Digital health care and sustainability synergies

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The implementation challenges

- Public administrations are often not organized to deal with issues that cross traditional sectors, scales, actor constellations or are long-term. All of which characterize many SDGs.

- Governments have limited resources and need to prioritize actions amongst this "indivisible whole".

- Need for methods and tools for capturing trade-offs and synergies in order to make more robust and effective implementation strategies.

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Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

What are the SDGs and why are they important?

- Adopted by UN Member States in 2015

- Set out an ambitious vision of a more sustainable world to be realized by 2030

- 17 overarching goals, 169 targets, and 231 unique indicators

- Broad coverage: Health, poverty, energy access, inequality, ecosystems, peace, and partnerships

Guiding principles: Integration, <u>indivisibility</u>, universality

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Digitalisation in this context

- Digitalization is not only an 'instrument' to resolve sustainability challenges, it is also fundamental as a driver of disruptive, multiscalar change. It provides entirely new and enhanced capacities and thus serves as a major force in shaping both the systemic context of transformative change and future solutions.

The rhetoric & reality of Digitalisation

- Digital transitions of recent decades have perpetuated, or even triggered, resource and greenhouse-gas-intensive growth patterns.

- Access to services: physical accessibility (the physical distance to a service), economic accessibility (afordability) and institutional accessibility (how norms, values and laws constrain or favour access) (OECD, 2016).

- As the Nordic Region increasingly relies on digitalisation to secure equal access to health care and social care, digital accessibility becomes imperative, in this context - the access to digital infrastructure such as broadband, as well as possessing the skills and knowledge to use the digital solutions.

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Assessment of environmental impacts caused by digitalization in public sector services, 2022: Policy Brief from Finland

- The carbon footprint of customer's annual use of home care services was equivalent to driving a car for hundreds of km. The single most significant factor in the carbon footprint of these services was the emissions from the manufacturing of the devices taken to customers' homes. Another significant factor was the data intensity of the service. Due to these two factors, the emissions of the video call service were about three times higher than those of the automated medicine dispenser service.

A sustainability transition – for whom?

- There is a lack off systematic and strategic analyses of the overall effects on welfare, growth, accessibility and equality - This fails to identify the groups at risk of losing out on the sustainability transition and to develop strategies to ensure their availability in a fossil free future.

- Different groups have different voices in the design of instruments and packages of measures, which has consequences for how they are designed and whom they benefit.

- The greater the insecurity people experience in the run-up to the transition, the longer it will take, which drives up both the climate impact and the conversion costs.

- An additional dimension that makes transition more difficult is that the group that is over-represented in decisions (men and high earners), uses the car more and has a more negative attitude towards measures aimed at reducing car use than the group that is underrepresented, where mainly women and low-income people are found (Smidfelt Rosqvist and Winslott Hiselius 2019).

Model regions and methods

- Agder region, Norway

- Päijät-Häme wellbeing services county, Finland

- Fjallabyggd municipality, Iceland

- Tiohundra in Norrtälje, Sweden.

- Multi-stakeholder engagement - understand the baseline of health care and care services including the opportunities and challenges in introducing distance spanning solutions in health care and care

- The SDG Synergies approach - explore the socio-economic and environmental impact of distance spanning solutions in health care and care

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Co-designing the transition

Tandem – A framework for co-exploration and co-production processes
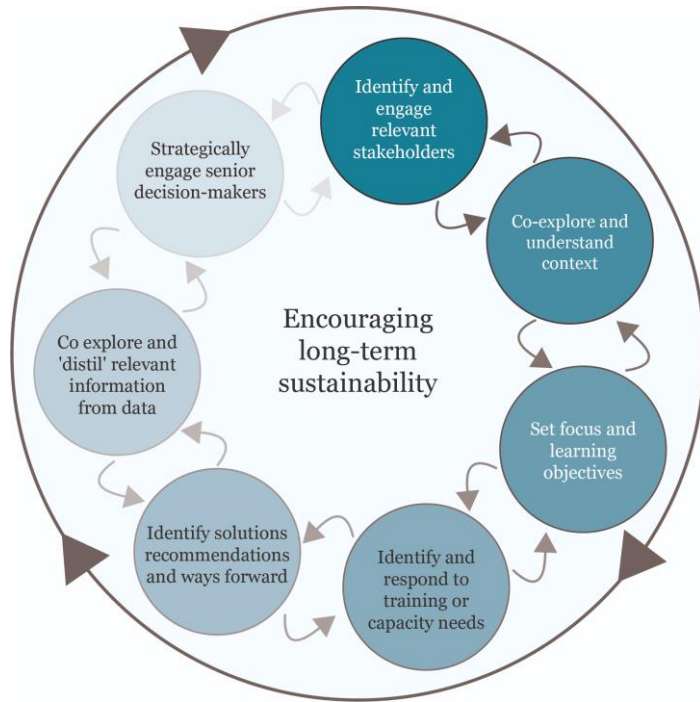
Insights from multi-stakeholder engagement:

