



Young Leaders Programme

Responses to questions on equity, innovation and leadership

Anna Dare (Canada / New Zealand)

Complex General Surgical Oncology Fellow, University of Toronto

Leadership:

- **What does good leadership mean to you?**

The ability to bring people together in pursuit of common goals, and to inspire and support them to turn ideas into action. I think recognizing and drawing on the knowledge, perspectives, experiences, and collective wisdom of the group is key to effective leadership: if you understand where people are coming from it's a lot easier to chart a path forward together.

- **What has the COVID-19 crisis taught us with regards to the key leadership traits needed to lead in the future?**

It has highlighted that agility and humanity are needed more than ever in leaders at all levels. Good leaders during COVID-19 have had the ability to pivot quickly (in thought and action) in response to changing information and situations, while always keeping people at the heart of their decision-making especially those with the least power/voice who are often the most affected not only by a crisis but by the leadership responses to one.

Equity:

- **What does 'equity in health' mean to you?**

Unfair, unjust, avoidable differences in health and health outcomes exist within countries, and between countries, usually as a result of different levels of advantage – COVID-19 has been a stark example of this. Working towards equity in health is about working together to eliminate these differences, recognizing that different approaches, resources, systems and structures may be needed (or may need to be removed) to get equitable health outcomes. For me, it is also about recognizing that health is a product of broader, social, economic, political and environmental forces – we can't effectively address health inequities in isolation from these factors.

Arnaud Bayle (France)

Assistant Professor, Drug Development Department, Gustave Roussy Cancer Center

Leadership:

- **What has the COVID-19 crisis taught us with regards to the key leadership traits needed to lead in the future?**

The COVID-19 crisis has taught us that addressing health care challenges requires collaboration, information exchange, and sharing of experiences across countries in order to find synergistic solutions while taking into account the specificities and maturity levels of different health systems.

Equity:

- **How can innovation help close the equity gap in healthcare?**

Innovation has the power to overcome economic and financial barriers by allowing a more rapid and global diffusion of therapeutic and diagnostic advances throughout the world. For instance, digital

innovations enable easier technology transfer and reduce information access times and barriers to entry.

Young Leaders Programme:

- What are you hoping to achieve through the “Young Leaders Programme”?

Thanks to UICC Young Leaders Programme I hope that I will be able to broaden my scope of vision and develop my network in order to collaborate on projects in essential medicines and universal health coverage (UHC).

Asma Hatoqai (Jordan)

Tobacco Control Specialist, Cancer Control Office, King Hussein Cancer Center

Leadership:

- What does good leadership mean to you?

Good leadership is leadership that is driven by passion and empathy, communicates a clear vision, and encourages creativity and innovation. I think, put simply, my idea of good leadership is one that seeks to create more leaders through mentorship.

- What has the COVID-19 crisis taught us with regards to the key leadership traits needed to lead in the future?

I think this crisis has highlighted how important it is, in times of uncertainty and controversy, for leaders to remain resilient, positive, empathetic, and perhaps most importantly, adaptable to new norms, in facing and leading the future.

Innovation:

- What does innovation mean to you?

Innovation to me is about looking at an old or on-going issue [problem] from different angles and with fresh perspective to find better and more sustainable solutions that can lead to real improvements in society.

- How can innovation help advance cancer care in your context?

We have witnessed tremendous leaps in cancer diagnostic and treatment innovations in the recent years. However, the world is nowhere near seeing these innovations become sustainable global standards of care. For this reason, the more cost-effective aim of cancer prevention should be a continuing target of all health practitioners and systems. Because cancer prevention through behavioral and environmental change is complex and challenging to achieve, we need to seek innovative strategies in this area.

Equity:

- What does ‘equity in health’ mean to you?

Equity in health to me means that we all have similar opportunities to receive constructive health information; and to have similar assistance to process this information and make sound decisions based on it. It is the availability of reasonable solutions to health problems, solutions that are possible for communities regardless of their location and their socioeconomic challenges.

- How can innovation help close the equity gap in healthcare?

