

The German government in the network of digital health transformers

Whose interests are served by our health policy?

by Norbert Häring,* Germany



Norbert Häring.
(Picture ma)

(CH-S) How far does the influence of pharmaceutical/IT companies extend into political decisions in the health-care sector? Norbert Häring traces clandestine conditions in Germany. Is the health of citizens being subordinated to the business of an international health industry? Can conclusions be drawn for Switzerland? The dispute between two IT companies over the equipping of Swiss hospitals with IT software worth hundreds of millions lets us prick our ears and take notice. Are our health insurance contributions and tax millions being spent sensibly, and who is profiting from them? It is worth taking a look at Germany.

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On 22 September, the UN General Assembly adopted a "Global Digital Pact" as an appendix to the UN Pact for the Future, a pact to promote the power and profits of the large digital corporations by forcing all citizens of the world to connect to and use the infrastructure they control. If you follow a thread in the German government's non-response to the question of the pact's main driving forces, you come across a close network of agenda setters for the forced digitalisation of the healthcare system, in which the last and the current government have allowed themselves to be interwoven.

As reported, the text of the "Global Digital Compact" is formulated so much in the interest of the large digital corporations that they themselves could hardly have done better.

The "Report of the Federal Government on Cooperation with the United Nations" for the years

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2022 and 2023 states that it "supported the process of creating a Global Digital Compact through financing and support" and that the involvement of "stakeholders from science, civil society and economy" played a "prominent role" in this regard from the perspective of the German government.¹ Therefore, the member of the Bundestag and AfD spokesperson on digital policy, *Eugen Schmidt*, asked the Foreign Office, which was responsible, which actors from science, civil society and the economy were involved and which criteria were used to select these actors. He asked to name the most important of these actors from the perspective of the German government.²

The answering State Secretary *Susanne Baumann* simply acts as if the very specific questions had not been asked and indulges in general.

"Together with the governments of Kenya, India and Mexico and in cooperation with the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Technology, *Amandeep Singh Gill*, the German government has organised three regional multi-stakeholder consultations with the private sector, academia and civil society in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The regional consultations were organised by GIZ as a project partner. The participants were selected according to their thematic relevance and potential function as multipliers. The results were documented in three regional reports and submitted to the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Technology and can be viewed on his office's website."

State Secretary Baumann, who disregards her duty to inform parliament here, recently gained inglorious fame for her alleged decisive role in enforcing an overly lax approach to issuing visas to Afghans.³ The response contains links to reports from the three regional consultations in Africa,⁴ the Americas⁵ and Asia.⁶ However, these reports also do not contain lists of the organisations involved. GIZ is the German government-owned development agency.

When the German government refuses to name the participants in a process of creating a

global pact, which it helped to shape, to representatives of the people, and when the content of the pact itself fuels suspicions that it is the result of corporate lobbying efforts, then one can almost consider these suspicions to be confirmed. However, let us follow a thread that we find in the non-response from the Federal Foreign Office:

Amandeep Singh Gill, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Technology, was, before taking up his post with *António Guterres* in 2023, founding director of the *International Digital Health and AI Research Collaborative* (I-DAIR) in Geneva, at the headquarters of the *World Health Organisation* (WHO). In the meantime, I-DAIR has been renamed "Health AI" and has become an independent foundation.⁷ Gill's foundation, which promotes the digitalisation of healthcare and the use of artificial intelligence, was financed by the WHO, the extremely wealthy pharmaceutical "Wellcome Trust" and the "Swiss digitalisation promotion foundation Botnar".⁸ Gill was previously a high-ranking Indian diplomat in the field of arms control,⁹ an earlier area of work that he shares with *Susanne Baumann*.

Regarding the founding of the organisation headed by Gill, it was stated:¹⁰

"I-DAIR draws inspiration from the recommendations of the *High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation of the United Nations Secretary-General* (HLPDC), which, under the co-chairmanship of *Melinda Gates* and *Jack Ma*, has developed new models of collaboration to use data and digital technology for the common good and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)".

Melinda Gates was still the wife of *Microsoft* founder *Bill Gates* at the time and is co-chair of the "*Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation*", which is extremely rich in terms of money and influence. *Jack Ma* is the former head of the Chinese internet conglomerate *Alibaba*.

