

Together for Tomorrow: Advancing Global Child Health through Equitable Collaboration and Action

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The International Child Health Group (ICHG), a special interest group of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), aims to advance child health globally through collaborations and activities focused on advocacy, education and research. Our global membership comprises more than 420 paediatricians and child health professionals from 28 countries across nearly all continents. Originally founded in the 1970s as the Tropical Paediatric Group, it was formed by paediatricians with experience working in low-resource settings. In 1986, the group evolved into the ICHG, expanding to an international membership with a shared mission to promote child health globally.

At ICHG we value justice, equity and diversity as we partner with a global network of professionals and other institutions to promote a child-focused approach to global health issues. Recognising that we can learn much from each other, we are inclusive and respectful whilst encouraging good practice, advocacy and research. The group strives to inspire and equip students and health professionals to engage with current issues in global child health, while upholding the core principle of decolonising the global health discipline.

ICHG's work centres on three main pillars: Advocacy, Education, and Research. Each area is supported by dedicated subgroups and all ICHG members are encouraged to join and participate in any of these initiatives through our social media communities. <https://www.internationalchildhealthgroup.org/join-ichg>

CREATING CHANGE THROUGH ADVOCACY WITH CHILD HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WORLDWIDE

Children's health and wellbeing are deeply shaped by the social, economic and political conditions they face, alongside the health systems and community contexts they rely on. The ICHG advocates for action to address issues impacting child health both globally and within the UK.

Our efforts aim to amplify children's voices, promote their health and wellbeing, and drive systemic change by educating and disseminating reliable knowledge within the child health community. Our recent key advocacy activities include:

- Publishing position statements on critical issues (e.g., effect of conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza and Sudan on child health; UK government proposed (now defunct) Rwanda Bill for asylum seekers; cuts to international aid funding by UK government) in collaboration with RCPCH and ISSOP.
- Writing academic articles to raise awareness and share reliable insights (e.g., BMJ Article on 'Gaza, armed conflict and child health')

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- Developing Good Practice Delivery Standards for children seeking asylum or refugee status in the UK (to be published soon on the RCPCH website)
- Hosting webinars on 'Children in Conflict' and 'Climate Change' in collaboration with ICHG education and research sub-groups and external partners (e.g., RCPCH Climate Change Working Group)
- Delivering advocacy training for child health professionals.
- Producing awareness-raising videos from the perspective of children seeking asylum in the UK (e.g., 'Child Migrants are Children First').

BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

ICHG is committed to building partnerships with like-minded organisations to strengthen collaborative advocacy efforts. Our key partnerships include:

- International Society for Social Pediatrics and Child Health (ISSOP): We collaborate on advocacy initiatives to address critical child health issues.
- CHIFA (Child Health and Rights in Practice)(International): We provide financial and operational support to promote access to reliable information for child health professionals globally.
- Students for Global Health (UK): A newly established partnership aiming to engage and empower the students, next generation of child health advocates, through joint activities and advocacy.
- RCPCH Global and other RCPCH Specialty Groups: Joint efforts in advocacy and shared platforms for meetings and initiatives to address pressing child health concerns in the UK and beyond.



Figure 1. Advocacy values of ICHG.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION THROUGH CONVERSATIONS: INTERNATIONAL WINTER MEETING CONFERENCES

Each year, we organise an International Winter Meeting to address key issues in global child health via a social/equity lens, bringing together child health professionals from around the world for impactful knowledge sharing and discussions. The event usually features a diverse programme covering topics relevant to both the UK and the Global South, delivered by an exceptional lineup of speakers. Since 2021 our meetings have been fully online for equitable access, typically with over 100 participants, offering a range of sessions including workshops, plenaries, keynotes and networking opportunities across various topics. Recent topics have included 'Inequalities in Childhood Infections' (2023) and 'Countdown to 2030: SDGs and global child health' (2024). Attendance is free for participants from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and we invite members to join the Winter Meeting organising committee, offering a valuable opportunity to build networks and develop transferable skills within the global child health community.

GUIDING FUTURES THROUGH NETWORK AND CONNECTION: GLOBAL HEALTH MENTORSHIP SCHEME

The Global Health Mentorship Scheme is a programme open to all students and professionals with an interest in and passion for global child health. Through this scheme, experienced mentors from around the world are paired with mentees to provide career guidance, share opportunities and knowledge with a focus on global child health. The scheme runs for one year, with mentee applications opening in January. Participants gain access to an online platform with resources, discussions and advice, as well as virtual mentorship conferences held throughout the year. Anyone interested in global health is welcome to join the scheme. For further enquiries, please contact ichgmentorship@gmail.com.

