

1. Background

Millennia2015's commitment is to highlight women's crucial role in the society and their unrecognized capacity as builders of alternative futures, based on characteristics such as an innate future orientation, capacity to mediate and to network at all levels, capacity to be social actors, to face natural catastrophes and human conflicts by creating solidarity among women.

In 2008, Millennia2015 decided that Information and Technology can connect people to give information about health through the study of the Variable V08 - "*Women and eHealth: connected medical knowledge benefiting all*".

In August 2010, the Women and eHealth International Working Group (WeHealth) was launched at the Destree Institute to conduct a two years study of the V08, create an active network of women, and investigate how women have access and use ICTs for health in the local communities.

The preliminary results were presented at the Millennia2015 International Seminar, Paris, 21 November 2011² and highlighted that Telemedicine remains an area where there are an insufficient number of women health professionals, leaders, IT designers, and beneficiaries.

Thereafter, the Global Network of Women in Telemedicine (WeTelemed) has been initiated as a WeHealth Action Plan with the vision to constitute a Millennia2015 powerful demonstration of women empowerment.

2. Objectives

The overall objective is to promote gender equality and women empowerment through the access and use of advanced technologies and Telemedicine combined with innovative integrated collaborative leadership programs.

And more specifically:

- To support women's role and place, especially to the developing world, in the context of medical diplomacy as a framework for a Global Network of Women in Telemedicine;
- To support Women Leaders to engage all generations to use tools in advanced technologies, to promote the access to Telemedicine to improve women's and family health;
- To empower and actively support women health care professionals, leaders, and IT designers working in Telehealth and Telemedicine, at political, economic and social levels.

3. Methods and activities 2012 - 2013

Methods

WeTelemed benefits of the methods of work in place at Millennia2015 and WeHealth, the prospective exercise and the 4-D Quality Analysis Model (4-D QAM), to collect information on women working in Telemedicine, stimulate interactions and increase the number of women proficient in the provision of telemedicine and/or telemedicine services. The methods of work follow the scientific, technical and ethical requirements described in the WeHealth Concept Note³.

Activities

² <http://www.millennia2015.org/news.asp?idLayout=6&cid=982&cid=136>

³ Available at www.millennia2015.org/Women_and_eHealth

WeTelemed is a unique network of voluntary members and the activities listed below are subject to their availability and willingness. With their continuous commitment, the network has conducted the following activities.

- **Creation of WeTelemed Network** - Paris, 21 November 2011

The Network is created by the four founders⁴ present at the Millennia2015 Seminar in Paris, to disseminate existing information, and stimulate the registration⁵ of new members at Millennia2015 WeTelemed (free registration). A webpage on Millennia2015 website displays up to date information and a generic email permits internal communication with registered members⁶.

- **Launch of WeTelemed** - Panama, 17 - 19 April 2012

Organised by Arletty Pinel, Head of Genos Global⁷, and the University of Technology of Panama, the conference on "Digital Inclusion for Health and Sustainable Development" launched WeTelemed, on 17 April 2012⁸, in liaison with the Grand Health Bazar in Lagos, Nigeria⁹ and Millennia2015 team at the Destree Institute in Namur, Belgium. Many participants registered, demonstrating the active participation of women, some coming from remote communities in Panama.

Since the launch, **134 members** from **25 countries** have registered, and constitute a dynamic group of women and men involved in telemedicine.

Particular attention is given to women addressing other women's needs when living remote areas, refugee camps or in areas of conflict where Telemedicine services may constitute an alternative to the local health centers, often non-operational in such conditions. Medical specialties such as gynecology, maternal and child health, dermatology, reproductive health, neurology, radiology, dermatology, infectious disease, emergency surgery and services are primarily targeted, as an increased number of female health care providers are more needed to deliver healthcare to women via Telehealth.

- **WeTelemed Survey**

In order to collect and share experiences among WeTelemed members illustrating the inclusion/exclusion of women in Telemedicine, a survey is designed by Mateja de Leoni and Patty Schweickert, with a set of 10 questions to conduct on site interviews with women working in Telemedicine and TeleHealth (available in English, French and Spanish¹⁰). All registered members are invited to participate.

