

FAQS:

THE BHCP ESSENTIALS

1. What are Healthy Cities?

The term “Healthy Cities” refers to a long-standing health promotion initiative by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) that began in 1986. A Healthy City is defined as a city that is committed to continuous improvement of physical and social environments, and expansion of community resources. Hence, a Healthy City is defined by a process and not an outcome.

These resources enable people to support each other in performing life’s functions and help them to reach their maximum potential. Essentially, a Healthy City is a city that cultivates the overall well-being of its population. However, it’s important to note that achieving this status isn’t a task solely for the health sector, but requires a concerted effort from all sectors and community members.

Source: White Paper

2. How did the healthy cities network originate? (History of Healthy Cities)

The concept of “Healthy Cities” originated from the understanding of the pivotal role local governments can play in establishing healthy conditions and promoting overall well-being within their communities.

The Healthy Cities initiative was born with the objective of prioritizing health in the social and political agendas of cities. Conceived by AD Tsouros in 2015, the initiative aimed to foster health, equity, and [sustainable development](#) through innovative and multi-sectoral changes. This concept was established based on the recognition of the local, urban level’s significance and the key role of local governments in shaping health policies. Operating at the forefront of public health, the Healthy Cities initiative quickly gained traction due to its innovative approach and the relevance of its actions to the broader areas of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) work.

The Healthy Cities idea first emerged in the 1980s, inspired by the new public health movement, the 1986 Ottawa Charter, and [WHO’s “Health for All” \(HFA\)](#) strategy introduced in 1978 at Alma Ata. The principles of HFA and the strategic guidance provided by the [Ottawa Charter](#) form the backbone of the WHO’s Healthy Cities initiatives.

Early examples of the application of this concept include the Canadian Healthy Cities project (now referred to as Healthy Communities) and the WHO European Healthy Cities Project initiated in 1986. These pioneering projects were built upon the pillars of primary health care and health promotion. They challenged communities to develop initiatives that reduced health status disparities, improved access to services, and formulated healthy public policies at the local level. These initiatives adopted a multi-sectoral approach and encouraged greater community participation in health decision-making, establishing the foundation for the Healthy Cities Network we know today.

Source: White paper



3. Are there any Healthy Cities in India?

As of now, there are no cities in India that are part of the WHO Healthy Cities Network. Bhopal is set to become the first city in the country to join this network through the implementation of the Bhopal Healthy City Program. This initiative aims to significantly improve the health and well-being of its residents, making Bhopal a pioneer in this significant health promotion effort.

4. Which city is recognized as the world's 1st healthy city?

The Healthy Cities movement was officially initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the mid-1980s. However, the designation of a specific city as the “world’s first healthy city” is not clearly identified in records. Instead, multiple cities across Europe participated in the initial phase of the European Healthy Cities Network, an integral part of the global Healthy Cities movement. Thus, it wouldn’t be accurate to attribute the title of “world’s first healthy city” to a specific city.

Source: <https://www.who.int/europe/groups/who-european-healthy-cities-network>

5. Are there any healthy cities across the world?

Yes, the World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes many cities around the world as part of its “Healthy Cities” initiative. This global movement aims to put health high on the social, economic and political agenda of city governments. From Europe to Africa, Asia to the Americas, cities are working to improve health and wellbeing by creating more supportive environments and enabling healthier choices. Some example of WHO Healthy Cities are:

North America: **San Francisco, USA, Vancouver, Canada and others.**

South America: **Rosario, Argentina, Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and others.**

Africa: **Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Accra, Ghana and others.**

Europe: **Copenhagen, Denmark, Liverpool, United Kingdom, Athens, Greece, and others.**

Asia: **Singapore, Kuching, Malaysia, Tokyo, Japan, and others.**

Source: *White paper pg. 32 Global Experiences and Lessons.*

6. Why are healthy cities relevant in India?

The relevance of Healthy Cities in India can be attributed to several key factors, most notably the rapid pace of urbanization. According to the 2011 census, 31.6% of Indians, equivalent to about 377.1 million people, lived in cities. By 2030, India’s urban population is projected to reach around 590 million, which will constitute approximately 40% of the total population.

