

Presentation of the NTD expertise at the Bundestag

Schistosomiasis, dengue and many more: according to estimates of the World Health Organization (WHO), more than one billion people suffer from so-called neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and a further two billion are at risk of contracting them. Those affected mostly live in low- and middle-income countries, in extreme poverty and without access to adequate healthcare, food, hygiene, water, sanitation and education. The WHO currently lists 21 NTDs, including diseases caused by worms, protozoa, bacteria, viruses or toxins. Although there are treatment options or vaccinations for many of these diseases, they are difficult to obtain or unaffordable in endemic countries. Despite the high burden of disease caused by NTDs, they do not receive as much attention as HIV, malaria or tuberculosis. For this reason, this is one of the main areas of research at the Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine (BNITM). The Fusco Lab-Group with its focus on poverty related and neglected diseases has facilitated the compilation of the booklet, which was presented on the 27th of June at the Bundestag in Berlin.

Prof. Jürgen May presented the key findings to a mixed audience of scientists, stakeholders, donors and politicians. Dr. Valentina Marchese and Dr. Daniela Fusco also attended the event. This was a unique opportunity to discuss Germany's future engagement in various NTD-related work. GLOHRA, represented by Prof. Beate Kampmann, was also present and important discussion points emerged, highlighting the importance of the multidisciplinary global health perspective, which is crucial in the fight against NTDs. Peer-to-peer communication initiatives were also discussed with Max Klein from BUKO Pharma-Kampagne, a German non-governmental organization (NGO) working to spread and raise awareness of diseases of poverty, including NTDs. Important discussions took place with Dr. Daniel Eibach and Ms. Nike Arning from BMZ on a program on female genital



Prof. May presenting the results



Dr. Daniela Fusco and Dr. Valentina Marchese in the audience

schistosomiasis that the Ministry will launch on 1st of July. This meeting, as well as the whole concept of the NTD expertise, has once again shown the importance of networking and communication between different stakeholders to address global health issues in the most fruitful way. We look forward to Germany's progress in the field of NTDs and hope to be able to report on what has happened in five years' time!