



SPEAK OUT AND AMPLIFY
CIVIL SOCIETY VOICES
MMI ANNUAL REPORT 2022

MEDICUS MUNDI INTERNATIONAL – NETWORK HEALTH FOR ALL

SPEAK OUT AND AMPLIFY CIVIL SOCIETY VOICES MMI ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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DEAR MEMBERS AND PARTNERS OF THE MMI NETWORK

The environment for international health cooperation is undergoing deep change. The long-standing realization that the solutions to achieving Health for All do not lie in the hands of actors from the Global North, and that deeply entrenched power structures are one of the biggest obstacles to international cooperation, is slowly breaking through.

Our Network, Medicus Mundi International, has recognised this for some time. A few years ago, MMI published a discussion paper in which we took a self-critical look at the structural nature of international health cooperation. We then called for the aid paradigm to be overcome. In an open discussion process with partners and especially within the People's Health Movement, the Kampala Initiative was finally launched in 2019, as part of a global decolonization movement. MMI played a key role in the development of the Kampala Initiative and co-hosted its secretariat in an initial period. In a next, consequent step the secretariat is to be transferred to Kampala.

The debates at the heart of MMI have also shaped the current strategy in which the structures of the Network itself are being reorganised. Historically a mostly European network, MMI is on the way to become more diverse. At the MMI General Assembly in November 2022, an important step in this direction was taken with the election of the new Board. The new team has become more female (3 out of 7 members) and more global (4 Europeans, 2 Africans, 1 Asian).

In year of MMI's 60th anniversary, I am convinced that we are well-positioned to continue playing a credible and active role in achieving Health for All in a just world. Thanks to all who have contributed to this and continue doing so.

MARTIN LESCHHORN, PRESIDENT
MEDICUS MUNDI INTERNATIONAL NETWORK



"SPEAK OUT AND AMPLIFY CIVIL SOCIETY VOICES AT THE GLOBAL POLICY LEVEL"

Over the past years, and again in 2022, the MMI Network successfully engaged in debates on global health policy and governance as a valuable, respected and well known voice and convener of civil society, in particular at the World Health Organization, and in cooperation with other civil society actors.

Building on synergies with the civil society platforms the secretariat of Medicus Mundi International is hosting, and being well connected with a variety of members and partners working at a local/national and international level, we achieved, in 2022, some good progress, despite still mostly working in the difficult "Zoom diplomacy" environment. In this chapter of the report, we share some highlights of activities in which the MMI secretariat and some members were strongly engaged.

WHO and civil society

In 2022 again, for good reasons, we raised the issue of a shrinking civic space and difficult working conditions for civil society in its interaction with the World Health Organization and in particular the WHO governing body meetings. The matter also made it to the series of G2H2 hosted policy dialogues in January 2022 and a half-day workshop "Are global civil society organizations still relevant at the UN organizations?". MMI Executive Secretary Thomas Schwarz contributed to the conversation with an update on the state of civil society participation in WHO governing bodies. In the follow-up of the workshop, the MMI Board endorsed an open civil society letter to the WHO Executive Board. Sometimes, things advance slowly, and messages need to be repeated.

...such as this one: The project of a WHO Civil Society Commission was proposed by MMI together with other civil society organizations already in 2020 as a formal mechanism to provide advice and recommendations to WHO for more meaningful engagement with civil society. While our proposal found the interest and support of the WHO Director-General, progress in WHO taking it up was slow. In 2022, the MMI Secretariat remained strongly engaged in this process, as co-leader of a "Civil Society Interest Group for a WHO Civil Society Commission" and with a public policy debate on the Commission proposal as part of a series of G2H2 hosted policy dialogues in May. Good news in early 2023: The WHO Secretariat announced the launch of the Commission and issued calls for participation.



