PROGRAMME BROCHURE · NOVEMBER 2026

HEALTHACON 2026

Health Innovation Lab, Panel Discussion and Inaugural Leadership Conclave

Health begins where we live





HEALTH INNOVATION LAB

12 – 14 November 2026

Native Retreats, Varkala

CONCLAVE

14 November · 2:00 – 5:00 PM

The Leela Ashtamudi, A Raviz Hotel, Kollam

healthacon.com

WELCOME

One programme. Three moments. One idea.

Kerala's next gains in health will not come from hospitals alone. They will come from prevention: the air people breathe, the food they eat, the habits they keep and the communities that support them.

HEALTHACON 2026 is a prevention-focused programme led by practising clinicians in Kollam. It brings together three elements that rarely sit in one place: **youth-led innovation** through a residential Health Innovation Lab, **expert dialogue** through a panel on environment and health, and **public leadership** through a formal inaugural Conclave that reports community evidence from the Nalla Swasam air-quality campaign.

The programme begins with air, the least visible and least individually controllable determinant of health. It is designed to extend to nutrition, lifestyle, mental wellbeing and community care.



1 · INNOVATE

Health Innovation Lab

Young minds develop practical solutions to real-world health challenges.

2:00 – 3:00 PM
Solutions showcase, 14 Nov



2 · ENGAGE

Changing Environment, Changing Health

Experts, policymakers and industry leaders discuss the future of environmental health.

3:00 – 4:00 PM
Panel discussion, 14 Nov



3 · ACT

Inaugural Leadership Conclave

Present community findings, announce innovations and inspire collective action.

4:00 – 5:00 PM
Nalla Swasam findings, inauguration, awards

How to read this brochure

The Health Innovation Lab (12 to 14 November, Varkala) is the main centre of attraction and builds up to the afternoon of 14 November in Kollam. That afternoon is the full HEALTHACON event: the Lab's solutions are shown, a panel widens the discussion to the environment, the Nalla Swasam findings are reported, and the programme is formally inaugurated with the announcement of the Lab awardees.

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

Three days, two venues

HEALTH INNOVATION LAB

Native Retreats, Varkala

12 – 14 November 2026 · Residential · Fully funded · Ages 18 – 35 · Six themes

CONCLAVE

The Leela Ashtamudi, Kollam

14 November 2026 · 2:00 – 5:00 PM · A Raviz Hotel

Before the Lab · Online

Online induction

Three evening sessions, 6:00 – 8:00 PM, covering the programme, introductions, the public health landscape in Kerala, the six themes and the social and environmental determinants of health. Dates are shared with selected participants.

Thursday 12 November · Varkala

Lab Day 1: Discovering the problem

Orientation and community building, community problem discovery, stakeholder mapping and problem framing, mentor connect.

Friday 13 November · Varkala

Lab Day 2: Ideation and prototyping

Collaborative ideation, rapid prototyping, technology and AI clinic, mentor review of prototypes.

Saturday 14 November, morning · Varkala

Lab Day 3: Presentation and next steps

Refining prototypes and preparing presentations. Finalists then travel to Kollam.

Saturday 14 November, 2:00 – 5:00 PM · Kollam

HEALTHACON Conclave

2:00 PM	Health Innovation Lab: Solutions Showcase
3:00 PM	Panel: Changing Environment, Changing Health
4:00 PM	Nalla Swasam Survey Report
4:10 PM	Inaugural Leadership Conclave, with the announcement of Lab awardees
5:00 PM	Close

Detailed Lab session timings are set by the SST× facilitation team and partners. After the event: follow-through at 2 weeks, 30, 60 and 90 days (page 15).

WHY THIS MATTERS

The case for prevention in Kerala

Kerala built one of India's strongest public health systems. The burden it now faces is different in kind: chronic, lifestyle-linked and environmental conditions that take root years before a patient reaches a clinic.

1 in 4

Adults in Kerala have diabetes (25.5%), against about 11% nationally.

ICMR-INDIAB, 2023

1 in 3+

Adults aged 15 – 49 are overweight or obese: 38.1% of women and 36.4% of men.

NFHS-5, 2019 – 21

1 in 6

Men face a lifetime cancer risk to age 75 (17.2%); 1 in 8 women (13.0%).

ICMR-NCRP, 2025

Treatment cannot keep pace with a burden generated upstream

These conditions are shaped in daily life: what people eat, how they move, what they breathe and how supported they feel. Treatment capacity, however strong, cannot keep pace with a burden generated upstream.



