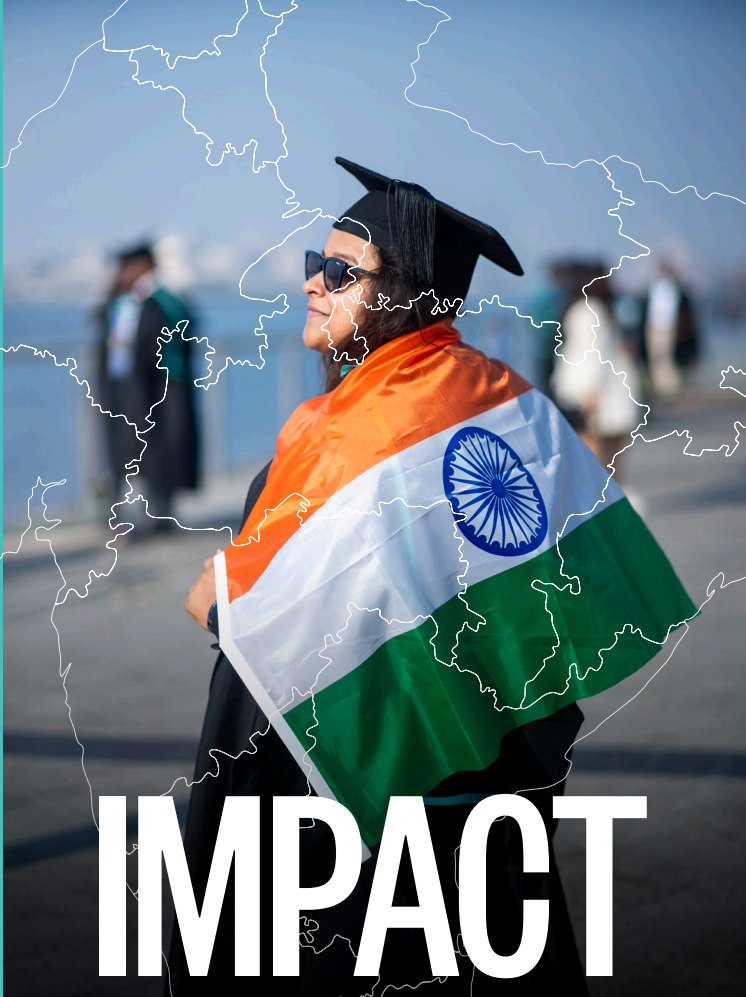




University of  
East London

Year of  
Science



# IMPACT

# IN INDIA

2024

# IMPACT!



- Have a proven track record educating internationally mobile Indian students, teaching over **15,000** from **18** different Indian regions in the last 5 years.
- Are in the heart of booming east London, with opportunities and pioneering careers at every turn
- Have a significant economic output (contributing **£814 million** annually to the UK economy).
- Are a leading producer of graduate entrepreneurs (ranked **4th** in the UK for annual graduate startups)

**1 in 20** Indian students in the UK is studying with the University of East London. **That's because we...**

- Help international students succeed, with **94%** reporting they belong at UEL
- Work with over **2,500** active employer partners
- Have over **160** nationalities represented in our student community

- Have an award-winning careers approach (winner of **Best University Employer Engagement Strategy 2023 – Institute for Student Employers Awards**)
- We are a leading university for employability (**Best University Employability Strategy 2022 – National Graduate Recruitment Awards**)
- Sector leading producer of highly skilled graduates (**Most innovative approach to developing employability skills 2022 – HE Innovative Awards**)
- Leading university in net zero and carbon emissions (**Net Zero Leader 2023 – Decentralised Energy Awards**)
- Top university for student retention (**Best Widening Access Initiative (Retention & Progression) 2023 -NEON Awards**)



Introduction by Professor **Amanda J. Broderick**,  
BA (Hons) PhD DipM DipMRS PGCTL FRSA MBGS FCIM  
PFHEA, **Vice-Chancellor & President**

The University of East London (UEL) has been pioneering futures since 1898, and today - as we enter a global 5.0 economy - we are fueling future careers and sustainable innovation for a changing world. As we continue to strive towards becoming the UK's leading careers-intensive university, we are focused on equipping our students with the knowledge and skills necessary to move seamlessly from their studies into the global workforce.

With India becoming one of the world's fastest growing economies and 2023's leader of the G20, UEL's careers-focussed education equips students with the knowledge, competencies, and understanding to meet the needs of India's rapid growth and population demands. India has the highest youth population in the world (aged between 18-30) of 420 million, making up 29% percent of the country's population. UEL is committed to delivering an impactful and future-proofed education for these young people. The skillset our graduates need to flourish and thrive in a global 5.0 economy is built into every course, at every level, as UEL seeks to support the growth of a diverse talent pipeline by bringing together education, industry, and talent. The fact that 1 in 20 Indian students in the UK are studying at UEL is a testament to both the success of our ambition, and how closely our careers-led focus aligns with India's blueprint for a future-ready country. Our University works with over 4,500 employer partners, and our students have access to this vast repository of industry expertise, whilst our courses offer unparalleled preparation for the transition from studying to employment, wherever in the world that might be.

We are a 'glocal' university, rooted in the vibrant diversity of east London, whilst welcoming and working with students, academics, and partners from across the globe. Over 160 nationalities are represented in our student community. For UEL, diversity and inclusion are not just ambitions, but a tangible reality – and something we value greatly. Our international students add to the vitality and culture on campus and in the classroom, and are ambassadors of our University, enriching the academic environment with diverse perspectives, knowledge, and cultural experiences, inspiring future generations of global scholars. Our success in creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for international students is evident – in the recent International Student Barometer survey (the globally recognised benchmark for international student experience), 94 per cent of international students felt that they belonged at UEL and 92 per cent said they were satisfied with the support they received from UEL.

For our Indian students, they find both a home away from home in a global city like London, whilst also experiencing and adapting to a new culture in one of the world's most cosmopolitan capitals. Newham, the borough that UEL is based in, has a strong south Asian community, providing access to a full range of UK experiences and British culture, while also serving as a home away from home. We are also a stone's throw away from the financial metropolis of Canary Wharf, home to some of the world's most successful multi-national companies, many of those partnering with UEL to provide specialist opportunities.

Our global outlook extends even further, as our 10-year strategic plan Vision 2028 is aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 17 SDGs are an urgent call for action by all countries working together in a global partnership to build a better, fairer, more sustainable world. UEL is in the top quarter of institutions worldwide for impact on and commitment to the SDGs; our distinctive approach to education, research and enterprise has an emphasis on real-world benefits that impact both local and global communities. These ambitions are threaded through all the activity included in this report, and it is evident how our research, partnerships, and the educational experience we provide are working towards that future in India.

As we enter the second half of our strategic plan, I am delighted to introduce this report outlining the positive impact our students, alumni, academics, and research is having in India as well as in the UK, and how we want to increase that tangible value much more. This report reaffirms the University of East London's commitment to the India of today, and of the future.



**Professor Amanda J. Broderick**  
BA (Hons) PhD DipM DipMRS PGCTL  
FRSA MBGS FCIM PFHEA  
**Vice-Chancellor & President**

Foreword by **Lord Karan Bilimoria** CBE DL FCA  
Cross Bench Peer  
Chairman and Founder of Cobra Beer  
Co-Chair of All Party Parliamentary Group on  
International Students

As someone who has long championed the cause of international students and recognised the immense value they bring, I am thrilled to see the tangible outcomes of this partnership across countries laid out here. I myself was born in India and came to the UK, to receiving a Diploma in Accounting from London Metropolitan University, and qualifying as a chartered accountant with Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales, before going on to graduate in Law at the University of Cambridge. I am now co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Students and spend a great deal of my time advocating for the mutual benefits of international education. Those early experiences I had studying in a new city and new context have long stayed with me, and I have seen the transformational effect of international education borne out in many other lives in the years since.

Students from India have now overtaken those from China as the largest group of international students in the UK. Foreign universities are now being allowed to open up in India, too – a great opportunity for British universities. Over the years, the University of East London has been at the forefront of welcoming students from around the world, including a significant number from India. The fact that 1 in 20 Indian students in the UK is now studying at UEL is a testament to the University’s commitment to diversity and excellence in education.

This report demonstrates the breadth of UEL’s work with Indian communities across the globe. Although this work always has the student experience at its centre, the case studies included here demonstrate how cross-cultural, international, multi-institutional partnerships end up delivering so much more as well. This report not only highlights the economic contributions of Indian students to the UK economy but also underscores the broader significance of their presence. Through academic exchange and collaboration, UK universities such as UEL provide internationally mobile Indian students with access to world-class education, equipping them with vital skills for the global job market and fostering cultural understanding and appreciation.



With India's ambitious vision for economic growth and development, it is essential that the UK remains a trusted partner and ally, working together to unlock the full potential of this dynamic partnership. The careers-focused education offered by UEL can help to catalyse India's economic development, as students use their skills and knowledge upon return, or develop opportunities through newly acquired entrepreneurial and business links.

