



PACTA

SOCIAL | IMPACT | LEGAL



Annual Report

2024-2025



From the Director's Desk



Dear Reader,

It gives me great joy to write this note for the third year in a row. When we prepared to release Pacta's first annual report in January 2023, I had no expectation of how the journey ahead of me would shape up. Even where I stand today, I don't know what is in store for me or Pacta in the coming years. But I feel a much greater sense of belonging and belief in Pacta's work than I have felt, ever before.

In the last year, Pacta has made long strides. Three things stand out, in particular:

- a. Our work in the societal implications of emerging technology and data practices is gradually finding a voice and shape of its own. As we continue to incubate and nurture the technology and data research vertical, we see ourselves embracing the power of emerging technologies, yet aware of associated trade-offs and co-benefits. Pacta's work on balancing the rights of gig workers on digital platforms, data rights of vulnerable groups like children and persons with disabilities has only begun.
- b. Pacta's conviction that knowledge and familiarity with the laws is key in shifting power has deepened. We are boldly committing to democratise legal knowledge and rights in jargon free and low stakes formats. One such initiative is Learning Spaces—Pacta's flagship program to make legal compliances for the social sector simple to understand and implement. Learning Spaces I and II were conducted in in-person and online formats to facilitate a fear-free embrace of laws such as FCRA, Income Tax, GST and Labour Laws. The positive response from our community has encouraged us to continue this pursuit.

- c. Our research in disability has deepened our resolve to work on access to justice and disability rights through evidence-driven and data-informed narratives. From 2020 - 2024, we laid a solid foundation to build our research program on data and justice for persons with disabilities. This year, we experimented with fresh tools such as illustrated comics and postcards to spark discussions on the journey to embodying rights. We continued our data-informed insights on disability budgets and orders passed by the Chief Commissioner of Persons with Disability, and this time we used AI to conduct the research. Our work in disability is expected to grow multi-fold in 2025 and beyond.

In 2024, Pacta also made strides institutionally—we renovated the office space, which brought renewed energy and optimism to the team. We launched the Chitta Initiative for Research by Pacta as a charitable trust dedicated to the pursuit of research to close gaps in translation between the intention and implementation of the law and policy. We also formalised and structured teams and work plans, to equip us to apply ourselves more consciously in the coming year.

I feel great gratitude for the experiences and people that shaped me in 2024. I am also proud of how much Team Pacta has grown in work, and hopefully in humility. We are looking forward to doing more great work in 2025—reaching deeper with our roots, but also strengthening our branches. We commit to do our work with grace, kindness and sincerity. On that note, may 2025 bestow us with the best!

**With love and gratitude,
Nivedita Krishna
Founder-Director
Pacta**





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1. About Pacta



Who we are

Pacta is a Bengaluru-based law firm and think tank dedicated to reducing inequities by bridging the gaps between the intent and implementation of laws and policies.

Our Vision: Making law and policies work for everyone

Pacta employs a three-pronged approach to achieve its vision:

1. **Legal Consulting:** Strengthening NGOs' operations, strategies, and programs.
2. **Policy Research:** Generating actionable, localized, and interdisciplinary evidence to close gaps between laws and practice.
3. **Capacity Building:** Equipping changemakers with a better understanding of laws to improve their impact.

The Conscious Extension: Chitta

Towards the vision of reduced inequities, Pacta began in 2017 with a service provisioning approach. We first provided legal services and gradually added research and capacity building services when commissioned by individual clients/ changemakers. Over the years, we observed that shifting perspectives of systems recurred as an imperative to achieve reduced inequities. We felt compelled to initiate the change and follow through, not just in the capacity of a service provider, but as a changemaker ourselves. And from this conscience, Chitta was born.

Chitta Initiative for Research by Pacta is a public charitable trust established in 2024 to bridge the gap between intent and implementation of law and policy, ensuring that laws work for everyone. Chitta serves as a crucible from which action to reduce inequities and serve justice emanates.