With the recent Covid-19 crisis, the world realizes now more than ever, the importance of investing in health and disease prevention, and the urgency of addressing avoidable health inequalities on all levels. The health and economic effects of the pandemic impacted the whole world; however, the worst effects have been faced by the poorest and most vulnerable communities and groups. Health inequity has always been a challenging and a complex public health problem, and with the damage the crisis has already done to various sectors, tackling this issue urgently needs innovative practical ideas and approaches.

Young Leaders Programme:

- What are you hoping to achieve through the “Young Leaders Programme”?

I believe that the UICC Young Leaders in Global Cancer Control Program will be able to provide me with the opportunity to utilize what I know and also advance my knowledge and skills in cancer control, in the hopes that I can lead initiatives that can contribute to improving lives. This program will undoubtedly expose me to a wealth of experiences, knowledge, and skills; and help me further build a wider network of healthcare professionals that can serve to motivate future leaders of change.

- **What can you offer your fellow “Young Leaders”?**

I am a firm believer of learning through collaborations, vicarious experiences, and dialogue with others in the field, and this is what the UICC Young Leaders Program offers. I am excited and have a lot to share about my experiences in professional training and education to address one of the most important preventable health behaviors globally (tobacco use); and am also eager to hear about how others have worked, and brainstorm about ways to grow our efforts.

Chemtai Mungo (USA / Kenya)

Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of North Carolina

Leadership:

- **What does good leadership mean to you?**

Good leadership is equitable, it centres and is most responsive to the most marginalized members of the society. A good leader listens, and empowers those she/he leads, and makes them feel part of the decision-making process and that their ideas are being considered in shaping policy.

Innovation:

- **How can innovation help advance cancer care in your context.**

Within the field of cervical cancer prevention in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), a recent innovation that will significantly advance prevention efforts is the use of self-collection of human papillomavirus (HPV) samples for screening. Instead of women relying on a pelvic exam by a trained provider – who are much fewer than are necessary to serve the population in these settings, women can be reached in markets and their homes, and with a bit of privacy, they can easily be instructed to collect their own sample for cervical cancer screening. The use of self-collected HPV tests has now been validated in multiple studies and significantly increases access to screening. Widespread use of HPV self-sampling will be crucial to the WHO's 90/70/90 global cervical cancer elimination effort. We have the science; it is urgent to make these screening tests affordable and accessible to women worldwide.

Equity

- **How can innovation help close the equity gap in healthcare?**

Within the field of global cervical cancer prevention, a recent innovation that can help to close the equity gap is the use of machine learning to bring highly accurate precancer diagnosis from cervical images taken at the point of care - circumventing the need for pathology diagnosis, which is not available in rural areas. The proof of concept was shown in a [recent NIH-led study](#), where researchers were able to train an automated algorithm to analyze digital images of the cervix and provide a highly accurate diagnosis of cervical precancer – more accurately than a human expert. This research is [currently being validated](#) with cervical images from around the world. This work has significant implications, as lack of access to pathology diagnosis is a barrier in current prevention efforts. If an algorithm embedded within a smartphone can provide a highly accurate precancer diagnosis from an image taken by a nurse in a rural health center, women can receive same-day treatment of precancer, preventing progression to cervical cancer, which carries high mortality in these settings.

Young Leaders Programme:

- **What are you hoping to achieve through the “Young Leaders Programme”?**

I plan to use the Young Leaders platform to contribute to the current global efforts to eliminate cervical cancer – a highly preventable disease – which disproportionately affects women in low-resource settings. It is unacceptable that 9 out of 10 women who die from cervical cancer live in certain parts of the world – where one lives should not determine whether they live or die. Significant effort has been made by healthcare workers, researchers, and policy experts over the last few decades to innovative tools to address this disparity. With the use of HPV self-sampling, the potential of artificial intelligence-based diagnosis, coupled with recent validation of hand-held, portable precancer treatment, there is no reason why a woman should die from lack of access to cervical cancer screening. I am honored and privileged to join others in this fight for equity in global women's health.

