

# INTERNATIONAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 10: June 2026



Leo Lewis (centre) with other delegates 2026. Image courtesy of Leo Lewis

## Helsinki's Radical Health Festival

by Leo Lewis (Bevan Commission, Swansea University)

I've been reflecting on my time at the Radical Health Festival Helsinki 2026, contributing to sessions on value-based healthcare, the DYNAMO Horizon Europe project and a workshop organised by the Reference Site Collaborative Network.

What struck me most wasn't just the technology, the AI demonstrations, or the policy conversations. It was the shared recognition that Europe is finally serious about shifting from illness-centred care to proactive, personalised health created with people and enabled by technology. ulting in transforming what health and care systems are for.

Finland set the tone. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health framed the challenge perfectly. AI, data and digital tools matter, but the real transformation is human. And that's where social prescribing comes in. For all the talk about algorithms, what keeps people well is connection, purpose and community. AI can identify risk. Data can personalise support. But social prescribing helps people actually live the change.

The boldness of the festival and the openness of the conversations left me energised on the one hand, but on the other, we need to translate the technological ambition and cultural change into radically different ways of delivering care and services resulting in transforming what health and care systems are for.



UK Global Health Summit 2026 - Page 3 among the delegates - Charlotte Welch (Public Health Wales) flanked by Israa Muhammed and Jess Simms (Global Health Partnership Cymru).

# Dutch Strategic Foresight in Wales

by Henk Hilderink and Jippe Miedema (Public Health Foresight,  
Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment)

**Strategic foresight is not a new concept. The Dutch National Institute of Health (RIVM) has a long tradition in applying strategic foresight to inform policy making. RIVM makes the Dutch Public Health Foresight Study already for more than 30 years, since 1993 and provides the government with a systematic, evidence-based picture of how population health is likely to develop over the coming decades. It is not a prediction. It is a structured and systematic way of asking: what future do we face, what are challenges arising from these futures, and what are the options for action?**

RIVM's experience with the Dutch Public health foresight study and various other foresight studies was the basis for a 2 day workshop at public health Wales.

The first workshop explored this methodology in depth: how can horizon scanning help to identify emerging threats and opportunities before they become crises, how are scenarios built to reflect genuine uncertainty rather than disguise it, and how are findings translated into options for action that policy makers can actually use.

The second workshop brought a different and particularly energising dimension. Fifteen participants connected to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, Wales's landmark legislation that creates a legal duty for public bodies to consider the long-term consequences of their decisions, participated in this workshop.

What emerged across both days was a shared recognition that the tools of foresight, including horizon scanning and scenario development travel well across contexts. However, the institutional conditions for making foresight matter are what truly determine its impact. Methodology without mandate produces reports that gather dust. Mandate without methodology produces good intentions without direction. Wales, with its unique legislative foundation and a genuine appetite for this kind of thinking, is well placed to bring both together.

For RIVM, these conversations are equally valuable. Foresight learns from comparison. Seeing how a different system grapples with the same fundamental challenge - how do you govern for a future you cannot fully know? - sharpens thinking on both sides. We look forward to continuing the conversation.



# UK Global Health Summit 2026

## Shaping Tomorrow's Health Together

by Keira Charteris and Charlotte Welch (Public Health Wales)

Colleagues from Global Health Partnerships Cymru (GHPC) and Public Health Wales (PHW) attended the UK Global Health Summit 2026, Shaping Tomorrow's Health, Together, held at the Royal College of Physicians.

The Summit brought together **1,000 delegates** from **22 countries**, spanning NGOs, academia, the public and private sectors, and UK and international governments, with over **100 speakers**, including senior political and health leaders.

Across three days, the programme focused on building a **globally engaged UK health system**, strengthening **equitable global health partnerships**, and recognising the leadership of **diaspora communities** in shaping global health.

Discussions explored shared challenges such as workforce sustainability, ethical collaboration, and how international partnerships can move from dialogue to practical action, grounded in principles of equity, reciprocity and shared responsibility.

