

# THE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

**EVERY MOVE MATTERS**

Planet IPE | July 2026



## MD Speaks

Winning the Future,  
One Move at a Time



## Editor's Note

Not just a game of strategy,  
but also of curiosity



## Events, Media Coverages & Publications

A recap of the month that was...



# OPENING MOVE



**ASHWAJIT SINGH**

Founder and Managing Director

“

*On the development board, every move matters. When guided by purpose, every move has the power to change the game.*

Every meaningful change begins with a move. Some are bold and transformative, others are quiet and deliberate, but each has the power to shape lives, strengthen systems and influence what comes next.

Development is much like a game of chess. It demands foresight, patience and the ability to think several moves ahead. There is no single winning strategy because every community, every challenge and every context presents a different board. The most meaningful moves are not always the fastest; they are the ones grounded in evidence, shaped through partnership and guided by the voices of the people at the heart of change.

At IPE Global, we believe that sustainable development is not achieved through a single defining moment, but through a series of thoughtful decisions made with purpose and perseverance. Every move, whether it informs policy, strengthens institutions, empowers communities or unlocks opportunity, creates momentum for the next. In development, the true measure of success is not the move itself, but the lasting difference it makes for generations to come.

# CHESS

**Collaboration, Hope, Equity,  
Strategy & Sustainability.**

Every move we make today shapes the world of tomorrow. Like a game of chess, real change comes from thinking ahead, working together, and staying committed to a better future for all.

— OUR MOVES. OUR IMPACT. —





# STRATEGIC MOVE



**TANYA SINGH**

Senior Director

“

*In development, every move is a lesson. Every lesson shapes lasting change.*



Chess is often described as a game of strategy, but it is equally a game of curiosity, resilience and continuous learning. Every move carries intent, yet the board constantly evolves, demanding adaptability, thoughtful decision-making and the ability to think beyond immediate outcomes. In many ways, development follows the same path. Progress is rarely linear, and meaningful change is built through collaboration, persistence, and the resolve to keep moving forward.

Inspired by World Chess Day, this edition of Planet IPE explores development through the lens of the game. Navigating complexity and embracing uncertainty to forge partnerships and think several moves ahead, the stories in these pages capture the many dimensions of creating an impact. There is no universal playbook for development, and there are no grandmasters here, *only people who continue to learn with every move they make.*

As you turn these pages, we hope these reflections spark new ideas, fresh perspectives and meaningful conversations. While every move may begin on the board, the real victories are realised in stronger systems, empowered communities, and lives transformed.

Hope you enjoy reading this edition!



# Every Move Counts. Every Goal Matters.

Together, we move closer to the 2030 Agenda.



## PEOPLE

End poverty and hunger in all forms and ensure dignity and equality.

NO  
POVERTY



ZERO  
HUNGER



GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



QUALITY  
EDUCATION



## PLANET

Protect our planet's resources and take urgent action on climate change.

CLEAN WATER  
AND SANITATION



AFFORDABLE AND  
CLEAN ENERGY



CLIMATE  
ACTION



LIFE  
ON LAND



2030  
AGENDA



## PROSPERITY

Build a thriving, inclusive, and innovative world for all.

DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH



INDUSTRY, INNOVATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



REDUCED  
INEQUALITIES



SUSTAINABLE CITIES  
AND COMMUNITIES



## PARTNERSHIPS & PEACE



Strengthen partnerships and promote peace, justice, and strong institutions.

