

How Grassroots Mobilisation and Advocacy can Contribute to Democratising Global Health Governance

Online International People's Health University on Global Health Governance

Background

A series of regional IPHUs around Global Health Governance is proposed as a strategy to strengthen the articulation between our global and our local activism as a movement and to deepen and broaden our understanding of GHG, encompassing the political economy of capitalism and imperialism and the geopolitics of intergovernmental relations.

PHM insists that confronting capitalism and imperialism is a core strategy in the struggle for health. This is big picture material, but it should not be seen in any sense as an alternative to confronting the myriad of local and immediate issues that communities are facing, including access to healthcare and the social determination of population health. The activist challenge is to address the local and immediate issues in ways which also address the macro and longer- term structural issues. How this idea is realised will depend on local circumstances, but it will involve putting together the narratives which speak about these macro micro relationships.

Global health governance extends well beyond the technical debates about particular health issues and services in the World Health Assembly. WHO is not the only or the determining authority in this complex field, but it has some influence and watching WHO provides a window through which to follow the wider structures and dynamics of global health governance.

PHM has engaged closely with WHO and its governing bodies since May 2001 with our first delegation to Geneva. Our engagement with WHO was systematised from 2011 with the establishment of WHO Watch.

Course details and how to apply

This online International People's Health University will take place biweekly on Wednesday evenings between the 30th of October and the 5th of February (**October 30th, November 13th, November 27th, December 11th, January 8th, January 22th, February 5th**). Session will take 1h30 each. They might start at 18, 19 or 20 CET, depending on the preferences from the participants.

The course has 7 sessions in total where topics relevant to GHG will be discussed. Each topic will be covered over 2 weeks where participants have ample time to go through the

readings. At the end of the two weeks, a webinar will bring it all together and offer space for discussion and further input from resource people. Throughout the two weeks, you will have access to the resource people to pose your questions and reflections in a whatsapp group.

The course is designed as such that **it won't overburden those with full time professional responsibilities, yet requires your active participation on a regular base in the whatsapp group and biweekly webinars.** The workshop will be resourced by experienced PHM activists from the region including activists with experience as WHO Watchers in Geneva. The workshop will be conducted in English.

The total enrollment will be limited to 30 participants. The enrolment policy aims to achieve: geographical mix, gender balance, diversity of involvements, and diversity of skills, interests, experience, and backgrounds.

Apply now via [this link](#) – applications close on the 21st of September 2024.

All applicants will be informed on the outcome of their application by 4th of October

Objectives

The objectives of this IPHU are to:

- explore the interplay between community activism around local health issues and the challenges of global engagement;
- introduce PHM activists to PHM's WHO Watch program;
- review key issues addressed in the recent World Health Assembly; explore the local and regional implications of those issues and identify local and regional priorities for engagement;
- explore the potential outcomes and challenges involved in policy engagement with government officials regarding their policy positions on current issues of international debate;
- develop our policy analysis, policy development and policy advocacy skills; and
- identify local and regional priorities and plan for priority actions.

Agenda

On Global Health Governance and EU Health Governance - 30th of October

- What does "global health" mean: how has it been defined and what are the limitations of these definitions from the perspective of activists?
- How is global health governed and how has this changed over time? Which actors and legal frameworks have been most important in governing global health?
- Democratising global health governance: how and why could the governance of global health be democratised?
- The EU role in Global Health Governance will be analysed on the basis on EU Policy documents

On the WHO and the WHA - 13th of November

Since its creation in 1948, the WHO - nominally the “directing and coordinating authority on international health work” - has in reality never had the power and the finance needed to fully honour its role. The institutional crisis of the WHO has become more prominent during the Covid-19 pandemics, leaving a void that is being filled by private vested interests and that does not ensure an optimal response to current and future health challenges.

Aim of this session is to offer to the audience an “essential toolbox” to understand and navigate through the WHO institutional crisis and to jointly reflect on the relevance of a strong, harmonised international global health institution to face our contemporary challenge and to ensure a timely, coordinated response for the global interest.

The session will be divided into 3 parts.

