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**Knuppel:** The American Institute of Indian Studies was founded nearly sixty years ago to further the knowledge of India in the United States by supporting American scholarship on India. The programs of AIIS foster the production of and engagement with scholarship on India, and promote and advance mutual understanding between the citizens of the United States and of India. AIIS seeks to provide access to scholarship about India to a wide and diverse audience.

Welcome to the July 2021 installment of the American Institute of Indian Studies podcast. My name is Anandi Silva Knuppel and I am a media specialist with AIIS. Through this podcast series, we hope to explore various exciting AIIS initiatives and engage with our current and former fellows, students, instructors, and researchers in this challenging time for connection.

In this episode, we will explore the joint work of the Council of American Overseas Research Centres, or CAORC, and AIIS in supporting faculty at community colleges and minority-serving institutions. CAORC has been partnering with member centers since 2017, organizing two-week international study abroad trips focusing on enriching faculty development opportunities through the exploration of complex global issues like climate change, religious and ethnic diversity, and the complexities of urban sustainability.

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These professional development opportunities introduce US faculty to specialists abroad, global collaborative and scholarly networks, and various immersive learning experiences.

Since 2017, CAORC has partnered with AIIS to bring community college and minority-serving institutions faculty to India for a two-week capacity-building workshop. The current cycle of CAORC-AIIS faculty development seminar applications is due August 31st, 2021, and the program is slated to run in early 2022. That is still of course likely to change given the current, extremely difficult COVID situation in India and elsewhere. You can keep up-to-date with the latest information on this next seminar cycle by visiting [www.caorc.org/faculty-development-India](http://www.caorc.org/faculty-development-India). The CAORC-AIIS faculty development seminar brings faculty to India to explore the “varying economic, cultural, social, and environmental pressures confronting emerging cities as more and more Indians migrate to urban areas in search of work and opportunity.

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As towns grow into cities and as cities morph into megacities, what can be done to ensure that demands for quality economic opportunities and decent standards of living are balanced against increased pressures on the environment, energy resources, and threatened cultural sites and traditions?”

Beyond the two weeks seminars faculty take their experiences, networks, and knowledge back to their home institutions in the US and create impactful creative research projects that bridge

their work in the States with the work being done in India. These projects are collaborative across minority-serving institutions and community colleges and are deeply connected to experiential student learning.

[0:04:02-0:05:26]

Joining us today to explore the work of CAORC and AIIS is Sandria Freitag, Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of History at NC State University and leader of the CAORC-AIIS faculty development seminars. Professor Freitag and I will take our conversation on a tour of exciting current projects in development by seminar faculty with work by Maria Del Carmen Paniagua Quinones, Associate Professor in the math department in Ivy Tech Community College (Bloomington, Indiana); Mukila Maitha, Associate Professor of Geography, Department Chair, and Coordinator of both the GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and Drone Technology program at Harper College; and Amar Sawhney, Professor of Architecture, Building Construction, and Interior Design at Miami Dade College, alongside Jessica Barnes, Senior Lecturer in Geography at Northern Arizona University.

Professors Freitag, Paniagua, Maitha, Sawhney, and Barnes, thank you all so much for being here. First, we will turn to Professor Freitag to tell us a little bit about the CAORC-AIIS seminars. So Sandy, to you first. You have been leading these seminars and are in a unique position to tell us about them and what they mean to the faculty and the goals of these seminars. So first I'd like just to open it up and have you tell us a little bit about the CAORC faculty development seminars, what these seminars cover, what are the goals of the seminars, and how you reach out to minority-serving institutions to participate in the seminars.

[0:05:27-0:06:58]

**Freitag:** Yes, as you mentioned earlier, this originated with the CAORC itself. CAORC has a budget line in the federal budget and works with its, I think they have something like, thirty or forty members who specialize in different parts of the world and they wanted to collaborate with a number of those different organizations in order to bring faculty in institutions which often did not have a chance to have a kind of global reach of any kind. So when they came to AIIS, of course, the idea was, how do we expand both the experience and knowledge base of faculty in both community colleges and minority-serving institutions about India? And we worked through a really interesting process that does that. It is definitely a work in progress and we have changed our approaches each of the years that we've planned - we're now through planning for what will be the third year of the program - learning as we go. And the learning itself I'd like to spend a little time talking about because I have learned massive amounts. It's been really interesting.