PEACE, JUSTICE  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS



PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS

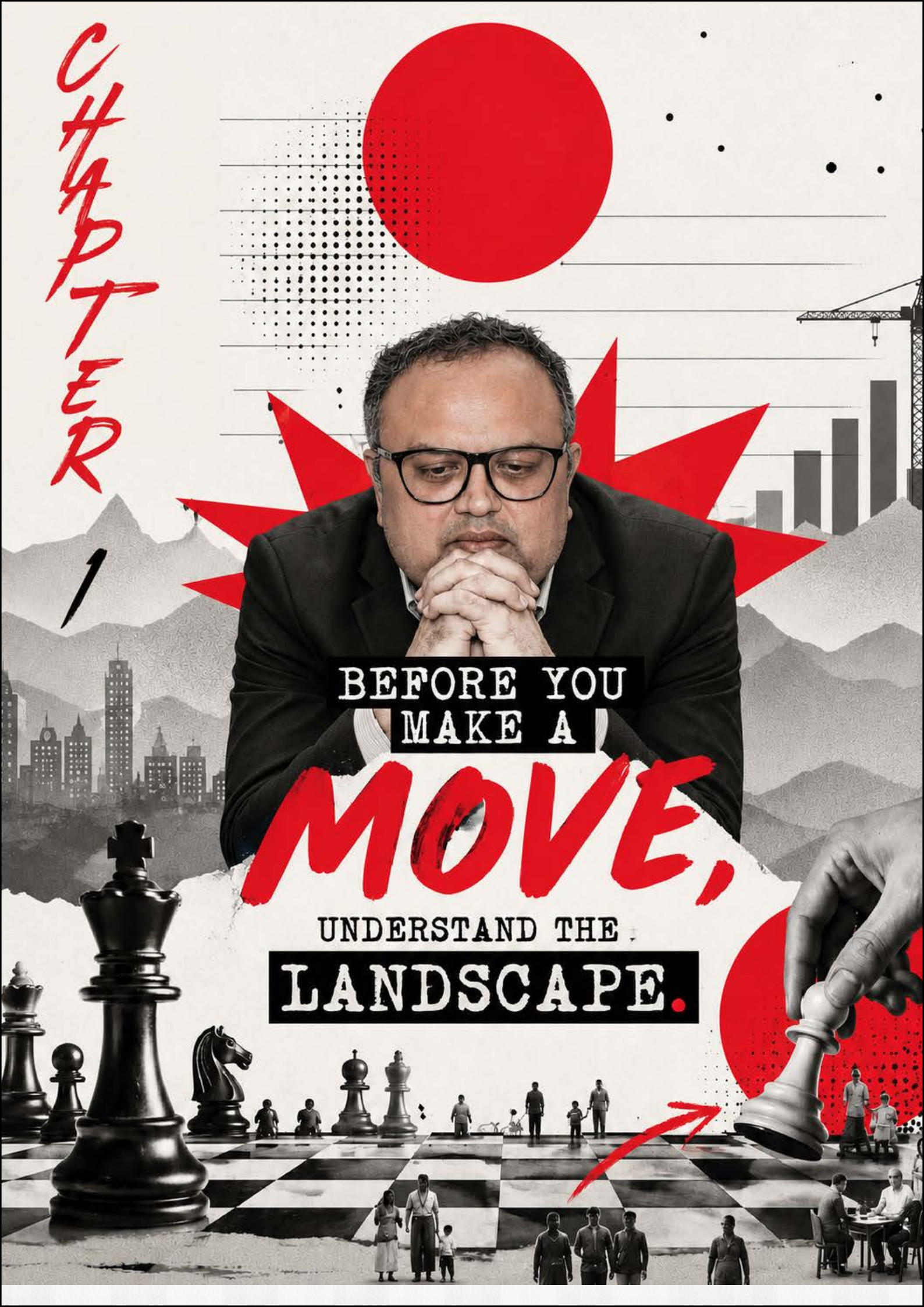


CHAPTER

BEFORE YOU  
MAKE A

MOVE,

UNDERSTAND THE  
LANDSCAPE.



# KNOW THE BOARD



**Q.** Why this game?  
What first drew you to development, and what has kept you here?



Chess taught me that every move has consequences. Development taught me that every move affects people.

I was drawn by the intellectual challenge of solving complex public problems. I have stayed because no two games are ever the same.

Every challenge demands fresh thinking and patience. The most rewarding moves are not the ones that end in checkmate. They are the ones that leave women, children, and communities stronger and better placed for the next move.

