



# SCHOOL OF GLOBAL HEALTH

## WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY SIMULATION 2023 SUMMARY REPORT:

Building Solidarity for Worldwide Health Security

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## A MESSAGE FROM WHA SIMULATION COORDINATOR



Greetings from the World Health Assembly Simulation Coordinator! I am absolutely thrilled to share the exciting journey we embarked on, as detailed in this report. This special document brings to life the exhilarating adventure of planning, implementing, and evaluating the very first World Health Assembly Simulation (WHA SIM) at York University's School of Global Health. It's a celebration of our triumphs, a reflective account of our lessons learned, and a heartfelt testament to the overwhelming support we received from York University during this landmark event. Hold on tight as you dive into this vibrant tale of our ground-breaking endeavour!

The WHA SIM, modelled on the World Health Organization's supreme decision-making body, was designed to offer students a unique experiential learning initiative that extends well beyond classroom instruction. We sought to enhance the understanding and application of collaborative governance strategies and to tackle global challenges, such as those encapsulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It was also a ground-breaking experiential learning opportunity for students to apply global health knowledge and skills in a real-world setting. We believe that this initiative brought forth innovative and viable solutions and enriched our students' skills in research, collaboration, debate, diplomacy, and policy writing.

With vital support from York University and the Faculty of Health, we successfully executed this initiative through the provision of crucial funds and resources. Our unique experiential learning strategy blended practical problem-solving, theory application, and teamwork, showcasing York University's dedication to experiential education and global engagement. The WHA SIM initiative elevated York's international reputation and demonstrated how SDGs can foster global equity, promote health, and encourage cross-cultural collaboration.

The WHA SIM initiative bolstered the Faculty of Health's reputation for being a world leader in global health education, while at the same time strengthened York's standing for its holistic, interdisciplinary approach to educating students in tackling real-life challenges. Our undergraduate global health program, which was the first in Canada and one of the first worldwide, has taken another leap forward with this innovative, real-world, simulation-based experiential learning initiative.

This initiative stands as a testament to the remarkable capabilities of our students and the shared commitment of our community to enhance experiential learning and global health education. We hope that this report will serve as a valuable tool to learn from our experiences and inspire further advances in global health education.

**Dr. Ahmad Firas Khalid, MD, PhD, MMgmt, Med, GradCertPHM**  
Assistant Professor (Teaching Stream), School of Global Health  
Faculty Fellow, Dahdeleh Institute for Global Health Research

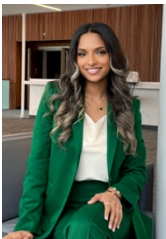
## STEERING COMMITTEE FOUNDING MEMBERS



Dr. **Ahmad Firas Khalid**, Sessional Assistant Professor in the School of Global Health (co-PI), is a medical doctor, a global health advocate, and a knowledge translation professional. He completed his medical degree at St. George's University School of Medicine and his PhD in Health Policy at McMaster University. Dr. Khalid worked as a Senior Research Manager at Evidence Aid working on creating a World Health Organization Knowledge Hub on emergency disasters research management and with the Pan American Health Organization on the creation of Resilient Health Systems collection to advise member states. Dr. Khalid's diverse academic and professional background brings substantial experience in the evaluation and implementation of real-time evidence use in humanitarian practice, strategic policymaking in civil society, and experiential learning and education. Dr. Khalid led the simulation design component and co-led the implementation and evaluation components of the initiative. He also acted as the primary supervisor for research and project assistants.



Dr. **A.M. Viens**, Inaugural Director of the School of Global Health and York Research Chair in Population Health Ethics and Law (co-PI), has degrees in philosophy and law from the Universities of Toronto, Oxford, and London. His research specialization focuses on population health (i.e., public health and global health) ethics and law. Dr. Viens brings significant experience in engaging policymakers, mobilizing interdisciplinary teams, and designing curricular programs and initiatives. Dr. Viens co-led the implementation and evaluation components of the initiative. He also acted as a secondary supervisor for research and project assistants.



Ms. **Megan Ann George**, Research Coordinator, is a Biomedical Science BSc Honours recent graduate from York University. She is experienced in research work and management tasks working with Dr. Khalid. She has experience conducting research in the Rehan Lab at York University, as well where she examined the effects of urbanization on bee populations. Megan assisted in developing the research instruments (e.g., surveys and interview questions) and with the development and running of the proof-of-concept WHA SIM. Furthermore, Megan will be pursuing her Master of Science at the Institute of Medical Sciences in the Temerty Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto in the Fall, where she will begin conducting clinical research focused on oncology.



Ms. **Sameen Ali**, Project Assistant, is a Biology BSc Honours student at York University. She has experience in professional content writing at the Antarctic Institute of Canada, Aisha Comfortable Co-living, scientific writing at EduTutor, and research assistant in a biology laboratory at York University. Sameen has published several books and articles through the Golden Meteorite Press. Sameen worked with the team on developing the marketing campaign for the proof-of-concept WHA SIM.

### 2023 WHA SIMULATION AT A GLANCE

#### Purpose of the WHA SIM

The World Health Organization (WHO) World Health Assembly (WHA) simulation (WHA SIM) was a simulation-based experiential learning initiative modeled after the WHO's supreme decision-making body. WHA SIM aimed to enhance knowledge and skills regarding collaborative governance approaches that addressed multi-sectoral and multi-jurisdictional global challenges, akin to those encapsulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It facilitated the generation and testing of innovative and feasible solutions centered around the simulation theme, expressed through research briefs, debates, and formal resolutions. The initiative's intent was to employ prior WHA SIM methodologies and experiential learning research to bolster the WHA SIM platform and simulation-based resources, enabling students to delve into global health governance, apply their global health insights in a real-world context, and refine their proficiency in research, collaboration, debate, diplomacy, and policy composition.

#### Priority Area Contributions

The WHA SIM advanced **experiential education (EE)** at York beyond the classroom by pioneering a novel EE strategy that (i) combined the opportunity to explore and analyze real-world problems with (ii) the application of theory and skills to a concrete experience, resulting in (iii) the production of outputs that were collaborative and action oriented. The WHA SIM furthered internalization by demonstrating York's commitment to imparting the significance of global engagement in effecting change within a globalized world. The global health setting also provided concrete examples of how SDGs, as unifying goals, could make our world more equitable and just by ensuring the conditions necessary for everyone's health through coordinative mechanisms that fostered global fluencies and collaboration in cross-cultural contexts.

#### Enhancement of Institutional Reputation

The WHA SIM enhances the Faculty of Health's reputation for being a **world leader in global health education**. It can also further strengthen York's reputation for nurturing more holistic, silo-breaking, and interdisciplinary approaches to prepare students to solve real-life challenges. York's undergraduate global health program was the first in Canada and one of the first in the world to offer a free-standing undergraduate global health degree. Its reputation and record of educating the next generation of global health leaders will be further advanced by the incorporation of an innovative real-world simulation-based experiential learning initiative.

