

# EMERGING VOICES FOR GLOBAL HEALTH (EV4GH)

# EV10YEARS



# EV4GH

## 10TH ANNIVERSARY

# DIGITAL MAGAZINE


LSTM  
LIVERPOOL SCHOOL  
OF TROPICAL MEDICINE

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A portrait of Wim Van Damme, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a black hat and a grey jacket. A blue speech bubble in the top left corner contains the text "MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDING FATHER".

MESSAGE FROM THE  
FOUNDING FATHER

# WIM VAN DAMME

*PROFESSOR, PUBLIC HEALTH  
INSTITUTE OF TROPICAL MEDICINE, ANTWERP*

“ FROM A CRAZY IDEA TO A GLOBAL NETWORK (2010 – 2020) ”

In 2010, the first Global Symposium on Health Systems Research was announced. Montreux, Switzerland would be the venue. At the time, I was also asked to organise ITM's annual Scientific Colloquium in Antwerp. My younger colleagues weren't very keen on yet another event with boring powerpoint presentations by the ageing "established" public health elite. They proposed a disruptive idea: "Let us come up with something fresh and dynamic, with young people". I agreed, not knowing what to expect. "Young people will do the talking, the established generation can watch and participate in the discussion," they clarified. I managed to convince my superiors to "take the risk" and the Belgian development agency to fund the venture.

After an essay competition, 50 young public health practitioners and researchers from around the globe were selected. In Antwerp, they were trained in Pecha Kucha, networking and fishbowl discussions, and introduced to the big themes of the Symposium. The Antwerp Colloquium became an amazing Young Voices pre-conference, and the Emerging Voices (EVs) made a splash at the Montreux Symposium. It was wonderful. A movement was born.

In 2012 in Beijing, we were hosted for 3 weeks on the campus of Peking University, in the heart of the Chinese capital. EVs from the 2010 batch mentored the next cohort. Together, we discovered the Chinese health system, their journey towards Universal Health Coverage, and Beijing's touristic wonders – with a special mention for the dazzling Summer Palace.

University of Western Cape, Cape Town, hosted the next ventures in 2013 (ICASA) & 2014 (3rd HSR symposium), at their beautiful campus. They organised most interesting visits to various health services and civil society initiatives, showcasing the struggle for health in South Africa's transformation.

By 2016, the EV network had matured, with the secretariat hosted at the Institute of Public Health, Bangalore. EV also became a Technical Working Group of Health Systems Global. Everything was organised by "former EVs", including an innovative distance learning programme and the full face-to-face venture in Vancouver. And so it continued for the 2018 venture in Liverpool, with strong support from the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, and the organising committee of the Symposium.

Once Dubai was selected by Health Systems Global as host city for the 2020 Symposium, a similar collaboration was set up with the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a fully virtual symposium, but the (just selected) new EVs are still invited for a face-to-face event early 2021 in Dubai. The journey continues.

I got the honourable title "Founding Father of EV4GH", which I accepted with some hesitation, but bear proudly. Some people also call me the EV's "Gandalf". From venture to venture, EV has evolved and grown. EV has become a network, a movement, a force for change. Many of the participants have grown from youngsters to become mature professionals (emerged?.) It has been a privilege to see the movement evolve from a crazy idea to a breeding ground for the next generation of health systems practitioners, researchers and activists, fully managed and organised by the previous generations. The future of Emerging Voices may yield some further surprises. I am eager to be surprised again.



“



# DORCUS KIWANUKA HENRIKSSON

**SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR HEALTH AND SRHR AT THE  
SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION AGENCY.**

## FROM THE CHAIRPERSON'S DESK

The EV4GH program was recommended to me by one of my then PhD supervisors who had attended the Second Global Symposium on Health Systems Research in Beijing and left the Chinese capital not just impressed by the emerging superpower but also by the Emerging Voices. He thought it would be a good fit for me. I was part of the EV 2014 program in Cape Town and seven years down the road, EV4GH is still a good fit for me.

In 2014, when I joined the Emerging Voices (EV) program, I was in my second year as a PhD candidate and had next to zero experience in meaningful participation at international conferences. As an EV I was introduced to - at the time - innovative ways of conveying a message to diverse audiences, and so I dared to use the 'pecha kucha' style of presentation in my first ever oral presentation at an international conference during the Third Global Symposium on Health Systems Research. As they say the rest is history. Since that EV venture in 2014, I have attended several conferences and made both oral and poster presentations; I have also been invited as a keynote speaker and panel member to several meetings and conferences. The EV program in Cape Town made me realize that we all have opinions, and as young people, we are in a somewhat unique position of not having fallen (yet?) in the trap of a 'business as usual' mentality. We should therefore make our voices heard.

