

# SOUTH ASIAN ENGAGEMENT MAGAZINE



PENN  
GSE

Presented by  
**NIRAJ KUMAR SINGH**





*"From rural beginnings to global platforms, youth empowerment remains my lifelong commitment."*

# NIRAJ KUMAR SINGH

## BRIEF PROFILE



Aspiring Global Education Leader | University of Pennsylvania | 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

# PREFACE



This magazine documents the professional journey of Niraj Kumar Singh, an education and social impact leader whose work spans eight countries and more than a decade of commitment to equity, access, and student success. From implementing large-scale community development initiatives across India to supporting admissions and enrollment processes at the University of Pennsylvania, his career reflects a unique blend of grassroots engagement and institutional expertise. Grounded in his Master's in International Educational Development, his work bridges global policy perspectives with practical, student-centered implementation.

The activities presented in this publication highlight cross-border collaborations in education, youth leadership, digital inclusion, and public health. Across diverse cultural and institutional settings, the focus has remained consistent: strengthening outreach systems, expanding access for underserved learners, enhancing enrollment pathways, and building sustainable program models. Each country engagement represents not only measurable impact, but also learning, partnership, and a deep respect for local communities and global interconnectedness.

This magazine serves as both reflection and vision. It captures milestones, partnerships, and outcomes, while also pointing toward a continued commitment to expanding educational opportunity within the U.S. education and nonprofit ecosystem. At its core, this work is guided by a simple belief—that education, when delivered with integrity and inclusion, becomes a powerful force for mobility, empowerment, and lasting social change.



# Table Of CONTENT

- 01** Bangladesh - Advancing Inclusive Development and Global Engagement
- 03** Cambodia - Leadership, Community & Sustainability
- 05** Laos - Youth Leadership and Community Engagement
- 07** Malaysia - Youth Mentorship and Educational Engagement
- 09** Myanmar - Social Work Development
- 11** Sri Lanka - Community Rebuilding and Youth Empowerment
- 14** Thailand - Human Rights, Health Advocacy & Regional Collaboration
- 16** Vietnam - Education, Youth Empowerment
- 18** Graphical Representation of Impact at a Glance
- 19** Acknowledgment
- 20** Visual Chronicle of Impact

# BANGLADESH – ADVANCING INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

## *Regional Collaboration*

In July 2019, Niraj Kumar Singh visited the headquarters of Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) in Dhaka, Bangladesh. During this engagement, he had the opportunity to interact with regional development leaders and practitioners working toward rural transformation and sustainable development across Asia and the Pacific. His visit symbolized a growing commitment to cross-country collaboration in strengthening community institutions, rural livelihoods, and inclusive development frameworks.





# Engagement & Impact

At the headquarters of the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) in Dhaka, Niraj Kumar Singh was honored with an award by Mr. Tevita G. Boseiwaqa Taginavulau, Director General of CIRDAP, in recognition of his contributions to youth engagement, education, and social development. During the same visit, he participated in the BER International Conference for Economists 2019 at the University of Dhaka, held on July 6–7, 2019, under the theme “Inclusive Growth for Sustainable Development,” engaging with scholars and policymakers on equitable development strategies.

He also visited a Disability Support and Assistive Technology Center in Bangladesh to understand inclusive rehabilitation practices, assistive device production, and community-based support systems for persons with disabilities. The field engagement strengthened his perspective on accessibility, rights-based inclusion, and sustainable community empowerment.



# CAMBODIA – LEADERSHIP, COMMUNITY & SUSTAINABILITY

A Youth Development Training was organized and facilitated in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, engaging 20 young leaders in an interactive leadership-building program. The session focused on strengthening confidence, teamwork, and youth participation in local development initiatives, creating a supportive platform for young people to exchange ideas and develop practical community strategies.



Community engagement efforts also included meetings with local non-profit leaders and self-help group members to discuss priorities such as microfinance access, education expansion, and sustainable income-generation opportunities. These discussions encouraged local voices to identify challenges and collaboratively design community-driven solutions for improved livelihoods and financial inclusion.





# Global Partnerships

In addition, a Community Awareness Training was conducted in partnership with United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and local youth organizations, focusing on governance awareness, civic participation, and youth-led development. The program incorporated participatory planning exercises, strategy development sessions, and open dialogue to strengthen transparency and grassroots leadership. A dedicated youth mentorship session further guided participants on higher education pathways, scholarship opportunities, and career planning, encouraging long-term academic and professional growth.

