

Global Health Annual Report

June 2024 - June 2025



NTNU

Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

Children fetching water,

Idlib Governorate, Syria.

Photo by Ahmed Akacha, from Pexels

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[10629468/](https://www.pexels.com/es-es/foto/mujer-agua-nina-nino-10629468/))

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FOREWORD

This past year has shown how deeply health is tied to politics, conflict, and inequality worldwide. From wars in Ukraine, Palestine, Sudan, and Myanmar to the dismantling of U.S. development funding and institutions under the Trump administration, we see how fragile infrastructures of care and solidarity can be. At the same time, communities continue to adapt, resist, and innovate in the face of crisis. As global health teachers, researchers, and project leaders at NTNU - in one of the world's wealthiest countries - I feel we have a responsibility to stand alongside those most affected, questioning the structural conditions that reproduce vulnerability while supporting pathways to health equity. This is reflected in our work this year: for example, in partnerships to strengthen maternal health services, health workforce capacity, and access to surgery in South Asia and Africa; in the launch of our new joint master's degree that professionalises those working in humanitarian contexts; and in our efforts to co-design digital health interventions with Ukrainian refugees in the Nordic-Baltic region.

The activities captured in this report - snapshots of our work with collaborators worldwide from June 2024 to June 2025 - demonstrate both the breadth and the critical orientation of NTNU's global health community. They remind us that global health is never separate from global politics, but embedded in histories of colonialism, in struggles for rights and recognition, and in the everyday labour of care that sustains life. While this report highlights selected projects, so much of our work depends on crucial collaborators - students, colleagues, and partners in Norway and around the world - whose contributions may not be named here but are deeply acknowledged and appreciated.

This year's report reflects our shared commitment to advancing research, education, and partnerships that not only generate knowledge but also engage with the urgent ethical and political questions of our time. We look forward to continuing this work with you in the year ahead.

JENNIFER INFANTI,
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GLOBAL HEALTH,
DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND NURSING (ISM)



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

A *SELECTION* OF HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR YEAR

- First infant lung function lab at Dhulikhel Hospital
- Final year of the GELA project
- The GRADE mixed methods group (2024-2025)
- Children's health and the environment
- POCT-BRA study update
- International Paediatric Pulmonology Conference
- Violence Against Women International Conference

- Policy dialogues: Informal use of mobile phones by healthcare workers
- Workshop on the global politics of health worker advocacy and resistance
- Pint of Science: Everyday Health Heroes event
- Anniversary of the Norway launch of the Cochrane People, Health Systems and Public Health Thematic Group
- Arendalsweek
- Norwegian ambassador visit to Dhulikhel Hospital
- CHAIN collaboration with IHME: Enabling the inclusion of education in the 2025 round of the Global Burden of Disease study
- CHAIN and Sir Michael Marmot: Lessons from Norway on reducing health inequalities

The first infant lung function lab at Dhulikhel Hospital (C-LUNG project - Children's Lung Study)



NTNU TEAM LEADER

Dr Kari Ravndal Risnes,
Department of Clinical and Molecular Medicine (IKOM),
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, NTNU

FUNDER

Research Council of Norway

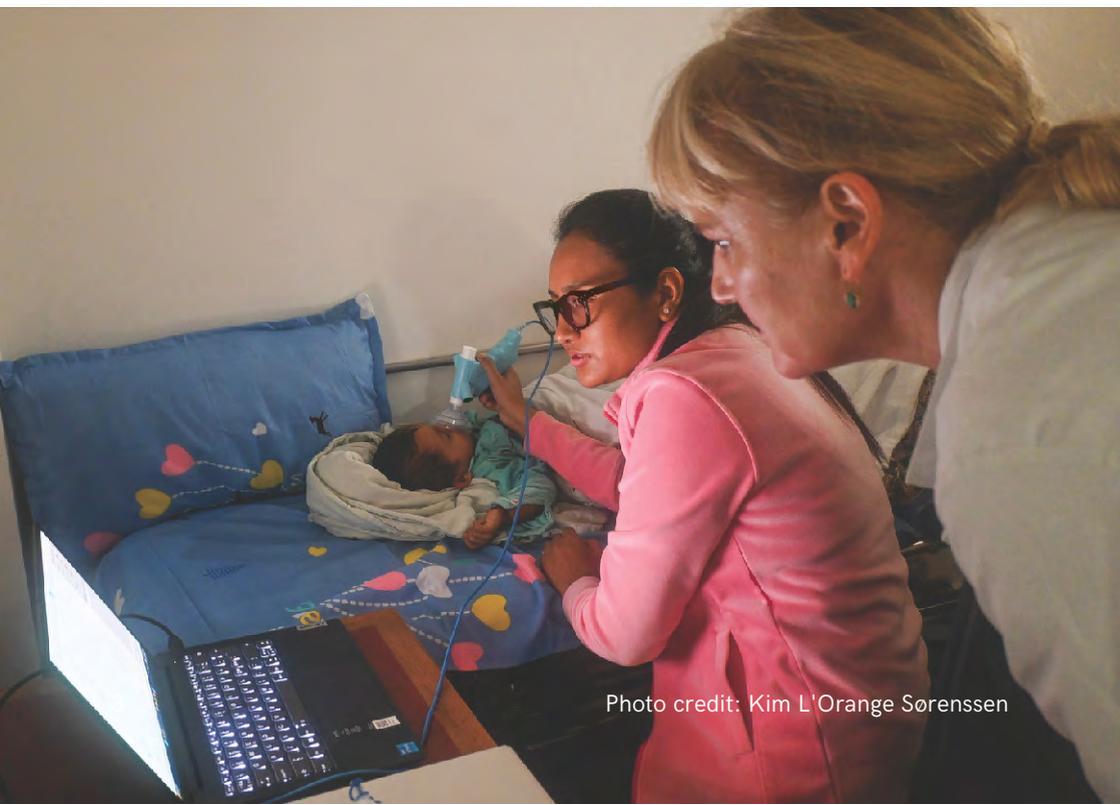


Photo credit: Kim L'Orange Sørensen



Photo credit: Kim L'Orange Sorensen

In October 2024, C-LUNG supported the inauguration of the first infant lung function lab at Dhulikhel Hospital, Nepal, and launched a 12-month follow-up study of children after lower respiratory tract infections (LRTIs).

The project consists of a longitudinal study on LRTIs in Nepalese children that aims to understand how early LRTIs affect long-term lung health and risk of asthma, to develop cost-effective prevention strategies, and to strengthen local research capacity. It includes viral diagnostics immune response analysis, control group comparison, and a clinical trial on short-course steroid treatment.

The project is expected to generate new knowledge on childhood respiratory health and build sustainable pediatric research infrastructure in low-resource settings.



Photo credit: GELA

Final Year of the Global Evidence - Local Adaptation (GELA) project



NTNU TEAM LEADER

FUNDER

Simon Lewin (IHA, NTNU)

EDCTP2 (European Commission)

GELA aims to maximise the impact of evidence for poverty-related diseases when developing locally relevant guidelines for newborn and child health. To do so, the project focuses on increasing the capacity of decision-makers and researchers in Sub-Saharan African countries to use global research. Throughout the project, the NTNU team together with their colleagues at Høgskulen på Vestlandet (HVL) have been providing methodological support to partners in Nigeria, Malawi and South Africa in gathering and synthesizing evidence, implementing an evidence-informed decision-making process on key child health guidelines, and ensuring the dissemination of the new guidelines. NTNU team lead Professor **Simon Lewin** (IHA), and key project participant, Dr. **Elodie Besnier** (IHA), also co-led the evaluation of the GELA project together with the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC). Among other findings, this evaluation has led to important progress in our understanding of how decision-makers make sense and use qualitative evidence in healthcare decision-making.