The swift and significant shift towards urban living brings with it a complex set of challenges impacting the health of city-dwellers. These challenges include increased migration, the effects of climate change, transitioning disease burdens, unhealthy built environments, and insufficient urban systems, including healthcare services.

In response to these challenges, there is an urgent need for a focused effort to establish Healthy Cities across India. The Healthy Cities initiative, launched by the WHO in 1986 following the Ottawa Charter, has long promoted health and well-being within urban settings. More recently, there's been a growing understanding of the crucial connection between Sustainable Development Goal [\(SDG\) 3](#), ensuring good health and well-being for all, and [SDG 11](#), making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

Healthy City planning aims to implement strategies that enhance urban health and address environmental issues through local government action and community involvement. Given the current urbanization trend in India, the Healthy Cities initiative is of high relevance, aiming to transform urban living conditions and promote a healthier, more sustainable future for the increasing number of city residents.

Source: White paper, BHCP PPT slide 3

7. What are social determinants of health?

[Social Determinants of Health \(SDH\)](#) are a range of non-medical factors that have a significant impact on your overall well-being. These factors shape the environment you're born into, the places you work and live, your aging process, and even your day-to-day experiences. Unlike medical treatments or lifestyle choices, SDH often lies outside an individual's immediate control but plays a pivotal role in health outcomes.

Here's a breakdown of key Social Determinants of Health:

- ⌘ Access and Quality of Education: The level and quality of education you receive can have lifelong implications on your health by affecting job opportunities, income, and even your understanding of healthy behaviors.
- ⌘ Health Care Access and Quality: Not just about the availability of healthcare services, but also how effective and inclusive these services are. Limited access or poor quality care can lead to inadequate or delayed treatment.
- ⌘ Neighbourhood and Built Environment: This includes everything from the safety of your community to the availability of parks and the quality of your housing. A well-designed environment can promote healthy choices and behaviors.
- ⌘ Social and Community Context: This involves the quality of your relationships, community engagement, and social inclusion. Supportive social networks can serve as a buffer against various health issues.
- ⌘ Economic Stability: Financial factors like employment, income, and expenses can create stress or limit access to essential resources like food and healthcare, directly affecting your health.

By addressing these determinants, BHCP aims to create a holistic approach to improving community well-being.

8. What are some of the key factors in achieving a healthy city status?

Reaching the goal of becoming a 'Healthy City' involves teamwork from many different groups, including local government, community members, and various organizations. It involves not only healthcare but also broader social and economic factors. Below are the critical elements that contribute to making a city 'healthy':

- ⌘ Engaged Leadership: The commitment from decision-makers, particularly local politicians, is vital. Their active involvement sets the stage for effective policy-making and implementation.
- ⌘ Clear Strategic Blueprint: A well-defined vision and mission are crucial. These should be articulated by a robust planning and management team that can guide the program's execution.
- ⌘ Policy Ownership: A sense of ownership over policies among stakeholders ensures sustained commitment. This ownership should be cultivated not just among governing bodies but also within the community to drive positive change.
- ⌘ Inclusive Stakeholder Participation: Achieving a 'Healthy City' isn't a one-organization job. A high level of stakeholder involvement, ranging from community members to healthcare providers, is essential for a holistic approach.
- ⌘ Institutionalized Framework: Policies and initiatives related to the Healthy Cities program need to be deeply embedded within institutional practices. This ensures the longevity and effectiveness of the program, even beyond the initial implementation phases.

By focusing on these key elements, cities can move towards creating environments where the well-being of residents is at the forefront. Programs like BHCP are designed to align with these factors, aiming for a holistic improvement in public health and quality of life.

9. Are there any key aspects from WHO that help cities attain the status of a healthy city?

Yes, the World Health Organization (WHO) has indeed provided a set of criteria and indicators to guide cities in their transformation towards becoming healthy cities. The key focus of a "Healthy City" is to create an urban environment that advances the health and well-being of all its residents.

