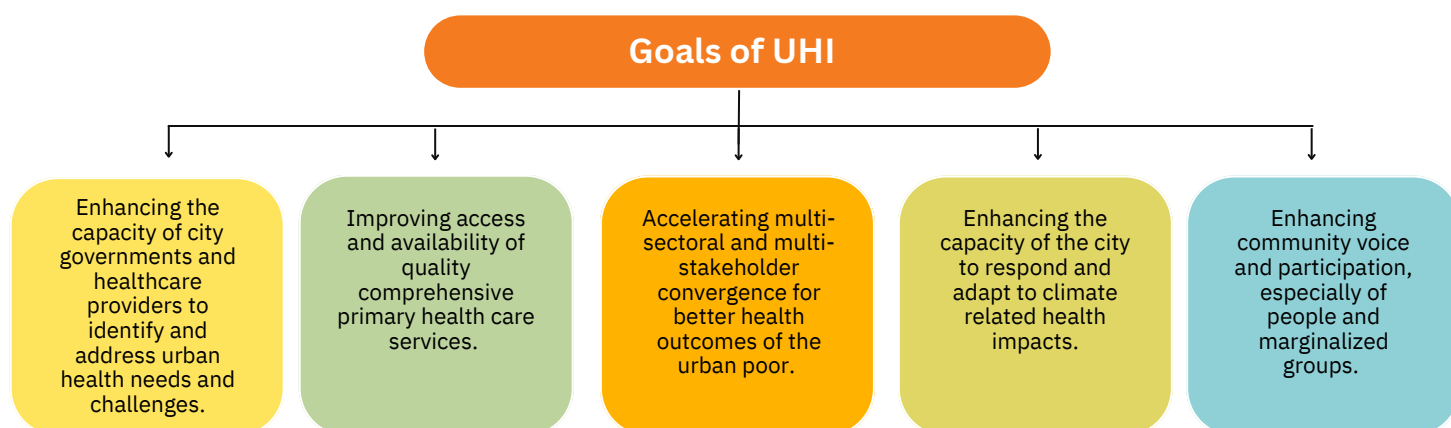


# Urban Health Initiative

**Problem:** In 2018, nearly 461 million people or one-third of India's population lived in cities, the second largest urban population in the world. The urban population is heterogeneous and dynamic, with inequitable distribution of services and benefits, that has worsened post the pandemic. Urban poverty is complex and multidimensional, exacerbated by factors such as residential locations, social identities and occupational affiliations. Data suggests that the health outcomes of the urban poorest quintile is worse than the rest of the urban population, and sometimes even worse than the rural poorest quintile. For example, men and women from the poorest urban households are at 2.3 times and 3.7 times greater risk of mortality compared to those from the richest households. The fragmented urban public health system characterized by inadequate infrastructure and limited number of trained health professionals fail to reach the urban poor and marginalised communities, who remain outside the ambit of public health services and benefits.

Their health vulnerabilities are further exacerbated by aspects such as poor city governance, limited access to water and sanitation, existing residential vulnerabilities, extreme climatic events such as heat waves and floods, and increasing levels of air pollution.

**Solution:** The complex and inter-disciplinary nature of urban health requires multiple stakeholders to come together to address urban health issues. These challenges cannot be addressed by the health department alone; and instead require a more systemic and convergent approach that adopts a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional lens to recognize the interconnectedness and complexity of urban systems. Samyak has set up a multi-stakeholder collaborative, the Urban Health Initiative (UHI), which adopts a systemic lens to address urban health issues, with the vision of creating an India where all citizens living in cities are able to achieve the highest possible quality of life, by reducing existing health inequities within our cities.



**About the Project:** As UHI is a multi-stakeholder collaborative, its overall mission is co-created and jointly owned by all key stakeholders. The interwoven and complex nature of the problems outlined above, and the lack of comprehensive capabilities in any one organization, lends itself to a collaborative architecture. Its core partners are:

- **Samyak, housed within Collective Good Foundation, which anchors the UHI**
- **Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship & Democracy**
- **Samhita**

Other partners include ARTPARK@IISc- AI & Robotics Technology Park, India Health Fund (IHF),

J-Pal India Climate - Health Data Capacity Accelerator, Gates Foundation and HSBC India.

UHI started its on-ground work in Uttar Pradesh last year, where it has partnered with the Government of Uttar Pradesh (GoUP) to provide knowledge support to the Urban Development Department in UP on aspects related to health, nutrition and urban governance. Through this partnership, it is providing support to the government to improve urban health outcomes in 100 cities (ULBs) in UP, identified as 'aspirational cities' in the recently launched Akankshi Nagar Yojana.