



**GLOHRA**  
German Alliance for  
Global Health Research



# GLOHRA 2020 Annual report

# Foreword

## A message from the Speaker Trio

The German Alliance for Global Health Research (GLOHRA) was initiated to forge new links and mechanisms of cooperation – across research disciplines, institutions, sectors and countries. The importance of this mission has gained additional traction as GLOHRA was established in February 2020, just as the SARS-CoV-2 virus started spreading around the world.

**We see GLOHRA as part of the evolving global health strategy of Germany, with a broad-reaching commitment to global health equity and scientific rigor.**

The mere exchange of information via scientific publications and conferences, focused collaborations and multi-center studies is clearly not enough to find joint solutions to pressing global health issues, whether concerned with infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases, mental health, health system strengthening, climate change or other critical determinants of health.

It is in this broad context of new ways of organizing and funding research that GLOHRA can contribute.

As a part of GLOHRA's leadership, we are committed to paving the way for research that keeps the bigger picture in sight. Our deliberate focus on bringing in perspectives from many disciplines distinguishes GLOHRA from other initiatives. The process often takes more time and energy – we use different languages and methods – but the result is continually becoming more comprehensive and better.

Specialized research will always have a place in global health, yet we seek to build bridges to connect specialists. In this era of globalization we are seeing how closely health outcomes and their determinants are interconnected. Viruses and diseases do not respect borders. As researchers, we should reflect this reality in our approaches in the lab, in the field and in the implementation of our findings.

At a time where in-person contact has not been possible, the strong sense of community at GLOHRA and fully operational governance is no small feat. Our team at the Secretariat has been foundational

in establishing the structural and procedural aspects of GLOHRA. By facilitating elections of the Steering Committee and devising our operational guidelines, we were able to get straight to work. Ties between members have still been possible with regular virtual meetings, the member Research Directory and introductions in the newsletter.

**A big thanks to the wonderful team at the Secretariat for helping to drive GLOHRA's momentum.**

In less than a year, GLOHRA has sent a clear message that researchers across Germany – from different cities, institutions and research disciplines – are committed to joining forces to tackle global health challenges. We are proud to be a part of this community and look forward to the many research, capacity-building and implementation activities in the making.

Prof. Dr. Walter Bruchhausen

Dr. Meral Esen

Prof. Dr. Eva Rehfuess

“With its support of the German Alliance for Global Health Research, the BMBF wants to address scientists in the field of global health across all disciplines.

One aim of this measure is therefore to strengthen and, where necessary, build up the entire German research scene in this field. Precisely so that holistic approaches can be better conceived of and implemented in the future.”



Prof. Dr. Veronika von Messling  
Abteilungsleiterin Lebenswissenschaften,  
Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung

Prof. Dr. Veronika von Messling,  
Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF), speaking at the GLOHRA launch event

“In Germany, excellent scientists are conducting research on very different aspects of global health issues. In order to solve the problems of the future, we need to build bridges between the disciplines. In addition to medical expertise, it is also important to understand why people make certain health decisions, such as the use of vaccinations, or how the various actors in the health system cooperate. Only in this way can we master the complex challenges in global health.”



Prof. Dr. Christian Drosten  
Director of the Institute of Virology of Charité, Founding Member of GLOHRA

Foreword	3
At a Glance	4
Background	6
About GLOHRA	8
2020 Milestones	10
People	12
Network	14
Steering Committee 2020–2022	16
Research Projects	18
Events	22
Behind the Scenes at the Secretariat	25
Looking Ahead	26

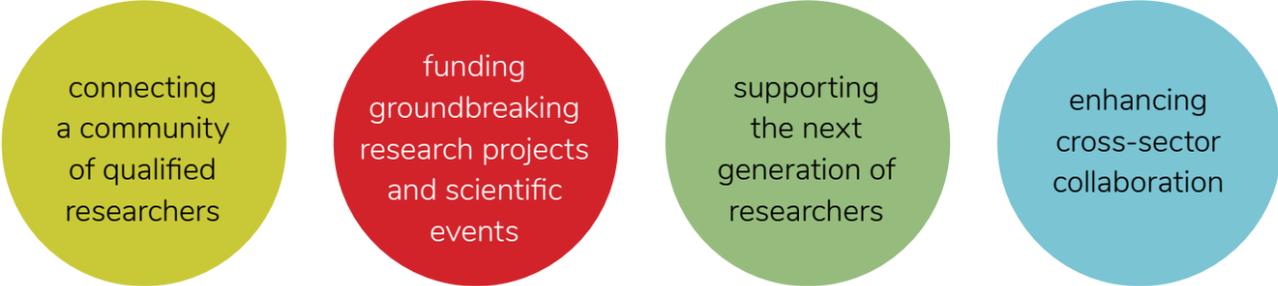
# At a Glance

## About Us

- The German Alliance for Global Health Research (GLOHRA) is an association of researchers from public research institutions in Germany
- GLOHRA was launched in February 2020 with funding and support from the German Federal Ministry of Research and Education (BMBF)
- Our community embraces representatives from all research areas relevant for global health i.e., biomedical sciences, social sciences and humanities, public health, and engineering and other sciences
- Together we are committed to tackling today's global health challenges via interdisciplinary and collaborative global health research

## Our Goals

GLOHRA aims to strengthen **global health research** in Germany by



## 11 Achievements from our First 11 Months

1. Established a fully-operational organization with ratified Statutes that bind us to our goals and commitment to interdisciplinary global health research	6. Published a joint statement in support of the WHO
2. Attracted membership of around 600 researchers from over 100 public research institutions across Germany	7. Developed a mechanism for evaluating interdisciplinary research projects, launched a call for proposals and evaluated 14 applications in the first evaluation round
3. Members elected an interdisciplinary, gender-balanced 19-member Steering Committee, with a notable 72% voter turnout	8. Awarded over 650,000 € in project funding to four interdisciplinary teams comprising more than 12 researchers from 9 research institutions across Germany
4. Created a visual identity and established our website <a href="http://globalhealth.de">globalhealth.de</a> , which hosts Germany's first Global Health Research Directory of ca. 600 researcher profiles	9. Reached 35,350 impressions on Twitter from 89 tweets and 224 followers
5. Hosted two exceptional sessions with over 300 attendees at the World Health Summit 2020	10. Sent over 1,500 newsletter deliveries to our community's inboxes
	11. Initiated the development of an information repository to benefit early career researchers



## The German Alliance for Global Health Research consists of three organizing bodies:

The **General Assembly** is made up of the members and associate members that have been accepted following our application process.

