

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND REFLECTIONS

2024-2025

**Niraj
Kumar
Singh**

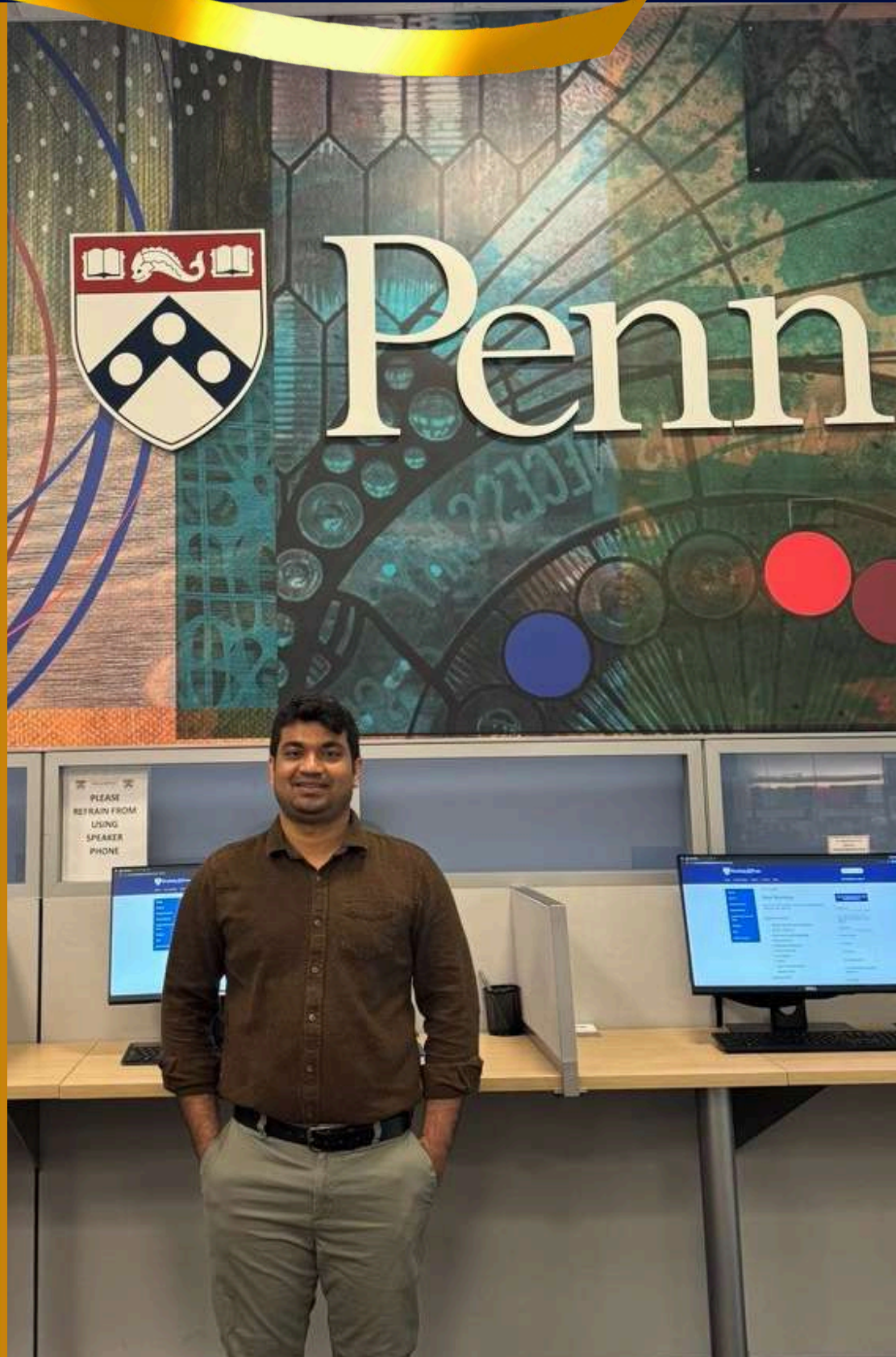
M.S.Ed. in International
Educational Development,
Penn GSE

UNIVERSITY OF
PENNSYLVANIA

GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF EDUCATION

PENN GSE

ACADEMIC
PROFESSIONAL &
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT
JOURNEY





INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION IS NOT ONLY ABOUT CROSSING BORDERS, BUT
ABOUT DESIGNING SYSTEMS THAT HONOR CONTEXT, EQUITY, AND LIVED
EXPERIENCE.

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NIRAJ KUMAR SINGH



Aspiring Global Education Leader | University of
Pennsylvania Graduate Student | Proven Experience in
Government & Nonprofit Organizations Youth Mentorship
and Community Educational Initiatives |
Youth Delegate | United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)
Third Committee



Asia, Africa, Europe & North America

IN THIS ISSUE

This report documents my academic, professional, and community engagement journey as a Penn GSE graduate student (2024–2025). It highlights key milestones, research work, conferences, service activities, and personal reflections, demonstrating my growth as an international education and youth development professional.



STUDENT SERVICE CENTRE AT PENN



OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS AT PENN GSE

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The journey from the small towns of Bihar to the historic halls of the University of Pennsylvania is not merely a story of academic transition—it is a narrative of persistence, purpose, and possibility.

This report captures that journey: a confluence of grassroots commitment and global vision, shaped through the Master’s in International Educational Development at Penn GSE (2024–2025). It reflects a year of intellectual exploration, cross-cultural learning, and the pursuit of equity through education

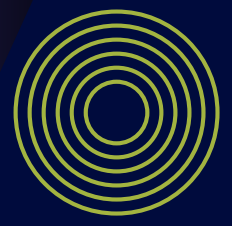
My academic and professional path began amid India’s dynamic development landscape. Over the past decade, I have led statewide vaccination campaigns, managed social work fellowships across South and Southeast Asia, and founded Youthology International, which has mentored over 10,000 students and empowered 25,000 young people. These experiences shaped my conviction that sustainable change begins at the intersection of evidence, empathy, and education—a conviction that found new depth at Penn GSE.

At Penn, learning transcended classrooms. Serving as an Admissions Ambassador, Application Reader, and Student Mentor with Penn Global offered opportunities to represent the values of diversity, inclusion, and access that define the University’s spirit.

Roles with GAPSA and the Graduate School of Education deepened my engagement in leadership and community building across cultures.

Presenting at CIES 2025 and CSWE 2025, and participating in academic exchanges at Harvard University, Columbia University, The New School, and MIT, broadened my perspective on education as a global equalizer. Being selected as a delegate to the United Nations further strengthened my resolve to transform academic insight into meaningful policy action.

This compilation stands as both a record and a reminder that journeys from local realities to global stages are defined not by privilege but by purpose. The Penn experience has expanded my intellectual horizons and reaffirmed my commitment to build pathways where education becomes the architecture of inclusion, innovation, and human development.



“ I discovered at Penn that learning can bridge worlds and reimagine what’s possible.





———— Meeting with Dr. Katharine O. Strunk, ————
Dean of Penn GSE, and Dr. Tony B. Watlington
Sr., Superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia
(2024)

LETTER FROM ACADEMIC ADVISOR

I am very pleased to reflect on the exceptional academic journey of Mr. Neeraj Kumar Singh at the University of Pennsylvania. As his academic advisor, I have had the privilege of observing his unwavering dedication, hard work, perseverance and love for the field of international educational development during his time at Penn GSE. Neeraj brings to Penn a rare combination of lived community experience and a deep-rooted commitment to advancing equitable education and youth empowerment.

I am extremely impressed by his proactive nature and interest to be part of international platforms. For example, his representation at prestigious platforms such as CIES 2025 in Chicago, UNGA 80 events in New York, and CSWE in Denver, reflects his growing interest and urge to have a voice in the global education and youth development/leadership. Coming from a humble background in Bihar to the Ivy League, Neeraj is a powerful testament to how resilience, hard work, and courage can transform possibilities.

He continues to inspire young learners and emerging leaders in the field, particularly those from low-resource communities. As he steps forward into future opportunities, I wish Mr. Neeraj Kumar Singh the very best for all his future endeavors and look forward to witnessing his continued success.

With warm regards and highest appreciation,

Dr. Amrit Thapa



DR. AMRIT THAPA
FACULTY, UNIVERSITY OF
PENNSYLVANIA –
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
EDUCATION (PENN GSE)
PHILADELPHIA, USA

***Niraj, your
journey
reaffirms that
hard work,
perseverance
and courage is
the way to
success. Keep it
up!***

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A LEGACY OF LEARNING

University of Pennsylvania



The University of Pennsylvania, founded in 1740 by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia, stands as one of America's earliest and most influential institutions of higher learning.

Franklin envisioned an education that blended practical knowledge with civic responsibility, preparing students for leadership in business, government, and public service rather than solely for the clergy. His forward-thinking ideals laid the foundation for a modern liberal arts curriculum and a tradition of innovation that continues to define Penn today.



From its early days as the Academy and Charitable School to becoming America's first university (1779) and home to the nation's first medical school (1765), Penn has been at the forefront of progress.



Over time, the University expanded to its 299-acre West Philadelphia campus, home to more than 180 historic and modern buildings and 12 distinguished schools, including the renowned Graduate School of Education (Penn GSE) and the Wharton School, the world's first collegiate business school.

With a global network of over 330,000 alumni, Penn continues to advance discovery and innovation through its pioneering research and interdisciplinary approach. The birthplace of the world's first digital computer (ENIAC) and a leader in mRNA vaccine research, Penn upholds Franklin's legacy of applying knowledge for the public good. Today, it stands as a vibrant, world-class university that educates and inspires leaders to shape a better society locally and globally.



The History of Penn-GSE

Overview of the Graduate School of Education

“ This opportunity at Penn GSE allows me to learn from leading educators and researchers while contributing to meaningful change in education worldwide.



The University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education (Penn GSE) traces its origins to the University's early commitment to teacher preparation and educational reform inspired by Benjamin Franklin's vision of learning for the public good.

Formal instruction in education began at Penn in 1893, leading to the creation of the School of Education in 1914, which granted its first Bachelor of Science in Education degrees in 1915. Graduate programs soon followed, with the M.S.Ed. established in 1930 and the Ed.D. in 1943.

In 1961, the School was restructured and renamed the Graduate School of Education (GSE), marking a new era of research, innovation, and community engagement.

