

## THE ANTWERP MANIFESTO FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

*Academicians, community health specialists and practitioners from several industrialised and Third World countries gathered in Antwerp, in November 1985, for a 2-day seminar inhere they took stock of the achievements of the Primary Health Care approach.*

*Since the 1978 Alma Ata Conference, the member states of the World Health Organisation agreed that this Primary Health Care strategy, which sees people as active partners, is the most suited to answer their needs and can provide the basis for Health for All.*

*However, in Third World countries, in spite of the lessons of history and of past experiences, major national and international donor agencies are diverting scarce resources into a short term approach know as "selective primary health care". This approach concentrates exclusively on certain interventions claimed to be the most efficient and aimed only at sections of the population.*

*This self-contradictory term should be banned, since, at their best, such programmes can only be considered as "selective health statusinterventions". This approach is in total contradiction uith the fundamental principles underlying Primary Health Care.*

*These principles are:*

- *The main roots of poor health lie in living conditions and the environment in general, and more specifically poverty, inequity and the unfair redistribution of resources in relation to needs, both inside individual countries and internationally.*
- *Since health is only one of the concerns of people, it is self-defeating not to consider them as partners who are able to play a great part in the protection and the improvement of their own health. They thus have to be fully and really involved in the making of decisions which affect their health, including, of course, ths provision of health services.*
- *Health services must provide both curative and preventive care, as well as promotive and rehabilitative measures. This has to be done in a coordinated and integrated my which responds to the people's needs.*

*The Primary Health Care approach is being used uith success in many parts of the world. Being a continuous process, much remains to be done.*

*This manifesto is issued because the proliferation of selective health intervention programmes undermines the health services at the exact moment when they try to reorganise themselves towards Primary Health Care.*

*It is issued also because these interventions purport to offer "quick solutions" and "instant success" for which they divert scarce resources from the solution of the real underlying and continuing problems, thus helping to maintain ill health.*

*In addition, experience has taught us that selective interventions tend to become permanent even though they are presented as "interim" responses only. In fact they need specific structures which a country could not easily get rid of at the moment it decided to reorientate its health policy towards comprehensive Primary Health Care.*

*And, above all, the selective approach rules out the possibility of people's participation in decision making about their own health.*

*The undersigned thus wish to reaffirm the principles of Primary Health Care in its comprehensive form, and reject other approaches instituted and propagated as "selective primary health care".*

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