Being selected as a Student Project for Health Winner is a great privilege, and I am extremely grateful for this opportunity. As a medical doctor, the Medical Model United Nations (MedMUN) represented my pilot venture into the field of public health and social medicine. Being selected as a winner lets me know that I’ve taken a step in the right direction, and provides me with a premier platform to share my project and develop collaborations. This award also provides validation that MedMUN can help in training health professionals’ to build socially accountable health systems through evidence-based decision-making in a democratic process.

Attending The World Summit on Social Accountability is a privilege and a great opportunity for me to understand the different ways in which social accountability and health equity have been enacted in a variety of contexts. Living in a country where health systems are rarely socially accountable and health inequity is rampant, this conference represents an opportunity for me to learn practical ways in which I can play an active role in strengthening India’s health systems.

Early sensitisation is an important strategy to foster social accountability in budding health professionals. The Network: TUFH can create educational and funding opportunities for undergraduate health professions students to visit host institutions, to practically learn how and why programs and ventures can and should be made socially accountable. Upon returning to their home institutions, trained students can initiate similar initiatives which should be sustained through ongoing mentorship by the Student Network Organization (SNO).
Encouraging students to progress from patient-health to population-health by developing a ‘systems-level’ perspective can significantly build health leadership where it is most needed. The Network: TUFH can collaborate with student fraternities to develop simple educational initiatives which can be integrated into existing curricula in health professions’ classrooms. Simulation-based initiatives like MedMUN can provide an engaging way for students to appreciate the social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions of health within our increasingly globalised world.

I’m looking forward to the conference. India, the world's largest democracy, is a capitalist economy with rampant social inequality and a fragmented public health system. More than ever before, health professionals need to work towards building socially accountable health policies and systems. I would like to connect with those who can show me how I can help make this happen, so that I can share with this with my fellow health professionals too. Additionally, I’m keen to meet individuals interested in developing MedMUN-like initiatives in their own home countries. This will help us to understand its role in different settings, and contextualise MedMUN to suit local health systems and policy needs.

The most important thing people should know about our project is that the Model United Nations (MUN) are an operational simulation of the UN in which students play the assigned roles of UN delegates and debate global issues. In Medical MUN (MedMUN), students of various health professions congregate in a classroom setting to debate global health issues in the MUN format, supporting their arguments and policy stances with research evidence.

The event is preceded by four, once-weekly training sessions where delegates are taught to write and deliver speeches, draft resolutions, answer questions and navigate parliamentary procedure. Students are also trained to acquire, appraise and utilise research evidence to support their policy stances. Training involves interactive presentations, discussions and mock sessions.

MedMUN was designed to foster skills in leadership, teamwork, interprofessional dialogue, knowledge sharing, critical thinking, and evidence-based policy to address pertinent health issues prevalent in our societies. Students are encouraged to avoid national ethnocentrism, embrace a global outlook, and consider multiple perspectives before attaining consensus through discourse and the democratic process.
If you want to learn more about this project please attend the Student Projects for Health session at The World Summit on Social Accountability on the 9th of April from 10:30-12:30 in Hammamet, Tunisia.

Medical Model United Nations (MedMUN) Image: Myron Anthony Godinho