



GLOBAL HEALTH • LOCAL ISSUE

medsin – uk

Progress Report

Aug 2007-Feb 2008

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Administrative Details

Charity Number: 1111824

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Mission Statement

Ideology

Medsin-UK promotes humanitarian ideals among students with an interest in health and seeks to contribute to the creation of responsible future healthcare professionals.

Objectives

- To promote health for the benefit of the public by reducing inequalities in health and healthcare, in the UK and abroad.
- To advance health education by increasing awareness of global health issues amongst students with an interest in health and the wider community, aiming to improve the quality and standard of global health and healthcare.

Methods

- Empowering healthcare students to use their knowledge and skills for the benefit of local, national and international communities.
- Offering advice, guidance and support to future healthcare professionals in the UK.
- Providing a forum for healthcare students throughout the UK to discuss topics related to individual and community health, education and science, thereby informing themselves and others about local and global inequalities in health and the causes of those inequalities.
- Promoting and facilitating professional and scientific exchanges, projects and extracurricular training for healthcare students, thereby sensitising them to other cultures and societies and their health problems.
- Providing a link between member branches, medical students' associations and international organisations, and encouraging co-operation between them for the ultimate benefit of society.
- Providing training opportunities for student members to realise their vision of improved health for society.
- Direct campaigning actions.

The Organisation

Medsin is an independent student organization that raises awareness of and takes action on humanitarian and global health issues at a local, national and international level. Formed in 1997, it is a network of motivated medical students active in curriculum issues, community projects, international exchanges, campaigns and conferences.

The Trustees – The National Committee

- President – Gemma Owens
- Vice-President Branches – Helen Preston
- Vice-President Projects – Emily Finnigan
- Vice-President Externals – Selina Rodrigues (until Dec 2007), Simon Lex (Jan 2008 onwards)
- Campaigns Directors – Peter Baker & Jennifer Riches
- Treasurer – Rafi Rogans-Watsons
- Secretary – Gemma Cubbin
- Publicity Director – James Chan
- Training Director – Daisy Acres
- Technology and Communications Director – Matthew Brandwood



Structure

Medsin-UK is a student-run charitable organization, consisting of an elected 'National Committee', who works to facilitate the Medsin network.

The National Committee's overall role involves:

- Coordination - Sharing ideas and information effectively through newsletters, website and regular contact
- Empowerment – Enabling students to put their ideas into action. The National Committee facilitates the exchange of resources and skills across the network. It is also responsible for organizing training opportunities that help students to develop their personal and professional skills
- Support - Using our experience and central position to give advice and support to branches and projects
- Representation – Maintaining relationship with the IFMSA and other partner organizations and developing new contacts.

The Network consists of Medsin branches at universities throughout the UK, and projects and campaigns which are run within the local branches. Each branch has a Branch President, and each Project/Campaign has a national Coordinator. Our Vice-President for branches facilitates dialogue and idea-sharing amongst Branch Presidents and the Vice-President for Projects and the Campaigns director does the same within the network for projects and campaigns, respectively.

Our Members are individuals who participate in any of the activities run locally or nationally by Medsin branches or projects. Our members are students with an interest in health; predominantly, but not exclusively medical students. We have increasing participation from other healthcare and non-healthcare students with an interest in the local and global promotion of health for all.

The International Network - The International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA) – is an organization which works to facilitate cooperation and dialogue between medical students from over 90 different countries around the world. The IFMSA is recognized as an official partner of the World Health Organization (WHO).

As the UK's National Member Organization, Medsin has access to the IFMSA's exchanges, projects and conferences. IFMSA's activities are now organized into six standing committees: Professional Exchanges; Reproductive health and HIV/AIDS; Refugees and Peace; Public Health; Medical Education; Research Exchanges. A delegation of Medsin members attend biannual IFMSA General Assemblies, in order to share knowledge and input into the objectives of the international organization.

Our Partnerships are based on health, education, science, environmental, social and humanitarian affairs and include the British Medical Association (BMA), the Lancet and Medact. A full list of our external partners can be found at www.medsin.org/externals.

Our Patrons are people who believe in the work of Medsin and to whom we are extremely grateful for their ongoing support. Medsin currently has 3 patrons – Richard Horton (Editor in Chief of the Lancet), Professor John Yudkin (Former Director and Founder of the International Health BSc course at UCL) and Professor Andrew Haines (Director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine).

