Growing up 2030 in a digital world

GOVERNING HEALTH FUTURES
THE LANCET & FINANCIAL TIMES COMMISSION

CONCEPT NOTE

Value-driven and whole-of-society governance of the digital transformations of health

GHFutures2030 DTH-LAB

Digital Transformation of Health Lab (DTH-LAB) 2022-2030

The outcomes of the Lancet/FT Commission

In October 2021, the Governing Health Futures 2030 (GHFutures2030) joint *Lancet* and Financial Times Commission published its report. It is a wake-up call for health and digital policymakers to act urgently to pro-actively govern the digital transformations of health. Its key recommendations address four major areas for policy development, implementation and research centred on public health values.

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1 Address the impact of the digital determinants of health, especially on children and young people

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2 Build a public trust architecture for digital transformations of health

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3 Enact an approach to the governance of health data based on data solidarity

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4 Invest in the enablers of a digital transformation of public health and UHC

The Commission's report is cutting edge in moving from a narrow understanding of digital health to the challenges of governing the digital transformations of health. These challenges exist in all countries as well as at the global and regional level and lies at the interface with other great transformations. Its trans disciplinarity paves the way for further thinking.

The Commission's report overcomes old divisions in Global North and Global South – it shows that some middle- income nations, with a larger fraction of digitally literate young people, may be better poised to innovate in digital transformation of health than higher income nations. The report also indicates where LMIC countries would need support to move forward and provides some tools.

The Commission's report is timely. Many of the health governance issues worked on by the Commission have gained additional traction through the COVID19 pandemic – especially the lack of trust architecture and data solidarity – trust in collaboration and data sharing will be critical for better health governance.

The Commission's approach is innovative and participatory. Fully engaging young people has proved to be a critical asset and sends a clear message on governance. Examples are the report by young people complementing the commission report, the data generated through the U-Report which allows young people from all over the world to share their vision of health futures with decision makers and the Imagining Health Futures science fiction texts by young authors. Successful digital transformation of health cannot ignore the priorities of young people - the new vision of health will be based on combining digital, health and civic literacies.

Presentations of the report and its recommendations to a broad range of stakeholders – such as The World Bank, OECD, WHO, the European Commission, private sector (through the FT) and the launch at the World Health Summit - have led to a very positive response and strong interest by many organizations and individuals to cooperate on future work.

THE NEXT STEP

Establish a Digital Transformations of Health Lab.

Based on this track record the co-Chairs of the Commission propose to establish a multistakeholder and transdisciplinary Digital Transformations of Health Lab DTH-LAB. It is proposed that funders take a long-term view of 5-7 years to allow the DTH-LAB to develop cutting edge thinking, sustainable leadership and deliver results for the 2030 SDG deadline.
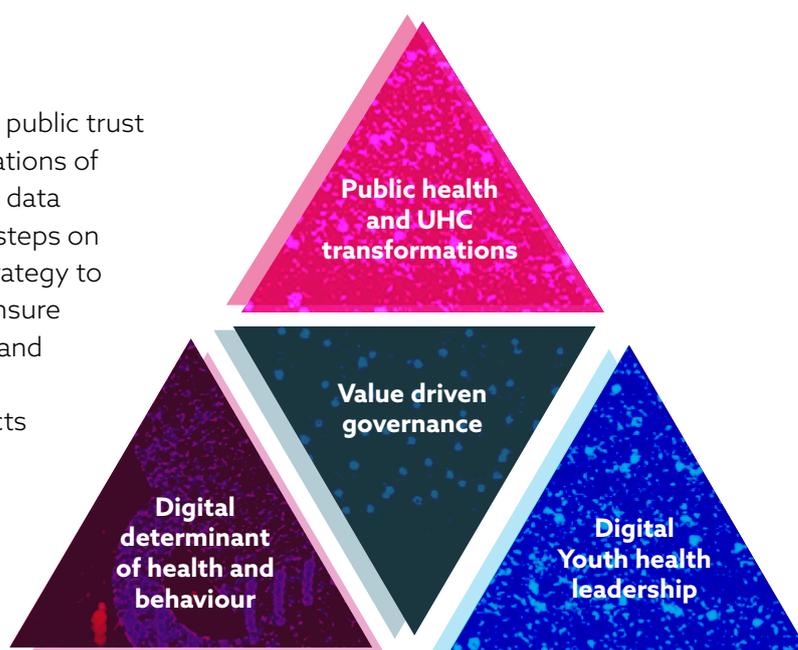
A whole of society approach

The DTH-LAB will have value driven governance at the heart of its work with a view to balance between individual and societal needs. Governance must be shared and democratic. Data must serve the public good. Technology must work for people. The DTH-LAB will adhere to a participatory understanding of governance as "how communities invent and shape their destiny" in view of the great transformations under way. Its work will support countries, organisations, and health systems to move from the present understanding of digital health to a whole-of-society and demand driven approach to govern the digital transformations of health. The function of a lab is to drive new ideas, and the DTH-LAB - with its strong foundation in the work of the *Lancet*/FT Commission and the strength of the four institutional partners (CIGI, Ashoka University, PharmAccess and the GHFutures 2030 Commission Secretariat at the Graduate Institute) - will rapidly establish itself as a leader and platform to drive innovation – and possibly disruption -in health governance and policy and health system change. To do so it must act to bring together the multitude of visions on health futures.

