OE.CD/TRENDS2023

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Global Trends in Government Innovation 2023

SUMMARY REPORT

OECD
OPSI Observatory of Public Sector Innovation
مركز محمد بن راشد للابتكار الحكومي
MOHAMMED BIN RASHID CENTRE FOR GOVERNMENT INNOVATION
WORLD GOVERNMENT SUMMIT

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Introduction and overview

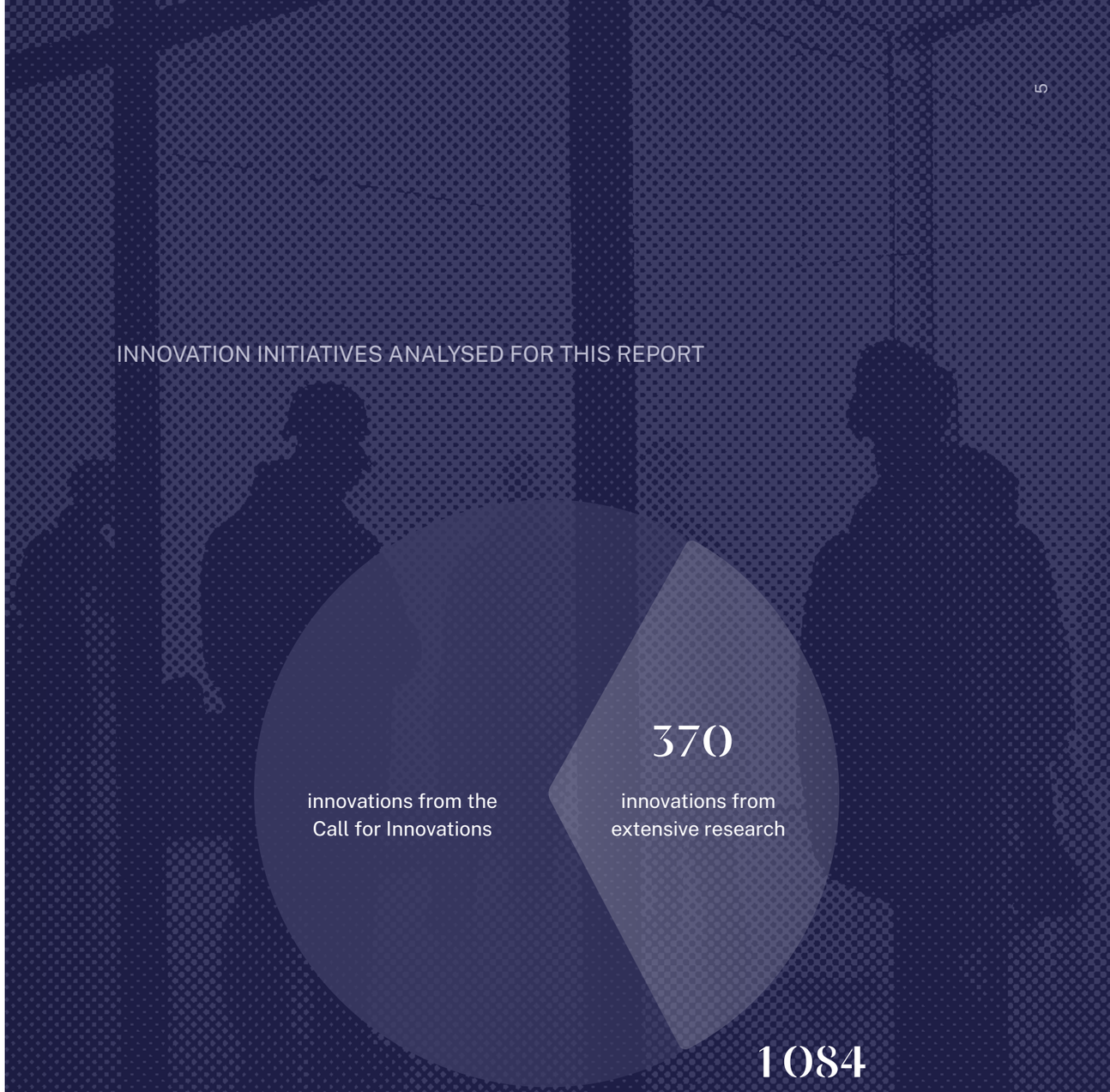
Governments have faced unprecedented challenges in the last few years, and the global mood remains far from optimistic. The world had little time to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic before the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation dealt the global economy a series of shocks. Governments must cope with and respond to these emerging threats while already grappling with issues such as climate change, digital disruption and low levels of trust.

Despite compounding challenges, governments have been able to adapt and innovate to transform their societies and economies, and to transform themselves and how they design and deliver policies and services. If anything, recent and ongoing crises have catalysed public sector innovation and reinstated the critical role of the state. While the overall tone may be pessimistic, public sector innovation has provided bright spots and room for hope.

The search for these bright spots is the driving force behind this summary, and the **full report** that underpins it. As part of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme, OPSI and the MBRCGI have collaborated since 2016 to explore how governments and their partners are working to understand, test and embed new ways of doing things.

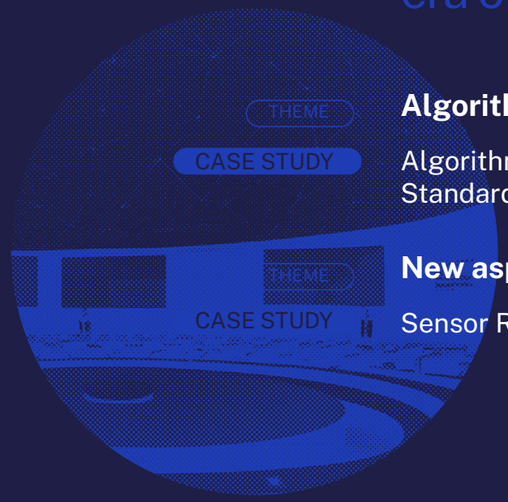
To take the pulse of public sector innovation this year, OPSI and the MBRCGI have identified and analysed **1 084 innovative initiatives from 94 countries** around the world (CSV).

INNOVATION INITIATIVES ANALYSED FOR THIS REPORT



Through synthesising the identified projects and taking into account events, workshops and conversations held with governments around the world, OPSI and the MBRCGI have identified **four key trends** and **10 case studies** that illustrate them, as shown on the following pages.

Trend 1 New forms of accountability for a new era of government



Algorithmic accountability

Algorithmic Transparency Recording Standard (United Kingdom)

New aspects of transparency

Sensor Register (Netherlands)

Trend 2 New approaches to care

Re-orienting care (eco)systems

Bogotá Care Blocks (Colombia)

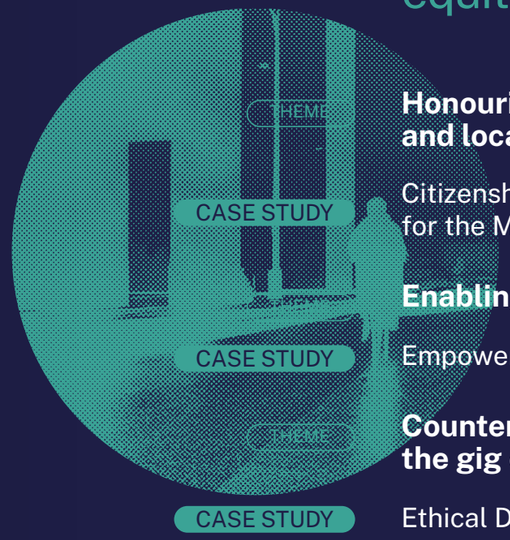
Empathy and care to support mental health

Mental Health Café (Australia)

New technologies revolutionising healthcare

Tucuvi (Spain)

Trend 3 New methods for preserving identities and strengthening equity



Honouring Indigenous societies and local cultures

Citizenship, democracy and justice for the Maxakali people (Brazil)

Enabling families and communities

Empowered Families Initiative (Singapore)

Counteracting the creation of the gig economy underclass

Ethical Deliveries (Italy)

Trend 4 New ways of engaging citizens and residents

Empowering voices

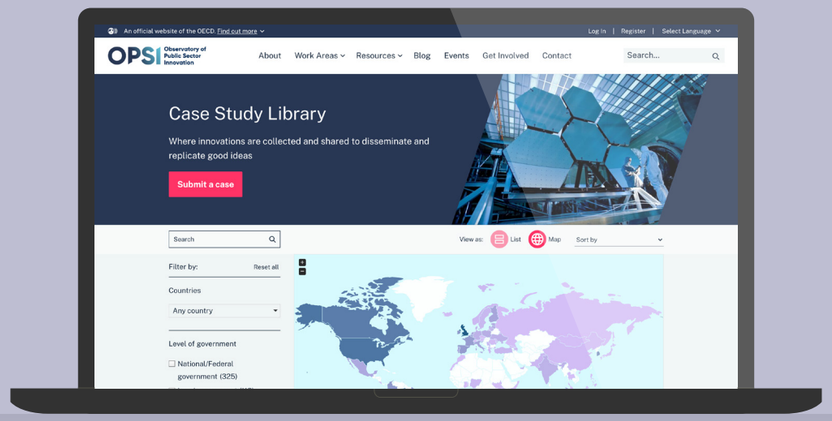
Deliberative Committees (Belgium)

Re-imagining communities, physically and virtually

#FreetownTheTreeTown (Sierra Leone)

OPSI and the MBRCGI celebrate these efforts and hope that they inspire others to take action and replicate success in their own context. The partners behind this project also greatly appreciate the work of the teams who are undertaking innovation projects and took the time to participate in the Call for Innovations that fuelled this research. Although not all the efforts uncovered for this work can be featured in this report, many are available on the OPSI Case Study Library, a growing resource where public servants can learn about innovative projects around the world.

As with previous editions, this trends report is published in conjunction with the World Government Summit, which brings together over 4 000 participants from more than 190 countries to discuss innovative ways to solve the challenges facing humanity. A flagship feature of the event is **Edge of Government**, a series of interactive exhibits that bring innovations to life and put innovation teams on the world stage. These exhibits include several of the case studies presented in this review.



Case Study Library

Trend 1

New forms of accountability for a new era of government

THEME

CASE STUDY

Algorithmic accountability

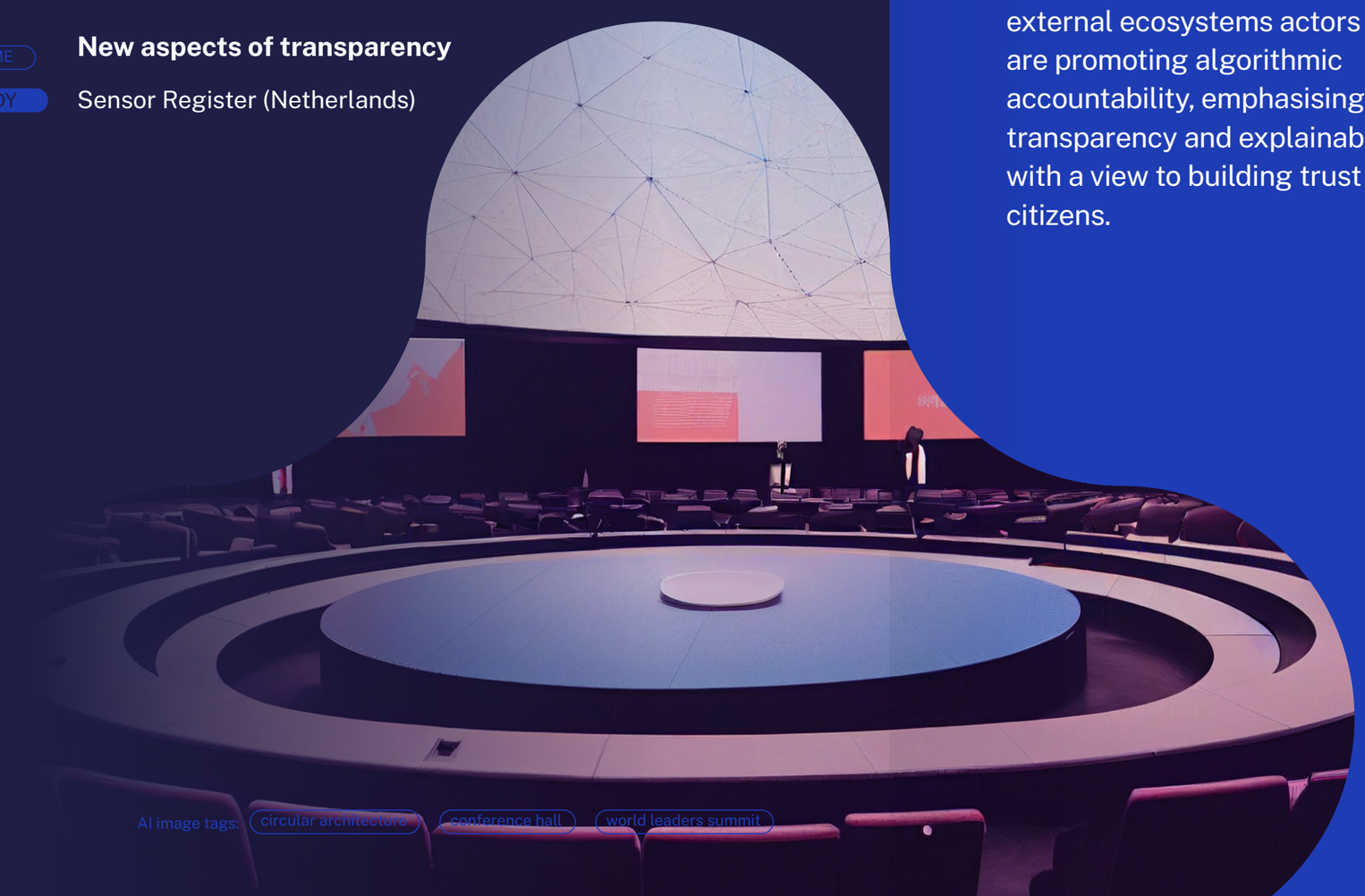
Algorithmic Transparency Recording Standard (United Kingdom)

