

### Global Forum Thematic Webinar III - 2023

Wednesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## Towards Global Digital Health and Novel Collaboration Constellations & Nature Regeneration and Resilience

#### Participants (41):

Jawad Abbassi, Namir Anani, Ingrid Andersson, Katherine Blizinsky, China Blue, Marius Bostan, Yahia Bouabdellaoui, Mariane Cimino, Robert Deller, Pavan Duggal, Geneviève Fieux-Castagnet, John Giusti, John Philip Green, John Jung, Karen Karapetyan, Nitya Karmakar, Hugo Kerschot, Eun-Ju Kim, Michel Lavollay, Corine Le Mouel, Eric Legale, Charles Lowe, Jeremy Millard, Eikazu Niwano, Alice Pezard, Pascal Poitevin, Toni Pekkola, Giorgio Prister, Judith Ryser, Aasia Saail, Gérald Santucci, Otto Schwetz, Susanne Siebald, Baila Sow, Johan Stronkhorst, Yoshio Tanaka, Lynn Thiesmeyer, Sylviane Toporkoff, Moussa Touré, Linda Vallée, Paul Wormeli.

The Global Forum Thematic Webinar #3 2023 on Global Digital Health and Novel Collaboration Constellations & Nature Regeneration and Resilience took place on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 from 13:30 to 15:00 CET via Zoom. It was the last webinar of the 2023 Global Forum webinar series.

With more than 40 participants joining from all over the world, the webinar was characterised by really good discussions and lively exchanges.

This report sums up the discussions of the Global Forum Thematic Webinar III/2023

## Programme

### Welcome and Introduction

#### Topic 1 – 45 min

##### **Nature Regeneration and Resilience**

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**Nature Based Solutions (NBS) for Sustainable Resilient Green & Blue Cities** – Judith Ryser, Urbanist, Senior Adviser Fundacion Metropoli, UK

**Mayyan, a Social Impact-Oriented Search Engine** – Moussa Touré, Founder & CEO Mayyan, France & Côte d'Ivoire

**Panel discussion**

#### Topic 2 – 45 min

##### **Towards Global Digital Health and Novel Collaboration Constellations**

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**Digital Health to Transform and Contribute to Solve Health Issues** – Mariane Cimino, Delegate for Digital Health, Numeum, France

**Rapid Progress and Remaining Challenges of Telemedicine / Telecare for Hard-To-Reach Areas in Asia** – Lynn Thiesmeyer, Professor Emerita of Environmental Information at Keio University /Senior Researcher at the Keio Global Research Institute, Japan

**Global Response to Health Challenges Needs Public-Private Partnerships** – Michel Lavollay, MD, Founder Public Private Partnership Europe

## Welcome and Introduction

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Ingrid Andersson, moderating, together with Sylviane Toporkoff, welcomed the participants to this third and last webinar of the Global Forum webinar series 2023.

## Nature Regeneration and Resilience

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**Judith Ryser**, Urbanist, Senior Adviser Fundacion Metropoli, UK, addressed the topic of nature-based solutions (NBS) for sustainable resilient green and blue cities by taking a long view on how the relation between man and nature has changed over time: The initial ecological relation began to change with agriculture and settlement – although ecology was still dominating at this time. This relation radically changed with the Age of Enlightenment when men began to dominate and exploit nature. Today, in face of a largely man-made climate change, people start questioning this way of functioning and nature-based solutions in urban planning are considered as a way to soften these adverse effects down. The question is what the future holds for us in terms of climate change and whether nature will dominate us again?

Cities are large consumers and polluters, but they are also small land users and very high producers. Agroindustry, on the other hand, is a large land user and a large polluter, but also a necessary food provider. NBS seek to redress some of these disbalances.

There is no single definition of NBS at the moment; the term was mentioned first by the UN in 2005 and has then been taken up by the International Union for Conservation of Nature in 2013, which came up with some NBS standards. NBS are “actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits”.

In urban development, formal planning was supposed to strike a balance between common good and private interest – a balance that tends towards unfettered development. NBS can be incorporated as a new planning tool to redress this balance. They have been used at two levels, the city and the regional level, in different ways. At the regional level, NBS generated extra dimensions, like benefiting biodiversity, focusing on human wellbeing (incl. health), and doing this through public participation and some basic redistribution of social spatial justice.

NBS have been used in few examples of urban development so far, but they have not been incorporated as an efficient formal planning tool yet. Even when introducing a new tool like NBS, it is completely dependent on human behaviour. There are a lot of small initiatives and people care about climate change, but it is still the domination of nature. Are NBS possible while domination of nature persists?