#### WHA SIM Advancement to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Global health provides an ideal context in which to make tangible the local relevance of global goals, and the transformative change possible when focusing on the structural drivers studied within the sciences, social sciences, and the humanities. The multi-disciplinary, multi-jurisdictional, and multi-sectoral nature of the SDGs reinforces the need to **think and work across disciplinary, geographic, and cultural boundaries** to address the most pressing problems facing society. Through the incorporation of the SDGs within the WHA SIM, it sought to expand **critical**

**problem-solving approaches** to complex issues as a key learning outcome built upon the knowledge and skills developed within degree programs.

**SDGs are central to global health; social** (education, food security), **economic** (poverty, infrastructure), **environmental** (climate change, water), and **political** (inequality, inclusion) **determinants of health** are all key areas within the global health curriculum. It also underscores the wider relevance of global health for students who may not view their discipline as having a connection to health or its determinants.



**GOAL 3.** Enhancing awareness, knowledge, and action **towards promoting health and well-being** at the local, national, and international levels through the selection of effective and equitable policies focused on healthcare, public health, and the wider determinants of health.



**GOAL 4.** Increasing student access to experiences of working within the WHO by removing traditional financial barriers by providing a Canadian-based simulated experience. This advances the goal of ensuring **inclusive and equitable quality educational opportunities**. Traditionally, only students with high-income backgrounds could afford to travel and live in Geneva to access the WHO, but WHA SIM provides a comparable learning experience to all students.



**GOAL 16.** Enhancing awareness of the need for **strong institutions** (such as the WHO) demonstrates the role of organizations in addressing structural/systemic considerations in solving complex issues. Strong institutions need members educated and experienced in interdisciplinary approaches involving collaboration and partnering with people from Global South and North. WHA SIM demonstrates, with participants from the diverse and international student community at York, the role of inclusive societies in building effective, equitable, and accountable institutions.



**GOAL 17.** Enhancing awareness of **partnerships** reinforces how ambitious, yet attainable goals can be used as a coordinative partnership mechanism. WHA SIM demonstrates how models of collective governance and decision-making can be used as a means of implementing and revitalizing global partnerships – including how we can reimagine current partnership approaches in light of continued power imbalances and progress toward decolonization.

**Figure 1.** Examples of how the WHA SIM can be used to advance SDGs.

## WHA SIM 2023 Theme

### **Building Global Solidarity for Worldwide Health Security (infographic available in Appendix I):**

The theme "Building Global Solidarity for Worldwide Health Security" addressed health emergencies, including pandemics, with a focus on health and humanitarian settings. Strategies included creating a workforce dedicated to global health emergencies, ensuring all individuals have access to quality public health and medical assistance, and forming a BioBank to share pathogen materials and clinical samples, thereby speeding up the creation of safe vaccines and medications.

Emerging viral diseases like COVID-19 and Ebola have shown that many countries are unprepared to respond effectively. Implementing the core capacities of the WHO's International Health Regulations (2005) could improve global preparedness and reduce disease-related morbidity and mortality rates. A relevant example of a similar theme in action is the Model WHO Simulation Week conducted in London UK in 2021, which focused on pandemic preparedness, response, and recovery. Subtopics included the One Health approach (recognizing the interconnectedness of people, animals, plants, and their shared environment), access to vaccines and medications, health communication to manage misinformation (infodemics), and healthcare workforce wellbeing.

In conclusion, this theme is vital and timely, aiming to enhance worldwide health security through global solidarity. As the recent pandemic has impacted the entire world, it was crucial to tackle these topics for improved future preparedness and response.

## WHA SIM Three-Day Structure

The first day was a virtual day where delegates were introduced to the format of the WHA SIM, learned how to write position papers, and the principles of effective debating. The two-day, in-person event commencing on May 1st and held at York University Second Student Centre began with registration followed by an Opening Ceremony starting with opening remarks by President Rhonda Lenton. This was followed by a panel session on the theme, "Building Global Solidarity for Worldwide Health Security", with esteemed panel members Dr. James Orbinski, Dr. David Peters, Dr. Krishana Sankar, and Dr. A.M. Viens speaking at this session.

After a brief social break, the Opening Plenary took place with Roll Call and Opening Statements. Lunch followed, succeeded by Committee Sessions on the topics "Public Health Emergencies: Preparedness and Response" (Committee A), "Strengthening Infodemic Management" (Committee B), and "Universal Health Coverage: Reorienting Health Systems to Primary Health Care" (Committee C), each with dedicated technical experts in attendance providing guidance and expert advice. The first day also included side events and Committee sessions dedicated to drafting position papers.

On the second day, delegates resumed with continued Committee sessions, where the focus shifted to drafting resolutions on the aforementioned topics. A critical segment of the day was the draft resolutions approval process, which underscored the importance of collaborative decision-making. In addition, Anthony Morgan (host of the CBC's *The Nature of Things*) captivated the audience with an engaging segment titled 'How to Have Polarizing Conversations,' encouraging students to fearlessly express their diverse opinions on a wide range of thought-provoking topics. Subsequently, a Global Health Career Talks Panel was held after lunch, followed by two parts of a Plenary session, punctuated by a social break. The event concluded with a Closing Ceremony with closing remarks by Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (Director General of the WHO) and Dr. Peter Singer (Special Advisor to Dr. Tedros). These sessions offered a platform for global health dialogue, exchange of innovative ideas, and collaborative resolution-making, pivotal in steering worldwide health security. *A copy of the agenda is available in Appendix II.*

This simulation offered a myriad of benefits to students, serving as a valuable co-curricular opportunity for them to apply global knowledge and skills in a real-world setting. Notably, it significantly enhanced their communication skills, leadership abilities, and capacity to tackle complex health issues. In terms of communication skills, the simulation's interactive structure encouraged meaningful exchanges between students, panelists, and technical experts. Through engaging in the drafting and debating of position papers and resolutions, students honed their written and verbal communication skills. Moreover, the platform provided a conducive environment for participating in global health dialogues and interacting with esteemed experts, fostering improved listening, and understanding skills.

Committee sessions were led by DIAS members (Diplomatic and International Affairs Society). DIAS members included a Chair, Vice-Chair, and a Secretariat who were students who underwent training in parliamentary procedures to ensure an authentic simulation of the World Health Assembly across all three topics: "Public Health Emergencies: Preparedness and Response", "Strengthening Infodemic Management", and "Universal Health Coverage: Reorienting Health Systems to Primary Health Care". Throughout the simulation, the DIAS exhibited exemplary leadership and made significant contributions, marked by their exceptional diplomacy and remarkable ability to foster consensus among diverse stakeholders. Their ability to navigate complex discussions and facilitate productive dialogue showcased their remarkable leadership capabilities and demonstrated their potential to become influential figures in the field of global health.

The drafting process of position papers prior to the WHA SIM played a vital role in facilitating meaningful discussions and enhancing students' overall Committee session experience. Through extensive research, analysis, and collaboration, students formulated comprehensive policy recommendations, critically assessed existing policies, and proposed innovative solutions. This process fostered a sense of ownership and accountability as students became intimately familiar with the issues, enabling them to confidently articulate viewpoints, engage in substantive debates, and contribute constructively to the deliberations.



