

## MMI Advocacy Policy

**This policy document of the Medicus Mundi International Network is rooted in the overall MMI Network Policy adopted in May 2009. It describes why we regard advocacy as a core activity of our Network and provides a set of guiding principles for the further development of our strategies, programs and activities in this field.**

In this paper, we use “advocacy” in the sense of social advocacy: the attempt to influence public policy by a series of actions taken and issues highlighted. Social advocacy aims at changing the “what is” into a “what should be” - a more decent and more just society. In a globalized world, social change requires advocacy beyond countries’ borders: transnational advocacy and international advocacy, based on international networks and coalitions.

Advocacy entails activities such as lobbying and raising awareness through campaigning: Lobbying is understood as trying to influence decision makers in an informal but structural way. The target groups for lobbying are decision makers, politicians, local authorities and companies. For certain advocacy issues there might be opportunities to raise awareness and to influence a wider audience through campaigning.



## Rationale. Advocacy - a core activity for MMI

**Advocacy in the field of public health is a core activity of the MMI Network, because it brings together all aspects of our Network's engagement and translates the full scale of our members' and their partners' experience into a format that can be used at their respective national but also at international level to exact lasting change in health policy.**

Joint advocacy adds a layer of value to the Network's activities. Supporting our members' efforts to achieve the shared vision of "Health for All", our advocacy aims at influencing the policy landscape in which our members' and their partners' activities takes place.

For the Medicus Mundi International Network as a whole, advocacy is a crucial way to establish our credibility as a valuable voice in international health policy.

For the Network's members and their partners, joint advocacy within the MMI Network is a way of ensuring that their voice gets heard in policy fora that are otherwise difficult for them to reach. The Network wants to play a role in passing its members key advocacy messages to the international level.

On the other hand, the MMI Network aims at encouraging and facilitating its members' and their partners' advocacy activities on a national level in the countries they are based or engaged in. The Network can be used by its members and their partners for linking

international advocacy with their local demands. This is not an easy task however, if they want to do it in a way that local impact will be realised for the benefit of the poor and vulnerable communities they serve.

For the global and national policy makers, our advocacy allows them to hear policy proposals based on the knowledge and experience of civil society institutions in areas of significant importance to them.

## Network Advocacy. Guiding Principles

**Based on our identity and mission.** MMI is the Network of private not-for-profit organisations (NGOs and NGO Networks) working in the field of international health policy and advocacy. Network advocacy shall be in line with the mission, policy and overall strategies of the Network.

**Focusing on "where the decisions are made".** Advocacy activities of the MMI Network are directed at raising public awareness and influencing the policies, positions or programs of national governments and global players related to key global health issues and to the role of NGOs working in the field of international and national health. Therefore, the planning of the Network's advocacy activities needs to be based on a sound analysis of the respective actors or stakeholders that we target with our messages. Our advocacy will be adapted to these decision makers' capacities and modalities of leading and organising a policy dialogue with civil society.



**Task oriented, insistent, optimistic.** As other Network projects, joint advocacy must have clearly defined objectives and outcomes. Advocacy outcomes (changing the “what is” into a “what should be”) can be immediate or just steps towards a final goal. We have to bear in mind that advocacy needs endurance: we will not always be able to succeed in our advocacy work. Intermediate results – and small successes - are also to be taken into account.

