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THE EMERGING VOICES FOR GLOBAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

*The official bi-annual newsletter
by EV4GH Spring 2025*



ABOUT EV4GH

Emerging Voices for Global Health (EV4GH) is an innovative multi-partner blended training program for young and emerging health policy & systems researchers (HPSR), decision makers and other health systems professionals. EV4GH uses virtual and face-to-face training to equip participants with skills to become influential global health voices and/or local change-makers. EV4GH started in 2010 at the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM), Antwerp, Belgium, with the aim of empowering health researchers from the global South to participate in global health conferences and events.

The program has grown to include participants from all WHO regions and has engagements with institutions from different countries, supported by a Secretariat at the BRAC James P. Grant School of Public Health, Dhaka, Bangladesh. A thematic working group of Health Systems Global (HSG) since 2016, EV4GH aims to empower the participation of young professionals, especially from LMICs, in HSG. EV members and alumni contribute to the HPSR community by helping review abstracts for Health Systems Research (HSR) symposia, conducting organized sessions and business meetings during the symposium and serving as peer reviewers and editorial members to HPSR journals. EV4GH boasts a vibrant Google group with over 600 members, actively engaging in conversations on global health issues. Over the years, EV4GH members have contributed blogs and articles on HSPR and relevant global health topics, and continue to remain vested in the venture.

WELCOME NOTE

Welcome note from the communications task force lead



Dear emerging voices members, alumni, and friends,

I am delighted to share another edition of the EV4GH newsletter with you. 2024 was an important and successful year for the EV4GH. The EV4GH governance board and secretariat worked diligently to serve the network and prepare and execute another venture. The 2024 Japan venture introduced another diverse cohort of 41 EVs from 27 countries who came together in November in Nagasaki to join the venture, learn together and from each other, and discuss topics such as climate change and mental health, global governance and health security, and a deep dive on Japan's health system and Nagasaki's history and legacy.

In times of crisis, as conflicts in Palestine, the DRC, Sudan, Ukraine, and beyond exacerbate health inequities, and as health rights face challenges from Afghanistan to the U.S., our collective action is more crucial than ever. Systematic efforts to weaken health as a global public good and undermine the crucial role of the WHO in safeguarding health around the world, only highlights the importance of our collective action, protecting fora for dialogue, and relying on our professional networks (such as EV4GH) to ensure our efforts to improve health around the world are coordinated and connected. I encourage you to take advantage of the EV groups (on LinkedIn, Google groups, WhatsApp, etc.) to stay connected, share your opinions, and engage in much-needed critical discourse. If you are not yet part of these groups, reach out to the Communications Task Force through the Secretariat for details on how to join and stay connected.

In this issue, we focus on the Japan 2024 venture by sharing some experiences of EVs and facilitators during their stay in Japan. We also share a glimpse of some important activities in 2025, such as the governance board elections. Enjoy the read!

Sincerely,

Dr. Zahra Zeinali

EV4GH Governance Board Member

Welcome note from the secretariat

Dear EV friends,

Welcome to Emerging Voices for Global Health (EV4GH)! We are thrilled to have you as part of our vibrant and dynamic community. As a global network of passionate professionals, researchers, and advocates, EV4GH is committed to amplifying diverse voices in global health discussions and shaping the future of health systems worldwide.

Since the end of 2023, BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health (BRAC JPGSPH) has taken on the role of the EV Secretariat. We are honored and privileged to serve as the anchor of this network, facilitating collaborations, supporting emerging health leaders, and driving meaningful conversations on global health equity. The EV Secretariat is headquartered in Dhaka, Bangladesh, at BRAC JPGSPH—a hub of innovation, research, and policy engagement in public health.

Our work is made possible through the dedication and support of our esteemed team members:

Dr Ataur Rahman - Program Manager

Zumana Hayat Khan – Programme Administrative Assistant and M&E Officer

Md Al-Mahmud – IT Officer

Zahid Imtiaz Mannan – Finance Officer

Asif Faisal – Communication and Engagement Officer

Patricia Trishna Gomes – Programme Officer

We would also like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our Dean, Dr. Laura Reichenbach, for her unwavering support and guidance. Together, we strive to create opportunities for knowledge exchange, mentorship, and advocacy within the global health community. Through various initiatives, engagement, and interactive platforms, we aim to empower emerging voices and strengthen their contributions to global health policy and practice. We encourage you to stay engaged by participating in EV4GH activities, sharing insights, and connecting with fellow members. Your voice matters, and we are excited to work with you to drive change and make a lasting impact. Please feel free to reach out to us anytime—we are here to support and collaborate with you.

Looking forward to an exciting journey ahead!