From February 24th to 28th 2025, the GELA team met in Cape Town to review the achievements of the project. In three years, GELA has helped develop four national guidelines to improve newborn and child health in the three target countries, successfully supported three Master students and submitted over 20 academic publications.

This project is coordinated by SAMRC (Tamara Kredo), and brings together partners from Norway (NTNU, HVL , MAGIC Evidence Ecosystem Foundation), South Africa (Stellenbosch University, SAMRC, Cochrane Africa), Nigeria (University of Calabar Teaching Hospital, Cochrane Nigeria), Malawi (Kamuzu University of Health Sciences), and the UK (Cochrane).



Photo credit: Mariya Stoyanova (HVL)

Methodological development for mixed-method reviews - the GRADE mixed methods group (2024-2025)

Coordinated by the Colombia GRADE Network, the group aims to develop new methods to assess the certainty or confidence in findings from mixed method reviews. Knowing the extent to which a reviews' findings are a good representation of the phenomenon of interest is essential to make policy decisions for health. So far, a GRADE approach has been developed for findings from quantitative systematic reviews and qualitative evidence syntheses. None are specifically designed for reviews bringing together both quantitative and qualitative research.

The group is currently undertaking a survey and scoping review of existing tools and current practices in assessing certainty/confidence in mixed method reviews to inform the development of new guidance for such an exercise. In September 2024, Prof. Juan José Yepes-Núñez (Universidad de Los Andes, Colombia), Dr. Andres Mauricio Garcia Sierra (University of Chicago, USA) and Dr. **Elodie Besnier** (NTNU, IHA, Norway) ran a workshop at the Global Evidence Summit in Prague to discuss the challenges posed by mixed method reviews and potential approaches the GRADE guidance could adopt.

KEY COLLABORATORS

School of Medicine, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá D.C., Colombia

Department of Public Health Sciences, University of Chicago, Chicago, USA

Colombia GRADE Network, Bogotá D.C., Colombia

Avedis Donabedian Research Institute, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

Department of Health Sciences (IHA) in Ålesund, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway

Quality, Process and Innovation Direction, Vall d'Hebron University Hospital, Barcelona, Spain

Vall d'Hebron Research Institute, Barcelona, Spain

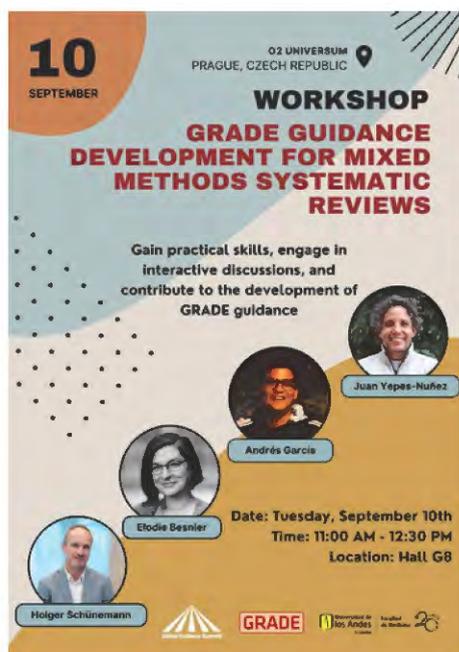
Department of Health Research Methods, Evidence, and Impact, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Cochrane Canada & McMaster GRADE Centres, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Clinical Epidemiology and Research Center, Humanitas University, Rozzano, Italy

IRCCS Humanitas Research Hospital, Milan, Rozzano, Italy

Fundación Santa Fe de Bogotá, Bogotá D.C., Colombia



Poster from the workshop on the GRADE mixed methods group hosted at the GES in Prague in September 2024

Children's health and the environment

COLLABORATORS

Kam Sripada (DLN, NTNU), Research to Action (R2A) & International Society for Children's Health and the Environment (ISCHE)



From 2023 to present, **Kam Sripada** has been both an invited fellow and mentor of the Research to Action (R2A) fellowship of the International Society for Children's Health and the Environment (ISCHE). This initiative aims to enhance the skills of early-stage investigators in children's environmental health in conducting, communicating, and translating relevant science into policy. The fellowship aims to provide mentorship and resources for Fellows to design and conduct action-oriented research, translate and communicate scientific findings, and develop transdisciplinary partnerships: <https://ische.ca/research-to-action/>



Generation Plastic UNICEF Report

NTNU COLLABORATOR

Kam Sripada (DLN-NTNU, UNICEF)

Kam Sripada is the Centre Manager for Digital Life Norway at NTNU and also works as an environmental health consultant for UNICEF. In 2024, she wrote UNICEF's first-ever report on children and plastic, published during the INC-5 Global Plastic Treaty negotiations (which have unfortunately been unsuccessful so far).

Generation Plastic cover

The report outlined five major hazards children face from plastics in early life, especially children exposed to open dumping and burning, those working as waste pickers, and children in regions with fewer regulatory safeguards.

At the same time, the report highlighted concrete projects that youth have led around the world to combat plastic in their communities, as well as critical steps forward to clean up the environment for children.

As George Laryea-Adjei, UNICEF Director of Programmes, wrote in the foreword: "The plastic crisis is not an abstract challenge – it is a direct assault on the rights of every child to grow up in a clean, healthy and sustainable environment."

Read the full report here, Generation Plastic:
<https://www.unicef.org/reports/generation-plastic>

Generation Plastic: Tips for families and caregivers:
<https://ceh.unicef.org/events-and-resources/knowledge-library/generation-plastic-tips-families-and-caregivers>

Generation Plastic visual, 'Where microplastics have been found in the human body'.





Photo credit: Risa Lonnee-Hoffman

POCT-BRA Study



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Risa Anna Lonnee-Hoffmann (IKOM, NTNU)

CO-INVESTIGATORS

Jennifer Infanti (ISM, NTNU), Sunila Shakya (DH-KUSMS)

FUNDER

Research Council of Norway

KEY PARTNERS

St. Olavs Hospital (Trondheim) and Dhulikhel Hospital (Nepal)

The POCT-BRA study continues to make strong progress in Nepal, evaluating the feasibility and performance of point-of-care testing (POCT) for the management of bothersome vaginal discharge in low-resource settings. In June 2025, the team had completed inclusion of approximately 1400 out of the planned 1500 participants in their three-arm randomised controlled trial in Nepal.

In October 2024, a successful training course on wet mount microscopy was held at Dhulikhel Hospital through this project, further strengthening local laboratory capacity.



Photo credit: Hun Heter Asma



Photo credit: Kim L'Orange Sørenssen

First International Paediatric Pulmonology Conference (PEDIPULMOCON-2024)

PLACE & DATE

Dhulikhel, Kavre, Nepal
26th October 2024

The First International Paediatric Pulmonology Conference (PEDIPULMOCON-2024), held in Dhulikhel, Nepal, brought together experts, practitioners, and stakeholders to focus on advancing respiratory care for children in low-resource settings. Under the theme "Bridging Gaps: Advancing Pediatric Respiratory Care in Low-Resource Settings", the conference highlighted critical disparities in pediatric respiratory healthcare and fostered collaborative dialogue on innovative and sustainable solutions.

