

NCD Alliance Candidate Profile Booklet

General Assembly 2025

Candidates for 2025-2027 NCDA President-Elect, General Board of Directors and Lived Experience Board of Directors

Background

The next General Assembly meeting of the NCD Alliance will be held virtually on Tuesday 6 May 2025. At the General Assembly, Founding and Full members will elect the President-Elect, seven (7) general Board of Directors members and one (1) lived experience Board of Directors for the term 2025-2027. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document can be found [here](#), which outlines the nominations and shortlisting process, as well as background information on the size of the Board, and the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors and President-Elect.

This document presents the profile of all candidates for President-Elect, General and Lived Experience Board to inform NCDA members for the election process. The information contained in each of the candidates' profile has been provided by the candidates themselves, and it is intended exclusively for NCDA members. Candidates were required to answer the same questions and adhere to the same maximum word count. Their responses were not edited.

A few important points to note:

- The NCD Alliance Board is composed of 14 seats, including the President and President-Elect. At the 2025 General Assembly meeting, our members will elect **1 President-Elect**, along with **7 general board members** and **1 lived experience board member**.
- This does not include the four permanent seats of the Founding Members (WHF, UICC, IDF and The Union), which are appointed by the Founding members themselves, rather than elected by members. The appointed Founding Member representatives for the term 2025-2027 are provided below, so that members can consider these within the context of your decisions on voting for the other Board candidates:
 - Union for International Cancer Control - Cristiana Fonseca, UICC Board Member and Head of Capacity Building, Portuguese League Against Cancer, Portugal.
 - The International Union Against TB and Lung Disease - Cassandra Kelly-Cirino, Executive Director, The International Union Against TB and Lung Disease, Switzerland.
 - International Diabetes Federation - Jackie Maalouf, IDF Vice-President and Founder and President of DiaLeb, Lebanon.
 - World Heart Federation - Fausto Pinto, WHF Past President and Professor of Cardiology, Portugal.
- The NCD Alliance Nominations Committee met to review the nominations and developed a strong and representative slate of candidates to put forward to our members at the General Assembly. The Committee took into consideration the criteria set out in the [Nominations Policy](#) for the 3 categories, alongside consideration for a balance of geographies, gender, skills and backgrounds. In addition, the Committee also considered the need to balance continuity and renewal of the Board of Directors.
- There are 2 candidates shortlisted for President-Elect, 14 candidates shortlisted for General Board Member and 3 candidates for lived experience Board Members.

Candidates for 2025-2027 NCDA President-Elect, General Board of Directors and Lived Experience Board of Directors

Candidates for President-Elect

(alphabetical order by surname of candidate)

Eva Njenga, Former Chair and Founding Member, NCD Alliance Kenya, Kenya 3

Saunthari Somasundaram, President and Medical Director, National Cancer Society Malaysia and Co-Chairperson, NCD Malaysia (NCDM), Malaysia 4

Candidates for general Board Member

(alphabetical order by surname of candidate)

Jennifer Bae, Executive Director of Global Innovation, American College of Cardiology, USA 5

Lara Bloom, CEO and President, The Ehlers-Danlos Society, UK 6

Beatriz Champagne, Executive Director, Coalición Latinoamérica Saludable / Healthy Latin America Coalition (CLAS), Argentina 7

Ratna Devi, CEO, Board Member and Trustee, Dakshama Health and Education and Founding Board Member, Healthy India Alliance (HIA), India 8

Dr Jaime Galvez Tan, Lead Convenor, Healthy Philippines Alliance, Philippines 9

Stefan Islandi, Director, Danish NCD Alliance (DNCA), Denmark 10

Ishu Kataria, Senior Public Health Researcher, RTI India, India 11

Isabel Mestres, CEO, City Cancer Challenge (C/CAN), Spain 12

Zied Mhirsi, Board Member, Eastern Mediterranean NCD Alliance (EM-NCDA), Tunisia 13

Joseph Mucumbitsi, Chair, Rwanda NCD Alliance and President, East Africa NCD Alliance (EANCA), Rwanda 14

Haruka Sakamoto, Senior Manager, Health and Global Policy Institute, Japan 15

Verónica Schoj, Vice President, Food and Nutritional Programs Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA), Argentina 16

Pubudu Sumanasekara, Consultant, Sri Lanka Alcohol and Drug Information Centre (ADIC), Sri Lanka 17

Laura Tucker-Longworth, Member, Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC), Belize 18

Candidates for lived experience Board Member

(alphabetical order by surname of candidate)

Chikhulupiro Stanley Ng'ombe, Project Officer, NCD Alliance Malawi, Malawi 19

Emily Ong, Board Member, Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI), Singapore 20

Mohammed Seyam, Post Graduate Candidate UCL, Eastern Mediterranean NCD Alliance (EM-NCDA), State of Palestine 21

Candidate for NCDA President-Elect

(alphabetical order by surname of candidate)



Eva Njenga
Former Chair and Founding Member
NCD Alliance Kenya
Kenya

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

I have served on the NCDA board for the last 4 years during which time I have become passionate of working with likeminded people in matters NCDS. The vision and Mission of NCDA where everyone has the opportunity for a healthy life, is what I wholly believe in and has been committed on advocating for all my years as a physician endocrinologist and a champion on NCDs in my country, regionally and globally as a member of NCDA board.

It has been satisfying to be a part of this movement and would like to continuing impacting on this as long as possible. As a member of the Board of Directors , I have a platform to advocate even more strongly on policies that will help us achieve the vision of the Alliance both at home and globally.

The NCDA board has management team that is committed to implementing the Board Policies which makes it a joy to work with the team. Being on the board also gives me the opportunity to learn from other board members on what is happening in the regions they come from, the successes, and challenges they have encountered in implementing projects that impact on the burden of NCDs . I would like to continue strengthening Civil Societies as we fight the growing burden of NCDS.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA President-Elect?

Having served on the NCDA board, now on a second term, I have worked with two Presidents of the Alliance and during this time I have learnt what works and how to positively interact with different professionals to achieve goals that the board sets up.

I have served in committees of the board as a member and as a Chair of Partnership and Membership subcommittee and I feel that has equipped me well in contributing to the functions of the board. I have broad knowledge on the impact of NCDs globally having been a champion for NCDs in my country and regionally for the last ten years. I remain actively engaged in community based education on NCDS prevention and management prioritizing empowerment of people living with NCDs.

My contribution in this area has impacted global health governance to amplify the voices of persons living with NCDs.

I have extensive experience in governance and leadership which is essential in advancing the NCDs agenda.

I have gathered immense experience in leadership as founding director Kenya NCD Alliance and serving as the chair of the same for several years and during my tenure as chair I played a pivotal role in it's growth and it's impact on the NCD space including shaping the National Strategy for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2021-2026.

I value National, Regional and Global partnerships that advance the fight in NCDs .

Biography

Dr. Njenga has been in medical practice for more than 20 years and holds a MMed from the University of Nairobi. She also has Certificate in Endocrinology and Diabetology from the University of New Castle Upon Tyne-UK and in Social Medicine and Medical Anthropology from Harvard University. She has formerly worked at several Public Hospitals in Kenya, and been a lecturer in one of the Medical Schools in Kenya. Former Chair of Kenya NCD Alliance, Former Chair Kenya Medical Practioners and Dentists Council,

She is a member of the American Diabetes Association, East Africa Diabetes Study group, Kenya Medical Association and Kenya Association of Physicians Member of Kenya Diabetes Study Group, Founder Director of Diabetes Management & Information Centre and many other professional Bodies.

Currently a Member of the Board of Directors of NCDA for the second term., Board Director of Equity Life Assurance Kenya

Puts patients first in all aspects of NCD's management.