**Moussa Touré**, Founder & CEO Mayyan, France & Côte d'Ivoire, presented Mayyan. Launched 2 years ago, Mayyan is a social impact-oriented search engine - or more precisely, the world's first impact-driven conversational commerce platform. Mayyan works like any other search engine, but each time a search is performed, an advertisement appears. 30% of the revenues made with advertising are then donated to carefully selected non-profit projects devoted to addressing pressing issues in one of the following focus areas:

- Nature regeneration: Combat deforestation, preserve biodiversity, empower rural communities with sustainable livelihoods, and attract investors by integrating innovative agroforestry, wetlands restoration, and local co-creation of NBS.
- Food, soil, water: The interconnection between food, soil, and water quality is crucial, and proper management of land-based ecosystems through sustainable agriculture and forestry can enhance food security, reduce biodiversity loss, and address climate change, poverty, and conflicts caused by poor land management practices.
- Education and health: Enable and support citizen participation, stakeholder involvement, green enterprise development and innovation in leveraging value streams for health benefits from nature, e.g., by improving air quality, promoting physical movement, social inclusion, and well-being.

By connecting search engine, advertising industry and impact creation, Mayyan is bridging the gap between technology and impact. It represents a new way of using a search engine, enabling every person that is doing a search to become a citizen investor in nature-based or other solutions in one of Mayyan's project funding focus areas. The person can select the project and the country he or she wants to invest in. The money is going to projects working on the ground. Moreover, the Mayyan search engine recognizes several hundreds of languages and dialects so that people can use voice over search. Mayyan is expected to be launched in January 2024.

## Q&A

When asked whether there is evidence for social community benefits of NBS, **Judith Ryser** replied that there is a lot of greenwashing in urban planning as citizen participation does not really take place. She mentioned the Local Trust project in the UK as good example: In order to put more power, resources and decision-making into the hands of local communities and to enable citizens to transform and improve their lives and the places they live, the programme donated £1 million to 150 neighbourhoods across England to use as they like – with very positive results. It is really important to let go of dominating from the center and giving people ownership of their project.

Reference was also given to the URBINAT Horizon 2020 Project, which added “Participatory NBS” as one category of NBS, together with “Social & Solidarity NBS”, besides the usual one “Territorial” and “Technical NBS”.

The audience also referred to the missing methodologies to measure social impact. There are generally 3 kinds of impact: economic (related to indicators such as job creation), environmental (which is rather easy to measure with indicators such as air quality etc.) and

the social impact which is related to wellbeing and thus very hard to measure. Quantitative effects are rather easy to measure, but there is a need for techniques to measure qualitative effects.

Humans and nature are generally considered different entities, and the question raised whether a better cooperation would exist when commonality of the two elements is sought and understood. Nature is indifferent to living beings (though some will argue that e.g., trees have their own 'conscience', while humans are scorning Nature, always willing to dominate it). The geographical dimension is also an important aspect. Can technologies help while domination of nature persists? Can technologies compensate for humans' lack of respect of Nature? At the same time, humans are by circumstance elements of nature, matters of cooperation would suggest that common elements of both would form a means to serve both. Communication is one such element, although many other characteristics differ. Food sources, health methodology and dependency for assistance are in common. A problem might be identified and elements of commonality and difference can determine how the human might operate within the frame of what we might refer to as nature. At least, discussion is required. Maybe the contamination by humans of nature results from the human desire to make money. Making money is not an element of nature, although well-being may be. The more technology we apply, as external elements from nature, the more separate we become.

## **Towards Global Digital Health and Novel Collaboration Constellations**

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**Mariane Cimino**, Delegate for Digital Health, Numeum, France, addressed the question of how digital health can transform and contribute to solve health issues. The pandemic has shown the significance of the One Health approach, recognizing the interconnection of the health of humans, animals and ecosystems. Moreover, the WHO's Constitution recognizes that "the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent on the fullest co-operation of individuals and States". Health is a global condition for the wellbeing of people.

The digital health market is expected to increase by 18% per year between 2023 and 2030 (from USD 211 Billion in 2022 to USD 809 Billion in 2030) – with the Asia-Pacific region having the most important increase of digital health solutions.

According to an OECD study (2021), the 8 elements for availability, maturity and use of digital databases are database availability, coverage, automation, speed of access to data, unique identification, coding, data binding, and regular publication of health care quality and system performance indicators.

Denmark, Korea, Sweden and Finland are leading with regards to key national health datasets availability, maturity and use, while Germany, the US and Ireland are at the end of the list.

In terms of citizen trust in digital processing of health data, citizens generally trust their own doctor, they have less trust in any doctor or non-profit researcher in their country and even less in private researchers in their country.

