

THE GLOBAL ROOTS

FROM SINGAPORE TO THE WORLD

The launch of the Asian Institute for Healthcare Leadership and Management and the Centre for Global Nursing has set the stage for new global health collaborations, innovations, and advancements in education and practice. **p08**

GLOBAL HEALTH WARRIOR

Prof Chua Yeow Leng's journey in global health is a testament to his approach to life: the more you understand the world, the better equipped you are to make a lasting impact on it. **p12**



“Global health
functions as a medium
for interdisciplinary
learning”

Education Associate Natasha Tai reflects on the future of global health education. **p04**



Strengthening Global Health Ties Between Jaffna and Singapore

A national neuroscience nursing training programme, a landscape assessment of youth mental health, and next steps in cutting edge trauma care clinical trials.

The SingHealth Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre, through the SingHealth Duke-NUS Global Health Institute, reaffirms its commitment to working with partners at the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. At the first progress meeting to discuss updates on 14 multidisciplinary projects, Dean of Duke-NUS Medical School, Prof Thomas Coffman, noted the importance of Jaffna as a crucial node in the regional network for the AMC.

“Through such regional partnerships, knowledge and best practices can be shared readily to improve the accessibility and quality of care for all citizens in the region.”

Read the full story [here](#).

Dean of Duke-NUS Medical School, Prof Thomas Coffman, and Director of SDGHI, Prof Tan Hiang Khoo, celebrating the partnership between SDGHI and the University of Jaffna



Duke-NUS Medical School student Dana Chow believes that we cannot end AIDS without prioritising children and adolescents – their ability to start and stay free of HIV is critical, both for them and for ending the epidemic for all.

Her [work in Tanzania](#) during her third year research project aimed to improve health outcomes in Young People Living with HIV (YPLWH). As one of two recipients of the [Children's Research Prize](#) at the AIDS2024 conference in August, Dana was recognised as having contributed to the body of research in children and youth HIV.

“The AIDS2024 conference highlighted to me the enduring importance of advocacy, which has been at the forefront of the fight against HIV since the early days of the epidemic,” said Dana. “It was inspiring to see diverse communities and individuals affected by HIV come together, united by the shared goal of eradicating this highly stigmatising disease.”

Dana's greatest reflections from the conference were the need to challenge the status quo and push for innovating approaches and equitable solutions. As she moves into her final year of medical school, she acknowledges the diverse landscape of HIV and its impacts, and is excited about contributing to the intersection of adolescent mental health and HIV.

Find out more about how SDGHI can support your global health research on our [grants and funding](#) page.

The Enduring Importance of HIV Advocacy

“

It is our responsibility to uphold strong morals and ethics, ensuring that humanity and compassion guide our actions, which can impact the lives of millions.

”

Dana Chow, second from right in picture, recipient of Children's Research Prize at AIDS2024

Shaping the future of global health education

Education Associate Natasha Tai reflects on her experiences giving her first ever global health lecture

Natasha believes that the best teachers she has ever had were, first and foremost, students and learners themselves. It's a philosophy she carried with her when lecturing at the International Summer Course "Understanding Global Issues at the Local Level to Improve Community Wellbeing", held at Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU) earlier this year. Standing before the class of eager students, Natasha knew she wasn't just there to teach—she was also there to learn.

What struck her most during the course was the unique energy in the room—an infectious enthusiasm for global health paired with an undeniable spirit of collaboration. "There was a special enthusiasm and curiosity for global health among the learners in the course, and a uniquely collaborative spirit among them," she reflected. For Natasha, this experience underscored the value of having a diversified student cohort who hold a breadth of experiences and perspectives.

"It especially reminded me of the ways in which global health functions as a medium for interdisciplinary learning," she said. "Global health is richest when population groups are equitably represented and come to the table ready to listen, learn, and unlearn." The course brought together around forty learners from different parts of Indonesia, as well as Malaysia and Pakistan, creating an environment ripe for rich discussions and innovative problem-solving.

Natasha's session on health promotion models covered a topic that she described as dry and boring to most students.