The exhibition space provided an excellent opportunity to **showcase Wales' contributions to global health**, with many valuable conversations and potential collaborations identified. We are hopeful that several of these can be progressed following the event.

The **Wales Malawi Antimicrobial Pharmacist Partnership (WMAPP)** was also featured at the Summit, with its abstract accepted and presented by Zoe Kennerley.



(Top) **Zoe Kennerley (WMAPP)**; (Centre) **Jo Peden (PHW)**, **Jess Simms**, **Israa Muhammed** and **Rachel Crooks** (all GHPC); (Above) **Keira Charteris (PHW)**, **Jess Simms**, **Israa Muhammed** (both GHPC), **Angela Gorman (Life for African Mothers)** and **Rachel Crooks (GHPC)**. Images courtesy of Israa Muhammed

# War-torn Myanmar - Trainee Nurses Study in Secret Jungle Classrooms

By Jo Harrington (Public Health Wales)

*Beneath a canopy of leaves, with civil war surrounding deadly on all sides, twenty-one brave nurses graduated. The class of March 2026 received their degree certificates in the depths of the jungle hidden from the Junta. The ceremony occurred furtively, dodging spy drones with the fighting (not always figuratively) at their gate.*



*Attacks on Health Care in Myanmar (Insecurity Insight, 2026)*

Fittingly, the celebration mirrored the past three years: clandestine, risk-threaded, bags packed for flight. At any moment the jungle could erupt in shouts and gunfire — the Junta locating yet another makeshift facility. Today, that facility hosted a Graduate Congregation.

In five years of nomadic existence, their base had shifted from front rooms to roadside tents to a burned-out hospital shell. Classrooms had twice been shaken by bombs outside. One student, on placement at an understocked hospital, survived a direct missile strike. Many others didn't.

Their jungle premises offered little: roofless buildings, no clean water, supplies stretched to near nothing — paracetamol running low with no resupply guaranteed. No MRI, no dynamap, no incubator.

Yet the degrees they held were real. In such circumstances, it should have been too proscriptive to begin let alone achieve. Nevertheless they existed, equivalent to any nursing degree held anywhere in the world, pitched to the same standards.

## From the ashes arose The Phoenix Nursing Programme

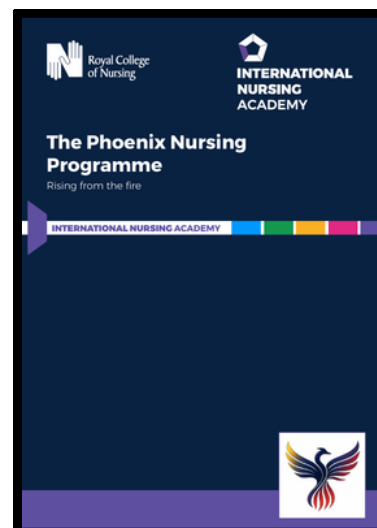
Behind the degrees lay one woman's resourcefulness — anonymous for her own safety — who reached out to former colleagues in the Myanmar diaspora in Britain, ultimately connecting with the Royal College of Nursing.

The initial asks were modest — information, mini-tutorials - patchy internet making such resources hard to come by. Local nurses had broad knowledge but lacked equipment to demonstrate it. Specialist gaps were urgent, like battlefield wounds, or emergency medicine with minimal supplies.

The challenge was two-fold in delivering each class - any media had to be basic enough to fit on something easily transportable, like a memory stick; then brave individuals were sought to physically smuggle concealed digital classes past Junta checkpoints. Starlink came on board with a more reliable internet service.

What grew from that collaboration became a three-year bespoke nursing degree: 58 lectures, plus a bridging programme. Led by Myanmar nurse educators, coordinated by the RCN's International Nursing Academy under Marcus Wootton, delivered by professionals worldwide, validated by Myanmar universities — and completed, to graduation, by twenty-one student nurses dodging bullets in a jungle.