Diego Gimenez Velilla (Paraguay)

Head of the Radiation Oncology Department, Nacional Cancer Institute

Leadership:

- **What does good leadership mean to you?**
Good leadership involves being wide open, leaving disputes and differences behind, pursuing a greater goal

Innovation:

- **What does innovation mean to you?**
It means doing things in a new way, gathering your own and other people experiences to improve the way things are done, in order to be everyday better in what we do.

Equity

- **What does 'equity in health' mean to you?**
All citizens are equal, and these takes a special importance for us caregivers working in public health systems, and even more in the context of limited resources countries.
- **How can innovation help close the equity gap in healthcare?**
Innovation can be the key to find solutions to chronic problems that haven't found their way yet.

Enrique Soto Pérez de Celis (Mexico)

Researcher in Medical Sciences, Department of Geriatrics, Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Médicas y Nutrición Salvador Zubirán

Leadership:

- **What does good leadership mean to you?**
To me, good leadership in cancer care is directly linked to the ability to create, foster, and promote multidisciplinary teams that are able to work together to achieve our common goal of improving the care of patients with cancer globally, regardless of where they live.
- **What has the COVID-19 crisis taught us with regards to the key leadership traits needed to lead in the future?**
The COVID-19 pandemic has taught me that in order to be a good leader one has to be open to change. This includes being able to change your mind about what you initially thought was right, and to adapt to changing environments were new evidence is generated by the second.

Innovation:

- **What does innovation mean to you?**
To me innovation means disrupting the way in which things are usually done. This does not necessarily mean inventing new things or using expensive technology, just doing things differently and reach good outcomes in a more efficient and effective manner.
- **How can innovation help advance cancer care in your context?**
Innovation is absolutely necessary to improve all levels of cancer care. We don't only need to innovate in the creation of new drugs and devices, but also in the way we think about cancer care provision, starting from primary care medicine and all the way up to the most sophisticated therapies.

Equity:

- **What does 'equity in health' mean to you?**
Equity in health means that all patients get access to the highest clinical care regardless of where they live or of who they are.
- **How can innovation help close the equity gap in healthcare?**
Innovation in cancer care delivery can close the gap by improving access to care for patients worldwide. In many parts of the world patients are not even able to access the most basic cancer care services, and we need to create disruptive and innovative models to make sure that this does not happen anymore in the future.

Young Leaders Programme:

- **What are you hoping to achieve through the “Young Leaders Programme”?**

I hope to learn everything I can about cancer policy. As a clinical researcher in geriatric oncology, I have understood that even though we can come up with good solutions to common problems, translating those solutions into something that is accessible for everyone is impossible if it is not accompanied by micro and macro policy changes and innovations. During this year, I hope to acquire the necessary skills to translate my research into policies aimed at improving the care of older patients with cancer worldwide.

- **What can you offer your fellow “Young Leaders”?**

First of all I think I can offer a very good time with a lot of laughs! I can also offer my experience in clinical research, as well as the perspective of a cancer care researcher and physician who works in a low and middle-income country. I believe we face a series of barriers that are not usual in other parts of the world, and this perspective will be important for my fellow Young Leaders.

Freddy Houehanou Rodrigue Gnanon (Benin)

Assistant Professor of Surgical Oncology, School of Medicine, University of Abomey-Calavi

Leadership:

- **What does good leadership mean to you?**

A good leader must be able to get all the members of their team function synergistically in order to achieve defined goals.

- **What has the COVID-19 crisis taught us with regards to the key leadership traits needed to lead in the future?**

The covid 19 crisis taught us more than ever that humanity must come together to unit forces in front of a pandemic. It also taught us that solidarity and equity are two critical values required to maintain global health, and that no country taken in isolation can pretend to gain the fight against a disease.

Innovation:

- **What does innovation mean to you?**

For me, innovation is the development of new processes, strategies, techniques, molecules to help solve a social problem. Innovation is the driving force behind the evolution of human race.

- **How can innovation help advance cancer care in your context?**

Innovation must bring cancer care and expertise to the most disadvantaged populations, especially those in rural areas. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the use of drones enables the delivery of anti-cancer drugs to the most isolated populations; similarly, telemedicine provides access to specialized medical expertise to populations in disadvantaged areas that would not otherwise be unreachable.

