

# Global Health Newsletter

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## Staten Island University Hospital

Madi Lindauer, MD MPH

### Americas

#### Alvin Irby- New York, USA

Alvin Irby, a first grade teacher from New York, is the founder of Barbershop books, an initiative designed to enhance literacy among young Black boys. The genesis of this project occurred during a routine visit to a local barbershop, where Irby noticed one of his students looking bored and thought, “he should be practicing his reading” but he didn’t have a book. The program has since distributed over 50,000 free children’s books to more than 200 barbershops, predominantly located in Black neighborhoods across the country.

Following the pandemic, educational challenges emerged, evident by declines in math and reading scores in the United States. Notably, only 17% of fourth-grade Black students exhibit proficiency in reading with lower percentages observed among boys. To address this, Irby strategically places colorful, kid-sized bookshelves in participating barbershops, aiming to create an inviting environment for reading. The curated book selection is targeted for Black boys ages 4 to 8, ensuring educational value and engagement. Boys visit barber shops once to twice a month and barber shops are important hubs within the community. Irby underscores the importance of introducing books; “We are putting books in a male-centered space. . . Less than 2% of teachers are Black males and many Black boys are raised by single moms. Black boys don’t see Black men reading.”

Adapting to the pandemic challenges, Barbershop books, transitioned online. Irby launched a free e-library on the organization’s website, featuring videos of himself reading picture books aloud and providing access to digital copies of books authored by people of color.

<https://barbershopbooks.org>

#### Tyrique Glasgow- Philadelphia, USA

Tyrique Glasgow is the founder of the Young Chances Foundation (YCF), an organization based in Philadelphia that aims to provide support to individuals affected by gun violence. YCF focuses on implementing various programs, including summer camps, after-school programs, free goods, and mutual aid programs to the Philadelphia community.

Glasgow’s impetus for establishing YCF is rooted in his personal experience with the criminal justice system. Having been incarcerated multiple times for drug-related offenses and possession, Glasgow recognized the need for community-based interventions to address the underlying causes of violence.



<https://www.alvinirby.com/bio>



<https://www.cmc.com/2022/10/20/philadelphia-prison-to-work-violence-youth-opportunity-on-the-rise/index.html>

Glasgow's involvement in gang activities began at the age of 15, and coupled with surviving 11 gunshot wounds played a pivotal role in shaping his perspective and motivating his efforts to create positive alternatives for those facing similar challenges.

YCF collaborates with the 17<sup>th</sup> Police District's community-relations team focusing on joint initiatives aimed at reducing violence and enhancing community connections. The YCF community center operates six days a week, serving as a central community hub. It provides hot meals twice of week and distributes essential food and home items to those in need at no cost. In addition to immediate relief efforts YCF facilitates connections to resources such as GED classes, rental assistance and mental health counseling.

<http://www.youngchances.org/programs.htm>

## Middle East/Northern Africa

### Arsham Parsi- Iran

Arsham Parsi, an Iranian LGBT human rights activist now residing in Canada, stands as the founder of the International Railroad for Queer Refugees (IRQR). This Canadian charity is dedicated to alleviating poverty for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) refugees living in Turkey by addressing their basic necessities.

IRQR's mission is centered on relieving poverty among LGBT refugees who have sought asylum in Turkey due to persecution based on their sexual orientation or gender identification. The organization achieves this objective by offering sponsorship, financial support, and resettlement assistance to individuals who have become victims of human rights abuses. The ultimate goal is to accompany and support these refugees until they achieve successful resettlement.



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arsham\\_Parsi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arsham_Parsi)

<https://irqr.ca/2016/>

### Hala Dahrouge- Lebanon

Entrepreneur Hala Dahrouge, a native of Lebanon, established LibanTROC in 2019 with a profound mission: to offer aid to Lebanese families grappling with the enduring challenges of conflict and corruption. In the year 2023, LibanTROC achieved notable milestones in their commitment to humanitarian assistance.

Throughout the year 2023, LibanTROC successfully covered medical bills for 120 individuals, supplied free medicine to 300 people, and revitalized 20 homes, providing much-needed support to families affected by ongoing difficulties. The organization further demonstrated its dedication to education by distributing 80 laptops, contributing to the academic progress of Lebanese students.



<https://www.libantroc.org/about-us/?v=c951270e425b>

LibanTROC's impact extended to addressing essential needs, including food assistance for 2000 families. The organization also took a compassionate approach by adopting 20 elders, recognizing the significance of providing care and support to the elderly population. Additionally, LibanTROC addressed the vulnerability of infants by distributing infant formula and milk to 3,000 babies, ensuring their nutritional needs were met.

<https://www.libantroc.org/?v=c951270e425b>

## Asia/Pacific

### **Dr. Shankar Man Rai- Nepal**

Dr. Shankar Man Rai, an experienced plastic surgeon in his 60s based in Nepal, specializes in cleft palates and burns. Born to a poor farming family in rural Nepal he went to medical school at Tribhuvan University in Nepal, followed by two years of General Surgery training before he went to receive a masters in General Surgery from Dhaka University in Bangladesh. He then completed a Plastic Surgery fellowship at South Western Medical Center in Texas and another Plastic Surgery fellowship at Cleveland Clinic in Ohio prior to returning to Nepal.



Today, Dr. Rai runs the Nepal Cleft and Burn Center in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, providing free surgeries to those in need. He is also the County Director of ReSurger international in Nepal. Dr. Rai and his team have provided more than 20,000 surgeries.

