



**G2** GENEVA  
GLOBAL  
**H2** HEALTH  
HUB

ANNUAL REPORT

2021



“We cannot do anything without optimism. Hope is a discipline, and our work is to cultivate it.” Angela Davies (2022)

## DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

After two years of a pandemic which world leaders have described with the metaphor of a war, a *real* war is taking precedence over everything else in daily news, the more so because of the nuclear threats it entails. This new crisis started with Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on 24 February – a repugnant initiative which will produce ineffable consequences. That same day, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body for a WHO Pandemic Treaty (INB) held its first meeting, and a few days later, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its latest report which shows the devastating impact of the climate crisis and points out that much worse is crashing down on humankind. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, described the report as “an atlas of human suffering”.

These otherwise distinct events are interwoven threads of the fabric of a deeply unhealthy world that – like a living organism – is heading to its end. The rule of law is a forgotten instrument, geopolitical rivalries pose existential threats to the health and safety of populations, while the spectrum of inequalities is expanding. And unbridled for-profit production spurs the climate and biodiversity crises in a process that will be accelerated by the new global conflict. The forces driving climate change also set the stage for the making of what might be a catastrophic age of pandemics if credible steps are not taken to arrest the situation.

Taking such steps requires a profound adhesion to the reality of things, and audacity to change the course of this ongoing syndemic. While governments need to take far-reaching measures which clearly put people and the planet at the centre if we are to survive on this planet, the militarization narrative used during the pandemic finds new political legitimacy in such despairing policies as increasing military spending, enhancing privatisation as an emergency shortcut, and in resorting to a breathless form of ruleless capitalism based on monopolies. The attempt at a compromise on the proposed TRIPS waiver at the WTO to contrast Covid-19, currently being negotiated among India, South Africa, the EU and USA, puts forward too little, too late, and reminds us of the decades-long structural war on the knowledge economy, the management of science, and the privatisation of common goods like publicly funded research and development, not only in the medical field.

The civil society movement, despite its unprecedented challenges, has an essential role to play at this stage. We need to unceasingly point out the truth and pose uncomfortable questions, getting out of our silos and connecting the dots with new systemic arguments. Why should the wealth of the world’s ten richest *men* have doubled since the pandemic began, as Oxfam notes in its January 2022 report, while 99% of humankind are worse off because of that same event? Why should more people have received their third jabs in Europe and North America than the entire number of vaccinated people in Africa?

Our questions are not merely rhetoric. They must be backed with renewed evidence for alternative proposals, hinged on the pursuit of the right of everybody and every nation to all-round self-determined development. Towards this end, G2H2 has ramped up both its convening role and advocacy as a collective body of civil society organisations in global health. In this annual report, you will read of some of the activities we have taken together in this direction. We need to go on!

**Baba Aye and Nicoletta Dentico, G2H2 Co-Presidents**

March 2022

# G2H2 PROMOTING AND IMPLEMENTING AN INTEGRATED CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCACY AGENDA FOR GLOBAL HEALTH

## G2H2 ADVOCACY PLATFORM

**With the adoption of an advocacy platform by the Annual General Assembly in 2021, members of the Geneva Global Health Hub agreed on a reference document for a more proactive role of G2H2 in promoting and implementing an integrated civil society advocacy agenda for global health.**

“Now more than ever, public interest civil society organisations need to stand up and speak out as vocally as they can for the kind of world we want and deserve. There is a generalised public appreciation of the need for far-reaching steps to be taken by governments and the multilateral system to address this syndemic crises. But the forces that benefit from the current state of affairs are entrenched. We need robust advocacy, and evidence-based campaigns to effectively influence public opinion with evidence and contribute to a post- Covid-19 world where “building back better” means putting people and the commons, such as universal healthcare and public health services, first.