Equity

- **What does ‘equity in health’ mean to you?**

For me, health equity means access to information, diagnosis and treatment for all populations around the world regardless of their geographical area, ethnic origin, religion and socio-economic status. These diagnostic and therapeutic facilities must be absolutely in line with international standards while being socially appropriate and culturally acceptable to them.

- **How can innovation help close the equity gap in healthcare?**

Innovation can close the health equity gap by enabling the most vulnerable and isolated populations to access appropriate health care at an acceptable cost. For example, the development of the oral route in chemotherapy and targeted therapy allows patients living in medical deserts to have access to care. Similarly, the miniaturization and portability of certain technologies (mammography, ultrasound) is making it possible to reduce the gap in care between highly medicalized regions and medical deserts, particularly in the poorest countries.

Young Leaders Programme:

- **What are you hoping to achieve through the “Young Leaders Programme”?**

The UICC Young Leaders Programme will provide me with the knowledge and skills necessary to play a key role in the fight against cancer in the sub-Saharan Africa region. I would also be interested in meeting with cancer control specialists and researchers specialized in the field of oncology from all over the world to exchange experiences during the Programme.

- **What can you offer your fellow “Young Leaders”?**

This 2021-2022 cohort is made up of colleagues from different areas of cancer control, and from all regions of the world. I will be able to share my experiences and participate with them in building a global cancer leadership network.

Melissa Lim Siaw Han (Malaysia)

Committee Member, Society for Cancer Advocacy and Awareness Kuching

Leadership:

- **What does good leadership mean to you?**

Good leadership consists of the ability to teach and learn from others. The most important essence of being a good leader is to be humble and to acknowledge and accept one's shortcomings. Legendary leaderships are earned, not bought. A good leader should be able to earn the confidence and trust from others without coercion.

- **What has the COVID-19 crisis taught us with regards to the key leadership traits needed to lead in the future?**

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us many lessons and one of it is to remain patient and steadfast in our endeavours in times of great crisis. We have seen different world leaders reacting to COVID-19 crisis in various ways – some with great success and some with great resistance, but all of them striving their best in their own capacities. The key to leadership traits in times of a novel crisis is flexibility and a sense of open mindedness. The ability to provide a sense of security and stability to the public while remaining grounded in the face of adversity is vital.

Innovation:

- **What does innovation mean to you?**

Innovation is to improve or replace a current process or service through the application of new processes, introducing new techniques or policies, or establishing novel ideas. It increases our chances to react to changes in a positive way and discover new opportunities for the betterment of the future.

- **How can innovation help advance cancer care in your context?**

Cancer care are always evolving and improving, from the conventional chemotherapy to targeted therapy and now to an even more novel technology called Theranostics – the fusion of Therapy and Diagnosis. For this reason, the question of who gets which treatment are a major concern and the innovation of health care policies are vital to help advance cancer care in future. The introduction and implementation of a more comprehensive health insurance plan coupled with financial support from government-based healthcare is key.

Equity

- **What does ‘equity in health’ mean to you?**

‘Equity in health’ means that everyone regardless of gender, religion, social or political standing, sexuality, professional status and income, education and background has access to adequate healthcare and treatment without discrimination. It also means that everyone, including those residing in rural areas with or without access to proper education should be able have access to adequate health awareness and available therapies, especially cancer prevention.

- **How can innovation help close the equity gap in healthcare?**

Through the implementation of new health care policies supported not only by local governments but also by local Non-Governmental Organizations and representatives from local communities, the equity gap in healthcare can be bridged.

Young Leaders Programme:

- **What are you hoping to achieve through the “Young Leaders Programme”?**
I hope to learn and discuss tangible cancer care and cancer control plans with fellow “Young Leaders” for future endeavours. By discussing and sharing our mutual goals of cancer control, I hope I can apply this new-found knowledge in my local community through cancer awareness and advocacy programmes.
- **What can you offer your fellow “Young Leaders”?**
I have organised and conducted several breast cancer awareness programmes in the rural regions of Borneo since 2012. This effort was supported by both the Ministry of Health Malaysia and a local NGO called Sarawak Breast Cancer Support Group. Logistical predicaments and lack of awareness among rural folks posed the most challenges during these endeavours and I can share and provide details of our efforts to fellow interested “Young Leaders”. I have also been a committee member of the Society for Cancer Advocacy and Awareness Kuching since 2017 and was involved in a few media related videos to disseminate cancer awareness.