**RAGHWESH RAJAN**  
TEAM SEE

**Q.** What's one thing you wish more people understood about development work?



The greatest impact of development is often the least visible. People notice a new school, healthcare centre, road, or policy, but rarely the years of listening, trust-building, collaboration, and persistence behind those outcomes.

Development is not about quick fixes; it is about creating the conditions for lasting change.

A successful development initiative may never make headlines, yet its impact can be life-changing - empowering a health worker to better serve her community, helping a girl stay in school, improving public services, or opening new opportunities for local entrepreneurs.

The goal is to strengthen systems, build resilience, and enable lasting progress. Ultimately, development is not about being the hero of the story, but about empowering people and institutions to shape their own future.

**SHILPI JAIN**  
TEAM CORPORATE  
COMMUNICATION



# CHAPTER 2

## MASTER YOUR



EVERY GREAT GAME STARTS WITH A STRONG FIRST MOVE.

# “THE MOVE THAT CHANGED THE GAME”



**NIHARIKA SRIVASTAVA**  
TEAM EPFM

**Q.** Looking back, what was the first move that made the biggest difference?

Moving from India to France, then to the UK, to study felt like stepping into uncertainty, but it was the move that opened every door afterwards. What I didn't realise then was that geography would become my curriculum: each country my work takes me to teaches something no classroom could. The connections I've made, the diversity of people I meet in the most talent-dense rooms, those are what shape how I see problems and solutions.

My work at IPE has taken me across Africa and the Asia-Pacific, and to my own country, India. I've learned that impact doesn't recognise borders. The real move was choosing to follow the work globally, the questions, and the people whose lives we are trying to make better. Every country changes how you see the problem. Every country changes you. That willingness to be changed, to move, to adapt, to stay curious – that's the difference!

**Q.** Have you ever taken a small decision that ended up having a much bigger impact than you expected?

It was **introducing stronger process controls during the implementation of our Oracle ERP system**. At the time, it seemed like a routine step to ensure accurate vendor mapping, approvals, and financial reporting. However, this early focus on process discipline significantly improved data accuracy, reduced errors, and streamlined coordination across Finance, HR, Procurement, and Project teams.

Much like a strategic move in chess, the benefits were not immediately visible but unfolded over time. The improved controls enhanced compliance, reduced rework, and enabled faster, more informed decision-making across projects. This experience reinforced a valuable lesson: small, well-timed decisions often create the foundation for long-term success and lasting impact.



**TARUN BANSAL**  
TEAM FINANCE

**Q.** When starting a new assignment, what's always your first move?



**KASTURI DROLIA**  
TEAM EPFM

Like in chess, the first move in an evaluation assignment may look simple, but it shapes the direction of everything that follows. **For me, that first move is sensemaking** - understanding the programme deeply, the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, and most importantly, framing the correct evaluation questions it must answer.

Clear evaluation questions are the anchor of any good study. They help focus the inquiry by clarifying what the evaluation needs to examine. They also guide the methods, questions, data collection tools, analysis, and synthesis.

Hence, for me, a strong first move is to invest time in understanding the programme's realities/logic, evaluation's purpose, and core questions. This early sensemaking may take time, but it makes the next steps sharper as the evaluation design becomes more focused, the tools more relevant, the evidence collection more purposeful, and the findings better aligned with the decisions the evaluation is meant to inform.

## CHAPTER 3

# EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED



# TURNING POINT.



PRISKIL LALDUHPUII  
TEAM URBAN

**Q. What's the most unexpected thing you have encountered while working in development?**

The most unexpected thing I've encountered while working in development is how often the biggest breakthroughs come from the simplest conversations. We usually enter a project with data, plans, and well-defined objectives, but I've learned that real progress often begins when people feel heard. A community member asking a difficult question, a frontline worker suggesting a practical solution, or a local official taking ownership can completely change the direction of a project. Those moments have reminded me that **development isn't just about solving problems, it's about building trust, listening with humility, and creating space for people to shape solutions themselves.**

**Q. What's the best lesson you have learnt from something that didn't go according to plan?**

One of the best lessons I learned came from a chess match when I was about 14 years old—a six-hour game.