**When providing medical care becomes an act of protest, learning how to do so must de facto be party to the resistance. To learn at the level of a degree, then nurse graduates emerge as icons of national defiance.**



*Phoenix Nursing Programme: Rising from the Fire (RCN, 2026)*

Since Myanmar's military coup on February 1st 2021, the country's healthcare system has been targetted specifically in the Junta's destructive boycott.

Hospitals, clinics and health centres are routinely bombed; medical supplies and medication are confiscated or spoiled; those reporting for duty must first pass checkpoints and blockades.

Documented thus far are:

- 1873 violent and/or obstructive incidents related to healthcare provision.
- 472 instances of damage or destruction to healthcare facilities.

Lost healthcare workers lost include:

- 170+ killed;
- 909 arrested;
- 70% fled or internally displaced.



*Image: AFP News - Treating Covid patients in secret Myanmar clinics (YouTube)*

## Persistent Zero-Dose Children in Nigeria's Kano State

A recent study by Dr Stanley Ukpai and Judith-Ann Walker examines the persistence of zero-dose children in Kano State, Nigeria, despite high routine immunisation coverage.



Read more in [Critical Public Health journal](#)

Published in *Critical Public Health*, ***Zero-dose children in Kano State, Nigeria: a multi-site qualitative study of non-initiation and social and behavioural change communication levers*** uses a qualitative multi-site design

Researchers identified barriers such as vaccine side effects (e.g. Penta-1 pain/fever), poverty, transport costs, distrust of free services, and household decision-making dynamics.

Misconceptions about vaccines, such as infertility fears, were prevalent.

Strategies to address these issues include anticipatory counseling, engaging trusted messengers like imams, reactivating community mobilisers, offering transport incentives, and improving provider communication.

The study emphasises equity-focused communication and service adjustments to build trust, reduce barriers, and ensure vaccination access for marginalised communities.

## Research to Policy Translation: Bridging the Gap | An Online Course

Duration: Self-Paced | Location: Online | Prerequisites: None | Cost: AUD \$150

An expert-designed, comprehensive online course designed to teach knowledge, skills and strategies necessary for translating research into policy and practice.

Featuring lectures and discussions, reflective activities, practical exercises, and formative assessments.

Learn essential skills in:

- Navigating the research–policy nexus
- Building effective research–policy partnerships
- Applying practical translation strategies, tools, and skills
- Communicating evidence for real-world impact
- Developing a clear and actionable knowledge translation plan

### WHO

Anyone interested in understanding and influencing the intersection of research and policy

### WHEN

This is a fully self-paced course and is available for enrolment year round.

### HOW

Enrol via the link below to gain access to the course

Build the skills to turn research into action.

CHIAPRT drives real-world change by turning research into action, connecting experts and policymakers to create collaborative impact and healthier communities. This course builds on this expertise to provide global audiences with the opportunity to develop their research translation knowledge and capacity.

Contact us at [chiaprt@sahmri.com](mailto:chiaprt@sahmri.com)



Developed with:  
Adelaide University



[Enrol Today!](#)

## WHO Collaborating Centre on Investment for Health and Well-being Re-designation

Public Health Wales is celebrating the re-designation of its Policy and International Health Directorate as a World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre (WHOCC) on Investment for Health and Well-being. This reaffirms Wales' position as a global leader in shaping policies, strategies and investments with health, well-being and equity at the heart.

The re-designation extends the Centre's status for a further four years (2026-30), recognising its unique role as the first and only WHOCC in the world dedicated specifically to increasing investment in the well-being of people, communities, societies, and our planet. It also secures Wales' continued contribution to and benefit from a global network of more than 800 Collaborating Centres across more than 80 countries.

Since its designation in 2018, the WHOCC has delivered a wide range of influential work that has strengthened evidence and value-informed policy. It has developed guidance and practical tools to help governments and organisations spend and invest more effectively in prevention. This work has helped position Wales as a champion for building well-being economies and advancing new thinking and approaches towards a healthier, fairer and more sustainable future for all.

Going forward the WHOCC will continue to expand its national and global collaborative work and impact through providing expertise and know-how, building capacity, and accelerating solutions for placing population health, well-being and equity at the heart of all policies and investments.