That goes even more for young voices from Southern countries. We might not come up with a Nobel prize winning idea, but our input will most definitely be a valuable contribution to the debate with the unique experience and knowledge that we bring to the discussion. This is partly the premise that triggered the EV4GH program a decade ago. To have global health symposia that would be truly "global", showcase innovative presentation methods that would convey messages clearly to a global audience, and most importantly, that would include 'young professionals' prominently at international conferences, till then dominated by authoritative names featured in keynotes and panels.

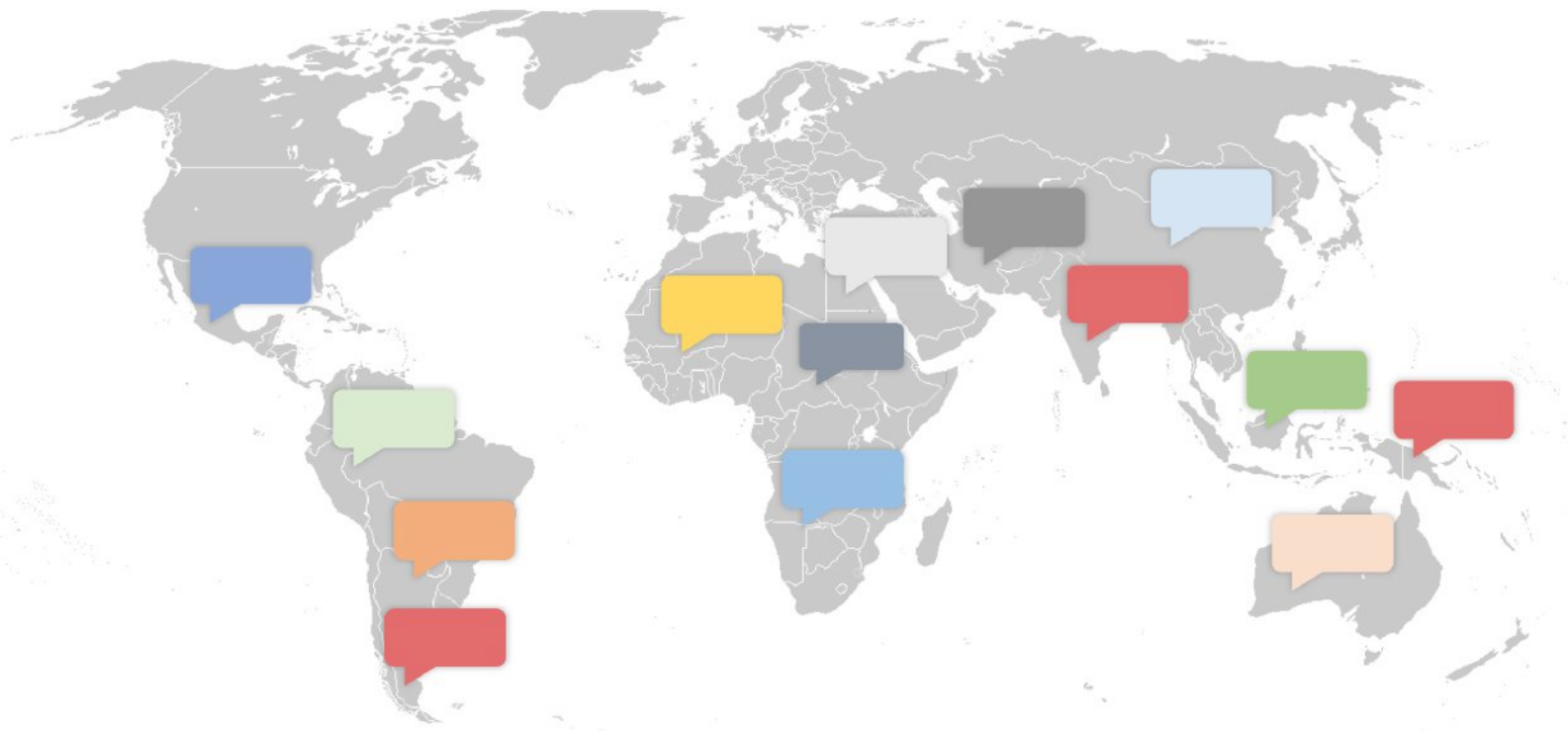
The HSG society (of which EV4GH is a Thematic Working Group since 2015), and the organizing leadership of global symposia on health systems research in Beijing (2012), Cape Town (2014), Vancouver (2016) and Liverpool (2018) welcomed the young professionals, and we're grateful for that. It's a journey we have undertaken together over the past ten years.