The WHO has established comprehensive indicators reflecting the multifaceted nature of health. These indicators include factors ranging from environmental conditions to social determinants of health. Key aspects can involve:

- ⌘ Quality of public health services.
- ⌘ Access to clean water and sanitation.
- ⌘ Availability of healthy and safe food.
- ⌘ Quality of housing.
- ⌘ Levels of physical activity among residents.
- ⌘ Air and environmental quality.
- ⌘ Availability of green and public spaces.
- ⌘ Social inclusion and community engagement.

In addition to these general guidelines, the specific application and emphasis on these indicators can be adjusted according to the unique needs and context of each city.



Supporting this, in a report submitted to the [WHO European Healthy Cities Network](#) in 2005, 35 out of the 45 city health profiles used all 500 indicators of inequality. The areas covered by these indicators included measures of health or well-being, disease prevalence, socioeconomic conditions, lifestyle, environmental conditions, and service utilization (admission or attendance rates). Other factors influencing health, such as traffic and crime, were also considered. This further emphasizes the extensive and diverse factors that need to be taken into account when developing a healthy city.

Source: WHO website. <https://www.who.int/europe/groups/who-european-healthy-cities-network/what-is-a-health-city>

10. Do Smart Cities and Healthy Cities represent the same concept?

No, Smart Cities and Healthy Cities, while both focused on improving urban life, represent distinct concepts.

A **Smart City** uses technology and data-driven solutions to improve the quality of life for its residents, increase the efficiency of urban services, ensure sustainable development, and enhance engagement with citizens. Smart City initiatives often involve the deployment of Internet of Things (IoT) technologies, advanced data analytics, artificial intelligence, and other innovations to manage resources and services, such as traffic and transportation systems, power supply, water supply, waste management, crime detection, and more.

On the other hand, a **Healthy City**, as per the World Health Organization's concept, is one that is continually creating and improving its physical and social environments, along with expanding community resources, to help people support each other in performing all functions of life and reaching their maximum potential. The focus is on health promotion, public health, social determinants of health, and fostering an environment that promotes the well-being of all its residents. It's about ensuring that health is considered in policies across all sectors and that health inequities are addressed.

While both concepts aim to enhance the quality of urban life, the primary difference lies in their focus. Smart Cities mainly emphasize the use of technology and data to improve city operations and the quality of life, while Healthy Cities primarily focus on health promotion and overall well-being of city residents. That said, the two concepts can intersect. A Smart City can leverage its technological capabilities to promote better health outcomes, making it a Healthy City as well, and vice versa.

Source: web: <https://smartcities.gov.in/>, BHCP PPT, White paper

11. What is BHCP?

The Bhopal Healthy City Program (BHCP) is a unique initiative in India that aims to improve the health and well-being of its citizens through a "Health in all Policies" approach. The objective of the "Bhopal Healthy City" initiative is to ensure that all residents maintain good health and well-being. To achieve this, the program uses a multi-sectoral approach that encompasses five key pillars: water, food, sanitation, environment, and individual family health. This broad, integrated perspective allows for comprehensive, sustainable improvement in public health.



12. Whose initiative is BHCP?

BHCP is a joint initiative by [Swasti](#), the [National Health Mission \(NHM\) Madhya Pradesh](#), and the [Health Systems Transformation Platform \(HSTP\)](#)

13. What is the Bhopal Healthy City Plan?

The Bhopal Healthy City Plan is a comprehensive, city-wide initiative that engages multiple agencies and sectors to improve the health and well-being of the city's residents. It aims to be accessible to at least 90% of [Bhopal's population](#) and emphasizes citizen-centric, quality assured, and consistent health promotion strategies.

The plan follows a continuum of care, spanning from prevention to treatment and care, and it features mechanisms for coordinating health-related activities across the city. This coordination occurs through partnerships with various organizations, both public and private, to ensure a holistic approach to health that addresses its many determinants.