WHO negotiation of a "pandemic treaty"

In 2022, the launch of an Intergovernmental Negotiating Body for a new international legal instrument in the field of pandemic prevention, preparedness and response kept the WHO Secretariat, member states and civil society busy. The MMI Secretariat participated in this process in various ways, such as providing oral and written input related to INB sessions, informal consultations and public hearings, sharing updates on the process with an informal "Civil Society Alliance on Human Rights in the Pandemic Treaty" and initiating and hosting, as G2H2 Secretariat, a G2H2 working group on the INB process

Input by the MMI Secretariat was either embedded in the promotion of a set core issues identified jointly together with other civil society organizations, within the Civil Society Alliance and G2H2, or related to traditional topics of MMI advocacy. Some of these specific inputs are documented in the news section of the MMI website. They include the following:

Promotion and protection of the rights of health and care workers

"We congratulate the INB Bureau for having provided, with Article 11 of the Conceptual Zero Draft, a good starting point, taking up some of the proposals emerging from an expert roundtable convened by MMI in October. We expect the INB in the 'proper' drafting of the new instrument to sustain and strengthen these provisions, and Member States to comply. This would mainly request to have the provisions framed as legally binding ('shall', not 'should'), and to have strong compliance and accountability mechanisms for the whole new instrument."

As indicated in this statement read out at the INB session in December, this MMI input was prepared by an expert roundtable on "How to better care for those who care for us in times of health emergencies? Time for new or stronger international legal norms?" as part of the series of MMI hosted policy dialogues in October 2022. With one of the INB vice-chairs actively participating in our dialogue, and with a great expert panel including representatives of civil society, the WHO Secretariat and the International Labour Organization providing very specific text recommendation, and with direct follow-up with the INB Bureau, the roundtable had a direct impact on shaping the related section of a "conceptual zero draft" of the pandemic treaty published in November. We repeated this initiative and approach in 2023, related to the Fifth Global Forum on Human Resources for Health.





More MMI input in the INB process

The MMI statement on health and care workers' rights was maybe the most visible one in a long series of substantive contributions to the early period of the WHO negotiations. Other statements documented on our website include:

- Concerns and recommendations regarding public hearings. MMI input submitted to the INB Bureau,
 March 2022 MMI website
- "Substantive elements" of a pandemic treaty... A wish list for urgent action or the core of what needs
 to be regulated through a new binding international instrument? MMI input to first public hearing, as
 blog, April 2022 MMI website
- Negotiating a pandemic treaty... High time to end the compilation mode. Comment on the outcome
 of the first INB meeting, June 2022 MMI website
- Negotiating a pandemic treaty: Of cultivation and sovereignty. Written comments and oral input to the INB meeting, July 2022 – MMI website

"To re-establish your real sovereignty, and in a sense of true, systemic prevention of future pandemics, country representatives should dare to call for drafting the new instrument in a way that it contributes to achieving financial justice* and overcoming the colonial patterns of dependency and charity, by addressing the failures of the current international economic order, as these failures are a key economic and political determinant of weak health systems and unequal access to health care."

- "Our expectations are high..." MMI comments on the working draft, as input to INB meeting and contribution to second public hearing, September 2022 MMI website, with video statement
- Sustainable and predictable financing in the Conceptual Zero Draft. MMI nput to INB meeting,
 December 2022 MMI website

Sharing insights and providing guidance

As the MMI Executive Secretary following the INB process closely, actively, and visibly, with statements and reflections that found considerable attention, he was also requested by various civil society actors and journalists to share insights and, for civil society, to provide guidance on how to best engage in the negotiation process — which is not an obvious matter. Besides a good number of bilateral and informal briefings, Thomas Schwarz provided a keynote at a virtual civil society WHA side event on "Accelerating progress toward health for all in pandemic preparedness" on 1 June 2022 organized by the Civil Society Engagement Mechanism of UHC2030. The event intended to "mobilize civil society around a common advocacy agenda in the pandemic preparedness and response discussion and discuss the need for health systems strengthening for global health security and UHC". Our main messages were simple:



"WHO Watch": More than watching...