Saunthari Somasundaram

President and Medical Director, National Cancer Society Malaysia
and Co-Chairperson, NCD Malaysia (NCDM)
Malaysia

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

Serving two terms on the NCDA Board has deepened my understanding of the complexities of our global mission. I firmly believe in the important role that the Board – and more broadly, the NCDA – plays in shaping appropriate policies and plans in the management of NCDs from a global perspective. My belief in its charter is the reason I would like to continue with my Board participation as President-Elect.

My 20-year career in the control of NCDs – as a clinician, advocate, and policy advisor – has consistently focused on translating lived experiences into effective interventions and policy change. Through implementing solutions and serving on the boards of local and global cancer and NCD organisations, I’ve seen the power of unity in achieving health equity. If we are to achieve health for all, all of us must be for health – regardless of disease, background, or role.

As President-Elect, I will bring these experiences to support NCDA’s vision. My approach is simple: global issues must meet local needs. This means every step toward strengthening global governance and policy must be grounded in real-life community experiences and shaped by the voices of people living with NCDs.

The NCDA Board has immense potential to ensure that global priorities match local realities – balancing equity, strategy, and common goals across the NCD spectrum. I am committed to contributing my governance experience, regional perspective, and grassroots-driven approach to help steer the Alliance through its next phase – ensuring it remains inclusive, impactful, and bold in advancing health for everyone.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA President-Elect?

My time served on the NCDA Board has made me understand and appreciate its core values, mission, and strategic outlook. As a candidate for President-Elect, I bring leadership forged from extensive global experience, as well as internal NCDA expertise gained through chairing the governance, and serving on the finance and membership subcommittees.

My leadership style is rooted in collaboration and inclusivity, fostering environments where innovative ideas can thrive while prioritising accountability and transparency. I am dedicated to evidence-based practices, ensuring that we develop sustainable solutions tailored to both local and global contexts.

One example is the Lung Health Resolution, proposed by the Malaysian government and driven in partnership with NCSM and NCD Malaysia. Aimed at minimising the global burden of lung-related diseases, the resolution has secured support from WHO and nearly 20 countries across both high- and low-to-middle-income settings, to be tabled in 2025.

I bring a deep understanding of the implementation challenges and opportunities that exist across countries of varying income levels. My leadership roles in national and global organisations including the UICC, NCDA and C/Can have equipped me with the perspective and commitment to serve and unite.

My experience in strengthening people-centred national and global capacity, including building civil society organisations, lived experience networks, and advocacy platforms, has shaped my belief that equity must drive everything we do.

As President-Elect, I am ready to support the NCDA’s next phase with engaged, inclusive leadership – bridging global vision with local action to advance health for all.

Biography

Dato’ Dr Saunthari Somasundaram brings over two decades of experience in cancer and non-communicable disease (NCD) control, with a deep understanding of both global and developing health systems. Her leadership focuses on aligning efforts across universal health coverage, with expertise in governance, financing, and accountability.

She holds key roles in national and international organisations, building partnerships across government, private, and civil society sectors. As an advisor to the Malaysian Ministry of Health, she has supported the integration of NCDs into UHC policy and strengthen civil society mobilisation.

She currently serves as President and Medical Director of the National Cancer Society of Malaysia (NCSM), and as Co-Chairperson of NCD Malaysia. She is a board member of the NCD Alliance (NCDA), City Cancer Challenge Foundation (C/Can), and formerly of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC).

For her services, she was conferred the title Dato’ by HRH, The Sultan of Perak, Malaysia.

Candidates for general Board Member

(alphabetical order by surname of candidate)



Jennifer Bae
Executive Director of Global Innovation,
American College of Cardiology
USA

Why would you like to be on the NCD Board of Directors?

I would be honored to join the NCD Alliance Board in support of its mission to “unite civil society for action on NCDs... leaving no one behind,” as I feel I can provide tangible value to the execution of the 2021-2026 NCD Strategic Plan and support NCD Alliance during the HLM at UNGA 2025 through a focus on health workforce issues. With respect to Prevention and Care, we design programs like the NCD Academy which support equitable access to prevention, screening and care in the communities where people live and work. On Financing, I have experience with multilaterals and government funders but can also lead on the importance of data to support financing requests. With respect to Community Engagement, my experience running global public health programs has taught me the importance of early engagement with a community to assure programs fit local needs and are sustainable. I have also learned that and orientation toward Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, including emphasizing lived experience, supports broader thinking and better solution development. Much of the work I lead is dependent on Collaboration, with the need to communicate clearly to articulate a problem and then work together, valuing others’ unique contributions, to solve it. This articulation also supports Accountability, the ability to solve unforeseen problems, and to drive Results. I believe a position on the Board provides me a channel to bring my abilities to bear on the organization’s strategic direction in support of a mission I deeply believe in.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCD Board of Directors?

I bring a unique combination of experiences to achieving NCD Alliance’s goals. I have eighteen years’ experience in global health, having developed national and global policy frameworks for pandemic preparedness capacity building, and collaborated with local partners and funders from third countries to achieve goals. I lived and worked supporting global health programs in Indonesia and China, and remotely led global program implementation in other regions, including some affected by a legacy of war and instability. I learned the importance of understanding the local culture and have a track record of respect, clear communication, aligning on shared priorities.

I understand how governments think about health funding and believe that current funding challenges can be partially addressed through integrated care by better leveraging existing health resources as attending to gaps in the system. As a woman in technology, I lead the ACC’s innovation strategy and investment portfolio, which seeks to close gaps in care access. I’ve learned the importance of mentorship and inclusion of underrepresented groups to solve pressing problems. It has also filled me with optimism that technology, when thoughtfully constructed and equitably deployed, can be a powerful tool to expand the reach of clinicians and to engage patients in their care from their community. The combination of my experiences in policy, programs, financing, technology, expat living and partnership, and my focus on mentorship and development make me a unique candidate; I hope to leverage those experiences as a member of the NCD Alliance Board.

Biography

Jennifer Bae, MHA, is the Executive Director of Global Innovation at the American College of Cardiology. She oversees ACC Global Programs, contributes to innovation strategy, and manages ACC’s venture fund focused on expanding access to care. Jennifer leads her organization to contribute to stronger health systems worldwide through education for the primary care and specialist workforce, data to measure disease burden and care quality, and technology to support care access.

Prior to joining the College, she worked for ten years in global health with a focus on pandemic preparedness, working within and between governments. She led direct public health capacity building and served on delegations to multilateral meetings. She also has a background in health care consulting at the Advisory Board Company.

Jennifer holds a Master of Health Services Administration and Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Michigan. She has language skill in Spanish, Bahasa, and Mandarin.



Lara Bloom
CEO and President, The Ehlers-Danlos Society
UK

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

I would be honoured to serve on the NCDA Board of Directors to advance inclusive, patient-driven responses to the global NCD crisis. As someone living with a complex, chronic condition, I understand first-hand the barriers faced by millions navigating fragmented health systems — particularly those with under-recognised or multisystemic diseases.

Through my work as CEO of The Ehlers-Danlos Society, Vice-Chair of IAPO, and Board Member of GA UK, I have led global efforts to elevate the voice of the patient across research, policy, and education. I am also a Professor of Practice at Penn State College of Medicine, specialising in patient engagement and global collaboration. These roles have shown me the urgent need to integrate lived experience at the heart of decision-making — not as a token gesture, but as a strategic imperative.

NCDA's mission resonates deeply with me. The organisation's commitment to equity, accountability, and meaningful participation aligns with my own values and professional track record. I believe I can contribute both governance experience and grassroots insight, particularly in championing underrepresented and intersectional patient communities.