In the first part, speakers will provide an introduction to the role and realities of the World Health Organization (WHO) that was established in 1948 as “directing and coordinating authority on international health work”: How is WHO structured and governed both at global and regional (European) level? How are the WHO legal instruments, technical norms, policies and strategies shaped, implemented, promoted and monitored? Who are the key actors WHO decision-making?

In the second part, selected speakers will provide a brief overview of the role played by WHO in the geopolitical scenario of the last 70 years, with a focus on the current multisectoral crisis that the WHO is facing and on the civil society engagement. Exploring the “lights” and the “shadows” that the international institution had to go through in its history is essential to draw lessons and insights for future action.

Drawing from the first and second part, the third one would like to offer some space for discussion around the following questions: what is the role and space for civil society at WHO, and what can be demanded and achieved through civil society advocacy at WHO? How can civil society action influence the strengthening of the WHO as the designated global health institution?

On Policy and advocacy and the WHO-watch - 27th of November

After the previous session’ discussions on the role that civil society can play within the WHO, today’s webinar would like to draw some light to a well-established and highly successful PHM programme: the WHO Watchers. To really democratise global health, each year the programme offers the opportunity to a group of selected candidates coming from all over the world to attend the World Health Assembly in Geneva, the most important WHO appointment of the year. Plunged into the world of highest-level diplomacy and with the opportunity to engage directly in the assembly – writing or reading statements – this experience represents a turning point for many of them.

With the contribution of previous WHO Watchers, the session will explore the history and details of the programme, focusing both on its ability to contribute and influence relevant

global health discussions at the WHO as well as enabling greater political awareness at local and regional level.

On the Workforce Issue - 11th of December

- Patterns of movement: the complexity of health workers migration
- Local contexts: What distinguishes the health workers crisis in different countries and regions, what connects them?
- The bigger picture: What underlying structural reasons led to the growing crisis of the health workforce?
- Looking at the global framework: The WHO Code of Practise on international health workers recruitment and its critical evaluation
- The role of PHM: How can we advocate for systematic measures that improve health workers working conditions globally?

On Public Pharma - 8th of January

In this session, we will explore what Public Pharma is, why it is crucial for global health, and the steps we can take to make it a reality. We will also discuss concrete actions that can be taken in Europe and their potential impact on the rest of the world, especially the Global South. Designed for a broad audience, this webinar will offer clear insights into how Public Pharma can transform healthcare accessibility and equity worldwide.

On our Theory of Change - 22th of January

[PHM's charter](#) emphasises the global nature of the dynamics which shape the global health crisis but also emphasises working with local communities. It is very much about acting locally while thinking globally.

The tasks which PHM confronts are huge and the oppositions are powerful. PHM itself is quite heterogeneous, with debate across differences as well as bonds of solidarity. There are no simple solutions. The very entity "PHM" is complex: an organisation, a network and a movement: an organisation which seeks through networking to build a movement.

In this session we will discuss how we see our theory of change. We will explore the relation between advocacy and activism, the role of organising, mobilising and sensibilisation and how to put theory into practise.

What's next? - 5th of February

This session will be literally this: What's Next? We will discuss our biggest takeaways from the past weeks and how we want to move forward with this as a group or in our individual work as professionals and/or activists.

What seems not concrete now, will grow week by week because of all the topics we discuss. In this session we will make concrete plans on how we want to go beyond our small group with everything we have learned.

Contact

For enquiries please contact matilde@vivasalud.be for questions about this IPHU, and ana@phmovement.org for questions on PHM Europe.

About PHM and IPHU

The People's Health Movement (PHM) is a global movement, which has its roots deep in the grassroots people's movements and owes its genesis to many health networks and activists who have been concerned by the growing inequities in health. The PHM calls for a revitalisation of the principles of the Alma-Ata Declaration, which promised Health for All by the year 2000 and complete revision of international and domestic policy that has shown to impact negatively on health status and systems. The People's Health Movement is coordinated by a global secretariat and is supported by a steering council.

Contact: globalsecretariat@phmovement.org

www.phmovement.org

The International People's Health University (IPHU) is one of the programs of the People's Health Movement (PHM). IPHU is a global university providing short courses and other resources for health activists.

Web: www.iphu.org