AI4PEP (Africa) Bulletin – November 14th to November 29th, 2023

Welcome to the AI4PEP bi-weekly News Brief.
This week we bring you some exciting updates from Team MENA: **Brazil, Dominican Republic, and Peru**.

Congratulations to Prof. Cesar Ugarte Gil who has just been appointed to a new position (an Associate Professor) at the University of Texas, Medical Branch.

- His appointment requires him to relocate to the United States. This has necessitated some changes within the Peruvian team. It has since been announced that Dr. Gabriel Carrasco will be stepping up as the new Principal Investigator. The AI4PEP Executive Director Dr. Jude Kong has welcomed the transition with warm hands and open-mindedness. He has reported that Dr. Ugarte's move to the USA will most likely broaden the network of AI4PEP broadly and possibly make some brand-new collaborations possible. A meeting between Dr. Kong and the team has been arranged to help manage the transition and provide Dr. Carrasco with all the support he will need in his new position. Carrasco is not new to the space as he was part of the project since conception, under the leadership of Dr. Ugarte.

César Ugarte, MD, MSc, PhD

Gabriel Carrasco, MSc, PhD

Collaboration

- A great amount of time was dedicated towards brainstorming for future collaborations. Prof. Kong introduced Dr. Enrique Cortez, a fellow colleague within the Global Health Network that he had just connected with at the recent conference in Nairobi. Dr. Cortez explained that he worked for Tec de Monterrey University where he was charged with the responsibility of coordinating AI Research and Projects/ Community Engagement. Dr. Cortez brought a commercial lens into the academia and had experience working with the Inter-American
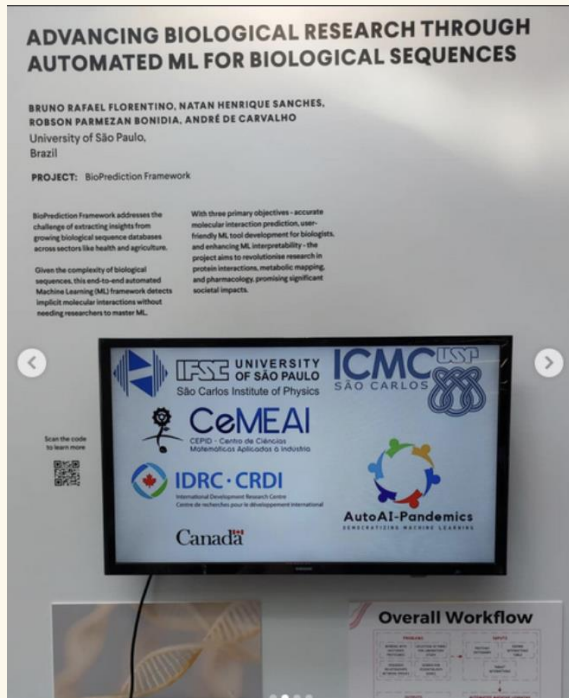
Development Bank and CAF. It was explained that the partnership would also include another colleague, Dr. Rubinstein Adolf who happened to be the former Minister of Health in Argentina. The proposed collaboration was meant to position the network strategically, maximizing on the diverse skill sets of the group and tapping into available resources in the region to support the work of the new consortium. It was agreed that a follow-up meeting would be arranged to agree on the strategic priorities.

Brazil

- Team Brazil reported that they heard back from the Grands Challenge after their submission *"Integrated Epidemiological Surveillance: Massive Classification of Medical Records, Anomaly Monitoring and Engagement with Frontline Services visa AI, Promoting a Qualitative Revolution in Public Health."*

- The team reported that their student team member, Bruno, was representing the team at the COP28 having been selected among the most transformative research initiatives globally under the theme: Prototypes for Humanity.

- Prof. Andre was also reported to be traveling to CO28 and was also gracing the session on Prototypes for Humanity.

- **Publication:** *"Democratizing Artificial Intelligence for Pandemic Preparedness and Global Governance in Latin American and Caribbean Countries"* Robson reported that the article was currently being shared with other journals after being successfully reviewed.

Dominican Republic

- **Prof. Colome reported that they had won another research award alongside Drs. The title of the award was "Determinants** *of Childhood Immunization Status: Addressing the Equity Gap in the Dominican Republic-2019."*
- The team reportedly sent an agreement/ contract to the UASD's home institution and were currently awaiting an. Internal review process. This may take until January 2024.

YORK UNIVERSITÉ UNIVERSITY

Drs. Colomé (PI) and Herrera, as well as Mariana and their team, have received a National Prize for Health Research in the Dominican Republic for the project titled: "Determinants of Childhood Immunization Status: Addressing the Equity Gap in the Dominican Republic- 2019"

Peru

- Patricia reported that she and Prof. Cesar Ugarte had participated as speakers for the National TB Conference in Peru.
- The team mentioned that they had not yet launched their project because of the pending IRB approval, but they were planning to have a virtual launch at least by December 2023.