Natasha speaking about health promotion models, introducing the Health Belief Model, Transtheoretical Model and Social Cognitive Theory to 40 adult learners who attended the summer course

Thus, instead of sticking to abstract theories, she brought the concepts to life by weaving in context-specific examples from Indonesia and Southeast Asia. She also drew on macro-level initiatives like Singapore's Healthier SG programme, illustrating how health promotion efforts could have both local and global implications.

One question that stood out to her came from a learner who asked, "How do we encourage health-promoting behaviours among our family members or close friends without being overbearing?"

"Global health is richest when population groups are equitably represented and come to the table ready to listen, learn, and unlearn."

Natasha Tai, Education Associate, SDGHI

For Natasha, this question wasn't just a reflection of the students' curiosity—it showed how they were already starting to apply what they'd learned to their own lives. "At the individual level, we can learn that we in fact make choices about our health every day," she shared. "However, on a population level, health is not just an individual responsibility, and sound policy is key to making the healthy choice also the easy choice."

Throughout the week, Natasha also had the opportunity to interact with students and faculty members from USU in more casual settings.

"After lunch, we would engage in a little dance-along at the start of every afternoon session. Some days, the after-lunch activity would be a little game with one or two people standing closest to you," said Natasha. "This gave me the chance to interact with the faculty and learners more casually. I really enjoyed those moments. It made me feel so included and excited to be a part of their community."

Beyond the classroom, Natasha's visit to Medan offered profound insights into the lived realities of global health challenges. She visited a *puskesmas*, a local health centre, and the urban village

of Sei Mati with her colleagues, where she witnessed firsthand the challenges of frequent flooding, poor sanitation, and health hazards caused by underdeveloped sewage systems. This experience highlighted the importance of context-specific global health solutions.

"Visiting the community reminded me that global health is not just about high-level frameworks or strategies. It's about first understanding and addressing the immediate needs of the communities we aim to serve," Natasha reflected. "Singapore has to become cognisant of the inequities that exist in its surrounding regions, much less about the realities that many live in less than an hour and half away by plane."

As an Education Associate at SDGHI, Natasha is acutely aware of the gaps in global health education, particularly the dominance of narratives from the Global North. Her unique background—growing up in Malaysia and studying global health in North America—has given her a nuanced perspective. She sees Singapore as being in a pivotal position to pioneer global health education in Asia, emphasising the importance



Visiting local villages with SDGHI and USU colleagues gave Natasha insights into the realities of global health challenges



Colleagues and partners at the International Summer Course at Universitas Sumatera Utara

of developing education programmes that are comprehensive, holistic, and curated for the local context, aligning with core principles of equity and access.

“Amplifying local voices and fostering cultural competency among staff and students – our institute has the responsibility to acknowledge its power and position to evoke change,” Natasha said. “This will allow us to bring about positive social change in healthcare, not just in Singapore but across the region.”

And as the first lecture of her teaching portfolio came to a close, she was once again reminded of this responsibility. For Natasha, the experience in Medan was more than just a teaching opportunity. It was an opportunity to inspire and be inspired by the next generation of global health leaders.

Natasha works in the space of global health education and policy. Connect with her at natasha.tai@duke-nus.edu.sg

About SDGHI Regional Collaborating Centres (RCCs)

The SDGHI RCCs aim to optimise coordination of new and existing global health programmes taking place within the Academic Medical Centre (AMC) and between Duke-affiliated institutions. These programmes include research, capacity building, education and knowledge-exchange activities. Since 2022, SDGHI has set up RCCs in Jaffna, Sri Lanka; Medan, Indonesia; and is on track to launch its third one in Hanoi, Vietnam, in March 2025.

Connect with us if you have an interest in global health activities in these regions!

PROJECT DOVE CLIMB-AND- WALKATHON



1. Stairs Challenge 8 Jan to 6 Feb 2025

Join us in our virtual Stairs Challenge, where every flight of stairs climbed counts towards raising funds for our overseas community projects.

Simply track and submit the number of floors you climb in your daily activities, work commute, or exercise regimes!

Top 5 climbers stand to win attractive Gift Vouchers and exclusive Duke-NUS merchandise!



2. Challenge Kick-off & Fireside Chat 8 Jan 2025 (Wed) 12:00pm to 1:30pm

Duke-NUS, Khoo Teck Puat Building Level 1 Foyer / LEAD Room

Join us for the **Stairs Challenge Kick-Off** climb up to level 5 and be rewarded with a delicious lunch! This will be followed by a **Fireside Chat** with our very own Duke-NUS alumnus, **Dr. Anu Pandey**, who will share her experiences trekking in the Himalayas and how to keep fit in a hectic career like medicine.