In Cape Town, Vancouver and Liverpool, I was able to develop my network in ways that would not have been possible if I hadn't been part of the EV4GH network. Most importantly, I made new friends. Friends I have continued to meet in various cities on the globe, while others I have not seen since 2014, but continue to be in touch with. The sense of community that is developed during the program and continues as an Alumnus/a has led to an enriched professional and personal life.

As a result of the EV program I continue to share with young professionals the skills and insights I developed directly from the EV4GH program but also from the networks and friendships that I have made as an Emerging Voice. I consciously avoid 'business as usual' and aim for the 'constructive disruption' introduced to me during the EV program.

Like the rest of the world, the COVID-19 pandemic disruption didn't spare the EV4GH network, mainly affecting the 2020 blended training program that was scheduled to take place August-November 2020 in Dubai. After the recent announcement to transform HSR2020 into a 'global virtual event', a core part of the EV4GH blended training program was affected. As mentioned in some of the EV alumni testimonies, the physical interaction has in the past boosted the confidence of many of these young professionals and enabled the development of networks, both personal and professional ones, that would have otherwise been unlikely. While it is difficult to recreate online the dynamic and "feel" of physical interaction, the EV4GH network is committed to bend and not break under the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is not only testing the resilience of health systems around the world but also our effort to achieve a more equal world. As I'm writing these words, the EV4GH 2020 program is being redesigned, to ensure that the voices of young professionals continue to be heard, even at a largely virtual HSR2020.

After ten years we celebrate the growth of the Network from 52 to over 300 members with many EV4GH alumni from early cohorts now being established researchers themselves, practitioners, policymakers and advocates. Although they would surely deny being 'Emerged' now (is one ever?), the network thus has increasing opportunities for mentorship and strengthening in-house, opportunities that need to be explored in the coming 10 years. Finding solutions for sustainable funding of EV4GH without losing its inherent flexibility or getting co-opted to the extent that it becomes one of the usual suspects in global health, is a challenge that the EV4GH leadership will continue to face over the next 10 years. Against that backdrop, the EV4GH network will probably remain informal, even as several alumni identify this as a possible weakness of the network. These tensions and diverse opinions keep the network vibrant and create an opportunity for innovation and growth. I hope the EV community continues to grow and support young professionals from around the globe.



# TESTIMONIALS



## ANAR ULIKPAN, EV 2010

*Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist  
(Health programme), Abt Associates,  
Australia*

### “ THE ‘EMERGING VOICES’ VENTURE AS MY PASSPORT TO GLOBAL HEALTH CITIZENSHIP ”

I was part of the first ever Emerging Voices venture held back in 2010 (Antwerp/Montreux). When I first received an email from ITM informing me of my successful acceptance to the EV program, I was not sure if I could afford to leave my “very important” job for three long weeks. At the time, I was working as a National Consultant for the Health Sector Development Program of the Ministry of Health, Mongolia, and I considered myself as a relatively “emerged” professional. However, looking back, now I can confidently say my participation was one of the few best decisions I have ever made in my life. Just to name a few reasons why this is the case:

It made me a “life-time” member of a larger global health family (with members from all over the world) from whom I drew my inspiration to pursue my research career.

It made me realise how boring I was in communicating my ideas and presentations and provided me with all necessary skills and knowledge to become a more effective presenter/writer. As a result, my applications for a PhD scholarship submitted to three different institutions all got accepted. An unbelievable success!

It sowed a “disruptive mindset” seed in my thinking, turning me into a life-long learner.

It made me pursue my further career in international health and obtain my PhD degree from one of the best universities in Australia.

It gave me the confidence to work internationally which had been almost a “mission impossible” for me before my EV experience.

It provided me with the necessary tools, knowledge and confidence to apply to well-known International consulting companies like Abt Associates, and be successful in my application.

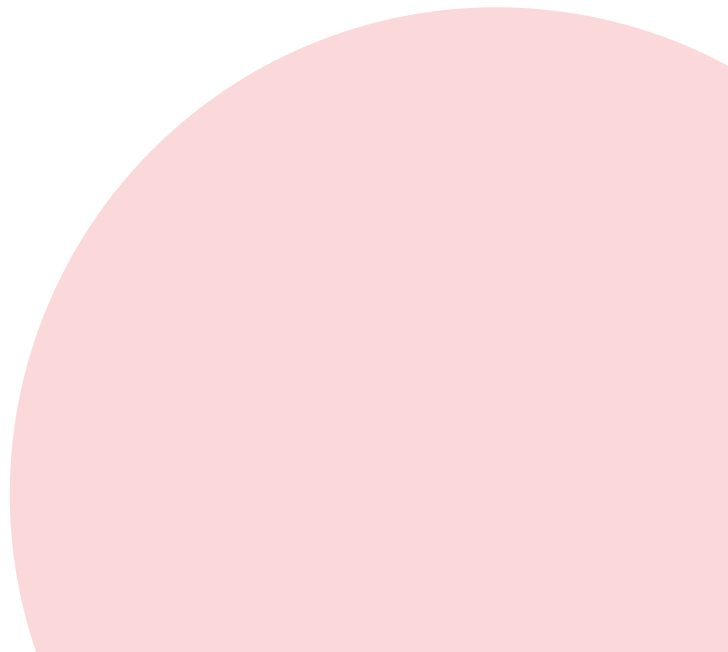
The Googlegroup (to be exact, it is Kristof) keeps me up-to-date on the latest news and publications which is one of the reasons why I’m considered a “valuable” member within my team.



