

Defeating the Last Mile: Success Stories, Creative Approaches from Odissa, India

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The “last mile” is a buzzword in global health. Nothing is more frustrating than availing the resources, funding, and personnel needed to create an impact, only to see the project fail when the patients are unable to make contact with this system. However, for those living in remote areas around the world, this is the daily reality, causing rural healthcare to lag behind. While spending March in Dhenkanal, Odisha, India, I experienced the last mile firsthand. Rural areas are home to 70 percent of India’s population but host just 40 percent of the nation’s hospital beds.¹ However, I also saw how my hospital overcame these challenges as specialists in defeating the last mile. At Kalinga Eye Hospital, I learned that overcoming the last mile can be as complex as establishing a rural clinic or as simple as driving a van to a forest village. With some creativity and outside-the-box thinking, we can better tackle this problem across the globe and in the United States.

References:

1. Oxfam India. (2021, July 20). *India's Unequal Healthcare Story*. Oxfam India. Retrieved March 30, 2023, from <https://www.oxfamindia.org/press-release/india-inequality-report-2021-indias-unequal-health-care-story>