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Our goal, as I said, was to make sure that we were allowing faculty to experience and gain a knowledge-base about India that they could use when they got back home. CAORC has

handled completely the recruitment side of this thing and they've done a wonderful job of building up ways to find interested people in these two kinds of institutions, the community colleges and the minority-serving institutions, and I think each year we get better at that. And we have a really interesting selection process that CAORC oversees that involves some of our members as well as other people that they have identified who are at these institutions to evaluate the kinds of proposals that come in. Our particular focus from the beginning has been urban sustainability and we came to that because of a couple of interesting kinds of partnerships that we have within AIIS.

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One of the really critical set of actors in supporting this program with CAORC or has the Title VI centers, those largest centers who have received federal funding in order to focus on South Asia more generally or on India specifically, and they get a certain amount of resources, including some from that are earmarked for outreach as that is known from these comprehensive canvases. So we went to that group of Title VI centres when we were trying to decide on a focus and asked for some feedback about that and the feedback that we got that overlapped also with what some of our own institutions other member institutions were doing was this notion of urban sustainability. Several of our campuses are also doing that and it struck us as something that would be of great interest to the faculty that we were aiming this program at. So we have worked on that focal point and we have gone to particular cities that we thought would be revealing in different ways because the cities all have different ways of dealing with this and different actors in them that it would be of interest to the participants to gain some familiarity with.

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And we have a number of different ways of doing that. In some cases it's other educational institutions - we have a lot of NGOs, non-governmental organizations, that work on these issues with particular communities within the cities. And then the other sort of guiding principle for various reasons that have to do with government of India requirements but also from our strengths, our AIIS strengths, was to try to concentrate on cities where we have language instruction programs because those programs are really deeply embedded within the cities and interact with a lot of the members of different communities and the NGOs in those places. So it gave us a leg up, a head start in terms of how we would do this.

**Knuppel:** And now for these two weeks programs, wherever the theme takes you, what do those two weeks look like for the faculty participants?

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**Freitag:** That's an interesting question. I'm grinning. It's too bad we don't have this visual because that's probably the biggest first lesson I learned. We structured the first year sort of shape by two things. One was the kinds of expectations one has when one does

research-oriented conferences, etc., etc. And the second constraint was that every time I would say, "Can we go to blah blah?" I would be told by the staff, "That will take you forever to get there." Traffic is terrible in all of these cities and we were going to lose a huge amount of time sitting on buses before we ever got to any place where we could actually see something in action. So the first, because of those two frames I guess, ended up being a lot of talking heads. And while that worked in terms of time efficiency, it was really not very appealing to this particular cohort. They were very antsy. They wanted to be out. They wanted to see what was going on.

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And they seemed to be quite willing to pay the price of having to sit in a bus instead of in a meeting room because the pay off once they got to a site made such a difference and the kinds of interactions they could have with the people involved in the particular community in the efforts that they were visiting were adjust just light years beyond what they could get from someone showing them slides in the middle of a meeting room. And so the second year we completely flipped that and we spent all of our time doing site visits. There is no question that this was infinitely more valuable and useful and interesting to the people who were involved - and it did involve long bus rides. The one thing we lost a bit in that second program, which we will be making up for this time, was the kind of discussions amongst ourselves after those experiences and we may have to use some of the bus rides back in order to do it or we may be able to figure out some way to do it around dinner time and that sort of thing so that we can debrief collectively, which I think will make a big difference.

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**Knuppel:** It seems like there are so many points of connection for you, for the program participants, for the networking connections that they make. There are so many points of connection here and in each one of those days there's the possibilities for new projects, and new ideas, and these exchanges. And what do you hope comes out of these seminars for the participants and what do you all hope comes out of it for the communities in India that you partner with?

**Freitag:** From what I've learned so far, there are a really interesting series of takeaways, I think, from these first two years of the program. And I think it - I actually wrote these all down at one point to share with another group within the AIIS, and I think it might be worth just mentioning those.

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The first thing that I learned beyond what I just said to you in terms of how we changed it from year one to year two is that the predominant format that our fellows in these MSI's use when they get back is that they teach kind of big-picture issues - climate change, air quality, challenges around sustainability - by exploring those in their specific localities and then

providing parallels with India. And that to me is really interesting because it means that, contrary to what happens in our member institutions, where people become, campuses become members because I have a concentration on India already in terms of their academic program and so the kinds of things they teach tend to be quite specific, these are comparative and they are big picture-focused and so that it really makes a difference.