Prevention has to move out of the clinic and into homes, schools, workplaces and neighbourhoods. That is the idea behind every part of HEALTHACON.

Our design principles

Community-led. Starts from what people know and need.

Clinically anchored. Designed and led by practising doctors.

Multi-stakeholder. Health, environment, local government, civil society and citizens.

Evidence-generating. Every Nalla Swasam session is measured before and after.

Youth-driven. Young people are designers of solutions, not audiences.

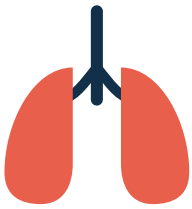
Low-cost and replicable. Tools and trained facilitators that move district by district.

Sources: ICMR-INDIAB study, Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology, 2023; NFHS-5 Kerala fact sheet, 2019 – 21; ICMR-NCRP, JAMA Network Open, 2025.

THE ENVIRONMENT WE LIVE IN

Air, environment and health

Kerala has the cleanest air of any Indian state. But "cleanest" is not "clean".



Outdoor air pollution was classified by the WHO's cancer agency IARC as carcinogenic to humans (Group 1) in 2013. WHO attributes about 7 million deaths a year worldwide to air pollution, including 29% of adult lung-cancer deaths. In India, air pollution was linked to about 2.1 million deaths in 2021.

INDICATOR	VALUE	WHY IT MATTERS
PM2.5 in Kerala population-weighted, 2019	15.8 µg/m³, about three times the WHO guideline of 5 µg/m³	Harm to heart and lungs is documented even at low concentrations
PM2.5 in Kochi	About 6 – 7 times the WHO guideline	Urban Kerala is not insulated from rising pollution
Chronic respiratory disease Nilamel block, Kollam (n = 12,556)	Chronic bronchitis 6.19%; asthma 2.82%	Local evidence of respiratory burden in Kollam district
Households without clean cooking fuel	About 28%	Household smoke disproportionately affects women and children
Economic cost of air pollution	About US$1.09 billion (2019)	Ill health from polluted air is also a cost to development

The measurement gap

When checked on 31 October 2026, the public real-time feed for Kollam's CPCB monitoring station at Polayathode had shown no data since 22 June 2026. What is not measured cannot be managed, and what is not communicated cannot change behaviour.

State and global figures show why the programme's themes matter. They are not measurements of Kollam's air, and are reported separately from Nalla Swasam survey findings.

Sources: GBD 2019, Lancet Planetary Health, 2020; WHO Global Air Quality Guidelines, 2021; Greenpeace India, Spare the Air-2, 2024; Indian Journal of Tuberculosis, 2018; NFHS-5; IARC Press Release 221, 2013; WHO, 2018; State of Global Air 2024 (HEI with UNICEF); CPCB Polayathode public feed, accessed 31 Oct 2026.

1 · INNOVATE 12 – 14 November · Native Retreats, Varkala

The Health Innovation Lab

Build real answers to real health challenges.



A fully funded, three-day residential programme for young people from Kerala who understand the health challenges of their own communities. Participants use The Ignite Foundation's SST× design-thinking method to move from community problem discovery to working prototypes, mentored by doctors, healthcare professionals, technologists and policy specialists.

Who it is for

- Ages 18 – 35, from Kerala
- No degree or prior experience required
- Individually or in teams of 2 – 4; individuals can form teams at the Lab
- Applications in English or Malayalam
- Women, gender minorities and applicants from underserved communities are encouraged

What is covered

- Food, accommodation and training for selected participants
- Travel to and from the venue is at participants' own cost
- Seed funding of up to ₹2.5 lakh in total for the most promising solutions, with support towards pilot implementation

What the Lab aims to achieve

1. A collaborative platform for young people and diverse stakeholders to explore community health challenges
2. Capacity to apply design thinking and develop first concepts and prototypes
3. Connections with doctors, social workers, designers, technologists and other practitioners
4. Documentation of problems, insights, ideas and prototypes
5. Continued support for promising ideas: seed grants, mentors, partners and potential incubation, subject to feasibility
6. A network of young changemakers working on good health and wellbeing

18 – 35	6	3 days	₹2.5 lakh
years, from Kerala	themes to work on	residential, 12 – 14 Nov	seed funding, total pool

FOCUS THEME · SOCIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION IN HEALTH

Six themes to work on

Participants pick the theme closest to their heart and work on a real challenge from their community.