Since the beginning of "WHO Watch" project more than ten years ago, the MMI Network has actively participated in this project coordinated by the People's Health Movement and hosted the team of young global health activists at the WHO governing body meetings in its delegation. MMI statements submitted to the World Health Assembly and the WHO Executive Board result as a collaborative effort of the WHO Watch team and the MMI secretariat and interested Network members and other civil society partners and are therfore read out in the name of MMI and the People's Health Movement.

"The World Health Organization (WHO) is the paramount health authority at the global level and needs to be strengthened and reformed and properly funded to play this role. WHO Watch seeks to generate support for a reformed WHO restored to its proper place in global health governance. WHO Watch aims to support wider knowledge of, and participation in, the various engagements across the broader field of global health governance. We are aiming to change the balance of power framing global decisions which impact on health." (Source: PHM)

In May 2022, the joint MMI/PHM team submitted statements to the 75th World Health Assembly on 14 agenda items. This was quite a logistic effort, as access to the Assembly was once more restricted – this time due to renovations of the Palais des Nations – so that only a few team members could attend the Assembly physically, stand by for their interventions and be ready when it was time to speak. Most of the joint statements are documented here in short video clips.



Assessments and comments on Universal Health Coverage, international cooperation, global health governance, and more

The MMI Executive Secretary, throughout the last year, was invited to contribute to meetings organized by civil society organizations, WHO and member states, expert groups and UN hosted fora. Due to capacity constraints, we had to select our engagement strategically and sometime delegated the requested input to colleagues within the MMI Network or close partners, as available. The following flashlights shows the range of topics and settings:

In February, Thomas Schwarz provided an input to a webinar organized by the Austian MMI member plan:g on the World Day of the Sick, with the title: "From charity to cooperation and solidarity. A(nother) critical look at health cooperation". The MMI Executive Secretary presented the work undertaken by MMI in this field over the last years leading to the creation of the Kampala Initiative in 2020. He could refer to the fact that plan:g endorsed the "Kampala Declaration on cooperation and solidarity for health equity within and beyond aid".

During the 49th Session of the Human Rights Council, in March 2022, Thomas Schwarz contributed to an expert roundtable set up by Bahai'i International on "Truth, Health and Building Confidence in Global Governance". In a lively and informal discussion, participants from diverse background explored the role of truth and evidence at the international level the impacts of a culture of misinformation, and what lessons we may have learned during the pandemic.

In May, the MMI Execuive Secretary was happy to contribute to a World Health Assembly preparatory session for young professionals organized by the International Federation of Medical Student Associations, with an input on "WHO decision making processes and how the World Health Assembly and WHO Executive Board fit into the picture".

In September, Thomas Schwarz was invited by Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) to moderate the Swiss annual conference on the Swiss Foreign Health Policy organized by the different ministries and units of the Federal Administration engaged in this field.

A late highlight of the year, in many ways, was the participation of the Executive Secretary in a three-day workshop at the Rockefeller-Centre in Bellagio, Italy, convened by the Ministry of Health of Thailand, on exploring what could be key content of a 2023 World Health Assembly resolution on Universal Health Coverage. Based on his good and trustful working relations with leading Thai representatives engaged in WHO processes, the MMI Executive Secretary was invited to this strategy workshop as a civil society representative, together with two other colleagues.



"CREATE, CONVENE, AND SUSTAIN RELEVANT CIVIL SOCIETY SPACES FOR EXCHANGE AND POLICY ADVANCEMENT"

"Creating, convening, hosting and managing civil society spaces" in core fields of global health governance was the focus of last year's Annual Report. In the current report, we cover this field of work that is at core of the activities and competence of the MMI Secretariat a bit less exensively, focusing on our main "paid" mandate, the hosting of the Secretariat of the Geneva Global Health Hub, and providing a short flashlight on the continued great little project of "WHA TODAY".