Our team was leading 4-3, and I was playing the final game. My position was hopeless.

A draw would secure victory for our team. One last possibility: forcing a stalemate.

Maneuvering into a stalemate position, I deliberately offered my last piece. Confident of victory, my opponent captured it without hesitation, and I extended my hand. He accepted, thinking he had won. Then his teammates, who had been holding their breath until that moment, explained to him that their team, thanks to him, had just lost.

More than fifty years later, I still remember that lesson. **In development work, as in chess, things do not always go as intended. When the initial path gets challenged, success often comes from staying calm, thinking hard, and finding a way forward.**

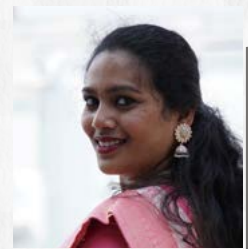


DANIEL KLEE  
TEAM EDUCATION

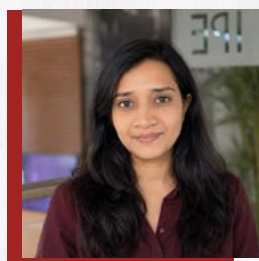
**Q. What's one experience that didn't unfold as expected but helped you grow the most?**

In development, I often see myself as the knight on a chessboard. Unlike the other pieces that move in predictable directions, the knight reaches its destination through an unexpected path. That reflects my experience in **development, progress is rarely linear.** Even with a well-planned strategy, stakeholder priorities, field realities, policy changes, and unforeseen challenges often require us to rethink our approach.

The most unexpected lesson I have learned is that success depends not only on technical expertise but also on adaptability, collaboration, and the ability to navigate challenges creatively.



LOGESHWARI M D  
TEAM URBAN



GUNGUN  
TEAM URBAN

**Q. Tell us about a moment when your project surprised you.**

During the Tamil Nadu Institutional Strengthening Programme, we had planned to deliver 16 capacity-building trainings over two to three months, engaging experts from government, academia, and industry. Just as we were starting, the client asked us to complete all 16 trainings within just three weeks. It felt like a sudden change in strategy midway like a chess game. We had to rethink schedules, coordinate with multiple experts at short notice, and manage logistics while maintaining the quality of every session. The experience reinforced that development work is rarely linear. **Sometimes the most impactful move is not the one you planned, but the one that demands adaptability, collaboration, and calm execution under pressure.** Looking back, that unexpected shift became one of our team's proudest achievements.

# IPE Global Chess Tournament 2024



Where every move reflected  
strategy, patience, and teamwork.



## TOURNAMENT HIGHLIGHTS



Strategic matchups across teams



Friendly competition and collaboration



Fast-paced timed games



Celebrating analytical thinking

e5



**Tarun  
Bansal**

Thinking. Planning.  
Making the right move.



Qh4+





## CHAPTER 4

# THINK THREE MOVES AHEAD

Great decisions  
today shape  
a better world  
**tomorrow.**



# DEVELOPMENT ISN'T ABOUT TODAY. FUTURE PLANS. WHERE ARE YOU NOW? WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE DO YOU WANT TO BE?

**Q.** If you could make one move today that would create the biggest impact ten years later, what would it be?



NIAMH CAHILL-BILLINGS  
TEAM TRIPLE LINE

If I could make one move today, it would be to embed an integrated systems approach across city planning and development, with special attention to secondary cities.

Climate hazards are intensifying and pose an acute risk in dense urban settings, where continued urbanisation is increasing exposure for vulnerable populations. This summer's wildfires and heatwaves have damaged assets, disrupted economies and cost lives. An integrated approach would treat the city as a connected system: public and private actors managing flood catchments hydrologically rather than by administrative boundary, and thermal retrofits specified for both winter warmth and summer cooling. That shift compounds into far greater resilience a decade on, though it's easier said than done!