## WHA SIM AWARDS

At the culmination of the two-day simulation, the exceptional efforts of participants in crafting position papers, collaborative action, and delegate performance were recognized and celebrated through awards presented to individuals who demonstrated outstanding submissions in each Committee, as evaluated by the DIAS. A total of nine student awards were granted for the 2023 GH WHA SIM.

**AWARD 1 BEST POSITION PAPER:** The Best Position Paper award is awarded to participants who exhibit a remarkable ability to present their ideas with clarity and organization, effectively support their viewpoints through evidence-based arguments, offer inventive solutions, demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of key challenges, approach the issue diplomatically, and maintain professional language and style throughout their paper.

The following were the winners of the **2023 GH WHA SIM Best Position Paper Award:**

1. Mahakpriti Kaur
2. Iman Nazir
3. Patricia Philip

**AWARD 2 BEST COLLABORATOR:** The Best Collaborator Award honours individuals who demonstrate exceptional teamwork, communication, and inclusiveness. Recipients actively contribute to group discussions, facilitate consensus-building, and foster a positive environment, enhancing the overall simulation experience.

The following were the winners of the **2023 GH WHA SIM Best Collaborator Award:**

1. Gabriel Fezza
2. Mirianna Georges
3. Essette Tesfaye

**AWARD 3 BEST DELEGATE:** The Best Delegate recognizes individuals who exhibit exceptional leadership, diplomacy, and expertise throughout the simulation. This award is presented to participants who demonstrate outstanding knowledge of global health issues, effectively advocate for their assigned country's position, and actively engage in fruitful discussions. The recipient of this award showcases strong critical thinking skills, persuasive communication abilities, and the ability to find innovative solutions to complex global health challenges.

The following were the winners of the **2023 GH WHA SIM Best Delegate Award:**

1. Jason Ho
2. Dimitri Smith
3. Aaranee Sritharan



Picture 1. Winners of the awards for Committee B along with their DIAS members and WHA SIM organizers.

## WHA SIM Guest Speakers

The WHA SIM at York University was enriched by a diverse and esteemed group of guest speakers who played pivotal roles in shaping the discussions and outcomes of the event. The inclusion of such experts, along with other distinguished professionals in fields like mental health, health informatics, and policy, ensured that the simulations were grounded in evidence-based practices and fostered holistic solutions to global health challenges. Their presence sparked critical thinking and dialogue, contributing to a well-rounded and insightful learning experience for all participants.

Summary of guest speakers at the WHA SIM:

1. **Dr. A.M. Viens:** Dr. Viens brought extensive expertise in global health policy and ethics, providing valuable insights into the ethical considerations and challenges faced in the implementation of effective health strategies.
2. **Dr. David Etkin:** As an expert in disaster and emergency management, Dr. Etkin enriched the discussions with his knowledge of how to address health crises and improve disaster preparedness in the face of various challenges.



## 2023 WHA SIMULATION

3. **Dr. James Orbinski:** Dr. Orbinski, a renowned humanitarian and physician, shared his experiences and expertise in delivering healthcare in conflict zones and underserved areas, inspiring innovative approaches to healthcare delivery.
4. **Dr. David Peters:** With a focus on health systems and policy, Dr. Peters contributed valuable perspectives on strengthening healthcare infrastructures and improving health outcomes through evidence-based policy decisions.
5. **Dr. Krishana Sankar:** Dr. Sankar's expertise in public health and epidemiology enriched the simulations with evidence-based approaches to disease prevention, outbreak management, and promoting population health.
6. **Anthony Morgan:** Anthony Morgan is an award-winning science communicator, Ph.D. researcher, start-up founder, and game designer. He hosts TV programs like CBC's The Nature of Things. With nearly 20 years of experience, he aims to revolutionize how people perceive and discuss science.
7. **Dr. Godfred Boateng:** Dr. Boateng is an expert in the design and application of culturally relevant scalable methodologies to study the multidimensional factors and processes that shape health and health equity across spatial scales (household, community, institutional, national) and how they can be promoted and sustained.
8. **Dr. Mathieu Poirier:** Dr. Poirier brought his expertise in evaluating international law to developing health equity metrics and generating policy-relevant research on socially and politically determined inequities in health.
9. **Dr. Farah Ahmad:** Dr. Ahmad is a health service researcher with a focus on primary care settings, psychosocial health, vulnerable communities, and eHealth innovations.
10. **Gurneet Bhela:** Gurneet Bhela's insights as a healthcare advocate contributed to the discussions around patient-centered care, community engagement, and empowerment in health initiatives.
11. **Devanshi Shah:** Devanshi Shah's expertise in health communication was valuable in fostering effective communication strategies to disseminate health information and engage diverse populations.
12. **Maame De-Heer:** Maame De-Heer, with her background in health policy, emphasized the importance of policy coherence and cross-sectoral collaboration in achieving global health goals.
13. **Kathleen Mae Nebre:** Kathleen Mae Nebre's expertise in health education enhanced the understanding of effective health promotion and disease prevention strategies.

14. **Dr. Peter Singer:** Dr. Singer's contributions spanned various health-related disciplines, including global health leadership and innovation, inspiring participants to think creatively in addressing complex health challenges.
15. **Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus:** As the Director-General of the World Health Organization, Dr. Tedros provided a unique perspective on global health priorities, challenges, and opportunities, inspiring participants to align their efforts with the global health agenda.

Overall, the guest speakers participating in the WHA SIM enriched the discussions with diverse perspectives, expertise, and experiences, which empowered participants to critically analyze and formulate innovative solutions to pressing global health issues. Their contributions amplified the value and impact of the simulations, fostering a collaborative and insightful learning environment for all attendees.

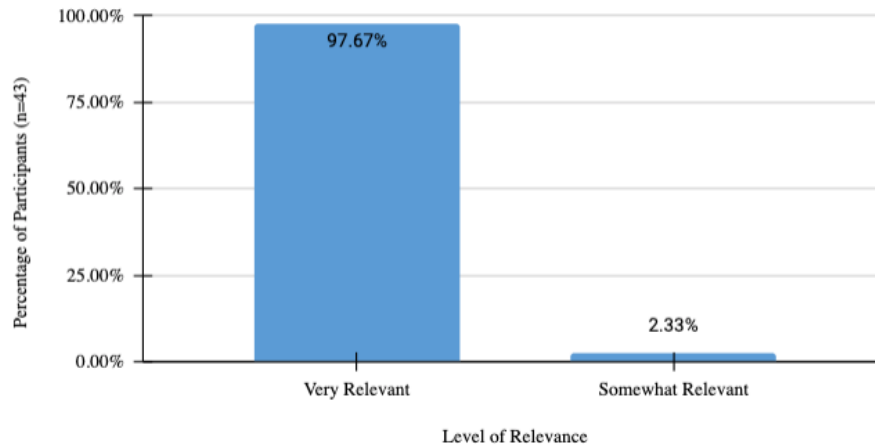
### WHA SIM Student Feedback

In our quest to gain deeper insights into the experiential learning experience and potential benefits derived from the WHA SIM, we conducted an extensive feedback survey immediately following the simulation and several post-simulation one-on-one interviews. These surveys and interviews provided us with invaluable perspectives and a more comprehensive understanding of the impact the simulation had on our participants and their learning. Through this approach, we were able to identify common themes that repeatedly emerged during the surveys and interviews. These prominent themes, which captured the essence of our attendees' experiences, are reported below:

#### RELEVANCE OF TOPICS TO STUDENTS' INTERESTS

- **97% of participants** expressed a strong belief in the relevance of the topics covered during the simulation to their current and future fields of education, interests, and work opportunities. The survey data underscores the simulation's ability to align with the evolving needs of our students, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary skills and insights to thrive in their chosen paths.

