



World Health Organization (WHO)

Established during the aftermath of World War II as a result of discussions regarding the need to improve and maintain global public health, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially began functioning on April 7th, 1948. Although the League of Nations Health Organization and the International Office of Public Hygiene were both already present, these ceased to exist after a unanimous vote in the San Francisco Conference (1945), followed by the creation of the Constitution of the WHO (1946) (WHO, 2021).

Nowadays, in addition to being comprised of 194 Member States, the WHO is supported by over 900 partners from international organizations, foundations, research institutions, and communities, amongst others. Particularly for countries with nonexistent or reduced financial and infrastructural means to provide their population with the basic right of medical access, the aforementioned allows the organization to have a worldwide reach with few restrictions. Consequently, its official purpose is to coordinate and to guide the health system within the United Nations (UN) (WHO Western Pacific, 2021).

That being said, as for its objectives, the WHO (2021) establishes that it aims to attain “the highest possible level of health by all people.” Furthermore, the organization has sought to promote the development of health systems in all countries, foster health security, strengthen health systems, harness research and information, enhance partnerships, and improve performance at all levels of the scientific agenda, as well as many akin proposals (UN, 2021). Nevertheless, it faces various limitations, as it is restrained and refrained from having a political standpoint due to the international governmental funds it receives. As seen throughout the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, the WHO failed to question the integrity of the origin of the virus, thus resulting in distrust from the international community (Tufekci, 2020).

Contrarily, the WHO is also recognized for the numerous achievements it has under its belt. For instance, the long vaccination campaign that resulted in the eradication of smallpox in December 1979, a general decline in the global infant mortality rate, reduced preterm birth and maternal mortality, prevention of untreatable gonorrhea, many successful immunization campaigns, elimination or control of 17 neglected tropical diseases, and no poliomyelitis outbreaks in most countries are just a few of them (Nature Microbiology, 2020: WHO, 2012).



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