A distributive and shared governance model

The world is changing rapidly and the significant role of digitally advanced low- and middle-income countries in leading digital innovation is factored into the DTH-LAB from the start and reflected in its organisational set-up. It will work based on a distributive governance model spanning several continents with four initial nodes in Europe, Africa, Asia, and North America complemented by a strong virtual presence. Each node brings specific strengths to the DTH- LAB - as a platform it will partner with academic institutions, think tanks, networks, international organisations, and youth-led organisations to pursue its agenda, building on the many connections – not least the commissioners - already established through the work on the Lancet/FT report. It will also explore the synergies that can emerge from a closer connection with I-DAIR. A DTH-LAB board will provide oversight and guidance. The DTH-HUB will build a Monitoring and Evaluation framework into its work from the start.

THE DTH-LAB MODEL

The GHFutures2030 report calls for a public trust architecture for the digital transformations of health and introduces the concept of data solidarity for health. It has proposed steps on how to implement a country wide strategy to safeguard health and digital rights, ensure participation as well as transparency and accountability. The GHFutures2030 report proposes to consider the effects of the access to digital tools, digital technologies, platforms and services as determinants of health, that heavily intersect with other determinants of health.

Public health and UHC transformations

Value driven governance

Digital determinant of health and behaviour

Digital Youth health leadership

The DTH-LAB will provide advice on governing the digital transformation of health, generate new knowledge for action on health futures and activate networks for learning and advocacy

It will work with a sense of urgency and purpose and show possible pathways for change by

- taking forward the Lancet/FT report and recommendations as well as the many additional products of the _Lancet_/FT Commission by **working with partners around the world** to make the recommendations on the governance of the digital transformation of health tangible and ensure that they are contextual to ground realities;

- giving priority to **linking health and digital decision makers** to take forward a whole-of-society and demand driven approach of value driven health governance and stewardship in the context of the digital transformations, linking global and on the ground developments and exploring alternative policy choices;

- working with stakeholders at different levels to apply learnings from COVID19 regarding the importance of **data solidarity, data coalitions, societal engagement, and trust architectures** for health.

- Expanding the understanding of the **digital determinants of health and behaviour** and initiating sandboxed studies of how positive change can be brought about;

- continue to **strengthen youth leadership** and develop an **educational component** to train a next generation of health leaders to lead the digital transformation of public health and UHC.

Given the speed of change the DTH-LAB will have the flexibility to take up new emerging agendas and encourage critical debate and controversy.

The DTH-LAB will develop and test new formats (for example action-coalitions) to engage partners and stakeholders – especially on-line.

Specific deliverables and outcomes will comprise leadership forum meetings, workshops, global dialogues, on- line debates, research reports, regular working papers and reports on key governance challenges and approaches, as well as for example:

- working with countries with very high youth populations to govern digital transformations in health and test the utility of the enabler framework for involving young people and assessing digital health readiness;

- work directly with policy makers engaged in change (sand boxing) work in operationalizing the ten enablers of digital readiness (links already exist in the nodes in India and Africa);

- Designing a longitudinal multi-country study on digital determinants of health and engaging with the major global youth organizations (a workshop has been held in collaboration with the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University's Youth and Media team (YaM), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Big6 Youth Organisations (Big6) on youth, health& well-being, and digital technologies as a preliminary discussion and to garner interest);

- Building a fellowship programme;

- Producing a major "Governing Health Futures 2.0" report five years after the *Lancet*/FT Commission in 2027

A wide range of potential partners can be approached for different parts of the DHT LAB and for additional funding

The *Lancet*/FT Commission has shown this is possible. They include the World Bank, OECD, EC, WHO HUB on Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence, PMNCH, WHO, UNICEF, PATH as well as foundations such as BMGF, Rockefeller, Wellcome as well as several development agencies.

Youth Leadership and engagement in the governance of digital transformations of health

The DTH-LAB will integrate youth leadership from the start and apply Youth engagement principles to all activities

This will be one of its defining features. A dedicated Youth Team supported the GHFutures2030's activities focused on youth enfranchisement and leadership within digital health governance. The DTH-LAB will continue to work with this youth team - a grant by the SDC makes this possible until June 2023 – and will aim to expand it. DTH-LAB youth- led activities will include:

- Harnessing and continuing to expand the [GHFutures2030 Youth Network](#) to advocate for implementation of the youth statement and call for action developed alongside the GHFutures2030 report.

- [Imagining Health Futures](#) initiative with UNICEF supporting young people to create new narratives and articulate their hopes and concerns about digital health futures.

