





INDIA SCALE-UP SUMMIT

AN ASPIRE CONVENING











INDIA SCALE-UP SUMMIT

AN ASPIRE CONVENING

AN OVERVIEW	01
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	02
INSIGHTS	03
EXPERIENCING EVIDENCE IN ACTION	04
NUDGE PARTNERSHIP	05
FIND OUT MORE	06



INDIA'S FIRST SCALE-UP SUMMIT

187

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE

Featuring leaders from research, philanthropy, governance and onground implementation.

2

TOOLKITS LAUNCHED

Practical guides to advance public knowledge on delivering impact at scale in education and gender.

INDIA SCALE-UP SUMMIT

AN ASPIRE CONVENING

202

1

NEW PARTNERSHIP

An MoU signed with The/Nudge Institute to accelerate the nationwide adoption of one of our programmes.

17

SPEAKERS

In panel discussions, lightning talks, with interactive audience engagement polls and an immersive experiential centre.





CONVERSATIONS BEGUN

With insights, challenges and discussions building out a new community.

A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR...



AMIT CHANDRA

Bain



IQBAL DHALIWAL

J-PAL, MIT



JOHN FLORETTA

J-PAL (Moderator)



MANGAL PANDEY
Key Education Foundation



VASUDEVAN
Veddis Foundation



NICK EHRMANN Arena Holdings



NOAM ANGRIST
What Works Hub for Global
Education & Youth Impact



ROBYN MILDON

Centre for Evidence and

Implementation



RUKMINI BANERJI

Pratham Education

Foundation



WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU.



S KRISHNAN
Ministry of Electronics
Information and Technology,
Government of India



SHAGUN SABARWAL Co-impact



SHANKAR MARUWADA EkStep Foundation



SHOBHINI MUKERJI

I-PAL South Asia



SMRITI SHARAN

Ministry of Rural Development,

Government of India



SUNITA MENON

Breakthrough



VIJI IYER ASPIRE



VIKRANT BHARGAVA

Veddis Foundation





SCALING WITH PURPOSE



INSIGHTS FROM THE DAY

From the "art" and "science" of delivering lasting change to the "witchcraft" and "wizardry" of scaling up evidence-based programs, the India Scale-Up Summit 2025 was packed with insights. Here's what we learnt:

- 1
- **Evidence is the launchpad. Alliance is the fuel**. Lasting impact emerges not from frameworks or research findings alone, but from coalitions of communities, governments, funders, and practitioners who persist together through the long journey of scaling.
- Government systems ensure durability. Embedding programs into government systems, investing in training and monitoring systems, and dedicated budgets helps programs survive beyond individual champions, political transitions, or funding cycles. True scale means interventions become indistinguishable within government structures.
- Scaling-up with policy champions. Scaling must be incremental—moving from
 frontline pilots to clusters, districts, and finally states—to allow adaptation and
 focus on outcomes. Policy 'champions' are vital in navigating political and
 administrative hurdles, while CSOs must ensure consistent delivery and outputs.
- Foster long-term partnerships that bring communities together. Frontline workers, communities, researchers, and funders who commit to collaborating through setbacks, leadership changes, and implementation challenges over multiple years ultimately lead to success.







Once when the community buyin is there and we have communitybased capacity building, can we really think of decentralization and take it to a larger scale.

Smriti Sharan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India





SCALING WITH PURPOSE

INSIGHTS FROM THE DAY

2

Scaling requires shifting the focus from individual solutions to transforming entire public systems. Lasting impact comes not from scaling an organization's intervention alone, but from aligning complex, resistant public systems around durable, people-centered outcomes.

- Move from solution-centric to system-centric thinking. The question is not "how do I scale my program?" but "what would it take for the system to work?" It's a reframing that pushes actors to engage with the whole machinery of government and society.
- Pursue durability against systemic inertia. Public systems are complex and tend
 to revert to the status quo. Meaningful change requires embedding interventions
 deeply enough that they become part of institutional practice rather than
 temporary add-ons.
- Commit to decades-long coalition building. Transformative change, as seen in the case of the Graduation approach, can take decades, demanding persistence, partnerships across agencies and sectors, and the ability to seize policy windows as they emerge.

Systems change is the enduring improvements in a public or market system... delivering better results in the lives of people, especially those who have been historically left (behind).

Shagun Sabarwal, Regional Director, Asia, Co-Impact



SCALING WITH PURPOSE

INSIGHTS FROM THE DAY



Iterative scaling bridges the gap between evidence and sustainable impact. Moving from "does it work?" to "is it working?" requires specialized skills, continuous adaptation, and support organizations that translate research into solutions that endure in messy real-world systems.

- Making programs work at scale is a non-linear journey. While research proves
 whether an idea works in controlled settings, an iterative process is vital to
 diagnose whether it continues to work in complex public systems, addressing the
 "black box" of delivery failures. The 'Pracademic Approach' (practical +
 academic) is key.
- Knowledge Intermediaries are critical in developing the right matches for solving problems at scale. These knowledge intermediaries translate evidence into action by working with governments, aligning programs with administrative structures, and ensuring integration into existing delivery systems.
- Scaling is a verb, not a noun. Real-world scaling is iterative. Programs expand, contract, and adapt, with each cycle creating institutional learning, staff skills, and system "muscle memory" that persist even if the program pauses.





66

Studying and figuring out the strategies that will improve the implementation in scaling is just as important as figuring out if it worked out in a couple of trials.

Robyn Mildon, Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Evidence and Implementation







"We need to continue to work towards database-based, evidence-based policy making as opposed to a seat-of-the-pants approach, and clearly this is an approach that needs to continue to grow.