THEME

CASE STUDY

New aspects of transparency

Sensor Register (Netherlands)



AI image tags: circular architecture · conference hall · world leaders summit

Governments are increasingly adopting Artificial Intelligence in the design and delivery of policies and services. This is accompanied by efforts to ensure that the algorithms and underlying data avoid bias and discrimination and that public servants understand data ethics. Several forward-thinking governments and external ecosystems actors are promoting algorithmic accountability, emphasising transparency and explainability, with a view to building trust with citizens.

Beyond algorithms, governments are promoting new concepts of transparency with the evolution of Rules as Code–open and transparent machine-consumable versions of government rules –and shedding light on the Internet of Things, which has embedded often-invisible sensors in public spaces. While promising, innovative policy efforts in these areas are often scattered and lack coherence, limiting the potential for collective learning and the scaling of good ideas. This underlines the need for further work on these topics, including fostering international alignment and comparability.

THEME

Algorithmic accountability

AI is generating productivity gains and improving efficiency in all sectors. As shown by the OECD.AI Policy Observatory, 60+ countries have put in place AI strategies, and the majority recognise the value of adopting AI while mitigating its risks in the public sector (OECD/CAF, 2022; OECD, 2019). In addition, 46 countries have adhered to the OECD AI Principles for trustworthy AI.

The rapid growth in government adoption of AI and algorithmic approaches underlines the need to ensure they are used in a trustworthy manner. Governments have a high duty of care to ensure that no harm occurs as a result of AI. Negative consequences in this area can be severe. For example:

- In the Netherlands, the use of an algorithm wrongfully accused thousands of fraud.
- Australia's "robodebt scheme" resulted in 470 000 incorrect debt notices.
- Algorithms in the US have resulted in wrongful arrests and biased sentencing decisions.

Governments need to put safeguards and processes in place to mitigate risks and ensure trustworthy development and use of algorithms. A growing approach is **algorithmic accountability**, as demonstrated by the examples shown.

Despite these promising approaches, **more needs to be done** to build alignment among disparate definitions and practices, concretely operationalise high-level principles, move beyond transparency into more tangible auditing, and implement robust data governance frameworks. OPSI intends to engage in additional work in this area to build a common understanding and guiding principles on algorithmic accountability in the public sector.

EXAMPLES

↗ **AI Accountability Framework** (US). By the Government Accountability Office, identifies key practices in governance, data, performance and monitoring.

↗ **AI Supervision Agency** (Spain). To design auditing and implementation guides, regulatory tools, and experimentation sandboxes.

↗ **Auditing Machine Learning Algorithms**. A white paper by the Supreme Audit Institutions of five European countries.

Algorithmic accountability means *"ensuring that those that build, procure and use algorithms are eventually answerable for their impacts."*

Source: The Ada Lovelace Institute, AI Now Institute and Open Government Partnership

SIX DETERMINANTS FOR THE EFFECTIVE DEPLOYMENT OF ALGORITHMIC ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Clear **institutional incentives and binding legal frameworks** can support consistent and effective enforcement of accountability mechanisms.
2. Algorithmic accountability policies need to define the **objects of governance** and establish **shared terminologies** across government.
3. Setting the **scope of policy application** supports their adoption.
4. Policy mechanisms that focus on transparency must be **detailed and audience appropriate** to underpin accountability.
5. Policies should **prioritise public participation** as a core policy goal, supported by appropriate resources and strategies.
6. Policies benefit from **institutional co-ordination** across sectors and levels of governance to create consistency.

Source: www.adalovelaceinstitute.org/report/algorithmic-accountability-public-sector

AI image tags:

accountability · legal · policy

↗ **Directive on Automated Decision Making** (Canada). Requires agencies using automated decisional algorithms to complete a risk-based assessment, which prescribes mitigation actions.

↗ Algorithmic **Impact Assessment** and **Auditing Framework** (Netherlands). Front-end and back-end approaches to algorithmic accountability.

↗ External GovTech Ecosystems. Accountability solutions from start-ups, such as **Arthur**, **Fiddler**, **Truera** and **Parity**.

See case study on the **Algorithmic Transparency Recording Standard** (United Kingdom) →

CASE STUDY

Algorithmic Transparency Recording Standard

(United Kingdom)

Algorithmic tools are increasingly being used in the public sector to support high-impact decisions. Research on public attitudes consistently highlights transparency as a key driver of public trust; therefore, building mechanisms for transparency is crucial to gaining trust in governments' use of data and algorithms. In the UK, the OECD Trust Survey shows that only 52% of people trust government to use their personal data for legitimate purposes. The UK's Algorithmic Transparency Recording Standard (ATRS) helps public bodies openly publish clear information about the algorithmic tools they use and why.

PROBLEM

Recent experiences in the UK have shown that implementation of algorithms without adequate safeguards can result in discrimination or encroach on civil rights. A Data Ethics Framework was established in 2016 to help address such risks. A study by the UK Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation (CDEI) confirmed that algorithms can lead to biased decisions and negative impacts on people's lives, and also identified ways to address these risks, including through transparency.

The public has a democratic right to information about how the government operates and makes decisions in order to understand its actions, appeal decisions and hold responsible decision makers to account. However, there is a lack of available information on how and why government bodies are using algorithmic tools.

AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

Co-designed through a collaborative and cross-sector approach, CDEI and the Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO) established the ATRS as a standardised way for public organisations to transparently publish information about how they are using algorithmic approaches in decision making. The ambition of this project is to increase public awareness and understanding, while enhancing the capacities of the public sector.

Alongside implementation guidance, the ATRS provides a structured schema that public sector organisations use to record and report information about the algorithms they use, divided into two reporting tiers. **Tier 1** is aimed at a general audience and includes simple details on how and why an algorithmic tool is being used. **Tier 2** is aimed at more technical audiences, covering:

1. Who is responsible for the algorithm.
2. A description of the algorithm and the rationale for its use.
3. Details on the wider decision-making process and human oversight.
4. Technical specifications and data.
5. A breakdown of risks, mitigations and impact assessments conducted.

The first version was published in November 2021 and piloted with ten public sector organisations, ranging from central offices to local police departments. These have resulted in six transparency reports to date. Based on pilot feedback, an updated version was launched in October 2022. The latest version was published on gov.uk in January 2023.

Consultation with the public and tools suppliers revealed 97% support for the ATRS. An additional positive impact has been the increased senior leader attention regarding algorithmic transparency.

AI image tags: circular architecture · conference hall · world leaders summit

THEME

New aspects of transparency

Governments are building new transparency dimensions to their open government approaches, helping to build trust with citizens, which has been at a near record low in recent years.

OPSI and the MBRCGI have explored innovative transparency since the 2017 Global Trends report, and the OECD has covered many different angles of public sector transparency more broadly (e.g., Open State, Open Government Data, promoting Civic Space. Indeed, one of the key areas in the recent OECD Good Practice Principles for Public Service Design and Delivery in the Digital Age is "be accountable and transparent in the design and delivery of public services to reinforce and strengthen public trust".

When looking at the latest public sector innovation efforts, **two leading themes** become apparent.

BRINGING ABOUT RULES AS CODE 2.0

Innovative applications of Rules as Code — creating an official, machine-consumable version of some types of government rules to exist alongside the natural language counterpart — have reached new levels of adoption. Among a number of potential benefits (e.g., improved consistency, enhanced interoperability), RaC has made the rule-creation process more transparent, and enabled the creation of services that help people understand government obligations and entitlements.

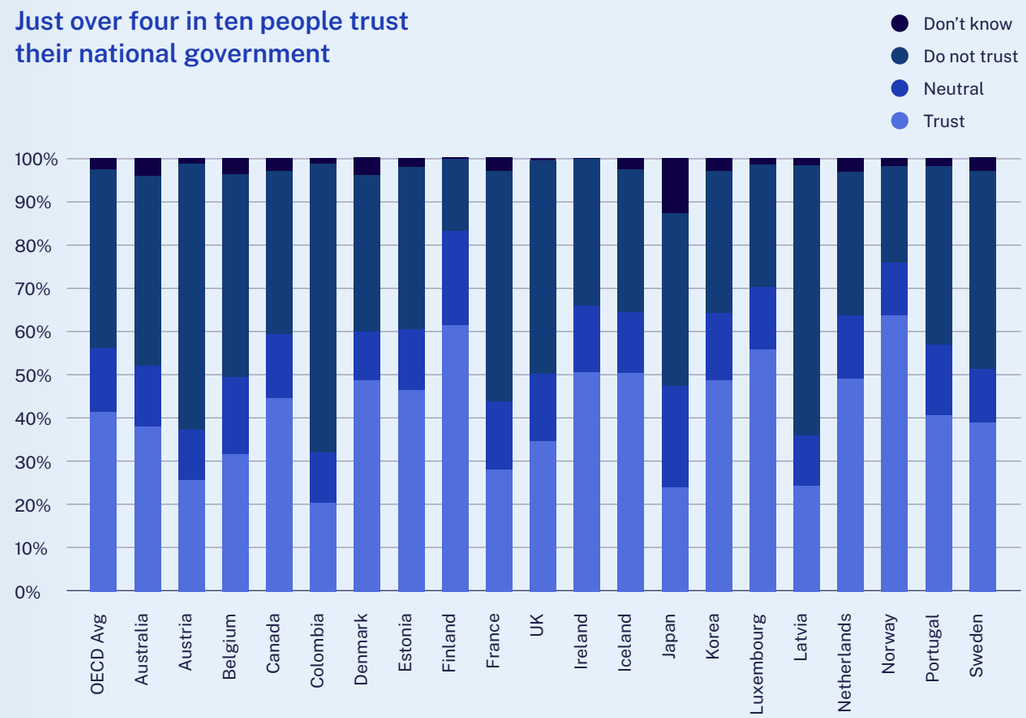
These approaches generally involve multi-disciplinary teams working to co-create a machine consumable version of rules which will exist in parallel with the human readable form (e.g. a PDF). However, a new take on this concept provides a hint of potential future developments in using AI to decode laws to make them consumable by digital systems.

EXAMPLES

- ↗ **RaC as a Shared Utility** (Australia). A shared central utility to deliver simpler, personalised digital user journeys for citizens.
- ↗ **RaC Know Your Benefits Tool** (New Zealand). Helps people in need better understand their legal eligibility for assistance.
- ↗ **Using AI with RaC** (Portugal). Protype that uses AI to decode laws to make them machine consumable.

