Policy Workshop on Preventive Health in Low- & Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) – Impact of Misinformation & Disinformation

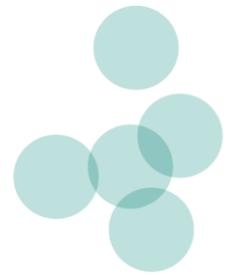*Hosted by GDL member Gaurav Sharma with the support of Eirliani Abdul Rahman*
Proposed date and location: 20 - 23 July, in-person or hybrid event in Nairobi, Kenya (TBC)

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light the fundamental inequity in access to primary healthcare in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). Most LMICs do not have effective and established social security or health insurance systems in place, compounding health-related risks and challenges, especially for vulnerable communities. Factors aggravating these shortcomings are many: the widespread phenomena of misinformation and disinformation, gutted infrastructure, the lack of professional resources, inadequate health education, and religious and cultural beliefs, to name just a few. Density of population and the natural topographies have also contributed to hindered access to primary health services.

This concept note provides a proposed framework for the implementation of a peer learning and knowledge-sharing workshop on preventive health for **Global Diplomacy Lab (GDL)** members, policymakers and civil-society actors.

The incubator phase of the workshop will be dedicated to generating a consolidated understanding of current challenges linked to "Preventive Health in LMICs", with a specific focus on the consideration of misinformation and disinformation. By targeting regional stakeholders with particular interest in preventive health systems and their implications for the overall health architecture of local societies, the curriculum will be based largely upon (expert) group interaction, knowledge sharing, and real-life examples from LMICs. Participants will be presented with information using different formats and methods such as case studies, group activities, slide and audiovisual presentations, as well as hands-on practice and reflection. Emphasis will be given to providing a broad overview on: (1) preventive health AI and relevance to developmental goals and agendas; (2) inherent risks and strategies for mitigating potential harms; (3) key issues to consider in LMICs; and (4) impact of misinformation and disinformation. Participants will apply the **ADIDS methodology** (Activity, Discussion, Input, Deepening, Synthesis). Content and exercises will be adapted to suit an in-person event to ensure a highly interactive working environment and to promote peer-to-peer learning and exchange.

The impact phase of the workshop will centre around a **policy discussion** to identify key themes that should be included in the preventive health mandate with a particular focus on lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic. An **abductive approach** will be used as facilitation methodology to provide a flexible framework in which participants can work together while remaining grounded in a set of principles that allows the emergence of new ideas. In this regard, the abductive method will combine both **inductive** (ideas are generated from the bottom up) and **deductive** (ideas are generated within a prescribed framework)

approaches. The anticipated outcome of the policy discussion is that the results generated during the workshop will be used to inform an initial draft for **preventive health actionable policy recommendations in LMICs**. A multi-stakeholder approach including policy and health experts as well as civil-society representatives will ensure that a wide range of perspectives and varying interests are incorporated. In addition, sessions dedicated to building consensus, identifying priorities for the group, and establishing how they should be integrated into the preventive health policy guidelines will be included in the policy drafting and planning sessions.

The final results will be presented as reference to policy makers (such as foreign ministries), relevant stakeholders, GDL members and partners, as well as local and global practitioners.