Niraj Kumar Singh also participated in an international Education and Environment Conference in Phnom Penh, which brought together representatives from 25 countries to deliberate on sustainable development, climate awareness, and integrating environmental responsibility into education systems. Additionally, he engaged in an international consultation meeting alongside delegates from the Netherlands and other global partners, exchanging cross-country perspectives on governance, inclusive policy engagement, and sustainable community-based development. Collectively, these initiatives reflected a comprehensive approach to youth empowerment, environmental responsibility, institutional collaboration, and long-term social impact in Cambodia.



# Laos – Youth Leadership and Community Engagement



In Vientiane, Laos, a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) activity was conducted with youth participants to identify community challenges, local resources, and development priorities. Through interactive mapping exercises and group discussions, participants analyzed social issues and collaboratively proposed solutions.

A Youth Leadership Training program was also organized in Vientiane, focusing on leadership development, digital awareness, and responsible technology use. Through structured discussions and interactive exercises, participants explored communication skills, critical thinking, teamwork, and social responsibility. The training motivated young individuals to become proactive leaders and positive role models within their schools and communities.

Further engagement included a leadership interaction at a Technical and Vocational College under the Ministry of Education and Sports in Vientiane. The session emphasized career pathways, vocational skills development, and higher education opportunities. Students actively participated in discussions on professional growth and sustainable livelihood building, highlighting the importance of technical education in strengthening economic independence and community contribution. An Education Awareness Rally and Social Work Camp were also organized in Vientiane, bringing together youth volunteers to promote quality education, community participation, and social responsibility. The rally encouraged young people to advocate for inclusive learning and leadership, while the camp engaged 25 youth volunteers in creative learning activities, awareness initiatives, and community-based projects. Together, these efforts strengthened youth voices, cross-cultural understanding, and active citizenship in urban communities across Laos.



## YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Beyond structured training programs, the initiatives in Laos emphasized experiential learning and collaborative engagement. Youth participants were encouraged to take ownership of discussions, share personal perspectives, and contribute ideas that reflected local realities. This participatory approach nurtured confidence, strengthened peer learning, and reinforced the value of inclusive dialogue in community development processes.

Collectively, the engagements in Vientiane demonstrated a holistic model of youth empowerment—integrating leadership development, technical education awareness, civic participation, and grassroots planning. By fostering critical thinking, teamwork, and social responsibility, these initiatives contributed to building a generation of informed, skilled, and community-oriented young leaders committed to sustainable development.



# MALAYSIA — YOUTH MENTORSHIP AND EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

In Malaysia, youth engagement and mentorship formed the foundation of the outreach initiatives. Interactive sessions were conducted focusing on confidence building, teamwork, and personal development. Through motivational conversations and informal discussions, students were encouraged to express their aspirations, strengthen communication skills, and develop leadership qualities within a supportive and inclusive environment.



---

# YOUTH MENTORSHIP & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Individual and small-group academic mentorship sessions were also organized to guide students in study strategies, goal setting, and career planning. These sessions provided personalized support, allowing students to share challenges, clarify academic doubts, and receive structured guidance. The mentorship emphasized long-term educational planning, resilience, and self-belief as essential components of student success.

## EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with shelter students further strengthened the community-centered approach. A shared lunch interaction created a safe and trusting space for open dialogue about education, personal experiences, and future ambitions. The conversation reinforced emotional support, inclusion, and encouragement, highlighting the importance of mentorship in shaping confidence and hope among vulnerable youth.



Educational activities were also conducted with children in schools and community spaces, including sessions at Sekolah Kebangsaan Bukit Bintang 1 & 2 and a community library reading program. These initiatives combined creative learning exercises, leadership games, environmental awareness activities, and guided reading sessions to promote literacy, critical thinking, and joyful learning. Together, the programs supported holistic child development by nurturing curiosity, creativity, teamwork, and a sustained interest in education.

# MYANMAR



In Yangon, Myanmar, a five-day Social Work Capacity-Building Camp was organized, bringing together 40 social work practitioners and community leaders from different regions of the country.



The camp focused on strengthening community leadership, improving social development practices, and encouraging collaborative approaches to address local social challenges. The program created a platform for knowledge sharing, practical learning, and strengthening grassroots capacity for sustainable community engagement.