If elected, I will work to strengthen NCDA's civil society partnerships, ensure that PROMs and patient-reported outcomes help shape system-level accountability, and advocate for health systems that enable true social participation. My vision is a world where people living with NCDs lead the change — and where health is defined not only by survival, but by dignity, autonomy, and quality of life.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors?

I bring a unique blend of lived experience, strategic leadership, and global advocacy that aligns with NCDA's mission and priorities. Having worked across sectors, I understand the importance of uniting patient communities, policymakers, clinicians, and researchers to drive sustainable, equitable change in NCD care and prevention.

As CEO of a global patient organisation, I lead international programmes focused on education, research, and policy influencing. I've built cross-border coalitions, engaged with WHO and UN agencies, and driven impactful campaigns that centre the voices of people living with chronic and multisystemic conditions.

My governance experience includes serving as Vice-Chair of the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations and Board Member of GA UK, where I have contributed to strategy development, risk management, and accountability frameworks. Additionally, as Professor of Practice at Penn State College of Medicine, I support initiatives that build capacity in patient engagement and global collaboration.

I have a track record of fostering partnerships across cultures and disciplines, ensuring inclusion of underserved and underrepresented communities. My approach is always collaborative, values-driven, and impact-focused.

I believe that a strong Board must reflect the diversity and reality of the NCD community. I offer not only professional expertise but deep empathy, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to equity and meaningful participation. I'm ready to contribute actively to NCDA's strategic goals and help shape a future where people living with NCDs are at the centre of every solution.

Biography

Lara Bloom is a global advocate and leader in the rare disease community, with over 15 years of experience advancing the rights and recognition of people living with chronic and complex conditions. As CEO of The Ehlers-Danlos Society, she leads international efforts in research, education, and advocacy for those affected by Ehlers-Danlos syndromes and related disorders.

Diagnosed with EDS at age 24, Lara brings lived experience to her leadership, driving equity, awareness, and systemic change. She serves as Vice-Chair of the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO) and as a Board Member of GA UK, contributing to global strategy, governance, and patient representation.

Lara has built strong cross-sector alliances and influenced policy on a global scale. In 2020, she was appointed Professor of Practice in Patient Engagement and Global Collaboration at Penn State College of Medicine. Her work continues to shape more inclusive, participatory, and person-centred health systems worldwide.



Beatriz Champagne
 Executive Director, Coalición Latinoamérica Saludable /
 Healthy Latin America Coalition (CLAS)
 Argentina

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

Having participated in many activities with NCDA, I hope to continue to contribute as a member of the Board of Directors. I can be useful in several ways.

1. Using my knowledge of civil society governance, I hope to help NCDA continue to be an effective, respected global organization, building capacity for NCD prevention and control, and meeting the needs of its members.
2. Having worked extensively in Latin America and the Caribbean, I can be a good representative for my region. Examples: helped develop NCD advocacy networks that have contributed to the region's successes in policy change, such as front of package food labeling, reducing the consumption of alcohol, and tobacco control. Supported the organization of coalitions and alliances, at the national and regional level, to advance and defend health policies in different countries, address issues of industry influence, conflicts of interest, regional agenda setting, communication, and capacity building. CLAS seeks funding to support its members.
3. Being a member of the WHO Civil Society working group, WOF, GAPA, among other groups, I am sensitive to the complexities and diversity of situations across the globe. It is important to encourage exchange with others to help us all learn and grow. Example: in Latin America we applied learnings from Thailand to reach high level politicians, and from Africa to reduce alcohol consumption.
4. CLAS facilitates an active group of People with Lived Experience and a Youth group that advance NCD priorities from their own perspectives, essential part of our community.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors?

I have contributed to the NCDA community for many years through CLAS, the Coalition for Americas' Health, which is the NCDA's regional member for Latin America (LA). As executive director, I am familiar with issues of governance, financial management, public relations, and membership engagement.

Accomplishments: 1st tobacco virtual network in LA, capacity building events to advance FCTC policies,

presided over 5 regional tobacco or health conferences, policy research, 7 journalism contests, national smoking cessation strategy & training of healthcare professionals, researched tobacco economy in Argentina and illicit trade in Mercosur, PI CARMELA study of risk factors in LA, salt reduction Consortium. With partners, currently developing a Community of Practice for healthy and sustainable food systems called COLANSA. Policy Brief on Front of Pack Labeling and on Alcohol and Cardiovascular Diseases with World Heart Federation. Promoting finance-public health dialogue. Supporting population-based strategies in Universal Health Coverage. Previously I was Executive Director of the InterAmerican Heart Foundation 1995-2017.

This past year I have become even more committed to strengthening the voices and actions of persons that live with an NCD having supported my husband Tony through recovery from an aggressive cancer that turned both of our lives upside down. It has been a difficult path that has not yet ended.

My superpower: abundant energy and a work ethic that has helped me through many challenges. I hope to actively represent the NCDA and its members and be a responsible actor at Board meetings.

Biography

Beatriz Champagne has been dedicated to the prevention & control of NCDs in the Americas with the Healthy Americas' Coalition (CLAS). CLAS promotes & defends policies for good nutrition, physical activity, tobacco & alcohol control. CLAS has 200+ member organizations and provides a coherent response from civil society on policy issues. As part of COLANSA, she supports advocacy for healthy and sustainable food systems. She is past Chair of the WHF Advocacy Committee. Having been born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and having grown up there, Beatriz's roots and heart are in the developing world.

2009 Luther L. Terry Award for Exemplary Leadership in Tobacco Control, 2017 Sharjah NCD Advocacy Award, 2018 WHO World No Tobacco Day Award. BS summa cum laude U. of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, MS and Ph.D. Rutgers University, New Jersey.



Ratna Devi

CEO, Board Member and Trustee, Dakshama Health and Education and Founding Board Member, Healthy India Alliance (HIA)
India

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

NCDA is an unique organisation positioned strategically to bring a change for NCDs and help various stakeholders work towards achieving the SDG goals. I am deeply committed to addressing the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health that drive NCDs. My goal is to support the Alliance in strengthening global advocacy, promoting multi-sectoral collaboration, and ensuring equitable access to prevention and treatment services. With a strong commitment to global health equity and NCD prevention, I believe my expertise, leadership experience, and passion for policy advocacy can contribute significantly to the Alliance’s mission.

I have the following relevant experience and expertise

- Public Health Leadership: Over 25 of experience in global health programs, NCD prevention, and health policy.
- Advocacy and Policy Influence: A track record of engaging with governments, international agencies, and civil society organizations to advance public health policies with previous experience in International Charities.
- Strategic Governance: Experience serving on boards of health-focused organizations, contributing to strategic planning and governance both Nationally and Internationally
- Health Equity and Community Engagement: Deep understanding of the intersection of NCDs, poverty, and social determinants of health, with experience working with underserved populations.

I believe I can contribute to the board by

- Strengthening global and regional advocacy for NCD prevention and control.
- Expanding partnerships with governments, the private sector, and civil society.
- Enhancing the Alliance’s strategic direction and governance effectiveness.
- Working with Bilateral and Multilateral agencies

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors?

I bring in an unique intersection of a being a public health physician, understanding of global health and Non Communicable diseases and a lived experience. Combined with over 30 years of experience in National and Global health issues, I believe I can contribute meaningfully in driving NCDAs mission to improve access and make treatments for NCDs available to everyone in need. My experience of working with WHO- Nationally, regionally and in Geneva will add value technically as well as in bringing other UN agencies and multilateral organisations working on NCDs to the table for discussion and partnerships. I have travelled widely on work and understand multicultural contexts and work settings as well as political and geographical influences that drive the NCD epidemic. My experience on International boards will bring in strong governance skills, strategic plans and technical products that can help drive the mission of NCDA forward in a meaningful, impactful and resource optimised way. I am a good negotiator and can address complex problems breaking them into small understandable bits and help find solutions. I am a people person thriving in teams and can step back or lead as necessary.