Events - Medsin hosts two National Conferences annually - the National Conference in October and the Global Health Conference in March. As well as this, Medsin also holds two General Assemblies (GAs) a year – the AGA in the autumn term and the SGA in spring. General Assemblies are a chance for Medsin members to meet to discuss the running of the organization, receive training on topics such as leadership and branch sustainability, and for voting members (Branches, nationally recognised Projects and Campaigns) to make important decisions on behalf of the network.

Medsin's Activities

Medsin Branches

Medsin currently has 33 branches working within the network including branches in 32 of the UK medical schools (including the LSHTM) and a branch at a university without a medical school – Medsin-SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies). A full list of the Medsin branches can be obtained from www.medsin.org/branches.

Medsin Projects

Medsin currently has 10 **nationally recognised projects**:

- **Crossing Borders** - health-related projects with refugees and asylum seekers
- **CPRiS** - teaching CPR in schools
- **Exchanges** - facilitating reciprocal exchanges between UK medical students and their IFMSA counterparts
- **Homed** - locally orientated projects working with the homeless.
- **Global Health Education Project** - campaigning for global health issues to be included in our core and optional curriculum.
- **Global Health Advocacy Project** - giving students a collective voice
- **Marrow** - recruiting potential bone marrow donors to the Anthony Nolan Trust Register.
- **Sexpression** - running sexual-health related workshops with young people
- **Students for Kids International Project (SKIP)** - locally organized international projects working with children.
- **Teddy Bear Hospital** - reducing children's fear of the medical setting through role-play.

And 2 **affiliated projects**:

- **Medaid** – shipping out health-related equipment to hospitals in need
- **Save a Baby's Life (SaBL)** - covers basic life support (rescue breathing and CPR), choking and near drowning protocols as applied to infants.

Medsin Campaigns

Medsin has 10 nationally recognised campaigns:

- **Arms Trade** - campaigning against the arms trade
- **Healthy Planet** – promoting awareness of the links between environment & health
- **Global Health Systems** – seeks to ensure that Medsin's work is well integrated and supports the entirety of global health systems including sufficient health workers, sufficient infrastructure, fighting user fees that prevent access to health care, etc.
- **International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)**
- **Malaria and Neglected Diseases Campaign (MNDC)**
- **PharmAware** - aims to raise awareness amongst future healthcare professionals of concerns relating to the effects of pharmaceutical marketing on prescribing behaviours.
- **Save Our NHS** – campaign for 'public health not private wealth'
- **Stop AIDS** - aims to raise awareness of the AIDS epidemic and barriers to ARV treatment
- **Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM)**
- **Water4all** – raising awareness of the issues regarding access to water and sanitation.

Of the 10 campaigns, we have 4 'priority campaigns' which means are given extra attention from the Campaigns Director and National Committee, extra newsletter and website prioritisation, and are suggested as a good starting point for those branches and individuals new to campaigning.

This year's 4 priority campaigns are:

- **Arms Trade**
- **Healthy Planet**
- **Save Our NHS**
- **Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM)**

Priorities for the 2007/08

The priorities identified by the National Committee at the start of the year, upon which to focus our energies were:

- To begin work on a long term strategic plan to include organisational aims and ideologies
- To improve the reputation of Medsin, both internally and externally
- To improve the structure/agenda of our General Assemblies
- To improve our Conferences

The long term strategic plan

Planned Strategies

- To evaluate the current situation in Medsin and carry out a SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis
- To encourage interaction and sharing of ideas amongst the Network regarding the future direction of Medsin
- To consult external experts for advice regarding capacity building and charity development
- To write a long term strategic plan which encompasses these ideas and promotes the future development and sustainability of the Network

Successes

Following on from Medsin's 10th anniversary and subsequent discussions of where the next 10 years would bring Medsin, the National Committee decided it was time to write a long term strategic plan which could shape the future direction of the Network. At the Autumn General Assembly the process began with a number of mini-meetings which brought Medsin members together to discuss the long term strategic plan from the point of view of projects, branches and campaigns. The Vice President for Projects, VP for Branches and Campaigns coordinators have taken the ideas generated in these mini-meetings to produce the start of the 10 year plan.