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And particularly given the kind of movement and moment in which we're all located at the moment, it seems really important to me that one of the things that comes out of that is that they simultaneously help their students understand what it is in *their* systemic circumstances of everyday life that they want to address or change through student agency and what they need to preserve for a sense of themselves. It also means bringing together research, teaching, and public programming. Almost all of the participants seem to think organically in those terms, so one of the things that I find myself doing every time, for instance, the expanded board of AIIS meets is to make sure that we don't only have as a reference "research," that we talk about those three - research, teaching, public programming - in ways that make clear there's a different kind of expertise that can move in those different directions. And I think the examples that we have today are really helpful in terms of revealing those interactions and interconnections.

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Also this is a group which has a really broad range of both humanistic and scientific disciplines in their training and interests. So we've had people from the arts, from history, from math, from environment, from geography, etc., and that has involved them all teaching interdisciplinarily. And that means that they have these very interesting ways to offer different aspects on big picture issues and to feature complimentary kinds of evidence and methods of analysis. It's very rich. And finally, I think the last take away was that they also see their cohorts as potential collaborators around teaching, research, public programming. That set of takeaways I find really promising. It defines a certain kind of expertise and suggests, in a period when AIIS is itself thinking about new ways of doing things to respond to the moment in which we find ourselves, it makes me think that one potential goal for the future of AIIS could be to build on this broader understanding of what constitutes expertise with what has been our standard measures that are very often defined by research strengths.

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**Knuppel:** I love that. I think it captures so many of the different ways that these participants come together but also thinking forward, in a forward manner, about what AIIS and CAORC are coming up against as the programs evolve and as you're bringing in a broader public as participants and those ideas are evolving as well.

Next we'll speak with Maria del Carmen Paniagua Quinones, Associate Professor in the math department in Ivy Tech Community College (Bloomington, Indiana). And to you, Carmen. Prior to joining CAORC and AIIIS, you had worked on a project with your students in Indiana on measuring poverty using the multidimensional poverty index or MPI. Can you tell us a little bit about this project, how you found your way to the CAORC-AIIS seminars, and how this project on poverty and the MPI was transformed by your seminar experience?

**Quinones:** One of the classes that I'm teaching every semester is about reasoning with numbers and this class is 100-level math. And one of the objectives is reviews on mathematical models and connect with some real applications.

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And when reviewing, for instance, linear models, or linear equations, I challenge my students to reflect about poverty line. And the poverty line here in Indiana is " $y = 4540x + 8340$ ." And something that admittedly the students, when they check this equation, the first question is my **???? (around 19:30)**, "What do these numbers mean to my personal life?" And it was interesting when I started using some of these kind of examples, my students were so engaged in this conversation and understood much better the idea of connecting linear models and some other ways to measure poverty with their real lives. And it was interesting after going back to this definition of poverty and identify that, you know, some of them live in these poverty conditions. It was the time when I decided to challenge a little bit more to my students with adding these multidimensional poverty index. So when I introduced this project, it was interesting in the sense that many of them understood much better that poverty is not only a simple in a financial way but they have many aspects, for instance, the multidimensional poverty index measure 10 different indicators and when I apply this project it was before going to India.

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And it was interesting after my experience to India, I came back to Bloomington, Indiana, and I changed my mind in many aspects after observing many communities - poor communities that they called slums - and it was so interesting to observe, for instance, access to water or access to sanitation. Yes, difference between some slums we visited that some of them, they don't have access to water or sanitation and, some of them, they have. It's amazing the quality of life between these two communities so my observation changed a lot the way I see now the index to measure poverty. So it was for me a before-and-after point of understanding myself, the way of measuring poverty.

**Freitag:** One of the things that interested me so much is the way that you have also now been trying to connect up not only conceptualizations and measures of property and how those can be culturally and historically determined, but also what happens when you connect that set of measures to measures which have to do with sustainability and other kinds of implications about how we're doing in terms of climate change and environmental issues.

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And since you're going to have a research reward as a follow-up project, if and when we can finally go back to India, I'd be really interested in what you've been thinking about in terms of how you'd put those two kinds of measures together in a way which works in a comparative kind of context.

**Quinones:** Yes, well, you know when after observing this economic, environmental, and social factors in India, it was a time when I could have the chance to connect what I'd been doing with my students - for instance, I also ran a project about estimating the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the personal-, regional-, and national-wide levels - and when observing at least in one community when Dr. Sandria took us and it was a chance to observe some places with this idea of using environmental friendly ways to reduce the emissions and some of this community uses solar panels to dry mangoes and to sell these products and it was the moment when I connected my students CO<sub>2</sub> project with what they are doing in India.

