



Health is a fundamental human right, a moral and social imperative, and the basis of equitable growth and sustainable development

Newsletter

Issue 22, February 2015

Health News

January 2015 Executive Board, World Health Organization

We reported in the January newsletter on preparations for and outcomes of the 136th meeting of the WHO Executive Board (EB) with its special session on Ebola. The consolidated commentary from the People's Health Movement (PHM) is [now available](#). See too the [Global Health Watch page](#) on the EB.

Handbook on HIV and AIDS for labour inspectors

The ILO has produced a new handbook to strengthen labour inspectors' capacity to include AIDS issues — such as discrimination, gender equality, and occupational safety and health— in their day-to-day work. It is [available](#) on the website of [ILOAIDS](#), the ILO's HIV/AIDS and the World of Work Branch.

Philanthrocapitalism, past and present: the Rockefeller Foundation, the Gates Foundation and the settings(s) of the international/ global health agenda

The [article](#) reflects critically on the roots, demands and reach of global health philanthropy, comparing the goals, principles, practices and agenda-setting roles of the Rockefeller and Gates Foundations.

Oxfam reports on inequality and access to health care in Russia

During 2014, Oxfam worked with the Global Call to Action against Poverty on a project to analyse inequality trends in Russia, with reference both to economic inequality and to inequality in access to healthcare. See Global Health Check for an [overview of findings](#), including a link to the [report](#) *Inequalities in access to healthcare in Russia. A policy analysis* (or click on the words '[inequality in access to healthcare](#)' in the first paragraph). The Oxfam [report](#) *After Equality: Inequality trends and policy responses in contemporary Russia* also has a section on healthcare.

The *WHO bulletin* looks at health in the BRICS countries (Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa) more generally in [BRICS and global health](#).

How to eradicate extreme poverty

A recent [article](#) in the World Economic Review examines the likelihood of eradicating extreme poverty – defined as income below \$1.25 a day – based on existing instruments of development policy and taking account of global carbon constraints. The author of *Incrementum ad Absurdum: Global Growth, Inequality and Poverty Eradication in a Carbon-*

Constrained World finds that this would take about 100 years and depend on global GDP per capita reaching \$100,000.

Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), Rome, November 2014

A group of civil society organizations (CSOs), including Forum member IBFAN-GIFA, took part in the year-long preparatory process for this intergovernmental meeting, held 22 years after the first ICN. The outcome of the negotiations ([Rome Political Declaration](#) and [Framework for Action](#)) provide a welcome focus on malnutrition in all its forms, with considerable attention given to breastfeeding, but are still inadequate to tackle the scale of the problem. The CSOs declared a worldwide People's Decade of Action on Nutrition and agreed a [Public Interest Civil Society Organizations' and Social Movements' Forum Declaration](#) to mobilize the political will to tackle the political, social, cultural and economic determinants of malnutrition in all its forms.

Friends of the Earth Europe say that EU-US trade deal threatens food safety

The trade agreement being negotiated between the US and EU threatens public health, consumer rights and animal welfare standards, according to [new analysis](#) by food and trade experts. The FoE criticisms come as negotiators from both sides of the Atlantic meet behind closed doors in Brussels, Belgium this week to start writing new food safety rules for the trade deal, while hundreds of people demonstrated against the 'Trojan Horse Treaty'.

2015 Human Development Report – Rethinking Work for Human Development

“Work is the means for unleashing human potential, creativity, innovation and spirits. It is essential to make human lives productive, worthwhile and meaningful.” So says the [new report](#) from the UN Development Programme (UNDP). It emphasizes that work is a much broader concept than jobs or employment, and includes voluntary as well as creative, care and domestic tasks and activities.

Can mobile technology transform health care?

Mobile technology has the potential to reshape the healthcare industry. According to a [new survey](#), providers in both public and private sectors predict that new mobile devices and services will allow people to be more proactive in attending to their health, make care more accessible for underserved communities and facilitate innovation.

Global health research priorities in UK

It appears that the UK's top medical research universities spend just two per cent of their health research budgets on work related to health in developing countries. The UK University Global Health Research [League Table](#) is the first public index to assess and rank the UK's top 25 universities — in terms of public funding for medical research — according to how much they spend on global health and neglected diseases.

Vaccines, social media and protective equipment combine against Ebola

The SciDev.net podcast [Vaccines and design against Ebola](#) examines how the world got together to fight the crisis, making use of different skills in the fields of medical research, technology and the media. The [epidemic](#), with over 22,000 cases across Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and almost 8,800 likely victims, is the biggest Ebola outbreak ever recorded.

