

## **About this book**

In an increasingly integrated, globalised world with new cross-border threats to health, widening disparities in both health and access to health care, and an unacceptable level of human suffering and premature mortality in developing countries, civil society actors are asking, why is so little progress being made by global health actors?

Like its critically acclaimed predecessor, the second edition of *Global Health Watch* covers a comprehensive range of topics, including access to medicines, mental health, water and sanitation, nutrition, and war and conflict.

Unlike other reports on global health, it also draws attention to the politics of global health and the policies and actions of key actors. *Global Health Watch 2* includes chapters on the United States foreign assistance programme, the Gates Foundation, the World Bank, the World Health Organization and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

*Global Health Watch 2* is not only an educational resource for health professionals and activists, it also makes clear the need for global health advocates to engage in lobbying key actors to do better and to do more, whilst resisting those that do harm.

## More praise for **Global Health Watch 2**

‘For everyone who remains disappointed by the inability of the many global accounts of health and disease to address the fundamental causes of global ill-health and premature death, this is the alternative. *GHW2* looks fearlessly and truthfully at issues which daily occupy the minds of thinking health professionals: reversing poverty, eliminating inequities, tackling environmental change and dealing directly with the delivery of effective health and social services. ... *GHW2* focuses on realisable solutions to each of these problems.’

*Hoosen M. ‘Jerry’ Coovadia, Victor Daitz professor of HIV/AIDS research, University of KwaZulu–Natal, Durban*

‘An incisive socio-political critique of contemporary global health issues which focuses on determinants rather than diseases, enables the reader to unravel the complexity of global economic governance of health, and helps us understand why appalling health inequities persist across and within nations – a must-read for anyone involved or interested in public health.’

*K. Srinath Reddy, president,  
Public Health Foundation of India*

‘*Global Health Watch 2* is insightful and provocative. It goes beyond the traditional health sector. It discusses economic, social and political preconditions for improving health for all. It does not shy away from highlighting the relation between the health of poor and marginalised people with the wealth appropriated by richer people, who have access to political power. In this sense, it is a true developmental report. The facts presented are a reason for great concern. They call for action.’

*Jan Pronk, professor of theory and practice of international development, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague*

**Global Health Watch** 2

An alternative world health report

People's Health Movement  
CAIRO

Medact  
LONDON

Global Equity Gauge Alliance  
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A detailed list of contributors, researchers and peer reviewers, as well as organisations who have contributed to the production of the *Watch*, and photo credits, can be found at the back of the book.

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Emily Hansson, Bridget Lloyd, David McCoy,  
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## Foreword

Reports on the state of the world's health appear daily in the world's media. UN agencies, NGOs and academic institutions produce vast amounts of data, statistics and analysis. However, what is lacking is a critical and integrated assessment of both the state of global health and the policies and actions taken to reduce global health inequalities and unacceptable levels of ill-health.

Still too often the state of ill-health in many poor countries is framed as a problem of disease, geography, bad luck or poor government. Rarely is it properly framed as a symptom and outcome of political and economic choices, or the current form of globalisation which has created a deep chasm between a minority of 'winners' and a majority of 'losers', whilst simultaneously placing the world at the brink of environmental crisis.

Recent years, however, have seen a rise in interest in 'global health', prompted by the creation of the Millennium Development Goals. Development assistance for health has increased, the number of new global health initiatives has multiplied and the Gates Foundation has massively increased the amount of private financing for global health. But in spite of these developments, why is so little improvement being made?

The People's Health Movement, Medact and the Global Equity Gauge Alliance came together in 2003 to appraise critically the state of global health and to assess the performance and actions of certain key institutions such as the World Health Organization and UNICEF, donor agencies, high-income-country governments, the World Bank, multinational corporations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization.

This resulted in *Global Health Watch 2005–2006*, an alternative world health report that highlighted the root causes of poor health and revealed the

gap between humanitarian rhetoric and reality. It comprised 22 chapters covering a broad array of subjects on global health and development policy, produced from the contributions of more than 120 individuals and the support of approximately 70 organisations across the world.

*GHW 1* was released in July 2005 at the second People's Health Assembly held in Cuenca, Ecuador. More than twenty-two official 'launches' of the report took place worldwide in more than sixteen countries.

A shorter summary and campaigning document *Global Health Action 2005–2006* was also produced and disseminated, and translated and printed in Spanish, French and Arabic. The *Watch* also stimulated the production of a Latin American Health Watch and a UK Health Watch. Two advocacy documents (on WHO and health systems) were developed and distributed at various forums and conferences.

The release of *Global Health Watch 2* coincides with the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration of Alma Ata. To mark this anniversary, the WHO has released the 2008 *World Health Report* on the revitalisation of PHC. This year also sees the release of the report of the Commission on the Social Determinants of Health. We believe *GHW 2* is important reading to accompany the official world health report.

However, as with *GHW 1*, this report has limitations. Many key issues relevant to health have not been covered. With space constraints, a limited budget and a small secretariat, we were simply unable to cover everything. Some of the data and analyses are also out of date. For example, the crisis around rising food prices occurred after the book was finalised.

Nonetheless, this book covers a range of issues and provides an alternative perspective that is vital to help the world move beyond the currently inadequate approaches and interventions to ensure that all people have their basic and essential health needs met.

We hope that the *Watch* provides some small contribution to ensuring that politicians, governments, donor agencies, banks and multilateral institutions are kept honest and held accountable.

**People's Health Movement**

**Medact**

**Global Equity Gauge Alliance**