

BLOG – GLOBAL HEALTH DAY 2023

By master's students in Global Health, Virginia and Juliet

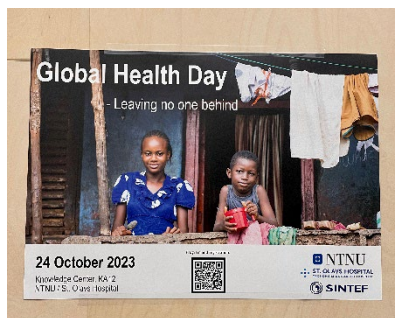


Photo 1: Poster for Global Health Day 2023

We generally refer to Global Health as a discipline that tries to achieve better health outcomes for vulnerable populations and communities around the world, but a world with universal and equitable access to healthcare systems still sounds as a utopian goal. So, how can we make a difference in low-middle countries? How can we have an impact on society? These are some questions that have been addressed during this year's Global Health Day Conference – **Leaving no one behind (2023)** organized by the Faculty of Medicine and Health Science, NTNU in

collaboration with St. Olav Hospital and SINTEF. The target audience was healthcare providers, researchers and students from all over the world.

Håkon A. Bolkan, consultant general and abdominal surgeon and Associate Professor in Global Health at NTNU Department of Public Health and Nursing, was the first taking the floor welcoming the guests and holding a little overview of the first's session theme "Global surgery – a neglected part of the health care system?". He drew the attention on 'The Global Surgery Foundation', an organization that works with governments and frontline providers in order to build surgical care systems in remote and impoverished territories. The focus is mainly set on the least developed countries (LDC), land-locked developing countries (LLDC), and small island developing states (SIDS).



Photo 2: Håkon A. Bolkan - Introduction to Global Surgery



Photo 3: Alemnesh T. Reta, implementation manager at Lærdal Global Health.

The floor was then turned to Alemnesh T. Reta, a midwife, Public Health specialist and implementation manager in Lærdal Global Health, who enlightened the audience about maternal healthcare. Since childbirth complications are difficult to manage and can potentially lead to irreversible health issues, she underlined an increasing recognition of the urgent need of medical practice in this field. At this juncture, she presented her research topic about caesarean-section and how to practice with a simulator that just looks like the womb of a women.

Bringing awareness of how complex working in a place with no resources could be, Herman Lonnee, anesthesiologist at St. Olavs Hospital, shared his experience in Malawi. He has worked at Mercy James Centre for Pediatric Surgery and Intensive Care in Blantyre, a city located in the south of the country on the banks of Shire River. Even if the city is the second in Malawi for population, medical equipment is coming in shortage and

healthcare providers have sometimes to take arduous decisions about who is going to live and who is not. His personal touching memories drew the attention on how skewed distributed economic wealth can have different impacts on global health.

David Ljungman gave an informative talk about the use of technology and software in Health Care. He is an associate professor of surgery at Sahlgrenska Academy and consultant colorectal surgeon at Sahlgrenska University Hospital, Gothenburg. During his talk he specifically went into depth about the DHIS2 software platform. This platform is designed to improve the health and well-being of people through access and use of information. He showed the audience how DHIS2 integrated health information on a mobile phone and what kind of influence this has on the improvement of health care.



Photo 4: Herman Lonnee, St. Olavs Hospital talks about one-year experience in Malawi

An innovative technology called Resuscitative Endovascular Balloon Occlusion of the Aorta (REBOA) was introduced by Dr. Knut Haakon Stensæth, a consultant Interventional Radiologist. REBOA is an approach developed for patients who suffer from a non-traumatic cardiac arrest. Through his visual pictures in his presentation, he showed how a small balloon is led up to the aorta where the balloon is inflated to provide occlusion. Dr. Knut Haakon Stensæth conducted a randomized clinical trial with other researchers in Uganda. The primary objective is to get the proportional of the participants, with maternal death to drop from 50% to 30%. A pilot of this study will start in the beginning of December of 2023.



Photo 5: Juul Bakker, PhD candidate with research in Liberia

The last speaker of the first half of the conference was Juul Bakker. She is a medical doctor, a PhD candidate at NTNU and is serving as the Country Director for CapaCare in Liberia. Juul gave a passionate talk about the CapaCare organization and her position in it. The vision of the organization is to give quality healthcare to all. They want to succeed by increasing the access to surgical services and by implementing surgery in Liberia. To give a more clear picture about the difficulties professional encounter in the Liberian infrastructure, Juul Bakker showed pictures of the rural rotation which led to The Jackson F. This gave even more dimension to the vision of the CapaCare organization.

The first half was closed by a convincing panel debate moderated by Guri Charlotte Wiggen. She succeeded to moderate an interesting and informative debate by including the audience and giving them the change to ask questions to the professionals. The first panel was closed by Juul Bakker giving advice to young people who want to work in the same workfield: *“Go out of your comfort zone and your own bubble and try to explore new things”*.



