



# 2025 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY REPORT

**global  
environmental  
health lab**

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# What we do...

Global Environmental Health LAB (GEH LAB) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building healthier, more resilient communities worldwide through research, education, and collaboration. Since 2015, we have mentored students and professionals across continents, facilitated international workshops and seminars, and partnered with universities to address public health challenges through the lens of environmental and occupational health. Our work, grounded in scientific integrity and cultural humility, supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and empowers the next generation of global health leaders.



# Letter from the Executive Director

To Our Cherished Supporters,

This year marks a remarkable milestone - 10 years since the official founding of Global Environmental Health LAB (GEH LAB). As we reflect on the past decade, I am filled with immense gratitude for the unwavering support of our partners, donors, interns, scholars, and community collaborators who have walked with us on this journey.

Since our establishment in 2015, and formal recognition as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2016, GEH LAB has worked across borders to build healthier, more resilient communities. What began as a small initiative rooted in public health and environmental science has grown into a dynamic international platform. We have supported and mentored students and young professionals from across Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe, equipping the next generation of global health leaders with practical skills and cultural insight.

Over the years, our work has reached thousands of individuals through international seminars and hands-on workshops focused on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). From addressing tobacco use in Eastern Indonesia to studying maternal and child health in flood-prone communities in Myanmar, our projects have always been grounded in scientific integrity, cultural humility, and community engagement.

Our partnerships with universities, particularly in Myanmar and Indonesia, have transformed both institutions and individuals. Together, we've nurtured a culture of research and inquiry; empowering faculty and students to explore public health challenges through the lens of environmental and occupational health. Their testimonies speak volumes about the long-term value and transformation sparked by this collaboration.

While each year has brought new challenges; from political unrest to global pandemics; our team has adapted with resilience and innovation. In 2021, we successfully hosted our 6th International Symposium for Sustainable Development entirely online, continuing our commitment to education and collaboration despite the constraints of COVID-19.

Looking back, we are proud of the lives touched, the communities strengthened, and the global network we've built. Looking ahead, we are committed to deepening our impact supporting sustainable development through research, capacity-building, and compassionate service.

Thank you for standing with us. Your support has been the cornerstone of our success, and we invite you to continue this journey with us into the next decade of global environmental health.

With heartfelt appreciation,

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER

*Dr. Tomoyuki Shibata*





# Over the past 10 years...

**2009-2014 – Global Environmental Health LAB operates as a research group** to support student learning and global engagement at Northern Illinois University (NIU) under the leadership of Tomoyuki Shibata, PhD.



**2015 – GEH LAB was incorporated as an official organization.** Heidi West joins the team as a co-founder and Director of Programs and Operations and Tomoyuki Shibata becomes Executive Director.

**2016 – GEH LAB obtains 501(c)(3) status** from the IRS, and programs expand beyond the NIU community to include a global team of research scholars and interns. GEH LAB runs its first research program in Mandalay, Myanmar!



**2017 – GEH LAB expands partnerships** in Myanmar to include universities and public health leadership in Magway. Important findings from the 2016 projects on emergency response and maternal health are presented to key stakeholders around the world.

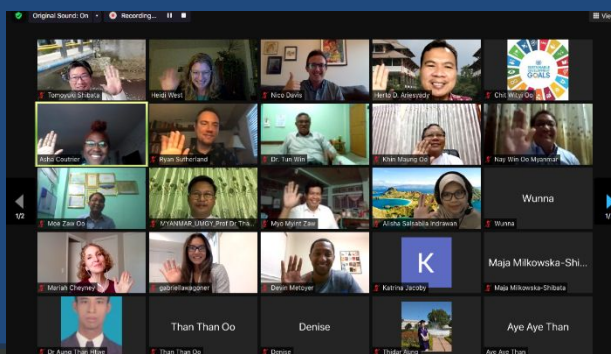
# Over the past 10 years...

**2018 – Collaborative partnerships facilitate the expansion of the research program** to include summer field experiences in both Myanmar and Indonesia. **CONTACT** – Center for Tobacco Control and Communicable Disease Prevention established in Makassar, Indonesia at Hasanuddin University with a grant from The Union.



**2019 – GEH LAB runs its largest Research Scholar Program** with teams focusing on capacity building for the use of mobile tech for data collection in mining and oil extraction sites in Myanmar and to monitor policy implementation for tobacco control in Indonesia.