# Public Health Wales' International Health Forum

## Art, Action, Development and the End of Global Health

May 20th 2026

The Forum was held virtually by the International Health Coordination Centre (IHCC) on 20th May 2026, bringing together a diverse audience. Attendees ranged from healthcare professionals and policymakers to academics and non-governmental organisations, all united to share learnings and best practice from international health activities, research, and opportunities that can help strengthen skills and systems across Wales and internationally.

*This bi-annual forum promotes shared learning, showcasing Wales' contributions to global health, and reinforces Wales' role as a globally responsible nation committed to improving health and well-being for all. It is a key activity of Public Health Wales' International Health Strategy, an enabler of Public Health Wales' Long-Term Strategy.*

**Four compelling presentations shaped the event.**



Namechecking REM and U2's Bono Vox, **Prof Colin McInnes (Aberystwyth University)** opened proceedings with a talk entitled ***The End of Global Health***.

Colin took the forum through a history of Global Health as a named concept backed by governments. Emerging from the collapse of the iron curtain and the rise of HIV, Global Health became a tenet of Blair's New Labour amongst others. Today we see rupture from a failure of globalization, distrust in authority and war, running through the dire filter of COVID.

Next steps, as implied by the narrative - led by Trump's USA - sees nations pulling away.

***Development, Decolonisation and Global Health: Reflections on Building Equitable Partnership*** followed, wherein **Dr Ben Wilson (Director of Public Engagement, SCIAF)** asked an uncomfortable question: what if the whole development project has been quietly colonial all along? Drawing on his PhD on the Scotland–Malawi partnership, he traced development theory from open exploitation, through modernisation ("we're all on the same path, you're just behind"), to the post-development critique that asks who gets to decide what "developed" even means. The lesson for global health: when disease is treated as a purely technical problem — RCTs, data extraction, expertise hierarchies — we miss the colonial and capitalist structures producing the vulnerability in the first place. Qualitative data, Ben argued, needs to be a genuine partner to the quantitative, not an afterthought.



Gweithio gyda'n gilydd i greu Cymru iachach

Working together for a healthier Wales



After two sobering talks, **Dr Mariana Dyakova (Public Health Wales)** presented a more positive outlook in ***Global Health in Action: Building Well-being Economies for Prosperity for All***.

Mariana offered a working alternative: the well-being economy - economies designed around people and planet, not profit - framed by the WHO's four "well-being capitals" and backed by the forthcoming Economics of Health for All strategy. Wales is a leader here, with the Well-being of Future Generations Act, a renewed memorandum with WHO Europe, and a WHO Collaborating Centre redesignated through 2030.

Finally, **Rosie Dow (Arts Council of Wales)** brought a long history of studying/working within public health to research into how health and wellbeing benefit by the arts. Delivered now as ***The Art of Global Health & Wellbeing: how the arts are helping to address health challenges in Wales and across the world***. The link between improved mental health and artistic pursuits has long been established. Rosie added many other applications, including elderly in dance classes boosting balance to cut down on falls. 170+ sources of peer-reviewed evidence worldwide informed Rosie's Lancet article promoting arts in healthcare.



**Watch the forum recording and/or download the presentation slides at [Public Health Network Cymru](#)**

**All are welcome.** The next **International Health Forum** is scheduled **November 2026**.

For updates, contact [Laura Holt](#) or [Jo Harrington](#) at Public Health Wales.

# Hub Cymru Africa - International Women's Day Celebration Wales, Africa and Women

Temple of Peace, Cardiff, March 11<sup>th</sup> 2026

by Jo Harrington (Public Health Wales)



*Pictured: ADJURA (singer-songwriter); the quintet choir ZimVoices; a memorial to Claire O'Shea (Hub Cymru Africa) - speakers included Chizi Phiri and Dr Kathrin Thomas; dancer Aïda Diop; and poet Tia-Zakura.*

Hub Cymru Africa's (HCA) glittering contribution to International Women's Day was a celebratory event at Cardiff's Temple of Peace. Guests learned and revelled in the entrepreneurship, talent and work of women from across the African continent.

