

Two Day Certificate Course on Introduction to Global Health Diplomacy

As the world emerges from the long shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for diplomacy that bridges the gap between public health and global governance has never been more urgent. From vaccine equity to pandemic response coordination, climate-linked disease migration to global supply chain vulnerabilities, public health has vaulted into the highest corridors of international policymaking.

Recognising this shift, Policy Circle and Sustainable Policy Solutions Foundation are jointly offering a two-day, in-person certificate course titled “Introduction to Global Health Diplomacy”. Scheduled for August 7–8 at the India International Centre, New Delhi, the course seeks to equip the next generation of public health professionals, government officials, researchers, and international agency staff with the tools to understand—and influence—global health policy in an age of multipolar geopolitics.

Expanding frontiers of health diplomacy

Global health diplomacy is no longer the preserve of ministries of health alone. It now sits at the intersection of foreign affairs, national security, trade policy, humanitarian relief, and climate negotiations. Its expanding scope requires understanding the cross-sectoral stakes of multilateralism, data diplomacy, vaccine access negotiations, migration-linked healthcare, and health equity in conflict zones.

This training recognises these evolving complexities. Drawing on the latest developments—including recent executive orders by the US White House with implications for global health strategy—it offers a case-based lens to understand how foreign policy tools are being used to advance (or constrain) health outcomes worldwide.

What the course offers

Participants in this two-day course will gain both conceptual clarity and practical insight across six tightly structured modules:

- **Module 1: Foundations of global health diplomacy**
An overview of the principles, actors, and institutions shaping global health governance, including the WHO, UN agencies, GAVI, and emerging multilateral groupings like BRICS+. The session will also address financing mechanisms and power asymmetries between donor and recipient nations.

- **Module 2: Stakeholder mapping and power dynamics**
Who drives the global health agenda? This module will help participants identify and critically analyse the influence of states, international NGOs, philanthropic foundations, civil society organisations, and corporate actors—each operating with their own incentives.
- **Module 3: Instruments and ideals of global health**
Using frameworks such as Universal Health Coverage, the Sustainable Development Goals, and Health-in-All-Policies, the course will analyse how ideas become action—and how diplomacy often shapes what succeeds and what stalls.
- **Module 4: The power of data in diplomacy**
Diplomacy today requires fluency in numbers. Participants will explore how both epidemiological and economic data are marshalled to prioritise global health agendas, and how selective use of evidence can shape negotiations.
- **Module 5: Health as foreign policy**
From India's Vaccine Maitri initiative to the EU's pandemic preparedness pact and the US's use of sanctions with health exemptions, participants will understand how governments increasingly integrate health into their strategic calculus.
- **Module 6: Collective diplomacy**
Climate-induced health threats, antimicrobial resistance, and future pandemics require collective action. This final module explores how countries negotiate binding agreements and why equity remains an elusive goal in multilateral health deals.

Course Director and Faculty

The course will be led by Dr Joe Thomas, MSc, PhD, FRSPH—Director of Learning at AICHM, Melbourne, and Chair of Global Public Health at the Sustainable Policy Solutions Foundation. Dr Thomas brings decades of experience working at the intersections of academia, fieldwork, and multilateral policy, and currently serves as Editor-in-Chief of Critical Public Health (Taylor & Francis, UK).

Who should attend

The course is tailored for a wide cross-section of professionals:

- Public health students, researchers, and practitioners
- Government officials engaged in health or international cooperation
- Policy advisers and diplomats involved in trade, migration, or security
- Staff of international organisations and UN agencies
- Civil society leaders advocating for health equity
- Academics studying health systems and international negotiations

Learning Outcomes

Upon completing the course, participants will:

- Understand the arenas and actors where global health diplomacy is practised
- Identify the challenges faced by Global South negotiators in multilateral health settings
- Apply leading theoretical frameworks in real-world scenarios
- Build a personalised engagement plan for pursuing GHD careers
- Reflect on the ethical and strategic limits of health diplomacy

Format, Certification, and Fees

Date: August 7–8, 2025

Time: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Location: Conference Room 1, India International Centre, New Delhi

Format: Face-to-face classroom instruction

Fee: ₹12,000 + GST (Student and group concessions available)

Deliverables

Participants will receive:

- Presentation decks, handouts, and recommended readings
- Curated access to WHO, EMRO, and Harvard Kennedy School multimedia content
- Certificate of Participation on completion
- Guidance on advanced GHD learning pathways

Why now?

With new global health architecture emerging post-pandemic and geopolitical fault lines sharpening, the diplomacy of health is no longer optional—it is central. The time is ripe for India to build a cadre of professionals fluent in both health systems and international relations.

This course is a timely step in that direction.

About the Organisers

Policy Circle is a digital platform that offers in-depth coverage of public policy issues in governance, environment, and society. It was launched in 2020 by a group of policy experts who share a vision of promoting evidence-based policymaking and constructive policy dialogue. It also organises summits, roundtables, and online discussions to bring together policymakers, researchers, corporate executives, professionals, and other stakeholders to deliberate on policy issues. It looks to bridge the gap between research and policy outcomes by facilitating dialogue among policy actors. It seeks to improve the quality of public policy discourse and decision making.

Sustainable Policy Solutions Foundation is a non-profit organisation that provides actionable policy inputs to governments and corporations to help them achieve their sustainability goals. We work with a wide range of stakeholders, including policymakers, businesses, civil society organisations, and academia, to develop and implement effective policies that promote sustainability. We publish our policy inputs on our digital platform Policy Circle.