9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

CO-LEADS

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17 ROOMS 2022 GLOBAL FLAGSHIP SUPPLEMENTAL ROOM DOCUMENT

DECEMBER 2022

The 17 Rooms initiative is co-hosted by the Center for Sustainable Development at The Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation. Within the 2022 global flagship process, each Room, one per SDG, was asked to identify actionable priorities that can be advanced by the end of 2023 to improve some component of 2030 outcomes for its respective Goal. Room 9, a working group for Sustainable Development Goal 9 on Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, focused on advancing new governance models for gender-related digital user data. This document summarizes the Room 9 proceedings.

Summary of Room 9 Proceedings

Astha Kapoor (Room 9 Co-lead) and Bapu Vaitla (Room 9 Co-lead)

The gender digital divide and the lack of control by women over their data have aggravated the already existing inequalities in our society. Room 9 believes the data cooperative model could help address the issue of gender inequality and give women the ability to obtain social and economic value from their data.

Room 9 has two main objectives:

1. *To build a road map for building a gender data cooperative with a use case:* Room 9 will support the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and one of its members, the Megha Cooperative in Gujarat, India, in creating a data cooperative.
2. *To develop a strategy to catalyze gender data cooperatives across the globe* by conducting a comprehensive literature review, writing a handbook on how to build a data cooperative in partnership with Open Data Manchester, and finally designing a support lab that provides personalized services to prospective gender data cooperatives.

In each Room 9 meeting, the co-leads provided updates on the progress of each sub-objective and asked Room 9 members to provide feedback.

The first meeting focused on conceptual foundations and the purpose of gender data cooperatives. The meeting included two brainstorming sessions. The first brainstorm covered general features of a gender data cooperative, focusing on four topics: governance, incentive to participate, data, and capacity. The exercise highlighted the importance of data literacy, building trust in the stewardship model, and the need to demonstrate clear value propositions to cooperative participants. The second brainstorm identified community consultation, co-design, and iteration/ experimentation as main themes. We also identified challenges in co-designing and noted the lack of literature on

cooperatives. These conversations pointed to concerns on whether the discussion was oriented only around the technical challenges of building a gender data cooperative or whether it should be broader.

Room 9's next meeting was centered around discussing whether focusing on existing women's cooperatives is an effective way to catalyze global data cooperatives for social good. This discussion had three break-out groups that discussed the blind spots in the underlying hypothesis and the essential characteristics that are needed of an existing women's cooperative to make data cooperatives work. We also discussed the design of an efficient global search strategy to identify women's cooperatives interested in developing a data cooperative. We explored the question of design support labs and the idea of building a discovery tool that cooperatives can use to self-assess to ensure there is interest in building a data cooperative.

Next, two of our Room members, Astha Kapoor and Shefali Girish, conducted a field visit to the Megha women's farmer cooperative, a member of the SEWA (Self Employed Women Association) Federation of Gujarat, India. The purpose of the visit was to understand the purpose and functioning of the cooperative, its structure, governance, data collection, and the challenges they face.

After visiting Megha, Kapoor and Girish presented their findings as well as their hypothesis on the value of adding a data layer to the existing cooperative structure to Room 9 members. They postulated that data cooperatives can manage pooling of data and enable farmers to raise money as a collective and enable access to capital; use the pooled data to provide better data-driven insights with the help of AI; help farmers get insights from each other in the community on best practices; and negotiate for better services based on farmers' needs while protecting their data rights.

The main hypothesis is that pooled data can be shared and deployed to show creditworthiness of the cooperative and get access to credit for women farmers. The Room 9 members agreed with this hypothesis but had several additional thoughts. The most prominent was the angle of climate change and positioning data cooperatives to leverage funding for sustainability. We discussed the opportunity to digitize the ways in which the cooperatives function. We also discussed how the handbook on building a data cooperative must look—a live document that will grow with the support lab and will benefit from the use cases going through it.

In our last meeting, we discussed climate-resilient and regenerative practices and the role of data cooperatives in promoting such practices and helping women's groups to finance the transition to climate resilient practices. We touched upon allowing communities to define themselves in a way that can reflect their reality and the need for ethical data sharing frameworks that enable knowledge exchange between farmers and third parties, especially when AI is involved. We also discussed the importance of policy to build capacity and empower farmers to advocate for themselves.

In terms of next steps, a subgroup of Room 9 members will be drafting the handbook on how to build a data cooperative. With our specific use case, Megha, we seek to test our hypothesis and to understand whether adopting the data cooperative model will be helpful to the farmers. We seek to finalize the framework of the Megha data cooperative, created through a community co-design process and addressing essential architecture and governance issues. To achieve this, we will make field visits to understand the willingness of farmers to share their data and, most importantly, involve them in the process of building this data cooperative layer.