THEME 1

Community-based Care

How can communities strengthen access to healthcare and support people in managing their health closer to home? Models that connect professionals, caregivers, volunteers and local institutions for better coordination, continuity and access.



THEME 2

Lifestyle Handholding

How can people be supported in adopting and sustaining healthier lifestyles in everyday settings? Practical approaches to lasting change in nutrition, activity and sleep through peer support and local networks.



THEME 3

Mental Health and Wellbeing

How can communities create environments where people can find information, seek help early and find support without stigma? Community-led approaches and peer support linked to professional care.



THEME 4

Technology and AI

How can technology and AI address gaps in access, information, monitoring and service delivery? Context-appropriate tools that consider affordability, accessibility, privacy and responsible use.



THEME 5

Environmental Oncology

How can communities reduce exposure to environmental causes of cancer and chronic illness, such as polluted air, household cooking smoke and waste burning? Making risks visible through local monitoring, clear data and community action.



THEME 6

Social and Behaviour Change Communication

How can communication move beyond awareness to sustained change in health behaviour? Culturally relevant messages, storytelling, community campaigns and participatory approaches.

INSIDE THE LAB

The Lab journey, step by step

Before the Lab

Online induction

Three evenings, 6:00 – 8:00 PM IST. The programme and its flow, participant introductions, the public health landscape in Kerala, stories of innovative approaches, the six themes, SST×'s people-transformation sessions, social and environmental determinants of health, and listening to communities.

After the Lab

Documentation and follow-up

Problem statements, insights and prototypes are documented and shared with partners. Promising teams get seed support and are connected with mentors and partner organisations for further development.

DAY	SESSIONS	LED BY
Day 1 Thu 12 Nov Discovering the problem	Orientation and community building · Health and wellbeing in Kerala: challenges and opportunities · Community problem discovery · Stakeholder mapping and problem framing · Evening mentor connect with doctors, health professionals and practitioners	Circle of Kindness · SST× facilitators · Mentors
Day 2 Fri 13 Nov Ideation and prototyping	Collaborative ideation · Selecting and refining ideas · Rapid prototyping · Clinic on technology and AI support · Evening mentor review of prototypes on feasibility	SST× facilitators · TinkerHub Foundation · Mentors and NPoC
Day 3 Sat 14 Nov Presentation and next steps	Morning: refining prototypes and preparing presentations. Afternoon: finalist presentations at the HEALTHACON Conclave, Kollam, followed by reflection on pathways for further development	Working groups · All partners

Indicative schedule, to be confirmed with facilitators and partners.

What each team works through

1
Discover
Real community problems, in the field and with mentors

2
Frame
Map stakeholders and frame a problem within one theme

3
Prototype
Generate, test and refine ideas into initial prototypes

4
Present
Pitch at the Conclave in Kollam to partners and stakeholders

TAKE PART

Apply to the Lab

PRIORITY DEADLINE

5 November 2026

11:59 PM IST · applications received by this date are reviewed first

APPLY

healthacon.com

Apply early: selection is rolling

Who can apply

- Applicants from Kerala who understand Kerala's health context and are ready to carry solutions forward there
- Aged 18 – 35: young problem solvers, healthcare enthusiasts, social workers, designers, technologists and grassroots changemakers
- No degree or technical background needed. Genuine commitment matters more than formal qualifications
- Individually or in teams of 2 – 4; applications in English or Malayalam
- Willing to attend the online induction and the full three days, including the presentations in Kollam

How selection works

1 · Apply online

Submit at healthacon.com/#apply.

2 · Conversation

The communication team speaks with applicants about availability, motivation and background. It is a value-match conversation, not an interview.

3 · Notification

Applications are reviewed and selected participants notified on a rolling basis.

4 · Confirm in two days

Places not confirmed within two days of the selection email pass to the waiting list.

Selected on

Motivation, understanding of the chosen theme and potential to contribute to a team. Commitment to community health and willingness to learn and collaborate count for more than qualifications or experience.

Costs

Covered: food, accommodation and training.
Your own cost: travel to and from the venue.



Seed funding for the best ideas

Up to ₹2.5 lakh in total, shared across the most promising Innovation Lab solutions and available only to Lab teams, with support towards pilot implementation. It is not a per-team or per-person amount. Awardees are announced at the Conclave on 14 November. Award conditions and milestones are confirmed before disbursement.