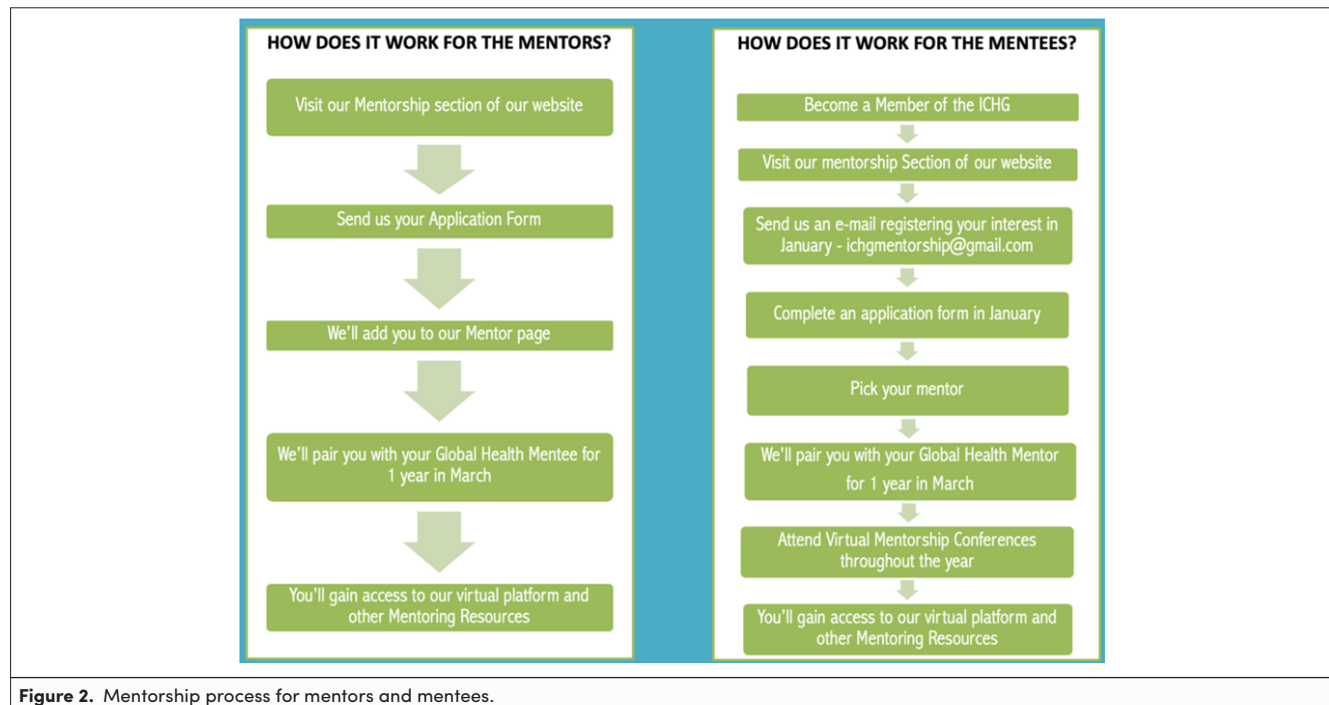
BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The ICHG Education and Training sub-group is committed to enhancing knowledge and skills in global child health and advocacy. We hold monthly Education & Training Webinars on international child health topics in collaboration with our partners. We are currently growing our online resource of webinars focusing on key topics in International Child Health, which are all accessible to our membership to watch on demand via YouTube.

We invite everyone who is interested in global child health to join these sessions; <https://app.medall.org/c/international-child-health-group>

ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING CHILD HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO ENGAGE IN RESEARCH

ICHG is dedicated to advancing global child health improvement through research. Our research webinars highlight diverse global child health projects across high priority topics including neonatal medicine, child development, malnutrition



and infectious disease. We host monthly research webinars from child specialists across the world who are active in research. We also link research with topical themes, with recent webinars including the Friendship Bench in Zimbabwe relating to child mental health, Vaccination relating to World Immunisation Week and World TB day focusing on insights from West Africa and Malawi. Other seminars also include sharing practical skills training such as exploring current research infrastructures, pitching ideas and writing abstracts. We aim to raise awareness and opportunities for research for all specialties and allied professionals related to global child health.