## 2023 WHA SIMULATION



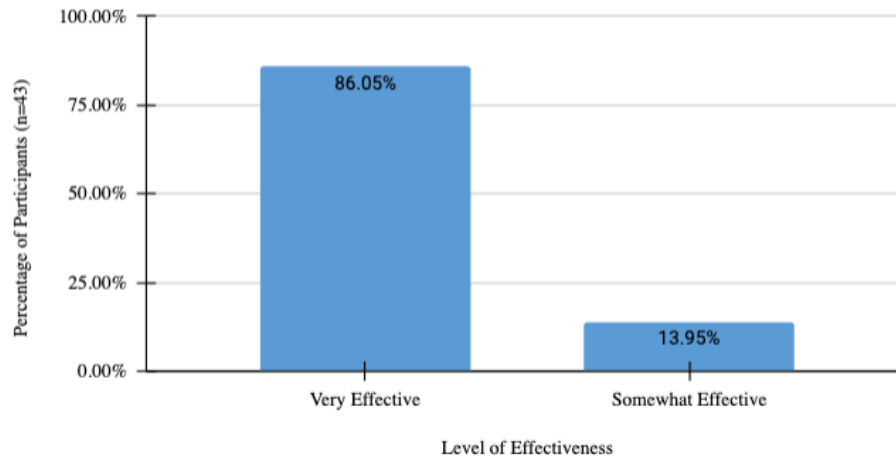
**Figure 2.** Relevance of topics to current or future fields of education, interests, and work opportunities.

### ***Problem-solving skills***

- The simulation aided students in honing their problem-solving abilities. The Committee sessions and the process of drafting resolutions forced students to grapple with complex health issues. They were encouraged to analyze these intricate challenges, consider multiple perspectives, and develop comprehensive and realistic solutions. This exposure to real-world health issues, and the experience of crafting and negotiating viable resolutions, sharpened students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are invaluable for future roles in the health sector. As one participant aptly expressed, "[...] Like I kind of feel like I have a better idea of like what goes into actually solving the problem rather than just like giving the solution," highlighting how the WHA SIM contributed to their improved problem-solving capabilities.

## SIMULATION'S IMPACT: UNVEILING GLOBAL HEALTH ISSUES & CHALLENGES

- **86% of participants** deemed the simulation to be “very effective” in highlighting key issues and challenges in global health. This underscores the simulation’s invaluable role in providing a comprehensive understanding of the complex landscape of global health. By immersing our students in a simulated environment that mirrors real-world scenarios, the simulation successfully enhances the necessary knowledge and awareness to tackle pressing global health challenges head-on.



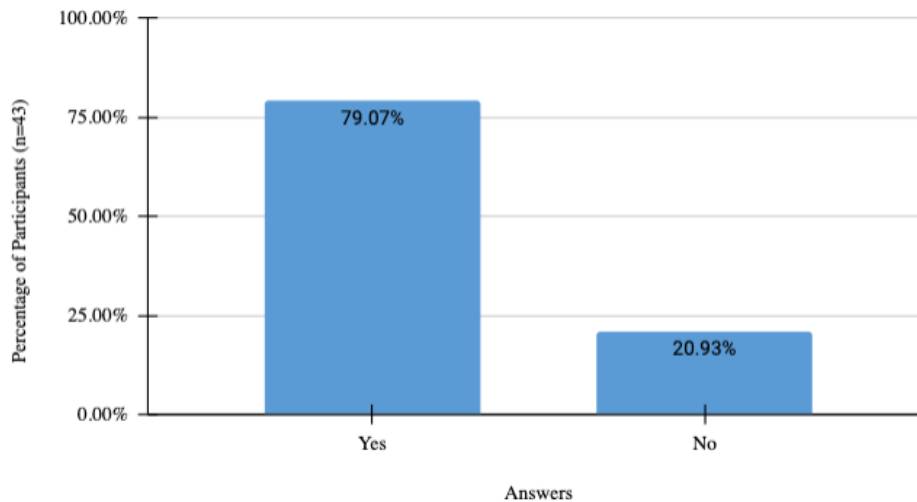
**Figure 3.** Effectiveness in highlighting key issues and challenges in global health.

### *Exposure*

- The simulation unveiled complex global health issues and challenges by providing a practical context for learning. As one student expressed, "What I wanted to achieve, one was like we learn about the WHA and all these other leadership decisions making in groups in classes. And it's very different learning about them in theory as opposed to the simulation and having to make decisions in their position." The simulation experience allowed the students to go beyond theoretical knowledge and actively engage in the decision-making processes of the WHA. By assuming the roles of decision-makers, they were able to better comprehend the intricacies of how topics are discussed, proposals are made, and approvals are obtained within the World Health Assembly. As another student stated, "The simulation experience provided a practical context that allowed us to better comprehend the intricacies of how topics were discussed and how proposals were made and approved in the WHA, which although learned within the classroom, was better learned in the simulation." Students gained firsthand experience of the challenges faced in addressing global health issues. They learned about the complexities involved in decision-making, the various perspectives that need to be considered, and the negotiation skills required to reach a consensus.

## CAREER PREPAREDNESS

- **79% of participants** expressed that this simulation experience had indeed made them feel better equipped for their future career opportunities.



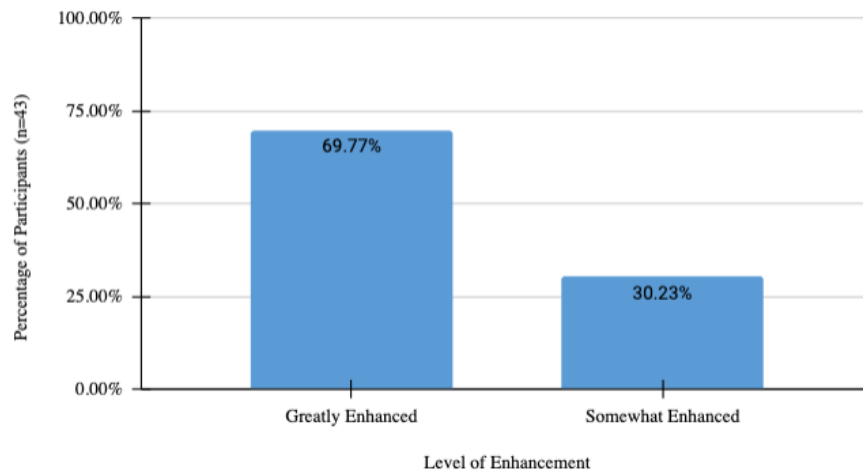
**Figure 4.** Feeling better prepared for careers in global health, health policy, public health, and health administration.