2. Highlights of Contributions in 2024

a. Legal Support for Institutional Set

- **Strengthening Governance & Establishing Trusts:** Pacta contributed to enhancing governance frameworks and setting up new trusts for founders driving social impact.
- **Advising a Venture Philanthropy Platform:** Provided legal guidance on developing innovative funding models for a non-profit venture philanthropy platform.
- **Governance Frameworks for Multi-Entity Non-Profits:** Streamlined governance structures for organizations working in public health, menstruation, and general public utility.
- **Establishing New Trusts:** Supported the creation of five new trusts focused on:
 - » **Disability & Inclusion**
 - » **Women's Livelihoods**
 - » **Climate Change Mitigation**
- **Strengthening Compliance & Governance:** Enhanced governance and compliance processes in large Pan-India not-for-profits through robust internal policies and procedures.

b. Pro-Bono Legal Transactions

- **Pro-Bono Legal Support:** Provided legal assistance to well-intentioned causes and founders lacking resources for paid support.
- **Supporting Afro-Indian Tribal Communities:** Assisted an Afro-Indian tribal community in Karnataka in establishing a new trust.
- **Promoting Inclusivity in Sports:** Drafted a grant agreement for the Cricket League for Disabled, fostering greater accessibility in sports.
- **Facilitating Respite Care:** Supported the formation of a charitable trust dedicated to providing respite care for caregivers of children and persons with disabilities, helping alleviate their burden and sustain their caregiving roles.

c. Documentation & Strategy

- **Public Archives & Copyright Compliance:** Assisted Azim Premji Foundation Library in creating public archives based on donated third-party collections, ensuring compliance with copyright and fair use laws.
- **Scholarship Program Documentation:** Supported documentation and digital compliance for India's largest Girls Scholarship Program, Azim Premji Scholarships, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- **Contracts for Development Projects:** Drafted civil engineering and development contracts for universities, hospitals, and bio-reserve construction projects, including:
 - » **MS Swaminathan Research Foundation**
 - » **National Law School of India University, Bangalore**
 - » **Azim Premji Foundation**
- **Grant Documentation Review:** Conducted a thorough review of grant documentation architecture for rare refundable grant programs providing microcredit facilities.

4. Pacta's Key Knowledge Resources

i. Mitigating Legal & Ethical Risks for Not-for-Profit Organizations in Use of AI - A Primer

Pacta developed a primer on Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help nonprofits understand the potential, risks, and responsible use of AI in their operations and programs. Pacta launched this at the Dasra - Tech4Dev CTO Summit in Bengaluru . The primer highlights:

- **AI Applications for NGOs:** Practical insights into AI-driven tools like automation, predictive analytics, NLP (Natural Language Processing), and generative AI for improving program efficiency, impact evaluation, and resource optimization.
- **Ethical and Legal Considerations:** Addressing challenges like data privacy, bias, and misuse of AI while recommending mitigation strategies and compliance with emerging regulations.
- **Actionable Guidance:** Case studies and real-world examples to help NGOs adopt AI responsibly, ensuring alignment with their mission while enhancing their operational capacity.

ii. Compliance Calendar for NGOs

To ensure ongoing compliance with the complex regulatory landscape, Pacta developed a comprehensive Compliance Calendar for NGOs. This internal resource serves as a critical tool for proactively managing statutory deadlines, including tax filings, regulatory submissions, and internal audits.

iii. Compendium on cases pertaining to street dogs for research project at University of Edinburgh

Pacta was engaged to analyze court cases involving stray dogs in India. Data was sourced from High Court websites, legal databases, news articles, and animal welfare reports. The study highlighted the judiciary's role in resolving legal challenges related to stray dogs and emphasized the need for humane management and robust regulatory frameworks to address these complex issues effectively.



e. Capacity Building by Pacta

At Pacta, we are committed to strengthening the legal and compliance capabilities of organizations within the social sector through targeted capacity building initiatives.

Pacta conducted compliance audits and training sessions on rights awareness on topics such as Data Privacy, LGBTQIA+ rights, Anti-Sexual Harassment Laws, Disability Rights, Child Safety Rights for several grass roots organisations such as British Asian Trust, Children's Investment Fund Foundation, Humsafar, among others.

DASRA-Tech4Good, April 2, 2024, Bengaluru - Roundtable discussion on the AI Social Sector Primer and the adoption of AI ethical frameworks in the social sector.



