological impacts of rising temperatures on maternal, fetal and newborn health: protocol for a cohort study (BIRTH-Cohort). *BMJ Open*. March 2026.
<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2025-107773>

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