Today, Penn GSE stands as one of the world's top-ranked schools for education research and practice, consistently recognized for its leadership in equity, innovation, and global education. Located in the heart of Philadelphia, the School brings together scholars, practitioners, and students from across the world to tackle the most pressing educational challenges of our time.

It is home to renowned research centers such as the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE), the Penn Center for Learning Analytics, and the Center for Urban Ethnography, all of which contribute groundbreaking insights that shape educational policy and practice worldwide.

Penn GSE offers a wide range of master's, doctoral, and professional programs spanning teacher education, higher education, educational policy, leadership, counseling, and learning sciences.

Its faculty are globally recognized for advancing research that bridges theory and practice, influencing classrooms, communities, and education systems around the world. With a strong commitment to social justice and access to quality education, Penn GSE partners with local Philadelphia schools while maintaining active collaborations across continents.

AGuided by Franklin's vision of knowledge in service, Penn GSE shapes the future of education, preparing leaders to create meaningful global impact.

2024-2025 ORIENTATION



August 26th, 2025

A Global Start to Our Journey

The IEDP 24-25 cohort officially kicked off the year with a warm and exciting Orientation event at Penn GSE!

With students representing 20+ countries and speaking 50+ languages, our cohort truly reflects the global mission of the International Educational Development Program. The diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and identities brought to the room highlighted what makes IEDP so unique – a community built on cross-cultural learning and collaboration.

During the event, students met faculty and staff, learned about the program, and began forming connections that will grow throughout the year. The energy, curiosity, and shared purpose already set the tone for a powerful collective journey ahead.

Academic Highlights: A Journey of Learning, Research, and Impact

Si. No	Course Code	Course Name
1	EDUC 5945	Qualitative Methods and the Politics of Knowledge
2	EDUC 6840	History of American Higher Education
3	EDUC 5495	Anthropology and Education
4	EDUC 6482	Masters Proseminar in International Educational Development
5	EDUC 6577	Information and Communications Technologies for Education and Development in Global Perspective
6	EDUC 5480	Education in Developing Countries
7	EDUC 6462	Principles of Monitoring & Evaluation in International Education
8	EDUC 6480	International Educational Development in Practice: Tools, Techniques and Ethics
9	EDUC 5404	Systems Thinking for International Development and Educational Change
10	NPLD 5820	NGOs and International Development

As an international student in educational development at Penn, I studied ten courses across Penn GSE, Wharton, and the School of Arts and Sciences, under the mentorship of eight exceptional professors. I completed nearly ten academic and field projects across India, Africa, and the United States, and held five student roles that strengthened my professional skills. Penn supported me through academic advising, career services, immigration assistance, and numerous campus resources. During this time, two of my research papers were selected for publication, I presented four papers at international conferences, and I served as a youth delegate at the United Nations. These experiences have shaped my growth as a scholar and emerging leader in global education.



UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS NEW YORK

Empowering Voices, Inspiring Change



With **Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid**
Special Representative of the
United Nations

Stepping into Conference Room 1 at the United Nations Headquarters as a delegate for the Youth Event convened by the Chair of the UNGA Third Committee was both humbling and empowering. Representing India and the University of Pennsylvania, I joined global youth leaders, diplomats, and education advocates to discuss inclusive policies and cross-cultural collaboration. The dialogue reaffirmed my belief that empowering young people through education is the cornerstone of global peace and progress. It was a proud moment to witness grassroots experiences from Bihar finding resonance within the world's most influential corridors of dialogue.



With **Ambassador Jérôme Bonnafont**, Permanent
Mission of France to the
United Nations



A week later, I had the honor of returning to the United Nations for the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, themed “Ensuring Respect and Effective Support for Families.” Participating in high-level discussions with international diplomats and UN representatives deepened my understanding of the interconnectedness between poverty eradication and educational inclusion. My conversation with Ambassador Jérôme Bonnafont of France reinforced the critical role that equitable education plays in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 1 and 4). This visit further strengthened my commitment to advancing evidence-based social policy for marginalized communities.



With **Ilze Brands Kehris**
United Nations Assistant
Secretary-General for
Human Rights

My third visit to the UN Headquarters came as part of a Global Social Work Dialogue, where scholars, practitioners, and policymakers explored the intersection of human rights, sustainability, and social innovation. Representing Penn GSE, I contributed insights on youth leadership and education as instruments of empowerment. Engaging with social work professionals from across continents reminded me that the values of compassion, dignity, and justice transcend all boundaries. The event concluded with a renewed collective vision—to transform empathy into global action and ensure that social work continues to be a force for inclusive development.

Harvard AI & Education Conference: A Transformative Learning Experience



Harvard University, Massachusetts

Stepping into Harvard University, one of the world’s most renowned academic institutions, was an inspiring moment filled with anticipation and pride. The historic campus, with its vibrant intellectual energy, reflected a tradition of curiosity and innovation.

The atmosphere resonated with purpose, collaboration, and the spirit of inquiry that Harvard embodies. The AI and Education Conference offered an immersive experience into the transformative role of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning



As part of the delegation attending the AI and Education Conference, I was surrounded by scholars, educators, and policy thinkers who shared a common vision—using technology to redefine the future of learning.

.Sessions led by pioneering experts highlighted how AI-driven tools can personalize education, predict learning outcomes, and promote accessibility for learners of all abilities. Discussions also emphasized the ethical responsibilities of educators in an increasingly digital era. Listening to global thought leaders speak about inclusive design and technological equity broadened my perspective on how data, empathy, and innovation can co-exist to build a more human-centered educational future.



“Learning at Harvard was not about technology replacing minds — it was about inspiring minds to use technology wisely.”



CIES 2025 – Global Education Conference, Chicago

Bridging Worlds Through Research and Collaboration

Global learning is not about where we come from, but what we can create together.

I had the honor of representing the University of Pennsylvania at the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) 2025 Conference, held at the Palmer House Hilton Hotel in Chicago, USA (March 22–26, 2025). The conference, which brought together over 4,000 scholars, policymakers, and practitioners from 120 countries, provided an inspiring platform to explore global perspectives on education, innovation, and social development.

Presenting my paper titled “Let’s Join Hands Together to Improve Digital Literacy and Open New Opportunities for Rural Youth of Bihar” was a defining academic milestone. My presentation on March 26, 2025, focused on how digital literacy can serve as a transformative tool for empowering marginalized youth and bridging socio-economic divides in rural India. The session generated meaningful dialogue on inclusive digital ecosystems and sustainable development frameworks.

Beyond the presentation, CIES 2025 offered an invaluable space for learning and collaboration. I had the privilege of engaging with renowned educators from institutions such as Harvard, Columbia, Stanford, and other leading universities, deepening my understanding of comparative education in diverse contexts. A special highlight was meeting Dr. Halla Holmarsdottir, President of CIES 2025, whose insights on education, equity, and global citizenship left a profound impression.



Honored to have met Dr. Halla Holmarsdottir President of CIES in Chicago (2025)



**With Michael Trucano
Fellow at the Brookings Institution
CIES 2025**

The CIES 2025 Conference in Chicago was not only an academic platform but also a living classroom of global collaboration. Conversations with educators from across continents illuminated how shared challenges, whether in access, inclusion, or digital transformation, demand shared solutions.



**With Professor Fernando Reimers,
Harvard University**

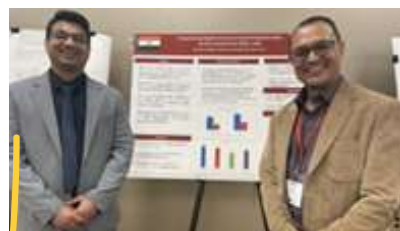
Every discussion, from keynote panels to informal exchanges, reinforced my belief that transformative education begins with mutual respect and the willingness to learn from one another.

The experience strengthened my resolve to advance policies that make technology inclusive, accessible, and equitable for all especially for learners from marginalized and underserved communities. It deepened my understanding that true progress in education begins with access, and access begins with empathy.



**Paper presentation at
CIES 2025**

The CIES 2025 Conference in Chicago was not only an academic platform but also a living classroom of global collaboration. Conversations with educators from across continents illuminated how shared challenges whether in access, inclusion, or digital transformation demand shared solutions. Listening to diverse perspectives from researchers, practitioners, and policymakers broadened my understanding of comparative education as a bridge between context and innovation.



**With the Academic Advisor
Dr. Amrit Thapa, UPenn**

Participating in CIES 2025 reaffirmed my lifelong commitment to using education as a tool for equity and empowerment. Presenting my paper on digital literacy for rural youth in Bihar allowed me to bring community voices to an international forum, connecting grassroots realities with global discourses.

As I return from Chicago, I carry a renewed conviction that the purpose of scholarship lies beyond presentation it lives in transformation. Knowledge finds its highest value when it becomes opportunity, empowering those whose voices deserve to be heard the most.



**Learning becomes transformative when it unites
ideas across borders and hearts across cultures.**



Columbia University, New York City

Bridging Worlds Through Research and Collaboration

At Teachers College, Columbia University, I had the privilege of presenting my research paper titled “Crossing Worlds: Indigenous Youth and the Reimagining of Education in Rural India” at the 5th Biennial Conference on Anthropology & Education. This global academic forum brought together scholars, educators, and researchers from leading universities to explore how anthropology shapes education and cultural understanding. My presentation focused on youth-led Indigenous educational practices emerging from rural Bihar—models that challenge conventional learning paradigms and center community participation. Engaging in this dialogue reaffirmed my belief that true education bridges the worlds of lived experience and scholarly inquiry.



Panel Discussion on Anthropology & Education Conference

I was deeply honored to serve as a panelist in the session “Decolonial Methodologies and Epistemic Justice in Educational Research”, where we explored how research can challenge colonial legacies and amplify marginalized voices. Speaking alongside renowned academics, including Messias Basques (University of Glasgow), Andrea Kim, Sophia Vázquez, and Sasha Dobos-Czarnocha, I shared insights on Indigenous knowledge systems and inclusive approaches to learning. This session reminded me that decolonizing education is not only an intellectual exercise it is a moral commitment to equity and justice.

Beyond formal sessions, the Columbia conference opened doors to collaborations with global educators and researchers. Conversations with faculty members and scholars from across continents led to exploratory discussions on joint research around comparative education, digital inclusion, and community-led learning.