The event was jointly organized by NTNU, Dhulikhel Hospital, and the Nepal Pediatric Society, with generous financial support from the Research Council of Norway.



Photo collage by Jennifer Infanti, ADVANCE study collaborators presenting at the NNVAWI conference in Phuket

25th Nursing Network on Violence Against Women International (NNVAWI) Conference

EVENT PLACE & DATE

Phuket, Thailand
13th -15th November 2024

ADVANCE 2 LEADERSHIP TEAM

Jennifer Infanti & Berit Schei (NTNU, Norway)
Mirjam Lukasse (USN, Norway)
Sunil Kumar Joshi (KMC, Nepal)
Kunta Devi Pun (KUSMS, Nepal)

PROJECT FUNDER

Research Council of Norway

Several members of the Addressing Domestic Violence in Antenatal Care Environments - Phase 2 (ADVANCE 2) study team attended the 25th Nursing Network on Violence Against Women International (NNVAWI) Conference in Phuket, Thailand, in November 2024. NTNU PhD candidates **Pratibha Manandhar** and **Pratibha Chalise**, along with NTNU alumna and postdoctoral researcher at KMC (Kathmandu Medical College) **Poonam Rishal**, presented their ongoing project work.

The NNVAWI conference is a leading global forum on violence against women and gender-based violence, highlighting the role of nurses, midwives, and other health professionals in prevention and response. The ADVANCE 2 team's participation underscored their involvement in evidence-based, collaborative approaches to addressing this critical public health issue.

Two policy dialogues focused on the informal use of mobile phones by healthcare workers

NTNU TEAM LEADER

Prof. Simon Lewin at IHA

FUNDER

Research Council of Norway

RESEARCH COLLABORATORS

Makerere University, Uganda; Norwegian Institute of Public Health; Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL); NTNU; Healthcare Information for All (HIFA) online forum; Johns Hopkins University, USA; University of Oslo

DIALOGUE COLLABORATORS

MoH, Uganda; WHO EMRO

Two policy dialogues focused on the informal use of mobile phones by healthcare workers took place in November 2024 and April 2025.

Digital approaches, including through mobile phones, are increasingly used to improve access to healthcare, enhance health workforce performance, and strengthen health systems. Alongside these formal digital systems, healthcare workers and managers are increasingly using their mobile phones to find their own solutions to the challenges they face in their daily work and to address gaps in the system. These informal solutions can provide important learning for health systems, but they can also create challenges.

The mHEALTH-INNOVATE research project is exploring the informal use of mobile phones in the health sector: the reasons behind it and its implications for healthcare workers, patients and the health system. To explore the policy implications of the research findings, we held two dialogues with stakeholders. The first in November 2024 was co-hosted by the Ugandan Ministry of Health, and Makerere University, Uganda and focused on implications for the Ugandan health system.



Photographs from the policy dialogue in Uganda, November 2024.
Photo credits to the mHEALTH-INNOVATE project team.

The second dialogue, held in April 2025, was hosted by the WHO EMRO Regional Office. It focused on implications of the project's findings for policy and practice in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. A final dialogue took place in June 2025 at WHO HQ in Geneva.

Workshop on the global politics of health worker advocacy and resistance

PLACE & DATE

Vancouver, Canada
3rd-4th June 2025



Roosa Sofia Tikkanen (PhD Fellow, CHAIN research group, ISS dept, SU faculty) participated in the “Workshop on the Global Politics of Health Worker Advocacy and Resistance”, held on June 3-4, 2025, in Vancouver, Canada. The event was organized by Professor Veena Sriram from the University of British Columbia (UBC) and funded by UBC.

The workshop gathered 13 established and emerging researchers from leading global institutions, including the University of Oxford (UK), Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University (USA), the George Institute/University of New South Wales (Australia), Aarhus University (Denmark), Azim Premji University (India), DY Patil University (India), Georgetown University (USA), and Johns Hopkins University (USA).

The focus of the workshop was on the growing role of health workers and their representative organizations - such as unions and professional associations - in health governance and policy processes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, health worker labor mobilization surged worldwide, driven by urgent challenges related to working conditions and broader systemic issues. These organizations have since become key actors in public policy debates and social movements.

It served as a platform for sharing early research findings, promoting comparative perspectives on health worker advocacy and professional power dynamics, and fostering international academic collaboration. It also laid the groundwork for future joint grant applications, co-authored publications, and the development of a global database tracking community health worker labor movements and advocacy efforts.

Pint of Science

PhD Candidate in political science, **Roosa Sofia Tikkanen** (2021-2025, ISS-SU, NTNU), spoke at the global popular science festival, 'Pint of Science' at Stammen Café in May 19th 2025. This event - held in 5 cities in Norway this year - brings together researchers to distil their research in a lay-friendly format in just 20 minutes (the time it takes to drink a pint of beer). Roosa shared findings from her PhD in a talk entitled 'The Invisible Health Workers', highlighting how the precarious working conditions of community health workers worldwide leaves them without economic and social unprotection and exposes them to occupational health hazards - and how this is an under-researched area.



Photo credit:
Jessica Annalena Steppe &
Meike Isabelle Siefkes

Anniversary of the Norway launch of the Cochrane People, Health Systems and Public Health Thematic Group

DATE

5th December 2024

The Cochrane People, Health Systems and Public Health Thematic Group held a webinar to mark one year since the Norway launch of the Group at NTNU. Speakers included Dr Laura Boeira (Instituto Veredas, Brazil), Maria Henningsen (Mid-Norway Health Trust), Prof. Ralf Kirchhoff (IHA, NTNU) and Prof. John Lavis (McMaster University, Canada). The webinar provided different perspectives on how to best get research evidence to users, moving from the global level to the national and subnational levels. Prof. Lavis and Dr. Laura Boeira described the work of the Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenges. This was followed by an input from Maria Henningsen on the clinical networks that have been established within the Mid-Norway Health Trust, and how these are being used to help ensure that healthcare providers have good access to relevant evidence.



Cochrane
People, Health Systems
and Public Health



5 December 2024, 2:00-3:30pm CET / 8-9:30am EST

Getting research evidence to users

Speakers:
Prof. John Lavis (McMaster University, Canada)
Dr. Laura Boeira (Instituto Veredas, Brazil)
Maria Henningsen (Mid-Norway Health Trust, Norway)
Prof. Ralf Kirchhoff (Norwegian university of science and technology, Norway)

Moderated by:
Prof. Simon Lewin (Norwegian university of science and technology, Norway)

[Register here](#)

Arendalsweek

PLACE & DATE

Arendal, 13-14th August 2024

NTNU co-organized several seminars together with Lærdal Global Health, SINTEF, and a network for global mental health, including:

- *Health care crises - how do we solve these locally and globally?*
- *Climate and health - where should we use our aid money?*
- *How to create peace? Strengthen children's mental health before, during and after war*

The discussions focused on practical solutions: How can we educate more health workers - better and faster? What can we learn from task-shifting in low-resource countries? What is needed to retain health professionals, and how can technology help us work more effectively?