Biography

A medical doctor, public health and management professional, Dr Ratna Devi brings more than 30 years of experience working to improve health outcomes in India, South East Asia and globally; Her focus has been on Health system strengthening, specifically policy Analysis, Quality assurance, institutional capacity building and Advocacy. In her leadership roles she has led her organisations strategic plans, risk management strategies and business plans. In her role as the Board member and Chair of International organisations, she has also dealt with governance, international charity law and has successfully established two new entities in one year. She is a recognised speaker and author having represented her organisations at various platforms, including WHO, WIPO, UN and other agencies. She is also a published author for scientific research articles as well as opinion pieces and op eds in leading local and global media.



Dr Jaime Galvez Tan
 Lead Convenor
 Healthy Philippines Alliance
 Philippines

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

While working in remote rural communities and having the opportunity to work at national levels, NCDs have always been increasing in terms of mortality in the past 5 decades of my medical practice. The situation in the Philippines is similar to other countries of the same socio-economic level. Being a member of the NCDA Board of Directors will give me the opportunity to alert global partners on the iniquities and unacceptable quality of care for people with NCD especially among the poor. So far, very few efforts have been given to help to prevent of NCDs as well as promote of healthy behaviors and lifestyles. Therefore the exchange of experiences in both policy and community action will enhance programs and policy directions in the Philippines, strengthening linkages with international institutions like universities, academe, and civil society groups. This also means opening up a new horizon of opportunities to really help people living with NCDs.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors?

My work experience — worked in government as Undersecretary and eventually Secretary of the Department of Health in 1995; worked 10 years in the grassroots, serving far flung rural areas; currently in the board of 12 civil society NGOs in the Philippines working among the marginalized communities. I was a Professor of the University of the Philippines College of Medicine; Vice Chancellor for Research of the University of the Philippines Manila and Executive Director of the National Institutes of Health Philippines 2002-2005. I also served as Regional Adviser in Health and Nutrition for East Asia and the Pacific Region of UNICEF in Bangkok in 1996. I have worked with WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, ILO, World Bank, ADB, AUSAID, JICA, E.U., GTZ, USAID.

Right after medical internship, I initiated the community-based health programs in Leyte and Samar with the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines (1975-78). I was Assistant Professor of the U.P. School of Health Sciences in Leyte, pioneering the stepladder curriculum for health sciences education. I was National Training Director of AKAP, an NGO involved in community based tuberculosis control 1978-80; Project Director of Health & Development Mindanao, mainly Davao, Agusan and Cotabato 1981-83; UNICEF Manila National Program Officer for urban basic services, nutrition, children in especially difficult circumstances, 1985-1992.

Biography

Doc Jimmy has the rare combination of the following expertise: solid grassroots community work in far flung doctorless rural areas; national and international health planning and programming, a faculty of colleges of medicine and health sciences; clinical practice combining North American European medicine with Asian and Filipino traditional medicine; national health policy development, national health field operations management, private sector health business development, research management and local government health development. He has worked with NGOs, international development agencies, the academe and government agencies. He is also an advocate of Philippine medicinal plants and has formulated various concoctions of herbal medicine.



Stefan Islandi
 Director, Danish NCD Alliance (DNCDA)
 Denmark

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

The world is navigating deeply challenging times - and that, sadly, is an understatement.

Respect for scientific facts is dwindling, and development funding is being replaced by funding for arms - just to mention a few of the most depressing facts. In times like these, there are no true winners - and, as always, those with the least suffer the most.

Throughout my career, I have been committed to improving the lives of some of the most vulnerable populations in low-resource settings, particularly across Africa and Southeast Asia. I firmly believe that one of the most pressing development issues we face today is the growing burden of NCDs. Empowering PLWNCDs and promoting locally led development must be at the heart of our response.

I cannot think of a more important platform from which to fight NCDs than the NCDA Board of Directors.

I am committed to contributing meaningfully to the fight against NCDs, particularly in the Global South. Advancing the global NCD agenda requires collaboration and strong partnerships. My key priority will be to strengthen NCD services at the primary health care level. Far too often, I have seen primary health clinics without trained staff, essential equipment, or access to life-saving medications for NCDs.

In addition, I will work to foster closer collaboration between the NCD movement and the disability movement. The link between NCDs and disability is clear and two-directional - and both movements share common goals, especially the urgent need for increased investment in health systems.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors?

I believe I am an excellent candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors for several key reasons. As the Director of the Danish NCD Alliance, I have gained deep insights into the diverse NCD challenges across various settings. A key part of our work has been supporting seven East African NCD Alliances - both national and regional - from their inception. Partly through my fundraising efforts, we have secured stable, long-term funding, contributing to their tremendous success.

Additionally, I currently serve on the board of CISU, Denmark's largest civil society network, comprising over 300 members and generating an annual turnover of more than USD 50 million. This role has further honed my leadership and organizational skills.

My career also includes extensive diplomatic experience with both the UN and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where I developed strong negotiation and diplomatic skills - assets I will bring to the NCDA Board.

However, I believe my most valuable strength is my in-depth, firsthand understanding of health challenges in developing countries and my experience working with volunteers. With over a decade of Red Cross experience in Africa (managing dozens of development projects and emergency operations) and, alongside more than 15 years living and working in developing countries, I bring a grounded, practical understanding of the issues.

Lastly, my personal experience as a parent of a PLWNCD gives me a profound understanding of the struggles within the health system. Lived experience is irreplaceable, and I bring this perspective to my work.

Biography

Stefan Islandi holds a Master's degree in Development Studies and Public Administration from Roskilde University (Denmark) and University of Edinburgh (Scotland). He is Director of the Danish NCD Alliance, which brings together some of Denmark's largest patient organizations. With over 25 years of experience in development and humanitarian work, Stefan began his career with UNDP in Laos, before serving five years as a diplomat with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, followed by leadership roles within the Red Cross. He has spent five years in Southeast Asia and a decade in Africa. A significant part of his time in Africa was as Head of Region for Danish Red Cross in East and the Horn of Africa, where he led large teams and worked closely with governments and hundreds of dedicated volunteers. He has operated in numerous African countries and led emergency operations in some of the world's most fragile regions.



Ishu Kataria
Senior Public Health Researcher, RTI India
India

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

As a passionate advocate for the prevention and control of NCDs, I am seeking re-election to the NCDA Board to continue amplifying the voices of young people and people living with NCDs (PLWNCDs), particularly in low- and middle-income countries. I bring an intersectional perspective rooted in both research and advocacy, with a strong commitment to advancing equitable policies in cancer and broader NCD care.

As a Visiting Researcher at the Institute of Cancer Policy at King’s College London and a Commissioner on the Lancet Commission on Women and Cancer, I have championed critical issues such as early detection, stigma, and health system gaps in cancer care. My continued engagement with WHO and global youth networks has fueled my advocacy for the meaningful inclusion of PLWNCDs in the NCD agenda and for greater equity in cancer and NCD prevention. This includes my leadership roles with WHO’s Youth Council and the Young Professionals Chronic Disease Network.

Through the Healthy India Alliance, I have supported the development of India’s civil society agenda on NCDs and led policy advocacy on air pollution, healthy food systems, and youth-focused action. As we approach the 2025 UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs, I believe the NCD Alliance can play a transformative role in elevating cancer and youth health on the global agenda.

I would be honored to continue serving on the Board to advance intergenerational leadership, evidence-based policy translation, and regional prioritization of cancer, climate, and UHC—ensuring PLWNCDs remain central to decision-making.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors?

I bring over a decade of cross-cutting experience in NCD prevention, cancer research, and youth-led advocacy both at the national and global level by working at the intersection of implementation science, health systems, and equity.

