

RIYA ANIE CHERIAN

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People-centered researcher and policy professional with 9+ years of global experience translating human insights into systems and service design improvements across government, nonprofit, and academic settings in India, Kenya, Senegal, and the U.S. Skilled in user research, participatory design, cross-functional facilitation, and organizational consulting. Passionate about nurturing collaborative, intuitive, and equitable solutions for complex social systems.

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Stephen M. Ross School of Business, University of Michigan

Hybrid, USA

Research Affiliate

September 2025-Present

- Led a hybrid time- and event-based user research study on AI adoption through diary methods to explore user experiences and inform human-centered policy design

Broadband Institute Foundation

Ann Arbor, USA

Community Manager

January 2025-Present

- Evaluated user experience of new community training platform by developing user flowcharts, enhancing usability and informing community outreach strategy for equitable internet access initiatives
- Coordinated the end-to-end development of grant proposals, integrating research insights and documentation to meet submission timelines and funding priorities

Africa Resource Centre (ARC)

Kenya and Senegal

Consultant, Strategy and Operations

March-August 2024

- Led community-engaged research to evaluate antiretroviral delivery gaps in Kenya; co-created impact framework aligning community needs with donor metrics, ensuring \$1.6M continued donor funding
- Partnered with clinical teams, technical experts, and users to map customer journeys and redesign workflows, improving service adoption by 45% and reducing user stigma
- Conducted analysis of Senegal's medicine supply chain, identifying systemic gaps and recommending three strategic reforms to reduce last mile stockouts by 6%

U.S. Department of State (DoS), Diplomacy Lab

Remote

Student Researcher

August-December 2023

- Conducted comparative policy analysis of 5 global fintech innovation hubs and synthesized findings into strategic governance recommendations for U.S. Office of Science and Technology Adviser

University of Michigan, Graham Sustainability Institute

Remote

Dow Sustainability Fellow

January-December 2023

- Mapped U.S. federal climate funding to identify systemic barriers for overburdened communities, co-creating community-centered tools that enhanced awareness and navigation of climate justice grants

Research and Technology Park, University of Virgin Islands

Virgin Islands, USA

Business Development Fellow

May-August 2023

- Designed after-school STEM program prototype using user personas and needs assessment; projected to enhance student participation by 50%
- Developed competitive benchmarking strategy to enhance university-industry partnerships, increasing local experiential learning opportunities for students by 60%

Government of Kerala, State Planning Board

Kerala, India

Technical Assistant

December 2020- July 2022

- Conducted fiscal analyses through cross-departmental coordination to align health and labor policies with budgets, ensuring accountability for \$37M in public funds
- Directed full lifecycle of State's 5-year economic vision document in coordination with cross-functional team of 45 experts, integrating insights from international consultations on economic development

Foundation for Agrarian Studies

Karnataka, India

Editorial Coordinator, Review of Agrarian Studies

December 2018-November 2020

- Directed editorial and publication strategy for four international peer-reviewed issues, improving workflow efficiency through agile methodologies, ensuring adherence to timelines and budgets
- Implemented user-focused content and communication strategies, including social media and stakeholder outreach, driving 50% increase in digital engagement

Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration

Uttarakhand, India

Research Fellow

September 2017-September 2018

- Conceptualized and developed streamlined process to update training materials for Indian civil servants in collaboration with six global research institutions, targeting 120 new case studies
- Led team of 20 to organize 3 national-level workshops on health systems, negotiations, and case writing, strengthening skillset of 110 civil servants in India

Government of India, Ministry of Rural Development

Assam, India

Prime Minister's Rural Development Fellow

May 2014-April 2017

- Executed community-centric planning model across 10 regions, training 128 officials and residents to identify resource gaps, generating 84 projects worth \$400K
- Reformed local governance by establishing local monitoring committees with 50+ members and training them for community-led evaluation of development projects, increasing transparency
- Spearheaded user-centered financial inclusion program by partnering with service providers to expand access for tea plantation workers, increasing coverage from 10% to 77%

EDUCATION

University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, USA

Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy | *Master of Public Policy*

May 2025

Stephen M. Ross School of Business | *Master of Business Administration (STEM)*

May 2025

- Graduate Student Instructor: Guided and evaluated written assignments for 50+ undergraduate and graduate students, providing detailed feedback to support learning

Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Mumbai, India

Master of Science in Development Practice

Apr 2017

- Research: Changing contexts of work and wellbeing among women tea plantation workers in India

Cochin University of Science and Technology

Cochin, India

Bachelor of Technology in Electronics and Communication Engineering

Jun 2009

ADDITIONAL

- Volunteer, National Service Scheme: Taught foundational electronics to high school students
- Led STEM accreditation advocacy for Master of Public Policy program at Ford School of Public Policy
- Passionate about watercolor painting; created murals for social awareness campaigns