I-DAIR/Health AI works closely with the *London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine* (LSHTM), which is generously supported by the "Wellcome Trust" and the "Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation". Its director, *Peter Piot*, was a coronavirus advisor to EU Commission President *Ursula von der Leyen*, who is in trouble with parliament and the public prosecutor's office because she negotiated contracts with the US pharmaceutical company *Pfizer* via text message for absurdly inflated quantities of coronavirus vaccines at high prices and on ex-

tremely favourable terms for the company and refuses to hand over these text messages. Piot's wife, *Heidi Larson*, heads the Department of Epidemiology at LSHTM.¹¹

Jeremy Farrar, Director of the "Wellcome Trust", which sponsors the I-DAIR/Health AI and LSHTM founded by Gill, was appointed Chief Scientist of the UN organisation WHO, the co-sponsor of I-DAIR, in December 2022.

Heidi Larson also heads the *Global Listening Project*, "generously funded by the *MacArthur Foundation*, the *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation* and the pharmaceutical companies *GlaxoSmithKline* and *Moderna*".¹² Depending on the intended audience, the aim is either to find out how to restore trust in governments, technology and science, or "*how the US can best lead health security efforts abroad*".

The project was prompted by a report by the *World Economic Forum* on the severely impaired social cohesion.

In 2010, *Larson* founded the *Vaccine Confidence Project*, funded by pharmaceutical companies, the *World Economic Forum*, the *Gates Foundation*, *Meta*, *YouTube* and the communications consultancy *Edelman Trust Institute*, among others, to promote vaccination readiness. She maintains close contacts with the *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (CSIS) in Washington, which she previously worked for and was awarded the title of "Best Think Tank for Defence and National Security".

Johanna Hanefeld, Piot's former deputy head of LSHTM with excellent connections to the "Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation",¹³ now heads the *RKI Centre for International Health Protection*. She is associated with *Larson's* "Global Listening Project" as a member of the International Advisory Board, together with *Charbel El Bcheraoui*, who is one management level below her at the *RKI Centre*. The "Robert Koch Institute" (RKI) is an authority within the remit of the Federal Ministry of Health.

Under Gill, I-DAIR has also concluded a cooperation agreement with the "Global Health Hub Germany", which was founded in 2019.¹⁴ This *Global Health Hub*, which is funded by the Federal Ministry of Health, is intended to "*bring together the various global health actors and sectors in an independent network*".¹⁵ The hub is likely to work about as "*independently*" of the ministry as the RKI, of which Health Minister *Lauterbach* has also falsely claimed.

In line with the great interest of many sectors in making money from digitalised health, the 2000 members include representatives from the financial sector, the IT industry and many more in addition to the healthcare sector. Representatives of companies and authorities from the fields of biosecurity (biological warfare) and defence are also involved.

The “Global Health Hub Germany” unabashedly uses the *World Economic Forum’s* slogan of the “Fourth Industrial Revolution”, which has already come upon us and which it wants to shape in cooperation with I-DAIR in a way that promotes humanity.¹⁶ The *World Economic Forum*, which represents the interests of the richest and most powerful global corporations, including first and foremost the US IT companies, is a particularly active promoter of digital health and the use of artificial intelligence. It counts Foreign Minister *Annalena Baerbock* among its *Young Global Leaders*, as well as the last Health Minister *Jens Spahn*. *Angela Merkel*, who was still Chancellor in 2021 when the cooperation was signed, also received this questionable honour in her younger ministerial years. Back then, the title and the associated globalist leadership training programme were still called *Global Leaders of Tomorrow*.

Summary

The *UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Technology*, whom the German government assisted with the *Global Digital Pact*, comes from a public-private network to promote the digitalisation of the healthcare sector, in which the German government is also involved. His organisation to promote the digitalisation of healthcare, I-DAIR/Health AI, is funded by the WHO and the “Wellcome Trust” pharmaceutical foundation and is committed to helping implement what the wife of the Microsoft founder and the UN’s most powerful Chinese IT entrepreneur have proposed in terms of digitalisation and the free international flow of data. “Health AI” is cooperating with a London university institute, LSHTM, which is heavily funded by the “Wellcome Trust” and the foundation of Microsoft founder Bill Gates, and whose top staff have close ties to the *World Economic Forum*, which is massively promoting the digitalisation of the healthcare system on behalf of the pharmaceutical and IT companies it represents. The German government has cooperation agreements or maintains

close relationships with I-DAIR/Health AI as well as with LSHTM and the *World Economic Forum*.