See case study on the **Sensor Register** (Amsterdam, Netherlands) →

Just over four in ten people trust their national government



Source: OECD Trust Survey (oe.cd/trust). Data available at stat.link/jlkt6v.

THE INTERNET OF (TRANSPARENT) THINGS

There are over 11 billion IoT connected devices around the world (Transforma Insights, 2022). While research shows that the most people support the use of sensors in public areas for public benefit, (Mossberger, Cho and Cheong, 2022; OECD, forthcoming), and that these benefits can be significant (OECD, 2019), IoT sensors and smart cities have raised privacy concerns (Joshi, 2019) and other ethical considerations (Ziosi et al., 2022). For example, San Diego's smart streetlights are designed to gather traffic data, but have also been used by police (Holder, 2020). These are important issues to think about, as "democracy requires safe spaces, or commons, for people to organically and spontaneously convene" (Williams, 2021).

Some of the most innovative governments have taken new steps to make their IoT and smart city efforts open in order to foster accountability and public trust in government.

Digital Trust for Places and Routines (DTPR) in Boston

↗ **Digital Trust for Places and Routines** (DTPR). An open-source standard for sensor transparency used in Canada, France, and the US (see image).

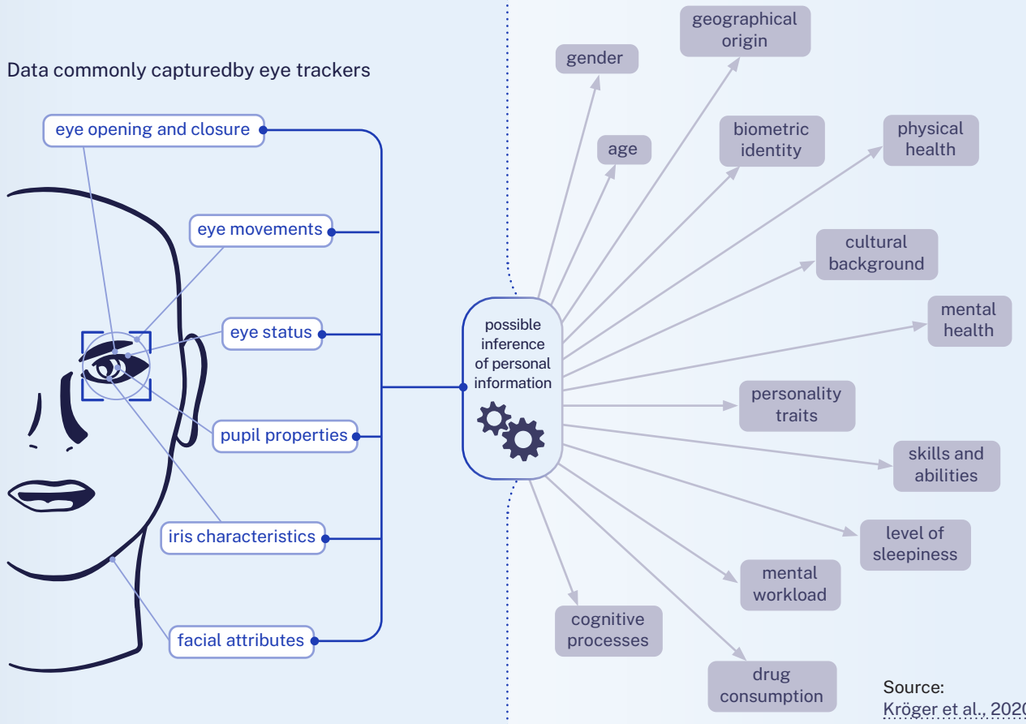
CASE STUDY

Sensor Register

(Amsterdam, Netherlands)

The Sensor Register is a tool of the City of Amsterdam used to obtain, combine and share publicly transparent information on all sensors placed for professional use in public spaces of the city. The Register is the result of an innovative Regulation which mandates the registration of all professional sensors of in public spaces. The registered sensors are visualised on an online map that allows anyone to see the kind of data it collects and processes and the responsible party.

Analysis of gaze data enables the inference of personal information



Source: Kröger et al., 2020.

PROBLEM

New technologies capable of capturing citizens' data in public spaces has given rise to debates about the threat of surveillance. For instance, billboards now often have cameras installed that read spectators' glances, faces or body movements in reaction to the exhibited content. Such information when processed by advanced data analytics can reveal much more about a user, such as their gender, sexual preference, emotional state and socioeconomic status. Sensors are installed frequently without the administration or passers-by being informed. It has become imperative to elaborate new policies to safeguard the dignity of residents and to avoid excessive and undesirable intrusion into people's lives.

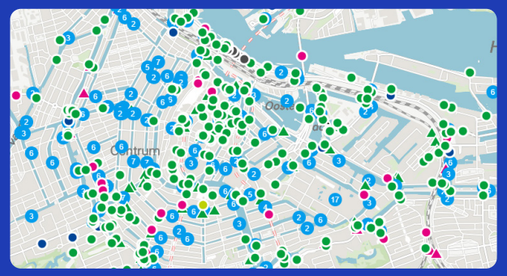
AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

In 2021, Amsterdam passed an unprecedented Regulation, requiring all parties that collect data in public space to report their sensors and indicate which data are collected. Building on this, the City developed the Sensor Register Map, allowing anyone to view all sensors placed in public space. On each sensor that processes sensitive data, a sticker is attached indicating why it is there and what it does, along with a URL to the Map where further information can be found.

The Regulation and the Map are intended to spark a debate about the role these technologies should play in communities by increasing the awareness of residents, which is the first step in enabling them to critically address this issue. The City's eventual plans are even bigger, with its coalition agreement 2022-2026 calling for a ban on biometric surveillance techniques, such as facial recognition.

The Regulation has aroused great interest and the Amsterdam team is working to get the issue on national and EU agendas. The project has demonstrated that many people care about digital rights and the potential dangers of new technologies in public spaces.

The Sensor Register Map



Source:Screenshotfromsensorenregister.amsterdam.nl(retrieved 21 November 2022).

Trend 2

AI image tags: new technologies | techonological | future care

New approaches to care

THEME
CASE STUDY

Re-orienting care (eco)systems

Bogotá Care Blocks (Colombia)

THEME
CASE STUDY

Empathy and care to support mental health

Mental Health Café (Australia)

THEME
CASE STUDY

New technologies revolutionising healthcare

Tucuvi (Spain)

The COVID-19 pandemic placed care under the spotlight with rapid scaling of technological innovations for healthcare at a distance. Even before the crisis, global population trends such as ageing and growth in chronic diseases were demanding a shift in approach. Disjointed health systems have prompted calls for more people-centred approaches. Integrated systems can also yield better quality data to drive better outcomes, enabling governments to make use of emerging technologies to better understand patients and diseases. This requires a shift towards systems approaches, re-orienting government processes and data flows. OPSI and the MBRCGI also found a strong innovation focus on mental health – a major casualty of the recent pandemic. Finally, the most powerful tool for revolutionising care seen in this cycle of work is Artificial Intelligence, with creative solutions coming from governments, GovTech startups and nonprofits, though hurdles to progress remain, including insufficient data and infrastructure and absence of agreement on tailored principles for trustworthy use of AI in healthcare.

THEME

Re-orienting care (eco)systems

Almost 2/3 of people over 65 live with a chronic condition requiring interactions with different providers. Poor and fragmented care has prompted calls for integrated health systems (Barrenho et al., 2022), which governments have introduced in recent years. However, existing structures hinder their success and healthcare systems remain fragmented. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the need for various parts of the health systems to work together for systems approaches to deliver seamless care and for coordination across levels of government (OECD, 2021a; 2021b).

RE-ORIENTING SYSTEMS ELEMENTS TO PROVIDE INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS

Many efforts focused on citizen-centred approaches to care that change the way services come together. Thus, governments absorb burden from citizens and provide holistic services that meet people where they are.

To re-orient systems in innovative ways, governments need to acquire a fuller perspective of the complexities and activities of their systems, as well as how these align with positive health and wellbeing. Many efforts centred on gaining this perspective.

As with much innovation, data is a critical factor. Integrated systems can yield better quality data to drive better outcomes, and better use of data is increasingly critical to providing systems approaches to care.

FOSTERING CARE ECOSYSTEMS AND ENGAGING RELEVANT ACTORS

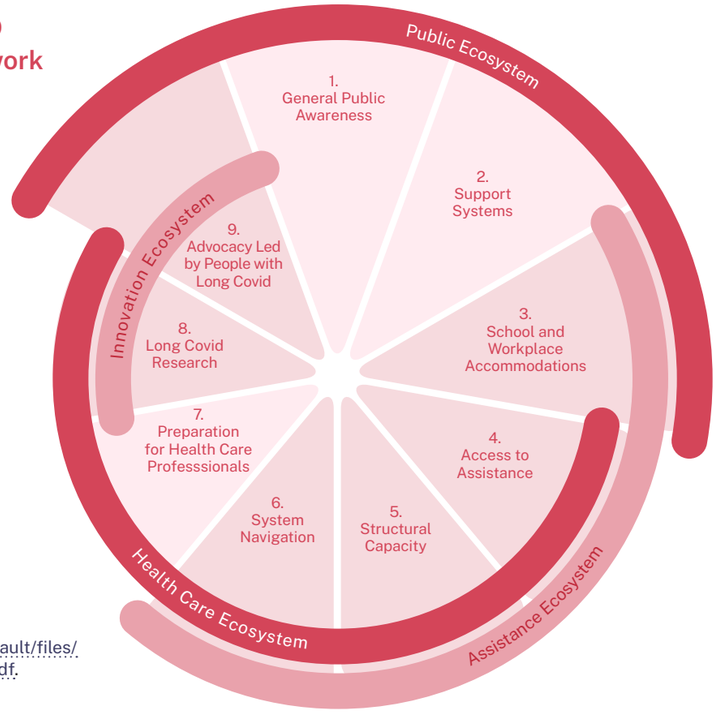
In addition to re-orienting *structures and data*, many innovative initiatives aim to re-orient *people* to bring forth the collective power of care ecosystems.

Technology is also facilitating engagement with relevant ecosystems actors, while promoting individual empathy and care. For instance, mass collective intelligence platforms have helped governments seize contributions from the public at scale.

EXAMPLES

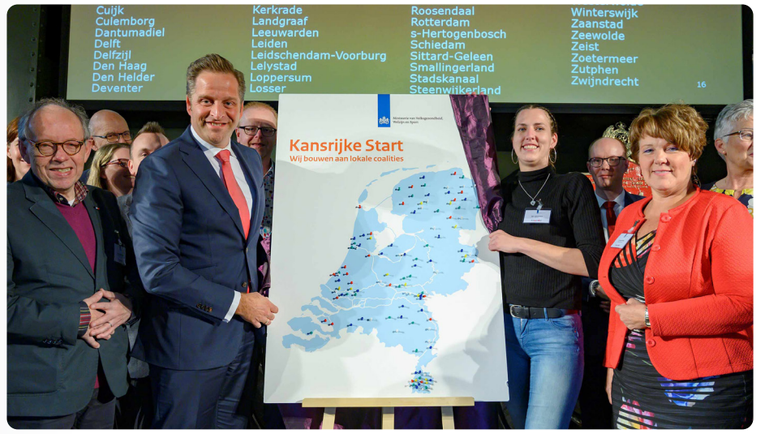
- ↗ **Solid Start** (Netherlands). Integrated, multi-sectoral local coalitions seeking to ensure that every child has the best possible start to life (see image).
- ↗ **HealthcareImprovementHub** (Scotland). A **humanlearning system** that seeks to build crisis response and anticipation into the health system.
- ↗ **LivingStandardsFramework** (New Zealand). Identifies interdependencies and trade-offs across the dimensions of wellbeing in order to align government activities.

Health+ Long COVID Opportunity Framework



Source: www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/healthplus-long-covid-report.pdf.

Solid Start municipalities in the Netherlands



Source: earlychildhoodmatters.online/2019/solid-start-supporting-municipalities-to-tailor-solutions-for-childrens-first-1000-days.