The **Steering Committee** is the key decision-making body of GLOHRA. The 19 Steering Committee members include female and male representatives from four research areas i.e., biomedical sciences, social sciences and humanities, public health, and engineering and other sciences. Elections are held every two years.

The **Secretariat** supports the operations and coordination of GLOHRA. The team is based at Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin.



**GLOHRA** is supported by the BMBF with over three million euros in funding from 2020 to 2025. Additional funds are reserved for selected research projects of GLOHRA members and their partners

# Background

## Supporting Germany's Mission to Improve Global Health

**GLOHRA** is part of a growing global health ecosystem in Germany. Over the past decade, global health strategy and action has steadily gained momentum in Germany as it becomes increasingly clear that the global community must do more to ensure health for all.

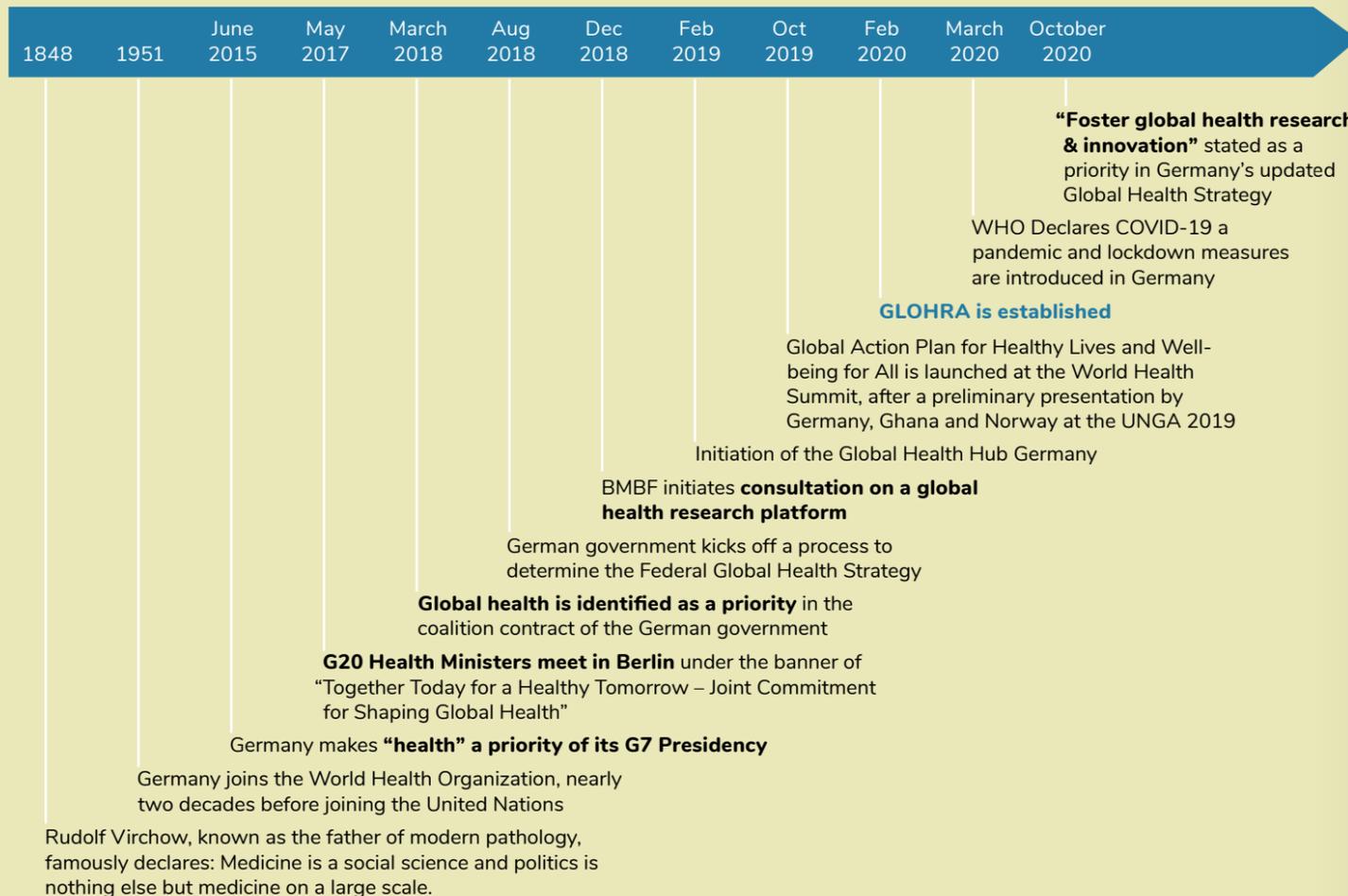
**GLOHRA** is one piece of this larger mission, with an explicit focus on strengthening and expanding global health research. By uniting the research community in Germany under a common cause of a healthier world, GLOHRA holds great potential to develop evidence and tools to tackle today's global health challenges.



**Global Health Strategy** of the German Federal Government, October 2020

“The 2030 Agenda requires a holistic and cross-sectoral approach to implementation. Interdisciplinary cooperation and research are needed to create a robust foundation that will allow us to identify priorities and avoid negative interactions.”

## Germany's Role in Global Health



## Scientific Collaboration to Face Global Health Challenges

**Addressing the complex challenges** we face today – neglected tropical diseases and antibiotic resistance, but also mental illness and diabetes together with achieving universal health coverage and the human right to health – requires research approaches that defy traditional boundaries. GLOHRA seeks to foster exchange and forge new mechanisms of cooperation across institutions, disciplines, sectors and countries.

Global health is determined by inseparable biological, cultural, political, economic, environmental, and behavioral determinants of health.

Accordingly, interdisciplinary global health research and cross-sector collaboration is needed to understand the specific components and interplay of these factors.