In addition, a document evaluating the current situation was written and a SWOT analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within the Network was produced. The SWOT analysis will now be used to produce a risk assessment which can be integrated into the long term strategic plan. The long term strategic plan will also seek to ensure that Medsin Network continued to maximise on its strengths and opportunities.

Work is also underway with regards to external consultation regarding charity development and capacity building. A meeting has already taken place with Medact, and we are also planning to seek advice from the director of People and Planet and Mike Rowson, among others.

Work on this is ongoing, and we expect there to be a consultant period prior to the AGA2008, when the strategic plan will hopefully be adopted.

The Reputation of Medsin

Planned Strategies

- To ensure NC members maintain a professional level of behaviour and integrate with members during Medsin national events
- NC members will each visit 2 branches other than their own to improve National Committee and local relations by AGA 2008
- All e-mails will be acknowledged within 72 hours
- To increase transparency and accountability of the National Committee and their activities, towards the network
- To continue improving Medsin's external reputation

Successes

The Medsin National Committee has endeavoured to integrate more with grass-root members during Medsin national events, by restricting National Committee meeting times during events. Grass-root contact has also increased through each National Committee member being responsible for maintaining regular contact with 2 branches (with the exception of VP for Branches) via telephone. Furthermore, approximately one third of Medsin's branches have been visited by a National Committee member to date this year.

The first ever Branch Presidents' meeting outside of a conference or GA, took place in Manchester in November, which helped the National Committee engage more with the branches and find out what they expect/want from the National Committee. This meeting was very productive and the National Committee are working towards meeting their requests, which included a generic branch handover document, more advice regarding branch structure and activities, and updating the branch resource pack.

In addition, the National committee have increased transparency and accountability to the rest of the Network through increased information regarding external partners and meetings, which is available from the Medsin website.

With regards to Medsin's external reputation, Medsin has continued to further integrate into the global health world. Some of the most notable achievements in our first six months have included Medsin's co-option onto the BMA's International Committee in October, Professor Andrew Haines (Director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) accepting our invitation to become Medsin's third patron, developing links with the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene and being invited to participant in the Global Health Watch 2 (GHW2) Launch Steering Group. Further more, Medsin was invited to give a presentation to the Heads of all the UK medical schools at the Medical Schools' Council in September, which gave Medsin a platform to publicise and gain support for local and national Medsin activities.

Improving General Assemblies

Planned Strategies

- To improve the planning process prior to Medsin General Assemblies (GAs)
- To write a GA explained document to send to branches, projects and campaigns prior to general assemblies
- To consider the evaluation and discussions regarding improvements to GAs following the SGA 2007
- To liaise with as many members as possible regarding improvements to GAs
- To minimise bureaucracy and maximise on training and time for networking and exchanging ideas

Successes

At the Autumn General assembly the agenda had a long over due make-over. The National Committee wanted to prioritise networking time and training, and ensure that the agenda accommodated those who had attended GAs before and those who hadn't. Changes included parallel sessions, a newcomer's session, a welcome speech from an external partner, an open debate, and training to suit even the most experienced of Medsin members. In addition, there was more networking time than ever before.

The National Committee have reviewed the evaluation forms following the AGA and have already started working towards more changes for the SGA. The National Committee are also intending to produce a 'how to run a general assembly' document to aid further National Committees with this task.

In addition, the National Committee have been looking into how other organisation's conduct their annual general meetings in order to see how Medsin can reduce the time spent debating bylaws and hence increase the time available for networking and mini-meetings.

Improving Conferences

Planned Strategies

- To develop an online archive of past conference to help facilitate teams plan their bids
 - To facilitate the writing of a more comprehensive 'how to run a conference manual'
 - To put in place further support mechanisms for conference teams
 - To implement a better evaluation process and review the feedback with the future conference hosts
 - To develop databases to aid future conference organisers
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Successes

With regards to improving conferences, the National Committee have started to put a number of mechanisms in place to aid with the planning of conference bids and the organization of the conference itself. We have started to develop an online archive of past conferences which includes information regards the themes of the conferences, which can be used as a tool to facilitate branches who wish to bid to host conferences. We are also currently updating the national speaker database, and creating a sponsorship database which will detail all the sponsors of the past conferences, the sum of money given and the contact details for the sponsors, to aid future conference fundraisers. Furthermore, we have asked a number of past conference coordinators for their help in writing a more comprehensive 'how to run a conference' guide which can be a working document that is updated after each conference in the future. Finally, we are currently developing a conference support team that will include past conference team members on a Medsin email address such as pastconferences@medsin.org, whom current conference teams can email for specific conference advice e.g. website graphics, print companies, example sponsorship packs, etc. The next six months will focus on completing much of this work and implementing a better conference evaluation process.