Conclusion

If you understand this network, which is certainly much tighter and larger than presented here, it is no longer surprising that the federal government is pushing ahead with the digitalisation of the healthcare system with such tenacity – against the will of doctors, pharmacists and patients – and is acting as a stooge for the promotion of the interests of the pharmaceutical and IT industries through a *Global Digital Pact*. Party affiliation is irrelevant. A CDU Health Minister and *Young Global Leader* Spahn from the CDU and a Minister *Lauterbach* from the SPD have both pushed for the forced digitalisation of healthcare.

Since the corporations and foundations that spin the threads in this web are primarily from the USA and act in harmony with the interests of the US government, it should come as no surprise that a foreign minister with a strong transatlantic orientation, who is also the *Young Global Leader* of the *World Economic Forum*, is working diligently to pursue this agenda of forced digitalisation.

In general, it can be assumed that Washington’s influence on the German political and media landscape is great enough that politicians with career ambitions can hardly afford to turn down emphatic requests for support from Washington. And for US governments, there are few things more important than keeping up with China and its digital corporations in the race for supremacy in a digital future. To do this, the major US corporations need as many fields of activity and data as possible as quickly as possible in and with which they can work, further develop their software and establish a dominant position. As the USA has less than a quarter of China’s population and the data protection rights of its own citizens also hinder data utilisation, it is much more dependent than China on the international playing field and the international flow of data.

Addendum (25 September) on the German government and the World Economic Forum

In the context of the links between the *World Economic Forum* and the German government, I neglected to mention the “Centre for Global Government Technology” recently established by the

latter in Berlin with the support of the Green Minister for Economic Affairs. I have now made up for this.¹⁷

Source: <https://norberthaering.de/news/bmg-who-digitalpakt/>, 25 September 2024

(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")

¹ <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/122/2012210.pdf>

² <https://afdbundestag.de/eugen-schmidt-regierung-bleibt-antworten-zu-auswahlverfahren-und-beteiligten-akteuren-des-global-digital-compact-schuldig/>

³ <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/plus252999892/Visa-Affaere-Neue-Details-belasten-Analena-Baerbocks-Staatssekretaerin.html>

⁴ https://www.un.org/techenvoy/sites/www.un.org.techenvoy/files/GDC-ConsultationAfrica_Report.pdf

⁵ https://www.un.org/techenvoy/sites/www.un.org.techenvoy/files/GDC-submission_Consultations-Americas.pdf

⁶ https://www.un.org/techenvoy/sites/www.un.org.techenvoy/files/GDC-submission_Asia-Consultations.pdf

⁷ <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61533ca0092096784373291a/t/>

[65b7756f63af444745cfa374/1706521973007/I-DAIR+2023+Annual+Report.pdf](https://www.norberthaering.de/65b7756f63af444745cfa374/1706521973007/I-DAIR+2023+Annual+Report.pdf)

⁸ <https://www.healthai.agency/funders-partners>

⁹ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/senior-indian-diplomat-amandeep-singh-gill-appointed-un-envoy-on-technology/article65517080.ece>
<https://www.fondationbotnar.org/international-digital-health-artificial-intelligence-research-collaborative-launch/>

¹⁰ <https://www.un.org/en/sg-digital-cooperation-panel>

¹¹ <https://norberthaering.de/news/globallistening-project/>

¹² <https://global-listening.org/about/>

¹³ <https://norberthaering.de/new/johanna-hanefeld/>

¹⁴ <https://www.globalhealthhub.de/en/news/detail/mit-glieder-stellen-sich-vor-i-dair-the-inclusive-path-to-trusted-ai-and-big-data-applications-in-digital-health>

¹⁵ <https://www.globalhealthhub.de/de/ueber-den-hub/idee>

¹⁶ <https://www.globalhealthhub.de/en/news/detail/mitglieder-stellen-sich-vor-i-dair-the-inclusive-path-to-trusted-ai-and-big-data-applications-in-digital-health>

¹⁷ <https://norberthaering.de/macht-kontrolle/ggtc/>