To encourage networking and continued discussion on emerging global health topics, a garden party was held on Tuesday, providing an informal space for mingling and exchange of ideas.



Photo credits: Pål Oftedal & Gerrick Robinsons

Norwegian ambassador visit to Dhulikhel Hospital

On April 2nd, **Risa Lonnee-Hoffmann**, **Jan Egil Afset**, and **Ingunn Harstad** presented collaborative activities between NTNU and DH-KUSMS to the Norwegian ambassador to Nepal during her visit to Dhulikhel Hospital. Risa also presented the POCT-BRA project, which aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of point-of-care tests (POCTs) in reducing overtreatment of abnormal vaginal discharge with antibiotics in Nepal.

In the below photo, we can see (in the middle) ambassador Ms. Torun Dramdal and Dr. Ram Shrestha (founder and executive director of Dhulikhel Hospital), the ambassador's secretary, the three NTNU researchers, and Dr. Ram's staff.



Photo credit: Deepan Pokhrel

CHAIN collaboration with IHME

CHAIN (Centre for Global Health Inequalities Research, ISS, SU faculty, NTNU), led by **Terje Andreas Eikemo**, has collaborated closely with its key partner, the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington, to add education as a risk factor to the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study. This will help quantify how educational inequalities impact health, specifically focusing on child and adult mortality. The CHAIN project has enabled the inclusion of education in the 2025 round of the GBD Study.

The GBD is the largest scientific endeavour of its kind - one which quantifies levels and trends in health, while ensuring that its data and accompanying data tools are made publicly available. Adding socioeconomic indicators to the study effectively creates a 'Global Social Burden of Disease' database, and will be a major milestone both for the GBD, but also for the development of evidence-based policies in global health.

The process started in 2019, when CHAIN researchers outlined plans for establishing a global socioeconomic network and data warehouse to monitor and explain health inequalities. The warehouse would allow previously disparate datasets to come under one roof and enable important discoveries through linkages of existing and new data. CHAIN and IHME worked closely to develop a protocol and train master's students and researchers on research techniques.



CHAIN and Sir Michael Marmot present lessons from Norway on reducing health inequalities

CHAIN Leader, **Terje Andreas Eikemo** (ISS, SU faculty), held a joint presentation with renowned health equity expert Sir Michael Marmot at the 2025 Conference of the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry. The presentation examined what the United Kingdom (UK) can learn from Norway about reducing health inequalities and set out three main lessons:

- The Norwegian healthcare system was inspired by the UK's National Health Service (NHS), and now it is time for Norway to return the favour. Looking to Norway, the UK will see a system built on the values that shaped the NHS in the first place - a reminder of the values the NHS may have lost touch with.
- Health must always remain a public responsibility.
- We must promote equality in opportunities for the next generation. The UK and Norway should fund and take the lead of the GUIDE Study: Europe's first and only child cohort study. Europe must remain united in this fight.



Text and photos reproduced from CHAIN summary report 2019-2025; read [here](#).

NTNU Global Surgery Group – Activities and results from June 2024-June 2025

The focus of the NTNU Global Surgery Group is to reduce inequities in access to health care in general, and to surgical, obstetric and anesthesia services in particular. Two of the most important tools to reduce inequities are through training and task-sharing.

During this reporting period, the research group has consisted of one associate professor in global health (**Håkon A. Bolkan**), one post-doctoral researcher (**Alex van Duinen**), 3 PhD students (**Juul Bakker**, **Josien Westendorp**, **Lubna Samad**) and several master students and researchers. The work has been carried out in strong collaboration with national and international partners, and the majority of the work has focused on 3 countries, namely Sierra Leone, Liberia and India, where the NGO CapaCare is responsible for implementation in the two West-African countries.

Since 2011, the research group has been active in Sierra Leone and during 2024-2025 it has continued projects related to emergency obstetric care and hernia surgery. For the emergency obstetric care project in this period, 9 rural governmental hospitals were visited to gain a deeper understanding of the indication and motivation for performing caesarean sections. The inguinal hernia research has included the follow-up of pediatric hernia with home visits and the completion of a 5-year follow-up of a prospective randomized controlled trial and a training group of 359 patients that had inguinal hernia surgery performed by medical doctors and associate clinicians.



In Liberia, the Global Surgery Research Group, together with the Liberia Ministry of Health, has in 2024-2025 worked on an impact evaluation of training surgical providers in both rural and urban areas. During this reporting year, the team completed a national data collection on surgical workforce, activity and infrastructure in 77 hospitals in Liberia. The surgical volume was 549 procedures per 100,000 population, roughly 10% of the proposed benchmark of 5000 procedures per 100,000 population. More than half of the surgeries were performed for obstetric & gynecological indications and caesarean section was the most performed procedure. The findings of this study were shared in 2024-2025 with local and international stakeholders.



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

India is the newest geographic focus area for the Global Surgery Research Group. The group is collaborating with the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) and World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Emergency, Critical and Operative Care, Program for Global Surgery & Trauma, New at the George Institute for Global Health, both in New Delhi, India. In 2024-2025, this collaboration with AIIMS and the WHO received funding through the Indo-Norwegian Cooperation Programme in Higher Education and Research-INCP2, a bilateral program that supports collaboration in higher education between Norway and India. Within this project, bilateral exchanges of students, researchers and supervisors have been planned during the reporting year.



PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHTS

- Tuberculosis and Respiratory Health
- Health Systems and Digital Health Innovations
- Maternal and Newborn Health
- One Health and Educational Innovation
- Global Surgery
- Blog post: Recognizing the Labour Behind Care
- The Lancet Regional Health-Southeast Asia refers to NTNU student thesis
- The Lancet Psychiatry: Commission on mental health in Ukraine & profile on NTNU professor Norbert Skokauskas

Tuberculosis and Respiratory Health

- Berg-Johnsen A, Hådem SO, Tamrakar D, **Harstad I**. A questionnaire of knowledge, attitude and practices on tuberculosis among medical interns in Nepal. *Journal of Clinical Tuberculosis and Other Mycobacterial Diseases*. 2020 Aug;20:100173. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jctube.2020.100173>
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Health Systems and Digital Health Innovations

- Agarwal S, Chin WY, Vasudevan L, Henschke N, Tamrat T, Foss HS, Glenton C, Bergman H, Fønhus MS, Ratanaprayul N, Pandya S, Mehl GL, **Lewin S**. Digital tracking, provider decision support systems, and targeted client communication via mobile devices to improve primary health care. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev*. 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD012925.pub2>
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- **Jiménez-Díaz G**, Gierman LM, Keitsch M, Elizarrarás-Rivas J, Silva-Méndez RM, **Infanti JJ**, Marcuzzi A. Validation of a Mobile Health Device for Neonatal Jaundice Screening: A Cross-Sectional Study in a Resource-Limited Setting in Mexico. *J Health Technol.* 2025. doi:10.1177/30502225251320544 <https://doi.org/10.1177/30502225251320544>

Maternal and Newborn Health

- Oommen H, Sagedal LR, **Infanti JJ**, Byrskog U, Severinsen MS, Lukasse M. Multicultural doula support and obstetric and neonatal outcomes: a multi-centre comparative study in Norway. *BMC Pregnancy Childbirth.* 2024;24:854. doi:10.1186/s12884-024-07073-y. <https://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-024-07073-y>
- Landsforeningen uventet barnedød (LUB). Flerkulturell doula: Støtter innvanderkvinner gjennom dødfødsler. Oslo: LUB. <https://lub.no/aktuelt/a-stotte-innvandrerkvinner-gjennom-dodfodslar-som-flerkulturell-doula>