Lastly but most importantly, thanks to the EV venture, I have met Dr Asmat Malik who later became my best colleague and friend, a “ruthless” critic, co-author of my papers and the greatest mentor whom I could ask the silliest question. Sadly, in May 2017, we all received the heartbreaking news of our dearest friend having passed away. He will always be remembered by the EV community as a passionate professional, best friend and the greatest human being.

In a nutshell, the EV venture provided me with a passport to Global (Health) Citizenship. Being heard in a global platform is a rare opportunity, especially, for someone like me who was educated (and used to practice) in a former socialist/Soviet country, where open communication and diversity are not often encouraged. In fact, I was and still am the first and only EV from Mongolia. Moving forward, expanding the EV opportunity to engage those often-unheard voices would be a great contribution to the development of the global health community, and bring further equity and diversity within the EV community as well.

Lastly, I must also say that the EV experience was not all “fairy tale”. The programme challenged my language abilities (English), fluency, critical thinking and presentation and networking skills. It also required some critical “de-learning” first, in order to “enable” my mind for innovation and different ways of thinking and doing. However, a diverse package of training, mentoring and peer learning opportunities provided by the EV venture assisted to overcome all these challenges. And the support and learning opportunities did not end there. It is not an exaggeration that in these ten years, not a week went by that I didn’t receive EV4GH emails/updates. Unbelievable! I cannot thank Kristof and the EV secretariat enough for their relentless effort to keep the EV loop still so alive and vibrant even 10 years since its start.



**SEYE ABIMBOLA, EV**

**2010**

*Lecturer, School of Public Health, University of Sydney, Australia & Editor-in-Chief, BMJ Global Health*



**“FROM EMERGING VOICES TO  
ENDURING FRIENDSHIPS”**

It was C.S. Lewis, one of my all-time favourite writers, who once said: “Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: ‘What! You too? I thought I was the only one.’” That was how the story of my Emerging Voices for Global Health (EV) experience began in 2010, and that is how it has continued ever since. The many moments of discovering kindred spirits, leading to enduring friendships from each cohort; friends without whom my life and career as a global health and health systems researcher would be much less interesting, rewarding, and rich. Friends from whom I learn regularly, from whom I draw inspiration, who are generous with their ideas and time; who offer their ears to hear me rant away about my latest academic obsessions; who listen to my arguments patiently and nudge me to the path of moderation; who partner with me on real or dream projects; friends who are at the same time intellectual co-conspirators. I am grateful for the conversations, for the friendly disputations, and most of all, for kindness. When I look back at my EV experience so far, one thing stands out – friendships; the many friends I’ve made along the way. For some, our interactions are episodic, we pick up from where we left off the last time, often two or more years ago. But for others they are more continuous; every few weeks. Long may the EV programme continue! And, indeed, long may these friendships – mine and others’ – continue!





## FRANCISCO OVIEDO, EV 2012

*Medical Officer, Ministry of Health of  
Costa Rica*

**“ YOUR VOICE NEVER STOPS  
EMERGING ”**

When I took part in the 2012 EV programme, I was working as a senior advisor to the Minister of Health's Office of my country, Costa Rica. I remembered that some of my fellow EVs asked me at the time, as a joke: "What are you doing here? You have already emerged, you can talk with the big guys whenever you want!" Fortunately, the joke proved to be wrong. I think one of the most important teachings I took from my EV experience was to learn that there will always be people who have not heard your voice (yet), and so, of which you must find out how to let your voice "emerge" towards them. These people won't necessarily be policy makers, or other "big guys", as a fellow EV called them. Over the past 7 years, I have frequently found myself in situations where I had to use the knowledge and skills that I gained from my EV experience, such as using multimedia tools in an effective way, to let my voice "emerge" towards a myriad of actors coming from many different contexts: health professionals, labour union leaders, teachers, religious leaders, business people, and perhaps the most demanding group of all, my students at the university - now that the age gap is becoming more evident, trust me, EV skills have come in handy! It is funny to see how explaining a complex health situation to people who are not health professionals or who are just beginning their health career, becomes easier when using the communication techniques I learnt as an EV, and how receptive people can be when they perceive you are putting in some real effort into conveying your ideas in an approachable way. I dare you to do a Pecha Kucha presentation to explain what UHC is, in a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce! The only thing else I can say is, remember your voice needs to continue to emerge! You're never done. Every situation is different, even for Emerging Voices.