**Dr. Soumya Swaminathan**  
WHO, Speaking at the World Health Summit 2020 GLOHRA-hosted Session on Evidence Based Decision Making

“Because we know that doing things based on a biomedical model alone – we’ve seen from history – that often doesn’t work. So I think the point about needing the social science, the behavioral science aspects, including economists, is key. And we’ve recognized that – even before the pandemic.”

## Building Bridges to Connect Researchers

**Global health research** is being carried out at numerous universities and research institutions across Germany. GLOHRA offers a platform for researchers to step beyond the confines of their institution or specialty to connect with one another in their attempt to better understand and solve global health challenges.

Acting as a bridge to link and support our members, we hope that these connections will not only lead to more awareness about global health activities and research, but also strengthen Germany's contribution to this field, for researchers both today and tomorrow.

## A Global Perspective on Health

**Global health** is an emerging discipline which addresses health issues in a transnational and global perspective and focuses particularly on the interdependencies between globalization, health and the individual, societal and environmental factors that determine people's health. GLOHRA uses the definition proposed by Koplan et al. as a starting point for conceptualizing global health:

“Global health is an area for study, research, and practice that places a priority on improving health and achieving equity in health for all people worldwide. Global health emphasizes transnational health issues, determinants, and solutions; involves many disciplines within and beyond the health sciences and promotes interdisciplinary collaboration; and is a synthesis of population-based prevention with individual-level clinical care.”

Koplan, J. P., Bond, T. C., Merson, M. H., Reddy, K. S., Rodriguez, M. H., Sewankambo, N. K., & Wasserheit, J. N. (2009). Towards a common definition of global health. *The Lancet*, 373(9679), 1993-1995.

# About GLOHRA

## Vision

A healthier world supported by global health research

## Mission

Tackle today's global health challenges via interdisciplinary and collaborative global health research

## Objectives

### Build an interdisciplinary global health research community in Germany

Our community of researchers is committed to improving global health via evidence-based research. This notion unites our members, who hail from diverse disciplines and institutions in- and outside of Germany. Our ever-expanding Global Health Research Directory offers a unique resource for finding and connecting researchers based on specialty, while our scientific events and workshops provide a space for substantive exchange on topics relevant for global health research. Together we are developing a joint understanding of global health.

### Support the next generation of global health researchers in Germany

With the GLOHRA Academy, we seek to prepare early career researchers with the competencies, information and training they need to address global health challenges. We are also supporting the development of an information repository to make it easier for researchers to identify educational and other opportunities. Our funding for global health fellowships is specifically designed to support early career researchers. We are also working to develop career and research opportunities in the global health field in Germany so today's students have greater opportunities tomorrow.

### Boost the German contribution to global health research

GLOHRA actively supports global health research with funding for interdisciplinary, cross-sector and global health fellowship research projects. Research proposals are evaluated by our elected Steering Committee for their novelty, feasibility and impact-potential. By testing new models of cooperation, we seek to develop new links between disciplines and communities within Germany and internationally. Our activities and events further support better research for pressing health challenges.

### Enhance cross-sector research collaboration in global health

GLOHRA acknowledges that research must be translated into policy and practice to have an impact. In addition to encouraging this collaboration in our cross-sector projects, our events and engagements prioritize exchange involving civil society, policymaker and industry perspectives. We are active in communicating major developments with our research community and seek new and innovative ways to generate dialogue between the research community and policymakers.

## Values

### Equity

GLOHRA acts in support of health equity for all people, all over the world. This ambition motivates strategic and funding decisions. We also reflect this value in our operations, which ensure gender equity and fair representation of all disciplines that contribute to global health.

### Excellence

We propel research that adheres to the highest standards of quality and scientific rigor. We expect that GLOHRA-supported research and activities demonstrate exceptional value as well as interdisciplinarity when addressing health challenges.

### Partnership

Confident in the power of shared knowledge, we relentlessly encourage collaboration, especially among people from different disciplines, institutions, sectors and countries. Among our members as well as collaborators in low- and middle- income countries, we expect partnerships that stand on equal footing, demonstrate joint ownership and share recognition for achievements.

### Transparency

We maintain ongoing exchange in our community, prioritizing honesty, openness and clear communication. Our leadership as well as our members are held to high standards of ethical conduct and professionalism.

### Impact

Our work is grounded in our vision of improving health. We go above and beyond to foster cross-sector dialogue and translate research into policy and practice. This means considering impact from the design phase until well after the completed experiment, workshop, event, etc.

### Sustainability

We acknowledge that healthy people need healthy social and natural ecosystems. As a research community, we call for creative ways to reduce our environmental impact and think long-term. We also ensure longevity by embracing initiatives that demonstrate genuine engagement from multiple stakeholders.

Throughout this report, we will introduce you to some GLOHRA members and their research!

## #MeetOurMember

**Prof. Dr. Katharina Schaufler,**  
University of Greifswald, Pharmaceutical Microbiology

**Focus:** Pharmaceutical microbiology, antimicrobial resistance, functional and phylogenetic genome analysis, One Health

**Research:** Katharina is examining factors that contribute to the success of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Her research seeks to characterize resistance, while also investigating virulence and fitness determinants. Ultimately, her research group aims to better understand and to fight successful pandemic pathogens.

**What's the best piece of advice you have been given?** Don't forget your heart.



# 2020 Milestones

**The German Alliance for Global Health Research (GLOHRA)** is established as a BMBF-supported initiative for interdisciplinary, international and cross-sector global health research. See page 3.

January

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

**GLOHRA kick-off event** draws over 100 researchers from institutions all across Germany to discuss strategy and meet the freshly elected Steering Committee. See page 16.



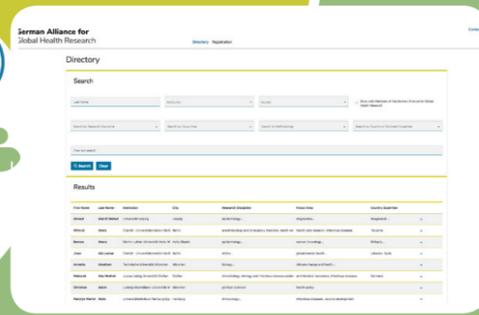
**First tweet** announces first call for project funding.