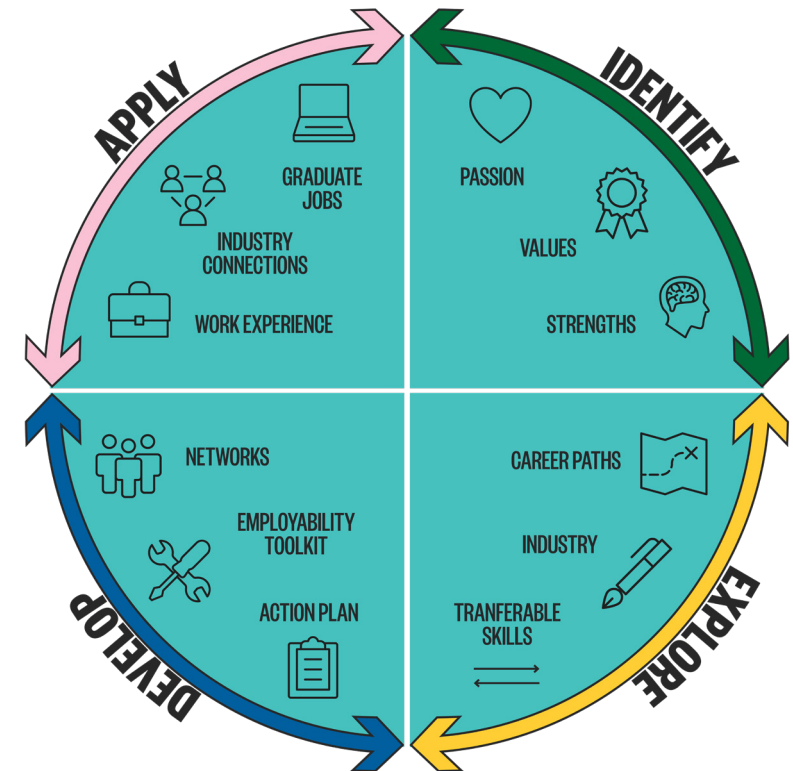
Moreover, the partnerships between India and UK universities extend beyond the academic realm, influencing policymaking, as well as driving research and innovation in key areas. For example, India is the fourth largest producer of renewable energy and solar power in the world, and collaborations in research and development between India and UK universities can capitalise on shared expertise to address some of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time, from climate change to sustainable development.

In conclusion, this report demonstrates the profound and far-reaching benefits of the relationship between the University of East London and India's students, researchers, citizens, employers, and government. It is a partnership built on shared values, and a commitment to excellence. As we look ahead, let us continue to cherish and strengthen invaluable relationships between UK universities and India, for the betterment of both our nations.

**Lord Karan Bilimoria** CBE DL FCA  
 Crossbench Peer  
 Chairman and Founder of Cobra Beer  
 Co-Chair of All Party Parliamentary Group on International Students

## Careers-First Education with UEL

- Step into the professional world with course career modules, industry leaders, internships, work placements, entrepreneurship, and start-up support, and a 15-month career support programme after graduating. We tailor your careers future – available from day one at UEL.



Choosing to study at the University of East London (UEL) marks the beginning of an exciting journey where academic achievement meets unparalleled career preparation. At UEL, every course is meticulously crafted with an eye towards the future, ensuring that our graduates are not only academically proficient but also ready to step confidently into their chosen careers. This commitment is reflected in our comprehensive career support programme which extends well beyond graduation, offering guidance and opportunities for a full 15 months after students complete their course.

We understand the importance of work experience in today's competitive job market. That's why our curriculum is integrated with work placements and industry projects, providing direct pathways to professional environments. These opportunities are complemented by our unique digital badging and Mental Wealth and Professional Fitness Programme certification, which offers you recognition for the skills you acquire, visible and valuable to potential employers.

UEL's location in London, a global hub for industries and innovation, presents a strategic advantage. Our students enjoy unparalleled access to networking events with industry leaders from the UK and beyond. These connections are initiated right from the start of your journey at UEL and continue to grow through guest lectures, industry panels and employer-hosted events, all designed to integrate professional insights and opportunities into your academic life.

For international students, UEL offers the flexibility to work while studying. This not only helps manage finances but also 'enhances CVs with UK-based work experience, making international students valuable candidates in the global job

market. Our career framework supports all students from the moment they decide to join UEL, from pre-entry career explorations and micro-credentials to post-graduation support like career advice and graduate internships.

Furthermore, our partnership with GoinGlobal facilitates access to an international job board, making global opportunities readily accessible. UEL also supports entrepreneurial ambitions through start-up visas, funding for new business ideas and incubation support for student start-ups, highlighted by our high ranking in national statistics for student-led enterprises.

Proof of our success is evident in the high satisfaction rates among our students, notably higher than global benchmarks, and our repeated recognition for employability strategies. These accolades, alongside our innovative approach to careers-focussed education, underline UEL's commitment to both educate and empower students to excel in their careers. Whether pursuing immediate employment, further study, or setting up an innovative business, UEL equips students with the tools and opportunities to thrive.

Choosing UEL means investing in a future where academic and professional aspirations are fully aligned and supported by a university that champions both personal and professional development. Join us at UEL and transform potential into success, in the heart of one of the world's most vibrant cities.

## UEL'S IMPACT IN NUMBERS

Don't just take our word for it - UEL's International Student Barometer results are **above other universities across all categories**, and proof of our success:

92%

of UEL international students' respondents stated that they were very satisfied or satisfied with all aspects of the institution

97%

of students using our Careers and Student Enterprise services were satisfied

91%

either strongly agreed or agreed that their course was good value for money - compared with only 83% across the sector

95%

of UEL respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with their learning experience

92%

of UEL respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with student support services

## International Funding

To increase access and enable success across our international student population, UEL also offers a range of scholarships and bursaries that can support students during their studies. Scholarships range between £500 and £5,000, depending on course programme. International scholarships are competitive and issued at the University's discretion, but we also provide a range of bursaries for any students in financial need during their time with us. International students are able to apply for our Emergency International Fund (for students facing unforeseen financial difficulties), the International Engagement Fund (to support eligible students with travel costs), the International Progression Fund (for course-related costs, for example when preparing an integral project), and a Humanitarian Crisis Support Fund (assisting students who find themselves in financial difficulty due to a humanitarian emergency in their home country).





# A Careers-Ready University



In today's rapidly evolving global economy, universities play a pivotal role in shaping the future workforce. At the University of East London, we support students at every stage of their higher education journey, equipping them with the tools they need to access an education pathway that helps them achieve their aims and ambitions.

Driven by the SDGs, UEL's focus marries together the goals of 'quality education' and 'decent work and economic growth', ensuring that our degree programmes are able to help bridge the gap between education and employment, and meet the expectations of an ever-changing global 5.0 economy. This includes introducing new courses and opportunities to address existing national and international skills gaps and working with industry to identify future skills gaps.

■ **A great example of this can be found in our MBA programmes and courses in International Business; over the last three years, UEL's Royal Docks School of Business and Law has welcomed an average of 2,500 internationally mobile Indian students annually. With 45 per cent of the Indian students studying at UEL enrolled on these courses, it is evident that we are creating and delivering courses that appeal to Indian students, and India as a whole.**

UEL's work in this area aligns with the increasing demands of a skilled workforce that the Indian economy needs. The Indian economy has already surpassed the U.K. to become the world's fifth largest economy and is expected to overtake Japan and Germany to become the third largest in five years. The Indian stock market, now the world's fourth largest, is at an all-time high.

**With UEL now a top destination for internationally mobile Indian students – having a higher proportion of Indian students than any other UK university – our careers-first education is clearly a large driving force in attracting Indian students.**

At the core of our approach is the award-winning Mental Wealth and Professional Fitness curriculum, which puts holistic career development centre-stage, and nurtures and supports students' aspirations throughout their time at UEL. This goes beyond the degree subject content, building emotional and social development, physical and cultural intelligence and digital proficiency – critical for a 5.0 economy - and increasing employability preparedness.

And the support does not stop at graduation. In recognition of the size, influence, and identified needs of our alumni in India, in 2023 UEL established an India Employer Advisory Board to provide advice on the relevance of curriculum content for the needs of the Indian economy, and to open a recruitment pipeline into India. Additionally, our curriculum aligns with the five guiding pillars of India's National Education Policy, providing high quality education and contributing to India's ambition to become a 'global knowledge superpower'. In 2024, we will recruit in-country careers support for our Indian alumni, and are working with state governments in Telangana and Tamil Nadu to deliver UEL talent showcases. Building upon the employment record of our graduates in India, we are working ever more closely with the 5 largest recruiting companies of UEL alumni, namely Tata Consultancy Services, Cognizant, HSBC, Tech Mahindra, and Infosys. Furthermore, many of our Indian alumni are employed within multi-national corporations, including Accenture,

Deloitte, Bank of America, Walmart Global Tech India, and EY, underlining how our graduates are prepared for the global workplace.

**Through offering our innovative courses and unrivalled alumni support, UEL is supporting global economies such as India's, educating a professional pipeline of talented individuals needed to meet the skills demands of today and the future. With India now being the most populous country on the planet, we hope to be welcoming and educating Indian students for many years to come.**

**Our students and graduates are working with some of the world's most influential companies, including:**



**TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES**



**cognizant®**

**Tech Mahindra**



**HSBC**

**Infosys®**



I am proud to have a long-standing connection with the University of East London. The University's mission to create a more socially just society is closely aligned with my own values and my career history. Having studied and practiced as a social worker, I have witnessed first-hand the many challenges communities face and have dedicated my professional life to helping to improve lives. It is hugely inspiring to also see this ambition in the work of the University of East London. Whilst the University remains rooted in its geographic location and the east London community, it is taking a unique and pioneering approach, applying the learning from its research and outreach work to tackle global challenges. This report evidences the success of that approach, outlining how through collaborations and partnerships in India, UEL is working to drive sustainability, address inequality and improve health outcomes, while also educating the global workforce of the future."

**Professor The Lord Patel of Bradford OBE**  
President of the Royal Society for Public Health  
Chair of Advisory Board Cygnet Healthcare



We are happy to work with The University of East London to support and enable students, researchers and academics realise their dreams of studying and working in the UK. The British Council creates opportunities for young people to succeed in a globalised world by giving them access to the world's best universities in the UK. Partnerships between UK and Indian higher education institutions are a vital part of the India-UK 2030 Roadmap, and testament to the enduring mutual interests of our countries."