Tlotlo Ralefala (Botswana)

Head of Medical Oncology, Princess Marina Hospital

Leadership

- **What does good leadership mean to you?**
Leadership is a process where an individual or organization can influence others to achieve a common goal. Good leadership is not just the ability to clearly articulate a vision and building a great team to accomplish set goals, it is born from love for those you serve. It is compassion for those who can't speak for themselves but need help, it is being courageous to face any situation confronting us, it is not giving up; resting/regrouping, yes, but never giving up. But more than all these, it is being teachable and always striving to gain more knowledge not just to improve self, but also others.

Innovation

- **What does innovation mean to you?**
Innovation is what we create or reimagine to solve a specific problem in a new and efficient way. As a practicing clinician, it is the link to improving patient care in my setting in collaboration with various stakeholders. It ranges from use of various technologies to improve patient care along the continuum of cancer care. It means the ability to have tissue diagnosis on common malignancies in a single setting compared to long wait for diagnosis, being able to use smartphone applications to store patient data, as well as follow them up, automatically improving care even for patients who may have lost their paper records. More than anything, it is not just the creation of the product or change in processes, it is the ability to collaboratively develop any intervention in a culturally acceptable manner leading to the fastest and easiest (hopefully) way of encouraging uptake of any intervention in any given setting.

Young Leaders Programme

- **What are you hoping to achieve through the “Young Leaders Programme”?**
Access to quality cancer care is critical for good patient outcomes in any setting. Although this may not be achieved overnight, it is still something to strive for to improve patient care both in our short- and long-term plans. As a clinician, it always gives me great pleasure to see patients receive resource specific evidence-based interventions. Due to limited human resources in LMIC, patients may be managed by non-oncology specialist personnel. Through this programme, I hope to be mentored on various ways to sustainably upskill team members to be able to offer optimal care to any patient that walks through our door

Venus Dadirai Mushininga (Zimbabwe)

Program Manager, Department of Non Communicable Diseases, Ministry of Health and Child Care

Leadership:

- **What does good leadership mean to you?**
To me good leadership means being able to be part of a team. Having the ability to recognise and appreciate the importance, strengths, and weaknesses of each team member (including yourself) and

allowing them to play their role while encouraging them to improve in the areas they show inadequacy. Being a leader means you do not demand respect-you earn it. You will know you are a good leader when solutions to a problem begin to come from the person least expected to provide them.

- **What has the COVID-19 crisis taught us with regards to the key leadership traits needed to lead in the future?**

COVID 19 has taught me that a good leader needs to be all inclusive and dynamic.

Innovation:

- **What does innovation mean to you?**

Innovation means finding new ways to solve complex problems. It may involve adopting solutions that have been applied elsewhere but modifying them to have greater impact in the environment in which they are applied. A measure of the success of an innovation is its ability to provide highest impact at the least cost possible without compromising quality.

- **How can innovation help advance cancer care in your context.**

In Zimbabwe, innovations such as the use of digital platforms can assist in decentralisation of cancer care, enable access to global cancer expertise and strengthen data management to inform set up of a National Cancer Control Program that allows for Universal Health Coverage.

Equity

- **What does 'equity in health' mean to you?**

Equity means creating an environment in which everyone has access to the level of health care services they need regardless of their status in society or other determinants of health. Equity means fair distribution of resources to ensure everyone has what they need when they need them and the opportunity to access services.

- **How can innovation help close the equity gap in healthcare?**

Innovation gives opportunity to access health services regardless of location through digital innovations that can enable telemedicine and drone technology. Innovations in financing models for health can enable access to quality health services regardless of the socioeconomical status. Innovation is a key driver of Universal Health Coverage.