

Revisiting Yale's Engagement in South Asia and India: Assessment and Recommendations

Yale University leaders committed to advance the internationalization of Yale at the university's tercentennial in 2001. In [2008](#) Yale officially launched the Yale India Initiative. The Initiative was ambitious with the vision to position Yale among the world's pre-eminent institutions for the study of and engagement with India and South Asia. Overall, the Initiative has been broadly successful, with some areas experiencing more success than others. Some highlights include:

- International students from India make up the third-largest cohort of international students only behind China and Canada, and enrollments in the graduate programs, in particular, have seen significant growth. There have typically been at least 200 South Asian nationals enrolled at Yale each year in the past decade.
- Recent new hires in Economics, Political Science, History, Environment, and Public Health, in particular, have strengthened our faculty ranks with connections to the region. Some of these hires include senior faculty with endowed chair positions. Together with our core South Asian Studies faculty, these new hires position Yale as one of the best places to study modern India.
- The South Asian Studies major, launched in 2007, supported by the faculty and the Council on South Asian Studies have expanded curricular offerings representing the region, including over 30 courses offered in Spring 2020 alone in Yale College and many others in the graduate and professional schools.
- Conversely, study abroad activities in South Asia reflects an overall decline in participation over the last eight years, particularly since 2014.
- More than 60 faculty members are engaged in or have recently completed research projects in South Asia, and over 40 faculty members have active research projects or research partnerships with colleagues from the region.
- Yale has over 250 visiting scholars from India (2019-2020), second only to China.
- To date, there have been 46 [World Fellows](#) from South and Central Asia with 22 Fellows from India and 22 [Fox International Fellows](#).
- Since 2017, the [Sustainable Health Initiative](#) (SHI) managed by the Yale Institute for Global Health has worked in partnership with [CoWrks Foundry](#) and [RMZ Foundation](#) of India, sponsoring and is mentoring ten start-ups.
- Since 2014, over 555,504 unique learners from India have enrolled in one or more courses offered by Yale through Coursera, representing 10.18% of all global learners who have enrolled in a Yale course on Coursera. Pakistan has over 36,188 unique learners (0.66%), Bangladesh has over 28,099 (0.51%), and Nepal is at 8,998 (0.16%).
- Yale's School of Management is a member of the [Global Network for Advanced Management](#), including the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore.
- In the past decade, Yale has been prominent in providing leadership education to various organizations in India such as the India-Yale Parliamentary Leadership Program, the India-Yale Higher Education Leadership Program, a three-year training program with the Indian Forest Service, [The Indian Forest Service Mid-Career Training program](#), and Corporate Executive Education programs led by YSOM in collaboration with global partners.
- Alumni and friends living in South Asia have generously supported Yale programs, including establishing several endowed chair positions (Nandan and Rohini Nilekani

Professorship of India and South Asian Studies, Dinakar Singh '91 Professorship of South Asian Studies, Ranjan and Chandrika Tandon Professorship in the Study of Hinduism, and Renu and Anand Dhawan Professorship of South Asian Studies), and gifts in support of research support, capacity building, and entrepreneurship and innovation.

- [EPoD India](#) (Evidence for Policy Design) at Krea University is now affiliated with Yale and brings over 30 staff members who work on providing concrete evidence-based research to improve policy design and its implementation in India and Nepal.
- The [Yale Research Initiative on Innovation and Scale](#) (Y-RISE) advances research on the effects of policy interventions when delivered at scale to alleviate poverty and improve the lives of vulnerable populations. While Y-RISE projects span the globe, a significant part of their work is in South Asia, in Bangladesh, India and Nepal, in particular.

Looking Ahead

As the pace of globalization, innovation, and our collective global challenges has only accelerated, the need for more robust global engagement, new partnerships, and leadership has become increasingly urgent, and South Asia and India continues to be important because of its size (population and the economy), its growth potential, and our historic and more recent ties to the nation. In the [2018](#) and the [2019 report](#), the following high-level aspirations for Yale's global strategy were articulated:

- Be the university that best prepares students for global citizenship and leadership.
- Be a worldwide research leader on matters of global import.
- Be the university with the most effective global networks.

To achieve these goals and broader aspirations in South Asia and India given the [new educational landscape](#) that is emerging in India, the university is developing a new set of coordinated strategies and tactics that builds on the strengths of faculty at Yale, broaden and deepen our corporate and personal donor relationships to expand Yale's strategic global network and leadership on issues of global importance with South Asia and India as a significant partner. The growth and refining of global video conferencing have increased our capacity to rethink global engagement and have given us new models and formats. In addition, [EPoD India's](#) affiliation to Yale, the creation of [Y-RISE](#), and the hiring of several new senior faculty who work in this region present us with new opportunities to amplify Yale's South Asia network and its impact.

Recommendations:

⇒ **Institutional Partnership – establish new and strengthen existing partnerships with a few “key” academic institutions in India.**

Continue to expand our partnership with IIM-Bangalore as part of YSOM's partnership with Global Network for Advanced Management and with other organizations by providing executive education to corporate, non-profit, and women leaders. Pursue other faculty-led research

partnerships with institutions of repute in the region. We should also consider new partnerships with emerging comprehensive private research universities and others that are ambitious and well poised to embrace new opportunities, particularly as we collectively address global challenges.

⇒ **Corporate and Government Relations – establish and strengthen connections with key corporate and government officials in India**

This is an important area for Yale to continue to foster and grow. Collaborative capacity-building programs are clearly a need. The Office of International Affairs can be a lead and a strong partner in developing leadership programs for the non-profit sector. One area where Yale can offer significant expertise and bring together a diverse set of Higher Education Leaders in helping address key emerging issues in Indian and Global higher education, especially as a new higher education landscape has emerged in India. Yale-NUS could also play an important role in higher education leadership, especially if we expand the region to include East Asia or Asia-Pacific.

⇒ **Fundraising and Friend raising and Alumni and Parent Relations**

Gift and grant opportunities exist for work done by Yale faculty in/about India and South Asia, for capacity building, and for financial aid for students from the region. Having a consistent schedule of visitors representing Yale, and a solid stream of news/updates, communication, and branding about Yale's activities and programming in their home country will be essential to earning donor's philanthropic support.

⇒ **Student Recruitment**

As Yale continues to expand its global footprint, both graduate and undergraduate student recruitment are a vital part of that strategy, and we should consider implementing a broader outreach plan for both undergraduate and graduate admission. In-country engagement, especially by the South Asian Studies Council, along with developing a strong brand and media strategy highlighting Yale's work in the region and in addressing global challenges, can aid in this effort.