

**hsr2020**  
SIXTH GLOBAL  
SYMPOSIUM ON  
HEALTH SYSTEMS  
RESEARCH

# EVALUATION OF THE SIXTH GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM ON HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH

Final report

February 2021

**Evaluation team:**

Glenn O'Neil & Patricia Goldschmid  
Owl RE, Switzerland



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sixth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR2020) was held exclusively online and brought together 2,350 actors involved in health systems and policy research and practice from more than 125 countries over three phases from November 2020 to March 2021. This evaluation focused on phase 1 and 2. The main purpose of this evaluation was to assess to what extent the HSR2020 symposium contributed to achieving the key objectives of Health Systems Global (HSG) that include:

- » Assure inclusiveness and connect diverse stakeholders (researchers, policy makers, program managers, advocates, community organizations, media representatives) from different geographic regions, country income groups and language backgrounds;
- » Facilitate equitable knowledge acquisition and dissemination around health policy and systems research;
- » Disseminate HSR methods including methods for knowledge translation;
- » Support capacity-building for the conduct, translation and utilization of health policy and systems research.

The research conducted for the evaluation included two online surveys (Phase 1: 778 responses—42% response rate; Phase 2: 209 delegates—26% response rate), four online discussion groups (12 delegates), observation and an analysis of secondary data.

## Findings

**Finding 1—Overall:** 92–93% of surveyed delegates felt that the HSR2020 event fully or partially met their expectations, a similar result to HSR2018. HSR2020 was seen as successful in providing content that was relevant for their work and supporting delegates in acquiring new knowledge but it was less successful in providing opportunities for networking. Overall satisfaction was higher for delegates from low- to middle-income countries (LMIC) compared to those from high-income countries (HIC).

**Finding 2—Promotion of inclusiveness and connectivity:** HSR2020 was a diverse symposium with a higher representation of LMICs than HICs compared to previous symposiums, both as delegates and presenters. While the benefits of providing knowledge increased

at HSR2020, the contribution of the symposium to building networks decreased reflecting the challenges of networking in the online format.

**Finding 3—Equitable knowledge acquisition and dissemination:** HSR2020 was successful in facilitating knowledge acquisition and dissemination around health policy and systems research. As seen for previous symposiums, it demonstrated greater acquisition from LMIC delegates than HIC delegates. Obstacles in knowledge acquisition identified during HSR2020 were mostly linked to the limitations of the online format, the format of the poster sessions and the time-zone differences.

**Finding 4—Dissemination of health systems research methods including knowledge translation:** 38% of HSR2020 session profiled research methods or knowledge translation. Delegates prioritized gaining new knowledge from research findings and learning of innovations and skills for research methods. HSR2020 did have a potential positive impact on changing the use of research methods and knowledge translation, most notably with delegates from LMIC countries.

**Finding 5—Capacity-building for health policy and systems research:** HSR2020 supported delegates in building their capacity to work on health policy and systems research. The symposium was strong in supporting delegates in facing challenges, as well as using research methods and disseminating research findings. As for previous symposiums, capacity building was markedly stronger for delegates from LMIC than HIC, notably in the use of health research and methods.

**Finding 6—Organization and communications of HSR2020:** HSR2020 was well organized in general, according to the feedback from delegates. The online platform was rated more positively in terms of the ability to find information but less so on the possibility to network, find and connect with peers. As for HSR2018, The conference App was seen as underperforming; social media provided visibility for HSR2020. The intention to attend the next symposium was very high at 96–97%, a considerable increase from 78% reported in the HSR2018 evaluation.

## Conclusions

Considering the exceptionally challenging environment created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the necessity to create an exclusively online event, HSR2020 did remarkably well in contributing to the key objectives of HSG and building on the work of HSR2018 and previous symposiums. Although HSR2020 could not provide the networking opportunities that an in-person symposiums could, it compensated by providing access to a more diverse audience, notably with more LMIC presenters and participants than previous symposiums. The evaluation found that learning opportunities with the online format were equal to previous symposiums and that delegates from LMIC benefited markedly more than those from HIC.

**Conclusion 1:** HSR2020 largely succeeded with its online format, notably providing access to diverse audiences and possibly health researchers who would not be able to attend an

in-person event, for example due to visa issues, their remote location, work commitments, financial limitations, etc. It is envisaged that future symposiums will be able to be held in person; at the same time, remote participation should be maintained given the benefits seen for some audiences. Combining in-person and remote participation (“blended approach”) is a relatively new event experience and good practices are only now starting to emerge, such as making sure physical venues are equipped to support remote participation, with full video and interactive conference services.

**Recommendation 1:** For future symposiums adopt a blended approach combining both online and in-person formats; ensure that physical venues are well equipped to support remote participation.

**Conclusion 2:** HSR2020 was not able to provide strong networking opportunities for delegates given its exclusively online format. In fairness to the symposium organisers and the platform, online networking for events is also a relatively new development and different approaches and tactics are being tested; such as networking online games, virtual environments and spaces to share and meet between conference delegates. In past symposiums, making contact and building relations with fellow health researchers was identified as a real added value for delegates. For both future online and in-person delegates, this will likely remain a priority.

**Recommendation 2:** Consider rethinking networking in any online format and finding a tool to facilitate it for future symposiums; for the in-person format, reinforce the networking within the program.

**Conclusion 3:** HSR2020 as an exclusively online event provided extensive feedback from delegates on what “worked” and did not for them. In general, the sessions worked well with improvements could be seen as needed in the interactivity and the ability to follow-up with participants (and possible build ongoing projects and a community with them). The networking aspects were less successful as described in the previous conclusion as was the poster sessions. The suggestions from delegates provide insights as to how the online experience can be improved (see Improvements section).