- ↗ **EuropeanHealthDataSpace** (EU). Promotes access to and interoperable exchange of health data to support healthcare delivery, research and policy making.
- ↗ **Health+LongCOVIDInitiative** (US). Uses human-centred design to align ecosystems co-create patient-centred solutions with those with Long COVID (see image).
- ↗ **CrowdBots**. Brings together AI models and collective human intelligence to analyse Alzheimer's research data, reducing 20 years of work to 5.

See case study on **Bogotá Care Blocks** (Colombia) →

CASE STUDY

Bogotá Care Blocks

(Colombia)

Thirty percent of women living in Bogotá are devoted to full-time unpaid care work, with hindered access to wellbeing services, self-care activities and constitutional rights such as education or social benefits. Bogotá's Care Blocks offer a context-specific solution. The City developed a novel approach to the development of women and caregiver-centric infrastructure and service provision, making services more accessible, empathetic and closer to the needs of caregivers.

PROBLEM

The burden of unpaid care work falls disproportionately on women, resulting in "time poverty" and other negative impacts (OECD, 2022). 30% of Bogotá's women dedicate 7-10 hours of unpaid work per day (source). 90% percent of caregivers live in low-income households, 70% have only a secondary education, 21% experience untreated chronic conditions, and 0% have financial autonomy. Officials from Bogotá's Secretariat of Women's Affairs describe *"a landscape of fragmented and siloed solutions"*, indicating a mismatch between services supply and the caregivers' realities. The situation exacerbates many undesired patterns for women.

AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

Bogotá's Care Blocks aim to provide holistic services that contribute to a new "3 R's" concept. They must 1) *recognise* the nature of caregiving as unpaid, non-voluntary and feminised; 2) *reduce* the burden of caregiving; and 3) consist of activities that can be *redistributed* between men and women. Its design simultaneously provides care for those who need it (i.e. children, elderly) and educational and leisure opportunities for caregivers.

The team evaluated populations living in specific areas around a potential block, identified three groups to target, and produced a user-centric list of services to be provided. The city explored 92 operational services and selected 36 that were considered essential for project aims.

Example of service delivery by group

	Caregivers	Care receivers	Men and the family
Service approach	Education Spare time & wellbeing	Professional and palliative care services	Cultural change Home duties
Example of services	Secondary education, yoga, recycling	Nursery or physiotherapy	Gender mainstreaming, cooking, washing

Having defined the services, the city next worked to determine the location of the Care Blocks based on: 1) demand for care, 2) presence of caregivers, 3) poverty rate, and 4) a specific request in the participatory budget. The findings were used to re-route and integrate public services such as psychological support, legal advice, services for people with physical limitations, social development, entrepreneurship and more. Foremost, they supported the creation of a cross-government system of care by 13 Secretariats who determine the next steps to advance implementation.

The city has reached a total of 300 000 services provided to women across 15 Care Blocks and two care buses. It expects to reach more than 1 million beneficiaries by the end of 2023 and build 45 Care Blocks by 2035.

Care Blocks has been replicated in San Pedro Garza García, Mexico. The city has also received requests for technical advice in Argentina, Chile, the Dominican Republic and Mexico. The Care Blocks team stressed that the effort cannot be replicated without a vibrant network of committed partners. It has built the Care Alliance – a network of actors from the private sector and civil society.

Care Blocks service participants

Source: oecd-opsi.org/innovations/bogota-care-blocks.

THEME

Empathy and care to support mental health

Mental ill-health can have devastating effects on individuals, families and communities, with half of people experiencing it in their lifetime. During the COVID-19 crisis, many people's mental health worsened (see image on next page). Mental ill-health also weighs heavily on societies and economies (up to 4% of GDP), while those with mental illness have poorer educational, employment and physical health outcomes. However, as many as 67% of people say they do not get the mental health support they need (OECD, 2021).

Perhaps triggered by COVID-19 distress, OPSI and the MBRCGI have identified a stronger focus on mental health compared to previous years. These cases often involve deep engagement with those whose lived experiences run counter to the philosophies of traditional approaches. Many of these efforts also demonstrate the power of talking therapy (OECD, 2021) or have focused specifically on young people, who are particularly vulnerable to mental ill-health.

Many efforts in understanding and improving mental health feature methods advocated for by OPSI, including future-oriented anticipatory scenarios, mission-oriented innovation through the OECD Mission Action Lab, and Behavioural Insights (BI).

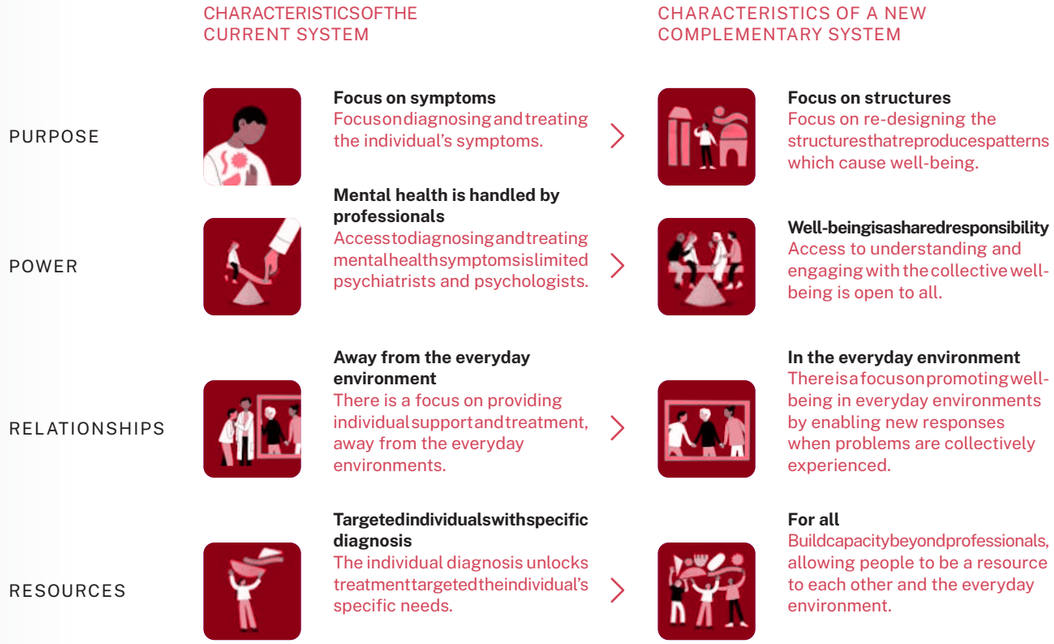
EXAMPLES

- ↗ **Co-created Philosophy of Care** (Australia). A new standard centred on people with lived experiences of distress and crisis emergency.
- ↗ **Reversing Youth Mental Health Outcomes** (US). Reverses the rates of youth mental health disorders through the creation of community ecosystems.
- ↗ **Imagine if We**. Uses anticipatory approaches scenarios for systemic shifts in mental health away from the individual and towards the community (see image on next page).
- ↗ **MH2k** (UK). Uses collaborative approaches to give young people a leadership role in addressing mental health challenges.
- ↗ **BI for Mental Health** (Slovak Republic). BI to prevent, destigmatise, and raise awareness around of mental health issues.
- ↗ **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Training** (Pakistan). Collaborating with the World Bank to introduce group-based CBT for entrepreneurs.

National estimates of depression or related symptoms before and after COVID-19

Source: doi.org/10.1787/0vccafa0b-enD. Data available at stat.link/mw2xro.

The four shifts of "Imagine if We"



Source: ddc.dk/projects/imagine-if-we.

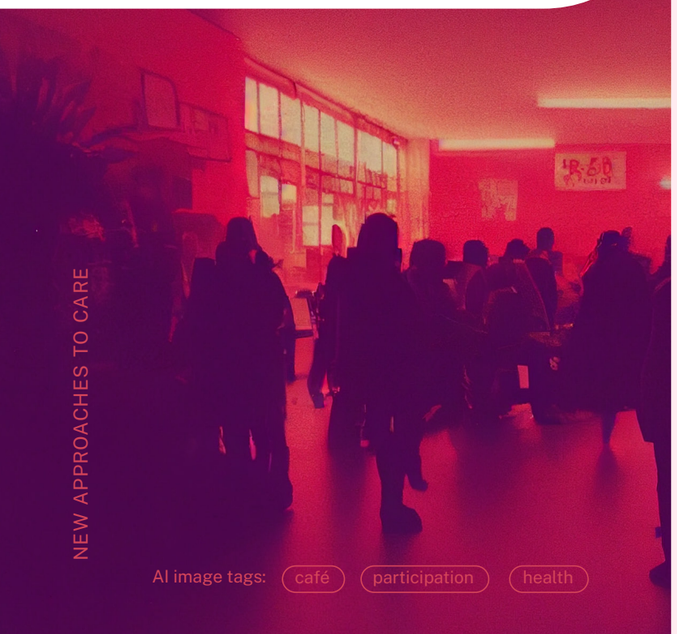
See case study on the **Mental Health Café** (Latrobe City, Australia) →

CASE STUDY

Mental Health Café

(Latrobe City, Australia)

The Latrobe Health Assembly is a community-led state government initiative that seeks to positively shape and facilitate new ways of working to improve health and wellness. Through a co-design process with service providers, health and government bodies, and residents, the Assembly developed an innovative Mental Health Café, a physical space tailored to after-hours and non-emergency stabilisation of people experiencing mental health challenges. Driven by a community-centred approach, the café aims to increase opportunities for peer support and social connection, reduce emergency department presentations for non-emergency issues, and improve consumer experiences and outcomes.



NEW APPROACHES TO CARE

AI image tags: café participation health

PROBLEM

In Latrobe, residents are residents 38% more likely to experience mental health challenges including depression or anxiety than the rest of the state, which has worsened since COVID-19. Emergency and non-emergency services for mental health have seen their capacities pushed to the limit. Traditional 9am-5pm hours for mental health services are insufficient and inconvenient, and there is a critical shortage of trained psychologists and other mental health workers to meet demand.

Mental Health Café for Latrobe Valley

Lead Agency / Consortium

Establishment phase
Project/Partnerships lead
Clinical governance

Critical Partnerships

Latrobe Regional Hospital
VicPol, MHAPR
Ambulance Victoria

Weekends
day +/- evening

Weekdays (minimum 1)
Afternoon + evening

Meaningful participationofpeople with lived experience

Design | Establishment/Furnishing | Staff | Volunteers | Service governance | Service promotion | Feedback & continuos improvement

Outcomes

Improved wellbeing
Less distress

Place of belonging
Community connection

Demand
Word of mouth

Representative
Inclusive

Staff, volunteer attraction

Used in wellness

Reduced emergency department use, service use

Source: www.healthassembly.org.au/all-projects/mental-health-cafe.