Best regards,

Dr. Ataur Rahman

Program Manager, EV Secretariat



Message from the EV GB Chair

Dear Emerging Voices Community,

As Chair of the Governance Board of Emerging Voices for Global Health (EV4GH), I reflect with immense pride on the milestones we achieved in our 2024 venture and wish to share our aspirations for the journey ahead.

The 2024 EV4GH venture stands as a testament to the incredible strength, resilience, and transformative power of our network, which empowers emerging global health leaders from around the world. We proudly welcomed 41 Emerging Voices (EVs) from 27 countries, highlighting our unwavering commitment to diversity and inclusion. Through our innovative blended learning model, EVs engaged in a rigorous training program that seamlessly integrated virtual experiences with immersive, face-to-face interactions. A significant highlight was the face-to-face training in Nagasaki, Japan, preceding the 8th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research. This gathering opened doors for EVs to connect with leading global health experts, showcase their work on an international stage, and contribute to vital discussions shaping the future of health systems. The Annual Governance Board Meeting at Nagasaki University reinforced our commitment to strategic growth, ensuring EV4GH remains agile and responsive to the evolving global health landscape.

The success of our 2024 venture was made possible by the tireless dedication and support of numerous stakeholders. We extend our deepest gratitude to the EV4GH Secretariat at BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University, for their unwavering commitment to coordinating and executing our program. Our heartfelt thanks also go to the School of Tropical Medicine and Global Health, Nagasaki University, for their exceptional partnership and warm hospitality, pivotal to the success of our in-person training and Annual Governance Board Meeting. To all our facilitators, Governance Board members, partners, and funders— thank you for believing in our vision and for your steadfast support in empowering future health leaders.

EV4GH serves as a dynamic platform and a lifelong, global health community, fostering a supportive alumni network that promotes mentorship, collaboration, and leadership beyond the training program. We draw inspiration from the passion, dedication, and vision of our alumni and partners. As we move forward, we aim to amplify diverse voices from underrepresented regions and work towards global health equity, harnessing our collective energy to uplift those in need. Together, we will fortify this vibrant network and champion the cause of global health equity. With heartfelt appreciation and an optimistic spirit,

Bachera Aktar

Chair, Governance Board

Emerging Voices for Global Health



Note from the Face-to-Face and Distance Learning task forces lead

Stepping into the role of the Distance Learning and Face-to-Face task forces lead of Emerging Voices for Global Health (EV4GH) has been a truly thought-provoking experience. Guiding such a dynamic, multicultural group through an intensive knowledge exchange journey was inspiring and deeply enriching. I am incredibly proud of what we achieved together – our collective energy, curiosity, and willingness to engage created a vibrant learning community that reflected the true spirit of EV4GH.

Throughout this process, I remained committed to learning from participants' feedback, embracing it as a valuable tool to strengthen our work. This experience has deepened my appreciation for global collaboration and energised my commitment to curating an even more impactful programme for our 2026 venture in Dubai. I am excited to carry forward all the lessons learned to build an even stronger platform for emerging voices in global health.



Dr. Germán Alarcón

EV4GH Governance Board Member

EV4GH 2024 Venture – Nagasaki, Japan

Congratulations to the 41 Emerging Voices from 27 countries participating in the EV4GH 2024 programme



The ninth and most recent edition of the EV4GH program was held between November 05 to November 15, 2024, and took place in Nagasaki, Japan, where 37 EVs took part in the training program. During the Japan venture, EVs participated in a two-week face-to-face training in Nagasaki at the School of Tropical Medicine and Global Health at Nagasaki University and subsequently the 8th health systems research symposium in Nagasaki at the Dejima Messe Nagasaki.

The 2024 EV venture was led by EV4GH Governance Board member Germán Alarcón, coordinated by ITM staff and EV collaborator Lai Jiang, and supported by a group of former EVs as facilitators and the EV4GH Governance Board. The team worked across two different task forces for the venture's distance learning (DL) and face-to-face (F2F) parts. The DL part of the venture spanned six weeks between 19 August – 13 October and covered topics ranging from climate change and the political determinants in health systems in times of peace and conflict, and complemented by skills-building sessions on knowledge transfer and dissemination, and peer reviewing.

Furthermore, the F2F part of the venture took place between November 4 to November 15, 2024, in the Nagasaki University campus. The F2F training focused on building key professional skills, including oral presentation, data visualisation, policy brief development, and effective digital engagement. The EVs practised their presentation and feedback skills. They also had the opportunity to hear from experts in the field on topics such as climate change and its impact on mental health, critical perspectives on global governance, pandemic preparedness, resurgence of health security, and participatory approaches (co-design, indigenous governance, etc.).