**Lynn Thiesmeyer**, Professor Emerita of Environmental Information at Keio University /Senior Researcher at the Keio Global Research Institute, Japan, addressed the rapid progress and remaining challenges of telemedicine and telecare for hard-to-reach areas in Asia.

Telemedicine in urban and peri-urban areas of Japan is not gaining users as quickly as in rural areas, where hospital visits are more difficult. Telemedicine in Thailand has advanced swiftly, with through national policy and financial support, to nearly all provincial and district hospitals, public and private. Health facilities began to rely more on it during COVID when rapid regional cooperation at migration borders became necessary.

In terms of socio-economic and environmental determinants of health issues, priority in Japan is put on rural and remote populations in the rapidly aging, scattered, small populations, such as remote villages in mountainous areas like Minamata City. There is a need to monitor possible epigenetic effects of environmental chemical exposure and the need to monitor elderly and other low-mobility patients who do not frequent town-based hospitals. It is now being discussed how to adapt digital care to patients who prefer family- or community-based care, which includes the development and use of wearables. In Thailand, priority is put on urban and peri-urban populations. Major urban public hospitals offer telecare. Private hospitals offer a nationwide network of telecare, with connections with the patients' own local hospitals, for necessary examinations and documentation. The objective is the monitoring of elderly and low-mobility patients and to monitor and treat chronic conditions.

Both examples show the usefulness of cross-border diagnostic and analytic telemedicine (professional to professional) during COVID at heavily-used migration transit points. Common challenges are related to gaps in connectivity (installation, costs of devices and services, other), low digital literacy but also low network readiness and interruption of service due to natural disasters or extreme weather. Lower tech and a hybrid use of digital media seem to fit larger populations and may represent an appropriate near-term solution to address these challenges. Such hybrid solution could consist in mobilizing existing equipment, such as land lines, mobile phones, and TVs, supported by the presence and assistance of co-resident family members and larger screens and home-based systems like CCTV.

**Michel Lavollay**, MD, Founder Public Private Partnership Europe, outlined why a global response to health challenges requires public-private partnerships.

The gap between North and South is growing again. COVID has served as a revelator, just as HIV did 25 years ago – both a revelator of the global shortcomings and the trigger for doing it right. Health is a condition for human development and a basic human right and we are, once again, at a critical juncture. There is a lack of leadership to “impose” a partnership framework supporting equitable access to health systems and products. Big pharma and the private sector are not doing what they should do and are more interested in immediate gains and posturing. Governments are too cautious and do not fulfil their leadership role, while it is very difficult for institutions to survive in the current turbulent times.

Contrary to the situation 25 years ago when WHO has failed, WHO is actually doing and saying the right things about equity and access to public goods – but it is not sufficiently supported politically and therefore not able to overcome vested interests. The WHO lead position should be supported (by G7/G20 and many more).

Public private partnerships are the only way to achieve the common goal. As Paul Polman used to say “you need infinite patience” to build these partnerships. You have to create the conditions for building trust and clear principles of transparency. Digital solutions will only be as productive and useful as they should be if a “partnership” supports them. There won’t be equitable access to public goods without a true partnership framework. However, we do not need to reinvent the wheel as the policy framework already exists: the OECD principles of aid effectiveness. All that is needed is the political will to call on all players to accept the principles and modalities of a partnership framework that guarantees equitable access to health services and partnerships as public goods.

## Q&A

The importance of legal and policy issues related to telemedicine were addressed—issues that become increasingly significant, especially against the backdrop of AI, generative AI and algorithms. More and more people are sharing their personal data without having an understanding of how this data is used. There are a number of national data protection laws, but there is still no common approach to these legal issues at the global level. At the same time, technology is going at a very fast pace and while people keep discussing how to regulate the development and application of GenAI, the technology world is changing. By the time the regulatory policies are developed, the nature of the technology will have outstripped the subjects of the policies. We simply don’t know what GenAI will be like in 3 years from now and should more focus on basic principles and less on the technology itself. Principles for privacy already exist: they have been developed by the OECD back in the 50s and they are still relevant. We should more focus on conceptual instead of regulatory policies.

In this context, we also have to consider how to create educational aspects for our society, i.e., to make sure that consumers understand their rights and obligations in terms of privacy and data protection. Education will be a critical component to start to accept and adopt some of the concepts that are going forward (such as informed consent, proactive disclosure...). The regulatory space will probably not be in a position to be able to manage that, it will be our understanding of the development and how to get the society to come up to speed with that developments are taking place.

## Concluding Remarks

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The moderator, Ingrid Andersson, together with Sylviane Toporkoff, thanked the speakers for sharing their precious thoughts and expertise and reminded the date of the upcoming webinar:

### **Global Forum Thematic Webinar I/2024:**

When: March 13th, 2024 | 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM CET

Topic tbd