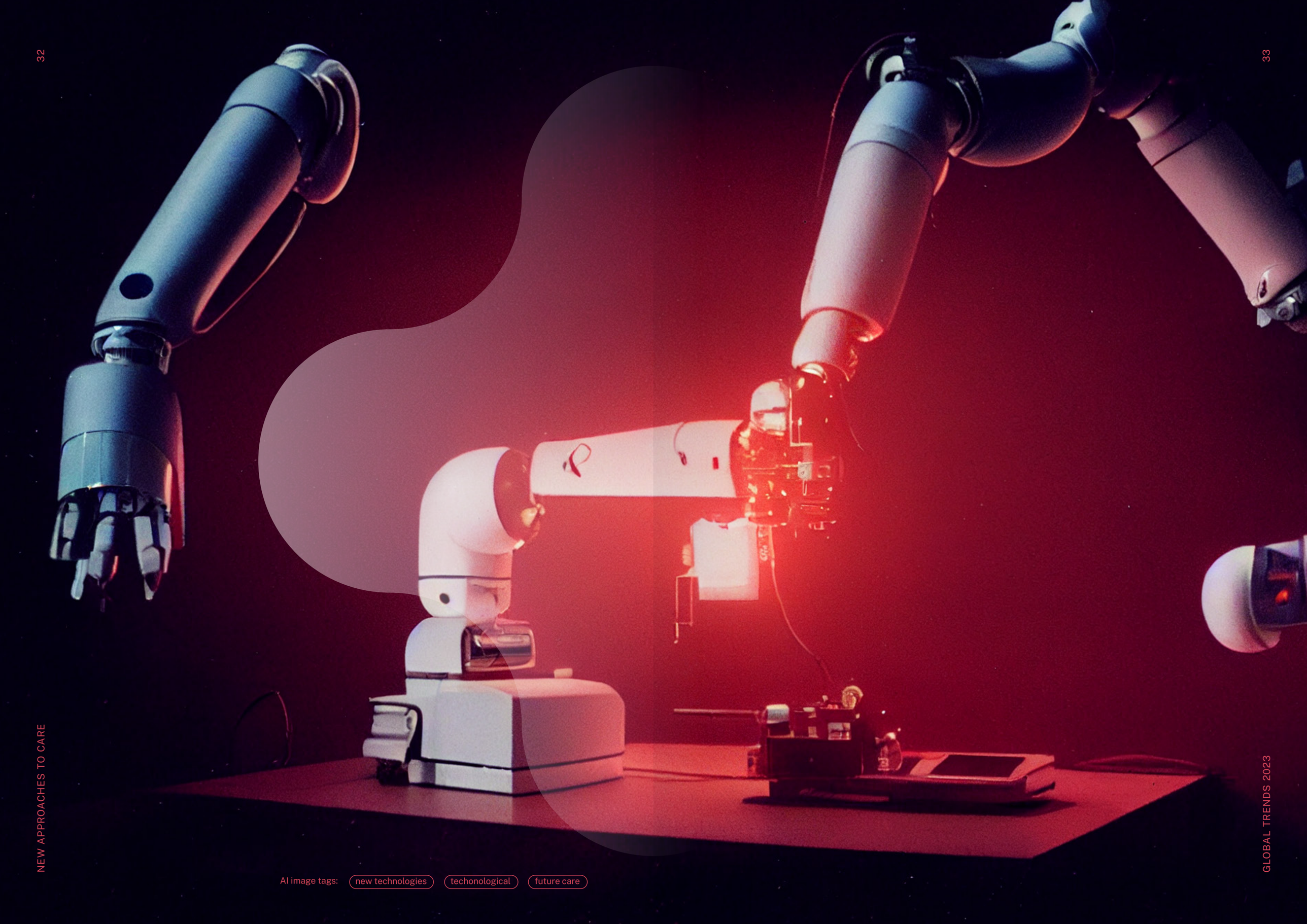
AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

In 2020, the municipality launched a co-design process to address the issue of mental health, which sought to reimagine engagement with innovation and mental health in ways that would enable a broad range of stakeholders (e.g., service providers, residents). Throughout 2021-22, Latrobe's Department of Health and Human services brought together hundreds providers, doctors and carers, experts, and patients.

These efforts culminated in the creation of the Mental Health Café concept, a peer-led model characterised by evening operating hours, wellbeing supports, a recovery-oriented approach and a commitment to meaningful, ongoing community participation, in particular of people with lived experience, at all decision-making levels.

The Café was configured around the idea of making patients feel comfortable, allocating caregivers and volunteers strategically to meet their needs and deliver the right set of services. The physical space of the Café serves to experiment with novel approaches, test new solutions to address patients' needs, and generate experience-based evidence related to emerging issues to support better policy making.

Currently, the Mental Health Café is amid the first six-month phase of a two-year pilot, which includes validating the initial concept and guaranteeing its appeal as a community-centred solution to ensure its sustainability and replicability, where possible. To achieve its objectives, the Café developed an Outcomes Framework, a tool by codesigned people with lived experiences to assess all aspects of the programme.



AI image tags: new technologies techonological future care

THEME

New technologies revolutionising healthcare

New technological approaches are transforming the ways in which governments are looking after the health of their people, most often in two ways.

LEVERAGING TECH FOR CARE AT A DISTANCE

While the world is working to emerge from the pandemic, the acceleration of digital innovation previously reported by OPSI and the MBRCGI has continued, especially with remote care. This ensures that people can access care even if they are heard to reach.

Medical interactions online have evolved from band-aid responses such as Zoom consultations to transformative initiatives at scale. Governments and health providers have also been using robots and drones to care for people at a distance.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR REAL OUTCOMES

OPSI work has repeatedly identified healthcare as a top public sector AI use case. The 2023 trends work has uncovered the growing use of AI in more refined and informed ways.

GovTech startups have been a driving force, creating some of the most innovative solutions being used by governments. Efforts go beyond granular projects, demonstrating cross-cutting approaches for engaging GovTech ecosystems. Civic tech organisations and nonprofits have also launched solid innovations.

Despite progress, AI has not transformed care as rapidly as some expected, with hurdles being insufficient data and infrastructure (Leonard and Reader, 2022). Governments must overcome this if they are to harness the potential of AI. There is also a lack of agreement on guiding principles for trustworthy AI in healthcare (EPRS, 2022; Council of Europe, 2021; Naik et al, 2022), though early efforts exist.

EXAMPLES

- ↗ **5G Remote Surgery** (**China**, **France**). Leveraging expanding 5G networks to conduct real-time remote surgeries (see image).
- ↗ **Mixed Reality Healthcare** (Serbia). A mixed-reality device allowing only one doctor to enter a risk zone while others monitor from outside.
- ↗ **NHS AI Lab** (UK). accelerate the safe and effective adoption of AI in care by bringing together government, providers, academics and tech companies.
- ↗ **Challenge Tenders** (Israel). Innovative challenge method of engaging GovTech ecosystems to solve urgent health problems.
- ↗ **SIAVIGia** (Argentina). Using AI to create an integrated system of for victims of gender violence.
- ↗ **Good Machine Learning Practices for Health**. Guiding principles collaboratively developed by Canada, the UK and the US (see box).

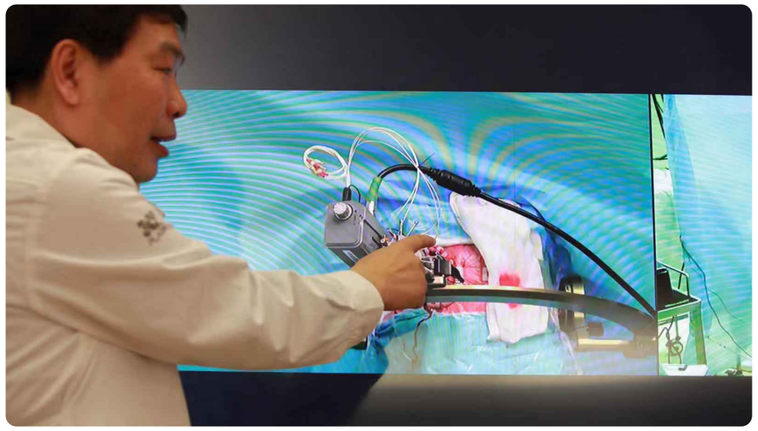
See case study on **Tucuvi** (Spain) →

Good machine learning practices for health – guiding principles

1. Multi-disciplinary expertise is leveraged.
2. Good software engineering & security practices are implemented.
3. Clinical participants and data are representative.
4. Training data sets are independent of test sets.
5. Reference datasets are based upon best available methods.
6. Model tailored to available data and reflect intended use.
7. Focus on the performance of the human-AI team.
8. Testing demonstrates performance during relevant conditions.
9. Users are provided clear, essential information.
10. Monitor models performance and manage re-training risks.

Source: bit.ly/3WAEYYX (edited by OPSI).

Remote brain surgery in China from 3 000 kilometres away



Source: Handout via engineerine.com/china-performed-its-first-5g-remote.

CASE STUDY

Tucuvi

(Spain)

The lack of nurses and doctors in Spain has led to an increase in unmet needs, insufficient medical availability and lower quality of health services. This has had a significant impact on patients with chronic conditions. By making automated phone calls using automatic speech recognition and natural language processing (NLP), Tucuvi makes remote patient monitoring possible, ensuring continuous care services.

PROBLEM

In Spain, almost a third of the population suffer from a chronic disease or illness, reaching nearly 60% for those over the age of 65 (OECD/WHO, 2019). Likewise, a wave of post-pandemic chronicity is expected in the younger population, requiring an increase in follow-up and care from healthcare systems, putting more pressure on nurses and doctors.

Spain has around 330 000 nursing professionals (625 nurses per 100 000 inhabitants, well below the EU average of 827). This makes it difficult to transform the healthcare model towards one of prevention and care. This mismatch contributes to the erosion of trust in hospital and healthcare systems, with resultant impacts on the quality of life of patients.

AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

In December 2021, the Ministry of Health published the Digital Health Strategy that promoted using new technologies, and encouraged greater follow-up of patients as a useful and cost-effective tool to avoid emergencies.

In this context, Tucuvi has emerged to augment the capacity of healthcare professionals and provide continuous care for the patients at home. Tucuvi is an AI voice-powered virtual caregiver who supports doctors and nurse professionals in three main ways:

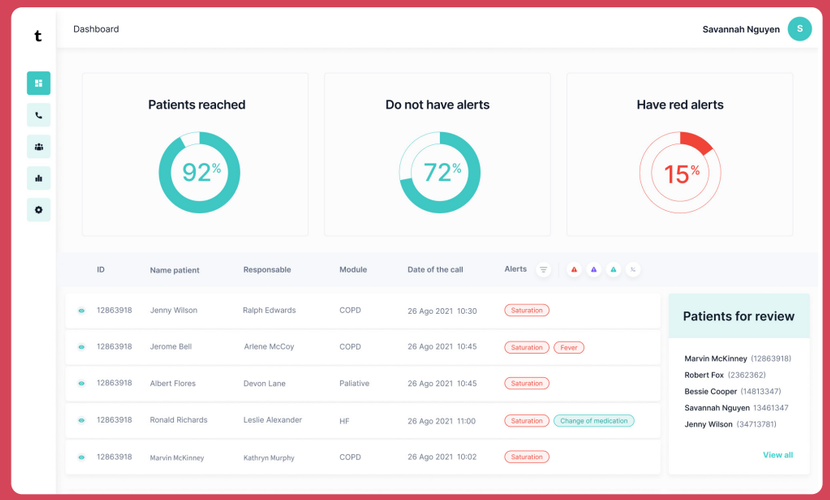
1. Reaching out to users with triage questions to learn about a patient's status;
2. Supporting early assessment of a patient's health status (e.g. determining whether the patient is at risk and needs to go to the ER); and
3. Informing doctors and nurses about the results, which they can monitor using a dashboard.

Patients do not need to download any software or app. Assessments are made by phone calls where patients interact directly with the AI bot "Lola". Lola talks to the user, analyses their conversations in real time using NLP, and processes the information to produce a specialised assessment. Lola thus enables remote patient monitoring to ensure that healthcare is delivered more quickly and continuously, while maintaining safety standards and quality of care.

In a use case study, the virtual assistant enabled the follow-up of 100 patients with COVID-19, with an answering rate of 69% and a success rate of call finalisation of 62%. The average length of calls was 2.1 minutes, and several generated alerts to be delivered to nurses and doctors for personalised follow-up.

Lola has proven to be versatile, adapting to different use cases, including by improving medication adherence, monitoring symptoms, conducting satisfaction surveys and promoting good habits. It has held 1 million+ patient conversations (source) and flagged thousands of risk cases that need particular attention. In October 2022, Tucuvi was selected to receive EUR 5.5 million in funding from the European Innovation Council.

Tucuvi's monitoring dashboard



Source: www.tucuvi.com/platform.

TucuviCEOMaríaGonzálezMansowinning PitchGovTechatthe2022GovTechSummit

Source : www.govtechsummit.eu/pitch-govtech.

Trend 3

New methods for preserving identities and strengthening equity

THEME **Honouring Indigenous societies and local cultures**

CASE STUDY Citizenship, democracy and justice for the Maxakali people (Brazil)

THEME **Enabling families and communities**

CASE STUDY Empowered Families Initiative (Singapore)

THEME **Counteracting the creation of the gig economy underclass**

CASE STUDY Ethical Deliveries (Italy)

AI image tags: gig economy · citizenship · democracy

The pressures of globalisation are increasing inequalities. Indigenous societies are particularly at risk, with governments developing inclusive, data-driven efforts to counter the challenges they face while ensuring their rights and values are respected. At the local level, government are supporting the digitisation of cultures and ensuring the fair distribution of benefits from innovations while driving sustainable development. Governments are also developing innovative strategies to address the cost-of-living crisis, unemployment, the digital divide, lack of adequate housing, crime, rising poverty, gender discrimination and inequalities more broadly. At the global level, governments are working to counter forms of inequality within gig economy platforms by creating alternatives and ensuring future expansion is socially sustainable and respectful of workers' rights.