**Information repository for early career researchers** is set in motion by an interdisciplinary team of GLOHRA members.

Steering Committee convenes for the **first project evaluation meeting**

**First Directory of Global Health Researchers** in Germany is launched on the GLOHRA website: [researchdirectory.globalhealth.de](https://researchdirectory.globalhealth.de)



**GLOHRA members** deliver a joint statement in support of the WHO.



Scan the code and read the statement

**More than 500 members** receive our first community newsletter.

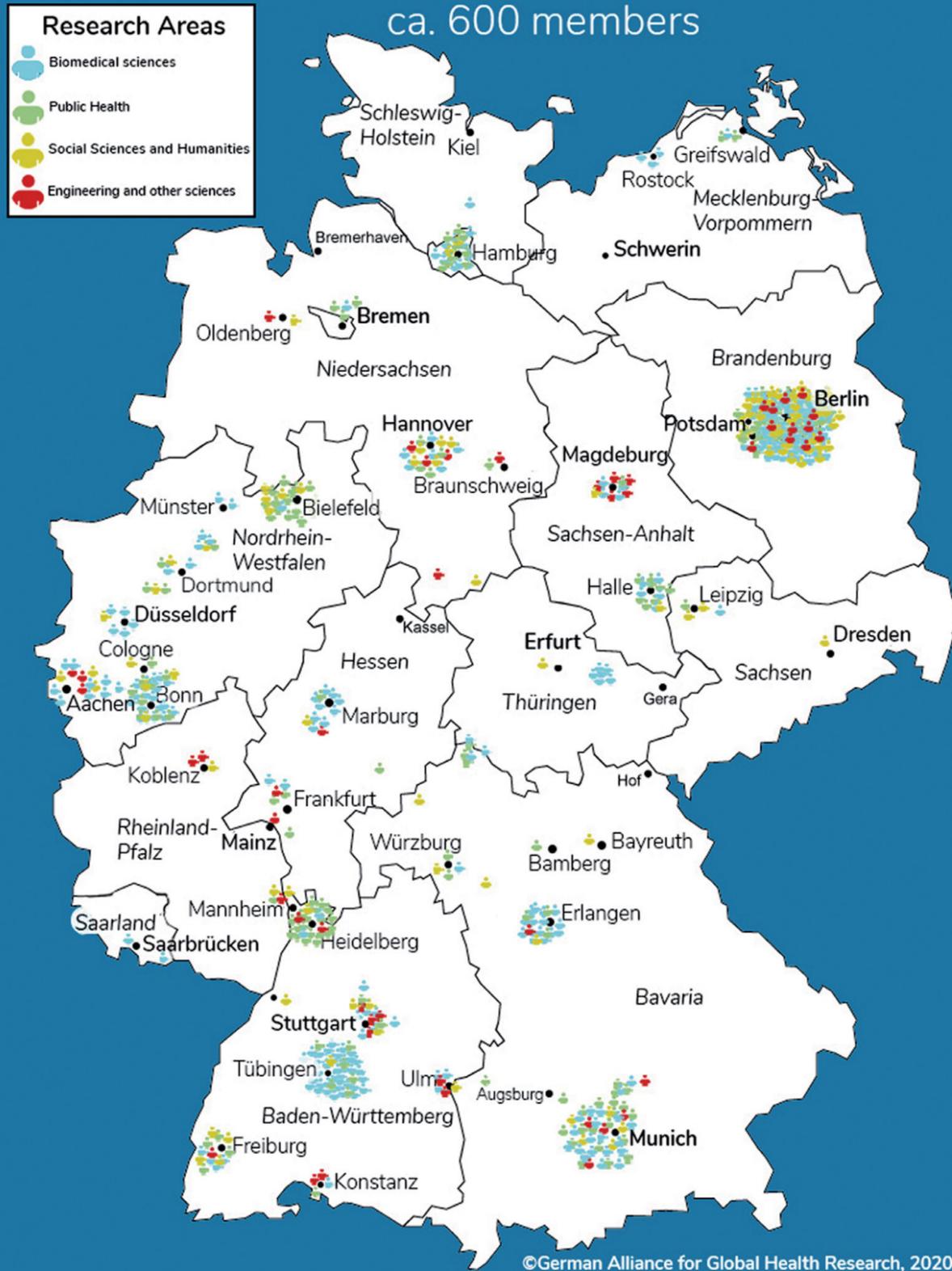


**Another thought-provoking session** about the challenges of using evidence to make health policy decisions during the #COVID19 pandemic.



## 2020 GLOHRA Members Map

ca. 600 members



## Members

Since our inception, GLOHRA membership has expanded rapidly to include **nearly 600 members** from **more than 100 research institutions**.

This community includes global health researchers representing specialties across the spectrum, from anthropology to ophthalmology, microbiology and beyond.



Our membership is open to researchers who are

- **affiliated with public research institutions in Germany, and**
- **demonstrably active in research relevant for global health.**

We offer associate membership to individuals who only partially fulfill these criteria.

Expert profiles of our members are added to the Global Health Research Directory, hosted by GLOHRA: [researchdirectory.globalhealth.de](https://researchdirectory.globalhealth.de)

This database is the first of its kind in Germany. Searchable by name, institution and research specialty, we intend this as a resource for both academics and non-academics to encourage collaboration and exchange.

## #MeetOurMember

**Prof. Dr. Nils Hoppe**, Professor of Ethics in Law in the Life Sciences, Director of the Centre for Ethics and Law in the Life Sciences and Dean of Research, Leibniz University Hannover

**Focus:** Bioethics, health law, health policy, research governance

**Research:** Nils' interdisciplinary expertise has informed his work as a long-standing external ethics expert for the European Commission as well as his research concerning bioethics and law in the practice of science. Nils has a particular interest in the construction of governance frameworks that reconcile conflicting rights in science and technology.

**If you could live two lives what would your non-research career be?**

I do live two lives! I have a non-research career as a lawyer in London and very much enjoy helping to solve complex legal problems.