The British Council in India



# Diversity of Thought

UEL's flagship Diversity of Thought employer partnership programme is designed to encourage and empower UEL's diverse student body to access the best graduate jobs at some of the world's most innovative companies – boosting social mobility by targeting support to students from traditionally under-represented backgrounds at key stages throughout the recruitment cycle. The programme is premised on three core elements: mentoring, work-based learning, and exposure to professional environments. It was developed and is delivered in collaboration with a range of multinational industry partners including Amazon Web Services, WPP, Siemens, MSCI, ITV, KPMG and London City Airport.

From over 2,500 blue-chip and SME employers actively engaged with UEL, we have worked with 27 Diversity of Thought partners to lead the way in replacing old-fashioned proxies of talent with new solutions to skills gaps, supporting diverse talent who can drive forward organisations' competitive advantage of the future. UEL graduates from the 2019/20 and 2020/21 cohorts are now working at Times Top 100 Employers such as the National Health Service (NHS), Amazon, Accenture, Barclays, E&Y, JP Morgan, GSK, Bank of England, IBM, BT, Mercedes Benz, and British Airways.



**We market and create advertising campaigns across the world and to do that we need people from all backgrounds offering authentic voices and varied life experiences. That's why there is such synergy with this programme and the demographic of UEL."**

**Michael Ludlow**  
Director of Talent



**The students we recruited through the Diversity of Thought Programme really impressed us. They were intelligent, enthusiastic, and highly professional in their approach. They delivered high-quality work and we have strongly encouraged a number of them to apply for a role with Siemens. We have already agreed to take on another cohort next year."**

**Simon Burgess**  
Renewable Energy Project Developer

**SIEMENS**

Students on the programme receive a personal mentor appointed from within the business along with targeted employability support designed to maximise their potential. Through this, students can access high-quality careers support and guidance, tailored to the student and their future goals. For example, two of our current students from India benefitting from the innovative Diversity of Thought programme are Nanda Abhilash and Ridhi Singla, who are both working for Siemens on a project relating to green technology.

Nanda, who is in her second year of a Computer Science degree, grew up in Kerala, and decided to study at UEL because of the practical approach to teaching, which she felt would give her the skills she needed to hit the ground running in her graduate career. UEL's diversity was also of interest to her, offering the chance to meet students from all over the world at an international institution. Her father encouraged her to apply for the Diversity of Thought internship, and she found that the support offered by UEL's Career Zone team was incredibly helpful in preparing her for the process. The flexible pace and scope of the programme means that Nanda is being given an insight into the world of work alongside the opportunity to explore what she is truly interested in. Her work with Siemens has inspired her to set up an Artificial Intelligence Society at the University with friends, and opened her eyes to the myriad paths available after graduation.



**I have learnt so much from [Diversity of Thought] – team management, communication, listening skills and leadership skills. With this sort of experience, you can imagine yourself in a work environment after; you get a glimpse of life after you graduate, and what you can expect. We have a lot of time to do research, and if you're really into it like I am, you get really good at it because they provide you with so many resources and so many tools.”**

**Nanda Abhilash**  
Computer Science BSc, UEL



Ridhi embarked on her educational journey with UEL after completing her A-levels in the north of India, close to New Delhi. UEL's vibrant academic environment and comprehensive facilities captured her interest, and she enrolled on our Business Management course with the aim of securing a graduate job at a multi-national corporation. One of the highlights of her academic journey has been her participation in the Diversity of Thought programme with Siemens, which provided her with invaluable exposure to an innovative company with worldwide reach. Engaging in sustainability projects, particularly focusing on developing a hydrogen economy model to reduce carbon emissions, has been a defining aspect of her internship experience. Looking towards the future, Ridhi aspires to build a career in the financial services sector within a multinational corporation, focussing particularly on investments. She believes that her internship experience, coupled with the skills and knowledge gained at UEL, will serve as a stepping-stone towards realising her ambitions. Encouraging her peers in India to pursue their dreams, she advocates for seizing every opportunity that comes their way, no matter how daunting it may seem.



**Even just two years ago, I didn't imagine that I could really be in London, working for a multinational corporation on such a project. I would strongly recommend to my fellow peers back in India: go for it!"**

**Ridhi Singla**  
Business Management BSc (Hons), UEL



## Alumni Success Stories

**Deepika Tyagi's** journey into the world of technology and entrepreneurship began with a simple decision to share her CV with the UEL Careers Team. This choice led her to an opportunity with a UK-based startup named Bit4id, located in the Knowledge Dock premises (now the Royal Docks Centre for Sustainability) at UEL's Docklands campus. Deepika, a 2012 graduate with a BSc in Software Engineering, was Bit4id's first employee, joining as a product manager.

At Bit4id, Deepika quickly made her mark, demonstrating a keen understanding of technology and a drive to innovate. Her journey took a significant turn in 2017 when she decided to establish Bit4id India, an extension of the UK-based company. This venture focused on transforming advanced technologies into accessible digital services, simplifying complex processes to provide intuitive and user-friendly experiences. By making technology more accessible, Bit4id India aimed to create a more efficient and sustainable digital world.

Despite the challenges of heading a company in India while residing in the UK, Deepika managed to build a successful business. She regularly travelled between both countries, effectively balancing her responsibilities, and overseeing the growth of Bit4id India. In just three years, under her leadership, the company achieved a turnover of 1 million USD – a testament to Deepika's strategic vision and leadership.

**“ Without the support of the UEL Careers Team and the opportunity to work with Bit4id in Knowledge Dock, I would not have the successes I have today. I am proud that 80% of the staff at my company in India consists of female employees and seeing young women chasing their dreams and becoming financially independent is something I value. My dream is to empower more women to pursue a career in technology.”**

**Deepika Tyagi**

BSc Software Engineering Graduate, Bit4id India

**Saurabh Malik**, who completed an MSc in Financial Management in 2011, found that his international experience in London significantly improved his interpersonal skills, setting the stage for international assignments in the USA, Australia, and other locations. His choice to study at UEL was influenced by the University's strong reputation in financial education, affordability, and a career-focused employability program. London's dynamic multicultural atmosphere contributed to his decision, as it fostered a global perspective that would be valuable in his career. One of Saurabh's favourite memories from his time at UEL is his participation in various employability schemes, particularly the six-month mentoring programme sponsored by Credit Suisse London. This experience offered him critical insights and exposure to the banking

and finance industry, eventually leading to a full-time job opportunity in London.

After completing his MSc, Saurabh started his career as a Branch Banking Officer at ICICI Bank UK Plc in London. His professional journey included roles at MetLife Global Operations Support Centre and Genpact India Pvt. Ltd., where he gained significant experience in investment banking operations and process improvement, earning a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt certificate in 2017. He later worked as an Operations Manager at Wells Fargo Investment Bank India and an Associate Director at UBS Investment Bank India, further solidifying his expertise in financial management and project leadership. He has also served as a Programme Manager (Assistant Vice President) at HSBC Bank India Pvt. Ltd., where he leads a team in the Risk domain of HSBC Asset Management Group.

**“ To current and future UEL students, I recommend seizing every learning and career development opportunity available on campus. Actively engage in mentoring programmes, internships, and student exchange options to gain diverse experiences and build professional networks early on. Hard work, coupled with a focus on skills and experiences, will pave the way for rewarding careers upon graduation.”**

**Saurabh Malik**

MSc Financial Management Graduate

## Chapter Two

# Health, Sport, and Wellbeing



At the University of East London, we are addressing health inequalities wherever they are found, enhancing lives, enriching futures, and creating a society that is healthier, greener, and fairer. Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, our work and research focus fundamentally on improving the health and wellbeing of communities across the globe, particularly those that are from traditionally marginalised groups and face poor health outcomes.

Our approach to solving health inequalities is founded in research that has both a hyper-local and global impact. With every community facing their own unique set of challenges, UEL's research is tailored to the needs and particular challenges each community faces – yet we are also always seeking to apply new knowledge to diverse global contexts. Our work within the UK is focused on tackling the root causes of health inequalities and helping to solve NHS workforce challenges. At our Stratford campus, our Hospital and Primary Care Training Hub takes an innovative approach to solving the shortage of placements in the NHS by simulating health and social care practice. Additionally, working in collaboration with local government, neighbouring universities, and community groups, UEL is a partner in a pioneering research collective in the London borough of Tower Hamlets. This project will deliver innovative research into wider causes of health inequalities amongst some of the UK's most diverse communities.





In His Majesty's first university visit of his reign, King Charles III visited UEL's Stratford Health Campus, including the pioneering Hospital and Primary Care Training Hub.

But we are committed to advancing positive change across our global communities. Akin to our local research, our work in India also has a tangible positive impact. India has made considerable health gains over the past 20 years – with life expectancy up from 63 to 70 years, and the infant mortality rate 2.5 per cent lower than two decades ago – but challenges still remain. In our drive to address and ultimately alleviate health inequalities, our research in India partners with citizens, communities, and local government to improve health outcomes. Additionally, UEL has a large cohort from the south of India studying on our health courses as we pioneer pathways for talent in the Indian healthcare system. Our research is more than academic, and is having real-world benefits for the people of India, influencing policymaking and changing lives for the better.

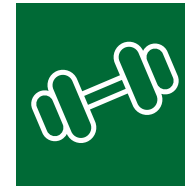
This commitment to tackling health inequalities extends to our offer for our students too. Our Active Campus initiative aims to remove barriers to participation in physical activity, and utilise the power of sport to transform lives and communities. UEL's gym facilities are free for students to use – which has led to an 800% increase in the number of students engaging in sport over the past year. With ready-made student communities thriving through sport, prospective students will be able to choose from myriad options to engage in activity and develop their teamworking skills.

Beyond this, UEL believes that a student's mental and physical health is a necessary foundation for effective learning, and actively structures its approach to teaching around students' wellbeing. UEL was one of the first five universities to be granted the University Mental Health Charter Award in December 2022. Providing a broad range of channels and methods, both online and in person, encourages students to access help in a way that works for them. This means that UEL is not only investing in students' skills, but in their wellbeing too.