**Q.** What's one challenge you think development will look very different in five years from now?

Working at the intersection of innovation, public health, and government systems has made it clear that our biggest challenge is often not the absence of good solutions, but the gap between innovation and adoption. Historically, development has asked, "Does this intervention work?" But **the next move in development is not just about innovation; it will be a shift in the unit of analysis: from reactive evaluation to anticipatory governance.**

Technology is advancing faster than trust, and development challenges are rarely black-and-white. They would rather exist in shades of grey, where innovation brings both opportunity and difficult trade-offs. The defining task for development is then not just creating better innovations but building systems capable of equitably governing, adopting, and sustaining. This will require stronger ethical guardrails, behavioural insights, and public trust to ensure the right solutions reach everyone.



RUCHA WANKHEDE  
TEAM HEALTH

# CHAPTER 5

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# SUSTAINABILITY.

## WHAT LASTING CHANGE DO YOU HOPE REMAINS?

Q.

**What's one outcome that can't be measured immediately**

One outcome that can't be measured immediately is shared ownership. **You don't always see it when a project ends or in the final set of indicators. It becomes visible months or even years later, when people continue using a system, improving a process, or solving new challenges without external support.** I've always felt that a project has truly succeeded when communities and institutions stop referring to it as "the project's initiative" and start calling it "the way we do things." That shift in mindset is difficult to quantify, but it says more about sustainability than any report ever could. For me, that's the quiet success of development professional hopes to leave behind.



**T C LALRINZUALI**  
TEAM URBAN

Q.

**What does success look like after a project ends?**

In chess, I often think of the king. It can move only one step at a time, yet every move carries the responsibility of the entire game. Development projects feel very similar. Each decision, activity, or milestone may seem like a small step on its own, but it can influence the project's overall success.

To me, success is when those individual efforts come together to create a lasting impact where the systems, processes, and capacities established during the project continue to function effectively even after the project team has stepped away. **Just as a well-played chess game is judged by the final position of the board rather than a single move, a successful development project is measured by the sustainable outcomes it leaves behind.**



**PRAVEEN KUMAR**  
TEAM URBAN

Q.

**How do you know when you have made a lasting difference?**



**POOJA DHOOPER**  
TEAM URBAN

Managing work at IPE Global is a lot like chess—it requires anticipating the needs of clients, internal teams, and regional stakeholders while keeping every piece moving in harmony. When a project progresses smoothly, I know our approach is delivering. For instance, while strengthening governance systems to manage urban floods one of the clients, the arrival of the monsoon brings a tangible, real-time reminder of our ground-level impact, leaving me incredibly proud of the vital work we do.

Yet the most profound validation lies in the relationships that endure long after a project closes. **Reconnecting with a former colleague after six years for a brief catch-up in a different city, where we still remembered the minute details of each other's health, hobbies, and families, reinforced what matters most.** In the grand strategy of development, the most meaningful and lasting impact we create is the trust, respect, and enduring human bonds we build along the way.

# CHAPTER 6

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**CHECKMATE!**

**EXCEPT NOBODY LOSES.  
BECAUSE DEVELOPMENT SUCCEEDS WHEN  
COMMUNITIES SUCCEED.**

# DEVELOPMENT DIGEST



**If development were a chess game, I would always protect** the long game. The strongest moves aren't always the most dramatic or the ones that win the most pieces. Rather they're the ones that patiently build a stronger position. Lasting impact comes from the wisdom to think beyond the next move, the courage to make difficult strategic choices, and the patience to build systems that endure.

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**DEVLINA BHATTACHARJEE**  
TEAM CORPORATE

**One move every development professional should never forget** is offering my team members opportunities to work across projects and practices. This has helped to diversify their experiences, expand their networks, and improve their skill sets!

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**PRABHAS GUPTA**  
TEAM URBAN



**The next move India needs is** to invest in people and not just programs where we are using data to guide decisions, empathy to shape them, and behaviour change to make them sustainable.