- **Manandhar P, Chalise P, Rishal P**, Campbell J, Henriksen L, **Infanti JJ**, Joshi SK, Lukasse M, Pun KD, **Schei B**, Swahnberg K; ADVANCE 2 study team. Developing and validating the Nepalese Abuse Assessment Screen (N-AAS) for identifying domestic violence among pregnant women in Nepal. *BMC Pregnancy Childbirth*. 2024;24:612. doi:10.1186/s12884-024-06890-3. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0292563>

One Health and Educational Innovation

- **Nowbuth AA, Parmar VS**. Escaping the ordinary: a review of escape rooms in medical and veterinary education. *BMC Med Educ*. 2024;24:567. doi:10.1186/s12909-024-04987-2. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-024-06512-w>
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Global Surgery

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Image from the blog post: www.internationalhealthpolicies.org

Blog post, 'Recognizing the Labour Behind Care - The Fight for Dignity and Rights Among South Asia's Community Healthcare Workers'

AUTHORS

Vaishnavi Mangal (IHA, NTNU)

Roosa Sofia Tikkanen (CHAIN, ISS, NTNU)

Dr. Deepika Saluja (WGH, George Institute)



[Recognizing the Labour Behind Care - The Fight for Dignity and Rights Among South Asia's Community Healthcare Workers - Speaking of Medicine and Health](#). Published in *Speaking of Medicine and Health*, *the blog for PLOS Global Public Health* (April 30, 2025).

This blog post, co-authored by NTNU PhD candidates Vaishnavi Mangal and Roosa Sofia Tikkanen, together with Deepika Saluja (Chair of Women in Global Health India and researcher at the George Institute for Global Health), highlights the struggles and advocacy of community healthcare workers across South Asia. The piece builds on Vaishnavi's earlier blog, [Frontline, Forgotten: The ASHA Workers' Fight for Fairness](#), which focused on the Kerala ASHA workers' strikes in India.

The Lancet Regional Health-Southeast Asia refers to NTNU student thesis

A commentary article in *The Lancet Regional Health-Southeast Asia* uses and references data from a thesis by medical students at NTNU. The commentary article is about implementing a self-management programme for COPD patients in Nepal. The NTNU student project collected data on admissions for COPD exacerbations at two hospitals in Nepal and survival 6-months after discharge. Practice was assessed against international guidelines, and it was found that the average patient received all available treatment options. This may indicate that the patients were very ill or also over-treated. At 6-month follow-up, 37% of the patients had died.

Read the commentary article here: [Empowering communities: implementing a COPD self-management program in Nepal Comment](#)

In addition, here is a published article from the same medical students, Marte Styrvold and Ane Jonette Heggset Sterten: [An audit of patients admitted to hospital in Nepal for COPD exacerbation.](#) Their supervisor was Ingunn Harstad, Department of Public Health and Nursing (ISM), NTNU.



The Lancet Psychiatry: Commission on mental health in the Ukraine & profile on NTNU professor Norbert Skokauskas



In November 2024, Talha Burki wrote a profile about Prof. Norbert Skokauskas (RKBU, IPH-NTNU) in *The Lancet Psychiatry*. Skokauskas was a co-chair of the Commission on Mental Health in the Ukraine. "All the members of the Commission have worked hard and intensely; however Irina Pinchuk was the one who really pulled it off", Skokauskas said. Pinchuk is Director of the Institute of Psychiatry of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine. She has remained in the country throughout the war.

After Russia launched its full-scale attack on Ukraine in February 2022, Skokauskas spent many hours on the phone talking with his Ukrainian friends and colleagues. "I wanted to express my support, and at this time learned more than ever about the power of attentive listening", he stated in the profile piece. "I felt compelled to share the horrifying stories of the war - stories not heard on TV or radio, but directly from those who have lived through it, from those who just yesterday lived the same 'normal' life as the rest of us." To spread the message widely, 4 weeks into full war, Skokauskas and colleagues published the correspondence, "War is a public health emergency," in *The Lancet*.

"Research is not just an academic exercise", stressed Skokauskas. "It has to make a difference to the community, to address current needs and to send a clear message - a call to action." It is a description that encapsulates the aim of the Lancet Psychiatry Commission on rebuilding mental health services in Ukraine.

The report from the Lancet Commission was published in November 2024: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(24\)00241-4/abstract](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(24)00241-4/abstract)



Photo credit:
Khaula Jamil

Rotary magazine article on problems in community health worker programs

DATE

29th April 2025

Roosa Sofia Tikkanen (PhD Fellow, CHAIN research group, ISS dept, SU faculty) was interviewed by journalist Etelka Lehoczky for *Rotary magazine*. The interview focused on problems that can arise in community health worker programs ranging from lack of efficacy to harassment and exploitation of the workers and how these problems are being addressed around the world.

Link to the Rotary article interview:

https://magazine.rotary.org/rotary/august_2025/MobilePagedArticle.action?articleId=2073774#articleId2073774

DESIGN FOR HEALTH

design for health lab

New global health collaborations with Design For Health Lab



LEADER

Ashis Jalote Parmar (ID, NTNU)

The Design for Health Lab was founded by Associate Professor Ashis Jalote Parmar at the Department of Design, NTNU, to foster interdisciplinary collaboration between design and health sciences. Faculty members from NTNU's campuses in Trondheim and Gjøvik contribute expertise in product, service, interaction, and humanitarian design to develop innovative solutions for public health challenges.

The lab's projects span a broad range of health-focused innovations - from welfare technologies for vulnerable populations and decision-support systems using AI, to intelligent environments that enhance patient care. The team also prioritizes work on the circular economy, value-based design, medical education, health literacy, and patient pathways, ensuring that solutions are both sustainable and user-centered.

The global health group is excited about new collaborations with the Design for Health Lab - stay tuned for more developments!

Visit the new website:
[Design4Health Lab Website](#)

EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS



Photo credits:
Geir Otto Johansen



Graduation ceremony for the final cohort of Master of Science students in Global Health

DATE

23rd May 2025

The last cohort of students in NTNU's Master of Science (MSc) in Global Health programme graduated during this reporting year, marking the conclusion of a successful ten-year journey (2015–2025). The programme has been coordinated by the Department of Public Health and Nursing and was established by the department's first Professor of Global Health, Professor Emerita **Elisabeth Darj**. In its final years, the programme was led by Associate Professor **Jennifer Infanti**, with significant contributions from a dedicated team of lecturers, clinicians, and researchers across NTNU and St. Olavs University Hospital.

Over the past decade, the MSc in Global Health has provided interdisciplinary education and research training to students from around the world. Its legacy continues through new international teaching initiatives, ongoing research collaborations, and an active alumni network - including graduates who are now pursuing PhDs at NTNU.



Photo: "Levitation" (cropped), photographed in Saint-Louis, Senegal in February 2019, by Ben Buckland.