We will vigorously continue to build a space for discussion on global health, and we shall equally boldly advocate for:

- **Universal** public health care, and global commitment to governments’ provision of the required funding for this,
- Safe and effective staffing for health, with concrete steps taken to address the envisaged 18 million shortfalls of health and care workers by 2030 with particular attention to halting the brain drain from the Global South
- Decolonising global health; with evidence-based arguments to WHO and other relevant multilateral organisations for addressing the abysmal state of health inequities between countries which puts the lives of billions of people at stake,
- **Transforming** development assistance for health from a neo-colonial model to one based on global solidarity, justice and equity
- A *syndemic* view on health crises like Covid-19, which should inform policies that grasp and address the **connections** between health, environment, food, trade, and life, with argues for a systemic One Health approach, which integrates ecological, nutrition and social human rights dimensions in analyses and policy process
- Enhanced public funding for health at the national level, increased member state funding of WHO, to strengthen its institutional capacity in providing leadership for global health, as well as heightened transparency and accountability in the use of these funds.
- **Multilateralism** that is not usurped by multistakeholderism, and curtailment of the intrusive and unaccountable influence of philanthrocapitalism in global health including the WHO.
- A thorough contextualization concerning the development and use of digital tools for health, with special **reference** to the use of precision medicine (PM) and prioritising the individualized biomedical approach in the care response, as well as the threatening challenges in the current governance of digital development.

To this end, G2H2 shall:

- Organise inclusive and participatory action-oriented fora for advocacy, consensus building and strategizing about engagements with WHO and other global health actors,
- Conduct quality research through its task groups to come up with solid research-to-policy linkages that will inform G2H2 policy work with its members and with Member States delegates,
- Issue statements and declarations on selected global health issues and stand in solidarity with the planet, the peoples and the public interest civil society organisations in pursuing the realisation of the right to health.”

...quoted from the [advocacy platform](#).

Moments of piercing crises – such as the one we have experienced with the Covid-19 pandemic and we are now experiencing with this new round of atrocious warfare in Ukraine – do confront us with enormous challenges, while the opportunities to reorient the world towards a reasonable sense of direction – a collectively cherished hope in the first months of the pandemic in 2020 – seem to fade away. Globalization and autocracy, on the other hand, appear firmly locked together. Dramatic changes have been induced by Covid-19 and more will be triggered as a legacy of this war, its massive humanitarian consequences and the multiple repercussions on world trade, the global economy and climate change. All of this happens in a fragmented, multipolar and competitive international scenario, which has seemingly lost the sense of limit.

The current moment calls for “the discipline of hope” and for boldness in the way we are forced to rethink our role, reflect deeply on the prospects of our work and plan our action for the future. G2H2 membership across every region of the world is committed, as a body of public-interest CSOs, to continue to rise up the spirit of undaunted advocacy which the current period demands from us. In this moment of thick darkness, the courage of daring is perhaps that leap of hope that we can still bet on.



## G2H2 PROJECT “THE POLITICS OF A PANDEMIC TREATY”

The research and advocacy project “The Politics of a Pandemic Treaty”, undertaken in the second semester of 2021 by a G2H2 project team mandated by the Steering Committee and operating in close periodic interaction with all G2H2 members, may plausibly be seen as the first concrete attempt at implementing the new G2H2 advocacy platform and its aspirations.