THEME

Honouring Indigenous societies and local cultures

Indigenous societies and local communities have been disproportionately threatened by the pressures of globalisation (OECD, 2021). To address this, governments and their partners are developing initiatives to help their cultures flourishing and recognise their value for society.

INDIGENOUS SOCIETIES

Approximately 38 million Indigenous people live in 13 OECD countries. They have unique assets and knowledge, but there are significant gaps in income, employment, life expectancy and educational attainment between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations (OECD, 2019).

OPSI and the MBRCGI have identified impressive efforts to ensure that innovation is inclusive and empowers Indigenous societies. One way to do this is through data. Incorporating Indigenous cultures into data sets, and then visualising them, helps to counter the challenges these societies face (Kokutai and Taylor, 2016).

A significant number of innovations are aimed at making legal proceedings more culturally sensitive, addressing the lack of discrete measures related to the engagement of Indigenous peoples, and tackling discrimination.

LOCAL CULTURES

Governments are undertaking novel efforts to support the digitisation of local cultures to prevent cultural extinction and ensure fair distribution of the benefits of innovation.

Governments and partners have also taken action to create digitised versions of cultural elements in the form of audio data, including both spoken language and sounds, to overcome English bias in voice services and better understand natural environments.

EXAMPLES

- ↗ **AI Decolonial Manyfesto.** "A provocation, a question, an opening, a dance about a future of AI technologies that is decolonial".
- ↗ **CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance.** Helps to recognise power differentials and preserve Indigenous rights in data (see next page).
- ↗ **Marram-Ngala Ganbu** (Australia). Court processes that enable greater participation by Indigenous family members and culturally informed decision making.

CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance

Collective benefit for inclusive development and innovation, improved governance and citizen engagement, and equitable outcomes.

Authority to control recognising rights and interests, making data for governance available, and developing data governance mechanisms.

Responsibility for positive relationships, expanding capability and capacity, and Indigenous languages and worldviews.

Ethics for minimising harm and maximising benefit, justice and future use.

Source: www.gida-global.org/care.

Visitor to the Collections of Ghent exhibit

Source: www.collections.gent/cogentbox.

- ↗ **Collections of Ghent** (Belgium). Intertwines the digitalisation of cultural heritage with the active involvement of citizens at the neighbourhood level (see photo).
- ↗ **Donate a Speech** (Estonia). Creating an open database of 4 000 hours of spoken Estonian language to enable the creation of speech-based services.
- ↗ **Urban Sound Lab** (Netherlands). Collects sounds of the urban environment to provide the foundations and data for future policies.

See case study on **Citizenship, democracy and justice for the Maxakali people** (Brazil) →

CASE STUDY

Citizenship, democracy and justice for the Maxakali people

(Brazil)

Brazil is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse countries. With 305 Indigenous ethnic groups and 274 Indigenous languages, the challenges of inclusion and equity are huge and remain unsolved. The Maxakalís are a rather small Indigenous group that face major challenges related to cultural isolation and lack of access to Brazil's constitutional rights. In 2020, the state Court of Justice of Minas Gerais and the Electoral Court launched a project in collaboration with the Maxakalís to co-create solutions promoting access to citizenship, democracy and justice, while working to resolve forms of structural and historical injustice.

PROBLEM

Facing cultural isolation due to their lack of mastery of Portuguese (speaking their native Tikmüün instead) and the absence of speakers of their language in public agencies, the Maxakalís are vulnerable to rights violations that limit their access to justice, voting, civil participation, social rights and protection. Such disadvantages are reinforced by their limited understanding of the federal and state system of justice. Government presence at different levels is rather weak and distant, broadening gaps culturally, geographically and institutionally in access to justice, while reinforcing discriminatory actions and violence towards the Maxakalís.

AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

The "Citizenship, Democracy and Justice for the Maxakalí People" initiative began running in January 2020 as a joint effort of the Court of Minas Gerais and the Regional Electoral Court. They embarked on a collaborative process with the Indigenous community of the Maxakalí. During the initial stage, the initiative conducted hearings and visits every 15 days to become familiar with the experiences of the Maxakalís, earn their trust and acquire a reputation for reliability. After six months of intensive interaction, the Maxakalís gave clearance to develop a joint project with the Tribunal and the Electoral Court, and later the Federal Public Ministry and Public Defender's Office.

Public hearings between the Maxakalís and government institutions

Source: bit.ly/3H1qI5V.

The conversations identified three main areas of action:

1. **Citizenship**. Issues related to lack of identity documents or formal recognition. Meetings were held with simultaneous translation where the Maxakalís and government worked together to obtain identity cards, legalise marriages and handle other procedures.

2. **Democracy**. Mock elections were held in Tikmüün and contextualised in terms of local culture and educational level to help them better understand electoral processes.

3. **Justice**. 50+ judicial hearings were held in the Maxakalí villages to map their demands and help them protect social security and other rights.

The three axes converged in the adoption of a new collaborative paradigm – one which centred the Maxakalís as the protagonist and main drivers of the process.

For the first time, 256 Indigenous people received identity cards, 81 acquired voting titles and 543 families gained access to direct support under the social protection system. In addition, 105 petitions were filed by the Maxakalí to protect their rights to social security and to gain legal recognition of their marriages. In addition, two new voting spaces were created for the Maxakalí and more than 50 public hearings have been held in their local language.

THEME

Enabling families and communities

For decades, income inequality has increased (OECD, 2019). Life has become more expensive, most recently with inflation imposing sacrifices on many families. Governments are undertaking innovative initiatives to address poverty and inequalities, with a view to providing more sustainable, human-centric and efficient results.

NEW APPROACHES TO PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT AND SUBSIDIES

About 33 million people are unemployed across OECD countries. Furthermore, vulnerable populations have experienced more severe effects as a result of the COVID-19 crisis (OECD, 2022).

To address this, governments are playing an active role in job markets, such as through combining public employment intervention with novel attention to sustainability, gender equality and vulnerability. They have also supported work integration social enterprises (WISEs), organisations that focus on improving employment prospects for those furthest from the labour market (OECD/EC, 2022). In addition, many innovations stimulate the economy through new subsidy programmes.

COUNTERING EXPENSIVE HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Access to affordable housing – a basic human right and central dimension of wellbeing – has become increasingly challenging. The OECD Horizontal Project on Housing has found that low-income households are struggling with rising housing costs. Income inequalities and exclusive housing has worsened structural factors that lead to homelessness. Indeed, the number of people experiencing homelessness has increased in 1/3 of OECD countries (OECD, 2020).

To address this, governments have developed innovative strategies to provide affordable housing and reduce energy costs. They have also engaged in innovative projects that seek to tackle homelessness through systems approaches and creative uses of data, and through partnering with social economy actors close to the ground (OECD/EC, 2022; OECD, 2020).

EXAMPLES

- ↗ **Presidential Employment Stimulus** (South Africa). Reimagines public employment as an instrument for social innovation (see image).
- ↗ **VirtualPowerPlant** (Australia). Reducing energy bills by constructing a decentralised power plant using the roofs of public housing.
- ↗ **Yes, We Rent!** (Spain). A city-led co-operative of tenants willing to search, renovate and rent collectively apartments (see image on next page).

Digital Girls Summer Camp

Source: www.ragazzedigitali.it/concluso-il-summer-camp.

Yes, We Rent – Training vulnerable young adults

Source: bit.ly/3W77MrV

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AS A CAUSE OF INEQUALITIES AND AN ANTIDOTE

Digital technologies have created new winners and losers. Governments are undertaking remarkable efforts to ensure that the benefits of the digital transformation are fairly distributed.

For citizens, governments have focused on helping them to develop new digital skills and making digital services more inclusive and accessible. For businesses, new efforts help non-digital companies navigate the digital transformation. Beyond the digital divide, technologies can be the antidote to longstanding societal challenges. Governments are using data to recognise and remedy these problems.

- ↗ **Digital Girls Emilia-Romagna** (Italy). Free summer camps where girls in high school learn the basics of programming (see image).
- ↗ **National AI Supercomputing Platform** (Serbia). Offers supercomputing resources and training free of charge to innovative startups.
- ↗ **Precarious Lives Mapper** (Lebanon). Documents processes and mechanisms that generate housing precarity in Beirut.

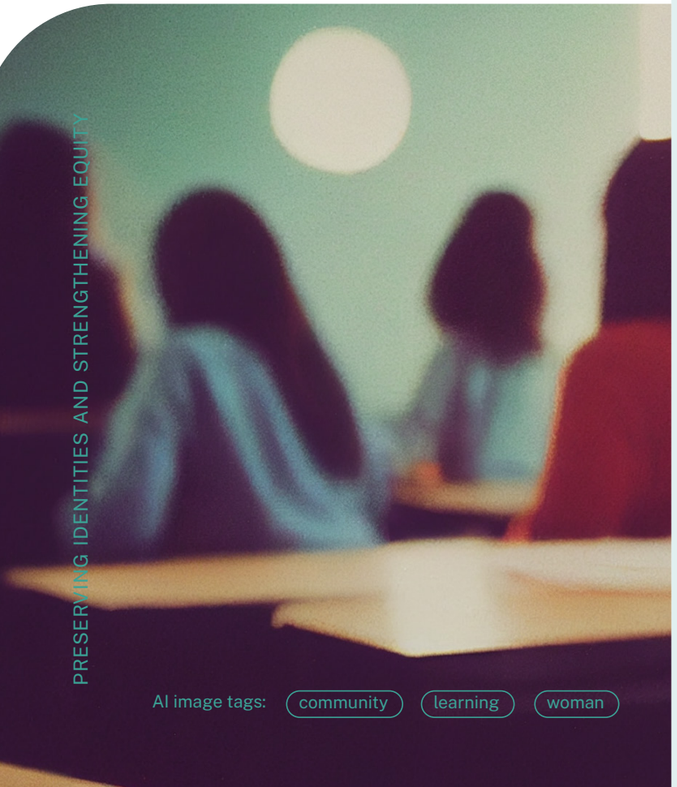
See case study on the **Empowered Families Initiative** (Singapore) →

CASE STUDY

Empowered Families Initiative

(Singapore)

Social assistance for low-income families in Singapore is often premised on their needs, rather than their ambitions or abilities. The Empowered Families Initiative is a developmental initiative that hopes to harness the strengths and willingness of low-income families to invest in their aspirations with the support of grants, savings matching and group support.



PRESERVING IDENTITIES AND STRENGTHENING EQUITY

AI image tags: community learning woman

PROBLEM

Traditionally, social assistance for low-income families is remedial and reactive in nature, and often premised on the idea of families as “needy recipients”, rather than on leveraging their assets. As such, this model can perpetuate situations where families are always “in need”. Moreover, traditional assistance largely focuses on basic needs, meaning that low-income families remain in a state of survival rather than prosperity. Traditional programmes are often programmatic in nature, employing a one-size-fits-all approach rather than being customised to the unique needs and circumstances of families and their specific plans and aspirations.

Families co-facilitating sessions to collaborate and update each other on progress

Source: EFI

Example pilot outcomes

Name	Support provided	Result
Danny	Grant to help upgrade from a bicycle to a motorbike for work as delivery rider.	Increased orders/deliveries.
Fatima	Investment grants and matching savings.	Saved enough money to open a car-washing business.
Lisa	Investment grants.	Collaborated to open a food stall, doubling their incomes.
Suzy		

AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

The Empowered Families Initiative (EFI) aims to “invest” in the hopes and plans of low-income families to improve their life circumstances, leveraging their strengths, motivation and creativity to improve their socio-economic position and build a better future. The initiative consists of three essential components:

- **Resources**. Access to funds and non-monetary support based on their respective plans and goals to better their lives (e.g., business training). Families structure the project and have the autonomy to choose how to utilise the resources for their goals.
- **Savings matching**. The initiative matches savings on a 1:2 basis. These savings can be used by families to support their current or future income-generating plans.
- **Meetings**. Regular group gatherings among families provide mutual support and encouragement.