# SOPHIE VUSHA CHABEDA, EV 2013

*Research Officer, KEMRI Wellcome Trust  
Research Program, Health System Research  
and Ethics Department, Kilifi, Kenya*



**“ EMERGING VOICES: NEVER  
STOP LEARNING TO CONVEY  
MESSAGES SHARPER - THE  
MANY UNHEARD VOICES IN  
THE WORLD EXPECT NOTHING  
LESS FROM US ”**

Learning never stops, it only takes a willing heart. I participated in the Emerging Voices for Global Health (EV4GH) 2013 venture linked to the ICASA conference in Cape Town, South Africa. ICASA - the International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Africa - is organized biannually. It was the first time I was attending not only an international training but also a conference out of my country, Kenya. Throughout the training programme, we experienced different learning methods. Among others, we learnt about interactive presentation skills, moving away from the (still too common) “Death by PowerPoint” experience to real audience engagement using the - among EVs notorious - “pecha kucha” (PK) format. It’s an experience I have shared since then with my friends and colleagues. Pecha Kucha certainly boosted my presentation skills and confidence over time, so I think it’s a bit a pity that in recent ventures, PK was somewhat overtaken by other formats & innovations with a view on effective presenting (like mind mapping, multimedia principles,...). But true, PK can be a bit tricky for presenters, and not every EV in my cohort was a PK “class act”! In Cape Town, we also had quite a bit of fun (of course) during the organized sightseeing, rather strongly “moderated” fishbowl discussions (ahum, Sipiwe?) and ‘social activities’.

But EV wasn’t just about the training programme. Formal & informal networks were also formed, and it’s through one of these that I got to know about another opportunity a little after. Together with 2 other EVs from my batch, I attended a WHO sponsored training on Research Methods at the Effective Care Research unit in East London, South Africa. The course focused on conducting randomized control trials and Cochrane systematic reviews.

Being part of the EV group, I was also introduced to the [International health policies \(IHP\)](#) website and weekly newsletter (to which I subscribed), and this has enabled me to follow global health policy news & publications over the years. Moreover, via the EV google group, I also got to know about a course on [Epidemiology, Biostatics and qualitative research](#) which I attended in 2017, at the University of Antwerp. I also attended the 10th European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health (ECTMIH) in the same city - I remember there were quite some other EVs around from various cohorts (and the pizza nearby the train station ). In 2018, I participated as a coach in the online distance phase for new EVs for the Liverpool EV venture. As many of you know, the EV 'model' tries to provide alumni with an opportunity to coach the next cohort of EVs, both in the distance and face to face (F2F) stage (funding allowing, of course, for the latter). I also reviewed abstracts for the 2018 HSR conference held in Liverpool. Since 2013, my network has expanded through interactions with various people in the global health systems research and policy community, it's a pool to draw from or refer other people to whenever needed.

The EV 2013 venture was perhaps "unique" due to its link with an HIV conference, a regional event too, as opposed to the other EV ventures all linked to (global) health systems research symposia. A number of us, however, work at the intersection with health systems, and hence the continued relevance of EV4GH also for us. May the program continue to spread through the world and reach the unheard voices.



# FREDDY ERIC KITUTU, EV 2013

*Lecturer and Health Systems Scholar,  
Pharmacy Department Acting Dean, School  
of Health Science, Makerere University  
College of Health Sciences*



**“ I AM BECAUSE EV4GH IS, AND  
EV4GH IS BECAUSE WE ARE ”**

I was part of the Emerging Voices for Global Health (EV4GH) 2013 cohort linked to the International Conference of AIDS and Sexually Transmitted infections (ICASA) in Cape Town, South Africa. At the time, my big idea for research and implementation was to use private community pharmacies as drug refill vehicles for stable HIV/AIDS patients. It seemed like an idea ahead of its time in 2013, but I am glad that today, it has been implemented in Uganda by the Infectious Diseases Institute in collaboration with the Kampala City Council Authority. Since then, I have made strides in my career and life. Some of these are (at least partly) explained by my association with the EV4GH program. First of all, I went on to complete my doctoral studies at the International Maternal and Child Health unit, Uppsala University, Sweden (October 2018). Second, thanks to poster presentation skills acquired during the EV4GH training, we got a poster award for “engaging power and politics in promoting health and public value”, at the 4th Global HSR symposium in Vancouver, Canada. Third, I was nominated by Uppsala University (with support from Robert Bosch Stiftung) to attend the prestigious 68th Lindau Nobel laureate meeting dedicated to Medicine and Physiology. It is another unique international forum for scientific exchange modelled along the Alfred Nobel prize enterprise to educate, inspire and connect the “next generation” of leading scientists with each other and with Nobel Laureates. In addition to the poster presentation, I picked up some other fancy communication skills from EV4GH. I will always remember “pecha kucha”, the “elevator pitch” to one’s prime minister (still need to do that one 😊 ) and the savvy use of social media to spread the gospel according to “one’s-latest-published-peer-reviewed-article”. As a consequence, networking has become so much easier, both face-to-face and online. Nowadays, I even combine the two: when I meet new people, our introductions often start with “I know you from twitter” (the scientific version of ‘I know what you did last summer’).

