



**UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK & CPRHE/NIEPA RESEARCH PROJECT
WIDENING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA:
INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES**

MARCH 2023 VISIT REPORT

S. Arokia Mary, Denisse Lillo-Sierra, Emily F. Henderson, Nidhi S. Sabharwal, Ann Stewart

Table of Contents

Campus Tour and Induction	3
Library Induction with Chris Bradford	3
Project Publications Meeting	3
Widening Access to Higher Education in India Project Planning Meeting	3
Discussion about Project Leadership	3
Data Analysis Workshop	4
Department of Education Studies Away Morning	4
Meeting with Fiona Copland, DES, Head of Department	5
Institute for Global Sustainable Development Meeting	5
Fircroft College Visit	6
Meeting with Widening Participation Officer in Law	7
Institute of Advanced Studies Salon Networking Event	7
Formulating Code Book Meeting for Pilot	8
PhD Group Meeting	8
Research Instrument Workshop	8
Warwick Research and Evaluation in Widening Participation Event	9
Meeting with Development Office	10
Meeting with the Funder	10

20th March 2023

Campus Tour and Induction

Mr Matt Phillips greeted Dr Nidhi Sabharwal in the reception of the Radcliffe hotel and conference centre on campus. Check-in the day before went smoothly. Matt escorted Dr Sabharwal to University House to collect her per diem payment to use on the trip and to collect her Warwick University staff ID card. Both were then met by Ms Denisse Lillo-Sierra and Ms S. Arokia Mary, both Research Assistants of the project, for a campus tour prior to the library induction.

Dr Sabharwal was then escorted for a campus tour by Ms Lillo-Sierra and Ms Mary. The tour enabled Dr Sabharwal to get familiarised with various aspects of the Central Campus. During the campus tour Dr Sabharwal interacted with Ms Lillo-Sierra and Ms Mary and discussed their doctoral studies.

Library Induction with Chris Bradford

Dr Sabharwal met with Ms Chris Bradford, Academic Support Librarian for the Department of Education Studies (DES) at Warwick. The purpose of the meeting was to understand the ways in which Dr Sabharwal could access library resources remotely. The discussions with Ms Bradford revolved around Dr Sabharwal being guided on how to find literature and gain remote access to journal articles, books, and available data sources on higher education (HE) in India and worldwide.

Project Publications Meeting

Dr Sabharwal and Prof Stewart discussed action plans and mechanisms to tackle some revisions that had been suggested by journal reviewers for a paper they had submitted (with Dr Renu Yadav). They agreed on how to address the key points and a plan of action on how to revise the paper. They also discussed the development of the next paper that they are submitting to an edited collection, which focuses on issues relating to access to legal education in India, with a particular focus on National Law Schools.

21st March 2023

Widening Access to Higher Education in India Project Planning Meeting

Mr Phillips joined Dr Henderson, Dr Sabharwal, and Professor Stewart to run through a draft Gantt chart project plan which was formed using the early draft timeline and the project proposal. The charts for years 1 and 2 were reviewed to stimulate conversation about task content, the correct order of project tasks and identification of any task gaps. Mr Phillips is, as a result, updating the timeline and reconfiguring the data into a left-right layout.

Discussion about Project Leadership

Dr Sabharwal and Dr Henderson met with Dr James Burford, Assistant Professor in DES at Warwick, with whom Dr Henderson has collaborated on several projects. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss project leadership skills and processes. In preparation for the meeting, the participants read an article from a research project about project leadership and

used the article as a basis for this discussion. Key topics covered included transnational project leadership, including managing power relations between Global North and Global South country contexts, and the affective dimensions of leadership.

22nd March 2023

Data Analysis Workshop

The data analysis workshop was held on 22nd March 2023, in which the initial data analysis for two proposed journal articles from the project 'Fair Chance to Education: Gendered Pathways to Educational Success in Haryana' were discussed. Dr Henderson, Dr Sabharwal, Prof Stewart, Dr Anjali Thomas and Ms Ragini Khurana, Research Assistant of the project, reviewed the thematic analysis carried out by Ms Lillo-Sierra and Ms Mary. A data analysis pack was developed and circulated amongst the participants of the workshop for their perusal.

In the morning session, team members discussed the potential argument of a journal article about the construction of faculty members in helping and/or hindering HE access and choice in the Indian context. The participants were provided with an overview of the activities and the procedures of the initial data analysis processes by Dr Henderson, Ms Lillo-Sierra, and Ms Mary. Following this, participants' feedback, clarifications, comments, and suggestions were discussed and recorded. Similarly, in the afternoon session, the paper on the gendered spatial dimensions of HE access and choice were discussed. Here again, the participants were briefed regarding the processes of data analysis, themes and the possible ambits of inferences that could be drawn. Participants' feedback, clarifications, comments, and suggestions were thoroughly discussed and recorded for facilitating further revisions and planning future steps.