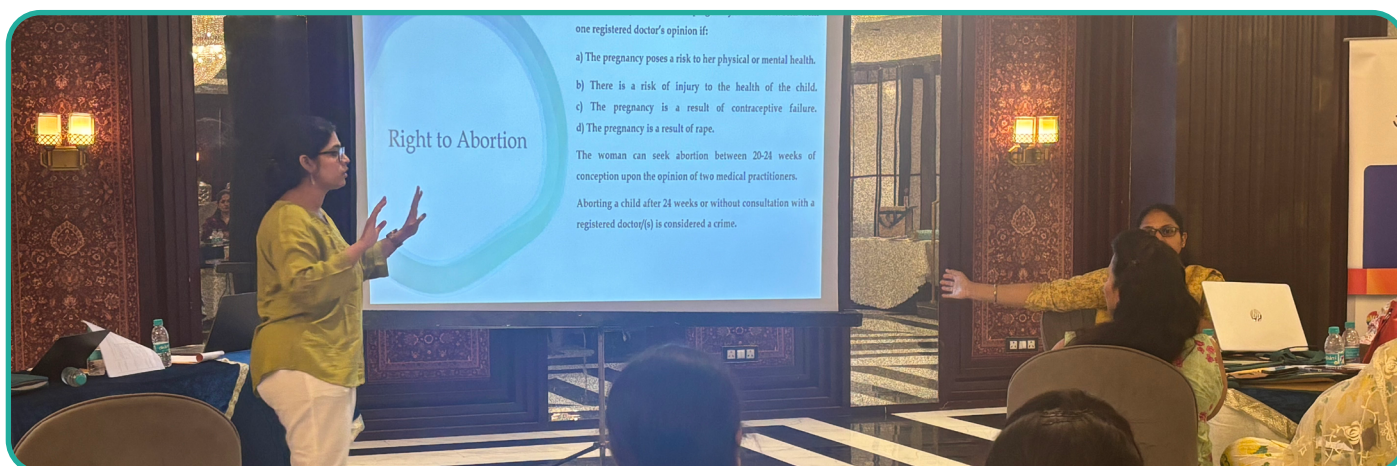
Dalberg - CIFF Data Protection for Non Profits - CIFF-Dalberg CME Cohort: April 8 - 10 April, 2024, Delhi - Session on Data Privacy in India's context legal obligations and practical implications.



Dhwani - Legal 101 for NGOs - Dhwani Foundation- Niranthara Sahayak TN Compliance Session - April 22 & 23, 2024 - Two-day workshop to strengthen the legal capacity of NGOs in the Dhwani Foundation cohort.



The Humsafar Trust - April 19 - 21, 2024, Delhi - Two-day training on legal literacy and skill development for LGBTQI+ individuals and female sex workers (FSW).



Other Capacity Building Sessions

- **Impact 3ie - July 11, 2024** - Session on laws governing ethics in research.
- **Digital Futures Lab - October 9, 2024** - RAIL Fellowship Lecture: Regulatory Compliance 101: Session on AI Laws and Ethics.
- **Krea University - November 23, 2024, Chennai** - Workshop on Ethics for IRB: Best Practices and Guidelines.
- **HDFC Parivartan Social Lens - September 20, 2024** - Training program on legal capacity building for NGOs.
- **CSF - Space2Grow - August 27, 2024** - A workshop on data privacy for impact-based EdTech initiatives.

3. Learning Spaces by Pacta

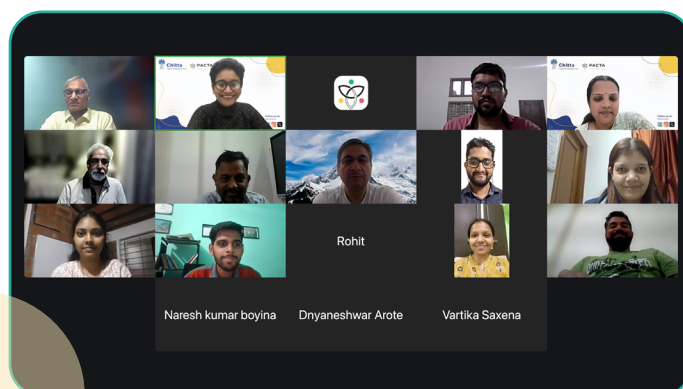
Learning Spaces is Pacta's flagship legal and compliance workshops tailored to the social sector. By equipping NGOs with the tools and knowledge to address legal challenges, Pacta empowers organizations to operate effectively and maximize their impact on the communities they serve. In 2024, we successfully conducted two key capacity building programs.

1. In-Person Workshop – August 9 & 10, 2024, Bengaluru

- Held at the Bangalore International Centre (BIC), this session focused on critical topics such as FCRA, GST, and Labour Compliances.
- Attended by 20 participants from various NGOs, the workshop provided practical insights to help organizations.

2. Online Capacity Building Session, November 22 & 23, 2024.

- This virtual session focused specifically on FCRA compliance, ensuring NGOs remain informed and prepared to meet their legal obligations.



