
Early Career Symoisum 2026

1. Information

Full Title

Early career symposium 2026, organized by the Global Health Academy

Place and Date

27 June 2026

Number of Participants

On site: 35



2. Summary

Background and Context

As part of the strategic planning for the Global Health Academy's Funding Phase 2025–2030, the Academy Advisory Board and key partners identified a clear need for an Early Career Symposium. This dedicated day of exchange and mutual learning is designed specifically for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers (ECRs). The initiative was further reinforced by feedback from the “Ask the Community” sessions at GLOHRA Day (2024 and 2025), where ECRs expressed strong interest in peer-led activities and requested targeted support for grant writing.



Strategic reviews also highlighted a gap in current training opportunities, particularly regarding two core domains of the Academy's Catalogue of Competencies (CoC): Domain 6, which focuses on building and sustaining connections, networks, and collaborations in global health research, and Domain 5, which addresses applying for and securing funding for global health research.

In direct response to these insights, the Academy designed a highly interactive symposium focused on peer networking, structured peer support, and practical workshops reflecting on the key components of successful grant applications.



Objectives

The Symposium aims to foster meaningful networking opportunities among peers while providing dedicated channels to enhance and deepen exchanges beyond the Symposium.

Approach

Central to the Symposium was the **Peer Coaching**, a peer-led method for collaboratively addressing real professional challenges. Peers engaged in group discussions during the event and will continue these exchanges online. Complementing this was the **Peer Colloquium Exercise**, which provided room for first collaboration

on future topics for an online forum for ECR to present work, test ideas, and refine methodologies. Whether preparing for a defense or sharing findings, this session offered a vital space to learn and collaborate, coordinated through the GLOHRA Training Platform. The program also addressed practical career development through a session titled **"Building a Research Career: From Research Idea to Funded Project,"** focusing on reflecting on own role as a researcher for the grant application and understanding the reviewer's perspective. Finally, the symposium included a **Fireside Chat**, where mid-career and senior researchers shared insights on career pathways in global health, offering valuable experience from both within and outside the Academy.



Key Insights & Outcomes

Participants demonstrated strong motivation and thoroughly engaged with the interactive, peer-driven format. Both verbal feedback throughout the day and formal written evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. The symposium's impact was further underscored by results from the 29 participants who completed the evaluation: 86% confirmed that the content was relevant and directly applicable to their career development, while an identical proportion reported establishing



new, valuable professional connections. Additionally, 83% indicated they could envision future collaboration with someone they met at the event, 90% expressed strong interest in joining the follow-up online peer coaching group, and 79% plan to lead future peer colloquium sessions by presenting and discussing their research.

Outlook

Moving forward, the Peer Colloquium will be hosted through the GLOHRA Training Platform, creating an accessible system where ECRs can apply to facilitate sessions on any global health research topic of their choice. Additionally, the peer-driven coaching model will continue to provide structure, shared experience, and meaningful connections. Facilitators were invited to organize subsequent sessions, ensuring this initiative evolves into a sustained, participant-led exercise.



3. Organizers

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