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And I observed also that these communities improve the quality of life for these ladies and it was a moment when I realized, "oh, I can take some of these ideas and then push a little bit with my students with this project and try to go to some small businesses and then try and help improve also the environmental issues with this project, the CO<sub>2</sub>, and move my projects in a different level. And just by doing this, I remember at least two of my students came back after they completed the CO<sub>2</sub> and they have a small businesses and they asked me to check and verify the calculations because they were thinking too seriously use some, you know, like appliances, more efficient appliances from the electricity point of view, and try to reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> because they were more conscious about these CO<sub>2</sub> emissions but also, you know, for saving because, as we know, for instance, when we use one 1 kilowatts per hour, the amount of admission is one 1.37 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>.

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So connecting these two definitions - for instance, in math we define this as an identity ratio - but connecting the mathematical side with their living experience and then moving in a different level, we can see the systemic point of view, from not only personal level but also regional and then national. And connecting these two points that I observe in India and then coming back with new ideas helped me a lot to realize that ??? (around 25:26) I can create or try to connect these two indexes, the poverty index and the sustainable indexes.

**Freitag:** I think this is great. It really brings home the way that being immersed in another place can help you think both about that place and about home and the kind of work that you do at home. It's a great example.

**Knuppel:** It's fascinating how your work in the States has influenced your decision and choice and the ways of our approached work in India and that his intern come back and influence your work in the states in the states and I wonder how your students have I taken to the kind of transnational, global take on something like the MPI. How have you seen your students kind of interact with this take on this content?

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**Quinones:** Well, for some of them it was so interesting because not only from the personal level when... I have experience and let me tell you from one of my classes. When reviewing that poverty line and then connected with the poverty index, some of them suggested why we choose one over the other? You know, a mathematical model. And I told them that, from my experience and from something that my professor used to say, mathematical models are wrong but some of them are useful. And I realize myself and my students that when you use, for instance, the poverty line, they can measure only the financial side of this big issue, poverty. But when using 10 indicators that the multidimensional poverty index uses, is another level of understanding how precise and accurate we can, you know, measure poverty. And even when we talk and reflect about these two models, my students realize, some of them, "Oh my gosh, I'm living under poverty conditions using the poverty line," and it was like the moment of truth for many of them when they figured it out, these kind of situations.

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And I told them, "Don't be afraid to share your thoughts. We are in a class. It's protected." And even I shared to them that, when I was a graduate student, I lived all these years under this poverty line and it's not something we should be afraid to express, but something that is important to share because its an open eye for many, many other people who maybe are afraid or don't realize that they are living in these conditions. And for them, it was a moment of truth to realize not only that the poverty indexes here in the U.S. but in some other countries and see that in some ways we have a blessing to have a country who is, you know, very strong compared to some other countries and to see, you know, that real life for some other people who live, you know, far away from us. And it was a moment of reflection and understanding and, I think, for them, it was a good way to see what is going on in our world and in our lives.

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**Knuppel:** That's so powerful and personally resonates with me. And I can imagine you thinking that some of these opportunities, you know, will broaden our understanding of the world but then also actually changes our own conceptions of where we are and how we live here in the States. So thank you for that insight into, kind of, your students' experience.

Next, we'll turn to Mukila Maitha, Associate Professor of Geography, Department Chair, and coordinator of both the GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and Drone Technology programs

at Harper College. So, Mukila, how did you come across the CAORC-AIIS opportunities and what about them spoke to your research and teaching at the time?

**Maitha:** So, I came across the CAORC opportunities through two sources. So I am on a list-serve from the University of Arizona Center for Middle Eastern Studies. So this is a list-serve that provides international education opportunities across the US and there was a section there that talked about the CAORC faculty seminars. And so I went to the website and took a look at those opportunities. And then also I heard about it from our college's International Education director, Rich Johnson. So he is also familiar - he has been familiar with CAORC for a long time - so also he would post those opportunities. So when I heard about that, then I went there to look at their website and the kinds of opportunities they offered faculty.

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In terms of how this spoke to me and captured my interest, well, as a geographer, I am very interested in learning about the world. I do teach physical geography and geographic information systems, so I'm always trying to further my learning about earth's natural systems, human diversity, and our relationship with the environment, and trying to find out about things that I could bring into the classroom. And because exploration and discovery are such central themes in geography this sounded like a good opportunity for me.

Well, there are several faculty seminars, as you all know, and the one for India had a focus on sustainability and especially in the urban environment and that quite... that aligned very well with sustainability issues, and issues of climate change and environmental change, which are central issues in the physical geography class. And in the physical geography class, South Asia and India feature several times in the course and this provided me an opportunity to learn a lot more about the region and bring that knowledge back to my students.