As an initial pilot, 15 families were invited to discuss their ambitions and plans and four were selected. The chosen families all demonstrated clear aspirations and a readiness to implement their plans, but had not been able to access support through existing initiatives. The EFI provided these families with financial and non-financial support. All four reported a higher level of social support after getting to know one another and declared that they had resources to achieve their aspirations. They also felt a sense of empowerment and confidence from receiving support for their goals and their early success.

The project team is currently incorporating lessons learned from the first pilot into the second iteration.

AI image tags: community learning woman

THEME

Counteracting the creation of the gig economy underclass

There has been great debate about the impact of the gig economy, focusing in particular on its effects on employment, taxes and labour conditions (OECD, 2021). Governments have recognised that the gig economy has both benefits and drawbacks and are actively trying to counter the latter with innovative initiatives.

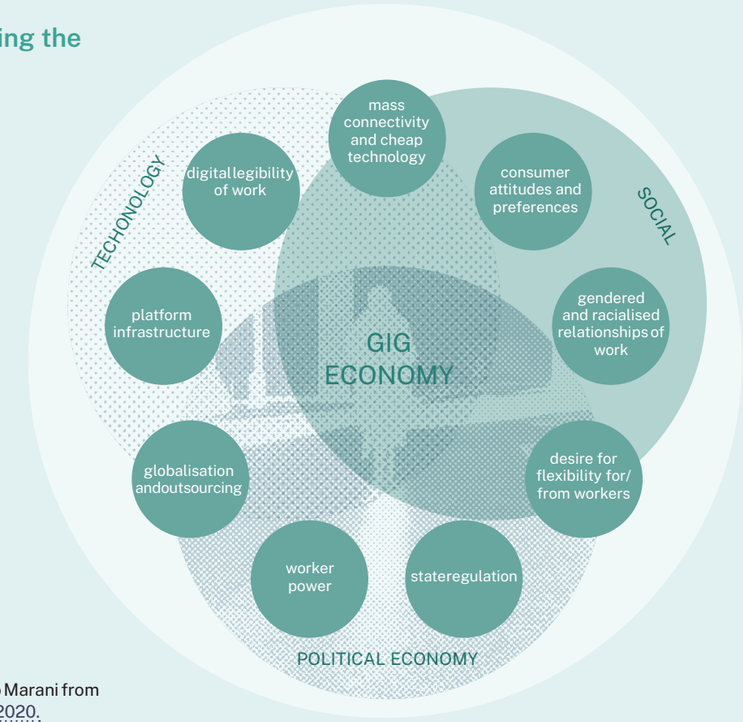
An analysis of the employment conditions that link platforms and workers reveals that a gig economy underclass may be emerging (Guan Huang and Gar-On Yeh, 2022). The working conditions of these self-employed contractors have had a negative impact: the majority of platform employees do not benefit from the protection of labour laws or collective bargaining agreements, and therefore experience low wages, precarious employment and hazardous working conditions.

TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE GIG ECONOMY

The current gig economy emerged from the interplay of a variety of factors including low worker power and a regulatory framework ill-equipped to handle the challenges related to platform expansion. In this context, OPSI and the MBRCGI have identified government and ground-up community efforts seeking to help ensure that the expansion of the gig economy is socially sustainable and respectful of workers' rights.

OPSI and the MBRCGI have also identified efforts to actively develop alternative models for platform governance and the promotion of worker welfare through engagement with gig economy platforms. Governments are also addressing the issue of the gig economy underclass by actively creating alternatives that can provide similar services.

Conditions shaping the gig economy



Source: Design by Giorgio Marani from Woodcock and Graham, 2020.

President of Uber India and South Asia addresses the Driver Advisory Council

Source: oecd-opsi.org/innovations/driver-advisory-council-for-uber-india.

EXAMPLES

- ↗ **Fairwork**. An international project resulting in a set of principles that should characterise fair work in the gig economy.
- ↗ **Driver Advisory Council for Uber** (India). Participatory action among workers and a sustainable alternative for platform governance (see image).
- ↗ **Neighbourhood Joint Delivery** (Korea). Improves delivery processes and conditions by integrating the fragmented private-sector system.
- ↗ **Better Working Conditions** (European Parliament). A proposal to improve conditions for workers on digital labour platforms.
- ↗ **WeChat Mutual Aid** (China). Food delivery riders are building mutual aid networks on WeChat to support each other.
- ↗ **Platform Cooperative Consortium**. Offers an alternative to platform capitalism based on cooperative principles (e.g. democratic ownership and governance.)

See case study on **Ethical Deliveries** (Bologna, Italy) →

CASE STUDY

Ethical Deliveries

(Bologna, Italy)

To improve the rights and opportunities of gig workers in the wake of COVID-19, Bologna, Italy launched Ethical Deliveries (*Consegne Etiche*), a home delivery platform that serves as an alternative to private delivery. Ethical Deliveries provides basic goods and services while respecting workers' rights and environmental sustainability.

PROBLEM

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an upsurge in the use of home delivery systems, highlighting the problems of the gig economy. Four companies were investigated by the Italian judiciary for imposing piecework payments and violating health and safety rights to their 60 000 workers. This led to growing awareness of the problematic labour relationship between companies and riders. Cities have often been seen as passive victims of large platforms, with some officials perceiving themselves as powerless to improve riders' and traders' working conditions. Local officials sought to handle things differently in Bologna.

AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

The Municipality of Bologna and urban regeneration centre Fondazione Innovazione Urbana (FIU) launched Ethical Deliveries, which consists of a delivery system developed through a participatory approach that respects two key principles: a fair labour relationship with riders and minimal environmental impact. The aim of the project is to provide a collective and solidarity-based alternative to large platforms.

The project started with a clear aim – to involve all city stakeholders in a debate on the issue of home deliveries, and to imagine something different. At the beginning of May 2020, FIU held an assembly and conducted interviews with riders, trade associations, civil society organisations, researchers and the novel Riders Union.

The aim was to identify an alternative ethical model to existing private platforms, leading to the Manifesto of Values.

In September 2020, they launched the website www.consegnetiche.it, which allows people to order groceries from neighbourhood markets, borrow books from libraries, order food from restaurants and purchase goods from local businesses. Ethical Deliveries provides riders with a minimum wage of EUR 9/hour – double the average wage that Italian riders typically earned – and worker protection against injuries, using only bicycles as a sustainable means of transport.

Thousands of ethical deliveries have been made with customers able to receive numerous goods and services due to the creation of a strong network of riders, civil society organisations, local business, the University of Bologna and the municipality. The project team produced a documentary on Ethical Deliveries, which is available for free online.

MANIFESTO OF VALUES

- Respect workers' **rights** and labour protection
- Guarantee fair and decent **remuneration**
- Guarantee the right to **health and safety**
- **Dismantle mechanisms** that fuel competition between workers
- Be logistically **sustainable** or with minimal environmental impacts
- Ensure the sustainability & transparency of the **business-rider relationship**
- Give value to **territorial service**
- Encourage **synergies** between actors at the expense of competition
- Favour the principles of **open source** for possible technological support
- Respect **information obligations** with customers
- Recognise and be able to communicate the **value of delivery**
- Keep the **relationship** between **trader** and **customer** alive
- Facilitate citizen **solidarity** processes.

Source: bit.ly/3Gzp8Ic.

Ethical Deliveries rider stocking up at the local market

Source: oecd-opsi.org/innovations/ethical-deliveries-bologna.

Trend 4

New ways of engaging citizens and residents

THEME **Empowering voices**

CASE STUDY Deliberative Committees (Belgium)

THEME **Re-imagining communities, physically and virtually**

CASE STUDY #FreetownTheTreeTown (Freetown, Sierra Leone)

AI image tags: citizens society engagement

Government engagement with citizens and residents to enhance representation, participation and openness is on the rise. However, citizen perceptions still indicate low confidence that they have an influence in the design and delivery of public policies and services. To remedy this situation, governments are using sophisticated techniques to connect and collaborate with the public including forming permanent citizens' councils, promoting Citizen Science and AI localism approaches, reimagining communities and leveraging technological innovations to build public trust, and collectively transforming both the physical and the virtual environment.

THEME

Empowering voices

In November 2022, 42 national adherents to the OECD Declaration on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy committed to "strengthening participation… and promoting inclusion in civic and democratic processes and decision making, as well as within the civil service, including women, youth and other underrepresented groups". OPSI and the MBRCGI identified efforts consistent with this, constituting a key innovation trend.

Governments have been working on stronger engagement with their citizens and residents for years, with OECD work finding that a "deliberative wave" has been gaining momentum (database of 574 approaches). Still, half of the respondents to OECD's Trust Survey stated that the political system does not let them have a say in government decisions.

Governments are addressing this through innovation – engaging and collaborating with citizens and residents in new ways and activating them as change agents. The most compelling examples are novel in the *approach*, *scale* or *focus areas* on which they engage the public. One notable approach is a move towards *permanent* forms of deliberative democracy that create spaces for everyday people to exercise their civic rights (see also OECD, 2021).

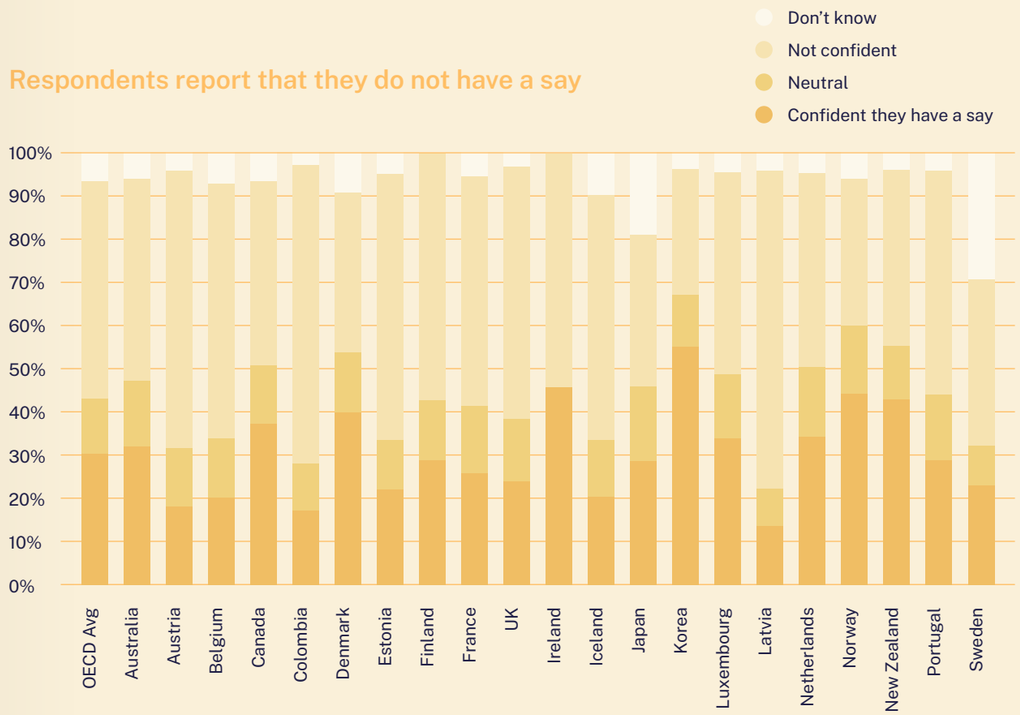
The most innovative initiatives, though, come from using new methods and technologies to connect elected leaders with their constituents, and engage citizens and residents about their opinions and feelings, which OPSI has called Democratic Technology (DemTech).

Governments at all levels will need to invest continuously in efforts to build public trust, and more work is needed to promote *responsiveness* alongside engagement (OECD, forthcoming). A growing body of relevant tools and resources exist to help bring about these skills and capacities, such as those on the OPSI Toolkit Navigator and the recent *Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes* (see next page).