- Reduce impacts of climate change
- Safe working conditions
- Cost-effectiveness
- Effective stakeholder engagement
- Inclusion and equality

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The SDG Synergies approach

- A **Systems Perspective** in decision-making

- **Stakeholder collaboration** over different sectors

- **Prioritisation** of goals and/or targets

- **Capacity building**

- Emphasise the **process**

- **Transparency** in the work

- A **systematic** and easy to understand process


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The SDG Synergies approach

Key guiding questions:

- Which targets have a catalytic effect?

- Where are potential trade-offs?

- Which targets require targeted support, and which targets are aided by progress in other areas?

- Which targets have strong interactions and would benefit from cross-sectoral collaborations?

- How can a particular target be implemented so as to avoid trade-offs and draw on synergies?

A balance act

Scientific rigor and complexity

Transparency and stakeholder buy-in

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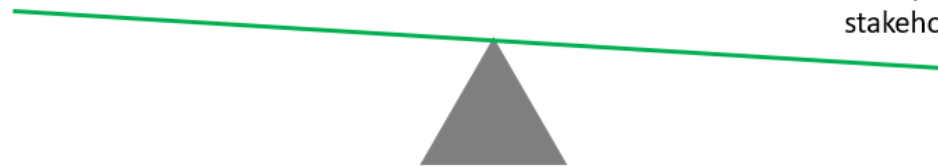
Selected distance spanning health solutions

- **Medicine robot services** – ensure that the user receives the correct medication at the right dose and at the right time

- **Digital night monitoring** – replace disruptive visits by night patrols to supervise elderly people e.g. installation of surveillance camera and a mobile router

- **Smart video technology** – enable residents living in sparsely populated areas to meet a doctor remotely at their local health centre

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Selected SDGs
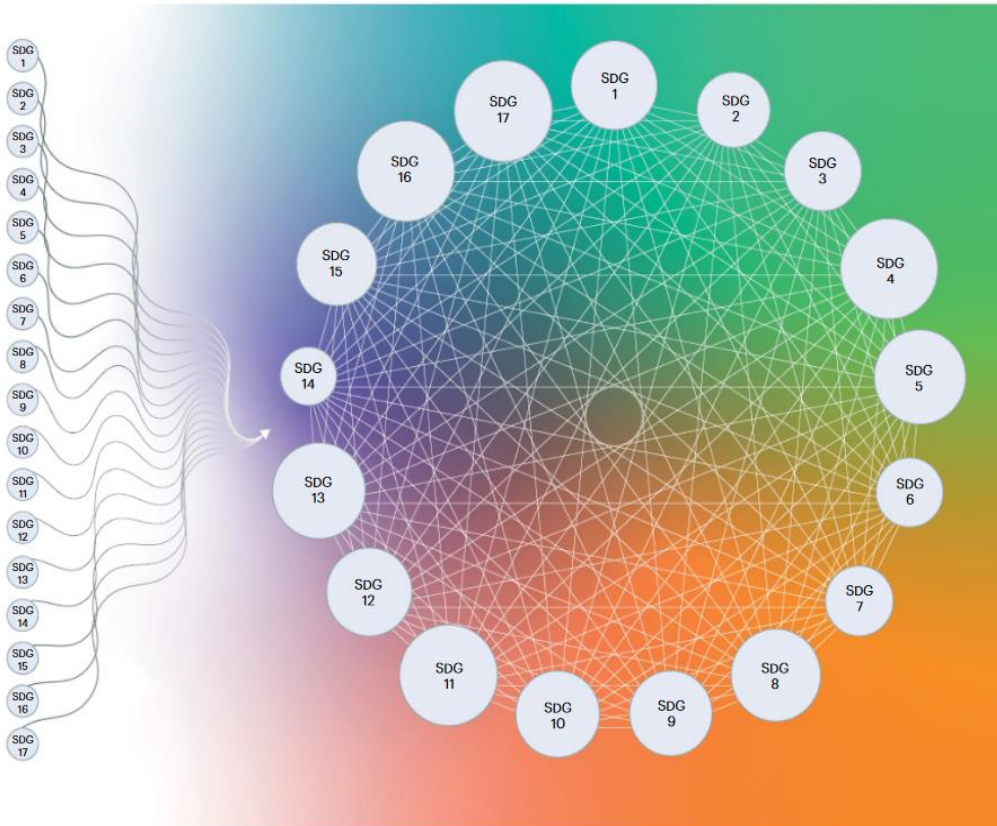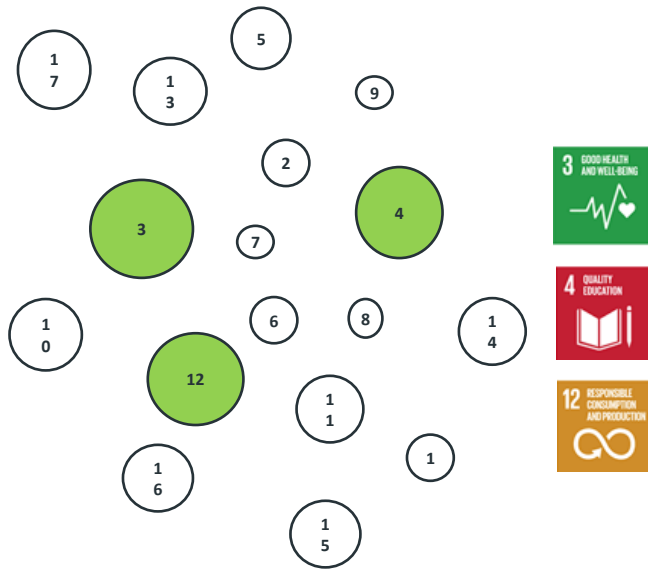