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And then on a personal level, I grew up in Kenya, which has got a large Indian diaspora. And because of that there's a cultural imprint on the country. And most of the South Asians in Kenya came from Punjab and Gujarat. And so I've always been and I still do have many friends who are of Indian descent in Kenya and I've always been curious to have a first-hand experience of that country.

**Knuppel:** So, tying together your background, your professional life as a geographer, and everything that goes along with that, and also interest particularly in the environment and sustainability, some of your recent projects marry all of those things via the seminars. So you had recently completed your COARC-AIIS seminar before writing a piece during the pandemic entitled "Explaining North India's Oppressive Smog." Can you tell us a little bit about this project and maybe a little bit about what it was like unpacking your experience back in the States during the early months of the pandemic?

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**Maitha:** Yes, so when I was going to India, there were several directions that my curriculum project could have taken. So we were asked to all create a project that we could use in our classroom. And the seminar touched on several topics so I was interested in a number of themes. So one was water. Another one was biodiversity. And then the urban landscape architecture was also another area of interest. The impact of social marginalization and exposure to environmental hazards for the poor was also another one and then air pollution. So I settled on air pollution because of a couple of reasons. One, it's an issue that I taught about and I felt that I could develop a case study and especially one that in future could allow some comparisons and so the students could analyze what is happening in a different country and also compare that to our pollution here in the United States.

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Then also when we visited North India in particular it's the time of year when air pollution is at its worst and I got to, we all got to experience that firsthand - were really immersed in it. And for me, because I suffer from seasonal allergies, I picked up a nasty cough and cold as a result of that. So it spoke to me both in terms of my class - what I wanted to do in the classroom - so I found out that connection, and then just that personal experience of being there and having to wear masks even before we could even imagine COVID was going to hit us. And then coming back to the US... So I carried a GPS receiver with me and one thing I did was to collect GPS points for our journey throughout India. And so when I came back I took that information and mapped our our journey and created an online map where I pointed out all the stops that we had and took the notes and schedule that were given by Sandria and then helped document that. So I noted where we were and then the significance of the different sites and the different themes.

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As I went through this, I just saw so... I knew that just during my experience but it also hit me that there is really a lot to learn about India that I didn't know about and that that experience was just the beginning. Well there was a small taste of it growing up in Kenya, being exposed to my colleagues and that, but then now going to the country and being exposed to environmental issues there, there's still a lot to learn. Now Harper happened to have, when we came back, an excellent faculty development course on South Asia, which is run by two faculty members of Indian descent. And then also that helped me when I did write my lesson for my students. I did contextualize India before jumping into the discussion of air pollution so that they can understand a little bit about the country and not necessarily jump into stereotypes and biases right away.

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In the article I did talk about the causes of the pollution and what was being done in the country to solve that problem and I did let the students know so that they do not imagine that nothing is being done in the country to address that issue. And upon coming back, the connection with other seminar members through social media using Whatsapp has also been very good because we're able to ask each other questions and find out areas where we can collaborate and so on.

**Freitag:** The range of disciplines that have been represented in these first two cohorts have been really astonishing and I think some of the best conversations, both informal and formal, that we had amongst these two cohorts really had to do with people posing particular issues and then other people drawing on their own disciplinary backgrounds and the kinds of questions they'd been asking in order to be helpful in broader discussions. And as several of the people that you've been interviewing here have made the point, they have kept in touch and they are still learning from each other and helping each other and this may be, from my perspective at least, one of the great strengths of the way this program has worked.

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Mukila and I have been talking for other reasons and potential projects about the fact that he does all this work with GIS and that his campus is working to get a drone technology certification program in place. And so I was wondering if you would want to talk a little more broadly about how you think that would connect up both to your own classroom and, because you've been doing things like workshops that you've invited your cohort to attend, how you think it might be used more broadly.

**Maitha:** In terms of the applicability of this project, it's applicable not only to my discipline and within the geography department. It can also be used broadly by other departments on campus that teach about environmental issues. And I can think of our biology department that has a class "Man and the Environment."

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I can think of our geology department that has an environmental geology course. But beyond that there are other disciplines too that are also teaching about the environment and sustainability. We have our anthropology department, our sociology department. Also some of our English faculty have been teaching about social justice issues and wanted to provide case studies and the like about different issues occurring around the world. So those are potential faculty members that could use the information that came out of this seminar. So at Harper, our International Education Office has set up a frame of where we can share curriculum materials with other faculty, amongst ourselves faculty that want to internationalize their courses. So what I'll do is provide the assignments but also help faculty members who want to adapt the assignments for their classes. With this particular case study that I created, I have talked with that one of the faculty members from the biology department to see how the case study that I developed can be incorporated into her class.