# Network

## Institutions of our Members



## Institutions of our Members



## Institutions of our Associate Members



# Steering Committee

2020–2022

## Co-Speakers



**Prof. Dr. Walter Bruchhausen**  
Universitätsklinikum Bonn



**Dr. Meral Esen**  
Universität Tübingen



**Prof. Dr. Eva Rehfuss**  
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

## Representatives of Biomedicine



**Prof. Dr. Detlev Ganten**  
Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin



**Dr. Eva Kantelhardt**  
Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg



**Dr. Dr. Carsten Köhler**  
Universitätsklinikum Tübingen

## Representatives of Public Health



**Prof. Dr. Kayvan Bozorgmehr**  
Universität Bielefeld



**Dr. Ellen Kuhlmann**  
Medizinische Hochschule Hannover



**Prof. Dr. Jürgen May**  
Bernhard-Nocht-Institut für Tropenmedizin

## Representatives of Social Sciences and Humanities



**Dr. Kerem Böge**  
Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin



**Prof. Dr. Johanna Hanefeld**  
Robert Koch-Institut



**Maike Voss**  
Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Politik

## Representatives of Engineering and Other Sciences



**Dr. Benjamin Leon Bodirsky**  
Potsdam Institut für Klimafolgen-forschung



**Prof. Dr. Mizeck Chagunda**  
Universität Hohenheim



**Dr. Sonia Diaz Monsalve**  
Albert-Ludwigs Universität Freiburg



**Prof. Dr. Julia Pongratz**  
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

## Representatives of Early Career Researchers and the Host Institution of the Secretariat



**Prof. Dr. Christian Drosten**  
Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin



**Dr. Jörg Heldmann**  
Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin



**PD Dr. Thi Minh Tam Ta**  
Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin

**Steering Committee Quick-Stats:**

**19**  
members

**13**  
research institutions

**9**  
female

**5**  
under 40 years

**3**  
born on another continent

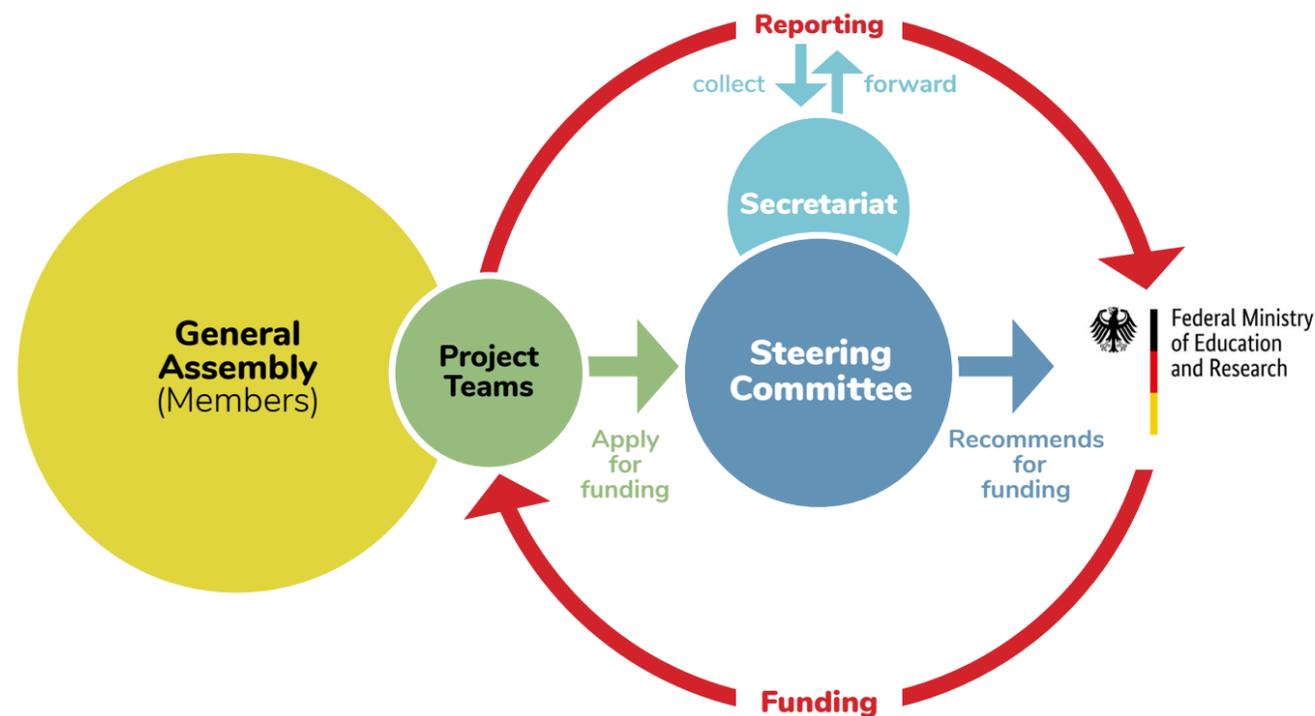
**Balanced representation**  
from biomedical sciences, public health, social sciences and humanities, and other sciences

# Research Projects

## GLOHRA Project Funding

GLOHRA especially intends to support projects that

- address transnational health issues, determinants, and solutions
- contribute to the improvement of health and health equity worldwide
- develop and implement groundbreaking ideas, test new models of cooperation and create new links between disciplines and communities
- are interdisciplinary and link GLOHRA members from different institutions and cities
- link scientific excellence with the domains of capacity building, science-based policy advice, teaching, implementation and/or clinical practice
- promote active, eye-level partnerships with national and international partners, including the Global South