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**AHELI BASU**  
TEAM SEE

**The first thing every development professional should do** is understand where every piece fits on the board. In development, meaningful impact is rarely created by one player alone. Governments, innovators, investors, communities, and development partners each bring unique strengths and perspectives. Success comes from understanding these roles, building trust, and bringing the right players together at the right time. Just like in chess, it's not the strongest individual piece that wins the game- it's how effectively the pieces work together toward a common goal.



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**DEEPTI TRIPATHI**  
TEAM HEALTH



**One move every development professional should never forget** is to listen first. Lasting impact comes not from having all the answers, but from understanding the realities, aspirations, and voices of the people we serve.

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**KRITIKA VERMA**  
TEAM HR

# EVENTS

## Cities Infrastructure & Growth

Supported the Ministry of Panchayati Raj's Atmanirbhar Panchayat Programme as the Technical Agency for the Panchayat Revenue Enhancement Cell (PREC), delivering virtual outreach workshops for 340+ participants across seven states to build awareness of financing opportunities and strengthen Panchayat Own Source Revenue (OSR).



(Kerala)



(Gujarat)



Supported the Government of Karnataka as the Programme Management Unit for the Sustainable Development and Promotion of Tourism in Coastal Karnataka, advancing the vision for sustainable tourism, investment and regional economic growth.

Supported the World Bank-funded Program-for-Results (PforR) in Shimla as the Programme Management Unit, advancing urban water supply and sewerage services through technical support, programme monitoring and institutional strengthening.



Conducted a capacity-building programme under AMRUT 2.0 for newly recruited engineers of the Karnataka Urban Water Supply & Drainage Board, strengthening technical expertise in urban water supply systems, hydraulic modelling and GIS applications.

## Social & Economic Empowerment

Partnered with the Gujarat Skill Development Mission (GSDM), Government of Gujarat, as a Technical Assistance Partner to strengthen women-centric skilling programmes and advance women's participation in the workforce through policy support, institutional strengthening and industry engagement.



Participated in the International Social and Behavior Change Communication Summit 2026 in Panama, showcasing our Cash Plus approach to advancing maternal and child nutrition through evidence-based social and behaviour change interventions.



Convened an industry dialogue with the Rajasthan Skill and Livelihoods Development Corporation (RSLDC) to strengthen women's participation in skilling and formal employment through greater industry engagement and inclusive workplaces.



Showcased the Cash Plus approach at the International Social and Behavior Change Communication Summit, highlighting lessons from its implementation to improve maternal and child nutrition through integrated cash transfers and behaviour change interventions.



Supported the State Transformation Commission, Government of Uttar Pradesh, in convening an inter-departmental dialogue to establish a dedicated FLFP Cell for accelerating women's economic participation through institutional convergence and evidence-based governance.



Partnered with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship as a technical partner to strengthen women-centric skilling and employment pathways through gender-inclusive programmes, employer engagement and data-driven governance. Partnered with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship as a technical partner to strengthen women-centric skilling and employment pathways through gender-inclusive programmes, employer engagement and data-driven governance.



Convened an industry roundtable with Talent Skillsvarsity on advancing gender-inclusive workplaces, bringing together industry leaders to discuss practical strategies for strengthening women's participation in the workforce and fostering inclusive workplaces.



## Social & Economic Empowerment



**SEE Team** participated in the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) Samvad in Koderma, Jharkhand, a dialogue focused on maternal nutrition and the critical first 1,000 days of life. The programme brought together nearly 1,000 participants, including PMMVY beneficiaries, frontline health workers, youth, students, and community members, highlighting the importance of collective action for healthier mothers and children.

The programme was graced by Hon'ble Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt. Annapurna Devi, along with officials from the Koderma district administration. Setting the context for the dialogue, Raghwesh Ranjan, Senior Director, IPE Global, highlighted how PMMVY can serve as a catalyst for advancing Poshan priorities by combining financial support with nutrition awareness, health service utilisation, and community engagement during the first 1,000 days of life.