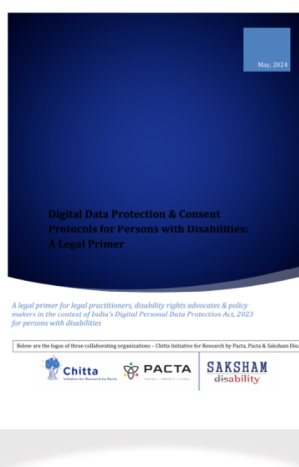
4. Publications at Pacta

a. Data & Technology



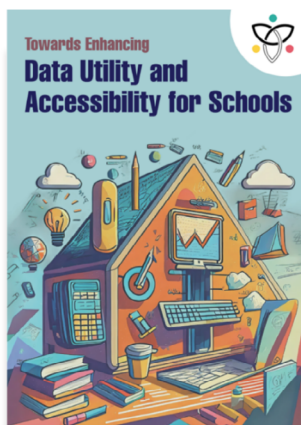
Implications of the Digital Data Protection Act, 2023 on Persons with Disabilities (In Collaboration with Chitta and Saksham Disability)

Pacta provided recommendations on the rules for implementing the Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 from the perspective of rights of persons with disabilities.



Digital Data Protection & Consent Protocols for Persons with Disabilities: A Legal Primer (In collaboration with Chitta and Saksham Disability)

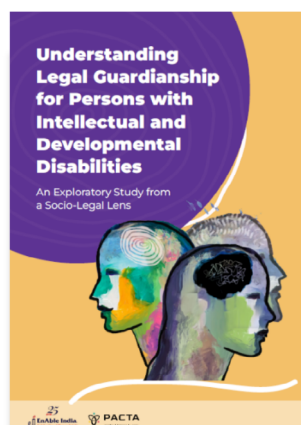
This initiative provides actionable insights into the intersection of data privacy and disability rights, addressing systemic gaps in the current legal framework.



Towards Enhancing Data Utility and Accessibility for Schools

Pacta received a research grant from **Apti-Mozilla Foundation** Under strengthening data systems in education in India to spotlight data management and accessibility challenges for schools.

b. Gender & Disability



Understanding Legal Guardianship for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (In collaboration With Enable India)

Pacta provided research insights and recommendations on legal guardianship for persons with disabilities compliant with intentions enshrined under the UNCRPD.



Tracing the Budgetary Allocation for Disability Sector in India

Budgetary Trends over the years upto 2024-25

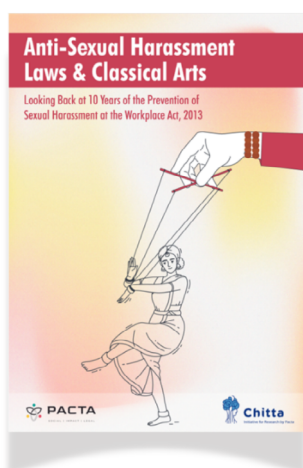
Tracing the Budgetary Allocation for Disability Sector in India-Budgetary Trends over the years upto 2024-2025 (Self-Directed)

A snapshot of the budget allocation trends over the years for persons with disabilities.



Data Insights on Decisions of India's Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities in 2023 (Self-Directed in collaboration with Chitta)

A comprehensive analysis compiling key findings from 358 cases handled by the CCPD from January to December 2023.



Anti-Sexual Harassment Laws & Classical Arts (In collaboration with Chitta)

The study highlights gaps in PoSH Act implementation and the need for broader legal frameworks in the classical arts sector.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Social Registry Enrollment Process Across 38 Districts in Tamil Nadu

Pacta conducted an independent evaluation of the Social Registry Enrolment (SRE) project in Tamil Nadu, utilizing a mixed-methods approach.

This project, spearheaded by the Directorate for the Welfare of the Differently Aabled (DWDA), aims to create a comprehensive database of individuals with disabilities. The evaluation, conducted between December 2023 and March 2024, involved data analysis, enumerator interviews, and field observations. Its findings, including identified data quality issues and recommendations for improvement, were shared with the DWDA to enhance the accuracy and effectiveness of the SRE project.

c. Education



Preserving the Right to Safe, Inclusive, Quality Education for Children in India (Self- Directed)

The compendium covers key judicial rulings from 2023 on education in India, focusing on private school autonomy, RTE rights, fee regulations, teacher qualifications, and institutional accountability.



State of Special Educators in India (Self-Directed in collaboration with Chitta)

The report uncovers the shortage of special educators in India, a data narrative compelling urgent action.

d. Social Impact Measurement



Diversity Dialogue II – Building an Inclusive Fleet: Insights from Zomato's Equitable Action for Livelihood.