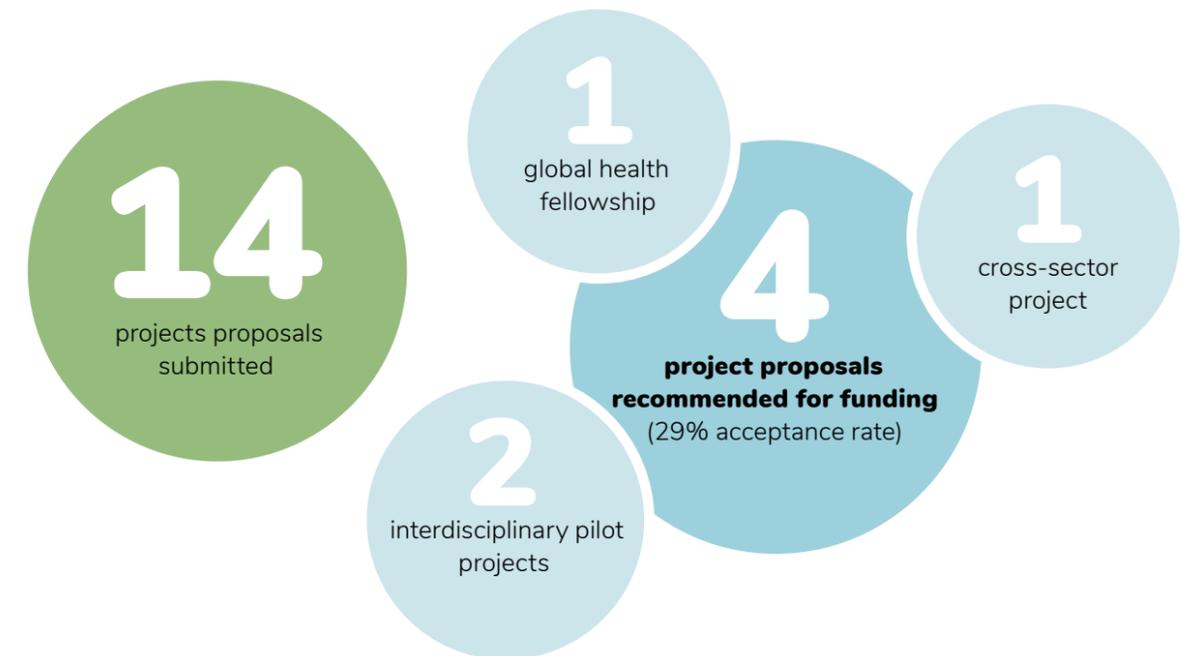


## Types of Projects

In 2020, GLOHRA supported the following types of research projects:



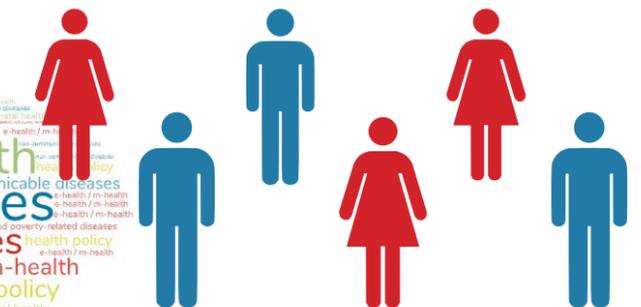
## Overview of Projects Selected in 2020



### Central focus of accepted projects



### Gender of Project Team Leaders



### Involving researchers from the following institutions



# Selected Projects at a Glance

## IMPEDE-CVD: Human centered design to adapt and inform an integrated chronic disease management

**Project type:** Cross-sector

**Research Areas:** Biomedical Sciences, Public Health, Engineering and Other Sciences

**Applicants:** Prof. Dr. Felix Knauf, Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin; Dr. Shannon McMahon-Rössle, Prof. Dr. Dr. Till Bärnighausen, both Universitätsklinikum Heidelberg; Dr. Julius Emmrich, Dr. Samuel Knauss, both mTOMADY gGmbH

“Through IMPEDE-CVD, we will combine expertise to tackle the growing burden of non-communicable diseases by integrating innovative mHealth technologies in a rural Ugandan setting.”

**IMPEDE-CVD team**



**Planned Duration:** May 2021—April 2023

**In a nutshell:** Research meets implementation in this digital health project in Uganda. The team aims to assess the feasibility, acceptability, perception, and usefulness of a mobile phone-based program, IMPEDE-CVD, to detect and manage cardiovascular disease in Uganda. This will ideally improve the detection and management of chronic diseases and reduce their financial burden in resource-poor communities.

## MeasureGender: Measuring gender-based discrimination to better understand maternal mortality

**Project type:** Interdisciplinary Pilot Project

**Research Areas:** Biomedical Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities, Public Health

**Applicants:** PD. Dr. med. Wilm Quentin, Technische Universität Berlin and Prof. Dr. Manuela De Allegri, Universität Heidelberg

**Planned Duration:** May 2021—April 2022

**In a nutshell:** Drawing on sociological and medical perspectives, this project aims to develop a culturally adapted tool for measuring gender-based discrimination. The team hopes that the tool, Measure-Gender, developed via field research and interviews, can be used in future surveys to improve our understanding of the relationship between gender-based discrimination and maternal health outcomes.

“The goal of this project is to lay the foundation for future analyses of the relationship between gender discrimination and various aspects of maternal health, including maternal mortality, by developing an instrument to measure gender discrimination.”

**Wilm Quentin and Manuela De Allegri**

## Diarrhea, fiber and colon cancer: Environmental contributions to low colon cancer risk in sub-Saharan Africa

**Project type:** Global Health Fellowship

**Research Areas:** Biomedical Sciences, Public Health

**Applicants:** Dr. Sören Ocvirk, Deutsches Institut für Ernährungsforschung Potsdam-Rehbrücke

**Planned Duration:** May 2021—April 2023

**In a nutshell:** This study proposes a novel mechanism for colorectal cancer (CRC) prevention. The team will examine a population with low risk for colon cancer, individuals in sub-Saharan Africa, with special attention to the role of dietary fiber consumption and pathogenic intestinal bacteria. Insights could have implications for targeted prevention of CRC in high-risk groups.

“This exciting project enables us to challenge the way we think about prevention of non-communicable diseases associated with a Western lifestyle, such as colon cancer. It will also question our perspective on how detrimental environmental factors like poor hygiene and nutrition in sub-Saharan Africa actually may provide a benefit in terms of diseases prevalent in Western populations.”

**Sören Ocvirk**

“This systematic review is a novel endeavor that will help fill in a persistent knowledge gap. The outcomes of this project have important implications for revisiting mass vaccination strategies to improve efficacy of not only current but future vaccines, especially against emerging diseases such as COVID-19. In the long term, this will help optimize resources and increase cost-effectiveness of such interventions in resource-poor settings.”