The Hon'ble Minister unveiled a film highlighting the importance of the first 1,000 days of life. Complementing this, a senior gynaecologist from RIMS shared insights on maternal nutrition, while a Nukkad Natak by local artists brought these messages to life in a culturally resonant and engaging manner.

The PMMVY Samvad demonstrated how community dialogue can strengthen the convergence of PMMVY and Poshan, encouraging greater awareness, participation, and collective responsibility. Through its technical support to governments at the national and state levels, IPE Global continues to contribute to strengthening this convergence and improving nutrition outcomes for women and children.

## Education Skills & Development

Facilitated the Exploratory Dialogue on Industry 4.0 (4IR) as the Project Management Consultant for the ADB-funded SIPTVETS Project.



## Tourism



Komal Agarwal participated in Daksha: Crafting Voices, organised in collaboration with the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, to discuss the role of heritage, responsible tourism and community-led development in building sustainable livelihoods.

# STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Co-hosted an industry roundtable with PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry and signed a Letter of Intent to advance industry-led gender-inclusive growth by strengthening women's participation in the private sector workforce.



Partnered with the Government of Himachal Pradesh for the World Bank-supported Himachal Pradesh – Resilient Action for Development and Disaster Recovery (HP-READY) programme to strengthen disaster resilience and disaster recovery across the state.

Partnered with the State Transformation Commission, Government of Uttar Pradesh, as the Technical Assistance Unit to advance women's economic participation through data-driven policy support, institutional strengthening, industry engagement and strategic communication



# IN THE MEDIA

## Tourism

Presented the Nalanda–Rajgir Concept Plan to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bihar as part of the Destination Development and Strategy Plan for Bihar, outlining a vision to strengthen sustainable tourism, enhance visitor experiences and support local livelihoods. [KNOW MORE](#)



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## Health Nutrition & Wash

Himanshu Sikka shared insights with Bangalore Mirror on the importance of safe drinking water, food safety and hand hygiene to prevent waterborne diseases and strengthen public health during the monsoon season.

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## Social & Economic Empowerment

- Raghwesh Ranjan published an opinion piece in Hindustan Times, highlighting how effective governance and Rajasthan's Cash Plus approach can strengthen maternal and child nutrition outcomes. [KNOW MORE](#)



- Facilitated district-level Master Trainer Trainings on the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) in collaboration with the Department of Women & Child Development, Himachal Pradesh, to strengthen frontline capacity for the effective delivery of maternal cash benefits.

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## Climate & Urban

On World Environment Day, [Abinash Mohanty](#) and [Anil Bansal](#) share their perspectives with The Glitz Media on advancing climate resilience, sustainable urban development and environmental stewardship

## Climate Change & Sustainability

- Discussed the policy, technology and financing frameworks needed to build climate-ready states and accelerate India's Net Zero transition on The Carbon Mandal podcast. [WATCH HERE](#)
- Joined a panel discussion on News Nine to examine whether India is entering a new era of climate-driven heat emergencies and what it means for fragile Himalayan ecosystems. [WATCH HERE](#)
- Participated in a SANSAD TV panel discussion on World Environment Day [WATCH HERE](#)



# PUBLICATIONS

## Team Social & Economic Empowerment

Published new evidence in Nature Health demonstrating that Rajasthan's Cash Plus approach improves maternal nutrition and reduces low birthweight through integrated cash benefits and behaviour change communication. [\*\*READ HERE\*\*](#)



## Team Climate Change & Sustainability

Published **Paving a Green Transition: A New Social Contract Amid West-Asia Crisis**, a study examining the impact of geopolitical shocks on India's economy and livelihoods, while outlining policy recommendations to advance a resilient and inclusive green transition.

**[READ HERE](#)**



# EVERY MOVE MATTERS

From vision to impact, each sector is a step towards a better tomorrow. Our collective strategies today build a resilient, inclusive and sustainable future for all.

Together, we create  
the change.

**CREDITS: TEAM CORPORATE COMMUNICATION**

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