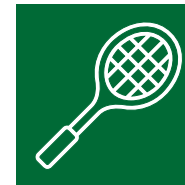


# Sport at the University of East London

At the University of East London, we pride ourselves on providing a variety of opportunities for students to lead a more active life in support of their wellbeing and learning outcomes. Being active is a key driver in improving physical and mental health, and here at UEL we have something for everyone – from club competition to elite performance sport, to simply taking part in free drop-in activities to keep people moving, help them make friends, and feel a sense of belonging to where they live and work.



**SportsDock** is our state-of-the-art sports facility and was recently refurbished to improve our offer to UEL's learning community. All students have **free** off-peak gym membership and can access training and classes from 6am to 8pm seven days a week for flexible scheduling around their studies.



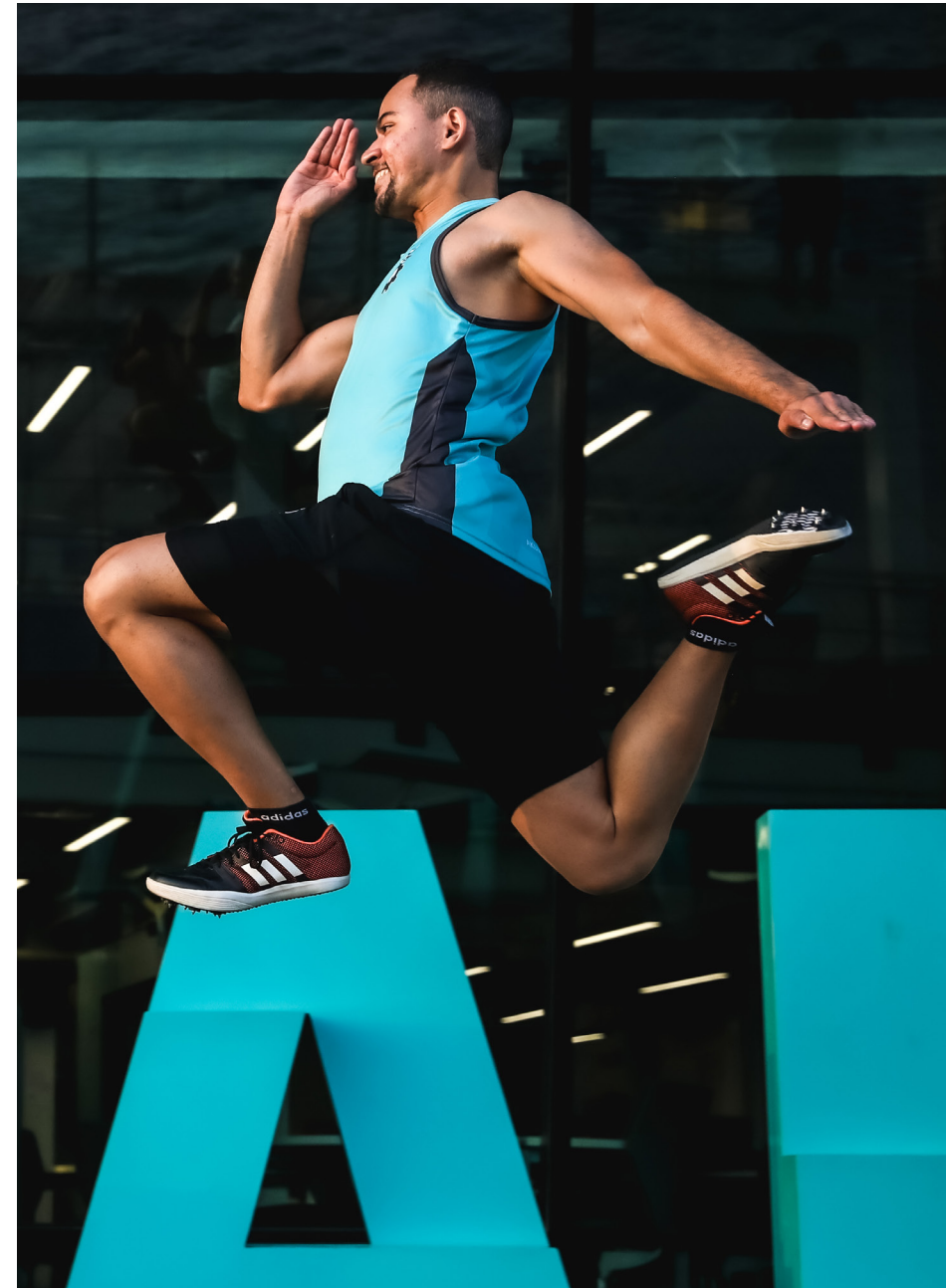
**Sports Teams:** At UEL we have 16 sports clubs, both competitive and non-competitive, that are open to everyone of all abilities, including men's and women's football, basketball and cricket. The majority of our clubs compete in the weekly league and cup matches, as well as individual championships run by British University and College Sports (BUCS), the governing body for higher education sports clubs in the UK, of which our Vice-Chancellor and President is Chair. Joining a sports team also offers students the opportunity to create new friendships, enhance their CVs and represent the University of East London, alongside having fun!



**Active Campus** is a year-round programme designed to improve the University of East London's spaces and places, and promote active participation by all – staff, students and the local community – for inclusive wellness outside the traditional sports offering. Whether students enjoy gardening, skateboarding or parkour, or simple therapeutic yoga, mindfulness and wellbeing walks, Active Campus encourages them to move their bodies and get involved in their surroundings. Our new Activity Trail makes the most of UEL's beautiful Docklands waterside location, and features innovative pop-up events such as a mobile pool on campus for water confidence and swim skills.



**East London Sport** offers a range of work-based learning opportunities for all, through engagement with its projects and programmes in addition to our high performance programme supporting talented student-athletes in their chosen sports. From informal volunteering at events to placements and internships, there are rewarding pathways for those interested in gaining careers-focused and life skills, as well as a real sense of camaraderie and teamwork, through the medium of sport and physical activity at UEL.



# The Role of Dignity in Menstrual Health

Good menstrual health is an important aspect of achieving gender equality and wellbeing in areas such as education, health, and societal participation. However, despite growing acknowledgement of these rights, the fundamental right of menstruators to manage their periods with dignity and safety is yet to be fully realised across all countries, including the UK. Dr Meera Tiwari, an Associate Professor at the University of East London, has been researching how to improve menstrual health outcomes across different societies. Part of this research has involved working with rural communities in India, aiming to investigate if dignity has a role to play in addressing discriminatory norms, cultural taboos, lack of opportunities, and limited access to services to achieve better menstrual health outcomes.

The areas where Dr Tiwari's research took place - Bihar and Uttar Pradesh - have some of the worst outcomes for women's health in the whole of India. Data from the World Bank showed that in 2016, maternal mortality (285 and 208 deaths per 100,000 live births compared to 167 for country), female literacy (58 and 70 per cent versus 31 per cent for country), and female work participation rates (25 and 9 per cent as compared with 31 per cent for

all India average) in these regions reflected a widespread undervaluing and neglect of women in the society. These issues exacerbate poor menstrual health outcomes for women in these areas. UNICEF data shows that there is a noticeable dropout rate among teenage girls from school once they begin menstruating. This a combination of cultural factors where people believe women should stay home once they begin menstruating, insufficient facilities at school, and other social factors. Similarly alarming absence data exists in the UK, resulting in cumulative setbacks. This perpetuates a cycle of catching up, impacting educational equity, as girls end up having less schooling, affecting their overall learning outcomes.

The findings led to the development of 'Dignity Indicators,' which highlight areas needing attention, such as women's comfort in discussing their menstrual health needs with male household members or communicating their needs during menstruation. The indicators that are most prevalent are context-specific and may vary between countries. The 'Dignity Indicators for Improving Menstrual Health' (DI-IMH) framework has since been adopted by three organisations: UEL's own Student Wellbeing Services (UK), the Naandi Foundation (India), and the Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation (Nepal) with the objective of improving menstrual health outcomes in the communities they serve. By using a RAG (red, amber, green) rated scale, organisations are able to focus on the key domains of menstrual health that need the most

attention in each community, spread across six categories: Life & Health; Physical & Legal Security; Education & Learning; Financial Security & Dignified Work; Comfortable, Independent & Secure Living Conditions; and Participation, Influence & Voice. Implementing the DI-IMH framework presents an opportunity for organisations to advance gender equality, public health, and workforce productivity. It offers a proactive approach to breaking the stigma around menstruation, promoting workplace inclusivity, and supporting community engagement.

Dr Tiwari's research is now continuing in other regions, and will be presented at the upcoming 2024 British Science Festival, being hosted at UEL. With PhD projects on the topic now also co-funded with the Economic and Social Research Council, the reach of this UEL research is only growing, acting as an inspiring example of our commitment to health gain and wellness for all.



**At the Naandi Foundation in India, we believe this project has the power to reshape menstrual health approaches, both within our communities and globally. The Dignified Indicators for Improved Menstrual Health (DI-MIH) framework has been an invaluable asset. Our extensive “Sport for Life” program, reaching 180,000 girls aged 6-15 in India and driven by 6,000 women, provides an ideal platform to integrate these learnings. The Naandi Foundation stands firmly behind this research. It exemplifies the power of research to drive tangible change and champion the rights and dignity of menstruators everywhere. We enthusiastically endorse this project and are committed to its continued success.”**

**Rohini Mukherjee**

Head of Global Partnerships and Strategy, Naandi



**UEL Research in Action:**

## The ORNATE India Project

Professor Gopal Netuveli, Professor of Public Health, Natural and Clinical sciences at UEL, is a key researcher on the ORNATE India Project, a high-profile and impactful collaborative project aimed at tackling visual impairment due to diabetic retinopathy (DR) in India. Funded by the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) through the Global Challenges Research Fund, the aim of the ORNATE India project is to build research capacity and capability in both India and the UK to tackle the global burden of diabetes-related visual impairment.

