

# IMPERIAL

WHO Collaborating Centre  
Public Health Education and Training 

## GENEVA TRIP

20  
24



## Report on Master's Students' Educational Trip to WHO HQs in Geneva

With Imperial College London as its mother institution, WHO Collaborating Centre (WHOCC) has always focused on students in its activities. Among other initiatives, the Centre has been curating a unique experience for master's students in the Public Health and Global Health stream: a trip to WHO Headquarters in Geneva. The event has been taking place every year since 2009, and there has been consistent oversubscription.

From June 19th to June 21st, 2024, a group of 25 master's students embarked on an educational trip to Geneva, Switzerland, focusing on international health and labour policy. The trip involved visiting key international organisations, including the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The students engaged in a series of enriching sessions with experts and participated in guided tours, gaining valuable insights into global health initiatives, governance, and current challenges facing international health policy.

### Learning Outcomes:

Throughout the trip, students had the opportunity to achieve the following learning outcomes:

- Gain a deeper understanding of the role, mandate, and work of the WHO in global health:

Through engaging sessions with WHO experts, students deepened their knowledge of WHO's role in global health governance and its work in tackling worldwide health challenges.

- Describe key international initiatives in global health:

Students explored key global health initiatives such as Universal Health Coverage (UHC), the Pandemic Accord, and vaccine equity efforts, learning about the critical initiatives shaping global health policy.

- Describe current projects and future plans and strategies of global health actors:

The students were able to identify and describe WHO's current projects, including efforts on ageing, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), sexual and reproductive health, and pandemic preparedness.

- Demonstrate how the coordination between global health stakeholders impacts global health:

The trip underscored the importance of coordinated efforts between organisations like WHO, ILO, and various governments, highlighting how collaborative approaches can lead to successful health interventions and policy changes.

- Apply knowledge gained during the MPH to real-life, professional situations:

The students were encouraged to draw upon their academic learning and apply it to the real-world situations discussed during the sessions. This experience helped them connect theory with practice in the global health arena.

## The Programme of the Trip:

### Day 1: June 19, 2024 – Visit to the International Labour Organisation (ILO)

Location: 4 route des Morillons, Geneva, Switzerland

The educational trip began with a visit to the ILO. The ILO, a specialised agency of the United Nations, promotes social justice and fair labour practices globally. The visit allowed students to explore the ILO's role in shaping labour standards, rights, and policies that impact workers worldwide.

#### Highlights of the visit:

Students were introduced to the ILO's mission and its global role in advocating for fair work environments.

The visit included a tour of the ILO headquarters and an overview of key programs addressing global labour issues.

### Day 2: June 20, 2024 – WHO Session

Location: WHO, Avenue Appia 20, Geneva, Switzerland

The second day focused on the WHO, with a series of informative sessions from leading health experts. Students arrived at the WHO headquarters early in the morning, where they were welcomed and briefed on the day's agenda. The sessions covered various aspects of global health, policy, and emerging challenges in health systems.

#### Schedule and Key Sessions:

**09:20 – 10:10:** Session with the WHO Spokesperson – Margaret Harris

Margaret Harris provided an overview of WHO's governance and its global role in coordinating responses to public health emergencies. The students had the opportunity to ask questions about the WHO's communications strategies during global health crises.

**10:10 – 10:55:** Pandemic Accord (Vaccine Equity) – Anne Huvos  
Anne Huvos discussed the global pandemic response and the ongoing efforts to ensure vaccine equity across all countries. This session highlighted the challenges and achievements in achieving global vaccination coverage.

**10:55 – 11:10:** Break





**11:10 – 12:00:** Universal Health Coverage – Susan Sparkes

Susan Sparkes led a discussion on the importance of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), emphasising WHO's efforts to ensure access to health services for all, regardless of socioeconomic status.

**12:00 – 13:45:** Lunch and Visit to the WHO Book/Gift Shop

**14:00 – 14:45:** AI in Healthcare – Sameer Pujari

Sameer Pujari presented on the growing role of artificial intelligence in healthcare. The session covered innovative AI applications in diagnostics, treatment planning, and healthcare delivery.

**14:45 – 15:30:** Pandemic Preparedness and Response – Abdi Mahamud

Abdi Mahamud discussed the WHO's strategies and protocols for pandemic preparedness and response. This session included insights into the lessons learned from COVID-19 and future strategies for global health crises.

**15:45 – 16:15:** Tour of the WHO Emergency Operations Centre – Ding Feng

The day concluded with a tour of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), where students saw firsthand how the WHO coordinates emergency health responses and manages global health crises.

Dinner Option:

An optional dinner was arranged for those who chose to dine together at Pizzeria Molino Molard, Place du Molard 7, 1204 Geneva.

### **Day 3: June 21, 2024 – Continued Sessions at the WHO**

**Location:** WHO, Avenue Appia 20, Geneva, Switzerland

Schedule and Key Sessions:

**09:00 – 09:45:** Behavioural Science in Global Health – Elena Altieri

Elena Altieri discussed the role of behavioural science in shaping global health interventions. This session focused on how understanding human behaviour can improve the effectiveness of public health campaigns.

**10:00 – 11:00:** Ageing – Yuka Sumi

Yuka Sumi led a session on the challenges and opportunities associated with ageing populations. The students explored global strategies to support older adults, including health systems and social policies.

11:00 – 11:20: Break

11:20 – 12:00: Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) – Anand Balachandran

Anand Balachandran addressed the critical issue of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), discussing its impact on global health and the efforts being made to tackle this growing problem.

12:00 – 13:45: Lunch

13:45 – 14:30: Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights – Venkatram Chandra-Mouli

Venkatram Chandra-Mouli provided insights into sexual and reproductive health rights, a core area of the WHO's work. The session explored global efforts to improve access to sexual and reproductive health services.

14:30 – 15:15: From Smallpox to Mpox – Rosamund Lewis

Rosamund Lewis offered a historical perspective on the global effort to eradicate smallpox, and the lessons learned, led to discussions on the emergence of Mpox and strategies to prevent future outbreaks.

15:15 – 15:35: Break

15:35 – 16:20: Career Session – Hans Willmann

The final session of the trip was a career-focused talk by Hans Willmann, who provided advice and insights for students interested in pursuing careers in global health and international organisations like the WHO

## Conclusion

The educational trip to Geneva provided master's students with an invaluable opportunity to engage directly with global health and public health experts. The sessions at both the ILO and WHO offered deep insights into the challenges and solutions shaping the future of global health, labour standards, and social justice. Students left with a deeper understanding of the complexities of international policy and governance, as well as the role of international organizations in addressing critical health issues around the world.

The knowledge gained during this trip undoubtedly contributed to the students' academic and professional growth and equipped them with the necessary tools to engage in impactful global and public health work in the future.

## Acknowledgements

The trip was made possible through the extensive coordination work of WHOCC staff and the invaluable contribution of the ILO and WHO staff. It was supported by the School of Public Health with financial donations towards the cost of travel for staff and students.

It has been calculated that the coordination, planning, and delivery of the trip consume approximately 180 working hours for WHO CC staff members.

Students expressed their gratitude for the insightful discussions and practical experiences provided during the sessions and tours.

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[www.imperialwhocc.org](http://www.imperialwhocc.org)