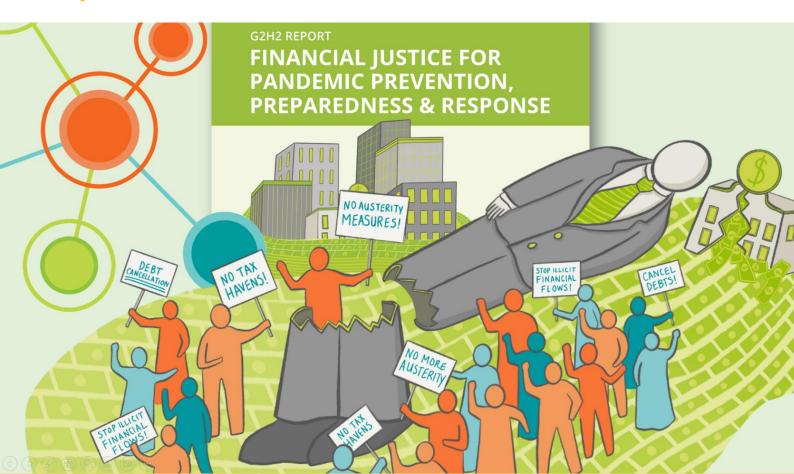
Geneva Global Health Hub

Since the Geneva Global Health Hub (G2H2) was launched in 2016, the MMI Network hosts its secretariat at its Geneva office. 2022 was a good year for G2H2, with two great series of public policy debates and a report on financial justice launched in November that found considerable attention – and still does so. As G2H2 is itself an association according to Swiss law, please refer to their own annual report available on their website, together with the documentation of the G2H2 meetings and publications featured below. A steadily increasing membership and growing visibility are signs of success and confirmed relevance.

MMI input and support G2H2 report on Financial Justice

The MMI secretariat (as G2H2 secretariat) and Network member Wemos were strongly engaged in the production and launch of another G2H2 report related to the Pandemic Treaty, this time on "Financial Justice for Pandemic Prevention, preparedeness and Response".

"Whatever the outcome of the process, one of the inescapable pillars of any new international agreement is addressing how to finance pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. This is the reason why the Geneva Global Health Hub decided to embark into the contentious relationship between the international financial architecture and current health financing models, towards highlighting the pitfalls the world must avoid to ensure a healthier post-COVID world. "(quoted from the report website).



The "Financial Justice" report was launched in a media conference and public meeting at the Geneva Press Club, in November 2022. After a long time of coming together only in the cold Zoom space, the event provided a good opportunity to meet again, at one place, with all consequences, such as an early morning walk through rainy Geneva with lots of heavy stuff to carry to the meeting. It was worth it.

"There is certainly no shortage of money in this world, but redirecting it to advance health after the pandemic requires bold action. The international community instead continues to pursue outdated and opaque models, as is the case of the recently established Pandemic Fund" (Mariska Meurs, Wemos, coauthor of the report)

"All the human suffering caused by austerity cuts can be avoided. There are alternatives even in the poorest countries, governments can increase their budgets to ensure quality public services and universal social protection by looking at financing options such as fairer taxation, reducing debt and illicit financial flows". (Isabel Ortiz, Initiative for Policy Dialogue, at the report launch(







MMI contributions to G2H2 hosted policy debates

We already reported on the G2H2 policy debates related to WHO governance and how these opportunities were used by MMI to promote our own advocacy agenda. The MMI Network was also engaged as a co-organizer of a session on a "tobacco law for the fossile fuel industry", with input from Network members working in the field of health and climate change. As G2H2 secretariat, we provided overall support for the programming and implementation of all other meetings. This exertise that we have gathered over the last few years was also very useful for shaping and positioning our own series of MMI policy dialogues.



WHA TODAY

We reported last year how, when it became obvious that the expected "back to normal" was still not possible for WHO governing body meetings, we transformed "WHA Today" into the current format of a daily "civil society lounge": an online meeting point for civil society representatives to come together during the World Health Assembly or the sessions of the WHO Executive Board to share insights on modalities of the WHO governing body meetings, on elements on the agenda that need particular civil society attention, and to assess the outcome of the deliberations on the previous day.