In the 2019 World Antibiotic Awareness Week, I participated in the Twitter storm to raise awareness about antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The networking and communication skills are useful in my role to support Uganda's response against the spread of resistant bugs. As part of ReAct Africa, an independent global network against AMR, I have been part of advocacy, implementation and strengthening of antimicrobial use, stewardship and their surveillance in Uganda. EV4GH and Uppsala University connections led me to actors like the UK Fleming Fund and Commonwealth Partnership for Antimicrobial Stewardship (CwPAMS) who support AMR activities in Uganda. As you can tell, I'm passionate about the battle against AMR. Borrowing some inspiration from Hollywood's Guardians of the Galaxy, let us all become guardians of our antibiotics in real life!

Since my return to the Pharmacy Department at Makerere University (MakPD) after my PhD, I have been entrusted by colleagues and University Management to serve as the Dean at the School of Health Sciences, Makerere University for the next year. It's a school in the College of Health Sciences that hosts degree programs to train five health professions: dental surgeons, nurses and midwives, pharmacists, optometrists and dental technologists. Although indicators are not completely clear, I guess I have "emerged" by now, but I remain very much connected to the colleagues and friends of EV4GH. If René Descartes were still around and became an Emerging Voice, he'd probably say, "I am because EV4GH is and EV4GH is because we are".

I have seen the program and network grow over the years to become a powerful brand in global health, especially at health systems research meetings. I would not change the focus of EV4GH as it provides young researchers with a vital opportunity to connect across cultures, disciplines and time and share their curiosity, dreams and ambitions for a better world.





## ADITHYA PRADYUMNA, EV 2014

*PhD student with the Health Impact assessment Research Group at the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, Basel, Switzerland*

### “ THE EV EFFECT: TANGIBLES AND INTANGIBLES ”

Participating in the 2014 'Cape Town' edition of Emerging Voices was a great experience in itself. It opened the doors to help me imagine more creative and interesting communication of my research. More importantly, I was able to interact with other young researchers from around the world and learn about methods they were using for their work. I can say that in a quiet way, the EV venture provided me the little nudge I needed to publish (occasionally with other EVs and mentors!) and to enroll for doctoral studies. I also feel more aware of what is going on in global health due to the active EV Google Group. These have been critical changes since the program. However, what has been most interesting to witness is the growing stature of several of my fellow EVs. While I always needed to push myself to engage with audiences, it has been a pleasure to see my fellow EVs take (and occasionally take over) important stages to communicate important messages. Be it talking to prominent leaders or appearing on television to participate in discussions, EVs are seen everywhere in the sphere of global health. EVs are also regularly participating in, organizing and contributing to webinars, which are an effective way to disseminate knowledge and skills to global audiences. I have attended some of these, and found them very useful. This is inspiring, because we surely need our voices heard in the context of the most pressing issues all around us. Some of these EVs have also been kind enough to review my work and provide me with feedback when I have approached them. I can say that being a part of this network has been very useful, in many tangible and intangible ways.







## ERLYN RACHELLE MACARAYAN, EV 2014

*Harvard Global Health Institute, Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, USA*

### “MY JOURNEY AS AN EMERGING VOICE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH”

“Once an emerging voice (EV), always an EV” – I think this statement best describes the Emerging Voices for Global Health (EV4GH) program. EV4GH has ignited my global health passion, shaping where I am now and my future plans. I was one of the EVs in 2014 (Cape Town). Through EV4GH, I got a chance to attend (fully funded) the Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR2014), which I wouldn't have been able to attend otherwise. This opened doors for me to get to know the key players in the (health systems/policy) field, resulting in my involvement as an intern then consultant for the World Health Organization (WHO) and Gavi. At WHO, I worked with WHO Europe and the Headquarters at the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research - to the latter I was introduced through EVGH and Health Systems Global (HSG). Since then, I have finished my PhD (with some chapters written in collaboration with the institutions I met through EV4GH), pursued a postdoc at Yale, and now I'm working as a researcher at Harvard, still focusing on health systems. Indeed, EV4GH has been the launch pad for my career.