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So the case study that I created, I did implement it in two classes. One was a physical geography honors class and then I made an adaptation of that and used it in an introduction to remote sensing class. What is involved in that case study is where students compare particulate matter pollution in Chicago to New Delhi India. And they use data sets from the WHO and NASA and also from India, the Central Pollution Control Board of India (CPCB). So they have data that I was able to obtain for New Delhi. So students compare those data sets. Then they get to understand the health impacts of particulate matter solution through some readings and then some additional readings allow them to study or learn about the socio-economic impact of pollution on disadvantaged populations. And then they go looking at satellite maps to view changes in particulate matter solution pollution from month to month and then we also look at the change in pollution from year to year.

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The students also did create maps looking at pre- and post-COVID PM pollution in the region and you do see a drop when the lockdowns were implemented last year. So in terms of other disciplines using this case study, you'd find that the biology faculty member will use most of it except maybe reduce some of the mapping elements. You find the English faculty would use the section on the impact of the PM pollution on socio-economically disadvantaged populations and the like. Then the other faculty might just want to do the data analysis and may just use that portion. For the... when I used it in the remote sensing course, there was an emphasis on the mapping portion and an additional... because one of the causes of the particulate matter solution is the burning of stubble from wheat production in Punjab and Haryana Province.

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So some of that fire data is available so the remote sensing class just worked more on analyzing those fires and perhaps the discussion on the impact on the disadvantaged populations was there but it was not emphasized. So I did try to make this assignment adaptable so that other faculty members can use it and adapt and take the pieces they like, so it's broken out into sections. So they don't have to implement the entire case study, they can just pick the pieces that apply to their classrooms.

**Freitag:** Thank you. That was great, I think, in terms of demonstrating how we actually reach various disciplines.

**Knuppel:** Finally, we turn to Amar Sawhney, Professor of Architecture, Building Construction, and Interior Design at Miami Dade College, alongside Jessica Barnes, Senior Lecturer in Geography at Northern Arizona University. Jessica and Amar, you have both been very busy with CAORC-AIIS projects over the last few years. Some of your projects are entitled "Planning for Informal Settlements in India" and "Addressing Eco-disparity in India."

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You both were recently awarded a follow-up AIIS grant for your project entitled “Planning for Social Sustainability in Indian Cities: Lessons in Identifying and Designing Spaces for Co-presence and Community.” And you were awarded a digital scholarship grant in December 2020 for your project entitled “Digital Explorations of Inequality and Development for Marginalized Communities in India and the United States: A Proposal for Creating Interactive Virtual Field Trips in Geography and Urbanbuilt Classes.” What brought you both to the CAORC-AIIS seminars and how did the seminars jumpstart all of this fantastic work?

**Barnes:** Really what brought me to being able to do the faculty seminar was that I'm a teacher as my main focus for the things I do - I teach classes in World Regional geography - so part of what I do is I try to take students around the world to help them better understand different contexts, cultures, environments, ways of being. And because I work so much as a teacher, I'm really busy doing that and to have an opportunity like this to actually be able to travel to some of these contexts and deepen my own understanding was something that I'd been looking for for a while.

[0:45:52-0:47:13]

And so I'd started to branch out into looking for these kinds of opportunities and there's not necessarily a lot of them for teaching-focused faculty. I learned a huge amount from these other teachers who were all coming from really diverse backgrounds and different disciplines to help try to have all of us kind of make sense of this experience, to try to figure out how to take what we'd learned back to our students and Amar was one of the great people that I met and of course we've kind of continued that relationship, continued asking questions, and started to work together after the seminar to try to figure out how we can apply the stuff in our classrooms and to find out ways to go back and learn more.

**Sawhney:** I saw that as an opportunity to see what's happening in the urban context of some of these older cities like Jaipur, Lucknow, and Delhi, and I thought to find out what stage some of these developments are going on in the Indian context and then see if can bring it back to my classes.

[0:47:14-0:48:57]

Now in the past, before going on this trip, I did work on some of the things, you know, like I brought to the attention of my students some of the urban contexts happening in India, in various cities, in my teacher career earlier. So I think... and also my interest was to explore where India is in terms of poverty and I have been always interested in the US - what's happening to the poor communities and especially indigenous communities - and I have worked in the past in some of the poor communities in Miami, especially the West Grove, Liberty City - these are some of the poor communities we have. So I thought it would give me another context

in India to see what's happening, what they're developing. To my surprise, they were really doing a lot of things that perhaps we were not doing in America. So that kind of let me explore sort of a comparative analysis, see what is going on in India. And plus I'm always a kind of eager person to learn from other people.