BT1: Local Health Systems in Japan



Professor Mayumi Ohnishi shared reflections on the strengths and challenges of Japan's local health system, highlighting lessons that can inform broader health policy debates worldwide.

BT2: Climate Change and Mental Health



Dr. Omnia ElOmriani explored the growing intersection between climate change and mental health, underlining the urgent need for integrated, cross-sectoral responses to protect vulnerable communities.

BT3: Nagasaki's History, International Relations, Cultural Exchange, Diplomacy, and Western Medicine



Dr. Bebio Amaro offered a fascinating journey through Nagasaki's rich history as a gateway for international relations, diplomacy, and the introduction of Western medicine to Japan.

BT4: Panel Discussion on Participatory Approaches



The EVs together with the facilitators, led a dynamic panel discussion on participatory methods in health research and practice, including co-design processes and indigenous governance models.

BT5: Critical Perspectives on Global Governance and Health Security



Professor Gorik Ooms delivered a compelling talk that challenged dominant narratives around pandemic preparedness, health security, and the resurgence of global governance structures post-COVID.

These discussions were central to enriching our learning journey, sparking critical debates, and inspiring us to think more deeply about the future of global health. The venture also included visits to the Atomic Bomb Museum and Nanko Arankai Horse Therapy as well as talks about the history of Nagasaki, international relations, cultural exchange, diplomacy, and Western Medicine.

The visit to the Atomic Bomb Museum provided a profound understanding of resilience, healing, and the long-term impact of war on public health. Participants witnessed the immense suffering endured by the people of Nagasaki and explored how survivors and communities coped with the physical, emotional, and social consequences of the bombing. The museum showcased stories of survival, medical responses to radiation exposure, and efforts toward nuclear disarmament, offering valuable insights into the intersection of history, health systems, and peace-building.

REFLECTIONS FROM AN EV4GH2024 VENTURE FACILITATOR: GUILLERMO HEGEL

The preparation for the Emerging Voices for Global Health (EV4GH) program begins long before the actual event. My role as a facilitator, particularly for the face-to-face component, involved extensive meetings and discussions with fellow facilitators and the organizing team. This experience was both exciting and challenging. At first, it was difficult to grasp the full structure of the program, especially since my initial participation as an EV had been in 2018. After several years away, re-engaging with the initiative in a leadership role required me to reacquaint myself with its evolving dynamics.



I chose to participate in this edition because it coincided with my attendance at the Health Systems Research (HSR) Symposium, where I was involved in an organized session. Given this opportunity, I felt it was the right moment to give back and contribute my time and expertise, just as previous EVs had done for me. Joining the core facilitators team was an enriching experience. The energy and dedication of several of the facilitators was truly motivating, many of whom contribute voluntarily, driven by their strong commitment to the program's mission. At the same time, this role presented a challenge: maintaining high standards to meet the expectations of a diverse group of participants, each bringing substantial experience and expertise in their respective fields. As facilitators, we spent considerable time discussing and refining the content to ensure it was relevant and impactful. We also faced moments where varying levels of engagement among the team presented obstacles in maintaining consistency and focus.

Once on-site in Nagasaki, the experience became even more enriching. Acting as a facilitator is not just about guiding discussions; it also requires refining one's own knowledge, analyzing content, and making it engaging for others. Beyond that, the opportunity to interact with such a dynamic and diverse group—participants pushing the boundaries of knowledge in various domains—created an environment of mutual learning and inspiration.

Additionally, being in Nagasaki offered a chance to immerse myself in a new culture, connect with professionals from around the world, and present ideas at a major conference like HSR. More broadly, this experience reinforced an important realization: we are witnessing changes of paradigms in global health, and it is essential to leverage the skills and capacities built within the EV4GH community. Moving forward, I believe the program should continue expanding its outreach, identifying and engaging individuals who are driving change but may not fit the traditional academic mold. Many impactful leaders lack a PhD or publication record, yet they are making meaningful contributions at the community level. Innovating new ways to find and support these voices is crucial.

Ultimately, this experience was deeply inspiring. It reinforced my commitment to global health and highlighted the importance of the work each of us contributes from our respective positions. The exchange of knowledge, perspectives, and experiences within EV4GH underscored the relevance of collective efforts in driving meaningful change. Some recommendations for future EV editions:

- **Facilitator commitment & funding:** Organizing this venture is not easy, especially given the constraints of facilitator availability and funding. Securing dedicated funding for the early identification of facilitators would allow for better planning and ensure more structured participation throughout all phases.

