

Economic Determination of Health Policies and Governance

Civil society brainstorming meeting

Geneva, Maison des Associations, 20 January 2017, 10–16 hrs

We refer to a concept note sent to potential participants in December and explaining background, objectives, overall approach and format of the meeting proposed and hosted by the Geneva Global Health Hub. With the format of an open brainstorming meeting, the organizers mainly want to create a space for reflection and interaction in order to think through key global health governance issues together. In particular, they refer to the Japanese “Ba” concept - a physical or virtual collaborative space where participants feel safe and exchange insights.

Expected outcomes:

1. Deeper understanding of the theme discussed and each other’s approaches and positions
2. Laying the ground for more concrete strategizing (civil society meeting on 21 January) and future cooperation (synergies between different sectoral and intersectoral struggles and strategies)

Programme

Morning session: Manifestations of the economic determination

1. Overall management approach to policies and planning

Everything is now about monitoring and accountability and there are enthusiastic debates on data requirements and outcome indicators which replace a sound political dialogue on what is really the problem (including what are the diverging interest of key actors), what change is exactly needed and how to achieve it. “New Public Management” was introduced by Thatcher as a tool for privatization, deregulation and depoliticization, and this is what we experience today.

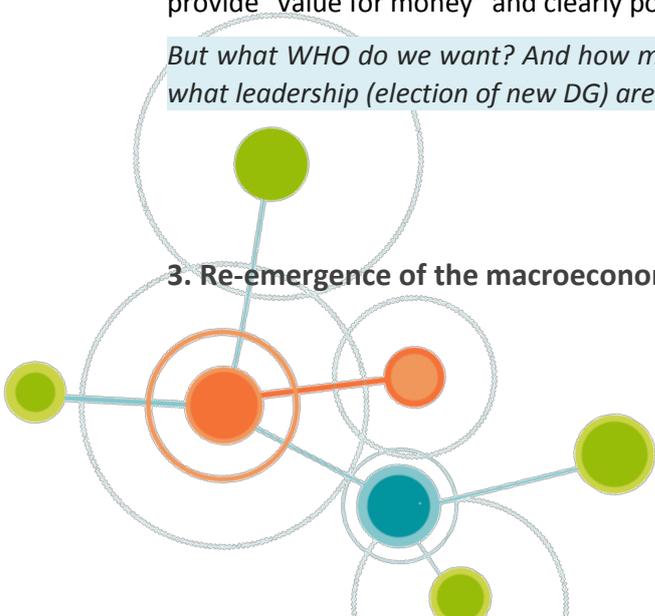
What are the implications of the transition from human rights accountability to mutual accountability and multistakeholderism? How to cope with the privatization of policy making?

2. Marketing approach for defining the role of WHO in global health

According to most of the WHO DG candidates, the organization must become more efficient, must provide “value for money” and clearly position itself and its programs in a strategic niche.

But what WHO do we want? And how much money (debate on increasing assessed contributions) and what leadership (election of new DG) are needed for this WHO we want? And who should pay for it?

3. Re-emergence of the macroeconomic discourse in global health policies



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“We build a strong civil society space in Geneva for more democratic global health governance.”

The “investment case” for health (examples: UHC, health workforce) has become absolutely dominating in political fora and leading publications. This “selling argument” is tempting, as it shows some good results.

So how to deal with this discourse and its ambivalence? How to defend the case for health as a human right or as a shared responsibility (global good) – among ourselves and publicly?

Afternoon session: The bigger picture – and a look at ourselves

4. “Big money” dominating the global health agenda setting

There are numerous examples and references for this imbalance of power - just to mention a few: Rich countries’ security interest led to better crisis management (Ebola) instead of creating strong health systems; with FENSA, WHO accommodates corporate lobbyists in its governance processes; the vertical “partnership” and “multi-stakeholder” mode of dealing with global health issues has become mainstream.

How to defend multilateralism? How to promote the voices and interests of people?

5. Economic power and economic determination of civil society processes

Who sits at our tables and in the big global fora? How to overcome the imbalance in deliberation and representation?

The brainstorming meeting is part of a series of civil society events ahead of the 140th Session of the WHO Executive Board and will be followed by an (open) information meeting of the Geneva Global Health Hub and a reception / buffet dinner.

Contact and registration

By invitation only. Send enquiries to the [G2H2 secretariat](#)
Online registration for invited participants: [G2H2 website](#)

Venue

Maison Internationale des Associations (www.mia-ge.ch), Salle Carson
Rue des Savoises 15, Geneva (South of Rhone river, near Plainpalais)

How to get there: From the Cornavin railway station, take tram No. 15 (direction Grand-Lancy, Palettes) or bus No. 1 (direction Thônex, Hôpital Trois-Chêne) until the stop “Cirque” (third stop). From there it is a short walk across the corner of the Plainpalais square and into Rue des Savoises.