Beyond being a launch pad, EV4GH has provided so much more. With EV4GH offering additional social media training, I have also been actively involved with the communications team of HSG for five years (and continuing). Many EVs know the Pecha Kucha presentation format, which I have used up to this day when I wanted to give compelling stories and lectures. If most researchers focus on publishing in high impact journals (for good reasons), as an EV, I also had the privilege of writing for the International Health Policies (IHP) blog, allowing me to share with a wider audience my perspectives on issues that matter the most to me. Being a global network, it has been one of my main sources when seeking potential project collaborators and advice on the local of a foreign country I am working on. For me, two things made my experience with the EV4GH stand out since Cape Town: 1. the relentless engagement of the alumni (thanks Kristof and the Secretariat) by providing constant updates and opportunities where EVs can take part in; and 2. the inspiring and vibrant community, where alumni are supporting each other, collaborating, and ensuring that we all excel in our own endeavors. It makes me proud to be an EV every time I hear how others have made great strides in their work. We can only hope that the network continues to grow and open doors especially for those who have great potential but may not have all the means and resources to excel.



## SHAKIRA CHOONARA, EV 2014

*African Union*

*Picture Description: [Sameera Hussain](#) (EV 2010), a leading fellow on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) invited me for a hearty meal post speaking at the opening plenary at the 2017 Canadian Conference in Global Health.*

### “ A REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAMME IN GLOBAL HEALTH: EMERGING VOICES FOR GLOBAL HEALTH ”

If I reflect back on my career thus far, the one programme which I reckon was the start of it all (i.e. pushing me into what I coin a 'research-advocate') was the exposure to the Emerging Voices for Global Health Programme.

Okay, I know it's hard to believe, especially if you follow me on social media, but I am actually an introvert and shy! I recall going to sit at my own big round table for lunch on the first day of the Emerging Voices programme back in 2014 (in Cape Town), I was also pretty much a spring chicken at the time! Enter the epic [Nasreen Jessani](#) who came over and introduced herself, and well the rest is history. From amazing roommates [Beverly Lorraine Ho](#) and [Mai Valera](#) (which FYI also helped with my 'being-afraid-of-the-dark syndrome') ... to being part of a network of accomplished health systems and policy researchers from all over the globe, and let's not forget about our mentors who are on a level of awesomeness as well, specifically thinking here of the very much missed [Asmat Malik](#).

Also, I can't not mention this, the EV programme is definitely where I learnt how to blog and write in this way (please don't remove this, [Kristof Decoster](#))! Other highlights to date have been, to just learn and grow with others; moreover, the opportunity to continue contributing to the programme as an Alumnus/a - for me this is one of the selling points of the EV programme - how can you give back, remain engaged, ...

Well, essentially, it's anything but a one-off programme!

Finally, the programme also led to the introduction and finetuning of public speaking, staying up-to-date, collaborating across boundaries despite time zones and geographies with no need for resources in many cases, just #EVCommitment, and without a doubt critical thinking which is promoted and punted as part of the programme.

The distinct 'EV way of doing things' is precisely what's needed in global health, just imagine if we organised a session at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) next year. True, I don't usually go to those (you can find out why [here](#)) but hey, [Greta Thunberg](#) may have just changed this for me!



## RENZO GUINTO, EV 2014

*Chief Planetary Doctor, PH Lab,  
Philippines & Doctor of Public Health  
graduate, Harvard University, USA*

### “ **DECOLONIZING GLOBAL HEALTH AND THE ‘EV VIBE’** ”

It was through the Emerging Voices for Global Health (EV4GH) program that I first realized I have an important and unique voice that needs to be heard by the world entire. Before, I thought that the cookie-cutter path for a wide-eyed neophyte Filipino doctor like me is to pursue an MPH abroad, find a consulting job in a USAID-funded firm, and forever be a reactive participant in the global health enterprise, going with the flow where limited opportunities arise. But thanks to EV4GH, I discovered that I possess the power to shape ideas and conversations, launch vibrant networks and innovative solutions, and inspire fellow emerging voices from around the world coming from my generation and those that are yet to come.