3. Walkathon 8 Feb 2025 (Sat) 7.45am to 12.00pm

Route: Duke-NUS → Mt. Faber → Telok Blangah Hill Park → Green Corridor → Duke-NUS (12.1km)



Enjoy a leisurely hike with friends and family as we journey from Duke-NUS to the scenic peak of Mt. Faber, the lush greenery of Telok Blangah Hill Park, and through the tranquil Rail Corridor, which will lead us back to Duke-NUS! Refreshments will be provided.



SIGN UP NOW!

Project DOVE Climb-and-Walkathon

Stairs Challenge 8 Jan - 6 Feb 2025
Challenge Kick-off & Fireside Chat 8 Jan 2025, Wednesday
Walkathon 8 Feb 2025, Saturday



Adopting a 'for Asia, by Asia' Approach to Healthcare Leadership and Management

Asia's diverse sociocultural, geographical, and demographic landscapes present unique challenges to healthcare systems, from addressing ageing populations to improving access in remote areas. Recognising these complexities, the Asian Institute for Healthcare Leadership and Management (Asian HEAL) was launched to drive regional collaboration and leadership development tailored to Asia's needs.

Through education, training, and consultancy programmes, as well as the establishment of a healthcare leadership network, Asian HEAL aims to contribute to the building of resilient healthcare systems helmed by strong leadership and bolstered by regional cooperation.

A cornerstone of this initiative is the Executive Master in Healthcare Leadership and Management (EMHLM), a programme designed to equip leaders with the tools to transform healthcare systems and foster innovation. The Executive Master is awarded by the National University of Singapore, ranked 8th in the world and 1st in Asia, and is currently accepting applications for its pioneer intake.

Make Asia Your Healthcare Leadership Classroom



Find out more about the [Executive Master in Healthcare Leadership and Management](#)



Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs in Singapore, striking a gong to launch Asian HEAL at the Singapore Healthcare Management Conference 2024.



Applying Global Health Perspectives to Nursing

About the [SingHealth Centre for Global Nursing \(CGN\)](#)

The SingHealth CGN aims to advance nursing knowledge and education, improve nursing care delivery, reduce health inequities, and shape policy on both national and international fronts.

Connect with us

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By 2030, the World Health Organization has estimated that we will be short of 15 to 18 million healthcare workers required to provide universal health coverage.

Included in this pool are nurses, a critical group of healthcare providers without whom positive patient outcomes are hard to achieve.

Recognising this need, the SingHealth Centre for Global Nursing (CGN) was launched to advance nursing education and leadership with a global perspective. It works with partners in Asia and beyond to facilitate programmes that improve population health outcomes, build nursing capability and capacity, and strengthen health systems through education, research and innovation.

Read more about SingHealth nursing going global [here](#).



Global Mental Health in Asia

Registrations now open



**17 - 19 February 2025
Singapore**

Calling all mental health experts, practitioners, policymakers, researchers, advocates, and stakeholders from around the globe, join us as we tackle pressing issues and explore exciting opportunities in mental health across Asia.



Asia-Pacific Global Health Innovation Hackathon

Singapore, 17-18 January 2025



Find out more about SDGHI's upcoming events on our [website](#)

Your journey to addressing global health issues in Asia begins here

Position yourself as a future global health leader in your field with SDGHI's graduate certificates

Graduate Certificate in Global Health Practice in Asia

This certificate equips individuals with both knowledge and practical skills to tackle health equity issues at the local or regional level.

Core Courses

Practice of Global Health in Asia: An Introduction
Project Evaluation in Global Health

Electives

Adolescent Health in Asia
Infectious Diseases and Global Health
Non-Communicable Diseases: Building Health System Capacity
Planetary Health: From Analysis to Action
Global Mental Health in Asia

Registrations open from 1 April to 4 July 2025

Find out more [here](#)

Graduate Certificate in Global Health Innovation

This certificate is designed for participants to gain insights into multi-disciplinary stakeholder involvement and those who are passionate about advancing access and health equity through innovative solutions.