Engaging with diverse perspectives also deepened my understanding of how the principles of epistemic justice can reshape policy frameworks and educational research worldwide.

Participating in these prestigious events at Columbia marked a defining moment in my academic journey from a small classroom in Bihar to one of the world's leading centers of educational thought. The experience validated my pursuit of bringing local realities to global platforms and reaffirmed the value of inclusive scholarship. Each conversation, presentation, and collaboration added a new dimension to my vision of education as a tool for transformation and dignity.



“At Columbia, I witnessed how decolonizing education begins not with resistance, but with recognition—of every voice, every story, every truth.”





CSWE 2025 – Council on Social Work Education Annual Conference, Denver



Elevating Voices, Expanding Impact, Empowering Communities

Representing the University of Pennsylvania at the 71st Annual Conference of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE 2025) in Denver was both a moment of gratitude and immense pride. Held at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel (October 23–26, 2025), the conference gathered global educators, practitioners, and scholars under the inspiring theme “It’s Time to Act: Championing Disability Justice and Disability Joy in Social Work.”



**With Matt Hooper
Vice President CSWE**

For me, standing on this international platform from the heart of Bihar to the heart of Denver symbolized how education can turn aspiration into action. The discussions around inclusion, equity, and disability justice echoed Penn GSE’s enduring belief that education is not only a means of learning but a force for human dignity. Engaging with leaders such as Matt Hooper, Vice President of CSWE, deepened my conviction that compassion and collaboration remain the cornerstones of meaningful change.

I had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Halaevалу F. O. Vakalahi, President and CEO of CSWE for the 2024–2025 fiscal year, to discuss the CSWE theme and key priorities in social work education. I also connected with Oann Brown-Thompson from the Communications & Membership Department to learn more about CSWE initiatives, membership engagement, and communication strategies. It was an insightful and encouraging conversation.



**With Joann Brown-
Thompson from the CSWE**



**With Dr. Halaevалу F. O.
Vakalahi, President and
CEO of CSWE 2025**

Participating in diverse academic sessions, from a culturally sensitive SEL framework for rural Chinese children to studies on juvenile justice and refugee women’s experiences expanded my understanding of intersectional research and transformative pedagogy. These insights will continue to shape my academic and professional path as I strive to design inclusive systems that amplify marginalized voices.

Education achieves its highest purpose when it restores dignity and belonging.



Asian & Pacific Islander Social Work Educators Association (APISWEA)



Championing Inclusion with Dignity and Purpose

I recently attended an inspiring APISWEA professional development session designed to guide first-generation, international, and Asian & Pacific Islander scholars preparing for academic careers. The conversation brought together experienced professors, program directors, and mentors who generously shared practical insights on succeeding in the academic job market. The discussion covered key elements of building a strong academic profile, including:



Building a strong academic profile requires attention to several key elements. Crafting an impactful academic CV and cover letter that clearly aligns with job announcement expectations is crucial. Delivering effective job talks that demonstrate teaching excellence, research clarity, and audience engagement is also vital.



A special highlight was attending the Asian & Pacific Islander Social Work Educators Association (APISWEA) Annual Meeting, where I had the rare honor of being the only master's student among distinguished professors, PhD candidates, and researchers. The dialogue on cultural sensitivity, community empowerment, and educational equity broadened my vision for integrating social work principles into global education policy.



Additionally, communicating confidently and presenting a strong scholarly identity can strengthen interview performance and make a lasting impression. Finally, building long-term academic networks by connecting with peers and professionals in your field can lead to meaningful collaborations and opportunities. These connections remain the cornerstones of meaningful change.

Real education enhances the dignity of a human being and increases their self-respect.

South Asian Social Work Educators' Association (SASWEA), Denver



Attending the South Asian Social Work Educators' Association (SASWEA) Annual Meeting 2025 during the CSWE Conference in Denver was a profound moment of pride and connection. As a graduate student at Penn GSE and a TISS alumnus, being welcomed into a room of distinguished South Asian educators, practitioners, and researchers felt like joining a collective legacy of service and scholarship. The gathering highlighted the growing influence of South Asian voices in global social work, reminding me how diasporic communities continue to shape academic and professional landscapes with compassion and resilience.

The meeting also gave me the chance to share one of my ideas coloring buildings in diverse shades to symbolize inclusion, creativity, and hope in social work and education. Senior faculty warmly received this simple metaphor, sparking reflections on how diversity invigorates learning spaces. The openness of senior faculty strengthened my confidence as an emerging academic and reminded me that ideas rooted in purpose can inspire meaningful dialogue. The evening reaffirmed the importance of representation and shared heritage within global academic spaces. I remain especially thankful to Dr. Neely Mahapatra and the organizing committee for creating a platform that uplifts South Asian scholars and strengthens our collective commitment to inclusive and culturally grounded scholarship.



Receiving the GADE Volunteer Recognition Award at the CSWE Annual Conference 2025 in Denver was a proud moment for Mr. Niraj Kumar Singh, honoring his dedication to student engagement, academic service, and community leadership at the University of Pennsylvania. For someone who began his journey in rural Bihar, this recognition symbolized the power of perseverance and purpose, reaffirming his commitment to advancing inclusive and socially responsive education.

A Milestone of Service



GADE VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AWARD 2025

NEXT GEN INDIA DIALOGUE

Consulate General of India, New York



Attending the NEXT GEN INDIA Dialogue at the Consulate General of India in New York was a remarkable opportunity to represent the University of Pennsylvania and contribute to discussions shaping India's youth development landscape. Engaging directly with senior officials, including Dr. Pallavi Jain Govil, Secretary, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, and Mr. Nitesh Kumar Mishra, Joint Secretary & CVO, allowed for meaningful exchanges on strengthening national youth platforms. Drawing from my work with organizations such as NSS, NYKS, and RGNIYD, I highlighted the importance of inclusive leadership pathways, educational access, and community-driven engagement for young people across India.



Honored to meet Dr. Pallavi Jain Govil
Secretary, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports,
Government of India, New York City on
September 26, 2025.



The dialogue became even more significant when two of my policy suggestions were accepted by the Ministry for future implementation. This affirmation reinforced my belief that ideas grounded in service can influence national progress and inspire collective action. The event strengthened my commitment to contributing to India's development vision for 2047, guided by the conviction that every young person, regardless of geography or background, deserves the opportunity to learn, lead, and shape the nation's future.

With Mr. Nitesh Kumar Mishra, Joint Secretary &
CVO, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Govt. of
India, New York City, September 26, 2025

YOUTH VOICE SYMPOSIUM – UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

A Platform for Youth Leadership, Insight, and Collective Growth



The Youth Voice Symposium at the University of Pennsylvania brought together a dynamic group of young leaders who reflected on the opportunities, challenges, and aspirations shaping today's generation. Listening to panelists from diverse fields share their lived experiences offered profound insight into the resilience, creativity, and purpose that define youth leadership today. The event reinforced the belief that when young people are given space to speak, they do not just participate they reshape conversations, inspire communities, and redefine what is possible. It was a reminder that youth voice is not merely a contribution to society, but a driving force for its transformation.



AT UNGA80 WITH UNEP

VOICES, VISION, AND GLOBAL ACTION





With Mr. Thomas Barbancey, Deputy Director General, Development Cooperation & Humanitarian Affairs of Luxembourg & Dr. Nigina Muntean, Chief of the Innovation & Transformation Branch, UNFPA

UNFPA

A Global Dialogue at

UNGA80

At UNFPA, I realized that global impact grows from simple acts of listening, learning, and standing up for equity.

Participating in the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA80) as a student of International Educational Development at the University of Pennsylvania was a deeply meaningful milestone in my global development journey. At the UNFPA side event, “Scaling What Works: From Local Success to Global Impact,” I had the privilege of engaging with leaders who shape transformative policies for women and girls worldwide. My conversation with Mr. Thomas Barbancey, Deputy Director General for Development Cooperation & Humanitarian Affairs of Luxembourg, reaffirmed the indispensable role of youth voices in building sustainable and inclusive futures.

Equally inspiring was my dialogue with Ms. Laura Rissanen, State Secretary to the Minister of Social Security of Finland, where we reflected on the power of government leadership and cross-country collaboration in advancing gender equity and scaling proven innovations. This experience strengthened my resolve to contribute to global development efforts that uplift women, empower youth, and translate community-led successes into wider social impact.

UNGA80: Dialogues for a Sustainable and Inclusive Future

Conversation on Peace | Inclusion | Sustainable Development

At the United Nations General Assembly



Meeting with Mr. Timur Zevakhia, Deputy Director-General, and Ms. Ekaterina N. Bakeeva, Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (2025)



With Mr. Bolbongse Vongphaen, Director-General of the Department of ASEAN Affairs, Thailand, in New York (2025).

Participating in the ASEAN SDGs Side Event during UNGA80 at the Permanent Mission of Thailand was a deeply meaningful moment in my journey as a student of international development at the University of Pennsylvania. The dialogue on the Complementarities Initiative 2.0, aligning ASEAN Community Vision 2045 with the UN 2030 Agenda, offered powerful insights into advancing a “Green Agenda for a Green ASEAN.” Sitting in New York and listening to regional leaders reminded me of my fieldwork in Thailand in 2019, where I witnessed how community-driven initiatives can translate global goals into local action. This experience reaffirmed my commitment to building cross-country collaborations that uplift youth, strengthen sustainable development pathways, and bridge India, Thailand, and the wider ASEAN region through shared purpose and collective progress.



Participating in the UNGA80 High-Level Week was an inspiring opportunity to engage with global leaders and diplomats committed to peace, inclusion, and sustainable development. A meaningful highlight was my conversation with Dr. Prince Ero Ibhafidon, where we explored potential collaboration on my upcoming project in Africa. These interactions strengthened my belief in the power of global partnerships to drive social change and deepen my commitment to development work that uplifts communities across continents.