**Vaccines and Helminths team**

## Vaccines and helminths: The impact of helminth infections on vaccine outcomes in humans – a systematic literature review

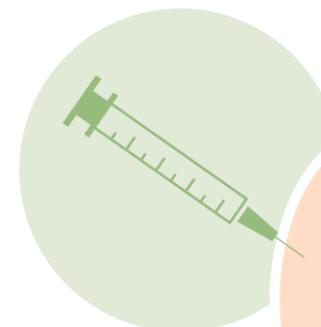
**Project type:** Interdisciplinary Pilot Project

**Research Areas:** Biomedical Sciences, Public Health

**Applicants:** Prof. Dr. Clarissa Prazeres da Costa, Prof. Dr. Stefanie Klug, Technische Universität München; Dr. Meral Esen, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen

**Planned Duration:** June 2021—November 2022

**In a nutshell:** Reflecting on the pivotal role of vaccines in prevention and control of infectious diseases, this interdisciplinary project seeks to systematically review and analyze the impact of helminth infections on the immune response to and efficacy of vaccines. Insights from this project will lead to the generation of knowledge-translation resources to inform clinical and public health practice guidelines, set the basis for the design of new studies investigating new vaccination strategies and eventually formulate scientific consensus statements.



# Events

## Scientific Events



### Evidence-Based Decision-Making in Global Health – What is Evidence and how is it used in Making Decisions about COVID-19?

**Date:** 26 October 2020

**Chairs:**  
Prof. Dr. Eva Rehfuess | Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, GLOHRA Steering Committee

Maike Voss | Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, GLOHRA Steering Committee

**Speakers:**  
Prof. Dr. Yvonne Doyle | Public Health England

Frode Forland | Norwegian Institute of Public Health

Dr. Fernando Simón | Ministry of Health Spain

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan | World Health Organization (WHO)

In this session, the speakers addressed how decisions have been made during the evolving phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting successful collaboration and challenges of uncertainty. Our speaker panel represented a range of health institutes and exchanged their experiences of decision making amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. They noted the challenges of implementing policy in absence of complete evidence, the importance of behavioral in addition to epidemiological insights, and the benefits of shared experience and collaboration among both health scientists and policy makers.

Mr. Forland described Norway's approach involving intense exchange between three major institutions and elaborated on newly established methods for evaluating early-stage research. Dr. Swaminathan reflected on the actions of the WHO and emphasized the importance of exchange among countries from the six WHO regions, especially in the early stages of the pandemic. She also voiced concerns about the insidious nature of the so-called "infodemic". Final reflections led some speakers to speculate that the investment in primary health care may help to explain better-than-expected outcomes in some lower income countries and noted, as ever, the importance of functioning health systems.



## Scientific Events

### Multi Stakeholder Collaboration in Global Health Research – Science meets Implementation



**Date:** 26 October 2020

**Chairs:**  
Prof. Dr. Walter Bruchhausen | Universitätsklinikum Bonn, GLOHRA Steering Committee

Prof. Dr. Johanna Hanefeld | Robert Koch-Institut, GLOHRA Steering Committee

**Speakers:**  
Prof. Dr. Achim Hörauf | Universitätsklinikum Bonn, GLOHRA Member

Prof. Dr. Francis Omaswa | African Center for Global Health and Social Transformation

Birgit Pickel | Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Caroline Schmutte | Wellcome Trust

This conversation-style session delved thoughtfully into bridging the gaps between research and practice, decolonizing partnerships and positive collaboration. There was an acknowledgement of the gaps between research and practice but also positive examples of international research collaboration, in particular the bilateral partnerships that exist between universities in Germany and various universities in Africa. A speaker-consensus emerged that effective global health research and initiatives must fully integrate local partners, from goal setting to joint-funding commitments.

Dr. Omaswa argued for funding national research institutions in Africa, which are already in line with national agendas and Ms. Schmutte noted the evolving stance of the Wellcome Trust to ensure fuller integration of local partners. Participants were finally asked to confront some more existential questions: Is our research truly being designed for the people we seek to serve? How do we best clarify the goals of our research? And, to what degree are private and public funders willing to give up control to local partners? These are ongoing matters that our funders and scientific community will face as global research collaboration and multi-stakeholder participation develops.



# General Assembly

## Online Elections and Virtual Kick-off Meeting on 20 April 2020

Between 8 April and 17 April 2020, we invited all 280 eligible members of the General Assembly to cast their votes for the first Steering Committee. Altogether, we received 202 votes, amounting to a 72% voter turnout. Voters were asked to elect two female and two male representatives from each of our four research areas i.e., biomedical sciences, public health, social sciences and humanities, and engineering and other sciences. A representative of Early Career Researchers was also elected.

On 20 April 2020, over 100 GLOHRA members met virtually on Zoom for our kick-off meeting. After a brief introduction, Prof. Dr. Veronika von Messling delivered strong words of support on behalf of the BMBF. She highlighted the importance of our mission to strengthen the research community and develop new avenues of collaboration. The meeting provided an opportunity to introduce the aims, structure and work program of GLOHRA. Funding opportunities for members were also presented. Even through the screens, the excitement for this new community was palpable. The kick-off event set the stage for ongoing exchange among community members.

# Steering Committee Meetings

## 20 April 2020

- The newly elected members of the Steering Committee take office.
- The Steering Committee discusses and adopts the draft Statutes and Regulations on Bodies and Committees with minor modifications.
- The Steering Committee asks the Secretariat to draft a call for scientific workshop proposals, which is later adopted with minor modifications.
- A discussion on the role of the speakers lays the basis for the appointment of the speaker trio over the following weeks.

## 7 May 2020

- The Steering Committee agrees to hold quarterly meetings (in-person and virtual). The working language for documentation and meetings is set to English.
- Funding for coordination support for the Academy is assigned to the co-speaker with special responsibilities for early career researcher support. A selection procedure for the Repository (subtask of the Academy) is designed, adopted, and applied over the summer.
- Draft guidelines for project funding are discussed and adopted with some modifications.
- The Steering Committee decides to hold two sessions at the World Health Summit and confirms hosts and speakers.

## 26 October 2020

- Representatives of the five projects that were most favorably evaluated in the preliminary evaluation present and defend their research proposals. The Steering Committee votes to recommend three projects, conditionally recommend one, and not recommend the remaining ones.
- "GLOHRA" becomes the official short name of the German Alliance for Global Health Research after a vote from the Steering Committee.
- Steering Committee contemplates strategies for increasing the interdisciplinarity of the research proposals.

