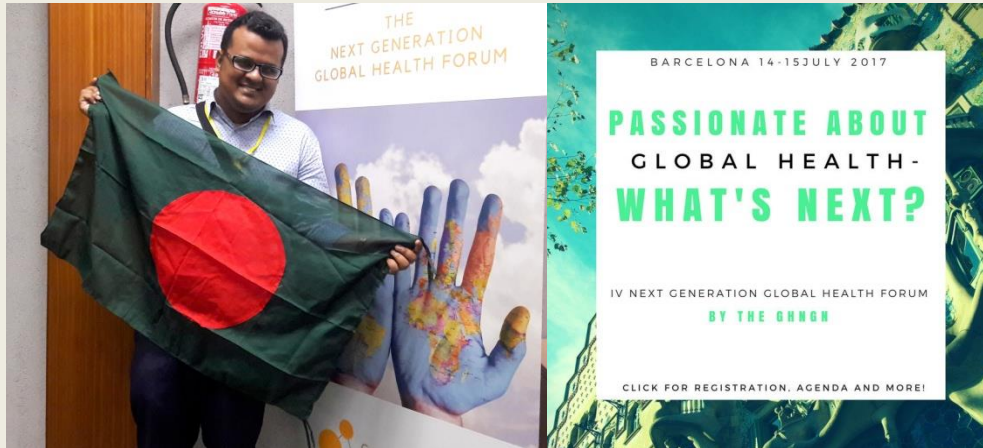


## PASSIONATE ABOUT GLOBAL HEALTH

By YPL alumnus 2016, M. Tasdik Hasan

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Following a selection process by the Global Health Next Generation Network, I was selected to attend the 4<sup>th</sup> Next Generation Global Health Forum 2017 in Barcelona, Spain. I was asked to be a panelist in the plenary session ‘Meet young professionals who found their way in global health’ along with four extraordinary young professionals from Portugal, Spain and the USA.

On the panel, when I was asked by Julian Kickbusch, Programme Director of the World Health Summit, to give advice to the young professionals in search of a career in global health, I said three things: “Be focused, be bold and have endless efforts to seek excellence.”

The meeting was indeed a moment to be cherished and I want to thank the InterAcademy Partnership for Health for giving me the wings to fly to Barcelona last July.



The programme started with the opening ceremony with distinguished guests and an opening speech by the chair of the network, Elena Marban, followed by a plenary session on career stories focused on entry points to the job. Julian Kickbusch; Elinor Thompson, director PRBB Intervals Programme, Barcelona Biomedical Research Park; Jesus Purroy, biomedical

entrepreneur and founder of Avida Biotech; Maria Jesus Pinanzo, assistant research professor at ISGlobal, Barcelona, were the panelists. The key statement that provoked me to think was the three tips for getting an ideal job: “Be proactive, work hard, and always act with integrity”. Kickbusch also said “Think again before you pursue a PhD to see if it aligns with your career objectives” which was one of the highlights of the panel, as being young professionals sometimes we try to go fast rather than thinking carefully before taking any major steps.

Among the three well designed workshops, I was able to join the ‘Ebola Crisis Simulation’ by Eduardo Celades, medical doctor at Health Systems & Innovation Cluster, WHO, and ‘Implementing Global Health Projects in the Field: The Ten Commandments’ by G. Martinez, international development consultant, and L. Cartanya, health expert in development and humanitarian action.

I was fascinated with the first workshop as it opened up my eyes on the lack of a global health system to tackle deadly outbreaks like Ebola. The second workshop was quite engaging & somehow connected with my current work responsibilities as I am running a project with global health interest in Bangladesh as the evaluation team leader cum researcher. After the workshop we were shaken up for an innovative networking activity. We were given a networking challenge, being asked to interact with at least nine participants and match something in common in a drawn matrix. I’m pleased to report that I was declared the winner!



This activity was followed by keynote lectures by Javier Martin and Jeffrey Lazarus. Martin revealed how to build up an early career in global health focused on FOCUSING itself!

“The more you focus, the better the result”, he explained succinctly.

I was personally very happy to see Jeffrey Lazarus’ slides as he showed images of Bangladesh and related success stories of icddr,b – my workstation – in preventing cholera and other water-borne diseases.

The last day of the event started with a well-attended quiz followed by project presentations by four participants including my own. My presentation was actually based on my diploma degree, which described the mental health service needs of the disaster-affected population of coastal Bangladesh. During the ensuing coffee break, some young students came to me to know more about the situation, policy structure and ongoing research activities. I tried to satisfy their thirst for knowledge by explaining the scenario with my personal experiences.

The next workshop, ‘Women in Global Health’, looked at research and programmes through a gender lens and was led by Asha Herten, research analyst, Centre on Global Health & Security. It certainly created a buzz among the participants by dragging them into the unequal world where gender discrimination can still be seen.

My contribution was that: “I cried when my paternity leave finished; I wanted to be with my son; a child needs his father too” – which was featured as a quote by the Global Health Network (@GlobalHealthNGN) in twitter and a lot of responses have come from different sources in favour of the statement. I stand for equity, and a lot of participants mentioned this statement during the concluding remarks of the event.



Another workshop on ‘Seeking Mentors in Global Health’ by Marianna Vitaloni, global health consultant, showed a new network which can be used by the young professionals in time of need and that can be adopted as one of the networking hubs in global health.

After lunch, it was my turn to be on stage to talk about my journey in global health. I spoke about my strengths, my mistakes, misconceptions related to global health in Bangladesh, and advice to the young audience to find their own ways to global health. All the panelists were all frank about mentioning our mistakes.

Donald Salami, PhD student, Global Public Health, Lisbon IHMT noted: “I believe that a mistake can turn into a miracle”, while Clara Pons, PhD student, Maternal, Child & Reproductive Health Initiative, ISGlobal, said: “My advice is – don’t be afraid”.

How productive these thoughts were!



I must say I was equally thrilled when I explained my experiences of the Young Physician Leaders programme of the InterAcademy Partnership for Health at the World Health Summit 2016. I explained how this programme has shaped my thoughts and helped me to be more focused to receive the prestigious commonwealth scholarship to study my desired subject in the UK. I was emotional to let them know how magically this wonderful platform has explored my inner potentialities, to frame them in a structure to change the world for better.



Although this event was ‘cozy’, with a limited audience, it was full of bold ideas that will have big impacts later on. I believe it was indeed an honor for me to be present at 4<sup>th</sup> NGGHF2017 as a panelist and speaker at this young age, and it will be remembered as the starting point after focusing towards a certain destination.

I want to thank icddr,b, the American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB) and the Public Health Foundation of Bangladesh for supporting me, and IAP for Health for giving me a travel and accommodation grant to help me attend this productive forum.

I would like to conclude with a remark from one of the panelists: “Be proactive, look for opportunities, and don’t wait them to find you”.

I firmly believe the time is ours now! This is the time for young scholars and researchers to look beyond borders to network for building a healthier world for all; what we need is a transparent intention to support all the positive initiatives towards achieving excellence in health care.

**Written by:**

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YPL Alumni 2016 [Young Physician Leaders Program of the IAP for Health at the WHS]

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