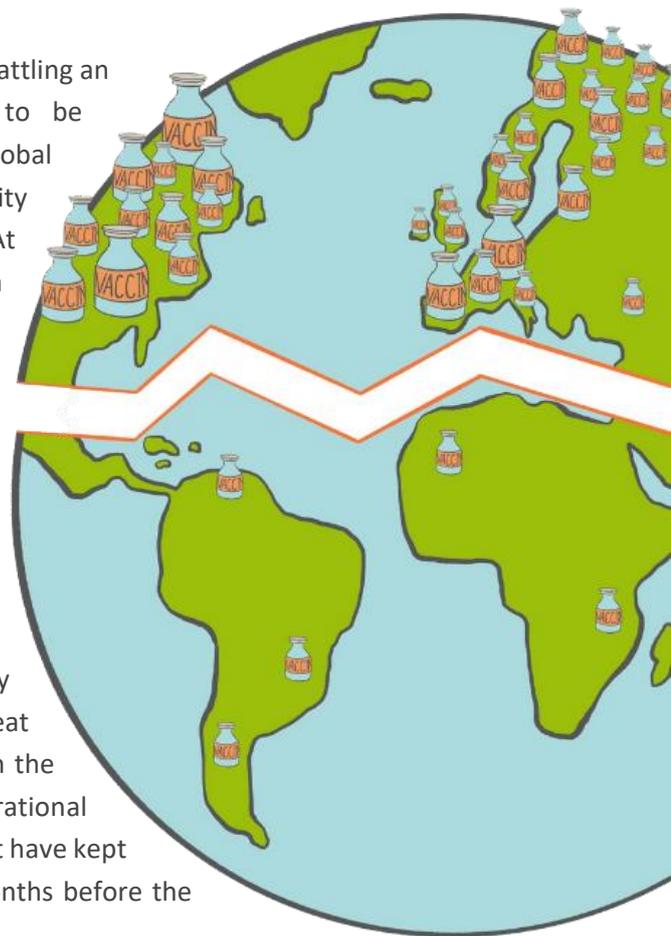
The project proved to be a most challenging itinerary, due to its ambitious goals, the evolving topic at the WHO and the short time available to deliver a result of some quality. Notwithstanding the objective fatigue and the lessons learnt along the way, this experience has been extremely positive. It has generated a wealth of internal debates and exchanges among the interested G2H2 members, enhancing the community. It has triggered attention on G2H2 from new players and enticed new memberships. Ultimately, it has resulted in a solid, original and relevant outcome. While this work represents the highlight of G2H2 activities in 2021, G2H2 exposure and commitment on the pandemic treaty issue is bound to feature our work in 2022 as well.

What is the project about? In 2021, after almost two years of battling an unprecedented health emergency, the world continued to be confronted with new waves of the Covid-19 pandemic and the global South found itself in the grip of a new form of systemic inequality enshrined in the patently flawed vaccine distribution strategy. At the end of the year, at a Special Session of the World Health Assembly, the World Health Organization and its member states unanimously agreed to launch intergovernmental negotiations for a new international legal instrument for pandemic preparedness and response.

The announcement was hailed by a somewhat cheerleading narrative which did not always sound very convincing though. Does the world really need a new “pandemic treaty”, given that legally binding tools already exist in the WHO to tackle pandemics? Is it a new negotiating process the right and timely thing to do, while the Covid-19 pandemic is still a significant threat to many countries? What legal hierarchy would exist between the old and the new instrument? And finally, what if the inspirational approach of the new tool? These are some of the questions that have kept civil society – members of G2H2 and others – busy in the months before the World Health Assembly Special Session, and still do so.

*“The treaty discussion is full of good intentions, but it lacks evidence.” (Nicoletta Dentico, project coordinator)*

With its research and advocacy project, G2H2 aimed to try and unpack these pertinent questions. It did so through involvement of a meaningful range of country delegates and health experts, including those concretely engaged in tackling the Covid-19 response in their countries. With structured interviews to international policymakers, health diplomats, civil society actors, academic representatives and public health professionals from across the globe, the designated research team mapped the geopolitical genesis and complexity of the treaty proposal, looking at its potential implications for the future of global health governance.



The resulting [G2H2 report](#) “The politics of a WHO pandemic treaty in a disenchanted world” published in November 2021 addresses the need for new approaches to the challenge of a pandemic future. In the wake of the harsh but real lessons that Covid-19 continues to administer, it focuses on some of the pathogenetic political and economic structures that must be recognized if the international community is serious about restoring democratic multilateralism and giving the world and the people a proper chance to better deal with future health emergencies and crises.

The report also highlights that this a pandemic of inequalities and inequities between and within countries, societies and genders. As the one international public health agency, the WHO needs to recognize the new organizing principles that Covid-19 has brought into the health domain in the context of managing the emergency, namely health and social justice, planetary boundaries and the need for encompassing racial, gender, financial and digital justice if the world is to prevent and prepare for future pandemics.

However, research respondents from the global South expressed the need for immediate concrete action in dealing with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the inequities it has magnified, including the burning issue of access to countermeasures like vaccines.

