



TheSocialMedwork

Company Background

*Every human has the inherent right to life.
Every human has the right to make his own decisions about body,
health and medical treatments.
Every human has the right to have access to the best diagnostics
and latest treatment options available globally.
These rights should be protected by law.
No one should be arbitrarily deprived of this freedom of choice.*

TheSocialMedwork manifesto

[TheSocialMedwork](#) is a social enterprise founded in 2014 by [Sjaak Vink](#), [James Heywood](#), [Bernard Muller](#), and [Katrin Schepp](#). An independent medicines intermediary registered with the Ministry of Health (registration number 6730 BEM) in The Netherlands, the social impact funded organisation helps patients with life-threatening, serious and life-debilitating diseases such as cancer, ALS, and multiple sclerosis access the newly developed medicines without any delay. TheSocialMedwork uses existing regulations to help patients import overseas approved medicines into their country. With 60 innovative medicines currently listed, TheSocialMedwork has supported requests from over 120 countries and supplied nearly 4,000 medicines to patients in 70 countries.

The company was founded after two of its founders lost family members and friends to ALS and cancer within a very short period of time. Both felt that their loved ones could have been treated more successfully, and experienced first-hand the frustration that came from delays in the drug approval process and market access for new medicines. The third founder, Bernard, was diagnosed with ALS in 2010. Their research led to the realisation that most countries have existing legal processes in place to enable patients to import approved medicines from overseas for personal use. However patients are not aware of this and the process is difficult due to the complexity involved in finding a provider who ships a specific medicine to an individual patient. Pharmaceutical wholesalers, for example, are not permitted to sell medicines to individuals. TheSocialMedwork was founded to meet the needs of such people – to help those who want to access a novel, innovative or breakthrough medicine, but struggle to find a way to do so. Possessing knowledge and expertise of the importation regulations and requirements for overseas approved medicines in countries worldwide, the organisation is able to deliver, for example, a new cancer treatment to patients living in some of the world's most remote places, within weeks of its US approval. Ordinarily, patients might have to either relocate to the US for treatment, or otherwise wait years for the medicine to be approved in their home country.

The highly qualified and skilled team consisting of 12 nationalities is based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and includes doctors, qualified pharmacists, medical industry experts, scientists, and lawyers, all equipped to provide patients, doctors and hospitals with all the support and information required to make an informed decision about the best course of treatment. In every case, patients must possess a prescription from their treating doctor who is based in their country.

The highly qualified and skilled team consisting of 14 nationalities is based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and includes doctors, qualified pharmacists, medical industry experts, scientists, and lawyers, all equipped to provide patients, doctors and hospitals with all the support and information required to make an informed decision about the best course of treatment. In every case, patients must possess a prescription from their treating doctor who is based in their country.



TheSocialMedwork

A social impact startup, the company is funded by 'social impact investors' who share the company's vision to revolutionise healthcare and give every patient access to the best medicines. The first angel investor was acclaimed Silicon Valley activist-investor [Esther Dyson](#) (pioneering healthcare innovator, board member of 23andme, and one of [TIME's Ten Most Influential Women in Technology](#)) and later [Rogier van Vliet](#) (former board member of conservation focused Oceana and supporter of the Global Investigative Journalism Network). As a defined social enterprise, a type of business conceived by Nobel Prize Winner Professor Yunus, we place social purpose over profit, have social impact KPIs rather than profit ones, and all profit is reinvested back into the growth of the organisation.

The cost of each medicine is determined by its manufacturer. Patient-centred and globally proactive in their sourcing, TheSocialMedwork continually negotiates the best possible prices with its providers, and is able in many cases to provide the lowest prices globally. To cover its operating costs TheSocialMedwork applies a small margin of 3 - 15%, which has an inverse application, meaning we charge less on more expensive medicines, and more on the cheapest ones (our cheapest medicine is Calcort at 9.00 euro) as well as a one-off handling fee of 10% with a maximum of €295.

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