**Knuppel:** And now a question for both of you about your work through the CAORC-AIIS seminars. How do you see your US classroom, your personal research, and the communities in India that you work with, how do you see them come together in your projects?

[0:48:57-0:50:32]

**Barnes:** I was, again, really lucky to have an amazing group of faculty to experience the seminar with and so there were so many people who are coming in with great and interesting ideas. And Amar, as he mentioned, with his background in planning and architecture, there's a lot of synergies between those disciplines and geography, which is what I do, so those notions kind of naturally come together. And I come from a department where we're geography, planning, and recreation. So it was a fit that really made sense. And some of the big focus of the seminar that we were on was to think about sustainable cities. So that was already the focus of a lot of the field trips that we did, a lot of the speakers that we heard from. And, of course, seeing these things in some of the mega-cities in India, places that we visited like Delhi, was kind of overwhelming. The context for Arizona, which is a fairly mid-sized city, but this is a place that also struggles a lot with affordable housing issues and it also borders the Navajo reservation, which is one of the poorest places in the United States.

[0:50:32-0:51:31]

The per capita incomes are significantly lower than the rest of the state and the US and there's big issues with stink like access to running water in houses and and electricity, things that we often take for granted in the US context but things that some of my students, you know, have grown up with and experienced and Northern Arizona University is a minority-serving institution that has a big Native American population. So there were ways that were big contrasts, of course, between the US context and the Indian context. But there are also things that were similar. So just trying to figure out how to do all these things sustainably, trying to make sure the people have access to affordable housing, and have access to livelihoods and resources and trying to figure out how to do this all in a sustainable way.

[0:51:32-0:52:59]

So it was really heartening in a lot of ways to see all the efforts of committed individuals, committed NGOs working on trying to solve these problems. So it was hard to come back to the US and not feel kick-started to try to do some kind of project to improve things and to improve things across multiple contexts. Amar and my projects had focused on was to try to bring all these ideas together. You know, how can we bring our expertise, as planners, as geographers, to help to understand some of things that are happening in the Indian context and then to also

show our students what some of these ideas that we talked about in class, like, thinking about series development thinking about urban planning - what do they actually look like on the ground? How can we connect them to real people instead of just having statistics? We're trying to figure out ways to do this where we could try to bring back, sort of, richer information. It's hard to be able to do large-scale field trips, right, for students and it's even harder now with the COVID context. So, trying to figure out how to use technology to help students be there a little more than we could otherwise.

[0:53:00-0:54:26]

**Sawhney:** So we did a project in one of my classes to do a community arts center in Lucknow, just around some of the places we saw. So the students really liked it and, you know, because one of the opportunities that I was trying to give to the students, "Hey, try to get to know the places that you don't know, the cultures that you don't know, because the world is getting more and more global and more and more connected. And if you stay in your own bubble you will not be able to survive in terms of employment and in terms of all of the opportunity, you know, we have in the US." But the other interesting thing came out of it, that we kind of started working on our NGO with Jessica and started motivating some students who really wanted to do independent research projects. So because of that, the classroom experience, and because of what I learned from the trip, one student from Colombia is working with the water shortage issue in their Indian communities, indigenous communities. And she made a presentation to me last week - this is independent of the classroom.

[0:54:27-0:55:42]

This is really interesting because student came to know this and the student said, "Hey, I want to do the same kind of thing in my community," and so I thought that was pretty neat in terms of, you know, how this experience got on the individual level. Now, another student working on Miccosukee to do sort of a digital field trip type of thing she was interested. So, it was of great value to bring it back to the classroom in terms of the community center and in terms of bringing this experience that the Colombian student wanted to have and also the Miccosukee, an Indian tribe in our community in Miami. And then we will also worked in one of the classes on the peace center that we designed in one of the Indian cities. So we worked like a whole semester and AHS is already familiar with that - previously I assigned the project - but now this is a new project that I worked with a student. So I think it was a great experience going there and then bringing back to the classroom.

[0:55:43-0:57:32]

**Freitag:** A question that I thought might be interesting to spend a little time on, at least, is what it means for all of us at this point in terms of our teaching, our, kind of, of public programming, and our research, to be in the middle of a movement which is powerful and global in its reach, which has to do really with how do you understand both cultural and historical patterns that have resulted in systemic issues which we have to now tackle? And it seemed to me that you both

might have some really interesting kinds of insights to say about that based on these different permutations in your projects.