- Implementing a young leaders programme to build the capacity of, and provide ongoing mentorship to, regional youth /students for more effective digital health governance. This will include developing a curriculum on health data governance - MOOC/open access course in collaboration with other partners.

- holding regular consultations with young people to capture their perspectives on digital health governance and lived experiences of health in a digital world and seeking alignment with the key areas of work of the DTH-LAB.

Potential partners include the wide range of youth networks with whom contacts have already been established, ie UNICEF, PMNCH, the BIG 6 youth organisations.

The DTH-LAB will combine continuity with new input and partners.

The DTH-LAB will be committed to **ongoing advocacy and dissemination** of the *Lancet*/FT report as it will be key to keeping the report alive and relevant and to drive the implementation of its recommendations. This will mean

- including some Commissioners that were involved in the 2021 report as well as bringing on board other experts and partners to add complementary expertise and perspectives.

- working with organisations that have already been engaged in commission work and widen the partnerships.

- Creating a fellowship programme.

- exploring joint initiatives with Transform Health to take the advocacy of the *Lancet*/FT report's recommendations forward. The DTH-LAB will further **monitor the uptake of concepts and implementation** of the Lancet/FT Commission recommendations.

Organisational form and location

DTH-LAB is based on a node model - negotiations would have to take place with potential host institutions based on a distributive governance model. Strong institutions and world-renowned experts would constitute the core of the DTH-LAB.

The two Commission co-chairs together with the commissioners Dr. Rohinton Medhora (CIGI) and Njide Ndili (PharmAccess) will lead the first phase of the DHT-LAB establishment with a view to establishing a permanent "next generation" leadership and governance model by late 2023. The establishment of a professorship could be explored to provide expertise and continuity. A fellowship or visiting scholars programme could add additional strength.

The **Commission's Secretariat** in Geneva will continue to fulfil coordination and support functions and will also be responsible for coordinating additional fundraising for the DTH-LAB. It will need to be structured and staffed according to its new functions as a secretariat to the distributed DTH-LAB. **Ilona Kickbusch** is associate professor at the Graduate Institute in Geneva and Chair of the Global Health Centre and one of the most connected experts in global health.

For Asia it will be based in India at the Ashoka University, one of the premier academic institutions in India, with existing global initiatives to use digital technology to understand and modify behaviour towards increased mental and physical wellness. India, with very high digital capabilities, has recently launched a national digital health mission with each citizen controlling access to their data through unique IDs and consent managers. This offers unique opportunities to understand and develop insights towards global best practices and to work with state governments with different readiness levels in deploying and testing ideas. Additional funding could be forthcoming from existing and new partnerships at Ashoka. **Anurag Agrawa**l will take on a leading position at the University in Spring 2022.

For North America it will be based at [CIGI](#) an internationally recognized think tank that addresses significant global issues at the intersection of technology and international governance. It has a global network of multidisciplinary researchers and strategic partnerships to provide policy solutions for the digital era and is headquartered in Waterloo, Canada. **Rohinton Medhora** is president of CIGI.

For Africa it will be based at the PharmAccess Foundation which is part of the PharmAccess Group. [PharmAccess](#) is an international non-profit organization with a digital agenda dedicated to connecting more people in sub-Saharan Africa to better healthcare. By making use of public-private partnerships, they leverage donor contributions, which will pave the way for private investments hereby contributing to healthier populations and social and economic development. Currently PharmAccess employs a multidisciplinary team of professionals in Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana and the Netherlands. **Njide Ndili** is country director of the Nigeria Office.

This give and take must also be explored in relation to main secretariat location and the other DTH-LAB nodes, possibly through service agreement with the host institutions. In order to ensure status and continuity of the DTH- LAB leadership a professorship and several fellowships could be established as part of the "DTH-LAB package." A rough budget calculation for the period of 7 years lies at CHF 10 million. The secretariat and hub members would seek additional funding for specific projects and initiatives – as has been the case with the commission.

Should the funder be willing to move forward with this proposal, the Commission Secretariat, the co-chairs and the node partners will work to complete the full submission by the deadlines established. The present funding of the secretariat takes us to June 2022. Bridge funding for core activities and proposal may need to be considered in the lead up to the grant approval.

Prof. Ilona Kickbusch	**Dr. Anurag Agrawal**	**Rohinton Medhora**	**Njide Ndili**
Co-Chair	Co-Chair	Commissioner	Commissioner
Chair of the International Advisory Board, GHC at IHEID, Geneva	Director, CSIR and IGIB, India	President,CIGI, Canada	Country Director, PharmAccess Foundation, Nigeria

The Lancet and Financial Times Commission on Governing health futures 2030: Growing up in a digital world was published in *The Lancet* on 24 October 2021 and is available online at https://www. thelancet.com/commissions/governing-health-futures-2030.

The *Lancet* & Financial Times Commission
Governing health futures 2030: Growing up in a digital world

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