## *CAPACITY BUILDING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES*

A training session on time management and project planning was also facilitated for youth leaders and community representatives at Yangon University. The session involved 45 participants and emphasized effective leadership, project implementation strategies, and practical time management skills for community-based initiatives. The training encouraged participants to plan and implement development activities with greater efficiency and strategic thinking.



A major highlight was the Young Leaders Youth Conference organized in collaboration with the Embassy of India in Myanmar, which brought together nearly 500 participants including students, youth leaders, and community representatives.

## LEADERSHIP & GLOBAL DIALOGUE

*During the Young Leaders Youth Conference, more than 300 high school students were honored with youth appreciation awards for their contributions to community development and youth engagement initiatives. The visit also included meetings with community leaders, discussions with research scholars from Columbia University, and an interaction with H.E. Saurabh Kumar, Ambassador of India to Myanmar, strengthening international dialogue and collaborative development opportunities.*

*A training session on time management and project planning was also facilitated for youth leaders and community representatives at Yangon University. The session involved 45 participants and emphasized effective leadership, project implementation strategies, and practical time management skills for community-based initiatives.*



The session involved 45 participants and emphasized effective leadership, project implementation strategies, and practical time management skills for community-based initiatives. The training encouraged participants to plan and implement development activities with greater efficiency and strategic thinking.

# SRI LANKA

*-Community Rebuilding and Youth Empowerment*



From January 24–26, 2019, a three-day Community Social Work Camp was organized in Balali village, Jaffna Province, Sri Lanka, led by Niraj Kumar Singh in partnership with the National Institute of Social Development (NISD). The camp brought together 27 participants, including youth leaders, NGO representatives, working professionals, community members, and local government stakeholders. Through participatory discussions, field-based learning, and collaborative exercises, the initiative strengthened grassroots social work practices and promoted inclusive, community-driven development in a post-conflict setting.

In Jaffna District, Niraj Kumar Singh engaged extensively with youth groups and young learners to design and support skill development initiatives. Meetings with youth clubs, project representatives, and students focused on vocational training, leadership building, and youth-led project planning.



A structured youth training session with 18 participants emphasized leadership development, dialogue, and community engagement, while vocational workshops supported employability skills, career planning, and sustainable livelihood pathways for young people.

Community consultations were also conducted in post-civil war conflict areas (1983–2009) to discuss education support initiatives aimed at rebuilding trust and strengthening access to learning. Engagements included interactions with primary school students to motivate continued education, as well as organizing an education awareness rally with students, teachers, and community members to promote the importance of schooling in rebuilding resilient communities.

# POST-CONFLICT EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT



Institutional & stakeholder collaborations further strengthened the outreach. Meetings were held with the Registrar, Professors, and Practitioners at the University of Jaffna to explore academic partnerships and institutional development opportunities.



Additional engagements included discussions with a bank official regarding scholarship and financial assistance mechanisms, collaboration meetings with community leaders and local government representatives, and an interaction with a women's self-help group to promote entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and sustainable income-generation initiatives. Together, these efforts reflected a comprehensive and community-centered approach to education, youth empowerment, and post-conflict development in Sri Lanka.

# THAILAND – HUMAN RIGHTS, HEALTH ADVOCACY & REGIONAL COLLABORATION

In 2019, Niraj Kumar Singh participated as a delegate at the Asia Civil Society Conference / Asia Pacific Forum (ACSC/APF) in Bangkok, Thailand. The regional forum brought together civil society leaders, activists, and policymakers to advance justice, peace, equality, and inclusive democracy across Southeast Asia. The engagement strengthened cross-border networks and also

reinforced a commitment to a commitment to rights-based and people-centered development approaches through policy dialogues and collaborative discussions on governance, human rights, and social development. Collaboration with nonprofit leaders in Bangkok and Pattaya further expanded regional partnerships focused on community-based initiatives and inclusive governance.



## RIGHTS-BASED ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT (2019)

Meetings emphasized program coordination, strategic planning, and knowledge sharing to address grassroots challenges effectively. A visit to the APCOM office also provided an opportunity to engage with regional advocates working on HIV awareness, LGBTQ+ rights, and inclusive development across the Asia-Pacific region.

A Community Health Awareness Program was delivered in partnership with Thammasat University, focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention, stigma reduction, and youth health education. The session encouraged dialogue on early testing, access to treatment, mental health support, and strengthening public health systems through community-based approaches.

