

Realising the promise of digital health for NCDs and UHC: What is the opportunity for civil society?

Language English



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NCDAC convened on 11 and 12 June in Dakar, Senegal, a meeting to discuss the opportunities offered by digital technologies in the NCD response.

The meeting, supported by Novartis Foundation, was attended by key actors involved in the fight against NCDs in Senegal. It discussed mobilisation and coordination of stakeholders around good practice to promote the implementation of sustainable digital health solutions for NCDs and sustainable financing models.

On occasion of the meeting, NCDAC presented a [working document](#) [1] based on the report of the Broadband Commission Working on Digital Health, co-chaired by the Novartis Foundation, that highlights the potential of digital health for NCDs and the ways civil society can play a role in taking these recommendations further.

NCDs are responsible for 71% of global mortality and take the lives of 41 million people per year. They pose a burden on healthcare systems and national economies and constitute a barrier to achieving the health-related targets of the SDGs and Universal Health Coverage, especially in low- and middle-income settings. The recent advances made in digital information and communication technologies have allowed the development of digital health solutions that can support health systems to cope with their growing disease and cost burdens and transform the way healthcare is delivered, in particular for NCDs.

Yet, despite their potential, **the myriad of digital health solutions often lack a clear strategy and purpose**, and struggle to become financially viable and integrated into national health policies and systems. For this reason the [Broadband Commission Working Group on Digital Health](#) [2] developed a comprehensive report to present practical recommendations to build and scale digital solutions so that universal health coverage can be accelerated in low- and middle- income communities.

During the meeting in Dakar, actors on the ground were able to consider the integration of existing digital health solutions into policies and programmes to combat NCDs and discuss opportunities to promote the global development of digital health and consider next steps to ensure the sustainability of these efforts.

“The development of digital health tools is a powerful enabler that can be used to address the growing demands of NCDs on health services to achieve universal health coverage. Civil society organisations have important contributions to make in the development and implementation of national digital health strategies. Fostering dialogues, such as this one, that share experiences and good practice encourages growing momentum in this area” said **Dr Cristina Parsons Perez, Capacity Development Director at the NCD Alliance**.

“Digital technology presents an extraordinary opportunity to transform how we approach both the underlying determinants of health, and how we deliver care. This roundtable meeting is a fantastic opportunity to mobilize stakeholders and foster dialogue around best practices to support the effective implementation and success of national strategies in Senegal” said **Marco Franzosi, Strategic Assistant, Novartis Foundation**.

Download the working document "Realising the promise of digital health for NCDs and UHC:

- [In English](#) [3]
- [In French](#) [4]

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[1] https://ncdalliance.org/sites/default/files/resource_files/DigitalHealthBrief_English_WEB.pdf

[2] <https://broadbandcommission.org/workinggroups/Pages/digitalhealth.aspx>

[3] <https://old.ncdalliance.org/resources/realising-the-promise-of-digital-health-for-ncds-and-uhc>

[4] <https://ncdalliance.org/fr/resources/réaliser-la-promesse-de-la-santé-numérique-pour-les-mnt-et-la-csu-0>

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