

India: Exploring Bitcoin Applications Through Human-Centered Design

By Ahshuwah Hawthorne and Nate Scholz

Recap from 2024

Before jumping into details about the event we held in India, it's helpful to recap what brought us to this moment. For the last four years, our Brilliance Labs team has been exploring practical use cases for Bitcoin in global missions. We hosted similar research gatherings in El Salvador to explore community economic development, and in Kenya to look at providing electricity for off-grid communities and financial education for African missionaries. As the final phase of our three-city research plan, India presented a compelling next context to explore.



Events in Our Travels

On the way to India, we attended the Lugano Bitcoin Conference in Switzerland, where Ahshuwah co-presented a masterclass on Bitcoin in Nonprofits alongside Swiss parliamentarian, Samuel Kullman.

Arriving in coastal India, our meetings followed the format of an innovation process called human-centered design. This process starts with the challenges faced by the group and then develops iterative solutions to help solve those problems. Framed around "money challenges," the group identified the primary obstacles to funding work in India. We introduced Bitcoin's relevant characteristics that make it useful in ministry. The founders of Bitcoin Beach in El Salvador shared how Bitcoin provided financial empowerment for the poor. Ahshuwah explained how it can be used as a savings mechanism to fund long-term projects.

The group then divided into teams to work on the projects that they were most interested in solving. By the end of the week, four projects had emerged, including two financial

education projects, a trusted peer-to-peer trading group for trading bitcoin and rupees, and a long-term savings plan to use bitcoin to help fund Bible translation projects.

We intentionally spent time networking and building relationships within the group. One afternoon, the group toured Goa's historic Portuguese-era sites, including ancient cathedrals and toured a spice farm.

The day after our event concluded, our group attended an open-invite bitcoin conference attended by over 120 Indian tech professionals and enthusiasts, from many different backgrounds. Ahshuwah gave the final keynote address about Bitcoin and spirituality. He addressed the challenges of relativism common in both secular and Hindu worlviews and tried to show how bitcoin moves us to believe in objective truth, which led to some faith sharing conversations among Hindus. Nate later reflected on these themes in a separate article exploring the intersection of faith in Jesus and Bitcoin.

Before heading home, we stopped in Bangalore, one of the largest tech hubs in India. We met with business leaders and explored how bitcoin could be used to help them in their work.

What we learned from our research trips and the next phase of ministry for Brilliance Labs

Among the many ways that Bitcoin could impact the missions community, we believe that solving the problem of cross-border payments would provide the biggest impact. We're now preparing an educational consultancy designed to come alongside missions organization finance officers to aid them in building customized use of Bitcoin in their toughest adaptive challenges.

The primary issue they face is stewarding the sacrificially given financial resources under their care. Each year, billions of dollars intended for missions work are lost to bank fees, and we can guide them in how to drastically reduce this loss. By April 2026, we aim to begin signing contracts under this service offering.