# LGBTQ+ CAPACITY BUILDING & ADVOCACY

A large-scale capacity-building training program was organized in Bangkok for approximately 250 members of the LGBTQ+ community. The training focused on leadership development, advocacy skills, human rights, health equity, and strengthening sustainable community-led initiatives. By creating a national platform for dialogue and empowerment, the program encouraged collaboration, collective action, and reinforced ongoing efforts to build a more inclusive and equitable society in Thailand.



## Community Health Advocacy \*

A community health awareness program was delivered in partnership with Thammasat University, focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention, stigma reduction, and youth health education. The session emphasized early testing, access to treatment, and the importance of mental health support within community health systems.

Through interactive discussions with students and local stakeholders, the initiative promoted evidence-based health practices and encouraged inclusive dialogue. The engagement strengthened awareness, responsibility, and community participation in advancing public health outcomes.



## REGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

Participation as a delegate at the Asia Civil Society Conference / Asia Pacific Forum (ACSC/APF) 2019 in Bangkok provided a platform for regional policy dialogue and collaboration. The forum focused on justice, peace, equality, and inclusive democracy across Southeast Asia.

Engaging with civil society leaders and development practitioners strengthened cross-border networks and reinforced commitment to rights-based, people-centered development. The experience contributed to building sustainable regional partnerships for social transformation.

# VIETNAM – EDUCATION, YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

I

In Vietnam, Niraj Kumar Singh was honored with an award recognizing his valuable contributions to community development, youth empowerment, and education promotion.



The recognition highlighted his commitment to strengthening grassroots engagement, building local leadership capacity, and supporting self-help groups in advancing inclusive and sustainable development practices within communities. Youth engagement formed a central part of his outreach, including participation in a sports interaction session with Vietnamese youth.

Through football and outdoor activities, young participants developed teamwork, discipline, leadership skills, and cross-cultural understanding. The initiative demonstrated how sports can serve as a powerful platform for positive youth development and community bonding. Public schools across Vietnam carried out extensive educational engagement, where interactive learning sessions encouraged creativity, teamwork, and confidence among students.



## STRENGTHENING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

To further strengthen inclusion, we organized an outdoor fundraising and education support initiative to provide learning materials and financial assistance to students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Group activities, games, and awareness-building exercises motivated children to actively participate in their learning journeys. These programs fostered inclusive classroom environments where students felt valued, empowered, and inspired to pursue their educational goals with enthusiasm.

Meetings with self-help group members were also conducted to discuss savings management, microfinance practices, transparency, and income-generating strategies to support sustainable livelihoods. Together, these initiatives reflected a holistic approach combining education support, financial empowerment, youth leadership, and community participation to promote long-term social impact in Vietnam.

# Strengthening Community Engagement

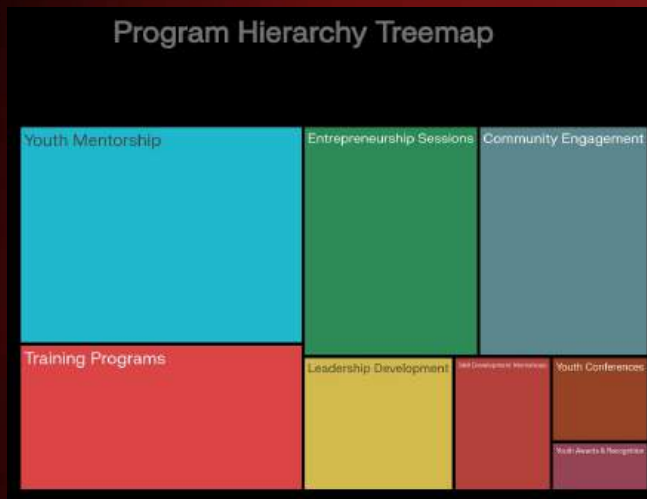
In addition to school-based initiatives, community-centered discussions played an important role in strengthening local participation. Meetings with self-help group members created space for dialogue on savings practices, financial planning, and small business development. These interactions promoted transparency, collective responsibility, and sustainable income-generation strategies within the community.



Youth mentorship sessions were also conducted to guide young individuals on higher education pathways, scholarship opportunities, and career planning. The sessions encouraged students to think beyond immediate challenges and develop long-term academic and professional aspirations. By building confidence and clarity, these programs helped young people become active contributors to their communities.