A blog on livelihoods of persons with disabilities engaged as Zomato delivery partners under the Zomato-NeoMotion model.

6. Pacta in the Press

Why India's Data Protection Board requires more scaffolding - Nivedita Krishna, March 4, 2024, ET Prime

POLICY AND REGULATIONS | **ETPrime**
Why India's Data Protection Board requires more scaffolding



Where India's disability pension scheme falls short- Riddhi Lakhiani, September 5, 2023, IDR



Where does India's disability pension scheme fall short?

Watch on YouTube

India's confusing legal landscape does not serve persons with intellectual disabilities - Krithika Sambasivan, Dishari Chakrabarti, December 21, 2024, The Leaflet

THE LEAFLET
CONSTITUTION FIRST

Home Rights Rule of law Niches Areas Courtroom In focus Multimedia Art, literature

Health
👑 **India's confusing legal landscape does not serve persons with intellectual disabilities**

How do India's legal guardianship laws— and the confusion therein— dictate autonomy for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities?

What nonprofits need to know about Form 10BD- May 23, 2024, IDR

What nonprofits need to know about Form 10BD

Any organisation with an 80G certificate needs to submit a donation statement to the Income Tax Department by filling form 10BD. Here's all you need to know about the form.

by **PACTA**

7. Events & Panel

Events & Panel

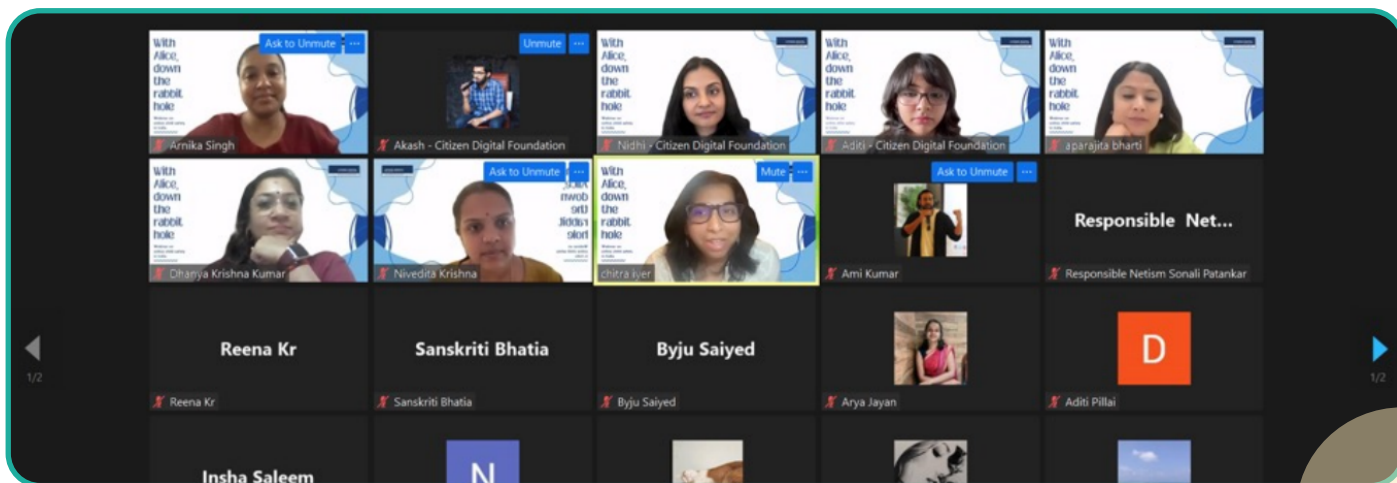
- **Zomato's Sustainability and Inclusivity: January 17, 2024, Delhi** - A conference organized by IndiaTech, in partnership with Zomato on the Role of the Platform Economy in fostering environmental sustainability and inclusion of women and persons with disabilities.
- **Meta's Annual Tech Policy flyout : October 17 & 18, 2024, San Francisco** - A two day event with in-depth discussions with company leaders on key issues.



- **Practicing Inclusive Education in India : February 16 & 17, 2024, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru** - A panel discussion on preparing practitioners for inclusive education in India.



- **Citizen Digital Foundation: June 14, 2024** - Webinar on online child safety in India with CSOs, parents, and policymakers.