14 NOVEMBER · KOLLAM

Conclave day: where it all comes together

The Leela Ashtamudi, A Raviz Hotel, Kollam

2:00 – 5:00 PM · Three sessions in one afternoon

The afternoon is sequenced so that leaders respond to work they have just seen. Lab finalists present first. The panel then widens the discussion to the environmental determinants of health. The Nalla Swasam report adds local evidence. The inaugural session closes with recognition and commitments.

2:00 – 3:00 PM	3:00 – 4:00 PM	4:00 – 5:00 PM
INNOVATE	ENGAGE	ACT
Solutions Showcase	Panel discussion	Findings and inauguration

2:00 – 3:00 PM

Health Innovation Lab: Solutions Showcase



Fresh from three days at Varkala, finalist teams present the working solutions they built for community health challenges. Each team sets out the problem, the affected population, the solution and a pilot pathway.

Format

- Finalist teams present on stage (indicatively five minutes each)
- Indicatively two minutes of questions from the jury
- A jury of clinical, technology, public-health and policy members assesses the work

Assessed on

- Community need
- Evidence and safety
- Feasibility
- Equity and accessibility
- Potential impact, sustainability and implementation plan

The assessment rubric and conflict-of-interest procedure are published before judging. Final assessment is completed during the showcase, and awardees are announced at the inaugural session.

2 · ENGAGE 3:00 – 4:00 PM · The Leela Ashtamudi, Kollam

Panel: Changing Environment, Changing Health

Understanding the impact on human wellbeing.

An expert-led discussion of how climate change, air and water pollution, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation shape disease patterns, public health and wellbeing, with an emphasis on sustainable and preventive healthcare.



Who is on the stage

A senior journalist as moderator, with panellists from clinical medicine and public health, environmental science, industry, academia, public administration and policy.

Spirit of the session

Shared responsibility and practical commitment, rather than attribution of blame.

How the hour unfolds

MINUTES	SEGMENT	GUIDING QUESTION
0 – 5	**Framing**	The moderator links the Lab's solutions to the environment in which people live
5 – 20	**What is changing**	Air, water, heat and waste: current trends in Kerala and Kollam
20 – 35	**What the evidence shows**	Respiratory, cardiovascular and cancer risk; wellbeing; and what remains uncertain
35 – 50	**Who can act**	Distinct roles for citizens, the health system, industry, local government and researchers
50 – 60	**Commitments**	Each panellist names one practical, time-bound next step

★

Panel line-up

The moderator and panellists will be announced once their participation is confirmed.

COMMUNITY EVIDENCE · 4:00 – 4:10 PM

Nalla Swasam, "good breath"

The early finding is consistent across settings: people care deeply, but no one has told them what is in their air or what they can do about it.

Circle of Kindness is a Kollam nonprofit of doctors and professionals with a record of practical delivery: patient-navigation support for 1,200 patients at ESIC Hospital since 2024, training for surgeons and local teams in breast-conserving surgery and PICC-line care, and community CPR training. Nalla Swasam applies the same discipline to prevention.

How a session is designed

1. **Baseline survey** — Knowledge and practice on air quality and lung health
2. **Structured session** — Standard awareness content from trained facilitators
3. **Follow-up survey** — Measures change in knowledge and practice
4. **Clinical evidence** — Lung-function testing and a traffic-warden mask study

Reach and scale-up

So far: about 20 sessions in the first two months, across corporation wards, residential colonies, schools, colleges, workplaces and hospitals in Kollam.
One-year target: at least 100 sessions.
Next: the model, tools and trained facilitators extended to other districts of Kerala.

At the Conclave: the survey report

Ten minutes on the Kollam findings, including measured change after the awareness sessions.

0 – 1	Reach: sessions and settings
1 – 3	Design and sample size
3 – 7	Three headline findings, each with n/N
7 – 8	Limitations
8 – 10	Implications and next phase

Reporting standard. The report states survey dates and locations, sampling method and sample size, findings with denominators, and limitations. Community perceptions, measured air quality and established health evidence are reported separately. The survey is not presented as an exposure or causation study.

3 · ACT 4:10 – 5:00 PM · The Leela Ashtamudi, Kollam

Inaugural Leadership Conclave

A formal ceremony to inaugurate HEALTHACON 2026, recognise the Innovation Lab awardees and set out commitments to carry the work forward.



Policymakers, senior officials, public-health experts and dignitaries come together after the Lab showcase, the panel and the Nalla Swasam findings. They respond to what they have just seen and heard.