- **WeTelemed and Connecting Nurses : the WeObservatory**

Line Kleinebrel has presented WeTelemed to Connecting Nurses¹¹, an initiative for nurses supported by Sanofi, in partnership with nurses organizations, to provide a forum for nurses from around the world to share their ideas, advice and innovations and enhance nursing's leading role in advancing healthcare. As women remain the forgotten group in many countries, together, Connecting Nurses and WeTelemed have decided to join their forces and create the WeObservatory¹² an innovative Digital Inclusion Platform dedicated to women's global health challenges, hosted at the Foundation Millennia2025¹³. The

⁴ Dr Line Kleinebrel, Dr Arletty Pinel, Dr Mateja de Leoni Stanonik, Mrs Patty Schweickert

⁵ http://www.millennia2015.org/Community_Registration

⁶ <http://www.millennia2015.org/WeTelemed>

⁷ www.genosglobal.com

⁸ http://www.millennia2015.org/Mujeres_ICTs_Panama

⁹ <http://www.millennia2015.org/GHB2012>

¹⁰ <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NZ6YXRC>

¹¹ <http://www.connecting-nurses.com/web/>

¹² <http://www.millennia2015.org/WeObservatory>

¹³ http://www.millennia2015.org/millennia2025_foundation

formal launch has happened on 10 April 2013 at the Special Session on Women and eHealth at Med-e-Tel, Luxembourg¹⁴.

The overall objective of the WeObservatory is to serve as a unique Resource Center on Telemedicine for nurses, to promote women empowerment through the access and use of advanced technologies combined with innovative integrated collaborative leadership programs.

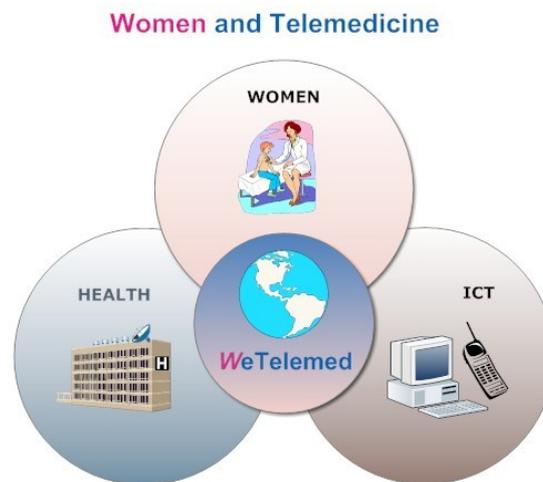
- **WeTelemed at International Conferences**

Since its launch, WeTelemed has been presented in six events, particularly at the Millennium2015 International Conference, at the UNESCO, Paris, 3 December 2012¹⁵.

Every conference constitutes the opportunity to expand the network, include new members and enrich the collective work. In 2013 and 2014, WeTelemed will be at the OCAPROCE NGO's Forum in Geneva, 2 – 3 September 2013, Women's Leader Forum in New York, 25 September 2013 in partnership with Advanced Development for Africa Foundation¹⁶, and the WeObservatory Round Table, Geneva, May 2014.

4. Conclusion

In 12 months, WeTelemed has grown much faster than expected and has generated an incredible interest among women's communities and in the international sphere. The founders, the coordinator and Millennium2015 team have contributed to generate promising collaborations and partnerships. Two publications are in preparation with the Fundación Telefónica and the International Journal of Bioethics, to be published by end 2013. Additional support is expected in the coming months and innovative online telemedicine applications will be made available at the WeObservatory to address multilingualism.



The Global Network of Women in Telemedicine

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¹⁴ http://www.medetel.eu/index.php?rub=educational_program&page=wehealth_session_2013

¹⁵ http://www.millennia2015.org/2012_UNESCO_Photos

¹⁶ www.adaorganization.org