Nepal grapples with a significant burn-related healthcare challenge, where over 56,000 people annually suffer from burns with more than 2,400 deaths- a rate 100 times higher than the United States. Dr. Rai's team not only performs surgeries but also implements comprehensive care plans, addressing contractions and deformities by providing, speech therapy, dental care, physiotherapy and splinting.

<https://nhrc.gov.np/members/dr-amit-joshi/>

### **Varsha Venugopal and Fiona Conlon-India**

Varsha Venugopal and Fiona Conlon co-founded Suvita, a nonprofit dedicated to improving vaccination rates in India. Suvita increases immunizations in two ways:

1. Community education through Volunteer Immunization Ambassadors: Suvita establishes a network of volunteer immunization ambassadors who educate new parents within the community about local vaccine clinics.
2. Personalized SMS Reminders for Caregivers: Suvita sends personalized SMS reminders to caregivers, notifying them when their child is due for a vaccination both seven days and one day prior.



<https://d-prize.org/winners/profiles/2020/9/28/suvita>

Globally one child dies every minute from vaccine preventable diseases, with 19 million children failing to receive their initial vaccinations before their first birthday. Half of the world's under vaccinated children reside in India, resulting in one child losing their life every four minutes.

To address this, Suvita has already sent over 200,000 SMS messages, leading to a 25% increase in attendance at government-run immunization camps.

<https://www.suvita.org/our-work>

### **Umesh Balal- Nepal**

Umesh Balal, a 28-year-old advocate with dwarfism, promotes disability rights within the context of climate change. Balal is from the Magar tribe in the Himalayan foothills of western Nepal and has witnessed firsthand the impact of environmental instability, forcing his community to migrate. Currently serving as the Youth Program Manager at the Nepal Water Foundation, Balal actively engages in projects related to climate and disability inclusion.



In his role, Balal conducts workshops across the country addressing water-related issues stemming from the increased melting of glaciers. One of Balal's notable campaigns focuses on disaster preparedness among disabled individuals. He highlights the critical issue that disaster rescue plans often overlook the unique needs of the disabled population, who are especially vulnerable during emergencies. Balal's advocacy aims to bridge this gap, ensuring that disaster preparedness measures are inclusive and considerate of the diverse needs of all community members.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2023/12/12/1218822840/this-28-year-old-from-nepal-is-telling-cop28-dont-forget-people-with-disabilitie>

## **Sub-Saharan Africa**

### **Osei Boateng- Ghana**

Born in a small village in southern Ghana, Osei Boateng identified a significant lack of access to healthcare in his community and founded the nonprofit, OKB Hope Foundation.

Boateng converted a van into a mobile doctor's office that traverses remote communities in Ghana, delivering free routine medical care. The van is equipped with a dedicated team comprising a nurse, physician's assistant, doctor and an operation assistant. The van has capabilities for basic bloodwork and urinalysis.



<https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/11/world/ghana-van-mental-health-medical-care-cnnheroes/index.html>

Since its creation in 2021, the OKB Hope Foundation's mobile unit has positively impacted more than 4,000 individuals across 45 rural communities. To further enhance the quality of care, the organization has 20 trained volunteers who serve as local advocates. These volunteers check vital signs, glucose levels and record comprehensive patient data during visits, ensuring an understanding of each patient's health history upon return visits.

<https://www.okbfoundation.org>

### **Mulira Aramanzani-Uganda**

Mulira Aramanzani, a 37-year-old border guard stationed in Busia, a town on the Uganda-Kenya border, noticed a high rate of HIV with no access to healthcare.

Truck drivers would often stop at the boarder for days waiting to be cleared by customs to cross. Due to these long weight times the Amalgamated Transport General Workers Union (ATGWU) received a space where they could relax, get a meal and spend the night, often engaging with sex workers in the area. In response, Aramanzani rented out a room in the ATGWU with basic offerings like condoms, lubricants and sex education. It also provides free HIV/AIDS treatment and care with PrEP, antiretroviral treatment and STI treatment.



There are staff counsellors, clinicians, lab techs, and peer leaders. It allows sex workers who are often stigmatize to receive these services as well.

Today, the ATGWU drop-in center provides Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) for 315 individuals who return every six months for lab tests to check viral loads and renew their medications. It provides PrEP for 1,600 clients and also provides walk-ins who come in for condoms, lubricants and STI testing.

<https://globalhealthnow.org/2023-11/condom-man-full-service-hiv-clinic-how-one-team-uganda-serves-key-populations>

## Europe

### Yuliia Sachu- Ukraine

Yuliia Sachuk is a Ukrainian activist dedicated to defending the rights of disabled people and is the co-founder and president of Fight for Right. Fight for Right focuses on a multifaceted approach to aid disabled individuals in Ukraine. The organization is actively involved in facilitating evacuation, offering targeted assistance, providing crucial psychological support, and delivering essential legal advice. Through these initiatives, Fight for Right aims to empower and uplift disabled Ukrainians, ensuring they have access to the necessary resources and support systems to enhance their quality of life.



<https://ffr.org.ua/en/about-us/>

<https://ffr.org.ua/en/what-we-do/>

## Upcoming Lectures/Conferences

### What is the Role of Business in Health?

January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 1pm EST.

The Hopkins Business of Health Initiative creates a collaborative space across Johns Hopkins University to incubate, accelerate, and disseminate impactful, world-class research on the business of health.

<https://events.jhu.edu/form/businessofhealth>