The Bhopal Healthy City Plan is not restricted to certain neighborhoods or communities nor is it implemented by a select few stakeholders. Instead, it serves as a city-wide endeavor that fosters collaboration rather than isolated actions. The plan's ultimate goal is not to be a catalog of activities conducted by separate departments but to facilitate the synchronization and amplification of collective actions aimed at improving the city's overall health.

Source: BHCP white paper Pg 20

14. What are the Objectives of the Program?

The Bhopal Healthy City Program (BHCP) has several key objectives:

- ⌘ Enhance the health and quality of life of Bhopal's residents by implementing multi-sectoral policies and initiatives.
- ⌘ Prioritize preventive health measures by addressing social determinants of health and thereby improving overall well-being of the community.
- ⌘ Achieve the status of a Healthy City, thereby becoming India's first city to earn this distinction.
- ⌘ Join the World Health Organization's (WHO) Healthy Cities network, aligning with a global community focused on improving urban health.

Through these objectives, the program aims to transform Bhopal into a city where all residents have the opportunity to live healthier and more fulfilling lives.

15. What are the focus areas of BHCP?

The Bhopal Healthy City Program (BHCP) has established its strategies around five key pillars that directly influence the health and well-being of the population. These focus areas include:

- ⌘ **Water:** This involves efforts towards ensuring the provision of clean and safe water, a critical component for maintaining public health.
- ⌘ **Sanitation:** The program places emphasis on improving sanitation standards and infrastructure throughout the city, recognizing the crucial role of sanitation in disease prevention and overall health.
- ⌘ **Environment:** Recognizing the impact of the environment on human health, the program aims to create a healthier, sustainable living environment, focusing on elements like air quality, waste management, and green spaces.
- ⌘ **Food:** BHCP addresses the importance of healthy, safe, and nutritious food for all citizens. It targets issues of food security and aims to promote better nutrition to prevent health problems.
- ⌘ **Individual and Family Health:** The program underlines the health and well-being of individuals and families. This includes efforts towards improving access to healthcare services, promoting preventive health measures, and nurturing a culture of health and wellness within families and communities.

These focus areas collectively provide a comprehensive approach to the overall health and well-being of the Bhopal city residents.

16. Why is Bhopal selected as the country's 1st city for the Healthy City Project ?

Bhopal's selection as the 1st city for the Healthy City Project was influenced by a combination of its strategic location, population size, status as a Smart City, and the commitment of local governmental agencies.

Located in the heart of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal serves as the capital and is the second most populous and largest city in the state by area. Its selection as one of the 100 cities under the "Smart City" initiative underscores its reputation for urban development and innovation. Additionally, it has earned the distinction of being the cleanest capital in the country. While Bhopal performs well on multiple health and cleanliness indicators, there are still areas identified for improvement. The city is also experiencing rapid growth and urbanization, providing an opportune time for a health-focused initiative like the Healthy City Project

Furthermore, the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Madhya Pradesh, is determined to exemplify that "Health for All" is achievable through coordination across different sectors impacting health. This enthusiasm for health-focused strategies contributed to Bhopal's selection as a model "Healthy City."

Source: BHCP White paper

17. How will the Bhopal Healthy City Program impact the daily lives of the residents?

The Bhopal Healthy City Program (BHCP) is envisioned to bring about significant and tangible changes in the daily lives of its residents:

- ⌘ Improved Health Indicators: The program focuses on enhancing public health metrics across the city. This is expected to result in a reduced incidence of diseases, better accessibility to health services, and overall improvement in physical well-being.
- ⌘ Enhanced Quality of Living: The program's scope extends beyond health. It also aims to uplift the overall quality of life in Bhopal, which could manifest as cleaner and safer environments, improved public services, and enhanced social conditions.
- ⌘ Resource and Knowledge Sharing: As a part of the WHO Healthy Cities network, Bhopal will gain access to global resources and expertise. This opens up possibilities for the implementation of best practices in urban health and development, ultimately benefiting the city's residents.

Ultimately, the BHCP aims to transform Bhopal into a healthier, more vibrant, and more sustainable city for its inhabitants.