*“This report gives voice, nuance and context to the concerns raised by many developing countries around the diplomatic process and motivations of negotiating new rules for future health emergencies.” (Priti Patnaik, member of the research team)*

*“There are often lofty cosmopolitan goals on pandemic governance, but the last decades have shown that richer countries will go their own way in implementing it, despite what they have agreed upon with WHO. It is hence understandable that lower and middle-income countries are taking a cautious and sceptical approach.” (Remco van de Pas, member of the research team)*



After a first online [presentation of preliminary findings](#) on 25 October 2021, on the side-lines of the World Health Summit in Berlin, the G2H2 report “The politics of a WHO pandemic treaty in a disenchanted world” was launched with a [public event in Geneva](#) on 24 November 2021, with members of the project and research team presenting its highlights. The following discussion was launched by two invited respondents, Suerie Moon (Graduate Institute) and Carlos Maria Correa (South Centre), and then also involved representatives of Geneva missions (Germany, Brazil, Mexico, Ghana, etc.) and the WHO Secretariat and those who followed the meeting in Geneva or online.

### **Based on teamwork and support**

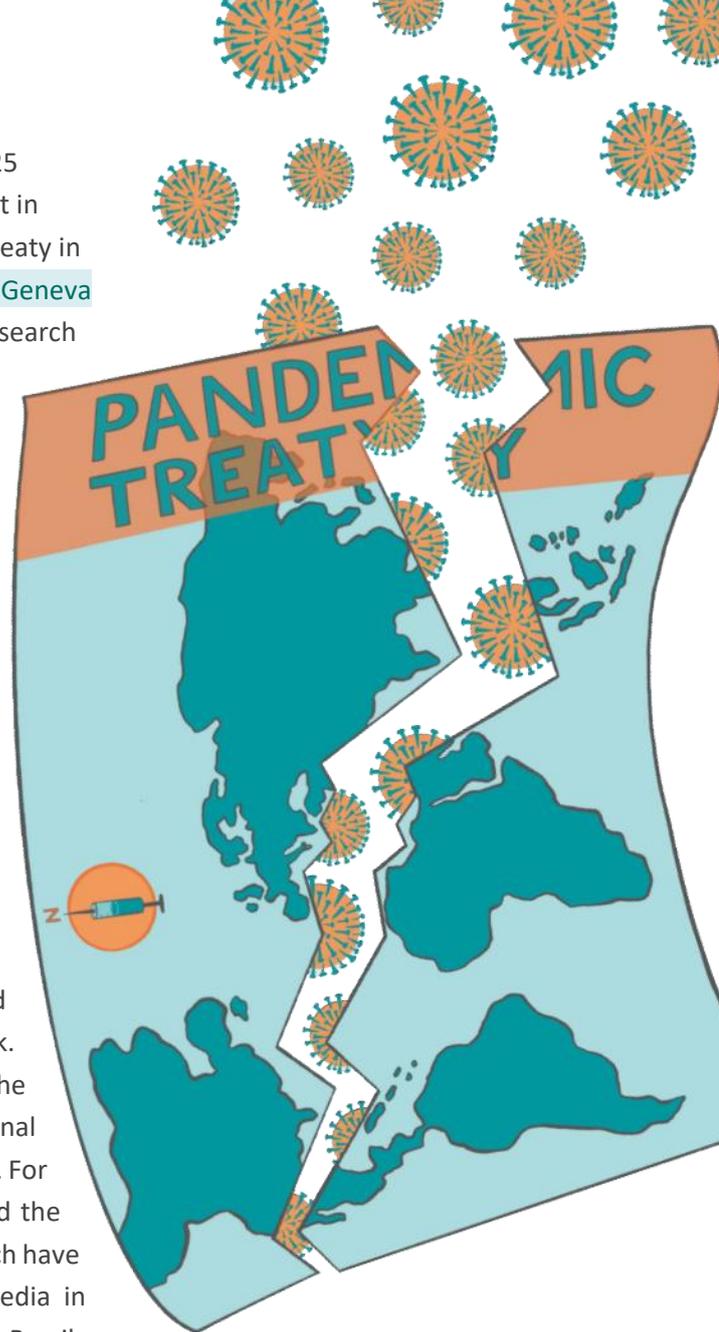
The G2H2 report and its launch in November 2021 are the result of intensive teamwork within and beyond the G2H2 membership, with a project team in the lead (coordinator: Nicoletta Denticio) and the engagement of two research professionals (Priti Patnaik and Remco van de Pas). As a collective research exercise, preliminary results were restituted to and discussed with the members of G2H2, and their inputs informed the later stage of the research work. The project team and the G2H2 secretariat, together with the project’s communication officer, were instrumental in the final shaping, editing, publishing and dissemination of the report. For the first time G2H2 engaged in direct media outreach, and the report was featured on *Health Policy Watch* and *Devex*, which have an international readership, as well as other national media in countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Argentina, Brazil, and Thailand.