Photo 6: Panel discussion from left; Håkon A Bolkan, Almnes T. Reta, Juul Bakker and Herman Lonnee. Moderator Guri C. Wiggen



Photo 7: One of the dancers in the Mexican dancing group Quetzalli

The second half of the conference was opened by a beautiful traditional Mexican folk dance carried out by the dance group **Quetzalli**. They performed two dances and wore traditional dresses with a lot of colors and details. Quetzalli was established in 2018 in Trondheim and consists of Mexican and Latin American dancers who share an interest and joy in sharing their cultural heritage with others. They definitely succeed in sharing their passion and joy with the audience at the conference.

After the dance Jennifer Infanti took the stage and introduced the second half of the Global Health conference. She is an Associate Professor of Global Health and leads the Master of Science program in Global Health. She included the audience by asking them what their work background is, and it seemed the audience was a good mix of (PhD) students, healthcare workers or professionals. At the end of her introduction she pointed out the importance of this Global Health day and that the second part of the conference will be specifically focused on sustainable development goals and health equality.

The moment when Katrin Glatz Brubakk started her talk the audience went completely silent. She is a child psychologist, Assistant Professor at NTNU and field worker for Doctors Without Borders. For Doctors Without Border, she conducted research in a refugee camp in Moria about the living conditions of the children living here and the traumas they had to experience. Katrin Glatz Brubakk took the audience into the traumatizing experiences refugee children have to face daily by



Photo 8: Katrin Glatz Brubakk

reading out loud a chapter out of her book about three teenage refugee boys who were pushed from the boat. You could feel the emotion through the words and it touched the whole audience. She succeeded in giving more attention to the experiences of these refugee children and the importance of this topic.

Harald Thørud is one of the leaders of the United Nations Development Program and joined the conference online to talk about his program which is going to launch in September 2022, and to draw more attention to mental wellbeing and awareness. He did so by sharing his own experience in mental wellbeing and pointing out that mental wellbeing should be broader than only a mental disorder and can have a lot of different causes. One of the biggest challenges a society faces, in terms of mental wellbeing, is the integration of inequality.

The second session kept on going with Arne H. Eide, Chief Scientist at SINTEF Digital and Professor at Institute for Social Work and Health Science at NTNU. His speech rotated towards the central and transformative promise of the 2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals ‘Leave no one behind (LNOB)’ that represents the UN Member States’ commitment to reduce inequalities and vulnerability that leave low-income people behind the rest of the global population. He then discussed the challenges of such an idealistic target, and showed how the connection between disability and poverty goes through different vulnerability factors such as sidelined in economic and technical development or lack of support for cost associated with impairment.



Photo 9: Arne H. Eide, Chief Scientist in SINTEF

A group of accomplished Nepalese healthcare specialists from Kathmandu Medical College (KMC) tackled the importance of collaboration in the health sector. The first we had the pleasure to listen to was Prof. Dr. Ratindra Nath Shrestha who is currently the Principal & Professor and Head of the Department of Anatomy. He presented significant collaboration milestones between Nepal and NTNU, starting from the first academic activities for nursing and physiotherapy students, and concluding with a wish for further partnerships in research.



Photo 10: Nepalese guests – from left Sanjay Bhatta PhD student, Pratibha Manandhar PhD student, Dr. Subhadra Vaidya Joshi and Dr. Jamuna Shrestha



Photo 11: Principal at KMC Dr. Ratindra Shrestha

We then went into depth about gender-based violence with Dr. Sunil Kumar Joshi, Professor and Head at the department of Community Medicine. Particularly interesting and captivating was listening to their cultural traditions for a marriage celebration. When someone is getting married, the father is in charge of giving the daughter to the men and leave them as a new family. If this may sound as something normal for most of us, we should not forget that women are forced to live with the men and have no rights in some middle East countries. Consequences of violence are extremely harmful, these could be bringing the woman to be isolated from the family, outcasted from the community and revictimization.

The last speaker of the day was Teklehaymanot G. Weldemichel, Associate Professor of Human Geography at the Department of Teacher Education at NTNU who shed light on the lack of medical treatment and healthcare access in the Tigray war (Ethiopia). The scale of this war was very big and extreme atrocities on and mass displacement of civilians were displayed. Women and girl were exposed to industrial-scale rape and sexual violence, and a lot of people died from hunger due to inhuman circumstances and food emergency.



Photo 12: Panel discussion 2: From left Teklehaymanot G. Weldemichel, Sunil Kumar Joshi and Arne H. Eide.

The day ended up with the panel discussion where the main points were carried out. The world should speed up, there is an urgent need for political decision makers to intervene and reform the 'already there' political structure. The society needs to share the burden of healthcare inequalities and the Academia, since it is a trusted source that has the amazing privilege to share knowledge, plays a crucial role. But remember changing the world is a joint venture so cooperation is the key!

There was thirteen Posters from PhD's in Global health. Audience could see and discuss with the students during the lunch break. Congratulations to Gabriela Jimenez Diaz from Mexico who won the first prize for the best poster research! This is 2000 Nok as contribution to research activities.



Photo 13: The winner of the Poster award Gabriela J. Diaz and evaluation committee represented by Hans Hadders.



**Thank you
and see you
next year!!!**

Photo 14: Master students in Global Health class 2023. Thank you so much for all practical organizations.