Start of the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree in Coordinated Humanitarian Response, Health and Displacement

DURATION

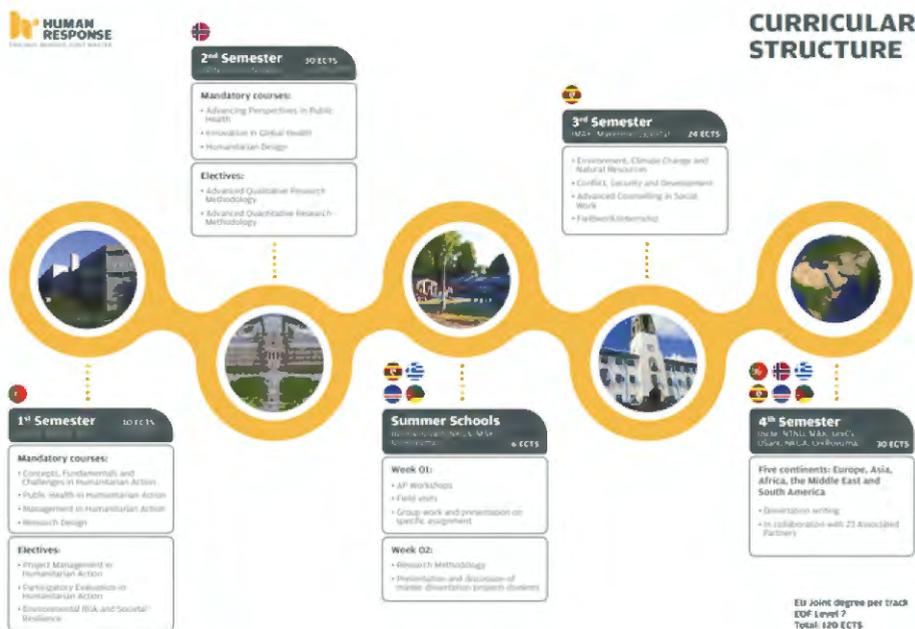
2 years (120 ECTS)

NTNU CONTACTS

Elin Yli Dvergsdal (coordinator) &
Jennifer Infanti (scientific director)

The Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree in Coordinated Humanitarian Response, Health and Displacement - or, for short, **HumanResponse** - is a newly launched international postgraduate programme (funded by the European Commission from 2025–2030). It is designed to address the growing demand for professional, multidisciplinary training in humanitarian settings. The programme brings together academic institutions from Europe and Africa, including NTNU, to build a new generation of humanitarian professionals equipped to respond to complex global crises.

NTNU is one of three core teaching institutions, alongside ISCTE-University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal) and Makerere University (Uganda). The programme also involves key partners in Cape Verde, Greece, and Mozambique, where students will participate in thematic summer schools.



Curricular structure, image from: www.humanresponse.eu

HumanResponse offers a two-year, 120-ECTS curriculum at the postgraduate (master) level, with a strong emphasis on South-South and South-North collaboration, local leadership, and practical engagement with humanitarian organisations.

The programme officially launches this year, with the first student cohort to arrive at NTNU in January 2026. HumanResponse will contribute to building a resilient, global humanitarian workforce through education grounded in real-world challenges.

- ISCTE website: <https://humanresponse.eu/>
- NTNU website: <https://www.ntnu.edu/studies/mshumres>

Lecture at Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences

KEY DETAILS

Dhulikhel, Nepal
8th April, 2025

On April 8, 2025, **Ingunn Harstad** (Associate Professor, Department of Public Health and Nursing) delivered a guest lecture at Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences (KUSMS), titled: "TB and COPD in Nepal: Two Published Student Projects in the Collaboration between DH-KUSMS and NTNU."



The lecture showcased two thesis projects conducted by NTNU medical students:

The first study, "Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice on TB among Medical Interns in Nepal," assessed tuberculosis (TB)-related awareness among medical interns. While general knowledge levels were found to be reasonably good, the study revealed serious knowledge gaps - for instance, many interns could not identify the key symptoms of pulmonary TB. The study also highlighted some stigma around TB: a significant number of respondents reported they would disclose a TB diagnosis to only one person. Notably, knowledge improved with increased clinical exposure to TB patients during medical school.

The second study, "An Audit of Patients Admitted to Hospital in Nepal for COPD Exacerbation," showed that all admitted patients had severe COPD and received nearly all available treatments (not individualized). Alarmingly, six-month follow-up data revealed a mortality rate of 36.7%.

These projects underscore the importance of both targeted health education and improved patient care strategies in Nepal.

Updates from NORHED II project: *Strengthening physiotherapy education in Nepal and South Africa*



PROJECT LEADER

Ann-Katrin Stensdotter, INB, NTNU

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS (JUNE 2024-JUNE 2025)

During this reporting period, the project made significant progress in strengthening physiotherapy education in Nepal. Key achievements include the successful transfer of a pedagogic course to Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences (KUSMS), capacity-building for supervisors and faculty, further development of bachelor's, master's, and PhD programs, and cross-cutting initiatives on gender, equity, and health.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Faculty development:**

- A 10-module pedagogic course was delivered at Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences (KUSMS), with 14 faculty participants from five institutions.
- A supervision course (12 faculty) and a clinical reasoning course (13 participants) further enhanced teaching and research capacity.

- **Program strengthening:**

- Master's program: five theses submitted; second cohort of five students admitted.
- Bachelor's program at Kathmandu Medical College (KMC): two cohorts admitted (15 and 17 students); three government scholarships awarded.
- Three PhD candidates completed coursework and mid-term evaluations during stays in autumn 2024 at NTNU.



Photo credit: Unknown (courtesy of project partners at Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences)

Photo from gender and equity workshop on gender-based violence, conducted in collaboration between the NORHED II and ADVANCE II projects (both funded by the Research Council of Norway).

- **Dissemination:**

- A workshop on academic-clinical integration engaged 10 faculty and supervisors, improving coordination of education and clinical training.

- **Gender and equity:**

- Two menstrual hygiene outreach camps reached 115 students and teachers.
- Two gender-based violence workshops trained 60 students and 40 physiotherapists on recognition and response.

Updates from NORHED II project: *Improving Maternal and Neonatal Health in Malawi and Zambia*



PROJECT LEADER
Håkon A. Bolkan, NTNU

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS (JUNE 2024-JUNE 2025)

This project aims to build capacity to develop and implement training programmes in nursing, midwifery, medical microbiology, and obstetric ultrasound, as well as to strengthen world-class research at the partner universities. The collaborating universities in Malawi are the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) and the Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHeS), together with the University of Zambia, School of Nursing (UNZA-SoN), in an effort to promote South-South collaboration.

HIGHLIGHTS

• **Supervision course**

- To support and strengthen supervisors in the newly established PhD programme, a supervision course was organised at the Amaryllis Hotel in Blantyre on September 17-18, 2024.
- The course focused on three main areas: 1) reflecting on supervision practices, 2) being introduced to tools, methods and mental models - and trying them out in practice, 3) exchanging experiences with other supervisors.



- **Scholar’s Retreat**

- During a five-day retreat held in January 2025, scholars were given dedicated time for writing and encouraged to engage in peer consultations. The retreat proved highly productive, with most participants successfully meeting their objectives.



Photo credit: Dr Sebean Mayimbo

- **“Leave no one behind” project**

- The project purchased five ultrasound machines - three for Malawi and two for Zambia.
- Four midwives received basic obstetric ultrasound training.
- As a result, 2,651 women were scanned during their first trimester, and 440 referrals were made for further care.