Practitioners need to continue to work harder on this and keep at influencing policy makers to adopt it significantly more." -

S. Krishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics Information and Technology, Government of India



SCALING WITH PURPOSE

INSIGHTS FROM THE DAY



Philanthropy must back the 'missing middle.' Instead of only funding pilots, funders should invest in organizational capacity, cross-agency coordination, and integration into public systems so promising solutions can become durable programs.

- Augment government capacity. Philanthropy can direct investments to boost governments' technical expertise, IT systems, and talent pipelines, so reforms have the operational backbone to succeed.
- **De-risk government adoption**. By backing programs with proven effectiveness, philanthropy helps governments scale with confidence, absorbing some of the implementation risk that ministries may be unwilling to shoulder alone.
- Support embedded partnerships. Philanthropy is most effective when it enables intermediaries and NGOs to work from within the system, aligning with government structures, budgets, and processes rather than relying only on MoUs or parallel delivery models.

WATCH THE SESSIONS:



MORNING SESSIONS



AFTERNOON SESSIONS



One of the most important things we've got to do is to take very calculated, aspirational risks and back those people who have that aspiration.

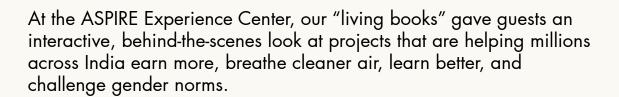
Amit Chandra,
Managing Director,
Bain Capital; Co-founder,
ATE Chandra Foundation

IASPIRE
HOSTED BY J-PAL SOUTH ASIA

J-PAL
SOUTH ASIA AT IFMR

EXPERIENCING EVIDENCE IN ACTION

THE ASPIRE EXPERIENCE CENTRE



You can read more about the projects **here**.

The Graduation Approach



A "big push" to help people lift themselves out of extreme poverty. From left to right: Kshovan Guha (Bandhan-Konnagar), Rajaneesh R (The/Nudge Institute), Sanjana Chettri (ASPIRE Fellow), and Neha Susan Jacob (J-PAL South Asia)

The Emissions Trading Scheme



An emissions market to cut pollution while fostering economic growth in Gujarat. From left to right: Maithili Sharma (J-PAL South Asia), Prakriti Bhardwaj (J-PAL South Asia), Shubham Sonawadiya (GPCB), Shivam Singh (J-PAL South Asia), and Gargi Pal (J-PAL South Asia)

The Gender Equity Curriculum



A gender equity curriculum to change the hearts and minds of young adolescents in Punjab and Odisha. From left to right: Mantasha Husain (J-PAL South Asia), Tanisha Ghosal (J-PAL South Asia), Rukmini Panda (Breakthrough), Aravind Nair (J-PAL South Asia), Arushi Bedi (J-PAL South Asia), Rashmi Dwivedi (Breakthrough)

Remote Tutoring



A remote tutoring program to improve children's basic numeracy and math skills as well as boosting parental engagement. Ketki Girish Moghe (J-PAL South Asia), left, and Sharvari Ravishankar (J-PAL South Asia), right.

Every Child Counts



A game-based curriculum to strengthen the innate math skills of children about to start school. From left to right: Sushant Pawar (J-PAL South Asia), Manisha Yadav (SCERT Maharashtra), Uthara Bhat (KEF), Vatsala Misra Sharma (J-PAL South Asia)

WHAT WE LAUNCHED



SCALING THE SCALE-UPS

The/Nudge Institute + J-PAL South Asia Partnership

J-PAL South Asia entered into a partnership with The/Nudge Institute to accelerate the nationwide adoption of the Graduation Approach, a livelihoods program that has helped people across more than 20 countries lift themselves out of extreme poverty.

J-PAL South Asia will work closely with The/Nudge Institute across states to ensure data-informed adaptations of the Graduation Approach.

Together they will raise resources for evidence generation and knowledge sharing as the program scales up while creating an ecosystem of governments, NGOs, donors, and multilateral agencies to further this work.

J-PAL South Asia and The/Nudge Institute are also part of the consortium supporting India's Ministry of Rural Development on Samaveshi Aajeevika (Inclusive Livelihoods), the government's flagship anti-poverty program based on the Graduation Approach.









WHAT WE LAUNCHED

SCALING THE SCALE-UPS

New Toolkits





ASPIRE launched two toolkits as part of its efforts to advance public knowledge on delivering impact at scale — Every Child Counts and Gender Equity Curriculum. Think of these as practical guides for governments, NGOs, donors, and researchers working on scaling up evidence-based programs. You can access them here.



THE ASPIRE COSTING COLLECTIVE!

BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY

And don't forget to join our latest initiative to develop a shared understanding among practitioners, donors, and researchers on measuring costs and adapting programs to maximize the impact for every rupee spent.

Email Parikrama Chowdhry

(pchowdhry@povertyactionlab.org) and Rijul Grover

(rgrover@povertyactionlab.org) to sign up for the
collective. Seats are limited.



WHO WE ARE

THE ASPIRE EFFECT

Catalyzing evidence-based policy to reach large-scale impact.

The Alliance for Scaling Policy Impact through Research and Evidence (ASPIRE) tackles some of India's biggest development challenges by scaling up programs that have been rigorously tested for effectiveness. It brings together governments, philanthropic organizations, civil society groups, and research institutions to solve cross-cutting policy problems to create an equitable future. ASPIRE is hosted by J-PAL South Asia.

20

Government and Civil Society Organizations currently partnering with ASPIRE to scale up evidence-based programs

Lives positively affected by scale-up programs supported by ASPIRE

26M+

US\$408 MILLION

Co-funding from government for evidence-based programs thus far.





Scaling is not about frameworks or numbers. It is about people. It is carried forward by communities and frontline workers. It is this alliance of actors that makes scale possible."





AN ASPIRE CONVENING

2025