## Communication

- Simulation effectively prepares students for future careers by enhancing their communication skills and confidence. As one student highlighted, "...there are limited opportunities for live-action discussions in the field of global health, where one must provide on-the-spot responses. I think throughout my time in global health, maybe we've had one debate. We definitely had one debate, but I don't recall anything other than that where we had to like to be ready to have on-the-spot responses to things and kind of develop the ability to explain our thinking without having time to go back and edit and proofread." The simulation provided a more accurate representation of the real-world challenges faced by leaders in global health, enabling students to develop their ability to communicate effectively under pressure. By engaging in dynamic discussions and simulated collaborative exercises, students gained the confidence and skills necessary to thrive in their future careers in global health.

## ENHANCED REAL-WORLD APPLICATION OF LEARNING

- 70% of respondents** affirmed that this experience had a tangible impact on their capacity to translate knowledge into practical application. This highlights the simulation's effectiveness in bridging the gap between theory and real-life scenarios, equipping students with the skills, and confidence needed to tackle challenges in a practical context. By immersing participants in a simulated environment mirroring real-world complexities, the simulation fosters a deep understanding of how concepts and principles manifest in practical situations.



**Figure 5.** Enhanced ability to apply learning in real-world settings.

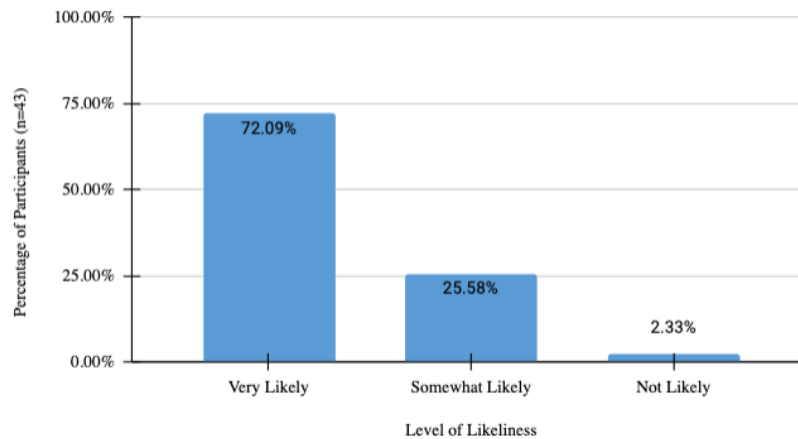
### *Learning Through Application*

- The simulation significantly enhanced students' ability to apply their learning in real-world settings. As one student emphasized, "I learn more from the application, so I think for me, a lot of the concepts that I learned in class were solidified." The simulation provided a practical context for students to understand the inner workings of the WHO's WHA. The student noted, "I didn't really understand how the structure of the WHA occurred..." By actively participating in the simulation, students gained firsthand experience and insights into the processes involved in proposing and gaining approval for resolutions. The student further highlighted the value of experiential learning, stating, "That entire process, if I was in a classroom and it was explained to me, I wouldn't really understand it.". This experiential approach bridged the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, enhancing their understanding of the processes and dynamics involved in global health governance.



## FUTURE GH WHA SIM ATTENDANCE LIKELIHOOD

- **98% of respondents** expressed a desire to attend future simulations of this nature. This reflects the simulation’s impact in delivering a valuable and engaging experience that resonates with students’ interests and aspirations in the field of global health. The support for attending future WHA SIMs reinforces their relevance as a dynamic platform for networking, knowledge-sharing, communication, building confidence, improving time management, and fostering a community of passionate individuals dedicated to improving global health outcomes.



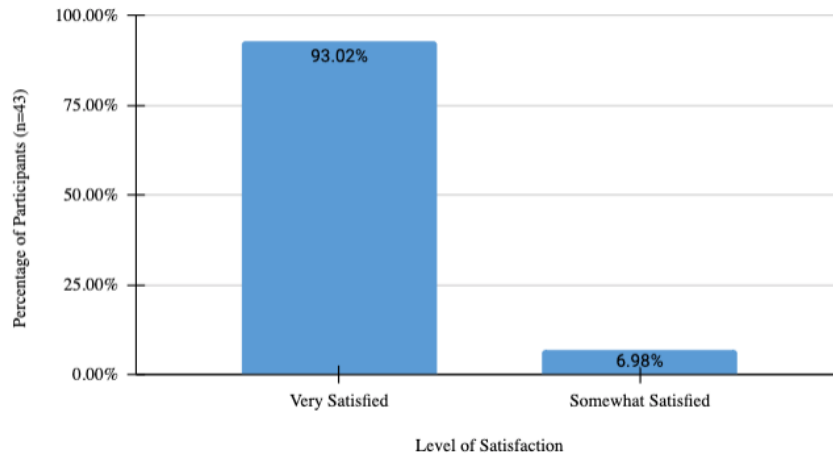
**Figure 6.** Likelihood to attend future global health WHA SIMs.

### *Supportive Environment*

- As one student expressed, “the simulation provided a supportive and conducive environment for students to learn and problem-solve effectively. It felt like a supportive atmosphere that encouraged learning and problem-solving.” Another student stated, “the simulation offered a less pressured setting compared to a traditional classroom, making it easier for students to engage and apply their knowledge. The simulation fostered a sense of community within the Global Health body at York, providing an excellent opportunity to practice communication, interpersonal skills, public speaking, and to feel comfortable in such an environment.” The positive experience and nurturing environment created a desire among students to return for future simulations, highlighting the value they found in participating and the benefits they gained from the experience.

## SATISFACTION WITH OPENING CEREMONY SPEAKERS

- **93%** of respondents expressed satisfaction with the speakers, indicating their high level of insight and knowledge on various subtopics. The speakers' expertise played a pivotal role in enriching participants' understanding and setting the stage for engaging debates and idea generation during committee sessions.



**Figure 7.** Satisfaction with opening ceremony speakers.

## Networking

- The WHA SIM served as an exceptional networking opportunity for students, enabling them to step out of their comfort zones and connect with fellow participants, guest speakers, professors, and professional observers (e.g., partners from the Canadian Red Cross). As one student stated, “I think one of the things that I wasn't immediately thinking about, but I realized was valuable afterwards was getting to meet people in the field and then getting to connect and network with, you know, global health professionals.” The interviews revealed how the simulation experience facilitated the development of valuable networking skills and enhanced their ability to engage in professional conversations. Participants acknowledged the importance of learning how to approach and connect with others outside their immediate circles, including esteemed guest speakers. This exposure enabled them to expand their network and build relationships that could be beneficial in their future endeavours.