Attending the UNGA80 High-Level Week in New York was a profound experience that broadened my understanding of global cooperation and the responsibilities of emerging development professionals. Engaging with diplomats, educators, and innovators reaffirmed the importance of collective action in addressing global challenges. A significant moment was my discussion with Dr. Prince Ero Ibhafidon, where we explored possibilities for collaboration on my upcoming Africa-focused project, an exchange that reminded me of how shared vision can spark real community transformation. Every conversation throughout the week strengthened my belief in inclusive leadership and inspired me to contribute more intentionally to building a world rooted in equity, dignity, and opportunity for all

**With Dr. Prince Ero Ibhafidon
at UNGA80, New York City**

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE 12 AT UNGA80, NEW YORK CITY

Participating in the 12th International Youth Conference (IYC12) alongside UNGA80 in New York City was a powerful moment in my journey as an international development professional and graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania. The conference brought together youth leaders, policymakers, and global practitioners united by a shared commitment to building inclusive, sustainable futures. One of the most impactful moments was my conversation with Konstantinos Papadakis, Principal Social Affairs Officer at UN DESA, where we reflected on the vital role of youth in driving sustainable development and the urgent need to expand digital learning, equitable access to education, and meaningful youth empowerment initiatives. The experience reinforced my belief that young voices must not only be heard but systematically integrated into global decision-making processes to advance the Sustainable Development Goals and shape a more just and resilient world.



International Youth Conference (IYC12)
New York City 2025



With Ali Mustafa is the Founder,
International Youth Conference



With Konstantinos Papadakis,
Principal Social Affairs Officer, UN
DESA, New York City (2025)



BECOMING MY BEST SELF

at Penn

Being part of the University of Pennsylvania an Ivy League campus shaped by brilliance, diversity, and 290,000+ global alumni has been the most transformative chapter of my journey. From my first days as an international student from rural Bihar to guiding prospective applicants as a student worker in the Office of Admissions, every moment has deepened my sense of purpose.

Field during the 269th Commencement, watching seniors walk proudly across the stage, I felt a powerful surge of hope: a reminder that resilience, sacrifice, and community shape every Penn story. Inspired by leaders who once walked these same paths—from Elizabeth Banks to global icons like Sundar Pichai, Elon Musk, and Nobel Laureates—I carry forward the belief that dreams built here can impact the world.

My Wharton coursework, my Penn GSE classes filled with students from nine nationalities, and discussions on culture, power, and education have expanded my thinking in ways I never imagined. The warmth of professors who bring tea to class, the support of mentors who guide me through graduate life, and the rich resources research, journals, entrepreneurship platforms have made Penn feel like both a challenge and a home.

I am still 8,000 miles from home, navigating struggles and breakthroughs, but I am here with blessings, support, and determination, working toward the moment when I, too will walk that stage as a first-generation international graduate from Bihar, carrying not just a degree but the stories and hopes of everyone who believed in me.



PROJECTS THAT SHAPE COMMUNITIES AND FUTURES

DESIGNING EQUITABLE, SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS THROUGH RESEARCH, COLLABORATION, AND LEADERSHIP.



MANNA PROJECT INTERNATIONAL

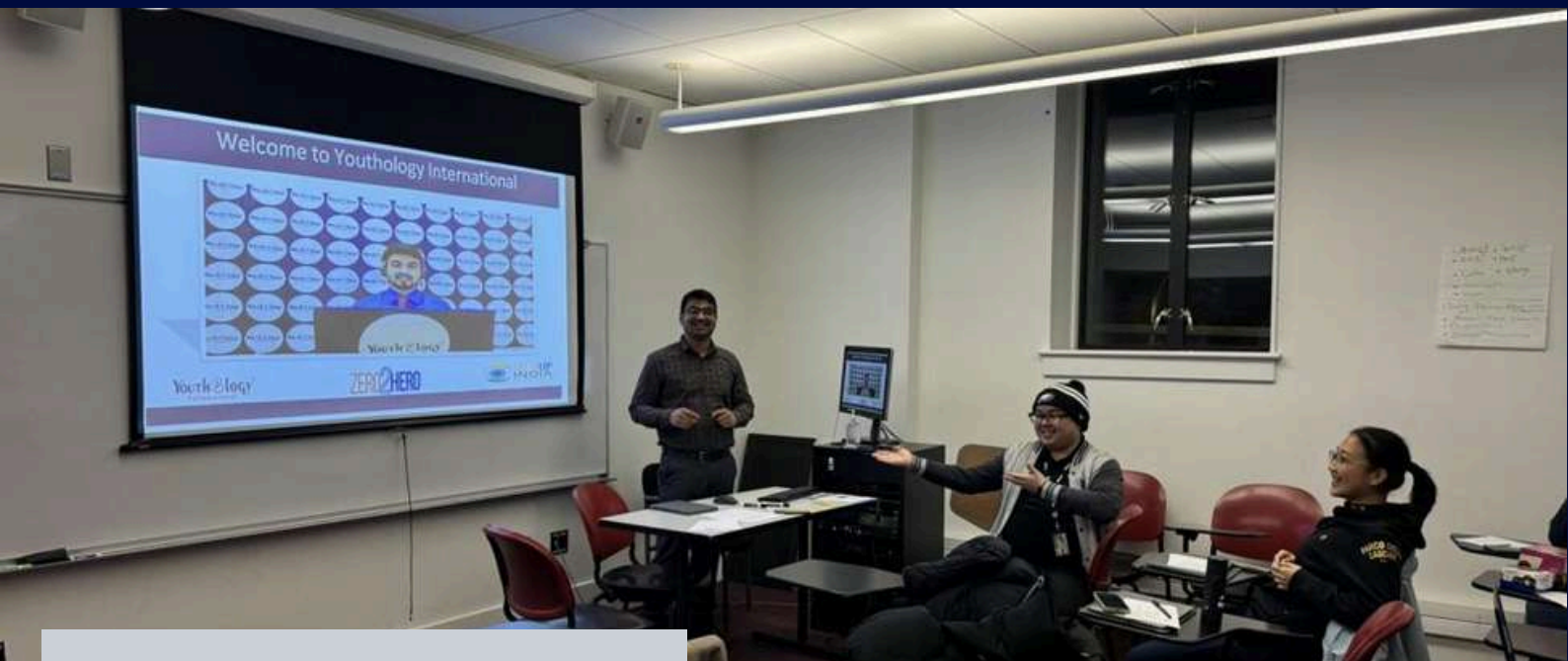
BUILDING RESILIENCE: EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES IN FRAGILE AND CRISIS-AFFECTED ENVIRONMENTS

Our project, “Building Resilience: Education Opportunities in Fragile and Crisis-Affected Environments,” was selected as one of six global finalists a recognition that reflects months of rigorous research, strategic planning, and collaborative innovation. Focused on strengthening education systems in Africa, particularly Nigeria, the initiative proposes a five-year intervention beginning in January 2025, supported by a projected budget of 30 million euros. During the presentation, our team had the privilege of engaging with experts from more than 20 countries, refining our approach through diverse perspectives and shared experiences across five different regions. This project aims to deliver sustainable educational systems, reinforce community resilience, and expand opportunities for children affected by instability. Backed by the guidance of professors, program coordinators, and peers at the University of Pennsylvania, we are now preparing to partner with international NGOs, local organizations, and government agencies to bring this transformative vision into reality.

As part of a consulting team, I contributed to a strategic analysis for Manna Project International, a nonprofit in rural Ecuador working to break cycles of poverty through community-led development. Our assessment revealed that volunteer recruitment and retention challenges stemmed not only from geographic remoteness but also from limited university partnerships and gaps in organizational learning. By reframing Manna’s strengths its mission, DEI values, and immersive field experiences we developed practical recommendations to strengthen recruitment pipelines, enhance knowledge-sharing systems, and build a more sustainable volunteer model that supports the organization’s long-term impact.



YOUTHOLGY INTERNATIONAL PROJECT PRESENTATION



DURING MY PRESENTATION OF THE YOUTHOLOGY INTERNATIONAL PROJECT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHOWCASE HOW YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES CAN TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, AND SOCIAL INNOVATION. I HIGHLIGHTED THE PROJECT'S IMPACT ACROSS MULTIPLE REGIONS OF INDIA, DEMONSTRATING MEASURABLE OUTCOMES IN SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT, GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP, AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION. THE SESSION ALSO EMPHASIZED YOUTHOLOGY'S COLLABORATIVE MODEL—BRIDGING STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND SOCIAL SECTOR PRACTITIONERS ACROSS BORDERS—AND OUTLINED ITS VISION FOR GLOBAL EXPANSION. ENGAGING WITH PENN FACULTY AND PEERS PROVIDED VALUABLE PERSPECTIVES THAT STRENGTHENED THE PROJECT'S FUTURE DIRECTION AND REINFORCED THE IMPORTANCE OF INVESTING IN YOUNG CHANGEMAKERS AS CATALYSTS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, USA



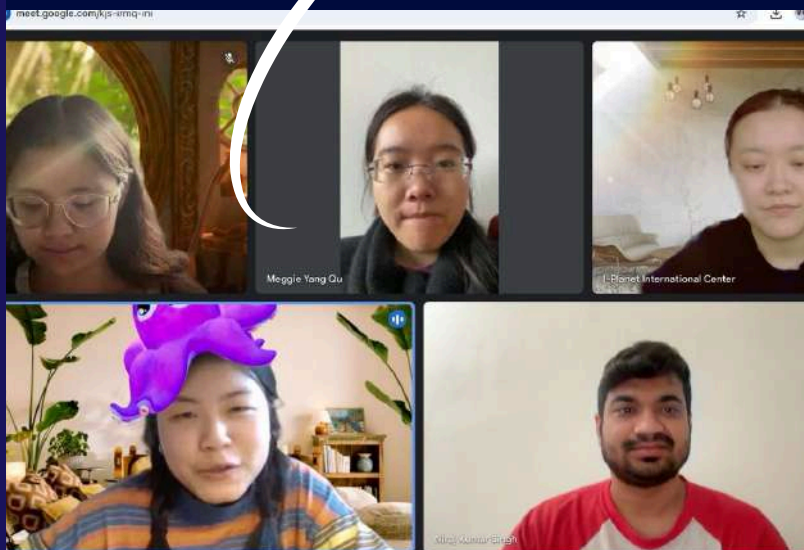
Building Connections Across Borders



Throughout his journey at the University of Pennsylvania, Mr. Niraj Kumar Singh actively sought opportunities to connect with scholars, youth leaders, and global communities. From participating in cross-cultural dialogues to mentoring peers in virtual learning spaces, each interaction deepened his understanding of collaboration and strengthened his commitment to inclusive, community-driven education.