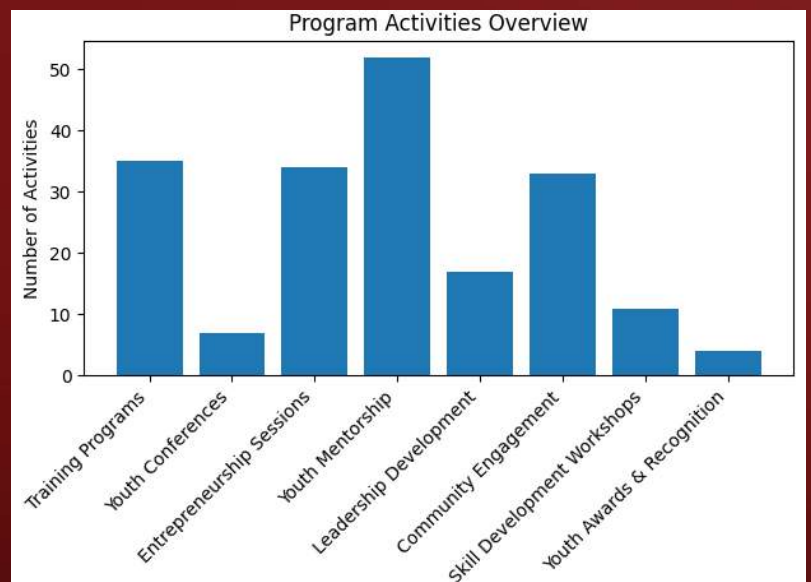
Overall, the initiatives in Vietnam reflected a balanced approach combining education, financial empowerment, and youth development. Through grassroots engagement, institutional collaboration, and inclusive programming, the efforts contributed to building resilient communities grounded in opportunity, participation, and sustainable growth.

# Impact at a Glance



A program hierarchy tree map visualizes nested program data using rectangles sized by count and in this youth programs, the largest rectangle (Youth Mentorship: 52) would dominate, containing or sitting alongside smaller ones like Training Programs (35) and Youth Conferences (7), packed efficiently to show both structure and scale at a glance.

This bar chart visualizes the distribution of youth program counts, with Youth Mentorship (52) as the largest slice at about 30%, followed by Training Programs (35).



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*I extend my sincere gratitude to the mentors, institutional partners, community leaders, educators, youth volunteers, and global collaborators who made these engagements possible across nine countries in South and Southeast Asia, including India, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.*

*I remain deeply thankful to Dr. Rambabu Botcha, Professor at the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD), Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, for his continued mentorship and guidance. I also express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Dattatray Bhandarkar, Amity University, Mumbai, for his academic encouragement and professional support. My heartfelt thanks to Mr. Alok Kumar, Founder of Kismat Trust, and Mr. Sandeep Kumar Singh, along with colleagues and volunteers whose dedication contributed significantly to the success of these initiatives.*

*I respectfully acknowledge the cooperation and engagement of various government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and civil society institutions that supported different phases of these interventions. I am grateful for the collaboration and institutional learning opportunities associated with agencies such as USAID-supported initiatives, United Nations agencies including UN Women (Myanmar), WHO Cambodia, and other UN system partners, as well as the valued support and facilitation extended by the Embassy of India in Yangon and the Consulate General of India in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. I also want to thank the field officers, community leaders, women leaders, and local administrators whose work together made sure that grassroots involvement and implementation were meaningful. These experiences have strengthened my academic foundation and global perspective in International Educational Development.*

*Most importantly, I acknowledge the resilience, courage, and aspirations of the young leaders and community members who continue to inspire this work. Their participation and commitment remain the driving force behind every initiative documented in this publication. This publication reflects collective effort, shared learning, and a sustained dedication to strengthening education, equity, and international cooperation*

*Niraj Kumar Singh*

M.S.Ed., International Educational Development  
University of Pennsylvania

# Nine Nations - One Mission



## Visual Chronicle of Impact



# SRI LANKA



...et neque a  
...fusse aliquet p  
...Suspendisse dapibus lorem, pellentesque  
...nulla. Donec blandit feugiat ligula.  
...Donec hendrerit, felis et imperdiet euismod  
...21...netium metus, in lacinia nulla nisi eget s  
...est in lectus consequat consequat. Etiam ego