WHA SIM Impacts

# 4 WHA SIM Impacts

## 1 Impacts for York

Advance the University  
Academic Plan (2020-25)

- 21st century learning
- Advancing global engagement
- Working in partnership
- Meeting key **SMA3 metrics**
  - Experiential learning
  - Skills and competencies
  - Institutional strength/focus



## 2 Embedding within Faculty of Health Priorities

Supports the Integrated  
Resource Plan (2022-23)

- Integrating experiential learning
- Developing co-curricular programming
- Facilitate student learning opportunities globally
- Opportunities for students to acquire new skills
- Gather information on new tools that capture SDG information

### 3 Furthering of York's Teaching and Learning Priorities

#### Simulation-Based Learning Benefits

- Can be used across multiple disciplines
- Generates awareness of complex issues and improves skills
- Prepares students for dealing with, collective action problems, complex decision-making, negotiation, technical training, collaboration
- Assists in teaching abstract concepts that may be hard to grasp in a classroom setting



### 4 Impacts for York Students

#### Improves Graduate Employability

- Enhancement of skills required in the workforce
  - Writing Skills
  - Communication Skills
  - Leadership Skills
  - Team-Building Skills
  - Problem-Solving Skills
- Knowledge of how to create and sustain impact at the global level

## LESSONS LEARNED

**CLEAR OBJECTIVES:** Clearly define the objectives of the simulation and communicate them among the organizing team to prevent any potential roadblocks. Understanding what we aim to achieve through the simulation, such as fostering knowledge, skills, and networking opportunities for participants. This will allow efficient planning of the varying components involved and further ensure the success of the simulation.

**EARLY PLANNING AND COORDINATION:** Plan well in advance to allow sufficient time for logistics, participant recruitment, and securing necessary resources. Ensure effective coordination among team members and stakeholders, such as faculty advisors, student organizations, and potential guest speakers to avoid miscommunication.

**ENGAGE KEY STAKEHOLDERS:** Involve relevant stakeholders, such as faculty members, subject matter experts, and representatives from student organizations and global health organizations, to gather input, garner support, and maximize the expertise available for organizing the simulation.

**BUDGET MANAGEMENT:** Develop a realistic budget and allocate resources wisely. Seek sponsorships, grants, or funding opportunities well in advance to support the organization and running of the experiential learning initiative. Monitor expenses to keep track of spending.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT AND COMMUNICATION:** Develop a targeted recruitment strategy to attract a diverse and engaged group of participants. Clearly communicate the purpose, format, and expectations of the simulation to potential attendees. Possibly engage students from other faculties at York to gain a diverse perspective during Committee sessions.

**FACILITATION AND MODERATION:** Continue to recruit skilled facilitators and moderators who can guide participants through the simulation, manage discussions, and maintain a respectful and inclusive environment.

**SIMULATION SCENARIO DESIGN:** Continue to proactively develop a compelling and lifelike simulation scenario that mirrors contemporary global health challenges. By exposing attendees to the simulation's purpose and mechanics, we can foster a welcoming environment, minimize nerves, and facilitate active participation.

**INCREASED DURATION OF SIMULATION:** To mitigate burnout and enhance participant readiness, it is recommended to extend the duration of the simulation from two days to three days in person. This extension allows for an additional day dedicated to training, enabling students to familiarize themselves with the simulation dynamics and expectations. This is especially

beneficial since many participants may enter the experience with limited prior knowledge. By allocating sufficient time for training and preparation, students can confidently engage in the subsequent days of the simulation, maximizing their learning outcomes and overall experience.

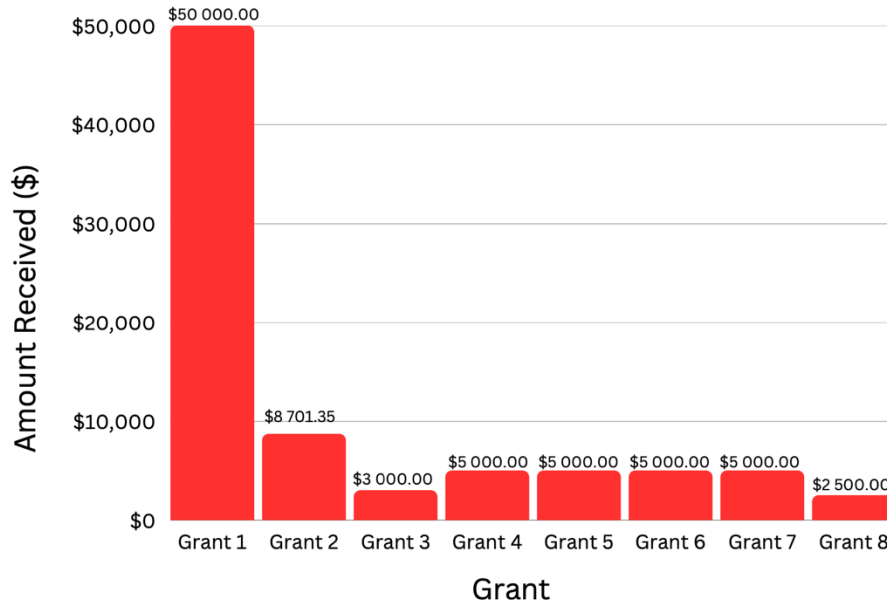
**EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK:** Develop a robust evaluation framework to assess the simulation's success in achieving its objectives. Prioritize the release of this evaluation framework a few days before the simulation concludes to allow participants ample time to provide thoughtful responses. By avoiding the last-minute rush when attendees may be eager to return home, we can enhance the accuracy and quality of the survey results. Gather feedback from participants, facilitators, and other stakeholders through surveys, focus group discussions, or individual interviews. This comprehensive feedback will help identify areas of improvement and valuable lessons learned to enhance future iterations of the event.

## FUTURE PLANS

Securing funding for this proof-of-concept WHA SIM was an essential first step in its development and implementation. We diligently submitted several funding applications to a variety of sources to support this innovative initiative. We have subsequently secured funding to enhance and expand the WHA SIM platform over the next two years through (i) design and implementation of **two additional WHA SIMs**, (ii) **mixed methods studies** to evaluate different design and implementation approaches to this simulation-based experiential learning platform, (iii) development of **new course proposal and materials** that incorporate a WHA SIM, and (iv) the development, testing, revision, validation, and dissemination of WHA SIM **platform guidance, tools, and materials** that will be shared free of cost to other universities and training centres.

In order to integrate the WHA SIM as the premier co-curricular experiential learning activity in the School of Global Health and Faculty of Health, we need sustainable funding and resources to ensure its success. This will ensure we can continually refine the program and platform, integrate new ideas and improvements, provide the most valuable and impactful learning experience for our students, and continue to expand wider access (domestically, including to high school students, and internationally via Globally Networked Learning). Our funding partners play a key role in driving global health education and training forward and shaping the next generation of global health leaders. Their contributions are not only an investment in the initiative but in the future of global health and the betterment of our world.

## Summary of Grants Received



### LEGEND

- Grant 1** - AIF 2023-2024
- Grant 2** - Nathanson Centre on Transnational Human Rights, Crime and Security at Osgoode Hall Law School
- Grant 3** - York University Minor Research Grant
- Grant 4** - York University Small Research Grant
- Grant 5** - YUFA Teaching & Learning Development Grant
- Grant 6** - York University Funds for Innovation in Teaching (FIT)
- Grant 7** - The Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research 2023 Seed Grants for Critical Social Science Perspectives in Global Health Research
- Grant 8** - York International

**Figure 8.** Grant and institutional funding received in 2022-23 to support the design, implementation, and evaluation of the WHA SIM Platform.