My work spans leading research and implementation projects in adolescent NCDs, cancer prevention and control, and equitable access to care. I currently serve as a member of the NCD Working Group of the WHO Youth

Council, where I guide global engagement strategies for young people and people living with NCDs. Through my coordination of the Young Professionals Chronic Disease Network (YP-CDN), I support youth-led action across various LMICs.

Nationally, my work with the Healthy India Alliance has supported the development of India’s civil society agenda for NCDs. Through initiatives like Our Views, Our Voices, I have engaged with people living with NCDs and coauthored scientific pieces on topics such as the impact of high-fat, salt, and sugar (HFSS) foods on young people and the dual burden of COVID-19 and NCDs. I have also worked closely with the NCD Alliance to advocate for NCDs and train media personnel on NCDs. My strategic, technical, and interpersonal skills make me well-suited for continued service on the NCDA Board.

I aim to strengthen the presence of LMIC voices, especially young changemakers and PLWNCDs, in regional and global spaces. With a special focus on cancer care, youth leadership, and the evolving climate-health nexus, I am committed to shaping NCDA’s next chapter with bold, equity-driven vision.

Biography

Dr Ishu Kataria is a Senior Public Health Researcher at RTI International and Visiting Researcher at the Institute of Cancer Policy, King’s College London. She holds a PhD in Public Health and Nutrition and works on NCD prevention, cancer control, and youth health. She has experience in developing and implementing programs focused on adolescent NCDs, cancer prevention, and mental health. Dr Kataria is a member of the NCD Working Group on the WHO Youth Council and the Global Coordinator of the Young Professionals Chronic Disease Network. She also served as a Commissioner on the Lancet Commission on Women and Cancer and works closely with the Healthy India Alliance to support civil society advocacy on NCDs in India. Her work integrates equity and policy engagement, with a strong commitment to representing LMIC perspectives, voices of young people and PLWNCDs in the global NCD response.



Isabel Mestres
 CEO, City Cancer Challenge (C/CAN)
 Spain

Why would you like to be on the NCD Board of Directors?

Because I care; I deeply care that who you are and where you live should not define the care you receive. Leading City Cancer Challenge (C/Can) has shown me that real change happens through collaboration, local leadership, and practical solutions. On the NCD Board, I will bring hands-on experience from working in cities and countries across all income levels, always focused on delivering impact. I am committed to pushing for stronger advocacy, faster integration of NCDs into health and development agendas, and smarter, more diverse financing models. I will work to connect locally generated evidence with global policy, ensuring that community voices shape solutions - not the other way around. Beyond programmatic work, I also bring experience in building and running organizations: I co-founded C/Can from the ground up, establishing its full governance, operations, and a high-performing, impact-driven team, experience that I believe will be valuable for NCD and its members. Joining the Board is not about representing one disease or one perspective; it's about uniting efforts to achieve better outcomes for everyone affected by NCDs. Only together can we build stronger health systems for all!

What makes you a good candidate for the NCD Board of Directors?

With over 15 years of leadership experience in global health, I bring a deep understanding of the NCD community's needs, shaped by work across both high-income and low- and middle-income countries. Throughout my career, I have worked closely with diverse communities, governments, and health systems to implement sustainable, impactful solutions—and I am known for getting things done. My experience spans advocacy, strategic partnerships, program implementation, and successful resource mobilization efforts across public, private, and philanthropic sectors. This positions me well to contribute to NCD's efforts to strengthen investment and mobilize new resources for NCDs. I am also committed to actively supporting NCD's fundraising efforts to benefit the entire membership and build a stronger, united movement. I am dedicated to representing the interests of all communities affected by NCDs, advocating for integrated, equitable, and people-centered approaches. Believing strongly in collective action, I would bring energy, integrity, and practical leadership to advance NCD's mission for the broader NCD community.

Biography

Isabel is the CEO of City Cancer Challenge (C/Can), a leading city-based initiative supporting cities worldwide as they strive to enhance access to quality and equitable cancer care. C/Can inspires scalable community-led cancer care solutions, reshaping collaboration between the private and public sectors to design, plan, and implement effective strategies.

Passionate about advancing public health, Isabel was vital in founding C/Can and has played a pivotal role in transforming projects in 15+ cities into dynamic solutions for cancer care access. Previously, she held the position of Director of Partnerships at C/Can, and prior to that, she held leadership positions at the International Union for Cancer Control, driving membership growth and forging a successful public-private partnership model that resulted in a tenfold increase in income generation.

Isabel, a Barcelona native with an MBA from ESADE Business School, speaks multiple languages. She resides in Switzerland with her family and dogs.



Zied Mhirsi
Board Member, Eastern Mediterranean NCD Alliance (EM-NCDA)
Tunisia

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

I would like to serve on the NCDA Board of Directors to contribute to a more inclusive, collaborative, and effective global response to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). With over 15 years of experience in global health, I have worked across sectors and regions—designing and implementing advocacy strategies, engaging with policymakers, and mobilizing diverse stakeholders to advance NCD prevention and care.

My work has spanned regional and global levels, from leading national public health initiatives in Tunisia to facilitating multi-stakeholder platforms across the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond. I bring a strong commitment to health equity and a belief in the importance of translating global strategies into local impact. As a current Board Member of the Eastern Mediterranean NCD Alliance, I have helped shape regional priorities and build partnerships that reflect the voices and needs of communities often left out of global health conversations.

I believe the NCD Alliance plays a critical role in driving political will, coordinating action, and holding stakeholders accountable. I would be honored to contribute to its strategic direction, bringing both my professional expertise and lived experience from the MENA region and the Global South more broadly.

My goal is to help ensure that the Alliance continues to grow as a truly global movement—one that centers affected populations, supports regional leadership, and delivers measurable progress toward reducing the burden of NCDs worldwide.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors?

What makes me a strong candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors is my ability to connect across sectors, cultures, and disciplines to build momentum for change. I bring not only public health expertise but also deep experience in strategic communication, coalition-building, and organizational governance—all of which are critical for advancing NCDA's mission in a complex and evolving global health landscape.

I have a proven track record of building trust and collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including civil society organizations, youth networks, academic institutions, and private sector actors. I understand how to navigate political dynamics and elevate NCD priorities within broader development agendas.

Additionally, I offer the perspective of someone who has worked extensively in and with low- and middle-income countries, particularly in contexts of limited resources and competing priorities. I know how to advocate effectively, with cultural sensitivity and a focus on long-term impact.

As someone who has led and advised both grassroots initiatives and global campaigns, I can bring creative problem-solving, a strong sense of accountability, and a passion for inclusive leadership to the Board. I believe in NCDA's vision and am ready to contribute actively to its continued growth and global influence.

Biography

Dr. Zied Mhirsi is a trilingual (Arabic, French, English) public health expert with over 15 years of experience in global health, advocacy, and strategic communications. He currently serves as Vice President at Global Health Strategies, where he leads global and regional initiatives focused on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), health equity, and systems strengthening.

He is the Co-founder and President of the Tunisian Center for Public Health and has served on the Board of the Eastern Mediterranean NCD Alliance since 2018. Dr. Mhirsi has worked extensively across Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, leading multi-stakeholder partnerships, shaping policy agendas, and driving impactful public health campaigns.

With a background in medicine and public health, he brings a unique blend of technical expertise and strategic insight. He is committed to inclusive leadership, advancing regional voices, and accelerating global action to reduce the burden of NCDs worldwide.