In this sense, the report is built on the leadership and great contributions by many.

The financial support provided by the Geneva office of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation allowed us to add some paid capacities (researchers, secretariat, communication officer) to the work already offered by various G2H2 members as their in-kind contributions to the project.

Ultimately, the research and advocacy project, with its ambitious task and time constraints – having the report out ahead of the World Health Assembly Special Session (WHASS) at the end of November – proved a real but tough test of what is possible and achievable in the semi-formal G2H2 setup of a civil society team that cannot (and does not want to) rely on an extensive and expensive core structure, but on the contributions and engagement by those who take the lead.

The lessons learnt will have to be considered in the G2H2 follow-on project on the pandemic treaty that is currently being explored. This new knowledge will also be essential for any further G2H2 task groups and advocacy projects. While there is quite a bit of courage within the membership to go for such...



## PEOPLE’S WORKING GROUP ON MULTISTAKEHOLDERISM

In the second half of 2021, G2H2 started to engage in an emerging intersectoral more actively “People’s Working Group on Multistakeholderism”, based on a decision by the Steering Committee that such an engagement fits well with the G2H2 advocacy platform. We will report on the [working group](#) and its initial publication “The Great Takeover”, an attempt to map multistakeholderism in Global Governance, in the next annual report.

## CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE WITH THE WHO DIRECTOR GENERAL

We already reported about a series of interactive dialogues held by the WHO Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus with civil society representatives in 2020 and in particular about the session on “Social Participation and Accountability” co-hosted by G2H2 as part of a broader team. After that session on 13 October 2020, G2H2 remained engaged in a task group convened by Medicus Mundi International to elaborate an outline of a “WHO Civil Society Commission” – a project that found the interest and support by the WHO DG.

In 2021, the dialogue with the WHO leadership on how to improve its relationship with civil society and on the Commission proposal was continued, with a follow-up [dialogue session](#) on 5 August 2021 as a milestone, co-hosted again by G2H2. At the end of the year, despite some progress in terms of CSO engagement, it clearly appears that there is still quite some way to go, and uphill, before the Commission is set up in a way that corresponds with civil society expectations.

### CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE WITH THE WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOLLOW-UP OF A DIALOGUE SESSION IN OCTOBER 2020

## SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

WEDNESDAY  
25 AUGUST 2021  
11.30 – 13.00 CEST



# G2H2 AS CIVIL SOCIETY CONVENER

Facilitating civil society's capacity for strategizing and advocacy is a core task of G2H2. Indeed, the limited spaces available and the shortcomings of previous informal arrangements in the field of civil society role in global health have been at the origin of the Geneva Global Health Hub, in 2016.

G2H2's intent is to "provide a space and enable civil society to meet, share knowledge and create initiatives to advocate for more democratic global health governance." It wants to remain a "convener and facilitator for jointly exploring key topics and processes in view of deepening analysis and promoting CSO cooperation within and beyond the health sector" (both quoted from a G2H2 strategy document adopted in 2020). Last year, we reported on how the environment of this work has fundamentally changed due to the pandemic, with Covid-19 related travel restrictions and with the health emergency having re-routed most of the global health narratives and spaces. All this forced G2H2 to move its events to the virtual Zoom meetings' space, outside the "protected" Geneva biotope, a shift that forced G2H2 to move out of its comfort zone and explain the particular role and value of its events to a broader audience.