**Sawhney:** I think one of the interesting thing happened that in the past, you know, we have gone to some of these trips to say Europe or Africa - I'm talking about study trips like these - and it's very hard to come back and connect. You're still in two different worlds. But, like, some of the things that, after coming back from India this time around, I start connecting to see what's happening in the community where I'm living. And that was the Miccosukee. I saw that the Miccosukee still have a water shortage problem. Miccosukee still have housing problems. because we still have employment problems. Miccosukee still have social problems. You know? This is in the US and this is Miami just to go five miles, part of 8th Street, and it's right there.

[0:57:33-0:59:16]

So I start thinking that, you know, as a teacher, how can I bring that back to my classrooms, you know, so people know? When the students found out they have a water issue and they have housing problem, which, you know, the US is kind of a very broad but not, you know, on that scale, the students get really surprised to do that. And then the issue of the Asian American communities happening because of the pandemic even the students didn't even know that the Indian Sikhs exist in America, you know, there are like four hundred thousand Indian Sikhs in the Indian communities, like two and a half million people. So things like that people are not aware of because people don't encounter those things unless you happen to be part of that sort of diaspora, then you're focused... maybe you're a little bit focused on that. So I think it was interesting to see that you could bring back some **perils** from India, you know, because of the culture and history being different, that you could bring still in the twenty-first century a few things that are still common. The USA is facing the same way what India is facing so we have like five hundred Indian tribes in America. They're all facing the same issues that we saw in some of the Delhi slum communities, you know? You know, the water, they have to steal the water. They don't have sewer systems, you know. It's kind of **very peril (around 59:04) I see** and I wanted to bring it to my students to be aware of, "Hey, it's not only happening in India and Africa. It's here too." It's just we don't see that common here, you know.

[0:59:17-1:01:09]

**Barnes:** So, just to follow-up from what Amar was saying, I'm really lucky to teach geography classes so part of what I do is compare other places and these kind of struggles for social justice, struggles over representation, struggles over how to deal with the present that includes offering continued inequalities but also really intense historical inequality and oppression is something, of course, that we talked about but I think a lot of times for students having the cushion of it be talking about it somewhere else can kind of open up other ways of thinking about it. So, for example, talking about, say, the caste system in India and trying to understand caste is obviously really hard for people outside to understand it. I thought I knew something about it because I've been teaching about it for a while and, once I got there on the ground, I think our whole group of fellows was trying to understand what was happening, how caste was

being read off one another, how it mattered. And because it wasn't a system that we had grown up in, that we'd been steeped in, you know, it seems like hard to make sense of, right? And so if we can expose students to these other systems of thinking where they're like, "Well, why does... why are there these kinds of inequalities?" it might start to stem there thinking to say, "Well, why are the inequalities here in the US the way they are?" right?

[1:01:10-1:02:14]

It starts to get them to think about the taken-for-granted and it changes their point of view a little bit. And we can see then how both we have again similarities in terms of, you know, these oppressions that we've seen in different places around the world, exploitation that we've seen. But we've also seen differences in how people have tried to address things like reparations or, say, Apology Day in Australia - things like that. And I've watched students in classrooms take that in and try to wonder, "Is this something that works here? Are these things that can ever be things that can actually improve on and make these issues right?" And they're hard questions. I think that's a really powerful message to bring back for students because they are a generation that is much more aware of these issues, much more willing to take action on it and not just kind of sit on their laurels.

[1:02:15-1:03:07]

But it can be overwhelming and it can be depressing. But to see people, you know, keeping at it to make change will hopefully be inspiring for students to help in their own communities and try to scale up these kinds of activities, not just from their communities but to other places around the world that share similar struggles.

**Freitag:** Thank you. I think these are really good examples. And there really are these amazing ways to, I guess, translate what we saw in India with what could enable not just students but anyone to be a change agent in the US. And I would say that given the movement at the moment that's probably the thing we all feel most, so thank you for those insights.

[1:03:08-1:04:21]

**Knuppel:** Well, that's our time for today. A grateful thank you to Sandria Freitag, Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of History at NC State University and leader of the CAORC-AIIS faculty development seminars; Maria del Carmen Paniagua Quinones, Associate Professor in the math department in Ivy Tech Community College (Bloomington, Indiana); Mukila Maitha, Associate Professor and Chair in the geography department at Harper College; Amar Sawhney, Professor of Architecture, Building Construction, and Interior Design at Miami Dade College; and Jessica Barnes, Senior Lecturer in Geography at Northern Arizona University. You can learn more about the upcoming CAORC-AIIS opportunities by visiting [www.caorc.org/faculty-development-india](http://www.caorc.org/faculty-development-india). And thank you for listening.

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