Joseph Mucumbitsi
 Chair, Rwanda NCD Alliance and President, East Africa NCD Alliance (EANCDA)
 Rwanda

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

As a clinician with over 30 years of experience, I have dedicated the last 18 years to advocating for the prevention and control of cardiovascular diseases and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in sub-Saharan Africa. My extensive involvement with leading non-governmental organizations has contributed to the transformative power of advocacy, particularly inspired by the NCDA's inclusive approach that empowers civil society organizations (CSOs) and individuals living with NCDs.

I am motivated to join the NCDA Board to leverage my experience in regional advocacy and capacity building, ensuring that main NCDs affecting vulnerable populations are prioritized in health policies in sub-Saharan Africa and globally. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the urgent need for resilient health systems, revealing the vulnerabilities of our healthcare systems. I am eager to collaborate with like-minded organizations to address the impending NCD crisis in our region, focusing on innovative solutions and sustainable practices. Joining the NCDA Board would not only allow me to contribute to meaningful change but also provide an opportunity to learn from diverse perspectives in the global fight against NCDs, ultimately enhancing our collective impact.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors?

I am a strong candidate for the NCDA Board because I bring an extensive experience and proven track record in NCD advocacy and healthcare leadership. My background encompasses clinical practice, research, and policy development, equipping me with a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges we face in combating NCDs.

As a founding member and leader in various organizations focused on NCDs in sub-Saharan Africa including the Pan African Society of Cardiology and the African Heart Network, where I seat on the Governing Councils, as well as the African NCD Network and the NCD Alliance East Africa which I have been chairing as Vice-President and President the last six years, I have successfully mobilized NCD advocacy networks and built capacity among local organizations, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing.

I have successfully co-hosted regional and international conferences on NCDs like the first EAC Regional NCD Conference and the 2025 Global NCD Alliance Forum in Kigali, Rwanda, advocating for impactful policies and practices that address the unique needs of the populations.

My fluency in both English and French allows me to engage effectively across diverse communities, and can help enhance the NCDA's regional reach and impact.

My commitment to collaboration, coupled with my flexibility in fulfilling board responsibilities, ensure that I can contribute meaningfully to the NCDA's mission of improving health for people living with NCDs, particularly in underserved communities.

Biography

Prof. Joseph Mucumbitsi is a Chief Consultant Pediatrician and Cardiologist at King Faisal Hospital, Kigali, and an Honorary Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Rwanda. He holds an MMED in Pediatrics, a Fellowship in Pediatric Cardiology, and an MSc in Clinical Research from the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL), Belgium. As Rwanda's first Pediatric Cardiologist and Coordinator of the National Cardiac Surgery Program from 2006, he has led the development of cardiac care services in partnership with the Ministry of Health. Joseph is a longtime member of the Rwanda National Technical Working Group on NCDs, shaping national policy and guidelines. He is a Founder and President of the Rwanda Heart Foundation and the Rwanda NCD Alliance. A founding member of the NCD Alliance East Africa, he served as Vice-President and President until February 2025, leading significant progress in advocacy for NCDs across Rwanda and the East African Community.



Haruka Sakamoto
Senior Manager, Health and Global Policy Institute
Japan

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

I am deeply motivated to join the NCDA Board of Directors because I believe in the transformative power of multisectoral collaboration to tackle non-communicable diseases (NCDs) globally. Over the course of my career as a family physician in Japan, a policymaker at the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and a global working experience at the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office, I have witnessed firsthand how the convergence of clinical practice, policy development, and community engagement can drive remarkable improvements in public health. Japan's remarkable achievement in health and longevity is not solely the product of high-income status but also the result of long-standing, community-driven NCD prevention strategies established even before our economic boom. This experience has taught me that effective NCD control requires not just a top-down approach, but an organic collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including local communities.

I want to contribute to the NCDA Board because I am passionate about sharing Japan's valuable experiences and learning from the global community. The challenges of aging populations, fiscal constraints in healthcare, and health inequities are shared concerns worldwide. Being part of the Board would enable me to work alongside international experts to exchange insights, refine strategies, and jointly develop innovative solutions that can adapt to varied contexts. I am excited by the opportunity to help steer global efforts that not only prevent NCDs but also foster resilient health systems through inclusive, cross-sectoral partnerships.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors?

My diverse background in clinical medicine, health policy, and international consultancy uniquely positions me as a strong candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors. I began my career as a family physician in Japan, where I developed a deep understanding of patient-centered care and community health. Later, working at the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, I contributed to shaping national medical policies and strategies—many of which laid the groundwork for Japan's successful NCD

prevention initiatives that predate our high-income era. My five-year tenure as a consultant for the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office further broadened my perspective by allowing me to collaborate on strengthening primary health care and NCD strategies across diverse settings in the Asia-Pacific region.

Academically, I have pursued advanced degrees in health policy at Harvard University (Master) and the University of Tokyo (PhD), equipping me with rigorous analytical and research skills. This blend of clinical practice, governmental policy experience, international engagement, and academic grounding enables me to bridge the gap between evidence-based strategies and practical implementation. I understand the complexities of both top-down governmental approaches and bottom-up community initiatives, a dual perspective that is crucial for effective global NCD management. I am committed to fostering a culture of mutual learning and collaboration among stakeholders, making me a dedicated and effective contributor to the NCDA Board.

Biography

Haruka SAKAMOTO, MD MPH, PhD is a primary care physician and a senior manager at Health and Global Policy Institute. She got her M.D from Sapporo Medical University and worked as a physician at St Luke's International Hospital in Tokyo for several years. She then got a scholarship from the World Bank and got her MPH at the Harvard School of Public Health and got PhD in public health from the University of Tokyo in 2021. In the past, she worked at the international cooperation department, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan, where she was deeply involved in health policy activities in Japan. Her current research focuses on prevention and control of NCDs, health system strengthening, health care financing, and politics in global health. She's currently working as the 26th Associate Member of Japan Science Council, and visiting associate professor at the Graduate School of Public Health, St Luke's International University.



Verónica Schoj
 Vice President, Food and Nutritional Programs
 Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI)
 Argentina

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

With NCDA's leadership, our community has an unprecedented opportunity over the next years to permanently alter the global trajectory of NCDs. This opportunity is partly based on positive trends, such as the potential for new commitments and accountability — including through the United Nations High-level meeting on the prevention and control of NCDs and the promotion of mental health and well-being. The opportunity is also due to challenges that can no longer be ignored, such as disruptions in global health financing and governance. NCDA's role is crucial, both because of its enormous policy and technical leadership and because of the strength of its members who positioned the organization as a taught leader in the NCD agenda, globally. And last, but not least, my organization and I personally, share the values of the NCDA, where the protection of health as a human right, the equity lens incorporated into all policies, the promotion of evidence-based interventions, and the understanding that the determinants of health are not only social determinants, but also commercial determinants, are fundamental philosophical pillars that are invaluable and encourage me to be part of and contribute to the agenda and success of the NCDA. As a leader in an NCDA member organization working with NCDA to mobilize civil society and strengthen its ability to improve health outcomes around the world, I am eager to serve NCDA and its members directly so that we can take advantage of this opportunity together.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors?

I have dedicated my career to improving health and preventing deaths from NCDs. As a public health professional in the Global South as well as a leader in an NCDA member organization, I have firsthand experience of how important NCDA's work is to transforming country health systems and how vital members are to its success. I engage actively with NCDA, including as a member of the NCDA's Advisory Group for the development of a policy report on fiscal policies across noncommunicable disease (NCD) risk factors. I have contributed to initiatives across the NCDA's scope of work, including the Peer Learning

Advocacy Network, Accelerator trainings, the mapping of unhealthy commodity industries and NCDA's input to the Codex Alimentarius. I have extensive experience and a lifelong commitment to making NCD prevention, treatment and care more accessible, both from within government — including as the National Director of Health Promotion and NCD Control at the Ministry of Health of Argentina — and through civil society, at national and global level. In my current role leading the Food and Nutrition Policy Program for the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids' Global Health Advocacy Incubator I provide strategic leadership to promote de adoption and implementation of food policies, that in 2025 includes advocacy efforts in 30 low- and middle-income countries across the world. Drawing on this experience, I am committed to advancing the NCDA's policy and technical leadership so that we can improve NCD prevention and control worldwide.