**2020 – Pivot to COVID-19 response** and communication in resource-limited settings; expanded use of remote tools and public health messaging. First fully virtual research program runs with global partners.



**2021 – GEH LAB holds its largest International Symposium** and honors outstanding students in celebration of International Youth Day.



# Over the past 10 years...

**2022 – STREAM program is piloted**, the expansion of a traditionally STEM focused program to include religion and arts. *Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics for Health and Sustainable Living*



**2023 – Efforts focus on producing evidence to support policy implementation for vaccines such as COVID-19.** International Symposium held in collaboration with the UN Association in honor of United Nations Day.

**2024 – ACCESS Consortium founded in Bandung, Indonesia.** The consortium represents the interdisciplinary multi-level focus of our public health work and has representatives from government, education, faith institutions, and family-based groups.



**2025- GEH LAB celebrates 10 years!** Creation of training modules and fieldwork toolkits in Bahasa Indonesia for sustainable health education and advocacy.

# Research

Global health disparities continue to threaten the well-being of vulnerable populations, particularly women and children. GEH LAB is addressing these challenges through innovative research and public health programming.



We have implemented

**30+ student-led  
research projects**



These projects have led  
to

**11 peer reviewed  
publications**

**&**

**27+ presentations  
at international  
conferences**

Conferences Include: American Public Health Association (APHA), World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WADEM), Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH), Science Council of Asia, International Burma Studies Conference and others. We also disseminate or work back into the communities through meetings, forums, conferences, workshops, and our international symposia.



# Research

One of the LAB's key initiatives has focused on **Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) in Indonesia and Myanmar**. Two published projects address the key role that social determinants of health play in WASH access and how important changes in health behavior are intertwined with policies that support sustainable development. Building on our studies, GEH LAB is developing a culturally adapted WASH module which aims to reduce the incidence of preventable diseases such as diarrhea and respiratory infections, particularly in mothers and children. The program utilizes health education modules which also promote safe hygiene practices and community empowerment to improve long-term health outcomes.



In addition to environmental health efforts, **GEH LAB is confronting the rising epidemic of youth tobacco use in Indonesia**. A dedicated research and communication campaign has been launched in South Sulawesi and West Java focusing on reducing smoking rates among children and adolescents. This initiative targets key influencers such as educators, faith-based organizations, families, and policymakers. The campaign uses emotionally engaging messages and evidence-based strategies to shift social norms, increase awareness of tobacco harms, and reduce advertising exposure to youth.



Both the WASH and tobacco control efforts reflect GEH LAB's mission to implement **practical, scalable solutions that bridge research and community impact**. By combining health education, policy advocacy, and stakeholder collaboration, GEH LAB continues to advance evidence-driven interventions that protect and empower communities.

# Capacity Building

Over the past decade, GEH LAB has been dedicated to building capacity in global health by providing engaged learning and research opportunities for students and junior professionals worldwide, particularly those without access to university-based global environmental health programs. Through collaborations with communities, governments, NGOs, and private sectors, GEH LAB has conducted interdisciplinary research projects and hosted workshops in countries like the U.S., Japan, Indonesia, and Myanmar, aiming to create safe, healthy, and sustainable environments.

In 2025, GEH LAB continues its commitment to capacity building through programs like *STREAM for Healthy & Sustainable Living* in Indonesia and *Health, Sustainability, and Cultural Wisdom* in Japan. These initiatives offer life-changing adventures that combine research training, cultural exchange, and community engagement.





# Capacity Building

Furthermore, GEH LAB's volunteer internship program pairs global health research and development initiatives with professional development opportunities for students and professionals from various sectors.

Past internship positions have included roles in digital media, non-profit administration, communications, grants, and fundraising, with volunteers coming from across the globe.