Source: Bhopal healthy City concept note

18. What is the success matrix of BHCP?

The success of the Bhopal Healthy City Program (BHCP) is determined by a set of specific measures:

- ⌘ **Midline and Endline Assessment of Baseline Indicators:** The program will monitor key health and quality-of-life indicators over time. A baseline assessment will establish the starting point for these indicators. Subsequent midline and endline assessments will track the progress and measure the impact of the program.
- ⌘ **Monitoring and Evaluation of Interventions:** The effectiveness of specific interventions undertaken as part of BHCP will be regularly monitored and evaluated. This process ensures that the program is delivering the intended results and allows for necessary adjustments to improve outcomes.
- ⌘ **Integration of Departments and Multi-Sectoral Efforts:** The success of BHCP also hinges on the integration and coordination of efforts across various departments and sectors. The degree of collaboration and the effectiveness of this multi-sectoral approach will be a key part of the success matrix.

Source: BHCP PPT

19. What benefit will Bhopal get by being a part of the WHO healthy cities?

Joining the WHO Healthy Cities Network comes with a host of benefits that can significantly aid in Bhopal's transformation into a healthier, more vibrant city. These benefits include:

- ⌘ **Resource Sharing:** As part of the network, Bhopal will have access to a range of resources developed by WHO and other member cities. These can include research findings, planning and implementation tools, policy guidelines, and best practices from around the world.
- ⌘ **Knowledge Sharing:** The network provides a platform for cities to share their experiences, lessons learned, and innovative solutions. Bhopal can learn from the successes and challenges of other cities, potentially saving time and resources by adopting proven strategies and avoiding known pitfalls.
- ⌘ **Scope of New Projects:** Being part of the network can open up opportunities for collaboration on new projects, both with WHO and other member cities. These projects can range from joint research initiatives to implementation of innovative health promotion programs.
- ⌘ **Funds Flow:** Membership in the network may increase Bhopal's visibility and attractiveness to national and international funding bodies. It may enhance the city's eligibility for specific grants, aid, or other forms of financial support aimed at promoting urban health and sustainability.

Ultimately, being a part of the WHO Healthy Cities Network can significantly strengthen Bhopal's efforts to enhance the health and wellbeing of its residents.

20. What are some benefits at state, national and international level?

The benefits of implementing a Healthy City initiative like Bhopal Healthy City Program (BHCP) extend beyond the city's borders, offering significant advantages at the state, national, and international levels as well:

State Level Benefits:

- **Model for Other Cities:** If successful, BHCP can serve as a model for other cities within the state, demonstrating how to effectively integrate health considerations into urban planning and policy-making processes.
- **Improved Public Health:** By focusing on determinants of health such as sanitation, water quality, and the environment, the BHCP can lead to widespread improvements in public health, reducing the burden on state health services.
- **Economic Growth:** Healthier populations are more productive and less reliant on healthcare services, which can spur economic growth at the state level.

National Level Benefits:

- **National Health Goals:** By improving the health of one of its major cities, the nation moves closer to achieving national health goals and targets.
- **Policy Innovation:** Successful initiatives can influence national policy, leading to broader changes in how health is addressed in cities across the country.
- **International Reputation:** Having a city recognized as a WHO Healthy City can enhance the country's reputation on the international stage, demonstrating a commitment to improving urban health and wellbeing.



International Level Benefits:

- **Contribution to Global Goals:** Implementing the BHCP helps contribute to global goals like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).
- **Global Health Promotion:** The success of the BHCP can offer valuable lessons and best practices that can be shared internationally, contributing to global efforts to promote urban health.
- **International Collaboration:** Being part of the WHO Healthy Cities Network fosters international collaboration, allowing cities to learn from each other's experiences and work together to tackle shared challenges.

21. What is Swasti?

[Swasti](#), officially known as Swasti The Health Catalyst, is a global health resource center based in India. The organization is committed to ensuring universal health coverage, human rights, and well-being for all. Swasti was founded in 2002 with a primary focus on public health and has since extended its work to include social development sectors.