Biography

Dr. Verónica Schoj is Vice President of Food and Nutrition Policy Program at the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids' Global Health Advocacy Incubator. She has 25 years of experience working on NCD issues, in both civil society and public administration. Most recently, she was the National Director of Health Promotion and NCD Control at the Ministry of Health of Argentina, where she oversaw more than ten national programs, including nutrition and obesity prevention, tobacco control, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. From 2007 to 2017, Dr. Schoj co-founded and served as Executive Director of the Interamerican Heart Foundation-Argentina (FIC Argentina), an NGO working on advocacy and research in non-communicable diseases. Previously, she was at the Family Medicine Department of the Hospital Italiano de Buenos Aires, where she coordinated the Smoking Cessation Clinic and integrated the Obesity Program. She is author +40 papers in peer-reviewed journals, and she is the recipient of multiple awards.



Pubudu Sumanasekara
Consultant, Sri Lanka Alcohol
and Drug Information Centre (ADIC)
Sri Lanka

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

I have a passion to design and implement innovative activities for NCD prevention and control in the global level and I believe that NCDA Board is the most suitable place for me to share my ideas and experience. Hope I can add value to the NCDA through the experience I gained as an academic, professional and activist with my previous work in local, regional, and global level especially in the field of alcohol, tobacco and other drug control and prevention. I strongly believe that there will be an opportunity to design innovative activities to prevent deaths and disabilities caused by NCD when I become a Board member of NCDA by using my work experience of community interventions, research and policy advocacy. I will be able to strengthen NCDA Board with my ability to work in different sectors such as community-based organizations, government institutions and corporate sector which will enriched NCD programmes in the future, As a good team player, I am eager to share my knowledge and experience with other directors to strengthen the NCD control mission in the global level.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors?

I am excited to contribute to the NCDA vision to control NCD's in the global level by adding my last 30 years' experience of working towards NCD prevention and control. As a representative of a developing country in the Asian region I believe that I can contribute to face the challenge of NCDs in the region.

I gained the knowledge and experience working with different contexts, cultures, and communities. I will be able to strengthen the existing NCDA programmes and design new interventions in the future. The results I achieved specially conceptualization, designing and implementing targeting young people will be an added advantage to the NCDA work in the coming years. I have actively engaged in community activities, research and policy advocacy in past may years in the local regional and global level. Through the achieved results in all the three areas I can contribute to improve the future interventions of NCDA.

Biography

Currently working as the consultant to alcohol and drug information centre (ADIC) Sri Lanka. Working as a visiting lecturer at University of Colombo Sri Lanka. Vice president of the largest alcohol prevention network Movendi International and a Board member of Global Alcohol Policy Alliance (GAPA). Closely engage with NCD alliance in Sri Lanka from the inception. Studied social work in India and Health promotion in Canada.

Have been actively engaged in NCD control work since 1995. especially the interventions focus on young population. Have done intensive interventions as an activist in the field and policy advocacy for alcohol and tobacco and other drug control. Have experience in working with the government institutions, corporate sector and extensively work with community-based organisations.



Laura Tucker-Longsworth
Member, Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC)
Belize

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

Since 2023, I have been serving as a Board Member for the NCD Alliance. During that period, I worked with dynamic men and women to strengthen, support and advance the mission, vision and goals of the NCDA. Board members contributed their vast knowledge and experience taking into account similarities and differences, culture and ethnicity, geopolitical environments and the socio economic nuances of the global communities who benefit from the work of the NCDA. Board members were also involved in key aspects of finance, governance, and other organizational matters. The NCDA provides leadership, financial support and guidance to select global communities, thereby building their capacities to elevate and accelerate their responses to NCD control. The Caribbean is disproportionately impacted by NCDs. We must increase our support for regional and national organizations to accelerate the implementation of country level strategies. We must work harder to breakdown siloes within the wider society, governments, and health systems that create barriers to NCD initiatives and services. We must increase engagements with our Caribbean communities on NCD Prevention strategies. We must focus on empowering our communities through health literacy. Civil societies must continue to sensitize our citizens on the negative influences of industry on policies necessary to reduce obesity, and address environmental and nutrition factors that place citizens at high risk for NCDs. We must increase lobbying efforts to influence leaders and policy makers to create budgets needed to prevent and control NCDs.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors?

I consider myself a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors because of my experience working at clinical, policy, and political levels regionally and nationally. Over the past two years, I gained considerable experience serving as an NCDA Board Member and understand key factors related to the economic, social, and commercial determinants of health that impact on the NCD epidemic. During my past position as Speaker of the House of Representative, I worked towards creating a more

inclusive, effective and open parliament and established the Belize Parliamentary Front against Hunger and Malnutrition. Over a period of 13 years I served on the Board of Directors of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC). We launched an “end cervical cancer” initiative in Belize in collaboration with the HCC through sponsorship from Direct Aid-Australia. I participated in meetings related to cervical cancer which included the launch of the regional Code of Cancer. I continue to support initiatives related to the prevention and control of cancer. Key successes include the successful launch of the HPV vaccine and establishment of formal arrangements with a neighbouring country for oncology services for Belizean children. We also launched sensitization initiatives to ban sugar sweetened beverages in school, addressed healthy foods for schools and highlighted the childhood obesity crisis. We also sensitized citizens and promoted the adoption of front of package labelling (FOPL). I am well poised to support NCDA activities and fulfil the obligations of an NCDA Board Member.

Biography

I hold a Master’s of Science degree in Nursing from the Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing, Loyola University Chicago, (Health Systems Management). I am the Chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee for the Nurses and Midwives Council of Belize. As Chairperson of the National AIDs Commission, I championed an Equal Opportunity Bill to protect the human rights of vulnerable citizens. I also served on the Board for Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS-a regional CARICOM organization. I served on the Board of Directors for the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) to address non-communicable diseases and represented the HCC at regional and international meetings. I was the Speaker of the House of Representatives (2017-2020), joining the ranks of only two other women Speakers in Belize. I am also the recipient of several awards for my contribution to health and nursing.

Candidates for lived experience Board Member

(alphabetical order by surname of candidate)



Chikhulupiro Stanley Ng'ombe

Project Officer, NCD Alliance Malawi
Malawi

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

I would like to join the NCDA as I believe it is a valuable opportunity to be able to make a difference in the NCD community and the NCDA as a whole. As a person with lived experience, I feel the need to change lives of those living with NCDs like myself. I have valued the achievements made by NCDA since the first time I heard of the organisation in 2016, as such I feel that there needs to be adequate participation of people with lived experience in the organisation. I also believe that the NCDA is a model organisation that promotes the agenda of people with lived experience, that has a listening ear to our challenges and responds to them amicably and adequately. I would love to continue to serve in my capacity as a lived experience person to ensure that the NCDA continues and that no interference from external parties divert its agenda and purpose. I have spent the past couple of months in my tenure as a board member on temporal status and most of this time was spent in proving to my peers that as people with lived experience we are there because we also have capability. Now I would like to continue in making the necessary policies and programmes for the much needed change.

What makes you a good candidate for the lived experience seat on the NCDA Board of Directors?