**Elemchi (Chi) Nwosu**, filmmaker, presenter, story-teller and actress, compèred the evening, which juxtaposed short, informative presentations with live entertainment and a meal. The latter came courtesy of Nigerian caterers, **Id's Place**. The rear of the hall was lined with stalls vending handy and decorative items, traditional crafts, books and fair trade produce. There was a wishing tree for thoughts, thanks and well wishes to be committed to scraps of paper and pinned.

Welcome proclaimed and introductory talks made, Senegal dancer **Aïda Diop** took the floor. All were encouraged to clap a rhythmic beat, faster at every pass, as Aïda energetically performed. Her moves were first learned as a Lebou child in her native Ouakam village and finessed at dance schools into adulthood. Singer-songwriter **ADJUA** draws upon both her Welsh and Ghanaian heritage to compose the songs played live over lunch. Local bard **Tia-Zakura Camilleri** brought the passion of her poetry in performative recital. Finally, there was the harmonious choral contribution of five ladies from Zimbabwe, collectively known as **ZimVoices**.

Spotlights were shone on the work of the **WCVA** (women's empowerment projects); **Treeflights** (female community building and empowerment in West Wales and Kenya); and the Fuluma Butta project in Malawi. **Hub Cymru Africa** itself was introduced by Israa Mohammed (**Global Health Partnerships Cymru**).

A highlight was also the evening's saddest segment. In celebrating tremendous women, Hub Cymru Africa honoured its own with a tribute to the late **Claire O'Shea**. Head of HCA until her demise last year, Claire's legacy was laid out in eulogies from colleague **Cath Moulogu** and mentee **Chizi Phiri**, plus her **Claire's Campaign** partner and friend, **Dr Kathrin Thomas**.



Photographs by Jo Harrington

# International Health Insights: Dementia Prevention

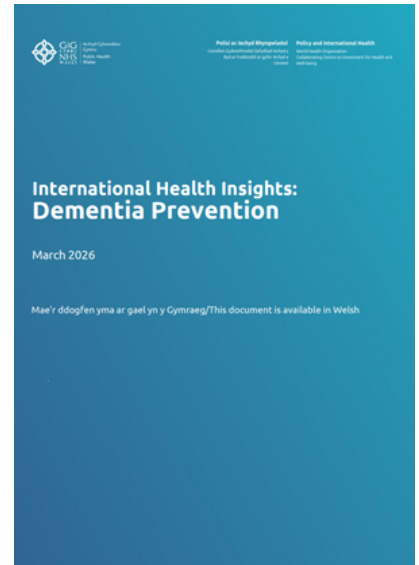
by Keira Charteris (Public Health Wales)

The International Health Insights team at Public Health Wales has published a report exploring the latest evidence on dementia prevention and the importance of supporting brain health across the life course.

Dementia is a major and escalating global public health challenge but prevention potential is substantial. Research suggests that up to 45% of cases could be prevented by addressing 14 modifiable risk factors across life stages.

## Key messages from the report include:

- ▶ The importance of supporting brain health across the life course through integrated action at three levels: behavioral interventions, multi-component programmes, and structural, population-level measures.
- ▶ The need to reduce inequities by targeting high-risk groups and ensuring equitable access to education, screening, and care.
- ▶ Important enablers, such as leveraging innovation for AI-driven early detection and new therapies, building workforce capacity, and community engagement.
- ▶ Country examples from Finland, Japan, South Korea, Uruguay, and the UK, illustrating diverse approaches to dementia prevention.



[Click to access the report](#)

The Welsh Government is currently developing a successor Dementia Strategy for Wales, with public consultation on the draft strategy open until 6 April 2026. This report has been developed to support that process, linking with colleagues across Public Health Wales and Welsh Government.

