



EV4GH
Newsletter

SWITCHING THE POLES

IN THIS ISSUE

Navigating 2020!

by Charles Ssemugabo (EV2016). Co-editor, EV4GH newsletter

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 6th edition of the Emerging Voices for Global Health (EV4GH) newsletter. We are all possibly coming to terms with the new normal or perhaps hoping that one of the greatest disruptors of life (ever), will come to pass soon or later. But, either way COVID-19 has demonstrated the many day-to-day privileges we should not take for granted. In the past eight months, a lot has been at stake including lives, jobs, social space among others and in fact, a lot is still at stake. As a network too, a lot has been and is at stake. It is now a [decade since the first EV4GH](#) edition. A more deserving celebration of this will now have to be witnessed remotely. The biennial initiation of a new cohort of young and enthusiastic global health researchers, alumni, and friends of EV4GH has also been disrupted. But human resilience and ingenuity means that, thanks to the new normal, somehow all this will take place virtually. Hopefully a F2F EV4GH event can still take place next year as well, in Dubai.



In this issue, we introduce EV4GH 2020. The EV governance team breaks down how the emerging voices programme for 2020 has been rethought to fit the new normal while being cognizant of the focus on the intra-cohort social interactions during the programme. The governance team also shares some reflections on the 10-year anniversary. We also bring you an update on the virtual phase that will precede the virtual [Sixth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research, 2020](#). The virtual phase – previously known as “distance coaching” – started on September 3, 2020. We also feature an article by Sameh Al-Awlaqi (EV, 2018) on his EV residency experience at ITM Antwerp, and how he managed to transit to his new appointment in Berlin amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we celebrate the 10 years of EV4GH, we unveil a new logo for the network. Finally, we thank you all for supporting the EV4GH network activities over the years, and in particular this year, we would like to give a shout out to all who have and are supporting the EV 2020/2021 programme especially in these uncertain times.

Enjoy your reading and we look forward to keeping you updated!

Update on Emerging Voices 2020

by Nityasri SN, Secretary EV4GH

EV4GH aims to support young and emerging health policy & systems researchers and practitioners, particularly from Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), in becoming influential global health voices and/or local change makers. The program typically includes online, and face-to-face training. Over the last decade, the EV4GH training program has been held biennially, in close association with the global Health Systems Research symposia.

This year, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the [Health Systems Research symposium](#) (HSR2020) will be held virtually, in three phases: (a) First phase consisting of skills building sessions, special panels and plenaries from the 8th to 12th November 2020; (b) parallel sessions to be held every two weeks from end of November 2020 to March 2021; (c) and, ideally (if the COVID situation allows), a small (invitation-only) face-to-face synthesizing event in Dubai. This edition of EV4GH will follow a similar program. The Emerging Voices (EV) 2020 program will be held in two phases: (a) a **virtual phase** that will have both synchronous and asynchronous training sessions in September-October 2020, followed by (b) a short **Face-to-Face (F2F)** phase in Dubai end of March 2021 which will align with the United Arab Emirates Health Policy Forum (subject to COVID-related travel possibilities). New and alumni EVs will also participate in the various stages of the HSG symposium.



EV4GH 2020 VENTURE

Over 400 applications were received for the two tracks this edition of EV4GH offers – (a) the young researchers' track; (b) change agents' track. Participants for the EV 2020 venture were selected through a comprehensive two-stage review and selection process. In the first stage, all applications were reviewed by 2-3 reviewers independently. Reviewers included EV alumni, teaching staff/faculty from EV partner institutes, and other EV "well-wishers" and facilitators involved in previous EV programs. The final selection – based on the shortlist from the (first stage of the) review process – was made at the end of June 2020, by the EV scientific committee (consisting of representatives of the EV partner institutes, a representative of the HSG secretariat and a few EV governance members).

The selection aimed to include EVs from different regions, representation from partner institutions, area of work, inputs/preferences from the main financial supporters of the EV 2020 venture (and of course funding available), gender, level of experience. All selected candidates demonstrate an interest to engage critically on global health issues that have local relevance within their country/local health systems and share a strong commitment to health equity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to many uncertainties, and we are navigating this much like everyone else. The EV governance team (in close collaboration with the local host, the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government) is keeping a close eye on the evolving situation. We hope the EV 2020 programme (including the planned F2F event in Dubai end of March 2021) will be conducted as planned! Plans have been made for certain foreseeable contingencies, such as dropouts due to local travel restrictions. A waitlist of EV applicants has been developed as a backup to address this. All 400+ EV applicants were notified early July.

Big news! – We're 10 years old!!!

This year also marks the [10th anniversary of the EV program!](#) This offers us an opportunity to reflect on the decade past, and plan for the years ahead. Over the years, the network has nurtured a focus on equity and action on social determinants of health. This equity focus has been embedded in the programmes of various cohorts, including through application of gender and power lenses, and a more recent focus on climate change and on fragile and conflict affected states. Reflecting on the past decade of EV4GH, we seek to reaffirm its promise of continuing to incubate disruptive and critical early career leadership within global health. And as EV chair Dorcus Kiwanuka Henriksson says, the EV network "might bend but will not break", even in difficult COVID-times. In fact, the Emerging Voices have perhaps never been needed more!

The EV team is looking forward to a successful EV 2020(/2021) venture, in collaboration with the local host the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government in Dubai. The virtual programme is about to start now, under the supervision of Tanya Seshadri (in collaboration with EV governance members Faraz Khalid and Goran Zangana, and a whole team of EV alumni & staff of partner institutes). See you all in early September!!!!