SDG3. Good health and well-being

SDG5. Gender equality SDG 6. Clean water and sanitation

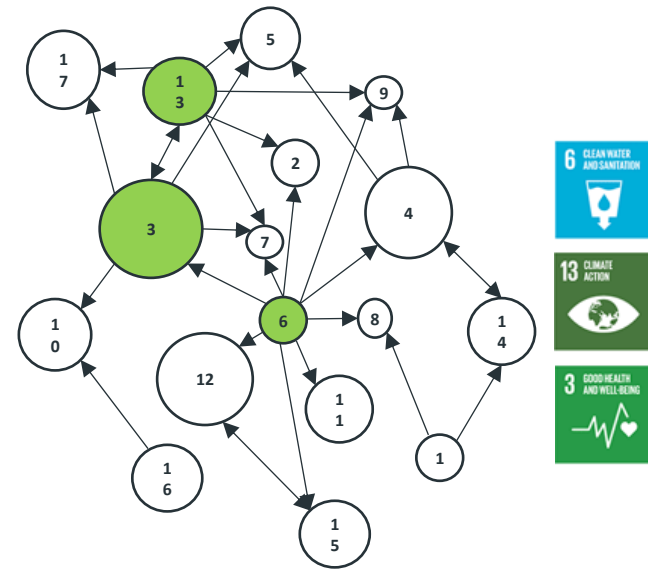**SDG8**. Decent work and economic growth

SDG10. Reduced inequalities

SDG12. Responsible consumption and production

SDG15. Life on land

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How important are goals taken as non-interacting entities?

How important are goals if systemic effects are considered?

Trade-offs and synergies

Catalytic goals - promoting them would have positive effects on the system as a whole:

- Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8)

- Gender equality (SDG 5)

- Reducing inequality (SDG 10)

Most positively influenced by progress in other goals:

- Good health and well-being (SDG 3)

- Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8)

- Reduced inequalities (SDG 10)

- Gender equality (SDG 5)

- Clean water and sanitation (SDG 6)
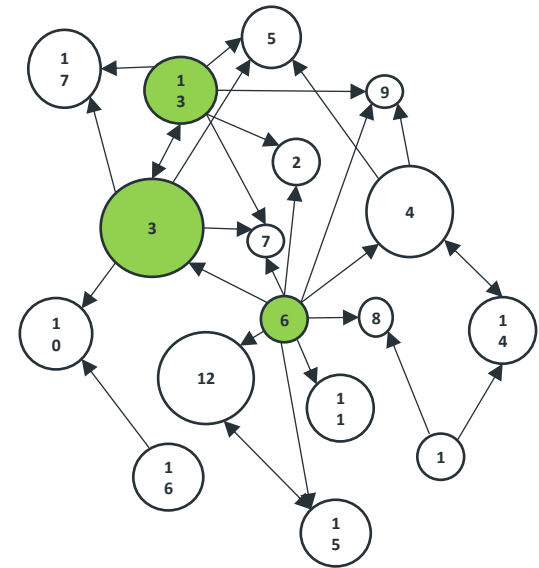
Thank You

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