The events hosted or co-hosted by G2H2 in 2021 show that we are on track, and that our role as civil society convener is both highly esteemed by our members and a wider audience. With the success of the G2H2 meetings, members' ambitions and aspirations are raising, and this is good so.



## SERIES OF PUBLIC BRIEFINGS AND DEBATES, 11-15 JANUARY 2021

### “WHO EXECUTIVE BOARD SESSION: ANOTHER WASTE OF TIME?”

In January 2021, G2H2 organized a series of public briefings and debates under the title “148th Session of the WHO Executive Board: Another waste of time – or time to restore WHO as directing global health authority?” The title and the outline of the meeting referred to the fact that, in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic, we witnessed and still witness a crisis of the WHO governing bodies, and in particular the Executive Board. This crisis contributes to further weakening the role of the World Health Organization as global health authority.

In this series of public briefings and debates hosted by the Geneva Global Health Hub and organized by G2H2 members, civil society organizations asked how the World Health Organization can live up to its constitutional mandate of being the directing and coordinating authority on international health work. Both in the current Covid19 pandemic and beyond, what will be needed to reaffirm this particular position of the WHO?

- Monday, 11 January 2021, session organized by the People’s Health Movement  
**Human rights and the Covid-19 response: Lessons for the future, action for now**
- Tuesday, 12 January 2021, session organized by Viva Salud  
**What can WHO contribute to making Covid-19 vaccines, treatments and technologies global public good?**
- Wednesday, 13 January 2021, session organized by WSFHSS and CSEND  
**Private sector engagement for strong health systems?**
- Thursday, 14 January 2021, session organized by Society for International Development SID  
**Rescue the World Health Organization from itself?**
- Friday, 15 January 2021, session organized by Medicus Mundi International Network  
**What reform agenda for the WHO Executive Board?**

The [meeting documentation](#) on the G2H2 website includes introductions to each session, a diversity of background information and references and the recordings of all sessions.



## **POLICY DIALOGUES AHEAD OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY, 10-13 MAY 2021** **“LOST IN THE PANDEMIC? PULSE OF GLOBAL HEALTH IN TIMES OF COVID-19”**

Taking place in the week before the 74th World Health Assembly (WHA), the series of G2H2 hosted policy dialogues “Lost in the Pandemic? The pulse of global health in times of SARS-CoV-2” aimed at bridging some key political elements of the WHA agenda with civil society perspectives on Covid-19 related processes that demand specific attention, assessment and action. All in all, we looked into the state of global health in times of the pandemic and provide a space for encouraging those who promote substantial change.

- Monday, 10 May 2021, session organized by Society for International Development  
**The Pandemic treaty proposal: Seeking accountability after the disaster?**
- Tuesday, 11 May 2021, session organized by Amel Association International  
**Claiming a dignified and universal approach for vaccination:  
Covid-19 realities of people on the move**
- Wednesday, 12 May 2021, session organized by WSFHSS and CSEND  
**Beyond state control and corporate power: An alternative digitalization of public health**
- Thursday, 13 May 2021, session organized by WSFHSS and CSEND  
**Sustainable WHO financing: But what World Health Organization do we want?**

This series of policy dialogues again found considerable attention, as expressed both in good attendance and positive feedback. A much-appreciated financial contribution by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (Geneva office) allowed us to provide interpretation of all sessions into English, French and Spanish (one session: Arabic) and therefore reaching out to a larger audience.

Also for this series of meetings, the G2H2 website provides extensive [documentation](#).

# **LOST IN THE PANDEMIC?**

POLICY DIALOGUES  
AHEAD OF WHA74  
10-13 MAY 2021

# **THE PULSE OF GLOBAL HEALTH IN TIMES OF SARS-COV-2**

# NETWORKING

Since the beginning of G2H2, networking, communication, and the promotion of collaboration have been part of the core functions of the Geneva Global Health Hub, complementing its initial core.