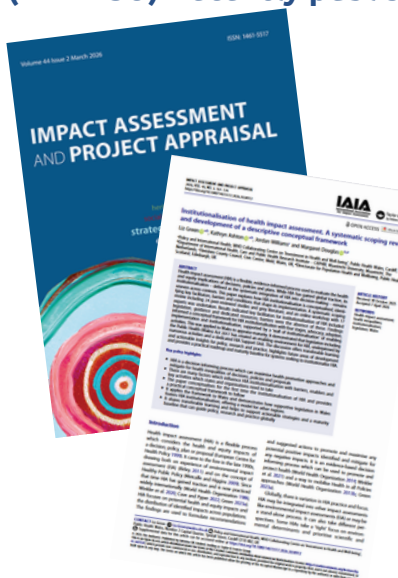
The report was written by Keira Charteris, Mariana Dyakova, Daniela Stewart and Zuwaira Hashim.

## Embedding Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

### Learning from international and Welsh practice

by Muqaddasa Abdul Wahid (Public Health Wales)

Prof. Liz Green and Dr Kathryn Ashton of the Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU) recently published an article titled '*Institutionalisation of health impact assessment. A systematic scoping review and development of a descriptive conceptual framework*' in the journal of *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*.



The paper is the first practical framework for the field/other nation states/organisations to use to measure how mature they are (or not) in HIA. It highlights the enablers and barriers and the 4 key stages of HIA institutionalisation, namely: advocacy, adoption, implementation and finally institutionalisation.

These are mapped against a practical 'wall of institutionalisation' which contains the critical activities, factors and facilitators needed for institutionalising HIA. Other nation states and organisations can use these to measure themselves against to identify how mature they are (or not) in the path to institutionalisation and critical factors they presently have or need to strive for.

[Click to access the report](#)

# Benefits of International Health for the People of Wales

## International Health Coordination Centre



An animated information video has been launched to demonstrate Welsh involvement in global health, and how the nation's impact hits well above its weight.

The animation (in [English](#) or [Welsh](#)) talks about how Wales is within the world - affected by international healthcare scares, while benefitting from health breakthroughs made anywhere around the globe.

Perhaps surprisingly for a small country, Wales is at the forefront of global health initiatives, like its leading role in the [International Association of National Public Health Institutes \(IANPHI\)](#).

Aimed at a target audience of everyone, the narrative is easily understandable beyond its academe and professional sector.

The short feature was commissioned by the [International Health Coordination Centre](#), part of Public Health Wales' Policy and International Health directorate. It was created by Cardiff's [Savage and Gray Design](#).

**“International Health Partnerships working and the benefits to Wales and beyond outlined in a short and informative way.”**

*Prof Liz Green, Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU)*

**“A wonderful tool to show the general public how many ways Wales stands on a global stage in terms of public health.”**

*Cara Davies, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Hub Coordinator*

**“I wasn't aware how much Wales did for global healthcare.”**

*Kay Kendall, member of the public*



# Upcoming Events and Conferences



## Observatory Venice Summer School 2026:

**Paying for health care in the face of fiscal constraints: how to generate adequate revenues and to spend better**

San Servolo, Venice

**July 19<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> 2026**

Six day course with surrounding events

[Click for more information](#)

## 8th International Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health Vulnerability, Policing and Public Health

University of Leeds, England

**September 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> 2026**

[Click for more information](#)

## World Health Organization: World Patient Safety Day 2026 Safe Care for Non-Communicable Diseases

Globally

**September 17<sup>th</sup> 2026**

All day; all timezones

[Click for more information](#)

**19th European Public Health Conference**  
**Urban and global synergies: shaping the future of public health with climate  
resilience, equity and innovation**

Bilboa, Spain  
November 10-13<sup>th</sup> 2026

Abstracts for the event  
to be submitted  
before June 19<sup>th</sup> 2026.

[Click for Event  
Registration](#)

**Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene Annual Meeting**  
**Equitable Partnerships in Global Health**

London, England  
October 15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> 2026

Early bird ticket prices  
for those registering  
before July 10<sup>th</sup> 2026

[Click for more  
information](#)



## Get in touch

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