National Events

- Autumn General Assembly, Southampton – 22nd & 23rd September 2007
- National Sexpression Conference, Sheffield – 13th & 14th October 2007
- PharmAware AGM, London – 13th & 14th October 2007
- Exchanges Training Weekend, Nottingham – 13th & 14th October 2007
- SKIP National Conference, Birmingham – 20th & 21st October 2007
- Medsin National conference, Dundee – 27th & 28th October 2007
- Marrow AGM, Peninsula – 24th & 25th November 2007
- Sexpression Global Health Day & Sex Ball, Birmingham – 24th November 2007
- Activities Board Meeting, Manchester – 19th & 20th January 2008
- Regional conferences, various cities – February & March 2008
- UK delegation to IFMSA General Assembly, Mexico – 1st – 7th March 2008
- Medsin Global Health Conference, Oxford – 29th & 30th March 2008
- European regional Meeting of the IFMSA, Croatia – 10th – 13th April 2008
- Spring General Assembly, Leeds – 26th & 27th April 2008
- UK delegation to IFMSA General Assembly, Jamaica – August 2008

Other Successes

Medsin National Conference



Medsin's National Conference 2007 was held in Dundee and was a huge success. Approximately 300 students from around the UK came together to discuss the issues surrounding 'Population and Health'.

The Medsin National Conference looked at diverse issues such as development, fertility rates and famine. The speakers explored some of the major health and social issues affecting a changing population and adopted a rights-based approach to promoting equality and social justice through encouraging dialogue and improving the choice of the individual.

In addition, Medsin members participated in campaigning actions relating to the plenary themes. Medsin members signed a giant banner reading 'Don't let our carbon footprint trample on health' with their footprints and participated in a group photo with a list of demands to government, world leaders, individuals and healthcare professionals. Delegates also signed a statement to the Department of Health, directly opposing any changes to access to primary health care for undocumented migrant.

Medsin demanded an end to the privatisation of the NHS



Thousands of students, pensioners, trade unionists, socialists and health activists from around the country marched across London and descended on Trafalgar Square on 3rd December. Some groups demanded better care for the elderly, others for decent pay and conditions for health workers and still others were campaigning for an end to the back-door privatisation.

Despite the variety of demands they had the same core principles at heart. The demo was really a unanimous call for universal high quality public health care,

regardless of age, gender, location or ability to pay. Medsin members proudly (and loudly!) joined in with slogans such as “public health not private wealth!”

Other Activity Board Successes

- Medsin Child Protection Policy was finalised and adopted at the AGA
- Sexpression, Marrow and SKIP all successfully hosted their own project conferences. HOMED, Teddy Bear Hospital (TBH) and Crossing Borders are also hosting conferences in the near future.
- The first edition of the Activities Board Newsletter was produced and circulated at the National Conference in Dundee
- A formal campaigns committee was formed to support the campaigns coordinators in terms of publicity, conference actions, organising campaigns training events, etc.
- Significant uptake of the Defend Primary Healthcare Campaign among branch members.

Branches

New Medsin branches are currently setting up in Keele, Bradford and Preston. In addition, preparations for Medsin regional conferences are going well, with conferences planned in South East England (London), South West England (Bristol), the Midlands (Nottingham), the North of England (Preston) and Scotland (Glasgow).

Plans for the Future

Much of the work over the next six months will focus on consolidating the plans outlined above. In addition, we will also focus on the following:

- Medsin representation at the European Meeting of the IFMSA and the August Meeting in Jamaica
- Continuing to support the Oxford Global Health Conference team and the UCL National Conference team
- Recruitment of successors and handover
- Strengthening external relationships
- Exploring alternative ideas regarding Medsin's structure
- The Medsin name change
- Developing a publicity and communications strategy