EXAMPLES

- ↗ **Our Europe, Our Future** (Germany, France). A vast consultation of 95 000 young people in under the Conference on the Future of Europe in government decision making.
- ↗ **Crea.Visions** (Denmark). Enables the public to co-create with AI thought-provoking visions of utopias and dystopias.
- ↗ **Deliberatura – Council to the Street** (Colombia). Brings the city's institutions out to listen and respond to citizens in public sessions (see image).

Respondents report that they do not have a say



Source: oe.cd/trust (2021).

Data available at stat.link/8alv9m.

Ten steps to plan and implement a citizen participation process

1. Identifying the problem to solve and the moment for participation
2. Defining the expected results
3. Identifying the relevant group of people to involve and recruiting participants
4. Choosing the participation method
5. Choosing the right digital tools
6. Communicating about the process
7. Implementing a participatory process
8. Using citizen input and participation process
9. Evaluating the participation process
10. Cultivating a culture of participation

Source: oe.cd/citizen-participation-guidelines.

Deliberatura session

Source: twitter.com/ActivaBtura.

See case study on **Deliberative Committees** (Belgium) →

CASE STUDY

Deliberative Committees

(Belgium)

To bridge the gap between representatives and represented, the Brussels Parliament decided to open its doors to all inhabitants of the region. To achieve this, the Parliament incorporated a system of direct participation for the region's residents into the formal rules of procedure: the Deliberative Committees (*commissions délibératives* in French). They are comprised of 15 members of the Brussels Regional Parliament and 45 residents chosen by lottery. Together, they are responsible for drawing up recommendations on a given topic, to which the Parliament must respond.

PROBLEM

The public should be able to see and contribute to public policy making, with stakeholder participation constituting an essential element of open government. Informing and involving citizens in the development of policy solutions can improve decision-making outcomes and increase their legitimacy. Deliberative processes can provide optimal solutions to problems that involve ethical questions, are complex and long-term in nature, and extend beyond the electoral cycle. Recognising the potential of citizen participation, the Brussel-Capital Region realised it needed to move beyond ad-hoc participation projects.

AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

At the start of the 2019-2024 legislature, the Brussels Parliament established the Deliberative Committees. Several experts in citizen participation assisted in defining the details of this new process, and the first Committee was formed in April 2021. Deliberative Committees now form part of the assembly's permanent operation. Each consists of 45 residents chosen by a lottery (from a random draw of 10 000) and 15 regional parliamentarians. They have created a new space for dialogue aimed at elaborating, together and on an equal footing, recommendations on a particular theme. The topic addressed by each deliberative committee is either proposed by a citizen via democratie.brussels and supported by a minimum of 1 000 Brussels residents, or put forward by one or more political groups.

The Committees are assisted by a support committee (comprising participation experts and subject specialists) and are facilitated by an external operator. The operation of a Committee can be divided into four phases:

1. The **information phase** aims at informing the participants about both the deliberative process and the topic under discussion
2. The **deliberation phase** aims at generating proposals for recommendations.
3. The **recommendation phase** aims at improving these proposals and generating recommendations by all participants.
4. The **presentation phase** is the phase where recommendations are presented and discussed in the relative parliamentary committee.

Parliamentarian members ensure that the recommendations adopted are followed up. After 6 months, a report on progress and actions is presented and debated in a public session. This monitoring makes it possible to strengthen public support for the process by ensuring that the recommendations are useful.

Three Deliberative Committees have been set up to date, which produced recommendations about 5G, biodiversity and homelessness. The recommendations adopted each time were followed up by the Parliament, and in 69% of cases, were accepted and became the subject of parliamentary discussion.

Deliberative Committees process

Source: democratie.brussels/pages/cd_schema.

Plenary session of a deliberative committee

Source: Deliberative Committees project team.

AI image tags: society community green

NEW WAYS OF ENGAGING CITIZENS AND RESIDENTS

THEME

Re-imagining communities, physically and virtually

Governments and their partners are devising novel approaches to engage the public in the tangible re-envisioning of physical and virtual spaces. In addition, innovative cross-cutting approaches are helping governments to engage with their people in these activities and to convert their ideas into realities.

RE-BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

Many of the efforts identified through this work involve rebuilding communities after shock, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or effects of the war in Ukraine.

Many others fall under the umbrella of Citizen Science, where the public participates in the scientific process. Such efforts have been around for some time, but recent projects have reached new levels of institutionalisation, scale and impact. Interestingly, the strongest focus is on **trees**, with governments collaborating with the public to enhance tree canopies to address issues ranging from urban heat to climate change.

Participatory efforts need to be nurtured. Many of the identified examples are ad-hoc and have not demonstrated their staying power. Some governments are putting in place measures to help ensure continuity and sustainability of engagement over time.

RE-ENVISIONING DIGITAL TO ALIGN WITH COLLECTIVE VALUES

Trend 1 discussed the importance of algorithmic accountability but what if the public could play a role in elaborating the policies that apply these algorithms? OPSI and the MBRCGI identified a growing trend of participatory approaches around data and AI, which often lack community engagement.

EXAMPLES

- ↗ **ReStart Ukraine**. An open collective aimed at exploring the best ways to restore afflicted urban and rural areas in a post-war scenario.
- ↗ **PropTech Engagement Fund** (UK). Accelerates digital engagement tools and transforming community involvement in placemaking (see image on next page).
- ↗ **Avalinn AR** (Estonia). Enables residents to use an augmented reality app to contribute to urban development (see image on next page).

Avalinn AR

Source: bgreen-handbook.eu/case-study/digital-participation-in-tallinn-avalinn.

By zooming in from national AI strategies, these approaches strengthen AI Localism, "the actions taken by local decision-makers to address the use of AI within a city or community", often due to policy gaps at national levels (AILocalism.org; Verhulst and Sloane, 2020). Beyond efforts of governments and partners, grassroots efforts have also taken shape. Actions in this space are just starting to emerge and will continue to strengthen, giving the public a voice in shaping digital approaches and virtual spaces.

PropTech Digital Engagement Team visiting a community engagement pilot

Source : oecd-opsi.org/innovations/proptech-engagement-fund.

- ↗ **WeBuildAI**. A collaborative participative framework that allows individuals to create algorithmic policy for their communities.
- ↗ **Community Tech Fellowship** (UK). Grassroots effort to build "community intelligence" using digital means to tackle complex problems.
- ↗ **Citizen Initiative Accelerator** (France). Provides tailored support to develop citizen-led projects that serve the public good.

See case study on **#FreetownTheTreeTown** (Sierra Leone) →

CASE STUDY

#FreetownTheTreeTown

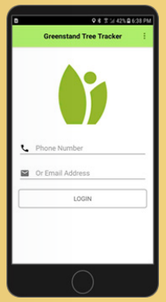
(Freetown, Sierra Leone)

In Freetown, the capital and largest city of Sierra Leone, heavy rains coupled with deforestation have resulted in devastating landslides, including one in 2017 which claimed nearly 1 000 lives. In 2020, the Freetown City Council decided to address this risk by launching #FreetownTheTreeTown, an initiative that aims to increase the city's green space and vegetation cover using innovative, disruptive, low-cost digital technology for tree-tracking.

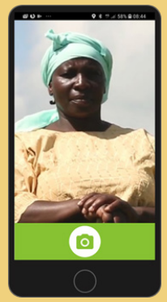
PROBLEM

Each year, more than 100 000 people in search of employment move to Freetown, and the urban fringes continue to push deeper into the forest expanses outside the city. This trend worsens deforestation in Sierra Leone, one of the countries most in danger from climate change. An equivalent of 12% of total canopy has been lost per year between 2011-2018. This directly affects catchment areas for water reserves and, in combination with heavy rains, exacerbates the risks of landslides, flooding and coastal erosion. Furthermore, loss of tree and vegetation cover also threatens biodiversity.

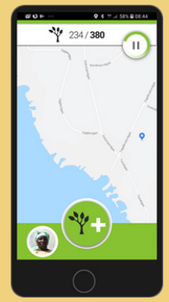
How #FreetownTheTreeTown works



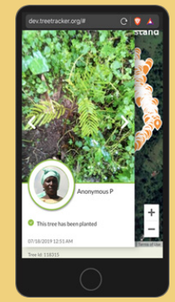
Mobile App Registration



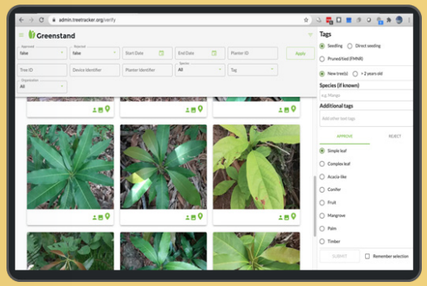
Take Selfie



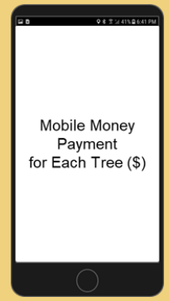
Select 'Plant Tree'



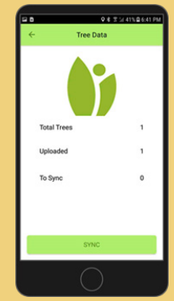
Plant Tree Take Photo



Planted Tree is Third Party Verified Using a Dashboard



Send Tree Payment



Tree Tracking

Source: bit.ly/3W9XyqF.

AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

The Freetown City Council put forth a plan to plant and grow 1 million trees to increase the city's vegetation cover by 50%. After over 400 meetings organised to engage citizens and encourage them to voice their needs, the City Council developed #FreetownTheTreeTown.

Thanks to a collaboration with the Environmental Foundation for Africa, a neighbouring council and a local nonprofit, and with funding from the World Bank, the TreeTracker app was developed. It allows members of the community to register as tree planters. After planting a tree in a location decided collectively, members create a unique geotagged record for each new tree, which is verified with a photo. Growers revisit each tree they "own" periodically, to water and maintain them, and document the plant's survival. In return for their efforts, they receive micropayments.

Since 2020, Freetown has planted more than 560 000 trees in climate-vulnerable areas, covering 578 hectares of urban land. The initiative has created over 1 200 jobs especially for marginalised, vulnerable and underemployed women and young people, 80% of which went to young people, and 44% to women.

Conclusion

In the last few years, a series of shocks have deeply unsettled societies around the world, exposing the fragility of current political, administrative, and economic systems. Governments devoting resources to post-pandemic renewal found themselves facing a new wave of global challenges unleashed by the war in Ukraine. These crises compounded a range of complex problems that have occupied governments' attention over many years.

To address these challenges and help create societies that are future-fit and resilient, governments and their partners have launched a wide range of impressive initiatives. In the face of fragility, innovation has emerged as a much-needed driver of stability that can generate public value where traditional approaches have failed to provide solutions.

OPSI and the MBRCGI analysed 1 084 innovations in almost 100 countries, a number that reflects governments' dedication to finding new solutions, exploring unprecedented alternatives and taking risks in a more structured way. Public sector innovation is increasingly becoming an integrated part of government activity and is proving crucial to addressing both new challenges and issues that have plagued societies for decades. In particular, the four trends analysed in this report suggest that public sector innovation can contribute to:

- **Making the public sector more accountable.** Governments are working to build relationships with those they represent. In particular, algorithmic accountability is emerging as a key area where governments are working to achieve a human-centric digital transformation.
- **Establishing an adequate response to new challenges in the field of health.** From ageing and chronic diseases to the increasing awareness of mental health issues, new initiatives are emerging that embrace collective and systemic dimensions of care.
- **Tackling new and old inequities and safeguarding cultural values.** Promoting equitable outcomes for disadvantaged groups such as gig economy workers and Indigenous peoples, as well as innovating to ensure that no one is left behind and that cultural values are protected.
- **Opening government decision making and promoting inclusive processes.** By decentralising power and collectively re-imagining communities and virtual spaces, governments are counteracting the loss of public trust and finding new ways to restore meaning to political life.

The trends identified and innovations analysed in this report provide potential ways for the public sector to meet today's challenges. While recognising the fragility of systems can heighten anxiety about the future, the joint efforts of OPSI and the MBRCGI continue to inform governments about the ways in which they can innovate and embrace the benefits of change while shielding themselves against threats. Public sector innovation can provide tools to tackle unprecedented challenges, and recognising the value of successful initiatives can serve to inspire public servants to make real change – making future prospects more promising.

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