ICHG AWARDS

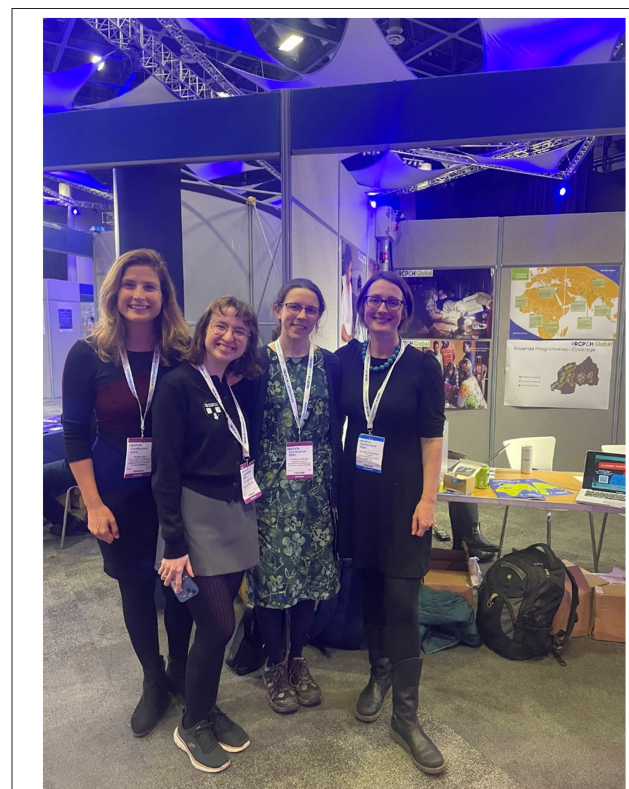
The ICHG offers several awards to support students and child health professionals in the UK and globally to pursue small advocacy and research projects, along with specific student awards. Award winners have the opportunity to present their work at an ICHG winter or spring meeting, providing valuable opportunities for developing presentation skills and showcasing their work.

Research Award

This small annual award provides support to members undertaking projects that focus on improving child health and wellbeing from a global perspective. Projects may be research-based or quality improvement-focused, with no restrictions on methodology (both laboratory and qualitative approaches are welcome). Priority is given to initiatives promoting collaboration, capacity-building, training or equitable partnerships. The award is particularly aimed at students, early-career professionals or those who have not previously received funding in their own name. We especially encourage applications from nationals or residents of LMICs and welcome joint submissions that reflect authentic partnerships between applicants from both high-income and LMIC regions.

Advocacy Award

This annual award funds projects advocating for child health issues worldwide. Applications are welcome from those seeking to develop or implement a project aligned with ICHG's



ICHG committee members at the RCPCH Conference 2023

Figure 3. ICHG committee members at the RCPCH Conference 2023.

advocacy values. Projects can cover any child health topic but must have a clear, well-defined advocacy approach with the potential to drive meaningful change. Innovative advocacy methods are encouraged, and the advocacy may be non-health sector-focused if relevant.

Elective Award

Previously known as the David Morley Prize, named in recognition of his contributions to global child health. It is awarded annually to a UK based medical student undertaking an international child health elective placement. The award aims to inspire and encourage the next generation of doctors to engage with global child health issues.

See our previous winners and details of their projects for all ICHG Awards here.

REAL STORIES IN CHILD HEALTH: OUR 'GLOBAL HEALTH LIVES' PODCAST

Global Health Lives is our podcast exploring key issues in global health through the stories of professionals in the field. We discuss their personal journeys, influences and the challenges they face professionally and personally in pursuing a career in this discipline.

<https://www.internationalchildhealthgroup.org/podcast>

ICHG is a vibrant and inclusive community dedicated to promoting diversity, inclusion, and equitable access to resources and opportunities for all child health professionals. Investing in children's health offers the greatest return for future generations; in a rapidly changing world, society and we, as child health professionals, must adapt to meet new challenges to address the needs of all children globally.¹ Echoing the stance of the Turkish Archives of Paediatrics, we believe that every child deserves to grow up in peace, with solidarity and in healthy conditions, regardless of their location or circumstances. Paediatricians and child health professionals are vital advocates for these rights to champion them across all settings and platforms.²

We welcome new collaborations with Paediatric Associations and joint advocacy efforts addressing challenges affecting the health and development of children across the globe. Please join us in advocating and taking action for improved child health globally - together we can achieve more for the children of tomorrow.

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