Photos credits: Elin Yli Dvergsdal



NTNU AWARDS



Håkon, Jennifer, Roosa, and Elodie with the two award winners.
Photo credit: Geir Mogen/NTNU

NTNU Awards to Simon Arnold Lewin & Terje Andreas Eikemo | Global health celebrated at NTNU awards

Global health research and collaboration were prominently recognized at the NTNU awards ceremony on 24 April 2025.

Professor Terje Andreas Eikemo (Department of Sociology and Political Science) received the award for his outstanding contribution to advancing NTNU's strategic priority area of internationalization.

Professor Simon Arnold Lewin (Department of Health Sciences in Ålesund) was awarded the NTNU Award for Outstanding Research for contributions to global health research and for strengthening the research environment at his department.

The achievements of Simon and Terje reflect the diversity and strength of global health research at NTNU. Their work highlights the hallmarks of our approach: interdisciplinary collaboration, innovation, real-world impact, and partnership across sectors and borders.



TERJE ANDREAS EIKEMO

AWARD FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION

Terje Andreas Eikemo is a Professor of Sociology and the leader of the Centre for Global Health Inequalities Research (CHAIN). His research focuses on how social inequalities affect health across the life course and generations, with a particular emphasis on mental health and well-being, chronic conditions, and mortality worldwide. Through CHAIN, Terje has built interdisciplinary, international collaborations with global health institutions such as the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), UNICEF Innocenti, and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the specialized cancer agency of the World Health Organization. A key focus of his research is on exploring the links between levels of education and mortality, for example through the collaboration with the Global Burden of Disease. Terje has also been the Editor-in-Chief of the Scandinavian Journal of Public Health since 2016.

After receiving his award, Terje said:

"I am deeply honored to receive the NTNU award for internationalization. This recognition not only humbles me but also inspires me to create stronger collaborations across sectors, international organizations, and engage with countries across the globe. I firmly believe that addressing and solving global health challenges requires a collective and interdisciplinary approach. I am excited to continue the work in CHAIN alongside my passionate colleagues in the NTNU Global Health Group to make a positive impact worldwide."



SIMON ARNOLD LEWIN

AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH

Simon Arnold Lewin is a Professor of Health Management and Health Systems, with more than 25 years of experience in strengthening health systems and supporting evidence-informed decision making. He is the Norwegian lead of the Cochrane People, Health Systems and Public Health Thematic Group, and has developed methods for systematic reviews, as part of the Nordic GRADE Network. In Ålesund, Simon has been supporting the Department's strong collaborations with health decision makers locally, regionally and internationally, including in Ålesund Municipality, Ålesund Hospital and the WHO. For instance, local and national decision makers have participated in guideline simulation training that Simon has developed and offered with partners from these networks.

Simon highlighted the critical timing of his award for global health:

"In my field of research, almost all projects are team-based, often including partners from multiple countries. This award reflects these many productive collaborations and I would like to share the credit with the many colleagues who have been so supportive and willing to share their insights and ideas. These are challenging times for global health, with decreased funding for health services and systems as well as for global health research in the Global South. In addition, we are experiencing threats to key elements of the global architecture, such as the WHO. The focus of this award on global health is therefore very timely and I hope will help to highlight the need to continue to support research relevant to global health, to stand up for science and for critical thinking, and to reinforce collaborative networks that facilitate knowledge and capacity sharing across the Global South and between South and North."

UPDATES FROM PHD CANDIDATES, NEW PROJECTS & NEW DOCTORS

PhD candidates

- Vaishnavi Mangal
- Avis Anya Nowbuth
- Nishan Katuwal
- Santripty Shrestha
- Gabriela Jiménez Díaz

Starting projects

- PATHS Project
- #BetterNutrition4Adolescent Project

New doctors

- Nishchal Ratna Shakya

PHD CANDIDATES



VAISHNAVI MANGAL

Dept. Health Sciences Ålesund
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

As part of her PhD project, Vaishnavi is investigating the informal use of mobile phones by healthcare workers in India. Fieldwork for the study took place from February to July 2025, encompassing both urban and rural contexts.

The urban component was conducted in Delhi, while the rural fieldwork was based in Kalahandi, Odisha. During this period, Vaishnavi engaged with a wide range of community-level healthcare workers, exploring their practices in both formal institutional settings and informal environments such as farms and community centers.



Photos credit: Vaishnavi Mangal





AVIS ANYA NOWBUTH

Dept. Neuromedicine and Movement Science
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

Anya's PhD project focuses on AMRageddon, a digital escape room game designed to teach medical and veterinary students about antimicrobial resistance and the interconnectedness of the One Health sectors.

The project has completed two randomized controlled trial (RCT) designed studies at NTNU and Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) in Norway, and Lusaka Apex Medical University (LAMU) in Zambia. The study focused on final year medical students and second year veterinary students.





NISHAN KATUWAL

Dept. Clinical and Molecular Medicine
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

Nishan's PhD project is part of a larger study, the Children's Lung Study in Dhulikhel, Nepal (C-LUNG). Nishan is investigating whether viral lower respiratory tract infections (LRTIs) early in life may predispose to chronic lung disease such as asthma later in life. Although Nishan is involved in several parts of the project including establishing the viral diagnostics, his PhD is focused on the immunology of these children.

The project's hypothesis is that early life LRTIs may skew the immune system in an unfavourable manner, depending on the viral etiology. His main activity at IKOM, NTNU will be to perform flow cytometry, CyTOF and inflammatory serum cytokines and chemokines analysis, and correlate it with clinical metadata and exposure factors to understand chronic lung infections.

The project website is here: <https://www.ntnu.edu/mh/c-lung>

Photos credit: Kim L'Orange Sørenssen





SANTRIPTI SHRESTHA

Dept. Clinical and Molecular Medicine
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

Bothersome vaginal discharge is one of the most common complaints, particularly among women in low- and lower middle-income countries, leading them to seek medical help. One-third of these women will have one or more of the three curable bacterial sexually transmitted infections (STIs), caused by: *Chlamydia trachomatis*, *Trichomonas vaginalis*, *Neisseria gonorrhoea*, or bacterial vaginosis. The syndromic management approach, being the standard of care in Nepal to date, might lead to overtreatment with antibiotics, facilitating antimicrobial resistance.

Santripty's PhD project is a randomized controlled trial, which aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of etiological testing using point-of-care tests (POCTs) to reduce overtreatment with antibiotics for abnormal vaginal discharge in a low-resource settings in Nepal. The study further examines the impact of patient education and addressing psychosocial vulnerabilities on adherence to treatment provided, health seeking behaviours, and symptom development.

Photo credits: Risa Lonnee-Hoffman





GABRIELA JIMÉNEZ DÍAZ

Dept. Public Health and Nursing
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

Gabriela's PhD project is on the implementation of a mobile health solution for neonatal jaundice detection in a resource-limited setting in Mexico. Her PhD work focuses on assessing the feasibility, usability, and potential clinical impact of the Picterus AS mHealth intervention in real-world settings.

Her thesis was submitted on 28 March 2025 and was approved for defence on August 21, 2025. The latest article was published on 22 April 2025: <https://doi.org/10.1177/30502225251320544>.

Key collaborators and/or supervisors include: Jesús Elizarrarás Rivas (IMSS, Oaxaca, Mexico); Jennifer Infanti, Martina Keitsch, and Anna Marcuzzi (NTNU); and Lobke M. Gierman (Picterus AS, Trondheim, Norway).



