

Health Without Borders

London Community Health Initiative

Kwan Yin Zabrina Ho 2025 Laidlaw Cohort · The University of Hong Kong

with UCL Friends of Médecins Sans Frontières

■ Introduction

As an HKU medical student completing a master's at UCL, I saw how refugee and migrant families in East London struggle with a health system they are entitled to use. Language, unfamiliar NHS pathways and different health beliefs delay care until problems become emergencies. Through UCL Friends of Médecins Sans Frontières (FoMSF), I set out to close that gap locally, and to grow a fundraising society into one that also serves its community directly.

BARRIERS WE ADDRESSED

Language

Unfamiliar NHS pathways

Cultural health beliefs

■ LiA Goals & Objectives

Lead

Expand FoMSF from fundraising only into direct community impact, building a model future committees can run again.

Design

Co-create culturally adapted health workshops with community leaders, measured with pre/post surveys.

Communicate

Create multilingual resources and train FoMSF volunteers as culturally sensitive health educators.

■ Inside the Workshops



01

Navigating the NHS

"Where should I go?" role-plays matching everyday scenarios to the pharmacy, GP, NHS 111, urgent care or A&E.



02

Registering with a GP

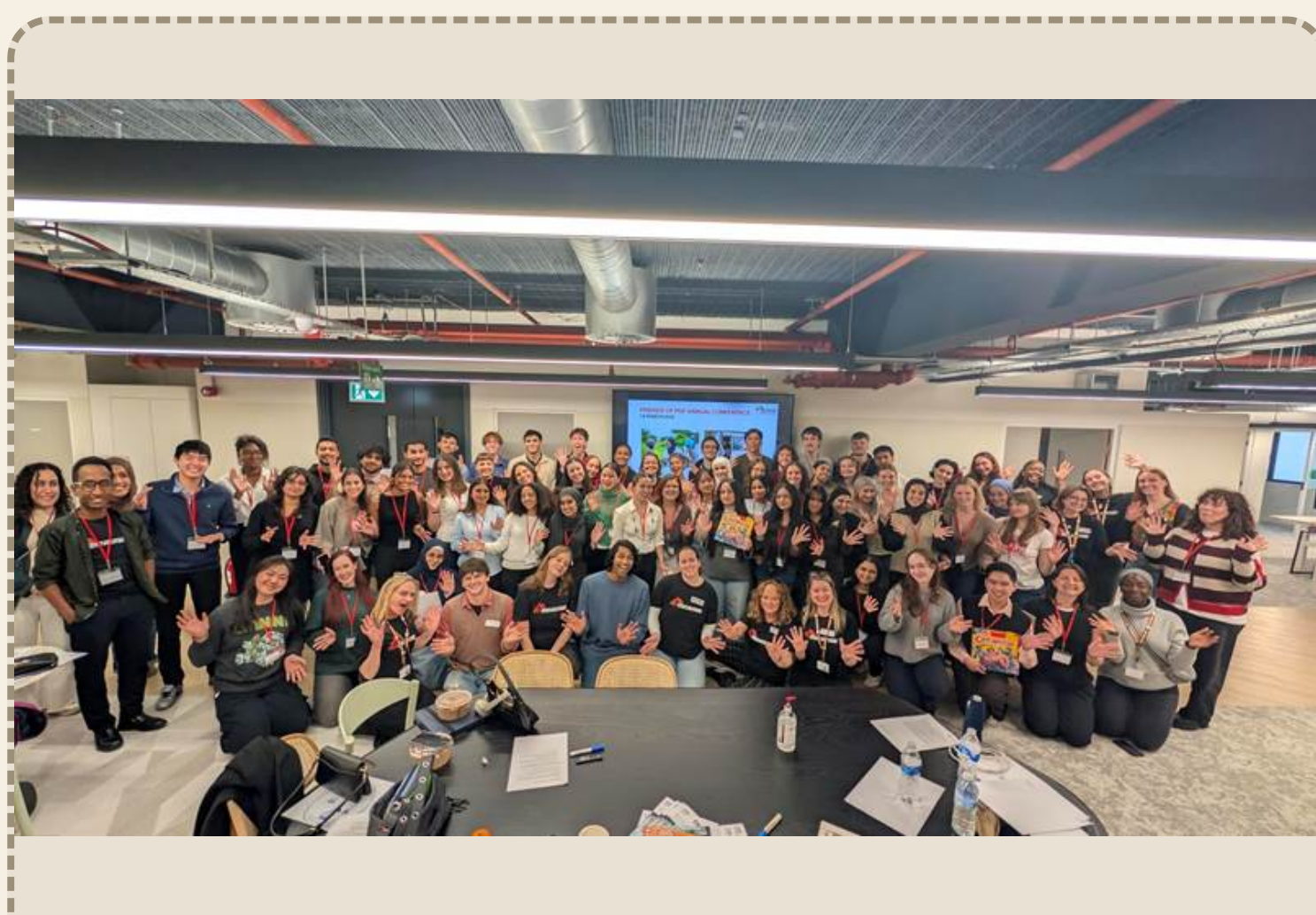
Mock registration forms filled in together, with one key message: no proof of address or immigration status is needed.



03

Spotting Red Flags

Picture-card games on warning signs that need urgent help: stroke (FAST), chest pain, sepsis, and fever with a rash in children.



Bengali

Arabic

Somali

Urdu

Dari

RESOURCES TRANSLATED INTO

"Before, I only went to hospital when things were very bad. Now I know the GP is my first door, and I can ask for an interpreter."

— Workshop participant, Tower Hamlets

■ Takeaways

1 Co-design builds trust

Community leaders reshaped our content more than any survey did. Sessions worked because they were built with people, not for them.

2 Access is more than language

Many participants spoke English, but no one had ever explained how the NHS works or what they are entitled to.

3 Lead for what outlasts you

Training volunteers mattered more than any single workshop. As a future doctor, I will bring this to migrant patients in Hong Kong.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to the **Laidlaw Foundation** for its generous support, to the **HKU Laidlaw Scholars Programme staff** for their guidance throughout my Leadership in Action project, and to the **UCL FoMSF committee members** who helped build this initiative from the ground up. Thank you also to the volunteers who delivered each session, and to every community member who shared their time and stories.