#DecolonizeGlobalHealth, which started as a single tweet, may seem a vague construct that still requires unpacking. But what it simply tells us is that today, we have a new cadre of global health scholars and practitioners not just from the Global South but from the millennial generation who, through the gifts of modern education and community building, have developed superb technical and leadership capacities, witnessed first-hand global health's chronic pathologies, and are now clamoring for a bigger space – and deeper respect – in the global health discourse. This development should not be seen as a disruptive attack to the mirage of global health peace, but as a transformative force for achieving equity and justice not just in the outcomes but also in the operations of the unfair global health machinery. EV4GH is part of this emerging planetary engine for global health decolonization – it is an effective scout for amazing talent that for a long time was invisible in our discipline, and a powerful convener for all voices, both emerging and emerged, to build lasting alliances for dismantling global health's inherent coloniality and for co-designing a truly decolonized global health future. What is the kind of force that will decolonize global health? A few weeks ago, I was on the train from Antwerp to Brussels with Kristof Decoster and fellow EV Sophie Vusha and all of a sudden, I mentioned about the 'EV vibe.'

For sure, the EV4GH committee has a list of selection criteria, but for me, the EV vibe is beyond an impressive CV, a long array of publications, and a prestigious PhD degree. The EV vibe is characterized by an infectious level of passion and energy, a renewable storage of creativity, innovativeness, and imagination, and undying flow of optimism and hope amid global health's perennial disease and despair. The EVs of all generations may be many and diverse, but in most respects, we are united and one. Thanks to the EV vibe, you know an EV when you meet one. But the EV vibe must be handled with great care and responsibility, so that in the process of decolonization, we do not end up being neocolonizers ourselves. It is a deep personal honor and privilege that I will cherish within my lifetime to be surrounded by the EV vibe embodied by friends and comrades from places far and wide, and I feel thrilled about the collaborations that will infect the world with the EV vibe for decolonizing global health in the years and decades to come. May our tribe continue to increase – for the health of people, and for the planet too.



# CHARLES SSEMUGABO, EV 2016

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## “EMERGING VOICES: THE PATH TO A GLOBAL MINDSET AND SPREADING YOUR WINGS AS A YOUNG RESEARCHER”

Of all my international experiences so far, the Emerging Voices for Global Health (EV4GH) programme stands out. As Sheryl Crow sang in 'The first cut is the deepest', indeed it is. Fresh from my postgraduate degree and working on my first research project, there I was in Vancouver (EV 2016), on my first expedition to global health meetings. Today, my international network has grown. I feel more confident in all audiences with the energy to shake the global health hegemony. Since Vancouver, I have participated in the organization of several conferences, attended others and won career development fellowships. Fresh from the EV experience, I chaired the logistics committee for the First International Conference on Community Health Workers organised by the Community Health Workers (CHWs) Thematic Working Group (TWG) of Health Systems Global in February 2017. This event in Kampala, Uganda was attended by over 450 people from more than 20 countries, including three EV alumni. During the conference, I also moderated the opening and closing plenaries building on the skills I gained from the EV programme. Consequently, we collaboratively wrote a blog about the conference proceeding which was published in International Health Policies. The second symposium is taking place in Bangladesh in November 2019. In April 2019, we hosted the Third International Federation of Environmental Health Academic Conference in Kampala, Uganda. I was a member of the scientific committee and chair of the logistics team. Since joining the EV program, I have attended a couple of scientific meetings including the 10th European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health in Antwerp and the second planetary health meeting in Edinburgh, among others. I have also been awarded the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA) and Fogarty Global Health Fellowships (FGHF) to support my PhD work. Overall, the EV experience boosted my professional confidence and self-esteem. It saved me from thinking (only) within my own space and instilled a global mindset. Moving forward, I crave for an EV community that engages alumni aggressively post-symposium, even if I know this is a 'resource constrained' network.

**OKIKIOLU BADEJO, EV**

**2018**

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**“ EV4GH: THERE IS ALWAYS MORE ”**

Fresh from an MPH Program at ITM, which, by the way, didn't disappoint after being recommended to me as (one of) the best in the world, I didn't think I could be wowed by any new knowledge as far as global health was concerned. But the EV4GH program in 2018 (linked to the Liverpool Health Systems Research symposium) exceeded my expectations and opened me up to new levels and types of learnings which have pushed me several notches higher professionally. I have since discovered my preference for a research-based career and got accepted into a doctoral program, become part of very interesting professional networks and have been actively involved in the broader global/regional health space. The community of past EV alumni growing together and making visible impacts in the field of global health, somehow granted me the permission to also be a real change agent in my own ways. The EV4GH program has in many ways delivered what I had hoped for, in terms of exposure and scientific aptitude. Perhaps the biggest thing EV4GH contributed to my career is the process through which the EV program has stimulated my professional evolution. Rather than just spoon-feeding knowledge, EV4GH has instead unlocked in me an unending quest to be a real change maker and through that quest, I have discovered things which I could have never learned in any other way. For me this discovery has meant professional clarity, coupled with the ability to be flexible when needed. I'm perhaps not yet the 'finished article' (i.e. 'fully emerged'), but EV4GH has definitely set the work in progress.