Photo credits: Gabriela Jiménez Díaz

STARTING PROJECTS

Promoting Access to Health Services through Participatory Approach: E-Health Intervention to Promote Good Health Seeking (PATHS)

Designed by www.freepik.es

DURATION 2025 - 2029



LEADER

Ashis Jalote Parmar
(ID, NTNU)



PhD Researcher

Andrea Porrás Elizo
(ID, NTNU)

The PATHS project, led by Ashis Jalote Parmar, Associate Professor at the Department of Design, NTNU, is actively contributing to research on Nordic-Baltic Migration and Integration. The project team, in collaboration with researchers from Sweden and Estonia, presented at the NordForsk-funded Kick-off Seminar on June 17, 2025, in Malmö, Sweden.

This project explores the healthcare needs and access barriers faced by Ukrainian refugee women in Norway, Sweden, and Estonia. Using a user-centered and participatory design approach, the team will develop digital health interventions to improve access to information, support, and healthcare services.

Andrea Porrás Elizo has been appointed as the PhD researcher for the PATHS project, and is starting on August 15, 2025. Andrea is a product designer and design researcher committed to leveraging design for health and well-being. Her expertise includes user research, prototyping, gamification, UX design, and accessibility, with a focus on human-centered solutions that drive awareness, education, and behavioral change.

The official PATHS project website is now available: [PATHS Website](#).

Building Healthy Food Environment in Schools: Evaluating Co-created Interventions in Low Resource Settings (#BetterNutrition4Adolescent)



LEADER

Abhijit Sen
(ISM, NTNU)

FUNDER



The #BetterNutrition4Adolescent project has secured funding of 12 million NOK from the Research Council of Norway. It commenced on April 1, 2025, and will run for four years. The project is led by Dr. Abhijit Sen, Associate Professor and Senior Researcher at the Department of Public Health and Nursing (ISM), NTNU.

About the project:

Malnutrition during adolescence contributes to the early onset of non-communicable diseases, significantly affecting future health and well-being. While global underweight rates have decreased, India and Nepal still face high underweight levels alongside rising obesity and overweight rates. Despite availability of cost-effective school-based nutrition interventions, their impact in schools in low-income countries has been inconsistent due to limited focus on environmental factors that support healthy behaviors. The project addresses these gaps by working with schools in marginalised communities from Delhi, India, and Budhanilkantha, Nepal. Stakeholders—including students, parents, teachers, food vendors, and administrators—will help identify barriers and facilitators in the school food environment. Thereafter, we will co-design with stakeholders, a tailored, multicomponent interventions to promote healthy food environment in schools.

The project will develop implementation strategies to overcome logistical and cultural challenges, ensuring seamless integration of interventions into the school calendar. We will evaluate the feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness of these intervention in reducing overweight, obesity, and underweight while improving diet quality, physical activity, mental well-being, and oral health. A cost-effectiveness analysis will assess sustainability and scalability.

This interdisciplinary global health project is hosted by NTNU in equitable collaboration with a network of experienced researchers from the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), the Institute for Implementation Science and Health (IISH) in Nepal, and the University of Birmingham, UK. Additionally, the project includes a postdoctoral and two PhD positions. The recruitment process of PhD positions is currently ongoing.



NEW DOCTORS

Development of physiotherapy as an integral part of the health system in Nepal

Nishchal Ratna Shakya, Ph.D. candidate
Department of Neuromedicine and Movement Science
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Trondheim, Norway

Thesis for the Degree of Philosophiae Doctor
March 21, 2025



Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences (KUSMS)
Dhulikhel Hospital, Kathmandu University Hospital, Nepal



Photo credits: Lennart Bentsen



NISHCHAL RATNA SHAKYA

Dept. Neuromedicine and Movement Science
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
Main supervisor: Ann-Katrin Stensdotter

March 2025

Development of physiotherapy as an integral part of health system in Nepal

Nishchal's thesis highlights the status of physiotherapy services in Nepal, a lower middle-income country. The research was conducted through three scientific papers aimed to identify barriers and facilitators to physiotherapy services, assess the implementation and status of physiotherapy in Nepal, and gather patients' recommendations.

The findings from the research revealed that there were significant challenges in the provision of physiotherapy services in Nepal, including lack of awareness and knowledge about physiotherapy at all system levels, disparities in resource distribution between urban and rural areas, and the need for improvement in availability, affordability, services, equipment and counselling for patients. Recommendations were made for advocacy and leadership efforts, inter-professional collaboration, organizational support, academic advancement, and government initiatives to advance physiotherapy services in Nepal.

The work provides valuable insights and recommendations for improving physiotherapy services in Nepal. It contributes to advancing the understanding of physiotherapy services and highlights the importance of strengthening physiotherapy as an integral part of health system in promoting health and treating various health conditions in resource-constrained settings.

IN MEMORIAM



JON ØYVIND ODLAND

Professor of Global Health

We want to remember and honour Jon Øyvind Odland, former Professor of Global Health at NTNU, who passed away in April 2025.

Jon Øyvind was a formidable scholar, valued colleague, teacher, and researcher who made lasting contributions to global health education and research at NTNU and all over the world. He had extensive experience in clinical and epidemiological research in low-income countries and a wide breadth of passions in global health, working on topics from maternal and child health to environmental medicine in several countries, especially Russia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. Jon Øyvind Odland was also an obstetrician deeply committed to Arctic health and the pollution affecting pregnant women.

Jon Øyvind's legacy continues through the students he taught, the colleagues he inspired, and the global health initiatives he helped to build. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and all who knew him.



REFLECTIONS



REFLECTIONS FROM PROFESSOR EMERITUS ELISABETH DARJ

Elisabeth Darj
Faculty of Medicine, NTNU / Uppsala University

"As an Emerita, it is a joy to stay engaged in global health - supervising international PhD students, sharing experiences, and continuing to learn."

We are pleased to include a few reflections from Elisabeth Darj, who was NTNU's first professor of global health and one of the foundational figures in the development of global health education and research at NTNU. Upon becoming emerita in 2021, Elisabeth continues to mentor global health master and PhD students, contributes to manuscript development and reviews, participates in recruitment processes, and attends conferences.

Currently, she supervises three PhD candidates, mentors a new main supervisor, and acts as a referee when former students apply for academic positions. Elisabeth also reviews for selected journals and participates in digital meetings with NTNU researchers and administration. Being affiliated with Uppsala University, she also gives occasional lectures there.

She notes with pride the development of NTNU's Master of Science program in global health (started in 2013, and now in its final year in 2025) during her term as professor, as well as NTNU's role as host of the National Research School in Global Health (funded by the Research Council of Norway with NOK 18 million over six years for PhD education). Elisabeth also helped initiate Nordic collaborations for global health with Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland, and started NTNU's inter-faculty global health network/research group.

We are very grateful for Elisabeth's continued presence and contributions to our activities and networks.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend sincere gratitude and appreciation to the global health researchers and educators who have contributed to this report, as well as to our national and international partners and networks for their ongoing collaboration.

Special thanks are owed to Jennifer Infanti and Andrea Porras Elizo for their dedication compiling this report and significant related efforts.

**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR CONTINUED
SUPPORT IN
PROMOTING HEALTH
FOR A BETTER WORLD**

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