Re-envisioning the Emerging Voices for Global Health 2020 program in the times of COVID-19

by Faraz Khalid (EV2016), Tanya Seshadri (Virtual program coordinator), Goran Zangana (EV2016)

The [Emerging Voices for Global Health \(EV4GH\)](#) launches the seventh edition of its distance learning phase on 3 Sep 2020. Since [Health Systems Global](#) (HSG) decided to hold the [sixth Health Systems Research Symposium as largely a virtual event](#), EV4GH, a Thematic Working Group (TWG) of HSG, was mulling how to respond to the new format without compromising the DNA of the program. The EV2020 program keeps at its heart objectives as reflected in [recent tweets](#) by some EV Alumni while sharing their reasons for applying to the EV program:

Keeping these objectives central to the program and accommodating the need for a virtual event, the former distance learning and face-to-face task force teams came together to form a joint task force for the EV2020 program. The EV2020 program will be held in two phases: (a) a virtual program in Sep-Oct 2020 leading up to the HSG Global Symposium followed by (b) a brief face-to-face program in March 2021 at Dubai.

The EV2020 virtual program as now designed, meets the objectives of the EV program and will ensure that high energy, enthusiasm, innovation, and the bold and constructive mood of EV ventures are retained. It has a wider scope than the usual distance learning and has added different innovative formats for a more interactive and engaging learning environment for the participants and is spread over eight weeks.



I was still such a newbie to Global Health! It was an exciting international programme that I knew would 1) contribute to my professional development and 2) getting to be part of an expert global network hee ha! #EV2020



In this edition, the program starts with an introduction to the EV4GH program and its history along with a module for the new EVs to get to know one another. The rest of the program has two broad sections: knowledge translation and thematic sessions. The first section

includes five modules that help EVs to learn and hone their communication skills to better organize and share their work, be it research-specific messages or a relevant health policy and systems issue to engage on. These modules include learning how to engage with peers online, mapping ideas or work through a mind-mapping exercise and finally three modules on communicating their work. This time EVs will get to learn how to write a blog/op-ed, develop an or ideas through podcast/poster/cartoons, etc. In the other

I was inspired with the rare opportunity for to learn, collaborate with emerging global health researchers from the global south & advance a gender equity agenda. It's a unique program that challenges the mindset & builds strong support network. #EV2020 #DemocratizeGlobalHealth



effective presentation and learn a new way to share their work or ideas through podcast/poster/cartoons, etc. In the other section, every week the EVs will also spend time engaging with fellow EVs, facilitators and resource persons from across the world on key health systems and policy issues. A total of seven sessions are planned, using different innovative formats that include role play, panel, debate, etc. Each session is planned to ensure that the EVs not only are exposed to different issues and perspectives but also learn how to engage on such issues respectfully and effectively. Given the boom of virtual sessions and online discussions in the brave new COVID-19 world, these sessions will help prepare them for communicating their work and thoughts with others in the upcoming Sixth Global Health Symposium (and beyond).

We hope that the greater exchange, development of ideas for a fair and just world and building of relationships in the virtual program will be further strengthened during the face-to-face meeting planned at the culminating event in Dubai, end of March 2021, and from there on the new cohort of EVs will play an important role in strengthening the growing network of EVs in more than sixty countries of the world and will influence the change both at the local health systems and global health platforms.

Reflections from an EV in residence

by Sameh Al-Awlaqi (Ev2018)

I finished my master's degree in public health in 2019 (governance of health systems and health economics), the same year, I was awarded a scholarship to be an EV resident at ITM.

I was so excited about this opportunity. My primary aim was to contribute to Yemen's health system review, explore my academic interests and career opportunities, get hands-on experience from ITM senior researchers, and to learn something new. I have never been to Belgium before.

As a national of Yemen, my first few weeks in Antwerp were challenging. I missed two important events (WHO health financing course in Geneva and ALNAP humanitarian conference in Berlin) because I was not authorised to leave Belgium unless I received my residence permit (no Belgian diplomatic missions in Yemen).

Nonetheless, I used the waiting time to interact and learn from everyone at ITM's health policy and financing unit. My day started with dropping my son at school, then heading to ITM to learn and work. I worked on Yemen health system analysis, wrote articles for IHP as an EMRO correspondent, and participated in teaching health economics sessions for master's students. I attended yoga classes as well ☺. I was invited to moderate a panel discussion on delivering health care in conflict at AidEx Brussels. The experience was enriching.

Together with my colleagues at the unit, we responded to an EU call COVID-19 in African countries. The competition was fierce, we did not win, but we developed a full proposal with ITM' partners in Europe and Africa in less than 10 days! That was an impressive achievement! This project opened new opportunities for ITM, and for me personally.

Between March until early May after finishing my residency, COVID-19 restrictions forced me to stay in Belgium. But during this time, another opportunity came, and I was able to move to Berlin after the ease of travel restrictions to work at the Robert Koch Institute as a research manager. I now oversee the research of the unit in fragile and conflict-affected countries, including Yemen.

Working at ITM was among the best things that ever happened to me in my entire life. Not only at the professional level, but at the personal level as well. I was humbled by the amount of support and guidance I got from my colleagues at ITM during my residency. I was privileged to be part of the ITM team and will always maintain great memories about my time at ITM, my friends and Antwerp. I am sure I will be back someday.



And finally,

EV Logo Competition



A big shoutout to Angeli Rawat, designer of the new Emerging Voices for Global Health logo. Also, many thanks for the contributions of Adithya Pradyumna and Sophie Vusha for their contributions to the search for a new logo for EV4GH!!! We love your entries, and our new logo!!