In India, DR is emerging as the leading cause of vision impairment and blindness, and currently, the only way of diagnosing it is with a yearly retinal examination. With over 77 million people with diabetes in India, it is challenging to screen every person with diabetes annually for sight-threatening DR. In the UK, screening for DR costs about £35 per person, or £140 million in total for the four million people with diabetes in the UK. However, India remains without a systematic national or state-wide screening programme for DR – the ORNATE India project therefore seeks to develop alternate safe approaches so that those at risk of visual impairment due to DR are identified promptly and treated.

The study involves collaboration between six UK institutions and seven institutions in India, including the

Government of Kerala. Diabetic retinopathy screening models were evaluated in the public system in Kerala, and an epidemiological study of diabetes and its complications was conducted through 20 centres across India covering 10 states. The interdisciplinary team enabled increased capability in several workstreams, resulting in an increased number of publications, development of cost effective risk models, algorithms for risk based screening, and policy for state-wide implementation of sustainable DR screening and treatment programs in primary care in Kerala. The increase in research capacity included multiple disciplines from field workers, administrators, project managers, project leads, screeners, graders, optometrists, nurses, general practitioners, and research associates in various disciplines.

The sustainability and scalability of research in diabetes and DR due to the ORNATE India project will be the lasting legacy of this project and can be measured by the significant increase in scientific outputs, successful grants, and new international partnerships in this field. The UK-India collaboration has created an enabling environment for local researchers to set goals and tailor study protocols to local needs and opportunities. In addition to focusing on capacity building, ORNATE India has resulted in fruitful collaborative collaborations built on mutual trust and shared decision-making – an emblem of UEL’s approach to impactful partnerships.

## Alumni Success Stories

**Vineet K Lingala** graduated with an MBA in Strategic Management from UEL in 2011 and has brought all the skills and knowledge he learned to bear on an impressive career since. Vineet is a recognised leader in the pharmaceutical industry, specialising in long-horizon business assessments, integration support, and operational improvement. With a wealth of experience spanning diverse therapeutic areas such as Oncology, Biosimilars, Respiratory, Neurology, and Cardiology, Vineet has been involved in every stage of the product life cycle, from pre-launch to post-launch. Throughout Vineet’s career, he has successfully executed various projects for biopharmaceutical organisations across Europe, the US, and Emerging Markets. His leadership extends to strategic project design, planning, and execution, encompassing a wide spectrum of activities ranging from CME Course conceptualisation to Adboards, KOL Management, and International Speaker Programmes. Currently, Vineet serves as a Team Lead at Novartis, where he continues to drive innovation and excellence in the pharmaceutical domain.



**The international degree I obtained from UEL played a significant role in broadening my outlook and helping me define my career goals. One of my fondest memories of UEL is of working on assignments with my future wife, who I had the pleasure of meeting during our time at the University.”**

**Vineet K Lingala**

MBA Strategic Management Graduate, Novartis



**Abhishek Khanna** holds a Master's degree in Public Health from UEL. He selected UEL for its location, subject ranking, and positive recommendations from other students – arriving to find a vibrant multicultural environment that exceeded his expectations.



UEL played a crucial role in shaping Abhishek's career path, offering him invaluable guidance from academics and practitioners. Their mentorship helped him navigate the complexities of the public health sector and set him on the road to success. After completing his studies at UEL, Abhishek returned to India and embarked on a career in public health; now, with over a decade of experience, he has been involved in various Indian public health programmes focussing on health system strengthening, maternal

health, immunisation, and non-communicable diseases, working at district, state, and national levels.

Abhishek currently serves as a National Professional Officer in Health Promotion & Social Determinants of Health. His role involves promoting health across the country and supporting Non-Communicable Disease services in coordination with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

For current UEL students, Abhishek's advice is to stay focused and make the most of the exceptional opportunities available. He suggests seeking guidance from faculty members and maintaining connections with the UEL alumni network, as these relationships can be invaluable in both academic and professional pursuits.





## Chapter Three

# A Fairer World



At the University of East London's heart is a mission for a more socially just world. This mission guides us and filters into every aspect of our work, from tackling inequalities to driving innovation in areas which seek to address global challenges and create a healthier, greener, fairer world.

Our expertise in providing courses and training for the next generation of legal professionals is one obvious area of activity relating to this mission – our Legal Advice Centre (LAC) provides students with the opportunity to practice while they study, gaining experience legal research under the supervision of a qualified solicitor who provides advice to a client. The Centre works with local charities and supports local MPs where legal advice is needed by their constituents. Over the last 12 months, the LAC has provided support to over 150 clients and provided over 200 students with experience in practice. Beyond our campuses, UEL academics are defining the discourse on international justice, too. Researchers from our Policing Innovation Enterprise and Centre are collaborating with RV University in Bangalore to deliver 2024's International Conference on Global Criminology and Victimology, situating Indian academics as vital voices in the field.

For UEL, however, to be a socially just organisation means so much more than this. In particular, we believe that the sustainability agenda can't be separated from social justice, and progress on the former delivers positive change for the latter. By embedding sustainability into course programmes, and by putting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals into the heart of research projects, we are empowering our students and academics to drive forward crucial action needed to solve the climate crisis. UEL's commitment not only nurtures green careers and sustainability research, but also improves the health and wellbeing of local and global communities.

Research shows that marginalised communities are more likely to live in more urban areas, with higher levels of pollution and poor-quality housing. The borough of Newham, where UEL campuses are situated, has some of the highest levels of deprivation in the UK and some of the lowest levels of air quality. In order to ensure that as an institution UEL is harnessing its power for the benefit of our local community – as well as contributing to the global need for climate action – the University has committed to being a net-zero carbon campus by 2030.

UEL has established a long-term partnership with global industry leader Siemens in order to turbo-charge its mission to net zero. The partnership focuses on energy reduction and green energy production, on UEL campuses, green business development and growth, establishing a diverse talent pipeline for the green economy, and creating a Living Lab of green data for research and innovation. The partnership earned the organisations a joint victory at The Decentralised Energy Awards 2023, where they were recognised as the Net Zero Leader.



Through our work and partnerships both at home and internationally, UEL has emerged as a frontrunner in championing urban sustainability globally and addressing inequalities in society.

■ **With a booming population, the need for green energy and sustainable building resources is more acute than ever in India. India has met this challenge and is leading the charge on renewal energy, and we are proud to be a contributing partner, not least through our pioneering Sugarcrete®.**

UEL is committed to developing sustainable materials and environments, creating innovative tools and empowering marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Our expertise, research and mission at UEL spreads well beyond our campuses, the university sector, and even the UK – we are proud to be informing international policy and improving lives globally.



**UEL is one of the most ambitious universities in the country. They have a clear vision of how they can reshape education for the benefit of all - giving students from any background the skills and opportunities they need to thrive in the modern world."**

**Simon Burgess**  
Renewable Energy Project Developer



# Sugarcrete® – greener, fairer, healthier construction

Sugarcrete® is a low-carbon alternative to bricks and concrete blockwork developed by researchers at the University of East London. The project has been developed as a collaboration between the UEL MArch Architecture programme and the Sustainability Research Institute (SRI), with the support of Tate & Lyle Sugars – a global industry partner based in east London. The material combines sugarcane fibres left over after sugar production with sand-mineral binders to produce bricks that have a carbon footprint six times smaller than traditionally made clay bricks. Sugarcane is the world's largest crop by production volume. Sugarcrete® was nominated for the prestigious 2023 Earthshot Prize, which is awarded to solutions that are innovating in the sustainability space.

Sugarcrete® research is benefitting local manufacturers in India where local producers can make affordable and ultra-low carbon building materials that can create new income streams via export to the global North. UEL has not patented Sugarcrete® precisely for this reason: it is a purposely 'open access' innovation in order to establish partnerships to produce new bio-waste-based construction materials where sugar cane is grown, and the benefit is greatest.



Partnerships are key to UEL's approach, and Sugarcrete represents an unrivalled opportunity to collaborate with Indian businesses for mutual benefit. Chemical System Technologies (CST), a key partner to the development of Sugarcrete® in India, including their pilot production site outside Delhi, are currently producing 400 of the bricks per day. They are produced and used locally, reducing both transport costs and environmental impact. Our partners at CST are currently looking into constructing buildings nearby using the material, including a school.



**The need for affordable and eco-friendly housing solutions in India has reached a critical juncture. Sustainable materials not only pave the way forward in promoting environmentally responsible construction practices but also present a tangible solution to the country's housing deficit. Recognising the indispensable role of women in India's agricultural workforce, integrating sustainable materials in housing construction represents a transformative avenue to elevate livelihoods and stimulate employment, while simultaneously generating positive environmental and social impact.”**

**Rhea Mazumdar Singhal**  
CST Chief Strategy Officer



**As India's construction and housing sector continues to advance, the importance of sustainable materials has become crystal clear. Embracing eco-friendly alternatives not only aligns with global sustainability goals but also propels India onto the world stage as a leader in sustainable manufacturing, shaping a brighter, more sustainable tomorrow for generations to come.”**

**Sunil Singhal**  
President, Chemical System Technologies

UEL's Sugarcrete® team are also collaborating with the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA) in Delhi. The school is India's national centre of excellence in the fields of planning and architecture and have discussed opportunities for collaboration between UEL and the SPA, with hopes that Sugarcrete® will be used to build an affordable housing prototype and for other projects in Delhi.