Trade proposal would open up foreign health coverage and encourage privatization

Countries negotiating the Trade in Services Agreement are considering a [proposal](#) that would allow them to tap into a growing stream of “medical tourists” seeking cut-rate treatments on everything from bypass surgery to knee replacements and make health care a

more tradable commodity. The negotiations could deregulate up to 70% of world trade in services.

[Cancer medicines and monopolies: perpetuating inequalities](#)

WHO estimates that cancers accounted for 8.2 million deaths in 2012 which is projected to increase to 11.5 million deaths by 2030. The majority of cancer mortality and morbidity (70% of deaths and 60% of new cases in 2012) is in developing countries, but unsustainable cancer medication pricing has increasingly become a global issue, creating access challenges in low- and middle-income but also high-income countries. A [report](#) from Oxfam describes recent developments in the pricing of medicines, discusses what lessons can be drawn from HIV/AIDS treatment scale-up and makes recommendations to help increase access to treatment for people with cancer.

Mental Health

Redefining mental illness

The recent [newsletter](#) of the Movement for Global Mental Health draws its readers' attention to an important study published by the British Psychological Society. Titled [Understanding Psychosis and Schizophrenia - Why people sometimes hear voices, believe things that others find strange, or appear out of touch with reality ...and what can help](#), the report seeks to challenge the usual distinctions between psychosis and normal experience, and redefine mental illness.

The newsletter also repeats the call of FundaMentalSDG to include a specific mental health target in the post-2015 development goals. See the briefing paper [here](#).

Global mental health

In 2013 HimalPartner published a booklet in Norwegian about global mental health- this has now been translated and published in English. Titled [Mental health in development work – compassionate societies](#), it asks the basic questions: Can the poor afford to think about their mental health? Can society afford not to?

Health and Human Rights

Taking a human rights approach to psychosocial disability

The Movement for Global Mental Health ([MGMH](#)) also includes perspectives on the way women and girls in India are forced into mental institutions for a range of disabilities and social misdemeanours. It refers to a recent [report](#) by Human Rights Watch contains revelations of horrific violations against women in India. But this is not only an issue in India. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Mental Health, Dainius Puras, people with mental health problems are often treated by doctors and policy makers as an element of a diagnosis, not as a person. This has enormous consequences in many countries in Europe, amounting to "grave violations of human rights". See more [here](#).

Announcements

Women's health and work - Sharing knowledge and experience to enhance women's working conditions and gender equality.

Conference of the European Trade Union Institute, 4 - 6 March 2015, Brussels. The [programme](#) is available on the ETUI website but registration is now closed.

Tigers roar

There will be a showing of the film 'Tigers' - which exposes the scandal of infant milk in Pakistan and the role of Nestlé – on Friday 27 February 2015 in the Grande Salle, Théâtre Pitoëff, followed by discussion and debate. This is part of the *Festival du Film et Forum International sur les Droits Humains*. Repeat showing on 6 March at 18h45, Salle Simon at the Théâtre du Grütli. See notice on IBFAN-GIFA website [here](#). Interpretation provided.

Research presentations at the Brocher Foundation

The projects of 15 researchers will be shared with the public at the Brocher Foundation, Hermance, from 09.00 on Tuesday 10 March 2015. See [here](#) for the programme and registration form (closes 3 March).

Tackling Childhood Obesity in Europe through Prevention and Partnership

A Public Policy Exchange with the participation of the WHO - Thursday 16 April 2015, Thon Hotel, Brussels.

The rise in childhood obesity has become a major public health concern in Europe. According to the WHO, one in three 6 to 9 year-olds is overweight or obese across Europe, while each year around 7% of national health budgets are spent on diseases linked to obesity. For the programme and registration details see [here](#).

Summer school on humanitarian action

The Geneva Centre for Education and Research in Humanitarian Action (CERAH) has opened registration at its summer school in partnership with the University of Geneva: [Understanding Humanitarian Action](#). The course takes a multidisciplinary approach to the study of characteristics and challenges of humanitarian action. Intended for under- or post-graduate diploma holders and for professionals in contact with humanitarian action. Dates: 15 - 26 June 2015; deadline for registration: 15 May 2015.

Overcoming antimicrobial resistance

The World Alliance against Antibiotic Resistance announces the publication of *AMR Control 15*, which will in future become an annual publication keeping practitioners and decision-makers up to date with relevant experience and findings from all disciplines. For more information, and to reserve a copy, write to amr@globalhealthdynamics.co.uk.

The Forum Newsletter aims to provide information to members and cooperating organisations and serve as a platform for sharing updates, ideas and experiences. Please send us material you want to share at: info@ngo-forum-health.ch

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