23rd March 2023

Department of Education Studies Away Morning

On 23rd March a staff development morning was organised within DES, and Dr Sabharwal was invited to attend as an Honorary Associate Professor in the department. The away morning took place in two parts. Firstly, Dr Henderson as Co-Director of Postgraduate Research (PGR) in DES facilitated a session which was about the PGR programme in the department. The discussion included what is involved in the department-level PGR offer and what might be needed to add to this programme. The session then included a review of the different aspects of the PGR programme and how they are related to social inclusion issues. This latter part led into the second section, which was facilitated by Social Inclusion lead Dr James Burford. Dr Burford introduced the new Social Inclusion role and the priorities for the role. There were then a discussion of social inclusion matters and priorities in DES. Dr Sabharwal was able to meet several members of the department and to gain a better sense of how DES functions; her contributions to discussions were much appreciated by colleagues.



Figure 1: DES faculty members during the away morning

Meeting with Fiona Copland, DES, Head of Department

Dr Sabharwal, with Dr Henderson, met Prof Fiona Copland, Head of Department in DES. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce Dr Sabharwal to Prof Copland, and their research areas, with Dr Henderson facilitating the discussion. Dr Sabharwal thanked Prof Copland for extending the opportunity to serve as Honorary Associate Professor in DES and offered her gratitude for continued support of collaboration between their institutions. The meeting included a lively exchange of thoughts and ideas on various aspects of HE, methodologies on linguistic ethnography and teaching practices of the English language across the UK, India and other country contexts. The meeting concluded with strengthening the current collaboration and striving for future engagements.

Institute for Global Sustainable Development Meeting

Dr Sabharwal and Dr Henderson met with Prof Elena Korosteleva, Director of the Institute for Global Sustainable Development (IGSD) at Warwick. The purpose of the meeting was for all parties to meet and learn more about the work of IGSD. Following introductions, Prof Korosteleva summarised the work of IGSD, explaining its history and current themes (e.g., biodiversity, resilience, and complex ecosystems/climate change, among others). IGSD forms a major part of the University sustainability strategy, in terms of delivering on research in this area. The discussions centred around identification of avenues where HE research could fit into the work of IGSD, to consider future potential collaborations between IGSD and the WAHEI team. Potential sites of collaboration included HE as a site for sustainability education, HE as a means of delivering on sustainability priorities, and the role of HE in public engagement about sustainability. Overall, it was agreed that there was potential for future collaboration.

24th March 2023

Fircroft College Visit

Dr Henderson and Dr Sabharwal met with Dr Michael Conway-Jones, Vice-Principal of Fircroft College, and Dr Holly Henderson, a faculty member at the College teaching Access to Higher Education courses. Fircroft College is an adult learners' residential college committed to social justice. More information on this college can be accessed through <https://www.fircroft.ac.uk/>

The purpose of the visit to Fircroft College was to understand and learn fully about its history and heritage, and the ways in which the college was supporting adult learners who have experienced some form of disadvantage or still experiencing disadvantaged life conditions, in furthering their educational pursuits. The visit involved meeting with the Vice-Principal of the college, who explained the history of the college, the courses offered and the ways in which learning support is extended to adult learners who would like to improve their lives through learning new things.

Dr Henderson and Dr Sabharwal also joined Dr Holly Henderson's Access to HE class and met students who were on the path of accessing university education. The meeting with students also involved discussing issues of access to HE in India, including presenting on key themes from the WAHEI research project. Dr Sabharwal and Dr Henderson found the experience to be a rich learning experience, and they hope to return to meet other groups of students over time.



Figure 2: Visit to Fircroft College

27th March 2023

Meeting with Widening Participation Officer in Law

Dr Sabharwal met Ms Becca Kirk, Widening Participation Officer, at the Warwick Law School. The purpose of the meeting was to learn more about the importance of the Widening Participation (WP) agenda in the UK context, and to gain an understanding of the types of outreach programmes implemented at the law school, which has helped increase access to home students who experience disadvantaged life conditions, and the ways in which the students are supported to progress from their first year to attainment.

Institute of Advanced Studies Salon Networking Event

Dr Emily Henderson and Dr James Burford hosted an Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) Salon titled ‘Connecting Research at Warwick on Doctoral Education and Academia’ with the purpose of connecting researchers at Warwick who currently work on, or are interested in working on, the topics of doctoral education and the academic profession. The event was conducted to enable collaborations amongst academics and administrative stakeholders to brainstorm ideas for establishing a Centre for Doctoral Education and Academia Research. The event brought in academics from across Warwick to brainstorm and pave the road and milestones ahead.



Figure 3: Participants of the IAS Salon

In the initial session, the participants were welcomed by Dr Burford and Dr Henderson. Following a brief introductory presentation, the objectives and agenda of the IAS Salon event were discussed. The participants were enabled to network by presenting their area of interest in researching doctoral education and academic identities and group activities. More

information on this event can be accessed through:

https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/ias/researchandnetworks/calendar/upcomingevents/crawdea/

Formulating Code Book Meeting for Pilot

Dr Sabharwal conducted a meeting with Ms Lillo-Sierra and Ms Mary as an induction session for generating a code book for the quantitative instruments for the Widening Access to Higher Education in India (WAHEI) pilot study. This meeting also discussed how variables were to be captured within the instruments for further sequential analytical steps that were to be carried out after data collection.