These engagements also opened doors to academic recognition, including the acceptance of his research at prestigious forums such as the Ethnography in Education Research Forum at Penn GSE and the Anthropology and Education Conference at Teachers College, Columbia University. Through these platforms, he amplified the voices of rural and marginalized youth, demonstrating the power of meaningful connections to inspire global learning and social change.



THE MANY HATS I WEAR AT PENN



I would like to sincerely thank you for guiding me through the admissions process. Your support helped me begin this life-changing journey at Penn GSE. I am truly grateful.



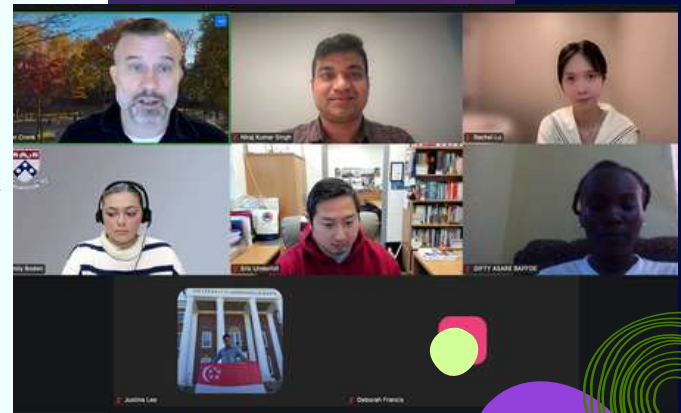
Jason Cronk
Director, Recruitment & Financial Aid
The University of Pennsylvania

Niraj has been a tremendous help to our team as an Admissions Ambassador for the past two years. I know him to be highly motivated and conscientious, and always willing to go the extra mile. For example, without prompting, he took initiative and introduced my team to recruiting opportunities in India that resulted in valuable connections. Niraj is one of the most industrious and diligent students I have met, and I would gladly recommend him to your organization.

THE MANY HATS I WEAR AT PENN



Niraj Kumar Singh contributed to Penn GSE’s Office of Admissions by supporting prospective students throughout the application journey. His role involved answering admission-related questions, guiding applicants on scholarships, financial documents, and program requirements, and representing Penn GSE in virtual information sessions, open houses, and campus tours. Niraj also shared his academic experience to help applicants make informed decisions. He engaged with 1,000+ prospective students from 40+ countries, strengthening global outreach and enhancing the applicant experience for diverse international audiences.



Admission Ambassador Penn GSE (Virtual Engagement)

As an Admission Ambassador at Penn GSE, I support prospective students during virtual chats by answering questions, sharing my experience in the IEDP program, and guiding them through the application process. This role allows me to help future educators and leaders learn more about Penn GSE and feel confident as they take the next step toward their graduate journey.



THE MANY HATS I WEAR AT PENN



ACCELERATED BACHELOR'S TO MASTER'S APPLICANTS | PENN GSE

In my role supporting applicants to Penn GSE's Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's program, I provide clear guidance to prospective students as they navigate one of the school's most competitive academic pathways. I assist them in understanding program requirements, clarifying application components, and preparing strong submissions that reflect their academic potential and professional goals. Through conversations, resource sharing, and individualized support, I help students make informed decisions about their educational trajectory while ensuring they feel confident, welcomed, and well-prepared throughout the application process.





BEYOND CLASSROOMS

Living the Penn Experience

A tapestry of moments that reflect learning, culture, and community.



1

FRIENDSGIVING AT PENN

At Gautam College House, our Friendsgiving dinner brought together students from over ten countries. Sharing laughter, stories, and dishes from around the world, we celebrated gratitude and cultural harmony. That evening proved that friendship transcends geography; kindness and community can turn any city into home.



2

INDEPENDENCE DAY IN PHILADELPHIA

Arriving in the United States on India's Independence Day was deeply symbolic. On August 15, 2024, I joined fellow Indian students and community members at Philadelphia City Hall to celebrate freedom far from home. The event, attended by the Deputy Director of the Indian Embassy in New York, featured the national anthem, traditional food, and cultural unity marking my first day at Penn with pride and belonging.





3

TISS ALUMNI MEET AT PENN

On November 2, 2024, the University of Pennsylvania hosted a vibrant TISSian Meet with Prof. Bipin Jojo, Dean of Social Work, TISS Mumbai. Alumni from across the U.S. reflected on India’s evolving social sector and the role of collaboration in global education. As a host and proud TISS alumnus, I felt immense gratitude for the opportunity to bring together shared values of service, scholarship, and social change.

4

THANKSGIVING IN DELAWARE

Joining fellow students and professionals for a Thanksgiving dinner in Delaware was a moment of warmth and cultural exchange. Over twenty dishes and spirited games reminded us that gratitude and togetherness transcend traditions. It was more than a meal, it was an experience in cultural empathy and shared humanity.



5

PLANTING HOPE

A magazine is a periodical publication, which can either be printed or published electronically. It is issued regularly, typically every week or month, and contains a variety of content. This can include articles, stories, photographs, and advertisements.



6

HOLIDAY SPIRIT AT PENN GSE

The Friday Pals Holiday Party lit up the campus with celebration and inclusion. Professors served food and gifts, creating a sense of unity among graduate students from around the world. As music and laughter filled the hall, I felt proud to be part of a community where joy, learning, and service intertwine.

7

GLOBAL CLASSROOMS

Joining fellow students and professionals for a Thanksgiving dinner in Delaware was a moment of warmth and cultural exchange. Over twenty dishes and spirited games reminded us that gratitude and togetherness transcend traditions. It was more than a meal; it was an experience in cultural empathy and shared humanity.



8

HALLOWEEN AT PENN GSE

On October 31, 2025, the campus came alive with costumes, music, and laughter at the Penn GSE Halloween Dance Party. For many of us far from home, it was a night of belonging and cultural exchange. Beneath the lights and music, I felt the true spirit of Penn—community, inclusion, and shared happiness beyond borders.



9 IEDP FIRST & SECOND YEAR MIXER AT PENN GSE — FALL 2024

IEDP students from both the first and second years came together for our community mixer, a wonderful opportunity to meet peers, exchange experiences, and strengthen connections across the cohort. The event celebrated collaboration, support, and the shared mission of international educational development at Penn GSE.



10 ANNUAL IEDP LUNCHEON AT DR. WAGNER'S HOME

As part of American academic culture, many professors host lunches at their homes to offer students home-cooked food, one-to-one mentorship, and opportunities for informal connection. I participated in the annual IEDP Luncheon at Dr. Wagner's home on Sunday, October 13th. It was a wonderful gathering with classmates and faculty. The event created a warm, welcoming space to connect, share experiences, and celebrate our IEDP community.



11 LEARNING EQUALITY: A CLASSROOM LESSON

During class, our professor facilitated a powerful lesson on equality, highlighting the importance of inclusion, respect, and equal opportunities for all learners. Through discussion and reflection, we explored how educational spaces can challenge discrimination and promote fairness, ensuring every student's voice is valued.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & MENTORSHIP ACROSS INDIA



Guna, Madhya Pradesh, India
M87p+r6p, Bhagat Singh Colony, Guna, Madhya Pradesh 473001, India
Lat 24.664308° Long 77.33559°
12/07/2025 03:05 PM GMT +05:30



Evening School

The Evening School stands as a grassroots learning space designed to bridge educational gaps for marginalized children. Established as a free community center, it currently provides structured academic support to 31 students who lack access to private tuition or learning resources. The initiative ensures that children from low-income households receive daily guidance in foundational subjects, homework assistance, and value-based learning. Beyond academics, the center fosters confidence, discipline, and curiosity—helping students build a stronger pathway toward continued schooling and long-term success.



Youth Mentorship

The Youth Mentorship initiative offers a transformative platform for 200 young individuals, guiding them through academic, personal, and early career development. Through one-on-one mentoring, workshops, and digital engagement, the program equips youth with essential 21st-century skills, including communication, leadership, problem-solving, and social responsibility. Many participants come from rural and semi-urban regions where mentorship opportunities are scarce. This initiative strengthens their aspirations, expands their worldview, and empowers them to pursue higher education and meaningful careers.



Community Education Support Project

The Community Education Support Project is a large-scale, multi-state initiative that has directly supported over 3,400 individuals through educational outreach, awareness campaigns, parental engagement sessions, and youth-led interventions. The program focuses on improving school readiness, strengthening community-school relationships, and enhancing learning environments in underserved regions. By mobilizing local volunteers, integrating creative learning tools, and promoting child rights and digital literacy, the project cultivates strong community participation and fosters long-term educational improvements across rural and tribal communities.

School-ICDS Engagement Initiative

During his M.S.Ed. coursework at Penn GSE, he undertook an academic project in India and identified a critical lack of academic support for public-school children. He launched a School-ICDS Engagement Initiative and, without funding, established an evening learning center to support underserved learners. He directly engaged with 50 ICDS centers, benefiting over 800 children through early learning and community-based activities. In addition, he collaborated with educators and youth networks across ten Indian states to strengthen resource-sharing and improve community learning systems.



American Education Mentorship Initiative

The American Education Mentorship Initiative provides academic guidance to 50 students aspiring to pursue higher education opportunities in the United States. Through personalized advising, essay support, program awareness sessions, and one-on-one consultations, the initiative demystifies the U.S. education system for first-generation, rural, and marginalized learners. By sharing insights from his own academic journey at the University of Pennsylvania, he helps students navigate applications, understand academic expectations, and build confidence to compete globally. The initiative has inspired many young learners to envision international education as an accessible and achievable goal.



GRASSROOTS ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Mentoring Future Leaders Across India

Over 350+ hours of mentoring management and engineering students from UPES has strengthened my belief in the power of guided learning. Supporting these young leaders as they navigate social-sector programs has been both fulfilling and transformative, especially as I watch them step confidently into global opportunities with purpose, compassion, and clarity.

Social Internship Program : Raising Awareness Nationwide

Mentoring interns placed across five Indian states, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi allowed me to help young change-makers create meaningful awareness around World Child Labour Day. Their visits to Anganwadi centers, interactions with community members, and outreach to nearly 100 people demonstrate how youth leadership can ignite real, grassroots-level change.