- **Stronger distance learning support** : The distance learning phase lacked sufficient facilitator engagement, likely due to the challenge of integrating into a digitally structured program. Having a confirmed group of facilitators for this phase—ideally supported by funding—could improve participation and content delivery.
- **Better integration between phases** : Aligning the distance learning and face-to-face phases more effectively would enhance continuity. Clearly defining who will facilitate the face-to-face sessions early on, during the distance learning preparation, would improve overall coherence and learning outcomes.
- **A more flexible agenda for peer-to-peer learning**: Participant and facilitator evaluations highlighted the need for more adaptable spaces within the agenda. Creating opportunities for participants to lead discussions and share innovative content would enhance engagement and knowledge exchange.

Guillermo Hegel

EV2018, EV2024 venture facilitator

EV4GH IN HSR8

Members of the EV community had a busy time at HSR 8, from plenaries to panels, presentations and workshops. Here are some of the highlights:

The opening plenary on planetary health featured Dr. Renzo Ginto, EV 2014. The closing plenary on knowledge production and dissemination featured Ms. Fatuma Hassan Guled, EV 2024, Dr. Seye Abimbola, EV 2010, and Dr. Prashanth Srinivas, EV 2010.



The EV4GH network hosted a panel discussion as an organized session on the last day of the symposium, focusing on the decolonial approach to epistemic injustice in health policy and systems research (HPSR). The panel featured Dr. Duha Shellah, EV 2024, Dr. Sana Contractor, EV 2016, Dr. Seye Abimbola, EV 2010, and Dr. Emma Rhule (UNU-IIGH), and was moderated by Dr. Zahra Zeinali, EV 2020.

This panel took stock of the progress in addressing power imbalances, centering diverse knowledge systems, and charted a path forward. The discussion focused on three guiding questions: how to address power imbalances in HPSR, how HPSR and teaching can reform governance structures shaped by colonial legacies, and how can we leverage our collective power to dismantle corporate and financial forms of colonialism in global health. Speakers

touched on power imbalances in HPSR, different forms of epistemic injustice, and the decentralization of knowledge production. The concluding remarks highlighted that the journey towards decolonizing global health and HPSR is long and complex. It demands more than policy changes; it requires a transformation in the culture of global health, one that prioritizes equity, respects diverse epistemologies, and is committed to dismantling longstanding power imbalances. Together, we have an opportunity—and a responsibility—to support a global health landscape that is fair, inclusive, and driven by the needs of those it seeks to serve.



The EV4GH Governance Board hosted the business meeting for the EV4GH thematic working group. At the EV4GH business meeting, alumni reflected on strengthening our network through deeper collaborations, mentorship programs, and innovative fundraising strategies for future ventures.



EV4GH 2024 Venture Photo Album





ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

Gautam Satheesh, EV 2024, has recently published his work on developing a regulatory framework for online pharmacies in India. [The study is published in PLoS Global Public Health](#) and covered in [national media](#) in India.

Shiferaw Tesfaye, EV 2024, has recently received the WHO/TDR Clinical Research Leadership Fellowship 2025 and will be placed at the International Vaccine Institute. Additionally, Shiferaw has been selected as an IHP Correspondent for 2025.

Reem Gaafar, EV 2020, has published a fiction book: A Mouth Full of Salt ([Saqi Books, Invisible Publishing](#)) is about three women in postcolonial Sudan whose lives are woven together by a series of tragic losses. The story highlights the complicated position of women in Sudanese society where the political is forever intruding on the personal. The original manuscript won The Island Prize in 2023 and is being translated into Dutch, Turkish and French. It was also listed as one of the [Toronto Star's 25 books to read in 2025](#).

Shakira Choonara, EV 2014, is the thematic lead for the [Action Coalition on Bodily Autonomy and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights at UN Women](#). The Action Coalition brings together 300+ partners worldwide to advance SRHR and gender equality. Shakira led the report published on 10 December 2024 – Human Rights Day, which shows the power of multi-stakeholder partnerships: through the 500 partnership initiative, 72 new or revised SRHR policies, and 769 new programs and 483 new SRHR advocacy initiatives were reported globally. You can access the full report [here](#).

Moses Tetui, EV 2012, and **Joseph Mumba Zulu**, EV 2012, and colleagues have recently launched [the Journal of Community Systems for Health](#), a pioneering, open-access, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to advancing high-quality research on the role of community systems in shaping health. The journal is founded on the principle that health is deeply embedded in daily life and shaped by social and structural factors and operates under a fair and transparent publishing model. Authors retain copyright, with no fees for publication or access, ensuring unrestricted knowledge sharing. The journal serves as an inclusive platform for academics, practitioners, and community members, welcoming diverse perspectives and innovative contributions.

Seye Abimbola, EV 2010, has recently published a book called "[The Foreign Gaze](#)" where he examines our accepted knowledge practices – how we make, use, share and value knowledge – are steeped in structural prejudice and heavily peppered by epistemic injustice.



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