PhD Group Meeting

In a joint effort of bringing together PhD researchers, Dr Henderson and Dr Burford host a monthly PhD group meeting to enable their doctoral supervisees to foster academic networks, links, and discussions. Dr Sabharwal was invited to join April's meeting. The focus of the session was to engage with the conceptualisation of validity in social science research. Two research articles on the discourse of validity had been circulated amongst the group members in advance. Extensive discussion on the conceptualisation and relevance of validity in research took place. Dr Dangeni from the University of Newcastle and Ms Lillo-Sierra, also participated in the doctoral group meeting actively.

28th March 2023

Research Instrument Workshop

The objective of this workshop was to enable a thorough discussion and revision of the research instruments before piloting them. Dr Burford; Dr Rebecca Morris, Associate Professor in DES; Dr Penelope J. Plowman, External Research Associate at the University of East Anglia; Prof Ana Aliverti, Co-Director of the Criminal Justice Centre and the Director of Research Funding at Warwick Law School; and Dr Dangeni, Newcastle University, formed the panel of experts who were invited to offer their valuable comments and feedback to enable possible amendments.

Dr Sabharwal chaired the session and offered an overview of the project to the panel members. Following this, Dr Henderson, Dr Sabharwal, and Prof Stewart engaged actively with the panel to aggregate all the comments and inputs provided by the panel for fine-tuning the instruments one by one. All the instruments were discussed extensively accommodating for the objectives and responses of the project members as well. Particular attention was given to the formulation of questions, refinement of instructions for respondents and clarification of conceptual elements. All the comments, feedback and suggestions were documented by Ms Lillo-Sierra and Ms Mary.



Figure 4: Dr Sabharwal discussing the aim of the research instrument workshop

In the second session, all the comments, feedback and suggestions collected during the first session were reviewed and reflected upon. Suitable recommendations were then incorporated to finetune all the instruments that were to be used for the pilot.

29th March 2023

Warwick Research and Evaluation in Widening Participation Event

Prof Emma Smith, faculty member of DES at Warwick, and Dr Tamara Thiele, Widening Participation Evaluation and Evidence Manager at Warwick, hosted a Research and Evaluation in Widening Participation Event. This group involved staff and students from across Warwick who shared their interest and expertise in undertaking research in issues related to WP.

The purpose of this event was to present and discuss ongoing research and projects on WP mechanisms for inclusion of students from disadvantaged contexts in the UK. However, the event also engaged with research and projects which focus on WP of HE at the global context. WAHEI's presentation was in the context of enabling WP in HE in India. Prof Stewart presented the objectives, aims and impact of the first Fair Chance Foundation-funded project to the attendees present in the event. Following this, Dr Sabharwal and Dr Henderson presented the objectives and scope of WAHEI, which intends to focus on the role of faculty members in WP of HE in the Indian context. The presentations were followed by clarifications, discussion, and comments by the event participants.



Figure 5: Prof Stewart, Dr Henderson and Dr Sabharwal presenting at the Research and Evaluation in Widening Participation Event

29th March 2023

Meeting with Development Office

Dr Sabharwal and Dr Henderson met with Ms Sara Akkad, who is the main contact for WAHEI with the Warwick Development Office, who stewards the relationship with Fair Chance Foundation. The meeting was an opportunity for Ms Akkad to meet Dr Sabharwal in person, and for the meeting attendees to brief ahead of the meeting with Fair Chance Foundation on 30th March. The meeting included Ms Akkad asking about updates from the WAHEI project and about the visit activities that had been taking place. Ms Akkad also reassured the team that she and colleagues are exploring the potential scholarship funding for a PhD scholarship to accompany the project. Ms Akkad reassured the team of her ongoing support with the project and Dr Henderson thanked Ms Akkad for the meeting and support.

30th March 2023

Meeting with the Funder

Dr Sabharwal, Dr Henderson, and Professor Stewart travelled to London to meet trustees of the Fair Chance Foundation. The meeting took place at Mr Sumir Karayi's home. Mr William Edmundson also attended the meeting, with Ms Corrie Pope sending apologies. The team presented paper copies of the final compilation report of the first Fair Chance

Foundation project and highlighted some of its key achievements. Mr Karayi and Mr Edmundson expressed their satisfaction with the outcomes.

Dr Henderson and Dr Sabharwal then provided an outline of the second WAHEI project, indicating that the piloting of the fieldwork was scheduled for the month of May. Mr Karayi and the team discussed the overall intended outcome of the project. Mr Karayi (Mr Edmundson had left to attend another meeting) expressed his enthusiasm for the project. He also took the opportunity to suggest two possible additional initiatives that the team might like to consider or assist with developing. The discussion between the trustees and the team was very positive and creative. The team was also extremely grateful for the hospitality offered by Mr Karayi.