On a recent visit to Indian partners, Sugarcrete® Project Lead and Senior Lecturer Armor Gutierrez Rivas, also visited Daurala, a sugarcane factory two hours from Delhi, in Uttar Pradesh. It is one of the largest sugarcane processing facilities in India and a potential manufacturing site for Sugarcrete®, demonstrating many of the advantageous opportunities for partnership. Sugar plantation workers only work part of the year, so making Sugarcrete® there would boost their incomes, while bagasse – the fibrous material that remains after crushing sugarcane – could become a valuable by-product, as it would be used to make the bricks. In addition, current brick production is energy-intensive and limited to periods of dry weather, whereas Sugarcrete® can be made year-round and needs far less energy to be produced.



**Our research trip to India has demonstrated the potential of Sugarcrete® as a construction alternative and the increasing interest to deploy the material within the Indian context, both at an academic and industry level. It was inspiring to understand the social aspects of sugarcane harvesting and to discuss how Sugarcrete® can offer actual employment opportunities, particularly for women during the off-season period.”**

**Armor Gutierrez Rivas**

Sugarcrete® Project Lead and Senior Lecturer,  
UEL

## The impact of Sugarcrete® on women's labour in rural India

Research over the past decade has concluded that whilst integral to sugarcane cultivation in rural India, women workers are India's "hidden farmers" with salaries on average half of that male workers receive for a comparable working day. Seasonal work is insecure, wages are low, education and self-development is sporadic, and land ownership amongst women is still uncommon. Women participate in planting, weeding and in harvest de-leafing of the canes. As transnational corporations invest in Indian sugarcane, new job opportunities do not necessarily follow, with higher demand for the female workforce failing to improve wage levels or increase social protection through better, longer-term employment contracts. Associated with this is a generally weak education provision across agricultural labour, with women in particular falling behind in learning about new technologies to aid production and lessen drudgery.

Sugarcrete® is linked to localised production situated within or adjacent to cane cultivation and processing. Through introducing this innovative technology and product opportunity, new opportunities for income generation, skills acquisition and healthier forms of work are available. The production of blocks local to processing sites converts what is a dusty and potentially flammable by-product that is costly to transport into a commodity that is easily stacked, stored, and transported to construction markets both local and regional. Women can play an important role in this production process, fitting around key cane cultivation tasks that they can continue to be a part of, but which also extends, adapts, and incentivises their economic contributions. Through this radical new employment opportunity, Sugarcrete® aims to enable an increased status and skills environment for women in rural India, delivering vital training and establishing an equitable wage structure based on a new product. This makes Sugarcrete® an emblematic piece of UEL research and practice, echoing our unwavering commitment to equity and inclusion.



**The University of East London’s approach has enabled it to lead the way in working with industry to tackle both current global skills gaps, and identify those skills needed into the future. Through its unique approach to industry collaboration, it is harnessing the drive and innovation of talented students from across the international social spectrum, equipping them with the skills and confidence to allow them to chart their own prosperous futures while giving employers a competitive edge. In its research, it is helping to ensure our youngest and most vulnerable can thrive regardless of their background, and collaborating with colleagues across the world to tackle global issues including improving health outcomes, building community cohesion, addressing inequality and driving sustainability. While it remains an institution clearly rooted in and committed to supporting east London and the UK as a whole, the University is unlocking the power of education and knowledge creation across geographical boundaries – not least in its partnership with Indian students, academics, institutions, and communities.”**

**Lord Jo Johnson**

International Higher Education Commissioner

UK Minister for Universities and Science (2015-18 & 2019)



UEL Research in Action:

## Empowering Women in Rural Bihar through Signature Literacy

The University of East London's Meera Tiwari has led a groundbreaking research project focussed on empowering women in rural Bihar, India. Working with the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Programme (BRLP), which aims to enhance economic, social, and health opportunities for over one million rural women from marginalised communities, Dr Tiwari's investigation revealed critical insights into the socio-economic challenges faced by these women, including the issue of signature literacy.

The BRLP primarily functions through a network of self-help groups which serve as platforms for delivering various development programmes, and Dr Tiwari's research was framed within the broader scope of understanding how individual and collective agency can improve multidimensional poverty. The research highlighted the disadvantage of using thumb imprints over signatures for official documents. Women who transitioned from thumb imprints to signatures reported increased self-respect and confidence, which notably enhanced their community and social participation.

Following the research, signature literacy mandatory across the BRLP network, a shift which not only improved women's personal agency but was also recognised and

incorporated into the national rural livelihoods mission. Women became more proactive in community matters, such as addressing teacher absenteeism and monitoring the quality of school meals – a direct result of the confidence gained from being literate in signing their names.

Dr. Tiwari's longitudinal study has significantly contributed to empowering the rural women of Bihar by addressing both tangible and intangible barriers to their socio-economic advancement. The introduction of signature literacy and the establishment of a dedicated health fund have not only enhanced the dignity and self-esteem of these women but have also led to substantial improvements in their livelihoods and access to essential services. This research exemplifies how UEL's targeted research and informed policymaking can effectively support Indian communities, providing a scalable model for similar interventions globally.



## Empowerment and the Arts - our partnership with the Queen of Vadodara

UEL is proud to be in the early stages of establishing a partnership with Radhikaraje Gaekwad, Queen of Vadodara, India. Queen Radhikaraje Gaekwad's career and life journey has been all about breaking barriers and fostering community, diversity, and inclusion – values that overlap exceptionally with UEL's, and which were recognised by the University with an Honorary Doctorate of Arts.

She was the first woman in her family to pursue a career, which involved changing how members of the Royal Family perceived the role of women at work. At the age of 20, she secured a position as a journalist for the renowned Indian Express newspaper, while also pursuing a Master's degree in Medieval Indian History and Culture. She is now Director of the CDS Art Foundation and she is Managing Trustee at the Maharaja Fatesingh Museum and Maharani Chimnabai Stree Udyogalaya. She is dedicated to promoting art and culture to enrich the heritage of the Vadodara region in India. She has been working closely in retaining and restoring heritage structures in and around Vadodara. She has also initiated a cultural festival in the name of her father-in-law: the Maharaja Ranjitsinh Gaekwad festival of arts, which celebrates the best of Indian classical music and fine art.



Beyond her Royal duties, Queen Radhikaraje Gaekwad is a passionate advocate for education accessibility, women's empowerment, inclusivity, and the LGBTQ+ community in India. She strives for social development and has run organisations that positively impact numerous lives in India, particularly of women. Some of the impactful projects she has worked on include career training for lower-income women, and the Pinkline Project which is an initiative to train women to drive school vans and office vehicles to prevent sexual and physical abuse. She has also organised the Lukshmi Vilas Palace Heritage Garba, the first inclusive religious dance festival in the world, with over 40,000 participants, led by women and members of the queer community.

Our future work together will be inspired and informed by the Queen's impressive track record of empowering others through the arts, working towards social justice in a values-based partnership.

## Alumni Success Stories

**Roshan Nageena** chose to study an innovative MSc Green Buildings programme offered by the Centre for Alternative Technology and validated by the University of East London, because the course provided the flexibility she needed to pursue her education online through distance learning. This approach not only furnished her with the essential knowledge to succeed in her field but also gave her the confidence to start her own architecture firm in India, enabling her to handle the complexities of decision-making in architecture with greater ease.

One of Roshan's most vivid memories from her time studying was the collaborative group projects that brought together students from all over the world. This blend of diverse perspectives and creativity made these sessions both memorable and impactful, and they remain a highlight of her educational experience. The shared ideas and innovative brainstorming sessions resonated with her and greatly contributed to her professional development.

Now based in Kerala, India, Roshan has established her own architecture firm with an emphasis on inclusive decision-making, aiming to foster open communication among all stakeholders early in the design process. Reflecting on her journey, Roshan advises others to prioritise interaction with fellow students. She believes that the value of these connections cannot be overstated, as they offer unique insights, encourage collaboration, and significantly contribute to both personal and professional growth.



**Paritesh Royal** is a lawyer specialising in international law, with notable experience working with the UN Charter and constitutions. He studied at Jaipur National University before coming to UEL to complete the Master of Law programme. Paritesh's time at UEL was instrumental in shaping his career path. He had positive interactions with his professors, which left a lasting impression, and has fond memories of studying and networking with fellow students.

The curriculum and teaching approach at UEL enabled Paritesh to see international law as more than theoretical – it was a field with significant real-world applications, which he has pursued since graduating. Paritesh's connections with India remain strong, as the country continues to gain prominence on the global stage. He views international law as an essential component of India's globalisation, with treaties, UN conventions, and international relations playing key roles. Paritesh now operates his practice out of Delhi, India, where he is a legal consultant at Regia Law TAPP, with over six years in the role as of March 2024. He leverages his international law expertise to guide clients through complex legal landscapes, both in India and the UK.

“**UEL prepared me to see the world of international law in a unique way. I had great interactions with my teachers at UEL, and they helped me understand the actual implementation of international law in practice. Social justice is an important part of my work, and for me means representing everyone on the grounds of equity and not equality. The knowledge I received at UEL feeds into this, and helps me work towards my ambition to build a more peaceful world.**”

**Preet Gill** is a British Indian MP for the Labour Party in the constituency of Birmingham Edgbaston in the UK. She is currently serving as the Shadow Minister for Primary Care and Public Health, having previously successfully held the position as Shadow Cabinet Minister for International Development.

Preet is the UK's first female Sikh MP and chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Sikhs and act as Vice Chair for the APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief. Preet also chairs the APPG for the Commonwealth Games, and the APPG for Aid Match and in 2020, was named MP of the Year by the Patchwork Foundation, an organisation that encourage active participation of young people from disadvantaged and minority communities in British democracy and civil society.