Swasti believes in transforming lives by empowering communities, influencing policies, and shaping market systems. Their work spans a broad spectrum of areas, including community health, women's empowerment, livelihoods, and more. The organization operates with a philosophy of catalyzing change for health and well-being by working alongside communities and other stakeholders at both local and global levels.

Driven by uncompromising compassion and a dream of adding 100 million healthy days to the lives of the most marginalized by 2030.

Aim: To reinvent systems that work for all. Our multidisciplinary teams do three things well -

- Demonstrate scalable, cost effective and sustainable models in partnership with communities
- Support partners to reach impact and
- Draw the threads from action research into evidence, learning and action.

Agenda: To change the way wellbeing pathways are achieved, starting with primary healthcare and tackling social determinants that direct how we experience everyday wellbeing.

22. What is the role of NHM in BHCP?

The [National Health Mission \(NHM\) of Madhya Pradesh](#) plays a crucial role in the execution of the Bhopal Healthy City Program. NHM has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Swasti, effectively making them a cooperation and implementation partner for the program.

The NHM provides essential support, resources, and collaboration necessary for carrying out the various initiatives under the BHCP. This partnership aims to effectively implement health improvement strategies and measures, thereby contributing significantly to the ultimate goal of transforming Bhopal into a healthy city.



In addition to NHM, the Health Systems Transformation Platform (HSTP) is also involved in the BHCP as a research, advisory, and funding partner. This collaborative effort among these organizations is aimed at leveraging each other's strengths and resources to ensure the successful realization of the BHCP.

23. Who funds the BHCP?

The Bhopal Healthy City Program is currently funded by the [Health Systems Transformation Platform](#) (HSTP).

HSTP is an initiative that aims to enhance health systems using a wide array of tools, including research, advisory services, and funding. As a collaborative platform, it works closely with governments, non-governmental organizations, academia, and other stakeholders, focusing on transforming health systems to better serve communities.

HSTP's financial support for the BHCP signifies their commitment to sustainable health improvement initiatives, particularly those that leverage a multi-sectoral approach to promote overall health and well-being in urban areas.

For further details about the funding and functioning of the BHCP, it's recommended to refer to official documentation or reach out to the involved organizations directly.

24. How can I contribute to the Healthy City initiative/ program?

As an individual, there are multiple ways you can actively contribute to the Healthy City initiative and help Bhopal transform into a healthier, more vibrant city. Here are some suggestions:

- ⌘ **Join the People's Campaign:** Participate in events, activities, and initiatives organized as part of the Healthy City program. This could involve everything from attending public forums to joining clean-up drives, or volunteering in community health programs.
- ⌘ **Participate on Social Media:** Engage with us on our various [social media platforms](#). Share your ideas, suggestions, and experiences. Participate in online discussions, share our content, and help raise awareness about the initiative.
- ⌘ **Support the City-Wide Initiative:** Adopt healthier lifestyle choices that align with the goals of the program. This could include using public transportation, reducing waste, consuming nutritious food, and encouraging physical activity. Each individual effort contributes to the overall health of the city.
- ⌘ **Spread the Word:** Tell your friends, family, and colleagues about the Healthy City initiative. The more people are aware of and involved in the program, the greater its impact will be.

Remember, every action, no matter how small, contributes to the bigger picture of creating a healthier Bhopal. Your participation and support are key to the success of this initiative.



25. How can I volunteer for the Bhopal Healthy City Program?

Here's how you can volunteer:

- ⌘ **Visit Our Website:** Navigate to the Bhopal Healthy City Program's official website. There, you can typically find information to contact us.
- ⌘ **Attend Orientation/Training:** Once registered, you may be asked to attend an orientation or training session. This will help you understand the program's goals and the role you can play as a volunteer.
- ⌘ **Stay Connected:** Keep up-to-date with the program's activities through their website, newsletters, and social media platforms. This will help you stay informed about upcoming volunteering opportunities and events.

Remember, every volunteer makes a difference. Your time, effort, and dedication can contribute significantly to making Bhopal a healthier and more sustainable city for everyone.