### In-Kind Contributions Received:

- **School of Global Health:** Printing - \$125.85
- **Faculty of Health’s Communications and Planning Team:** Videography - \$3,615.05

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the individuals who contributed to the success of the 2023 WHA SIM. We extend our deepest appreciation to the esteemed guest speakers, including President Rhonda Lenton, Dr. A.M. Viens, Dr. David Etkin, Dr. James Orbinski, Dr. David Peters, Dr. Krishana Sankar, Anthony Morgan, Dr. Godfred Boateng, Dr. Mathieu Poirier, Dr. Farah Ahmad, Brittany Maguire, Gurneet Bhela, Devanshi Shah, Maame De-Heer, Kathleen Mae Nebre, and Dr. Peter Singer.

We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus for his gracious acknowledgement and video address during the WHA SIM. In his inspiring speech, Dr. Tedros recognized the exceptional contributions and unwavering dedication of Dr. Ahmad Firas Khalid and Dr. A.M. Viens. Their innovative efforts, remarkable creativity, and unwavering commitment to the field of global health have not gone unnoticed. Dr. Tedros' recognition serves as a testament to the significant potential of the WHA SIM, reaffirming the invaluable role the School of Global Health can have on the world's stage educating the next generation of global health leaders.

We would also like to acknowledge the generous support provided by the Faculty of Health for the WHA SIM Coordinator role teaching release. The design, organization, logistics, and management of the WHA SIM make it an extremely time intensive pedagogical activity, for which such a release is necessary. We are grateful for the funding received by the following grants and entities at York, which made this event possible: The Nathanson Centre on Transnational Human Rights, Crime and Security at Osgoode Hall Law School, York University Small Research Grant, York University Minor Research Grant, YUFA Teaching & Learning Development Grant, York University Funds for Innovation in Teaching (FIT), and the Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research 2023 Seed Grant for Critical Social Science Perspectives in Global Health Research.

Special thanks to Cheryl Corson (Design & Production Officer, Faculty of Health) for photography, Frank Clarke (Director of Director of Communications & Planning, Faculty of Health), Grant McNair (Senior Media Operations Technician) for videography, and YUSC Second Student Centre for hosting the event. We would like to extend our appreciation to Yulia Belvina for her exceptional organization and planning related to the food, venue, and logistics of the simulation.

We are immensely grateful to all the participants for their active engagement and valuable contributions throughout the event. Their presence and involvement were instrumental in creating a dynamic and enriching experience.

Furthermore, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to Megan George for her invaluable contributions to the organization and planning of the simulation. Megan played a pivotal role in finalizing the theme for this year's WHA SIM, expertly facilitated the proceedings, served as the





## 2023 WHA SIMULATION

event's Master of Ceremonies, and meticulously attended to all the fine details that ensured its success. Her dedication and efforts greatly enhanced the overall experience for all participants. In addition, we express our deepest gratitude to Sameen Ali for her exceptional work in crafting a captivating promotional video, cultivating a robust social media presence, and designing an impressive website. Sameen's creative vision and technical expertise were instrumental in generating excitement and engagement, effectively reaching a wide audience, and ensuring a seamless online experience for all participants.

In addition, we wholeheartedly recognize the tireless dedication of Dr. Ahmad Firas Khalid for his visionary design and impeccable execution of this concept. His unwavering commitment and meticulous attention to detail were instrumental in bringing the simulation to life and creating a truly immersive and impactful experience for all participants. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to Dr. A.M. Viens for his invaluable support and guidance throughout the entire process, which greatly contributed to the success and significance of the event.

Lastly, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to the new project assistants, Clarissa Eggen, Aarane Sritharan, and Faiza Wali, who have joined us for the Summer of 2023. Their contributions, alongside the Research Coordinator, Megan George, will be dedicated to analyzing the outcomes of the WHA SIM 2023, conducting surveys, facilitating, and analyzing post-simulation interviews with participants. This work will be pivotal in generating insightful findings and crafting a manuscript that captures the effectiveness of this immersive and experiential learning experience.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I – Guest Speakers Biographies



**Dr. Farah Ahmad - Technical Expert – Committee C: Universal Healthcare Coverage**

Dr. Farah Ahmad is an Associate Professor in the School of Health Policy and Management where she is a health service researcher with a focus on primary care settings, psychosocial health, vulnerable communities, and eHealth innovations. Professor Ahmad says, “Fostering equitable access to healthcare through applied research, teaching and service is my philosophy”. She uses mixed-method research designs which range from randomized controlled trials to in-depth interviews, focus groups and concept mapping. She has taught courses in health informatics, eHealth, health promotion, migration and health and research methods.



**Dr. Godfred Boateng - Technical Expert – Committee A: Pandemic Preparedness**

Dr. Godfred Boateng is an Assistant Professor at York University's School of Global Health and Canada Research Chair in Global Health and Humanitarianism. His research focuses on resource insecurity, health, and sustainable livelihoods, aging and health, health systems, and health equity. Dr. Boateng's work has been critical in understanding the social and structural determinants of health in vulnerable populations. He is also an editor and reviewer for various journals.



**Dr. David Etkin - Opening Plenary Speaker**

David Etkin is a Professor of Disaster and Emergency Management at York University. Previously, he worked for Environment Canada from 1977-2005. During his career, he has been a weather forecaster in Nova Scotia and Ontario, taught meteorology to new forecasters, and done applied research in the Arctic and Industrial Climatology Divisions of the Canadian Climate Centre. He has contributed to several national and international natural hazard projects including the 2nd U.S. national assessment of natural hazards, the IPCC, was Principal Investigator of the Canadian National Assessment of Natural Hazards and is Past President of the Canadian Risk and Hazards Network. His current areas of research are disaster risk assessment and disaster ethics.



**Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus - Closing Plenary Remarks**

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, elected as the WHO Director-General at the Seventieth World Health Assembly in May 2017, was the first WHO Director-General chosen from multiple candidates by the assembly and the first from the WHO African Region to lead the organization. He holds a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Asmara, a Master of Science (MSc) in Immunology of Infectious Diseases from the University of London, and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Community Health from the University

of Nottingham. He also received an Honorary Fellowship from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.



### **Rhonda Lenton - Welcome Address Speaker**

Rhonda Lenton is the eighth President and Vice-Chancellor of York University. She joined York in 2002 as Dean of the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal & Professional Studies and went on to serve as Vice-Provost Academic and then Vice-President Academic & Provost. She is a sociologist by training, her areas of teaching and research expertise include gender, family conflict, research methods and more recently, higher education. Lenton is a dedicated champion of community engagement and innovative partnerships, she has significantly expanded York's institutional collaborations with government, business, community organizations, and other postsecondary education partners.



### **Anthony Morgan - Side Event 1: How to Have Polarizing Conversations**

Anthony Morgan is an award-winning science communicator, Ph.D. researcher, start-up founder and game designer who has hosted dozens of TV programs. He's also the new host of The Nature of Things on CBC Television. He's obsessed with changing how people see, think, and talk about science in their everyday lives. He's spent close to 20 years finding ways to do just that. He's worked at the Ontario Science Centre, with Asap SCIENCE, written for newspapers, hosted CBC Radio, collaborated with municipal governments and serves on the steering committee of the misinformation-tackling Science Up First. This work and more have earned him multiple distinctions and award nominations including a Falling Walls nomination for a breakthrough science engagement initiative and being named one of CBC's top 20 millennial change-makers.