Running order

4:10 – 4:15 PM
Welcome and programme overview
Circle of Kindness / COINS

4:15 – 4:20 PM
Formal inauguration and lighting of the lamp

4:20 – 4:40 PM
Inaugural and leadership addresses
Three to four dignitaries

4:40 – 4:52 PM
Announcement of the Innovation Lab awardees and seed-funding recipients
The winning teams are announced together with an explanation of how they were selected.

4:52 – 5:00 PM
Acknowledgement of partners and vote of thanks

Lab awardees
Seed funding of up to ₹2.5 lakh in total goes to the most promising Lab solutions.

Commitments
Commitments made at the panel and the Conclave are followed up at 90 days.

Guests of honour
The chief guest and dignitaries will be announced once their participation is confirmed. The running order is indicative and the protocol sequence is set by the organising committee.

WHO IS BEHIND IT

Organisers and partners

Lead organiser

Circle of Kindness (CoK), through COINS – Circle of Insights

A collective of like-minded professionals within a community of doctors, working for dignity, equitable access to healthcare and mutual support for socially marginalised patients and their caregivers. Since 2024 it has supported 1,200 patients at ESIC Hospital, Kollam. Leads direction, clinical work, Nalla Swasam and the Conclave.

Lead organiser

COINS – Circle of Insights

The Circle of Insights arm through which Circle of Kindness leads HEALTHACON 2026.

Co-organiser

The Ignite Foundation (SST×, School for Social Transformation)

A registered non-profit rooted in Kerala, working with young people on community-based problem-solving and social innovation through experiential learning, leadership development and social entrepreneurship. Contributes the SST× design-thinking method and Innovation Lab facilitation.

Supporting partner

TinkerHub Foundation

A non-profit that builds communities of learners, makers and students passionate about innovation, promoting hands-on, peer-led and interdisciplinary learning. Programme support, including technology and AI clinic support at the Lab.

Supporting partner

Nayaneethi Policy Collective (NPoC)

A think-do tank based in Kerala combining research, public policy, capacity building and advocacy to translate ideas into practical action. Programme support, including mentor review at the Lab.

Aligned with public priorities

Sustainable Development Goal 3	Good health and wellbeing, including reducing illness and death from air pollution
National Clean Air Programme	Public awareness and citizen participation in cleaner air
Climate Change and Human Health Programme	Linking environmental exposure with health surveillance and preparedness
Kerala's prevention agenda	Early action on non-communicable diseases and cancer

BEYOND THE EVENT

Outcomes and follow-through

HEALTHACON is designed to produce results that persist beyond the event.

Within 2 weeks

Proceedings published

Proceedings, the Nalla Swasam report and the list of awardees.

By 30 days

Mentors matched

Funded teams matched with mentors; seed-funding conditions and milestones confirmed.

By 60 days

Pilots take shape

Pilot partners, sites, owners and outcome measures confirmed.

By 90 days

Public progress update

Progress shared publicly; next district for Nalla Swasam planned.

What we will measure

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	TIMING
Youth innovation	Applications received; teams participating; district and background diversity	At close of Lab
Solution quality	Solutions presented; awardees; solutions receiving seed funding	14 November
Implementation	Pilots initiated; partner institutions engaged; funded teams on track	60 and 90 days
Community awareness	Nalla Swasam sessions; people reached; measured change in knowledge and practice	Quarterly
Institutional engagement	Commitments made at the panel and Conclave; commitments followed up	90 days

We started with air. We will not stop there.

The same model can grow from good air to good health in every form: food, habits, mental wellbeing and caring communities, across every district of Kerala.

JOIN US

Health begins where we live.

Build solutions with us in Varkala, then bring them to Kollam on 14 November.

HEALTH INNOVATION LAB

12 – 14 November 2026

Native Retreats, Varkala
Residential · Fully funded · Ages 18 – 35

CONCLAVE

14 November · 2:00 – 5:00 PM

The Leela Ashtamudi, A Raviz Hotel, Kollam
Showcase · Panel · Nalla Swasam · Inauguration

APPLY · PRIORITY DEADLINE 5 NOVEMBER, 11:59 PM IST

healthacon.com/#apply

Enquiries: contact.healthacon@gmail.com · +91 79071 23921

Lead organiser: Circle of Kindness (CoK), through COINS – Circle of Insights
Co-organiser: The Ignite Foundation (SST× – School for Social Transformation)
Supported by: TinkerHub Foundation · Nayaneethi Policy Collective (NPoC)

Panellist, moderator and guest line-up to be confirmed.

Circle of Kindness · COINS Circle Of Insights · The Ignite Foundation · TinkerHub · Nayaneethi Policy Collective