Art Therapy for Healing and Hope

Penn GSE | Niraj Kumar Singh

Even while studying in the United States, my mission continues through the students I mentor in India. A recent art therapy session in Dulhera, Meerut, invited children to reflect on their fears and dreams through creative expression. This initiative, part of a larger program spanning ten regions, aimed to create emotionally safe learning spaces in government schools, affirming that education is as much about healing as it is about acquiring knowledge.



Educating Minds, Greening Futures

In Bharatpur, Rajasthan, a student-led plantation drive brought together children, teachers, and community leaders to plant neem, mango, peepal, and flowering saplings each bearing the name of a child. Through environmental activities, eco-friendly rewards, and hands-on learning, students embraced sustainability while deepening their connection to the natural world.



Empowering India's Future One Anganwadi at a Time

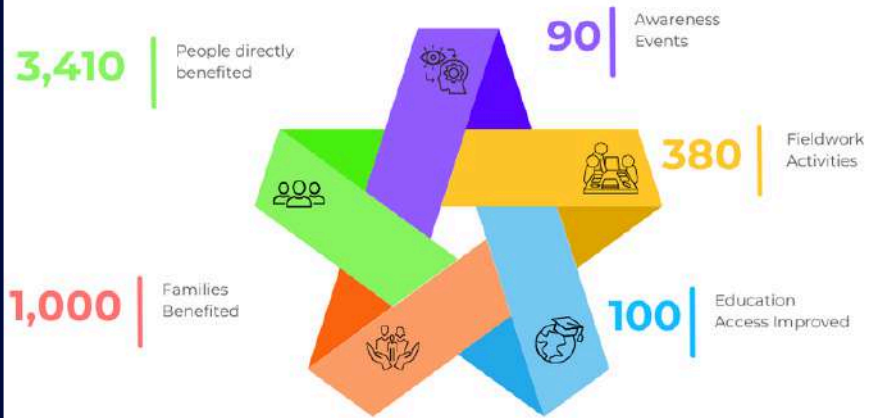
Through my self-initiated Social Intention Program, I continue supporting early childhood education across India. This week, my mentee visited an Anganwadi in Kerala to observe learning environments, identify challenges, and explore ways to improve engagement and attendance. Even from Philadelphia, I remain committed to uplifting rural and tribal children by strengthening early childhood systems and creating environments that restore dignity, spark curiosity, and inspire lifelong learning.



TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

During the M.S.Ed. program, I remained deeply connected to India's grassroots realities, leading a series of education-focused, child-centered, and community development initiatives across multiple states. Through coordinated fieldwork, awareness events, school and Anganwadi visits, digital campaigns, and youth engagement programs, these efforts reached over 3,400 individuals, supported 1,000 families, and strengthened learning environments in underserved communities

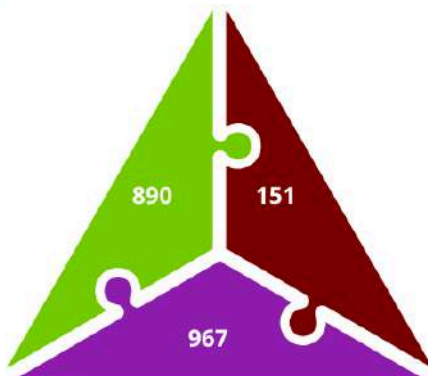
Total Impact at a Glance



TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT



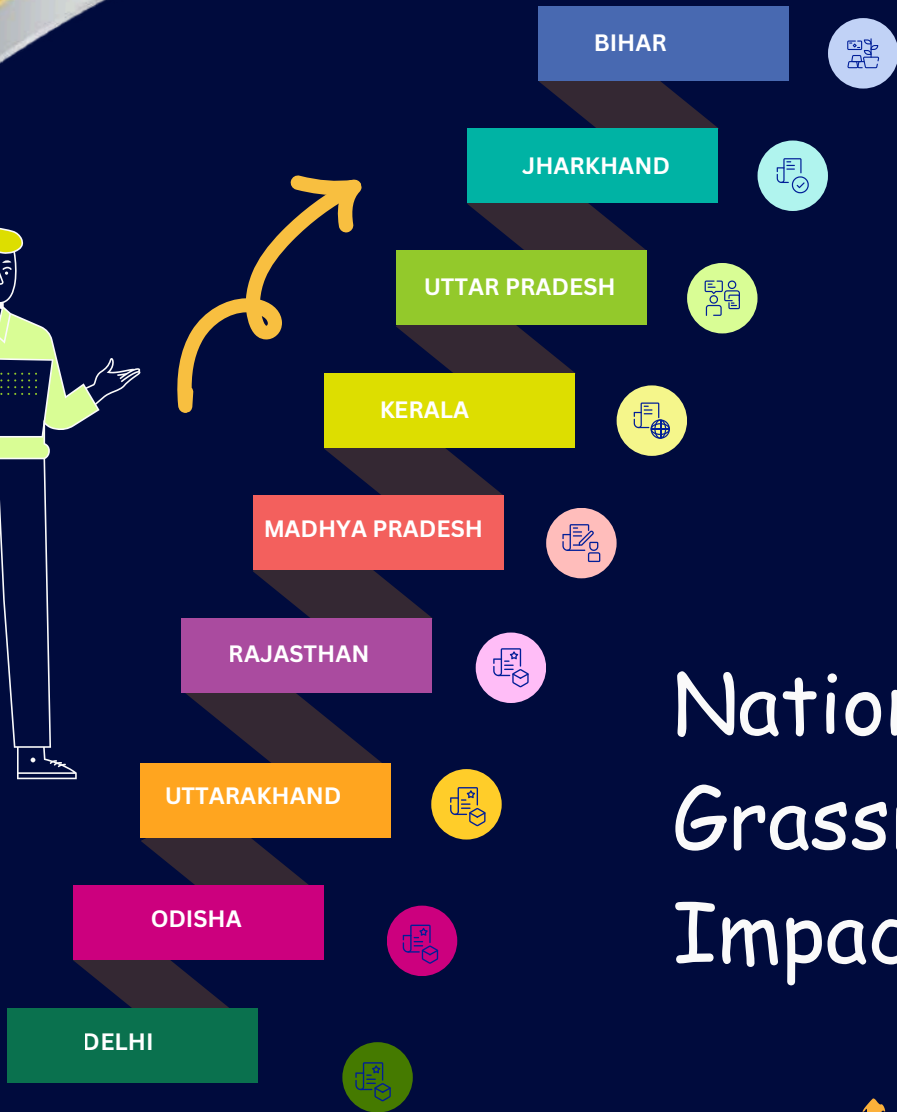
Impact Achieved Through Fieldwork



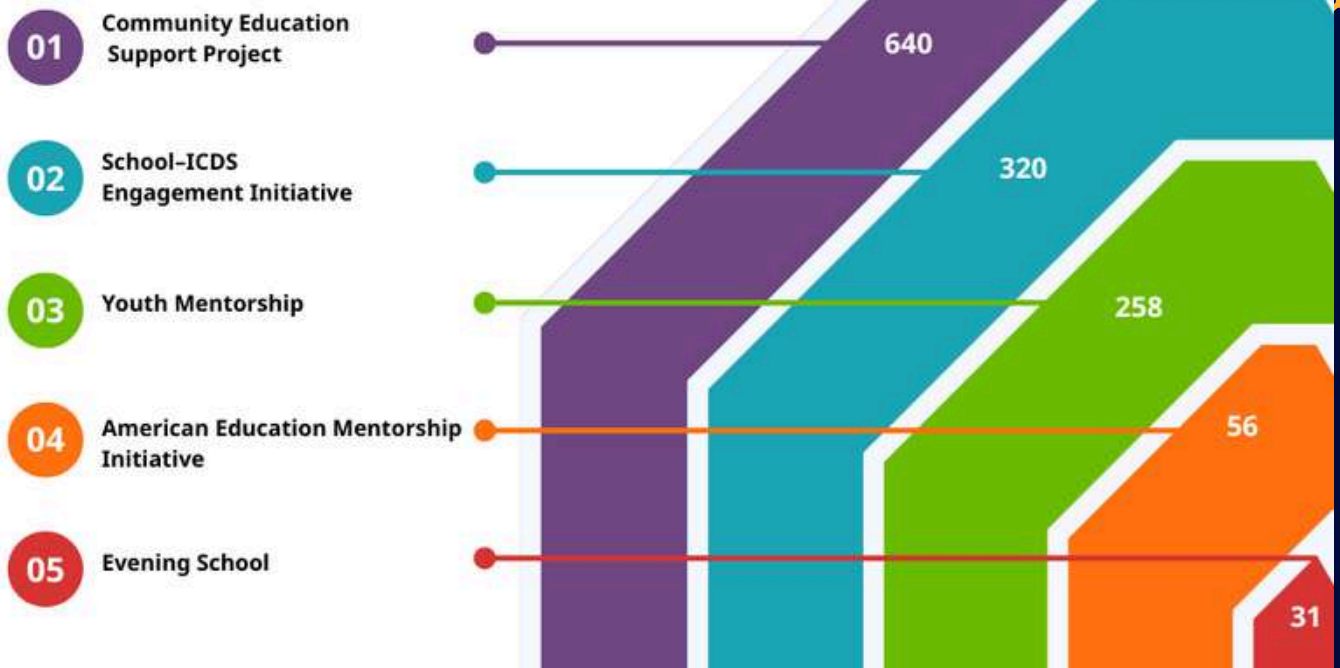
Youth Engagement Strengthened

Digital Literacy Enhanced

Child Rights Awareness



Nationwide Grassroots Impact



Student Experience

Student life is about more than just study; it's about community, collegiality, and purpose. Here, what you learn will make a difference in the world beyond the classroom and your growth—intellectual, personal, and professional—will be supported every step along the way.

Hear from our students and alumni about how they discovered belonging, support, and lifelong connections within the Penn GSE community.

"As a first-generation international student, becoming part of the Penn community has been truly empowering. Faculty, peers, and resources have been instrumental in supporting my academic growth and personal development."

NIRAJ KUMAR SINGH, CURRENT STUDENT
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, M.S.ED.



"The support of this community has been so genuine and game-changing for me. I feel so welcomed and embraced for my unique approach to my doctorate as a



"That constant exchange of ideas, that community of minds challenging and uplifting each other, has been one of the most transformative aspects of these two years. I came for the education—but I'm leaving most grateful for the people."