Preet studied for a BSc in sociology with social work at the University of East London and speaks fondly of her time here:

“

**It was the best choice I could have made. I think about my lectures and the support they gave me; they were phenomenal. The diverse people on my course, what was accessible and available to me at that time – it was wonderful”.**

**Preet Gill**

MP for Birmingham Edgbaston  
BSc Sociology with Social Work, UEL



**Paritesh Royal**

Master of Law Graduate, Regia Law TAPP

## Chapter Four

# A Global University



The University of East London plays a vital role as a global gateway for organisations and students from all over the world, while also harnessing talent and building partnerships in the local community. The Sustainable Development Goals remind us of our global commitment, as institution or country, to play a role in eradicating poverty and inequality worldwide. Whilst we are rooted in east London, our international communities create a ripple effect whereby UEL's reach is felt far beyond the physical space of the institution.

Our location in the thriving area of east London offers unparalleled advantages to our students, providing exceptional career opportunities and convenient access to transport links spanning the city and beyond. Renowned as the most innovative, rapidly expanding, and culturally diverse area in the nation, east London stands as an international hub for students seeking career prospects, enriching life experiences, and encounters with extraordinary individuals.

■ **At the University of East London, students have access to more than 90 clubs and societies (including the Indian Society, our largest and most active student group), one of the best gyms in London, two student hubs, a variety of cafes and restaurants, a community garden, an on-site nursery, a student bar and a lively programme of on and off-campus entertainment events.**

UEL has been an anchor institution in east London for over 125 years, and as a result has developed a granular understanding of the challenges and opportunities that come from serving a diverse and ever-evolving community. In an increasingly global world, many communities face

similar challenges, and at UEL we want to ensure that our research is providing evidence-led solutions. As India works towards ambitious targets and rapid growth in the development of green energy, UEL's pioneering work to develop a global blueprint for urban sustainability can serve as a model for institutions in highly polluted cities and areas in India. Additionally, UEL is a leader in the early years space. Our Baby Development Lab plays an internationally leading role in early years research, seeking to find a deeper understanding of how society can better support our youngest and most vulnerable in their most formative years. It has pioneered state-of-the-art wearables and naturalistic brain recording techniques to study how the diverse early living environments and relationships experienced by children in our catchment area influence early stress - both in the child themselves, and their parents - and to investigate how adversity influences the way parents interact with their children. Through this, we aim to understand how early life stress affects parenting, and mental health development in the child. This work can be applied to communities across the world, including in India's rapidly growing population, to provide us with a better understanding of the importance of a child's early years and ensure better outcomes for the future.

UEL's position and work as a local anchor and global gateway is holistic. Through its curriculum, UEL prepares its students to be global citizens, equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate an increasingly interconnected world. Through its education and research activity, it serves as a dynamic bridge connecting individuals and ideas from different corners of the world, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and driving innovation on a global scale.

## University of East London Students' Union

The University of East London Students' Union (UELSU) plays a crucial role in creating a vibrant student community, offering a range of student groups, support services, and representation initiatives. Membership in UELSU is automatic for all University of East London students, allowing everyone to access the union's services and representation. The union is led by three full-time Student Union Officers, elected annually by the student body, who advocate for student interests within the University.



**Syed Sirajudeen** is Activities & Opportunities Officer at UELSU, also studying for a Master's Degree in Information Security and Digital Forensics at the University. Hailing from Tamil Nadu, Syed always dreamt of pursuing his master's degree in the United Kingdom; London, with its rich history and vibrant culture, was his ideal destination. Among the many universities in the city, he chose the University of East London for its diverse student body, excellent academic reputation, and numerous extracurricular activities.

From the outset, he embraced the rigorous academic environment, adapting quickly to the demands of his coursework. He has found the collaborative learning experience particularly rewarding, and appreciates the emphasis on communication and writing skills in his degree programme. One of the most significant aspects of Syed's experience at UEL has been the opportunity to interact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. As an international student, he found that engaging with others from different parts of the world broadened his horizons. He came to understand that there are many ways to approach a problem, and this diversity of thought often led to innovative solutions.

To maintain a sense of connection with his own and other cultures, and celebrate the richness of UEL's diversity, Syed organises and participates in events and campaigns with the East London Students' Union. Festivals like Diwali, Eid, Holi, Onam, and Navaratri are celebrated with great enthusiasm, creating a home-like atmosphere for international students. These events have allowed Syed to meet new people, form lasting friendships, and experience a sense of belonging. Syed's story demonstrates that with an open mind and a willingness to embrace new experiences, the journey of studying abroad can be incredibly rewarding.

Beyond representation, UELSU offers comprehensive support services to help students navigate academic and personal challenges. This includes confidential advice on academic appeals, complaints, and on-campus accommodation concerns – all provided by impartial advisors, as UELSU is independent from the University. Additionally, UELSU organizes a range of events and activities, from quizzes to film screenings, creating a welcoming environment where students can relax, socialise, and enjoy their time on campus. For example, the Near and Far Festival is a celebration of all the nationalities and cultures that make up the University of East London community, featuring student-run stalls, traditional dancing, singing and poetry, plus arts and crafts, language workshops, fashion shows and more.

With over 30 student groups, UELSU provides platforms for students to connect over shared interests, hobbies, academic disciplines, and personal experiences. These groups serve as a gateway for students to build friendships and explore new passions, whether through sports, cultural clubs, or faith-based societies.

■ **One of our largest and most active student societies is the UEL Indian Society. Open to all UEL students, regardless of cultural background, the Society is committed to delivering exciting events as well as valuable services to enhance the student experience.**

The Society runs a wide variety of events including sports tournaments, charity fundraisers, and cultural workshops – including a Holi festival, Eid celebration dinner, and a Diwali Fashion Show.

Students have also established societies dedicated to specific regions, cultures, and communities within and beyond India, including the UEL Kerala Society and the UEL Tamil Society.



At the University of East London, my experiences as a student, staff member, Lead Student Ambassador, and President of the UEL Tamil Society have been instrumental in shaping my university life. I have worked on initiatives to improve the learning environment, focusing on technology and student support. In my role with the Students Union, I have aimed to foster inclusivity and increase student participation through strategic projects and engaging cultural events. I have been involved in several student engagement efforts, helping to create a vibrant campus community and promote cultural understanding. These experiences have contributed significantly to my academic journey, providing valuable opportunities for personal growth and community building, preparing me well for a career in IT and cyber security.”

**Danagshanth Thavagnanam**  
President UEL Tamil Society



I am a student from Kerala, India, pursuing an MSc in Cloud Computing, and my experience at the University of East London has been transformative. Despite the initial challenges of homesickness, I was able to create the UEL Kerala Society and foster a sense of belonging – this university has truly become my sanctuary. The faculty's consistent support has nurtured my academic interests and professional growth, leading to certifications from industry leaders like Microsoft and Amazon. My participation in the University of East London Cloud Champion competition and representation at the First London Regional Hackathon have allowed me to thrive. I am deeply grateful for the opportunities, guidance, and community this institution has provided.”

**Robinson Varghese**  
Founder UEL Kerala Society



# Turing Scheme Placements

Since 2022, UEL has participated in the Turing Scheme – the UK government’s programme to provide funding for international opportunities in education and training across the world. Dr Mukhlesur Rahman, Associate Professor and Subject Area Lead of Drug and Chemical Sciences, has successfully led Turing-funded placements to the B.S. Abdur Rahman Crescent Institute of Science and Technology in Chennai.

These placement opportunities are offered to Level 5 and 6 students in the Department of Bioscience in the School of Health, Sport and Bioscience, and provide hands-on learning experience in the pharmaceutical sciences and biotechnology. Participating UEL students are immersed in the cultural and academic settings of India, fostering global exposure and skills development, and enhancing employability through international work experience and networking.

The programme spans six weeks and includes lectures, workshops, practical sessions, and assessment activities including assignments and reports. Students are able to learn from some of India’s leading experts on nanotechnology, with a particular focus on its application in the healthcare sector, as well as sustainable crop protection.

Students also benefit from industrial visits to leading biotechnology and pharmaceutical partners in India, such as Aaranya Biosciences and CisGen Biotech Pvt Ltd. Cultural sightseeing tours and social events in Chennai are also organised to promote cultural understanding and integration.

Feedback from these cohorts has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the enriching academic and cross-cultural experiences. The success of the programme has resulted in the Turing Scheme more than doubling the number of UEL students it now funds to visit India.



**The whole experience at Abdur Rahman Crescent Institute was unforgettable, eventful, and unique. The faculty of Abdur Rahman Crescent Institute welcomed me from day one and made sure that my stay in India was comfortable. I fell in love with the Indian culture and the people, made friends and networked with inspiring professionals. I learned so much new information, but also refreshed my knowledge accumulated during my studies at UEL.”**

**Andreea**  
BSc Biomedical Science

# The Noon Centre

The Noon Centre for Equality and Diversity in Business, funded by Lord Noon MBE and supported by the Noon Foundation, is a transformational space for engaging and supporting students into industry networks, career development and self-employment, known for its interdisciplinary research and practice in workplace diversity. Since its inception in 2012, the Centre has pursued the strategic goal of supporting and developing students from diverse backgrounds beyond their traditional degree programmes so that they are better prepared for workplace challenges. The Centre's vision is to provide a robust forum for engagement, support and research.

■ **The Noon Centre plays a key part in engaging students from the Indian diaspora in research and enrichment activities that positively impact their lives whilst they are in the UK as UEL students and graduates, but also when they return to India equipped with skills that they can use in their future careers.**

The Centre has an impressive range of projects underway, including work funded by the prestigious National Institute for Health Research into empowering youth to effectively participate in health decision making in Newham.

The Noon Centre has co-designed the programme with young people mostly from the Indian diaspora in Newham. The 10-week module is designed to appeal to young people with an interest in developing health decision-making skills to improve their health and wellbeing in a modern, complex, and demanding world. It provides an overview of the organisational and policy contexts within which health care services operate, focusing on the challenges and opportunities faced by young people across health and social care. Additionally, the Noon Centre has recently worked with 80 youth delegates from schools and universities in Newham and east London on a model United Nations event, and on a youth leadership programme for local communities.