In 2021, the Geneva Global Health Hub continued to provide its members with concrete tools for information sharing, allowing them to strategize, communicate, and exchange information and experience throughout the year. The [G2H2 website](#) provides basic information on the Hub and its governance and membership, meetings and publications. In spring 2020, for obvious Covid-19 related reasons, we deactivated our online calendar of events for Geneva global health meetings.

Adapting our communication to the steadily growing number of online events and webinars on Covid-19 related issues, we recommended to our members to mainly refer to our posts on [Twitter](#) (G2H2 has over 6000 followers) and to the internal “G2H2-members” mailing list as a communication platform and amplifier for their announcements and updates. Traffic on the mailing list is steadily growing.

## WHA TODAY: CIVIL SOCIETY LOUNGE CO-HOSTED BY G2H2

And yes, in 2021 we reinvented “WHA TODAY”, once more. Already in 2020, in the cold environment of a “virtual” World Health Assembly, it did not make sense for G2H2 to publish its guide to World Health Assembly side events as we have done in previous years. We then produced a “Civil society guide to the World Health Assembly”. In 2021, Medicus Mundi International, the People’s Health Movement and G2H2 agreed to implement “WHA TODAY” as a daily civil society lounge.

...and it worked! Equipped with their drinks and insights, many civil society colleagues within and beyond the membership of the three co-conveners joined our “lounge” and contributed to a lively conversation. The good attendance, with 30 to 50 civil society colleagues joining us in the lounge at every session, and the positive feedback received on this new, easy and informal way of meeting and interacting related to a WHO governing body meeting encouraged the team of co-organizers to do “more of the same”:

- WHA TODAY during the WHA Special Session in November/December 2021
- EB TODAY during the WHO Executive Board meeting in January 2022
- WHA AHEAD intersessional briefing ahead of the 75th World Health Assembly

We will certainly report about the latter two in the next G2H2 Annual Report. And we might adapt the formula of “WHA TODAY” again in 2022 when the World Health Assembly might be implemented as a hybrid event and people will again come to Geneva for talking, networking and lobbying. Stay tuned!



**WHA TODAY**  
SPECIAL SESSION ON PANDEMIC TREATY

**DAILY, 9-10 AM CET**  
**29 NOV - 2 DEC 2021**

**LOUNGE FOR**  
**CIVIL SOCIETY**  
**EXCHANGES**

# GOVERNANCE

In 2021 G2H2 held the Annual **General Assembly** on 21st June. Set up again as a Zoom meeting, the Assembly was attended by the formal representatives of 23 member organizations and a good number of other G2H2 colleagues. The participating members welcomed the four new entities that joined G2H2 over the previous year:

- Global Health Centre, The Graduate Institute
- European Association for Counselling
- Médecins du Monde International Network
- Dianova International

In 2021, the composition of the **G2H2 Steering Committee** remained the same:

- Ana Vračar, PHM
- Andreas Wulf, Medico International
- Armando Antônio De Negri Filho, WSFHSS
- Baba Aye, Public Services International, G2H2 Co-President
- Patrick Kadama, ACHEST
- Lorenzo De Min, saluteglobale.it
- Nicoletta Dentico, Society for International Development, G2H2 Co-President
- Virginie Lefevre, Amel Association International
- Thomas Schwarz, MMI Network, representing the G2H2 Secretariat

The **G2H2 Secretariat** continues to be hosted by the Medicus Mundi International Network at its Geneva office, based on a Secretariat agreement defining its role and scope of work. The Executive Secretary, currently the only employed G2H2 staff, implements the mandate and leads the day-to-day management of the Hub. At the Annual General Meeting, the Steering Committee and the members again expressed their appreciation for the contributions and engagement of the Secretariat.

For the “Pandemic Treaty” project, the **contribution by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation** allowed us to temporarily extend the capacity of the G2H2 Secretariat by some days and to engage a staff member of the Society for International Development (SID) as a **Communication Officer**. By the end of the year, there are good perspectives for sustaining the mandate of the communication officer, as another, most welcome in-kind contribution by a G2H2 member, and with its task to be further shaped.



*We build a strong civil society  
space in Geneva*

*for more democratic global  
health governance.*

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