LOREA PETERSON REDONDO, DUAL-DEGREE, M.B.A.
AND EDUCATION POLICY, M.S.ED., 2025



A SCHOLAR-LEADER SHAPING EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Discover Purpose, Create Impact.

Mr. Niraj Kumar Singh's academic and professional journey reflects a strong commitment to linking research with real-world impact. Through his work at the University of Pennsylvania, he contributed to youth policy, digital literacy, and educational equity, presenting his findings at leading conferences including CIES, the Ethnography in Education Research Forum, and Columbia University's Anthropology & Education Conference. His leadership roles at Penn and prestigious international fellowships across Europe and Asia further strengthened his ability to translate scholarly insight into meaningful social change, positioning him as an emerging scholar-practitioner dedicated to inclusive development.



The Penn GSE Student Experience Publication (2025) featured his journey from Bihar to Penn, recognizing him as a first-generation international scholar.



SOCIAL MEDIA POST BY



University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education

13,898 followers

1mo · 🌐

International Educational Development student **Niraj Kumar Singh** recently contributed to two major international events in New York City: the 5th Biennial Conference on Anthropology and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, and the Youth Event Convened by the Chair of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Third Committee at the United Nations Headquarters.

At Columbia University, Niraj presented his research paper exploring how Indigenous youth in India are transforming education by merging traditional wisdom with modern technologies.

In the same week, Niraj represented India as a Delegate at the UNGA Third Committee Youth Event, held at the United Nations Headquarters under the theme "Building Solutions Together for an Inclusive Future". The event provided a platform for dialogue among youth advocates, UN agencies, and diplomats to discuss education, social development, and digital equity, with a particular focus on youth from Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States.



You and 60 others

3 comments · 2 reposts

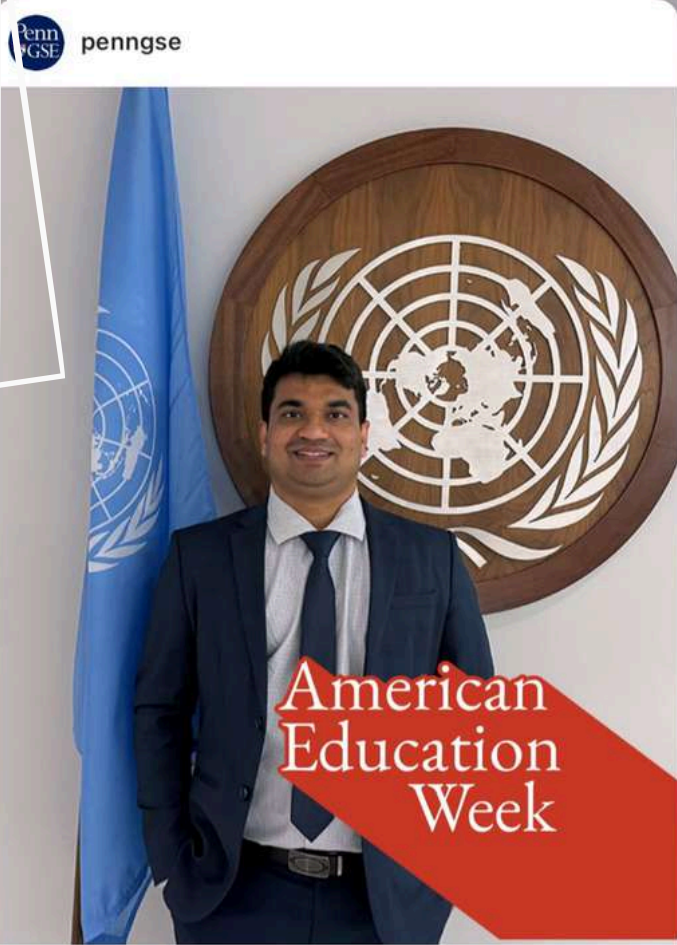
PENN GSE



OFFICIAL INSTAGRAM POST

BY

PENN GSE



penngse As part of #AmericanEducationWeek, we asked Penn GSE students what inspired them to pursue a care...

जिले के नीरज का कमाल, कोलंबिया यूनिवर्सिटी में करेंगे शोधपत्र प्रस्तुति

सिटीरिपोर्ट/छपरा

सांख्यिकी के लिए गर्व का क्षण है। जिले के पकरी नारोडम गांव के प्रतिभाशाली युवक नीरज कुमार सिंह का शोधपत्र अमेरिका की प्रतिष्ठित कोलंबिया यूनिवर्सिटी, न्यूयॉर्क में प्रस्तुत करने के लिए चयनित हुआ है। नीरज 10 और 11 अक्टूबर 2025 को आयोजित होने वाले 71वें वार्षिक मानवशास्त्र एवं शिक्षा सम्मेलन में अपना शोध प्रस्तुत करेंगे। यह सम्मेलन कोलंबिया यूनिवर्सिटी के प्रसिद्ध मिलर कैम्पस में आयोजित होगा। नीरज फिलाहाल अमेरिका के यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ पेन्सिल्वेनिया (UPenn) से अंतरराष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक

विकास (International Educational Development) विषय में स्नातकोत्तर की पढ़ाई कर रहे हैं। गांव से निकलकर आखी लीग विश्वविद्यालय तक का उनका सफर जिले और बिहार के युवाओं के लिए प्रेरणा का स्रोत बन गया है। सम्मेलन की आयोजन समिति ने नीरज के शोध को खास महत्व देते हुए कहा है कि इसमें उच्च गुण प्रदान वैश्विक शिक्षा और विकास से जुड़े विषयों के लिए अत्यंत प्रासंगिक है। अपनी इस सफलता पर नीरज ने भावुक होकर कहा, यह उपलब्धि केवल मुझे मिले नितंत आर्थिक, सामाजिक और भावनात्मक सहयोग की वजह से संभव हो सकी है। मैं इस सफलता को अपने परिवार, मार्गदर्शकों और बिहार की अपनी समुदाय को समर्पित करता हूँ। नीरज का सफर अब तक कई आयु पढ़ाई से गुजरा है। वे भारत और विदेशों

में युवा सशक्तिकरण, डिजिटल साक्षरता और शैक्षिक सुधारों के क्षेत्र में सक्रिय रहे हैं। वे पहले भी हार्वर्ड यूनिवर्सिटी, एमआईटी और यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ शिकागो जैसे प्रतिष्ठित संस्थानों में अपने शोध प्रस्तुत कर चुके हैं। इसके अलावा वे अब तक 10 देशों में अंतरराष्ट्रीय विकास कर्मियों से जुड़े रहे हैं। साधारण परिवार से आने वाले नीरज के पिता प्र.प्र.द. सिंह के पास एक छोटा सा गीता देवी गुहिया है। ऐसे पृष्ठभूमि से निकलकर वैश्विक मंच पर अपनी जगह बनाना न केवल उनकी व्यक्तिगत उपलब्धि है, बल्कि ग्रामीण बिहार के युवाओं के लिए आशा और हौसले का प्रतीक है। सांख्यिकी के लोग नीरज की इस उपलब्धि पर गर्व महसूस कर रहे हैं और उनकी इस सफलता को जिले की ऐतिहासिक पहचान में एक और सुनहरा अध्याय मन रहे हैं।

सारण के नीरज ने अमेरिका में किया भारत का प्रतिनिधित्व

जागरण संवाददाता, छपरा: सारण जिले के नीरज कुमार सिंह ने अमेरिका के डेनवर में आयोजित काउंसिल आन सोशल वर्क एजुकेशन (सीएसडब्ल्यूई) के 71वें वार्षिक सम्मेलन में भारत का गर्व से प्रतिनिधित्व किया। यह सम्मेलन 23 से 26 अक्टूबर तक शोरेटन डेनवर डाउनटाउन होटल में हुआ, जिसमें विभिन्न देशों के शिक्षाविदों और समाजसेवियों ने भाग लिया। सम्मेलन का मुख्य विषय था "अब कार्य करने का समय है: सोशल वर्क में दिव्यांग न्याय को बढ़ावा देना।" नीरज, जो वर्तमान में यूनिवर्सिटी आफ पेन्सिल्वेनिया में अंतरराष्ट्रीय शैक्षणिक विकास के छात्र हैं, ने शिक्षा के माध्यम से समानता और समावेशन की आवश्यकता पर जोर दिया। उन्होंने दक्षिण और दक्षिण-पूर्व एशिया के 10 देशों में शिक्षा और युवा विकास में सक्रिय भूमिका निभाई है।



नीरज कुमार सिंह सौ. स्वयं

सच्चे ने पहचान के गले



ASK WHAT YOU CAN DO

गांव से संयुक्त राष्ट्र तक: सारण के नीरज ने शिक्षा और प्रेरणा की मिसाल कायम की

छपरा। सारण जिले के पानापुर प्रखंड के छोटे से गांव पकरी नारोडम के नीरज कुमार सिंह ने संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा में भारत का प्रतिनिधित्व कर बिहार का नाम अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर रोशन किया। "Building Solutions Together for an Inclusive Future" कार्यक्रम में उन्होंने सामाजिक विकास और युवाओं की भूमिका पर वैश्विक संवाद में भाग लिया। सरकारी स्कूल से शिक्षा शुरू करने वाले नीरज वर्तमान में अमेरिका की University of Pennsylvania में International Educational Development में स्नातकोत्तर अध्ययन कर रहे हैं। वे ग्रामीण भारत में शिक्षा, समानता और युवाओं के नेतृत्व को सशक्त बनाने के लिए काम कर रहे हैं और अपनी फाहली पीढ़ी के शिक्षार्थियों के रूप में प्रेरक उदाहरण पेश कर रहे हैं। नीरज ने Harvard, Columbia, MIT, University of Chicago और The New School, New York जैसे विश्वविद्यालय विश्वविद्यालयों में अपने शोध और विचार साझा किए हैं। उन्होंने भारत और दक्षिण एशिया के 10 देशों में शिक्षा, युवा विकास और सामाजिक उद्यमिता से जुड़े कार्यक्रम संचालित किए हैं। नीरज को अंतरराष्ट्रीय युवा सामाजिक कार्य पुरस्कार (कंबोडिया, 2019), युवा अंतरराष्ट्रीय सेवा पुरस्कार (2020), राष्ट्रीय गौरव सम्मान (2022) और ओडिशा सरकार से प्रशंसा प्रमाणपत्र (2023) मिल चुका है।