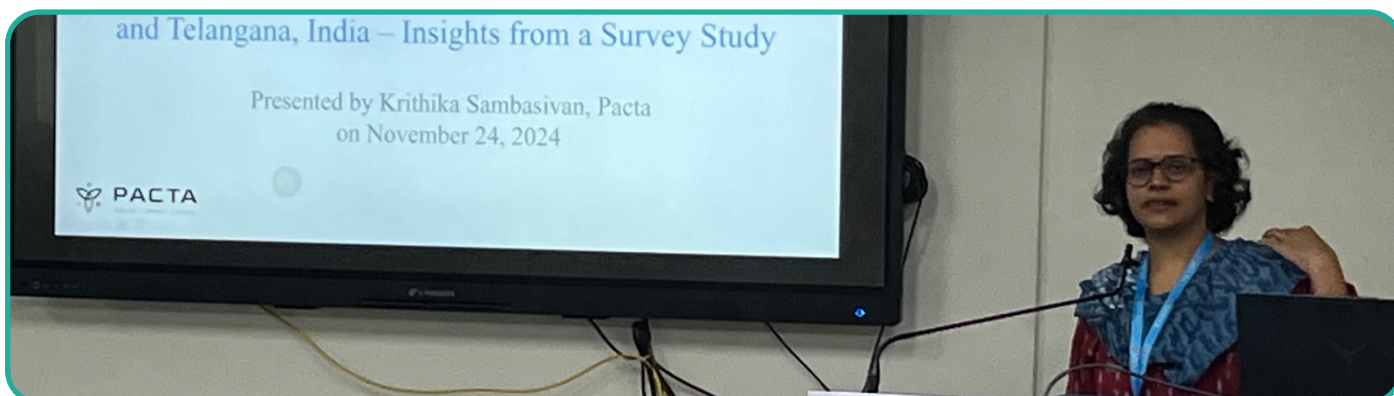


- **Implications of DPDP Act for Persons with Disability-Saksham Disability: August 8, 2024, Delhi** - Report launch and discussion on legal obligations and practical implications.



- **CLPR National Consultation on Disability Rights Judgements: July 13, 2024, Delhi** - Invitation to review the Draft Resource Book on Disability Rights Judgements as a consultant in the field, field.
- **Zero Project Bangalore Technology Forum: September 23, 2024, Bengaluru** - A forum on assistive technology solutions for persons with disabilities.
- **UNICEF-YLAC-Nipman Foundation Consultation: November 11, 2024** - Consultation regarding Equitable and Inclusive Access to Justice for Children with Disabilities.

- **8th Global Disability Conference- Prasho Foundation: November 23 & 24, 2024, Hyderabad -** Presentation on the state of implementation and barriers to obtaining the UDID in Karnataka and Telangana.



- **Agami Justice Maker's Mela: November 29 & 30, 2024, Bhopal -** An interactive session using illustrated cards and prompts to facilitate discussions on our key projects.



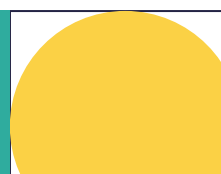
- **The Ability Network (TAN) Conference- Tech Mahindra: November 29, 2024, Bengaluru -** A conference uniting various stakeholders to co-create solutions for access to services through a tech-based platform for persons with disabilities.



- **Digital Citizen Summit: November 15 & 16, 2024, Hyderabad** - A roundtable on AI accountability, community governance, and equitable technology.



- **Digital Futures Lab-Gen AI Foresight Workshop - November 14 & 15, 2024, Goa** - A workshop on the future of AI.



8. Self-Learning and Team Strengthening at Pacta

This year, we introduced Weekly Reflection Sessions as a cornerstone of our collaborative and ever-learning culture. These sessions, led by team members on a rotational basis, serve as a platform for introspection, creativity, and problem-solving.

Each session is uniquely crafted by the facilitator, focusing on diverse themes such as:

- **Stories of Social Impact:** Exploring narratives around pressing social issues and engaging the team in thought-provoking discussions to understand various perspectives.
- **Research Challenges:** Encouraging team members to share questions or challenges faced in their work, inviting fresh ideas and collective problem-solving from the group.

These reflections have not only deepened our understanding of complex social issues but also strengthened our team's ability to think critically and collaboratively. By fostering an environment of trust and open dialogue, these sessions have become a valuable source of inspiration, innovation, and team cohesion.



Weekly Reflection Session with the Team



Reflective Session with Professor Claire Crawford on her work in Technology and Society



Reflective Session with Nidhi Sudan on Technology and Digital Platforms

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