I have developed a lot of leadership skills in my time that are tuning to the needs of advocacy work, that create and build a face to the story while being able to make the necessary decisions and sacrifice. I am also blessed to have been trained in a number of areas by NCDA itself, I have also served and am serving in the Our Views Our voices committee. I have been able to gain the respect of both NCDA and people with lived experience and am currently in the perfect positioning to act as a bridge between NCDA and people with lived experience. I am also not afraid to speak the truth, and will do my best to ensure that in the policy making of NCDA there shall be no point any decision, policy or action be taken that undermines the value of people with lived experience. Most of all I believe and practice a leadership style of empathy and servanthood of which my time attached to the various activities with NCDA can attest to. I pledge to always put others in front of me and that also includes the millions with various NCDs in the world.

Biography

I am Chikhulupiro Stanley Ng'ombe, from Malawi, an LMICs in the Southern part of Africa. At 8 years old I was diagnosed with Leukaemia and epilepsy diagnosis after 3 months into chemotherapy as a side effect. Though our medical facilities do not offer state of the art medical care, All in all, I never allowed the condition to conquer me and I always live a full and joyous life. Early in my treatment doctors noticed my ability to talk and encourage fellow patients of all ages (something I must have got from my late mum). The doctors would use me to talk to other cancer patients and later various conditions. I set up a non-profit organisation called Cancer Survivors Quest in 2011, which is patient centred. We support patients in reducing out of pocket expenses, though we are not donor funded. Later in 2016 together with a couple of organisations we set up an NCD Alliance in Malawi.



Emily Ong

Board Member, Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI)
Singapore

Why would you like to be on the NCD Board of Directors?

I am impressed and inspired by the commitment level of NCD Alliance to elevating the voices of people living with NCDs through the “Our Views, Our Voices” initiative. As a reputable global organisation, it leads by example in promoting and implementing the WHO framework for meaningful engagement of people living with NCDs, mental health and neurological conditions. Hence, it would be an honour to serve on the NCD Alliance Board of Directors, which puts people with lived experience first and foremost, enabling them to reclaim their human rights and combating stigma and discrimination through people-led projects. Coming from the dementia community, I believe that being on the NCD Board of Directors will provide leverage in strengthening national leadership in dementia and promoting greater inclusion of dementia within their National NCD Framework. With 700 million people aged 65 and older worldwide, dementia numbers are expected to double by 2050. Dementia risk and protective factors are closely linked to noncommunicable diseases, and the integration of dementia into the NCD framework allows for a more holistic and coordinated approach to prevention, early detection, and care, like how other NCDs are managed. Furthermore, as a migrant living with NCD, I hope to help NCD advocacy networks in addressing the public health impact faced by refugees and migrants living with NCDs.

What makes you a good candidate for the lived experience seat on the NCD Board of Directors?

Having been an elected member with lived experience on the ADI Board of Directors and a former Board of Directors of Dementia Alliance International (DAI), I am familiar with the role of a board member.

I am an active advocate at local, regional, and global levels. I co-founded the Environmental Design Special Interest Group under DAI, an international community of experts with lived experience and technical experts, to advocate for dementia-inclusive environments to promote independence and dignity for people living with dementia. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I started an informal online peer-to-peer support group for people

living with dementia to maintain their social connections and well-being. This group continues to grow from strength to strength over the years. In championing the importance of meaningful involvement of people with lived experience, I was the first author of a book chapter, “The voice of people with dementia at the core of environmental design”, published under Taylor & Francis Group. I co-lead the initiative, “Living with dementia: Voices of Asia,” which is an eBook collection of 20 narratives from people living with dementia and care partners/carers from 13 countries in Asia. Additionally, I hold various roles in ADI and WHO to advance the rights of people living with dementia and ensure policies and practices are people-centred, culturally inclusive and “Nothing About Us, Without Us.” My ability to work with diverse cultures and get people together to achieve a common goal is the strength that makes me a suitable candidate for the position.

Biography

Since her diagnosis in 2017, Emily Ong has dedicated her life mission to advocating for the rights and inclusion of people living with cognitive impairment. Emily is known for her numerous works, such as the “Voices for Hope” advocacy program, “My Life, My Goals” cognitive rehabilitation self-help toolkit, consultative wayfinding works in public housing, public transportation hubs, and dementia care homes. She has published a few journal papers with others related to the participatory co-creation topic.

Born and raised in Sarawak, Malaysia, Emily strongly desires to collaborate with collaborators to address the healthcare challenges faced by people living with NCDs, depression, and dementia in the LMICs. Working with a few healthcare professionals from the public hospital in her hometown, she co-developed a dementia care education program for informal carers and healthcare workers to improve their knowledge and skills.



Mohammed Seyam
 Post Graduate Candidate UCL
 Eastern Mediterranean NCD Alliance (EM-NCDA)
 State of Palestine

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

As a person living with type 1 diabetes, a medical doctor, and a global health policy specialist, I have dedicated my life to championing the rights and wellbeing of people living with NCDs—particularly those most affected by conflict, displacement, and inequality. I want to serve on the NCDA Board of Directors to represent the lived experiences and aspirations of my community in the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond, and to help shape meaningful, inclusive, and actionable policies at the global level.

I believe deeply in the NCDA's mission, and I see this role as a unique opportunity to bring my perspective—as someone who has navigated both the realities of LMICs and the privileges of an HIC—to the forefront of decision-making. From coordinating emergency diabetes responses in Gaza and Lebanon, to contributing to WHO's regional frameworks, and mentoring youth across regions, I have witnessed how global frameworks can and must center lived experience to drive real, lasting change.

Joining the NCDA Board is not just a personal honour—it is a chance to give back, to serve, and to contribute to a vision where people living with NCDs are not only heard but meaningfully involved in shaping their futures. Together, I believe we can build more responsive systems, stronger communities, and a fairer world.

What makes you a good candidate for the lived experience seat on the NCDA Board of Directors?

I bring a unique and holistic perspective to the Board—rooted in my personal journey as someone living with type 1 diabetes, and enriched by my professional roles as a doctor, health systems researcher, policy developer, and community advocate. My lived experience has not only informed my passion but shaped my purpose.

Over the past years, I have worked with multiple global and regional organizations, including the WHO EMRO, Médecins Sans Frontières, T1International, IDF, and NCDA itself, where I am now a member of the Global Advisory Committee. I have spoken at international forums, supported grassroots health initiatives, and

contributed to major reports like the Lancet Commission on Type 1 Diabetes and global diabetes stigma consensus statements. I am equally comfortable sitting with policymakers as I am in clinics or community gatherings—bridging perspectives with empathy and strategy.

Having moved from Gaza to the UK, I carry a deep awareness of health disparities, and this fuels my advocacy for equity—particularly for those in humanitarian settings and LMICs. I've led youth initiatives, designed tools to support NCD care in crises, and mentored emerging advocates from across regions.

As a Board member, I will bring energy, integrity, and lived insight. I will champion the meaningful engagement of our community, push for practical, context-sensitive solutions, and work to ensure the NCDA remains a beacon of inclusive leadership. I am ready to serve, collaborate, and represent with humility and purpose.

Biography

Mohammed Seyam is a medical doctor from Gaza and a recent MSc graduate in Global Healthcare Management (Leadership) from University College London. He brings a unique combination of lived experience with type 1 diabetes, clinical training, and global health expertise to his advocacy work. Mohammed is a member of the Global Advisory Committee for the NCD Alliance's Our Views, Our Voices initiative and a Young Leader in Diabetes mentor with the International Diabetes Federation.

Passionate about equitable health systems, Mohammed has collaborated with WHO EMRO, MSF, and civil society actors to strengthen NCD care in humanitarian and low-resource settings. His work spans community engagement, policy development, and capacity building across the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond. Mohammed is deeply committed to advancing the rights, voices, and health of people living with NCDs—particularly those affected by conflict, displacement, and systemic injustice—by bridging local realities with global action.



**Accelerating action on NCDs to promote health,
protect rights and save lives**

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