



## Why India?

### *How the Cranwell Family Foundation Is Living Its “Locally Grounded, Globally Minded” Ethos*

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As the [Cranwell Family Foundation](#) (CFF) continues to grow in impact and clarity of purpose, we regularly reflect on the “why” behind our philanthropic priorities and the partnerships that make up our portfolio. One of those questions is: **Why India? Why is CFF engaged in supporting work in India?**

For a family foundation rooted in southwest Virginia, the answer may not be immediately obvious. But like much of CFF’s work, the answer is deeply values-driven, relational, and grounded in a long view of impact. Our commitment to human dignity, opportunity, and community flourishing transcends borders, while remaining rooted in relationships that span generations.

Today, CFF’s engagement in India is focused on a single trusted partner, the [Pure Water Initiative](#) (PWI). But the roots of this work extend back decades, forming a powerful “full-circle” moment in the Cranwell family’s philanthropic journey.

#### **From Southwest Virginia to India: A Story of Relationship and Return**

The Cranwell family’s connection to **India** began in the early 1980s, when Bill Cranwell connected with Rev. Dr. Ray Allen, then a pastor in Blacksburg, Virginia. Dr. Allen had recently established a relationship with Rev. Dr. Kunjumon Chacko and his wife, Jane, from Kerala, India. Collaboration began in teaching rural pastors, planting churches, supporting orphaned children, and founding the India Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS).



Decades later, that same network of relationships has come full circle with the Cranwell Family Foundation supporting IBTS humanitarian efforts across India through Pure Water Initiative, and with Kunjumon and Jane Chacko’s oldest son, Biju Chacko, now serving on the PWI board.

Through CFF’s engagement with and support for PWI, the Cranwell family’s historic ties to India are renewed in a way that reflects both continuity and evolution, connecting past relationships with present-day impact.

This work was never about scale or visibility. It was about presence, partnership, and responding to real needs on the ground – values that continue to shape CFF’s approach today.

#### **Pure Water Initiative: Restoring Dignity Through Access to Clean Water**



PURE WATER  
INITIATIVE

CFF’s current engagement in India is focused exclusively on its partnership with [Pure Water Initiative](#) (PWI), a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing global water scarcity through sustainable, community-based water solutions.

In India (particularly in rural and underserved villages) access to clean, safe water is not guaranteed. Families, particularly women and children, often spend hours each day collecting water or spend a significant portion of their income purchasing it. The consequences of water scarcity ripple outward: poor health, lost educational opportunities for children (especially girls), economic instability, and long-term community vulnerability.

PWI addresses this challenge by partnering with local leaders, pastors, and community members to design and build water infrastructure, providing clean, accessible water throughout the village. These projects meet immediate needs and strengthen communities for generations.

Access to clean water transforms daily life by improving health outcomes, increasing educational and play opportunities for children, strengthening household economic stability, and inspiring sustainable community development throughout villages.

**In 2025, CFF provided support to fund PWI projects across multiple villages in India**, including in Kerala and Odisha, ensuring that countless villagers will have reliable access to clean water. These investments were intentionally timed so projects could be completed before the monsoon season, maximizing both effectiveness and durability.

## Beyond the Well: Building Capacity for Long-Term Impact

What resonates most deeply with CFF about PWI's work is its commitment to going "beyond the well."

In partnership with the India Baptist Theological Seminary, PWI supports a Community Development Certificate Program that equips future pastors and community leaders with practical skills to address critical needs in the villages they serve. This approach reflects a belief that sustainable change is rooted in local leadership, education, and trust.

By investing in both infrastructure *and* people, PWI aligns closely with CFF's broader philanthropic philosophy: durable impact happens when communities are empowered to steward their own futures.

## Locally Grounded, Globally Minded

So, what does this have to do with the Cranwell family?

Everything.

CFF's engagement in India is not about expanding a geographic footprint. It is about honoring relationships, stewarding legacy responsibly, and supporting work that reflects our deepest values. It is a reminder that being locally grounded does not limit our vision – it anchors it.

Just as our work in rural Virginia and in Africa reflects long-term commitments built on trust and shared purpose, our partnership with PWI in **India** represents a continuation of a story that began decades ago and continues to evolve.

## What's Next

Looking ahead, CFF expects its engagement in India to remain focused and intentional, anchored in its partnership with the Pure Water Initiative and guided by ongoing learning, relationship, and impact. As with all our work, **we will prioritize depth over breadth, sustainability over scale, and ripple over splash.**

## Final Thought

India is not a single story. It is a country of extraordinary diversity, resilience, and complexity. But one truth is universal: access to clean water is foundational to human dignity and opportunity.

By supporting clean water initiatives in India through PWI, the Cranwell Family Foundation is participating in work that is both profoundly practical and deeply human – work that improves health, expands opportunity, and strengthens communities for generations.

In doing so, we honor the past, respond to the present, and invest in the future, living out our commitment to be a small foundation with a long memory, a global heart, and an enduring belief in the power of being *locally grounded and globally minded*.