### **Dr. James Orbinski - Opening Plenary Speaker**

James Orbinski is a Canadian physician and humanitarian, known for his work with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) where he served as the organization's international president from 1998 to 2000. He has also held various positions at the University of Toronto and is an accomplished author on global health and humanitarianism. Orbinski has received numerous awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999 awarded to MSF.



### **Dr. David Peters - Opening Plenary Speaker**

In January 2023, David Peters began his tenure as the Dean of the Faculty of Health at York University in Toronto. Prior to that, Dr. Peters was professor & chair of the Department of International Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Dr. Peters' work focuses on strengthening health systems, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, and addressing policy and program issues to improve health equity and the performance of health systems, while contributing to critical models and methods for implementation research and systems science. He is widely published and among the top 1% of the most cited scientists in the world and is an award-winning teacher.



**Dr. Mathieu Poirier - Technical Expert – Committee B: Strengthening Infodemics**

Mathieu Poirier is an Assistant Professor of Social Epidemiology at the School of Global Health and Associate Director of the Global Strategy Lab (GSL). His research focuses on evaluating international law, developing health equity metrics, and generating policy-relevant research on socially and politically determined inequities in health. He has led evaluations of the global impacts of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and is a member of the WHO Collaborating Centre on the Global Governance of Antimicrobial Resistance.



**Dr. Krishana Sankar - Opening Plenary Speaker**

Dr. Krishana Sankar is an award-winning researcher, trained scientist, and a sought-after speaker. She completed her PhD at the University of Toronto in the Faculty of Medicine. Dr. Sankar is currently the Science Advisor and Community Partnerships Lead for ScienceUpFirst, an initiative of the Canadian Association of Science Centers. Through her work with the organization, she has engaged and collaborated with several community partners that serve those in equity-deserving and marginalized populations. A major aim of her work is to remove barriers to access of accurate and relevant information and to tackle misinformation in these groups.



**Dr. Peter Singer - Closing Plenary Speaker**

Peter Singer is an adjunct professor of medicine at the University of Toronto and a special advisor to the Director-General of the World Health Organization. He was previously the CEO of Grand Challenges Canada and the director of the Sandra Rotman Centre at the University Health Network. Singer has been recognized for his contributions to health research and bioethics, and he is a fellow of several academies. He has published over 600 research articles, received over \$50 million in research grants, and mentored hundreds of university students.



**Dr. A.M. Viens - Opening Plenary Chair**

Dr. A.M. Viens is the Director of the School of Global Health and the York Research Chair in Population Health Ethics and Law. His research focuses on demonstrating how philosophical analysis, legal epidemiology, and regulatory theory should shape global health policy. He is also an Investigator in the Global Strategy Lab and a member of the WHO Collaboration Centre on the Global Governance of Antimicrobial Resistance. He is an Honorary Member of the UK Faculty of Public Health, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Public Health and Royal Society of Medicine, and Editor-in-Chief of *Health Care Analysis*.

APPENDIX II – WHA SIM 2023 INFOGRAPHIC



# School of Global Health World Health Assembly Simulation

**Dates:**

**April 30th - May 2nd, 2023**



**Theme: Building Global Solidarity for  
Worldwide Health Security**

**BENEFITS:**

- Listen to experts from around the world
- Connect with like minded colleagues
- Improve communication skills
- Expand your knowledge on current Global Health issues
- Gain a deeper understanding of how governance at the World Health Organization works

**PLEASE REGISTER BY:**

**FEBRUARY 28, 2023**

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**HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**

Visit this link to register:  
<https://forms.office.com/r/nBYbbtQ4xz>

**MORE INFORMATION**  
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## 2023 WHA SIMULATION

### APPENDIX III – WHA SIM 2023 AGENDA

<b>GH WHA SIM 2023</b>		
<b>DAY I AGENDA</b>		
<b>Location</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Pre-Function Hall	8:00-9:00	Registration
Large Convention Room	9:00-9:15	Opening Ceremony • Dr. Rhonda L. Lenton - York University's eighth President and Vice-Chancellor
Large Convention Room	9:15-10:30	Opening Plenary - Building Solidarity for Worldwide Health Security • Facilitator: Dr. A.M. Viens • Panellists: Dr. David Peters, Dr. James Orbinski, Dr. Krishana Sankar
Pre-Function Hall	10:30-10:45	Social Break
Breakout Rooms	10:45-11:45	• Opening Plenary: Roll Call & Opening Statements
Breakout Rooms	11:45-1:00	<i>Committee Sessions Simulations:</i>  <i>Committee A: Public Health Emergencies: Preparedness and Response</i> • Technical Expert: Dr. Godfred Boateng  <i>Committee B: Strengthening Infodemic Management</i> • Technical Expert: Dr. Mathieu Poirier  <i>Committee C: Universal Health Coverage: Reorienting health systems to primary health care</i> • Technical Expert: Dr. Farah Ahmad
Pre-Function Hall	1:00-2:00	Lunch
Breakout Rooms	2:00-3:00	Side Events: Anthony Morgan - How to have polarizing conversations
Pre-Function Hall	3:00-3:15	Social Break
Breakout Rooms	3:15-4:30	Committee Sessions Simulations & Drafting of Position Paper by Delegates  <i>Committee A: Public Health Emergencies: Preparedness and response</i> <i>Committee B: Strengthening Infodemic Management</i> <i>Committee C: Universal Health Coverage: Reorienting health systems to primary health care</i>
Large Convention Room	4:30-5:00	Closing Remarks

## 2023 WHA SIMULATION

### GH WHA SIM 2023

#### DAY 2 AGENDA

Location	Time	Activity
Pre-Function Hall	8:00-9:00	Registration
Breakout Rooms	9:00-10:30	Committee Sessions: Simulation & Draft Resolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Committee A</u>: Public Health Emergencies: Preparedness and Response</li> <li>• <u>Committee B</u>: Strengthening Infodemic Management</li> <li>• <u>Committee C</u>: Universal Health Coverage: Reorienting health systems to primary health care</li> </ul>
Pre-Function Hall	10:30-10:45	Social Break
Breakout Rooms	10:45-12:15	Committee Sessions: Simulation & Draft Resolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Committee A</u>: Public Health Emergencies: Preparedness and Response</li> <li>• <u>Committee B</u>: Strengthening Infodemic Management</li> <li>• <u>Committee C</u>: Universal Health Coverage: Reorienting health systems to primary health care</li> </ul>
Pre-Function Hall	12:15-1:15	Lunch
Large Convention Room	1:15-2:15	Plenary: Draft Resolution Approval Process
Pre-Function Hall	2:15-2:30	Social Break
Large Convention Room	2:30-3:30	Side Events: Global Health Career Talks
Large Convention Room	3:30-4:30	Closing Ceremony - Speaker: Dr. Peter Singer Facilitated by: Dr. A.M. Viens
Large Convention Room	4:30-5:00	Awards Ceremony

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