

In the heart of October, we gathered in the beautiful city of Heidelberg, Germany, for the DAAD Alumni and Expert Workshop titled “Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases: Best Practice Examples and Ways Forward”. This event, meticulously organized by Andreas Deckert with the invaluable help of Myo Chit and Annett Messy, was a melting pot of knowledge, experiences, and cultures, gathering 25 participants from 16 different countries spanning Asia, Africa, America, and Europe.

The journey began with a warm and cozy welcome dinner on Sunday evening, providing us with the perfect opportunity to meet new faces and reconnect with old friends. It was a beautiful prelude to the week that lay ahead, filled with learning, sharing, and growing together.

Each day unfolded with new insights and knowledge. We absorbed the rich experiences and expertise of HIGH alumni, and were particularly moved by the child nutrition program in Zambia, a commendable initiative aimed at preventing Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) through proper nutrition from a young age. One of the highlights of the workshop was the insightful keynote lecture delivered by Till Bärnighausen, the Director of the Heidelberg Institute of Global Health (HIGH). His words were a reminder of the importance and magnitude of our collective mission in addressing the global health challenges posed by NCDs.

Throughout the workshop, we dived deep into various aspects of NCDs, covering a range of topics from the WHO's best practices and eHealth, to cervical cancer, indigenous communities, health systems, and much more. Each presentation and group discussion brought us closer to a holistic understanding of the multifaceted nature of NCDs and the ways in which we can tackle them.

Our days were also filled with shared moments at the student cafeteria, over breakfast, coffee, and lunch. These moments were filled with stories and laughter, as we exchanged tales of our different cultures and lives. We also had the chance to explore the historic city, with visits to the Heidelberg Castle and its fascinating pharmaceutical museum, a trip to Bammental, and a solemn visit to the grave of Andreas Ruppel to remember him two years after his passing.

As the workshop drew to a close, we parted ways with promises to keep the connections we had forged alive. We left Heidelberg with a renewed sense of purpose, armed with the knowledge and friendships necessary to forge a healthier future for all.