2025-09-26
छपरा (1)

न्यूयॉर्क में नेक्स्ट जेन इंडिया संवाद में करेंगे बिहार का प्रतिनिधित्व नीरज सिंह

सिटीरिपोर्ट/छपरा

सारण जिले के पकरी नारोडम गांव के रहने वाले नीरज कुमार सिंह को भारतीय वणिज्य दूतावास, न्यूयॉर्क द्वारा आयोजित नेक्स्ट जेन इंडिया संवाद में आमंत्रित किया गया है। यह प्रतिष्ठित कार्यक्रम 26 सितम्बर 2025 को वणिज्य दूतावास परिसर में आयोजित होगा। इस संवाद का मुख्य आशय है भारत सरकार के युवा मामले एवं खेल मंत्रालय की सचिव, डॉ. पल्लवी जैन गोविल के साथ युवाओं का प्रत्यक्ष संवाद। नीरज वर्तमान में पेन्सिल्वेनिया विश्वविद्यालय (अमेरिका) में अंतरराष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक विकास विषय में अध्ययनरत हैं। वे प्रथम पीढ़ी के शिक्षार्थी हैं जिन्होंने बचपन से ही शिक्षा के लिए शिका, डिजिटल साक्षरता

2025-10-25
छपरा (2)

शिक्षा में समावेशन पर रखे विचार सारण के नीरज सिंह ने अमेरिका में भारत का किया प्रतिनिधित्व

सिटीरिपोर्ट/छपरा

सारण जिले के पानापुर प्रखंड के पकरी नारोडम गांव के मूल निवासी नीरज कुमार सिंह ने अमेरिका के डेनवर शहर में आयोजित काउंसिल आन सोशल वर्क एजुकेशन (CSWE) के 71वें वार्षिक सम्मेलन में भारत का प्रतिनिधित्व किया। यह सम्मेलन 23 से 26 अक्टूबर 2025 तक शोरेटन डेनवर डाउनटाउन होटल में आयोजित हुआ। नीरज वर्तमान में यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ पेन्सिल्वेनिया (UPenn) से अंतरराष्ट्रीय शैक्षणिक विकास के छात्र हैं।

सम्मेलन का विषय था अब कार्य करने का समय है: सोशल वर्क में दिव्यांग न्याय और दिव्यांग आनंद को बढ़ावा देना। नीरज ने इस अवसर पर शिक्षा में समान अवसर और समावेशन की महत्ता पर अपने विचार साझा किए। एक प्रथम-पीढ़ी के शिक्षार्थी के रूप में ग्रामीण पृष्ठभूमि से निकलकर वैश्विक मंच तक पहुंचे नीरज ने शिक्षा, डिजिटल साक्षरता और युवा नेतृत्व विकास के क्षेत्र में दक्षिण और दक्षिण-पूर्व एशिया के दस देशों में उपलब्धीय कार्य किए हैं। उन्होंने हार्वर्ड, कोलंबिया, एमआईटी और शिकागो यूनिवर्सिटी जैसे प्रतिष्ठित संस्थानों के अंतरराष्ट्रीय कार्यक्रमों में भी भाग लिया है। नीरज ने कहा, "बिहार के एक ग्रामीण विद्यार्थी के रूप में मैं जब अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंच पर खड़ा हूँ, तो अपने साथ उन छात्रों को भी ले जाता हूँ जो मेरे गांव से हैं।"

2025-10-25
छपरा (2)

सारण जिले के नवसल प्रमावित इलाके के रूप में अपनी पहचान बनाने वाले पानापुर के निवासी हैं नीरज शिखा विकास कार्यक्रम के लिए सारण के नीरज का हुआ चयन

सिटीरिपोर्ट/छपरा

सारण जिले के नवसल प्रमावित इलाके के रूप में अपनी पहचान बनाने वाले पानापुर के निवासी हैं नीरज कुमार सिंह। वे नवसल विकास कार्यक्रम के लिए सारण के नीरज का चयन किया गया है। नीरज वर्तमान में अमेरिका में अध्ययनरत हैं।

2025-08-2024
छपरा

नीरज कुमार सिंह को नवसल विकास कार्यक्रम के लिए सारण के नीरज का चयन किया गया है। नीरज वर्तमान में अमेरिका में अध्ययनरत हैं।

**Transforming
Lives:
Testimonials
from Children &
Youth**

**What
They
Say?**



Shagun

"I never knew storytelling could teach so much. Now I want to read more and maybe write my own story one day!"

★★★★★



Rekha

"I want to go back to school again. Talking with you made me feel like my dream still matters."

★★★★★



Internship under guider of Niraj Kumar Singh has been an incredibly eye-opening and transformative journey. From conducting field surveys and organizing awareness events to interacting with children in schools and handling digital tasks, every activity taught me something new—about society, about people, and about myself.



AAKANSHI
B.COM 2ND YEAR



★★★★★
I learned that small efforts, when made with sincerity and heart, can create meaningful impact. The smiles on children's faces, the engagement of community members, and the stories I heard have left a lasting impression on me. These experiences have not only developed my communication and organizational skills but also deepened my empathy, patience, and sense of social responsibility.

50

MAITRI, B.Tech 2nd Year

ONE TRANSFORMATIVE YEAR

Through the Lens





GALLERY



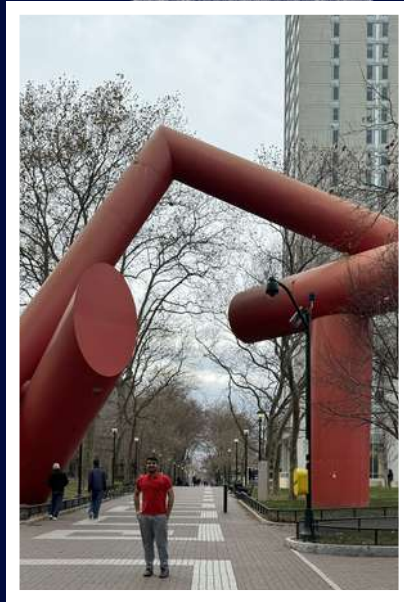


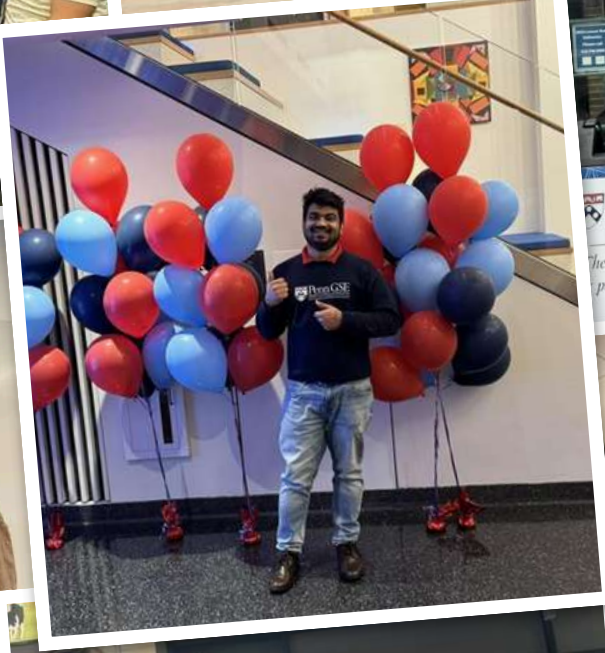


















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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Dear Donors, Professors, Mentors, Advisors, Penn Alumni, BJANA Community, and Friends,

As I complete my year at Penn, my heart is filled with deep gratitude. This milestone is not mine alone; it reflects the collective strength, support, guidance, and blessings of so many remarkable people across the world who stood by me.

To my professors at the University of Pennsylvania, thank you for shaping my academic and personal growth with your wisdom, compassion, and high expectations. Your classes challenged me to think critically, your mentorship pushed me to expand my possibilities, and your encouragement gave me the confidence to pursue ambitious goals. Every conversation, assignment, and feedback session helped me grow into a better scholar and a more reflective practitioner. I am truly grateful for your dedication, kindness, and belief in my potential.

To my professors from TISS and RGNIYD, you laid the foundation for the values I carry today: service, justice, humility, and commitment to community. Every lesson from those classrooms has guided me on this global path and kept me grounded in purpose.

To my mentors and advisors, thank you for your patience, guidance, and unwavering support. You helped me overcome challenges, navigate unfamiliar spaces, and remain focused on my goals. To the Penn Alumni community, thank you for your mentorship and for being a family away from home. You guided me in academics, career planning, networking, and adjusting to life in the U.S.

To my Penn GSE classmates, friends, and staff, thank you for creating a warm and supportive home in Philadelphia. Your kindness and collaboration made this journey truly meaningful. A special thank you to EducationUSA for guiding me through the U.S. higher education process with patience and clarity, and to the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi for granting my student visa and enabling this opportunity. I am also deeply grateful to BJANA and the Bihar–Jharkhand diaspora community for embracing me with pride and reminding me of my roots. To my friends across India, the U.S., and beyond, thank you for your motivation, late-night conversations, and constant support.

And to the more than 200 people who supported me—teachers, family friends, youth mentors, students, seniors, and well-wishers—thank you for your blessings, prayers, and faith in my journey. From a small village in Saran, Bihar, to completing a degree at the University of Pennsylvania, this journey is a testament to community, love, and collective strength. I deeply acknowledge the role each of you played in every step I took.

Thank you for believing in me, supporting me, and walking with me. I carry your blessings with me into the next chapter of my life, learning, and service.

With heartfelt gratitude and respect,



Niraj Kumar Singh

Master's in International Educational Development

University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA



January							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
1					1	2	3 4
2	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
3	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
4	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
5	26	27	28	29	30	31	

February							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
5							1
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8	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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March							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
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11	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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14	30	31					

April							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
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May							
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June							
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27	29	30					

July							
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31	27	28	29	30	31		

August							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
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32	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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36	31						

September							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
36		1	2	3	4	5	6
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October							
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40				1	2	3	4
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43	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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November							
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44							1
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December							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
49		1	2	3	4	5	6
50	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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52	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
53	28	29	30	31			



THANK YOU

JOIN THE JOURNEY OF GLOBAL LEARNING AND SOCIAL IMPACT

Niraj Kumar Singh

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