# Behind the Scenes at the Secretariat

The German Alliance for Global Health Research is the result of years of work by countless contributors. We were born out of a desire for meaningful networking among colleagues in the global health community. Below you'll get a bit of insight into the story of how the Secretariat came to be based at Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin and a glimpse into how GLOHRA was transformed from a dream to a reality.

## An Idea was Born

In February 2019, around 50 global health researchers from universities and research institutes across Germany gathered in Berlin to discuss the role of universities in global health research and policy. Around the same time, BMBF was preparing a call for proposals to initiate and fund a networking platform for global health research.

The interdisciplinary group decided to seize the opportunity and submit an application, which they jointly prepared in several follow-up meetings and phone conferences. The application was to be submitted by Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin, which had been asked to host the Secretariat in the German capital. In January 2020, the BMBF formally approved the proposal.

The Secretariat took up work in February 2020.

## Building a Community

From the beginning, we wanted to send the clear message that we aren't "just another research funder" but part of a bigger movement within the global health community in Germany. We are thinking BIG – aiming for collaboration in the field on a scale that currently does not exist. This means that we have tried, even amidst the pandemic, to create a sense of community amongst our researchers, who are scattered across Germany.

To this end, we set up the GLOHRA website and the Global Health Research Directory, introduced a monthly newsletter for members, started and grew a very active Twitter account and launched the campaigns #MeetOurMembers and #OurImpact to make our members and their expertise visible. We have also been hard at work to get the word out about GLOHRA and invite members.

This means writing to hundreds of departments – from medical schools to engineering faculties – encouraging eligible members from all research disciplines to join. We have been delighted to see the GLOHRA community grow and diversify as a result.

## First-Year Reflections

Looking back we are awed at the progress that we have made in less than one year. Our development is mainly thanks to the dedication of our Steering Committee and support from our extended community. Over time, the Steering Committee has developed trust and understanding for one another's approaches, and dedicated a lot of time and effort to ensuring our exceptional development. Exchange across disciplines is not always simple, but we have seen first-hand how the knowledge and outcomes generated are greater than the sum of their parts.



**Dr. Jörg Heldmann**  
Managing Director



**Nora Anton, M.A./M.Sc.**  
Deputy Managing Director



**Maeve Cook-Deegan, M.Sc.**  
Scientific Coordinator

# Looking Ahead

GLOHRA is part of a growing movement – in the scientific community, it is a testament to the importance of collaboration and interdisciplinarity. As part of Germany's global health strategy, GLOHRA also makes an important contribution to new mechanisms of cooperation and avenues of thinking. Our fateful launch at the start of the pandemic has increased the awareness of our mission. We will build on the momentum from our first year to continue to transform global health research. Here's a sneak-peak of just a few things that are on the agenda for the upcoming year. Excited? So are we.

## Launch of the Global Health Academy

The Global Health Academy is a GLOHRA initiative specifically committed to supporting early career researchers. The target audience is primarily PhD students and post-docs – individuals who have demonstrated a clear interest in global health research, but who could use assistance in gaining competencies and networking opportunities to assist their career progression in global health.

The organizing team of the Academy is based at Bonn University, where Prof. Dr. Walter Bruchhausen has been awarded special responsibilities for overseeing its development. Further, a team of GLOHRA members is currently developing a repository to assist early career researchers to identify educational and other opportunities.

## GLOHRA-Supported Research Projects to Face Global Health Challenges

GLOHRA-supported projects from the first funding round begin in 2021. These projects range in their scope – from creating a tool for measuring gender discrimination, to investigating a novel mechanism for colorectal cancer, to innovative mHealth technologies in Uganda and finally, a systematic review on the impact of helminth infections on vaccine efficacy – yet are united by their mission to improve global health. We look forward to ongoing exchange with the respective teams and will provide updates on their progress to the community.

The Steering Committee reviews and decides on future projects in two project evaluation meetings in January and June 2020. As ties deepen among researchers across institutions and disciplines, we anticipate new partnerships and innovative ways of approaching global health challenges.

## GLOHRA Engaged: Perspectives on the Global Health Strategy

The latest Global Health Strategy has set out key objectives and focus areas – from strengthening health systems to mitigating the health impacts of climate change. This year we will engage our GLOHRA community members, tapping into their expertise to shed light on how research perspectives can bolster the strategy. In true GLOHRA style, we will ensure diverse disciplines and viewpoints are represented.

## Community Growth

In our first year we have been impressed by the enthusiasm for this initiative and the researchers from all disciplines that are contributing to our growth. We will continue to carry on with our efforts to increase awareness about GLOHRA and our mission. We will expand our communication activities and expand networking opportunities. Not only to reach more researchers from additional research institutions and disciplines, but also to deepen existing ties within the community.

## GLOHRA Day 2021 at the World Health Summit

We hope, pandemic-permitting, to host our annual symposium in Berlin on 23 October, 2021. This will be a day for members to get to know one another, share research results and ideas and find new collaboration opportunities. We will also host a session at the World Health Summit, bringing in cross-sector perspectives from the WHO to academia to discuss research and training in tropical diseases.

### Photos

cover image: Steffen Kugler / World Health Summit, editing by Helmut Kraus  
p.2 (Prof. Drosten): Wiebke Peitz / Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin  
p.9: Till Junker / Universität Greifswald  
p.13: Leibniz Universität Hannover  
p.20: Helmut Kraus  
p.23: Steffen Kugler / World Health Summit

### Printed by

K+L DruckenPlus GmbH, Berlin



**German Alliance for  
Global Health Research**  
[www.globalhealth.de](http://www.globalhealth.de)

SPONSORED BY THE



Federal Ministry  
of Education  
and Research

Secretariat c/o Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin  
Dr. Jörg Heldmann, Nora Anton, Maeve Cook-Deegan

Charitéplatz 1, 10117 Berlin, Germany  
e: [secretariat@globalhealth.de](mailto:secretariat@globalhealth.de)  
t: +49 30 450 572 1100  
f: +49 30 450 7572 118

 [@globalhealth\\_de](https://twitter.com/globalhealth_de)

 [linkedin.com/company/globalhealth-de](https://www.linkedin.com/company/globalhealth-de)

Published in July 2021  
Layout/Design: Helmut Kraus