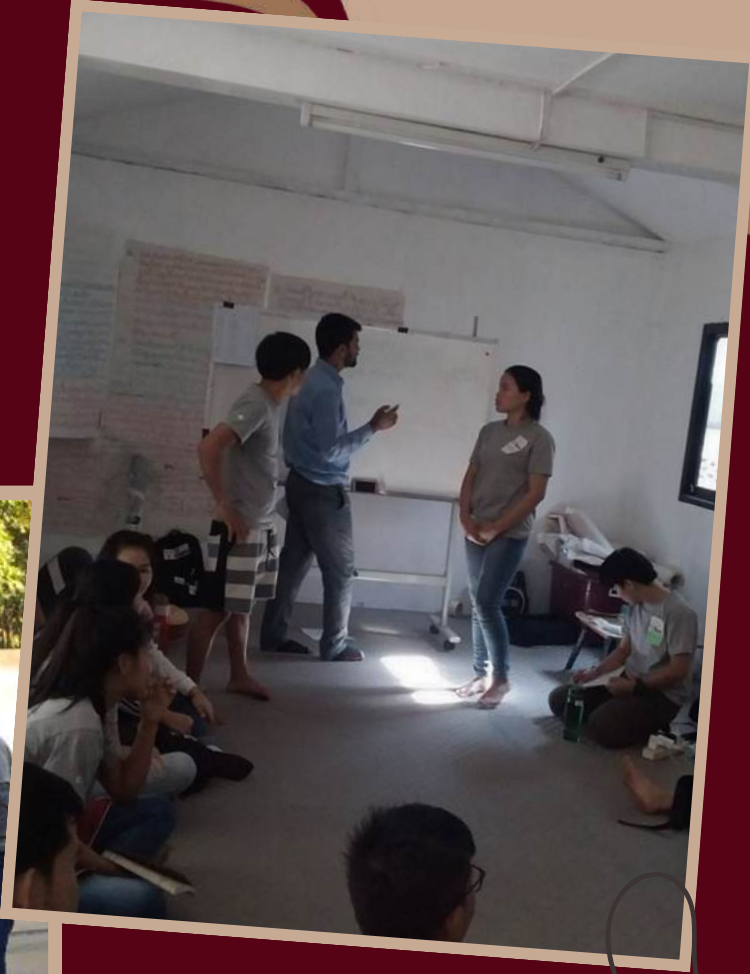
...s. D  
...iam. Eu  
...iam in. Mi ips  
...odales neque sou  
...tate semper quis. In d  
...rem sed risus ultricies t  
...nt nunc pulvinar sapien et.  
...rem dolor. Vel fringilla est ullamdimentum odio. Sed ac ligula. Aliquam at eros.  
...la et tellus ullamcorper ultrices. In

# Vietnam





# AOS





# Malaysia



## VISUAL HIGHLIGHTS

# Glimpse of



# THAILAND





Thailand

# Special Moment





SHOT ON REDMI 7  
AI DUAL CAMERA



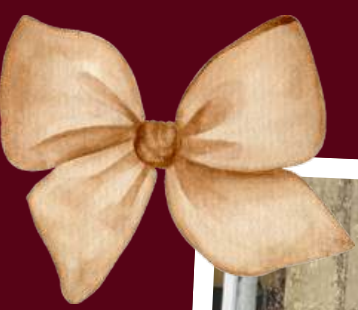
SHOT ON MI CC 9E  
TRIPLE CAMERA

SNAP SHOT OF MYANMAR













UNIVERSITY OF  
PENNSYLVANIA  
PHILADELPHIA

# NIRAJ KUMAR SINGH

JOIN THE MOVEMENT FOR  
GLOBAL LEARNING AND  
SOCIAL CHANGE



M.S.Ed. in International Educational Development  
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA

Alumnus – Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) &  
Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD), Govt. of India

Phone (U.S.): +1 (445) 208-0946 | WhatsApp (India): +91 78-700-20000

Email: [info@nirajkumarsingh.org](mailto:info@nirajkumarsingh.org) | [nirajsingh@alumni.upenn.edu](mailto:nirajsingh@alumni.upenn.edu)

Website: [www.nirajkumarsingh.org](http://www.nirajkumarsingh.org)

LinkedIn | Facebook | YouTube | X/Twitter @nirajupenn