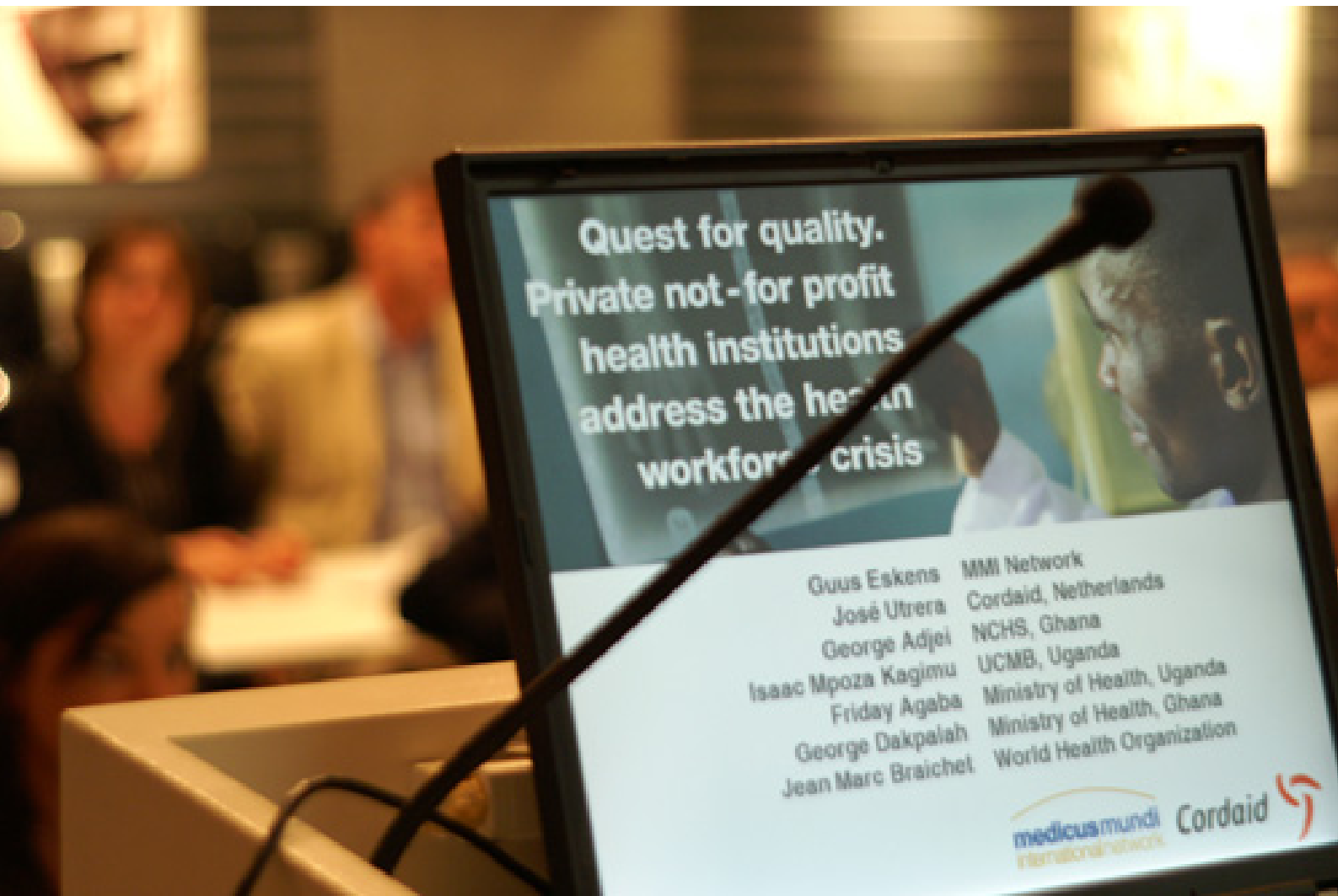
**Creating ‘critical mass’.** We have to ensure that our messages and that of our partners are taken serious. In order to have the policy landscape changed and to get the proper policies implemented a ‘critical mass’ of well informed organised citizens has to be build and/or supported. The voices of the poor will be heard through our combined efforts to build alliances between our partners and their supporters at all levels (locally, nationally and internationally).

**Integrating Network resources and skills.** Advocacy is about information gathering and exchange, policy analysis, creation of policy recommendations and communicating them to decision makers in the right form and at the

right time – and many other things. The nature of this work means it carries relatively limited operational costs (funding still needs to be ensured...), but relies heavily on human resources with specialized skills and roles. Making these resources available for joint advocacy projects is a main challenge for the Network members.

**Based on reliable evidence.** Policy statements, position papers, letters and messages without supporting reliable and convincing facts, figures and experiences will not be taken seriously. Advocacy collects the knowledge and the experience of the Network members and partners and translates it into a format in which it can be used to influence policies and practices.

**Joining forces and sharing know-how:** The Network assists its members and their partners both directly through providing a platform for advocating together on issues where they formulate joint positions - and by providing spaces (sessions/gatherings/exchange) for the improvement of the members’ and their partners’ advocacy skills and capacities.



## How to do it.

### Procedural guidelines

**Integrated in strategic planning.** Our joint advocacy is necessarily focused on longer-term themes and subjects. This corresponds with the MMI Network's way of working: In our periodical strategic planning, we will continue to define a small set of joint key issues (e.g. Human Resources for Health). Our strategies, programs and annual work plans developed around these key issues shall always include advocacy.

**Facilitating decentralized initiatives.** Our Network is a living community! Despite of our strategic planning and the related definition of a set of key issues and related advocacy

**Allowing debate and dissent.** Within a pluralistic Network a political (or technical) issue is sometimes discussed very controversially among the Network members (e.g. performance based financing?). Issuing a formal Network policy statement or position paper is not possible in such a case, but the Network still can play the role of a platform for discussion and mutual learning.

**Networking beyond the Network's limitations.** Our "Health for All" vision is shared by many others. Therefore we need to get in touch with other civil society networks, become involved in broader alliances and platforms and participate in joint campaigns or events related to access to health and health care, mainly if they are focusing on the key issues identified by our Network.



programs, Network members are free to propose joint advocacy activities any time and, if their proposals are supported by other Network members, to set up ad hoc thematic advocacy groups or larger advocacy projects within the Network. Topics of advocacy can therefore also be chosen on the basis of their relevance for the Network members in question and not only as a part of an overall strategy or work plan.

**Consulting Network members.** When MMI publishes a formal policy statement or position paper (e.g. regarding international recruitment of health personnel), all the Network members need to be consulted in the drafting process. Joint policy statements must be cleared by the Board, the President or a working group duly mandated by the Board. They have to include a general clause stating that they do not necessarily reflect the position of all Network members.

**Joining thematic partnerships and platforms.** Formal membership of the MMI Network in international thematic partnerships and platforms requires a decision by the Executive Board which designates a Network member or representative to act as our focal point.

**Getting involved in international advocacy campaigns.** Participating in broad international advocacy campaigns and signing or endorsing their calls or statements as "MMI Network" requires consultation of the Network members following the principles outlined above and a decision by the Executive Board. In any case, the Network informs its members about new international advocacy campaigns and how to join them individually.

Advocacy Policy adopted by the Executive Board of the Medicus Mundi International Network  
Toenisvorst, 27 November 2009

.....

*"Sharing knowhow and joining forces"*