The program also collaborates with universities to offer academic credit for students fulfilling practicum requirements through participation in research and internship programs, providing mentorship from public health experts and foundational skills to build global health careers. Some recent participants in GEH LAB capacity building programs include:



Baylee Brochu, MD  
University of Miami  
2024



Alexandria Scarlett, MPH  
University of Miami  
2024



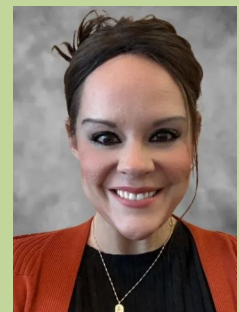
Rachael Chait, MD, MPH  
University of Miami  
2022



Johnny Jiang, MA, MPH  
George Washington  
University  
2025



Assiya Muhammad, MPH  
Georgia State University  
2022



Emily Bertsch, MPH  
Liberty University  
2025

# International Symposium

In 2025, GEH LAB celebrates a decade of impactful global research, community partnerships, and capacity building with its International STREAM Symposium in Bandung, Indonesia (July 2025). GEH LAB has hosted international symposia since 2016 (7 in person, 3 virtual).

## Past Themes Covered:

- Advancing environmental health equity through community-based research
- Building local capacity in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)
- Engaging youth in tobacco prevention and risk communication
- The role of cross-cultural collaboration in sustainable health interventions

## Highlights:

- Keynote addresses by leading public health experts
- Panel sessions featuring partners from around the world
- Student presentations on fieldwork in WASH, maternal health, emergency response, and tobacco control
- Launch of new digital training modules and open-access resources
- Multimedia sessions featuring health communication through the arts
- Networking and sessions promoting global collaboration
- Awards for outstanding students
- Fundraising for participation by students in low-income settings

## Looking Forward:

These international symposia are not only a space to celebrate past achievements but also provide an opportunity to share a bold vision for the future, expanding work in climate resilience, health equity, and scalable interventions. GEH LAB remains committed to empowering communities, supporting student research, and driving change at the intersection of environment and health.





# Financial Report

## Revenue

Net Revenue **\$71,179** -Programs

Net Revenue **\$16,854** -Operations

Total Revenue **\$88,033**

10 Year Revenue



## Expense

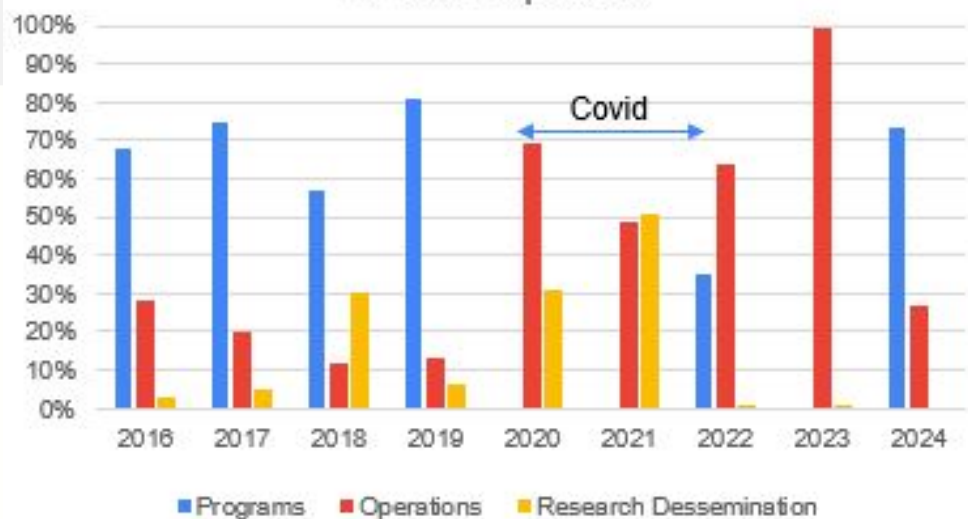
Net Revenue **\$51,292** -Programs

Net Revenue **\$21,169** -Operations

Net Revenue **\$11,046** -R&D

Total Expense **\$83,508**

10 Year Expenses



# Special Thanks!



## **Julie Hollenbeck, PhD, MA GEH LAB Board President**

Dr. Hollenbeck is a human and environmental health researcher, with extensive experience in science communication and program management.

We thank you, Julie, for your continued leadership!



## **Jennifer Gray, PhD, MPP GEH LAB Board Secretary**

Dr. Gray is a Professor in the Public Health Program at Northern Illinois University, College of Health and Human Sciences.

We are so grateful for Jennifer, our longest standing board member, for her 10 years of commitment and service to GEH LAB!



# Get Involved

donate

<https://gehlab.org/donate>



join the team

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