Noon Centre researchers are not just improving lives locally, however – they are also using their work to improve conditions across the world. Recent research from the Centre has led to a breakthrough in global negotiations on Women's Rights and Climate Justice, when the UN Expert Group Meeting in Quezon City, the Philippines, adopted the framework on a new social contract written and proposed by Noon Centre Director, Professor Siraj Sait. The 25-step framework operationalises the sustainable development goals, human rights and climate agreements in pursuit of better rights and opportunities for women across the world.

Noon Centre affiliated researchers are also carrying out work in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Stratford to have impact in India – a true example of the 'glocal' approach that characterises UEL. The Rotary Club of Stratford has launched a significant campaign to fight leprosy in India, in partnership with Leprosy UK and other Indian Rotary Clubs. The Leprosy Control Programme targets leprosy prevention and treatment while ensuring respect and



dignity for those affected. The Noon Centre for Equality and Diversity, led by Prof Siraj Sait and Prof Shampa Roy Mukherjee, contributes to the programme by ensuring inclusivity and respect for leprosy-affected individuals. Their strategic guidance and support for the “Living with Dignity” campaign help combat discrimination and marginalisation. This partnership demonstrates a holistic approach to public health challenges, addressing both medical and social dimensions, and reflecting the concerted efforts of all involved to eradicate leprosy and promote the dignity and inclusion of those affected.

Beyond this, the Rotary Public School Ladana project is an ambitious initiative aimed at enhancing education in rural Rajasthan, which the Noon Centre for Equality and Diversity supports as inclusivity and diversity consultants, as well as training sessions to ensure these principles are embedded in the school’s culture. The Rotary Public School Ladana project is expected to bring significant educational benefits to rural Rajasthan, creating a blueprint for inclusive and diverse education in the region. The project’s success is underpinned by collaboration among local and international Rotary clubs, with expert advice from the Noon Centre for Equality and Diversity.



## UEL Family

**Preity Zinta** is an illustrious Bollywood actress, who has seamlessly integrated her cinematic achievements with a profound commitment to social causes, earning her recognition far beyond the film industry. In recognition of her exceptional career and tireless advocacy, the University of East London proudly awarded her an Honorary Doctorate of the Arts, acknowledging her substantial contributions to both world cinema and humanitarian endeavours.

Beyond her well-known work in many iconic Bollywood films, Zinta’s activism and philanthropy have left an indelible mark. Her outspoken advocacy for women’s rights, AIDS awareness, and campaigns against human trafficking and child exploitation showcase her unwavering commitment to social justice. UEL commended Zinta’s exemplary leadership and advocacy, applauding her instrumental role as an ambassador for various charitable organisations, including the Godfrey Phillips Bravery Awards and the Loomba Trust. Her multifaceted contributions underscore the transformative power of celebrity influence when wielded in service of charitable causes.

In honouring Preity Zinta, UEL not only celebrated her cinematic achievements but also acknowledges her profound impact as a catalyst for positive change, bridging cultural divides and inspiring others to advocate for a more just and equitable world. As an honorary alumna of worldwide significance celebrated in a ceremony at our Docklands campus, Zinta’s legacy reflects UEL’s own institutional goal to make a difference in the communities we serve, both locally and globally.

**Shabir Randeree CBE** served as Chancellor at the University of East London from 2016 to 2023, a tenure marked by the University's significant growth, particularly in its engagement with diverse communities. Shabir, born in South Africa of Indian heritage, has played a key role as UEL expands its global connections, particularly with Indian communities. The international student body at UEL grew by over 670% from 2018/19 to 2023/24, with significant partnerships forged across India and South Asia. This growth reflects Shabir's strategic vision and commitment to making UEL a global educational hub.

One of Shabir's significant achievements is his role in pioneering diversity and inclusion at UEL. Under his guidance, the University established the Office for Institutional Equity (OIE), a first-of-its-kind initiative aimed at closing the degree awarding gap. Shabir has also been instrumental in enhancing UEL's academic credentials and careers-first focus. He supported numerous initiatives, including the Mental Wealth and Professional Fitness curriculum, and fostered partnerships with major industry players such as HSBC, PwC, Sony, GlaxoSmithKline, and ITV.

Apart from his role at UEL, Shabir continues to have a remarkable career as an entrepreneur and philanthropist. He has served as Chair on a vast variety of high-profile boards, most recently serving as Chair of the Woolf Institute, Cambridge. In recognition of his outstanding work, in 2013 Shabir was awarded a CBE for his business, education and philanthropic contributions. Shabir is a Centenary Fellow at St Edmund's College, University of Cambridge and has

Honorary Doctorates from the University of Warwick and Kingston University where he graduated with a BA (Hons) in Accounting and Finance. He also holds an MBA and is an alumnus of London Business School.

As UEL celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2023, Shabir was honoured with the Vice-Chancellor and President's University Medal, recognising his extraordinary contributions to the University and the wider community. He remains a trusted advisor for UEL's leadership, with valuable expertise to lend to the University's efforts to achieve its strategic goals and empower all students to succeed.

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**The University of East London is one of the most ambitious and inclusive higher education institutions in the UK, and it was one of the pleasures of my professional life to serve as Chancellor. Their unique approach to careers-first education is truly transformative. As they continue to expand their global partnerships, I encourage others to explore how they can collaborate with this most innovative of universities.”**



**Shabir Randeree CBE**

# Conclusion



The University of East London was founded in 1898 as the “people’s university”, with a mission to help local people gain access to education in science, engineering, and the arts. In many ways we are still rooted in that origin – but our focus has widened significantly to welcome talented students from across the globe.

■ **Taking the principles of our mission to help people access education, we continue to offer our students a transformational educational and cultural experience. But today we are upskilling our students and preparing them for the demands of a global 5.0 economy and the jobs of a rapidly advancing future.**

Preparing our students to adapt and develop skills in an ever-changing world is our main driver and a key part of the appeal of UEL for our Indian students. We are proud that our success in delivering our mission to be the UK’s careers intensive university, is globally recognised – as demonstrated by our significant and growing Indian student population. Our international graduates are socially mobile and able to apply the learning and skills acquired during their time at UEL to any workplace across the globe.

■ **UEL is committed to continuing and developing our dynamic relationship with India to ensure that we can contribute to accelerating the country’s impressive economic growth, as our graduates return to India to harness their skills, entrepreneurial zeal, and industry links for the benefit of the country.**

As we look to the future of our work in India, we are enhancing our partnership through further academic research, knowledge exchange, and industry collaboration.

For example, the ENERGISE project is an innovative student exchange programme focused on research into clean energy innovation between the UK and India, benefitting both nations' battles against climate change. Elsewhere, UEL researchers are investigating heat exposure and its impact on health; with the world experiencing record high global temperatures in 2023, this project has the potential to be brought to India to understand what measures can be put into place to protect and promote health in extreme heat. In another example of student exchange and collaboration, UEL students are teaching a summer programme at La Montessori School in Kullu Valley, Himachal Pradesh. With our students gaining practical teaching experience and international exposure to diverse cultures and education systems, they will be able to learn from Indian contexts and apply this back to the UK.

To further our mission for a healthier, fairer and more socially just future for the world's population, we are also developing partnerships with India with a health focus. With the Datta Meghe Institute of Higher Education and Research and the Tata Medical Center, UEL is developing new programmes in a variety of health-related courses including public health, nutrition and specialised cancer care course for nurses. The programmes will be designed, taught, and assessed by UEL, as we export our world-class teaching for the benefit of communities across India.

The opportunities for UEL to expand our research and collaboration are boundless, as we continue to apply our pioneering research to communities across the world. For example, UEL academics are working on a research project looking into the strengths and weaknesses of digital social prescribing. Currently ongoing in the London borough of Hackney, we are now investigating how this project could be adapted elsewhere, bringing radical health improvements to global context.

As half of the world's population, including India, go to the polls this year, we are at a pivotal moment for change. Humanity is now in the fifth industrial revolution and technology and AI are rapidly developing at an exciting pace, posing new challenges and opportunities for the whole of humanity. We need to nurture talented individuals to prepare them to meet the demands of a new age. Whilst the future may be uncertain, the University of East London's commitment to India remains steadfast.



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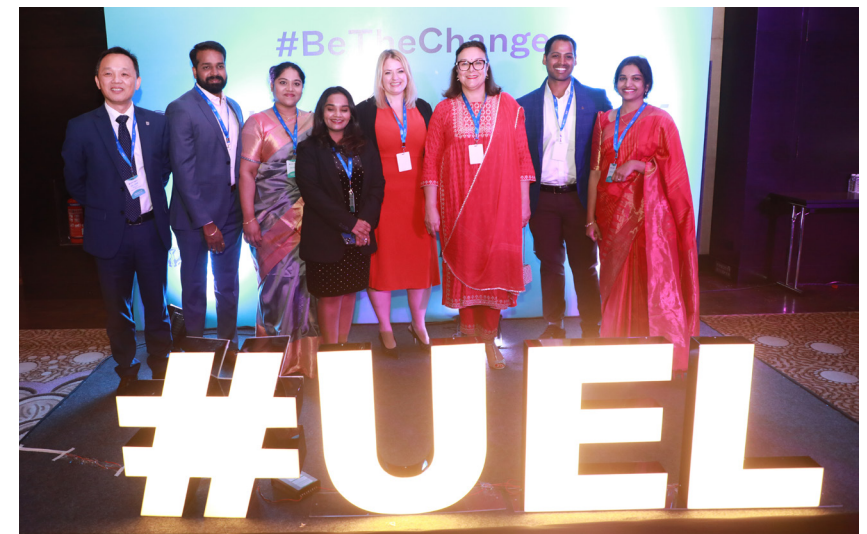
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