After testing an "EB TODAY" meeting during the WHO Executive Board meeting in January 2022, we introduced an "intersessional check-in session" to stay in touch and prepare civil society advocacy at the 75th World Health Assembly in May 2022.

With over 300 registered participants who receive updates on next sessions, this nice little project is still getting lot of attention, and despite a (partial) return to in-person governing body meetings of the WHO, we decided to keep WHA TODAY fully "virtual", to allow interaction between those who can make it to the WHA in Geneva despite rigid access restrictions and those who watch and comment thes deliberations remotely.



"PROVIDE INPUT, NORMATIVE GUIDANCE AND EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATION"

For a second time after 2021, and within and beyond the particular fields outlined in the MMI Network Strategy, Medicus Mundi International used its well-established networks and contacts with key actors to implement a full series of thematic policy dialogues.

One of the sessions in the 2022 series of policy dialogues provided an opportunity to introduce the MMI input to the Symposium of Medicus Mundi Switzerland on the topic of "Post Growth policies for planetary health". In another session convened by Medicus Mundi Spain, we had, for once, a conversation in Spanish only. We already reported on the session on the protection of health workers and how this directly fed into the negotiations of a pandemic treaty. The final session organized by Cordaid and partners allowed an outlook to the EU global health strategy. Session attendance varied between 50 and 100 participants.

We very much appreciate the engagement and co-leadership of the all organizations and networks that contributed to the success of this series of policy dialogues, in its (intended) diversity. We will certainly go for another round in 2023, again at the end of October.

- 26 October 2022 Introduciendo la crisis climática en la cooperación sanitaria: de la teoría a los primeros pasos en la práctica
- 27 October 2022 How to better care for those who care for us in times of health emergencies: Time to move from "technical advice" to international legal norms?
- 28 October 2022 Why Post Growth policies are essential for planetary health
- 31 October 2022 The project of a EU global health strategy: in whose interest will it be?







"CONSTANTLY APPLY NORMATIVE GUIDANCE ON THE MMI NETWORK"

In the last section of the report, we report on the challenges to apply the normative guidance outlined in the MMI Strategy to the Network itself, the reference being the same: The November events in Basel with the Symposium of Medicus Mundi Switzerland and the Annual General Assembly of the MMI Network.

"It is a matter of credibility and consistency to not only advocate for others 'to do better' and invite them to engage in processes of institutional self-reflection and change, but to do the same as the convener of these processes. In this sense, the list of cross-cutting issues and thematic working groups outlined above will become the list of how the MMI Network itself is expected to change over the next years, with its leadership actively engaging in these communities and applying the resulting normative guidance. If we advocate for respecting planetary boundaries, we cannot at same time expect our Network members to annually meet in Geneva and to fly into our network events. If we promote gender equity and full representation of the global south and want to reach out to a next generation, let us also consider changing the face(s) and leadership of the Network" (MMI Network Strategy 2021-2025)

Carbon footprint

Yes, after two years of Covid, some Network members came together again to meet each other "face-to-face", in person, in a crowded room. On 2 November, Network members contributed to the Symposium of Medicus Mundi Switzerland on "The world in crisis – climate change, pandemic, and war", with Remco van de Pas as an invited speaker and others contributing from the floor and as panelists. The Symposium was followed by the MMI Assembly on 3 November, kindly hosted by the Swiss TPH.

And yes, this meant some additional carbon foodprint for those who joined us from far. On the other hand, being together again was a great experience. It also allowed us to "properly" say good-bye to the Board members who left us after a long period of great engagement, mainly Christina de Vries (Cordaid) Fabian Schumacher (Medicus Mundi Italy) and Remco van de Pas (ITM Antwerp) who were with us at the Assembly. And we experienced the in many ways difficult setup of a "hybrid" meeting, with some of us in the room and others, including some of the the newly elected Board members, joining us remotely, being excluded from informal chats and networking, from a great visit at the Swiss TPH where the Assembly took place, and from the nice dinner we had in a restaurant in town, after the first day.