Core Courses

Practice of Global Health in Asia: An Introduction
Approaches to Global Health Innovation
Bringing Global Health Innovations to Market
Innovation Implementation, Adoption & Scaling in Global Health

Registrations open from 1 April to 4 July 2025

Find out more [here](#)



For enquiries
sdghi@duke-nus.edu.sg

Global Health Warrior

We profile the champions of global health who have been doing great work across the region. Get to know more about their motivations, interests, and expertise, and feel free to reach out to them for collaboration opportunities!



Prof Chua Yeow Leng

Clinical Associate Professor
SingHealth Duke-NUS Cardiovascular Sciences
Academic Clinical Programme

Prof Chua Yeow Leng's global health journey has been shaped by one philosophy: that the more you understand the world, the better equipped you are to make a lasting impact on it.

He can recount, off the top of his head, the names of countless colleagues, students, and mentors from every corner of the globe. In his work, he's amassed a vast network of collaborators, from hospital directors in Indonesia to military officials in Nepal. These connections are not just professional affiliations to him—they represent the essence of two-way learning.

He reflects on his early experiences working with the Wuhan Asia Heart Hospital in China, when he joined a SingHealth team of surgeons to conduct trainings for their Chinese counterparts in 1989.

"We were initially the teachers, but by the early '90s, they were already performing more cardiac surgeries than Singapore, to such a degree of finesse that we began sending our surgeons there for attachments." The sheer volume of patients at Wuhan's hospital provided Singapore's budding surgeons with the invaluable exposure to rare conditions they could never encounter back home. The mentors had become the students, and that, for Prof Chua, is a beautiful thing.

Prof Chua's passion for doing good work is palpable, but his ambitions stretch far beyond individual clinical training. During

his stint as Group Director at the SingHealth International Collaboration Office, his focus shifted from improving surgical skills to tackling issues on a macro-level by strengthening healthcare systems through capacity building. This transition is a reflection of his belief that the most effective interventions happen when entire teams—and even whole health systems—are empowered to function cohesively.

"In the past, we would train a couple of nurses on the side while conducting surgical training," he explains. "But that had a limited impact. It made me think about how we could increase the reach of our education efforts."



The SingHealth team with the Prime Minister of Nepal while embarking on the post-disaster recovery management project

His approach evolved in places like Myanmar, where SingHealth and local collaborators organised seminars for nurses across the region. The programme saw so much success that 300 participants from the Mandalay region took part in the Continuing Nurse Education (CNE) programme in 2019. Training en masse allowed him to reach more people efficiently, providing a framework that could be scaled and sustained across the healthcare system.

Prof Chua's work in global health has taken him to some of the most remote and challenging places. In post-earthquake Nepal, he and his team met with politicians, doctors, and military leaders to understand the critical issues that exacerbated the disaster. What they discovered was not just a shortage of medical expertise but systemic and infrastructure breakdowns that immobilised the country's response efforts.

Working with local leaders, the SingHealth team helped craft a solution that involved training not only doctors but also hospital managers, disaster responders, and physical therapists, ensuring the entire healthcare system was better equipped to handle future crises.

This sense of seeing the big picture is essential to Prof Chua's philosophy. Global health is about building a depth and breadth of knowledge that allows you to understand how the world works and how to engage effectively within it.

"I do global health because it allows you to see the world and understand why things happen the way they do—geographically, historically, culturally. That's what allows me to connect with people, which feeds back and allows me to do better global health work. I consider it a privilege to be able to see the world this way."



Prof Chua with nurses who took part in the Continuing Nursing Education Programme in 2019 in Mandalay

Connect and Collaborate

SDGHI works with partners in the region to advance health and wellbeing in Asia and beyond. Reach out to our faculty for collaboration opportunities [here](#).

Be Featured as A Global Health Warrior

If you would like to be featured as our Global Health Warrior, or know one who should be featured, connect with us at sdghi@duke-nus.edu.sg



Advancing Global Health in Asia and Beyond

The SingHealth Duke-NUS Global Health Institute seeks to tackle prevalent health challenges, strengthen health systems, and better insulate countries from pandemics and disease threats.

Have an idea for a segment in the global health newsletter?
Let us know!

sdghi@duke-nus.edu.sg