

# NISHITA KARUN

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Chicago, IL | [Website](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [nishitakarun1@gmail.com](mailto:nishitakarun1@gmail.com) | Open to Travel 40-50%

On H1B Visa

Innovation and public policy professional with 6+ years of experience facilitating workshops, designing human-centered programs, and building partnerships with government stakeholders across three continents. Track record of leading complex, multi-stakeholder initiatives in ambiguous environments, from facilitating design-thinking curricula for 2M+ civil servants to managing 1,000-person behavior-change campaigns across 500 villages. Background spans the World Bank, NITI Aayog, University of Chicago, and independent consulting, with deep expertise in public sector innovation, capacity-building, and data-driven governance.

## SKILLS & EXPERTISE

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**Core:** Human-Centered Design & Facilitation | Workshop Design | Civic Technology | Digital Governance | Stakeholder Management | Behavioral Science | Capacity-Building | Policy Analysis | Program Design & Evaluation | Communications

**Data Analysis:** R, Python, SQL | **Data Visualization:** Tableau, Flourish, Datawrapper | **Design:** Adobe Suite, Canva

**Research Methods:** RCT Design, Survey Analysis, Social Network Analysis, Econometrics, Participatory Research, Systems Mapping

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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### INSTITUTE OF CLIMATE & SUSTAINABLE GROWTH, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Chicago, IL

*Research Communication Specialist*

December 2024 – Present

- Translated complex climate research into accessible insights for policymakers and 10,000+ public audiences, producing 25+ research summaries and 50+ data visualizations with 15+ researchers.
- Led end-to-end communication strategy for the Air Quality Life Index—managing an interactive website, annual reports, 15+ factsheets, and data visualizations now used by global policymakers and researchers.

### HARRIS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Chicago, IL

*Head Teaching Assistant (Microeconomics I & II); Teaching Assistant (Leading with Innovation)*

September 2023 – June 2024

- Led an 18-member instructional team supporting 400+ graduate students, facilitating coordination, grading, and sessions
- Mentored 8 teams on human-centered policy innovations for micro & small businesses, applying LISC's Business Inclusivity Plan framework for Chicago communities and city innovation programming

### WORLD BANK (DEVELOPMENT IMPACT EVALUATION (DIME))

Washington, D.C.

*Summer Research Fellow*

June 2023 – September 2023

- Co-developed case studies for the Government Analytics Handbook under Dr. Rogers, providing data-in-policy guidance now institutionalized as an annual fellowship for governments globally
- Analyzed surveys and designed data summaries contributing to a World Bank report on strengthening public health administrative systems for the Madagascar Government

### INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT

Multiple Cities, India

*Research & Strategy Consultant – Public Sector & Development*

January 2021 - August 2022

- Behavior Change Communications:** Managed and facilitated workshops for a 1,000+ member team across 500 Bihar villages that drove 160,000+ COVID vaccinations; led a state-wide pilot across 100,000+ students in 10 schools through a peer-to-peer 'Good Gossip' campaign in Jharkhand
- Policy & Governance:** Drafted 60+ zero hours and 15+ legislative briefs for YSR Congress MPs during India's Monsoon session; conducted systems analysis of India's child adoption process for the Ministry of Women and Child Development
- Design & Curriculum:** Designed user-centric patient management for Tata Memorial Cancer Hospital (5,000+ monthly patients); developed a "Design Thinking in Governance" curriculum reaching 2M+ students & civil servants via UpGrad

## NITI AAYOG – GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

New Delhi, India

Policy Fellow

July 2021 – December 2021

- Developed growth opportunity reports for the Chief Minister's Office of 8 NE states informing state-level investments
- Contributed to the 'Ease of Doing Business Report' supporting micro-finance policy in North-East with the IDFC Institute

## LOPEZ DESIGN

New Delhi, India

Senior Design Researcher

July 2018 – December 2020

- Led a team of 15+ to deliver end-to-end human-centered design projects with User Research, Strategy, and Design Deliverables for public & private sector
- Founded a Design thinking forum with 50 + industry professionals to advance human-centered design in policy & business; inaugural keynote by Mr. Amitabh Kant (CEO, NITI Aayog)

## EDUCATION

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### Harris School of Public Policy, University of Chicago

Chicago, IL

Master's in Public Policy; MPP (STEM)

June 2024

Relevant Coursework: Econometrics, Cost-Benefit Analysis, Program Evaluation, RCT Design, Conflict & Data Science

Leadership: Co-President, HarrisTech; Grad Affiliate, Chicago Center on Democracy, Podcast Editor, Root of Conflict (Pearson Inst.)

### Select Research & Policy Projects

- RCT proposal on Digital Grievance Redressal in India developed under Prof. Rachel Glennester, selected by the Democracy & Society Journal at Georgetown University
- Published research on crowdsourced governance data for local governments in Social Innovation Journal, UPenn
- Social Network Analysis (SNA) on Political participation in rural India using India Human Development Survey (IHDS) dataset
- At UNDP, conducted multi-component analysis on local poverty and perceptions of governance in Burkina Faso (Confidential)
- System Analysis of Farmer Suicides in India, Global Semi-Finalist out of 100+ Universities, for Oxford Map the System
- Behavioral Nudges to improve Illinois state Kindergarten readiness | (IL Dept. of Human Services Case Competition)

### National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT)

Mumbai, India

BA in Communication Design | All India Rank 103 | Student of the Year

May 2018

Relevant Coursework: Design Thinking, Service Design, Behavioral Research Methods, Branding & Public Communication

## LEADERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT

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- Panelist at UN GirlUp Foundation Day event to share insights on 'Biased by Design'
- Residential Fellow from India at Summer Institute of Sustainability & Energy (SISE)'19, *University of Illinois at Chicago*
- Published Paper with Linguistic Society of University of Andhra Pradesh on Teaching English as Emotional Language, material was later added to the curriculum and published as a book
- Selected as a presenter at Transcending Boundaries Symposium at University of Chicago, supporting minorities in research
- Founded 1002 Design Consultancy, applying HCD to client strategy across 15+ organizations
- National Finalist for NSE Young Pioneers with History TV18 for developing a Political Rating Application in 2014