We will see in the future how to balance the dynamic of "being (fully) together" and respecting the planetary binderies. The way will be in-between routinely flying-in for Board meetings and having all interaction in the cold virtual space provided by the online conference tools.

















MMI: Face and leadership

And yes, with the MMI Assembly in November, and with the election of a new **Board**, the MMI Network did a good first step in "changing its face and leadership", having now three female Board members and three Board members based in the global South. A next opportunity on this way will be the succession of MMI Executive Secretary Thomas Schwarz, with the transition of the Secretariat to his follower scheduled for 2024.

Thanks to the great colleagues who left the Board, and welcome to the newcomers Fabiana Arieti, Itai Rusike, Labila Sumaya Musoke and Sulakshana Nandi (from left to right). See here how the Board members and the new President Martin Leschhorn presented themselves in view of the election, together with some other highlights from the Assembly.



...and welcome to CERRHUD!

Bad news in 2022 was that, with action medeor, one of the founding members of MMI left the Association. We will miss them. Good news is that we could also welcome a <u>new member</u>: The Centre of Research in Human Reproduction and Demography (CERRHUD) is the

research centre associated to the University Clinic of Gynecology and Obstetrics

of the University hospital /Hubert Koutoukou Maga of Cotonou in Benin.

CERRHUD's mission is to build research capacities, to develop and implement research programs and implement evidence-informed interventions for better health in Benin and in West-Africa.

CERRHUD has also the mission to promote and support evidence-based policy and decision making for improving the population's health. Welcome again!

REFERENCE: MMI NETWORK STRATEGY

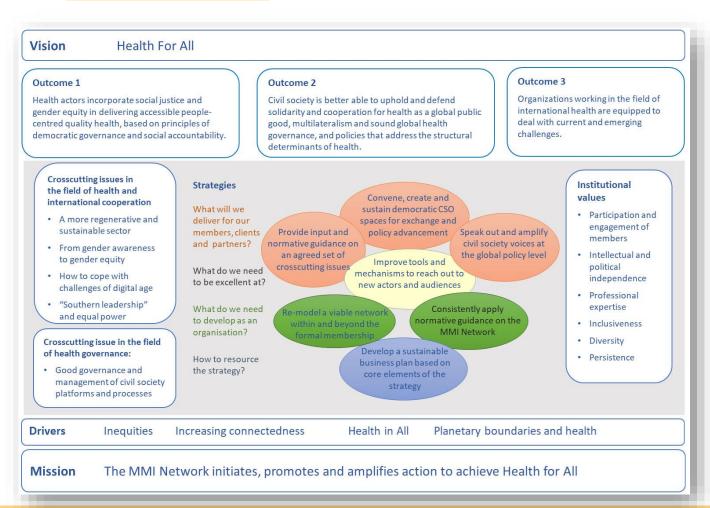
The "Network Strategy 2021-2025" adopted by the Assembly of the Medicus Mundi International Network in November 2020 "explains how our Network shall pursue the shared vision of its members and carry out its operational mission during the five years ahead." In this sense, and after the second year of its implementation, the Strategy remains the main guidance for our work. The following paragraphs are directly quoted from the strategy.

"The current challenging times of Covid-19 have been an eye-opener for a better understanding of the urgency to bring international health and the work of its actors to a next level. But the pandemic has also shown us how difficult it is to confidently plan the long term. In this sense, when we have taken strategic decisions and made choices based on our assessments and a strategy dialogue among the Board and membership, let us remain open for new challenges, new dynamics, and new opportunities.

The MMI Network Strategy 2020-2025 has been developed and drafted by the MMI Board in a series of workshops from November 2019 to August 2020 and related interaction with Network members. This process was disturbed by the Covid-19 pandemic that made it more difficult for us to come together. At the same time, the pandemic proved as a reality check for our analysis and planning that started before the outbreak.

This strategy continues to serve as a reference framework for annual planning for a maximum of five years, or less if the Board needs to review the strategy due to major external or internal changes."

The MMI Network Strategy 2021-2025 at a glance:



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