**Recommendation 3:** For the online platform of future symposiums, integrate the feedback from the delegates to improve the online experience, notably in interactivity, networking and poster sessions.

**Conclusion 4:** HSR2020 created a rich legacy of materials; content, presentations, session recordings and posters. These materials are available to delegates (and following March 2021 to the wider public). However, delegates were unsure of how to access these materials—and for how long they would be available—to further capitalize on them for their own learning and knowledge development.

**Recommendation 4:** Communicate to the delegates about access and availability of the HSR2020 materials.

**Conclusion 5:** Skills-building sessions were very popular with delegates for HSR2020 as seen with previous symposiums. Given their benefit for delegates from mainly LMICs, they appear to be a key benefit in addition to the scientific program, offered both in-person and online.

**Recommendation 5:** Consider increasing the number of skills-building sessions, offering them both online and in-person (when feasible).

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. Methodology .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3. Findings .....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1. Promotion of inclusiveness and connectivity .....	13
3.2. Equitable knowledge acquisition and dissemination .....	15
3.3. Dissemination of health systems research methods including knowledge translation .....	19
3.4. Capacity-building for health policy and systems research .....	20
3.5. Organization and communications of HSR2020 .....	31
<b>4. Conclusions and recommendations.....</b>	<b>32</b>
 <b>Annex 1: Survey data tables.....</b>	 <b>35</b>
<b>Annex 2: Extra survey charts .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Annex 3: Comparison of key results between symposiums.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Annex 4: Evaluation methodology.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Annex 5: Evaluation tools.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Annex 6: Evaluation matrix .....</b>	<b>66</b>



# INTRODUCTION

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This document presents the results of an evaluation of the Sixth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR2020), which was held online between November 2020 and March 2021. HSR2020 was originally planned for Dubai, UAE in November 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the symposium was transformed into an online event comprised of three phases:

- » Phase 1 was the main symposium held over five days from 8 to 12 November 2020;
- » Phase 2 was seven one day events held from November 2020 to March 2021;
- » Phase 3 was a follow-up invitation-only event planned for March 2021.

This evaluation covers phase 1 of HSR2020 and part of phase 2 (until December 2020). The symposium was organized by Health Systems Global (HSG), in partnership with the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research (AHPSR), World Health Organization (WHO), Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, American University of Beirut and their Knowledge to Policy Center.

HSR2020 brought together 2,350 actors involved in health systems and policy research and practice from more than 125 countries worldwide. Beginning with the First Global Symposium in Montreux in 2010, the symposiums have played a crucial, catalytic role in convening a global community dedicated to strengthening health systems and building the field of health systems research (HSR). HSG aims to ensure balanced participation by giving a voice and space to representatives from low- to middle-income countries (LMIC), as well as to researchers, policymakers, practitioners, students, NGOs and civil society from both LMIC and high-income countries (HIC).

The evaluation was carried out by Dr Glenn O'Neil and Ms Patricia Goldschmid of Owl RE, a research and evaluation consultancy based in Geneva, Switzerland.



# **METHODOLOGY**



## 2. METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of the evaluation was to assess to what extent the HSR2020 symposium contributed to achieving the key objectives of HSG. Insights are also provided on the deficiencies/gaps that would need to be considered in preparation for the next symposium.

The key objectives of HSG for HSR2020 were to:

- » Assure inclusiveness and connect diverse stakeholders (researchers, policy makers, program managers, advocates, community organizations, media representatives) from different geographic regions, country income groups and language backgrounds;
- » Facilitate equitable knowledge acquisition and dissemination around health policy and systems research;
- » Disseminate HSR methods including methods for knowledge translation;
- » Support capacity-building for the conduct, translation and utilization of health policy and systems research.

The evaluation also considered the following aspects of HSR2020:

- » The overall scientific value and quality of HSR2020 as perceived by delegates;
- » The greatest value offered by HSR2020 to delegates;
- » The organizational aspects of HSR2020 including availability/access to information; abstract submission process; registration and payment systems; online experience of presenters and participants.

The research conducted for the evaluation included a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods and was conducted entirely remotely:

- » Online surveys: two online surveys were sent to delegates:
  - 778 responses were received for the first survey from delegates who attended phase 1, a 42% response rate (out of 1,867 delegates who participated in phase 1);
  - 209 responses were received for the second survey from delegates who attended phase 2 (November and December 2020); a 26% response rate (out of 793 delegates who participated in phase 2—November and December 2020)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Number of delegates is based on the number of unique log-ins during the respective phase. For HSR2018, a 48% response rate was achieved for the one survey sent to delegates following the symposium.

- » Online discussion groups: four online discussion groups were held with delegates following phase 1; two in English, one in French and one in Spanish with 12 participants in total.
- » Online participation: the evaluation team participated as observers on the event platform in both phases 1 and 2.
- » Secondary data: registration data, social media and web analytics were analyzed and integrated into this evaluation.

The data and information collected was analyzed and forms the basis for the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this report. Statistical testing was carried out to establish statistically significant differences between delegates based on income group and region. Within this report, survey charts are noted with the indication “n=xx” which indicates the number of delegates who responded to that given survey question. Reference is also made to the evaluations carried out for the previous symposiums, HSR2018, held in Liverpool, UK and HSR2016 held in Vancouver, Canada. Annex 1 provides additional survey data tables; annex 2 provides further charts on the demographics of surveyed delegates and for phase 2; annex 3 provides a comparison of key survey results for HSR2016, 2018 and 2020; annex 4 details the evaluation methodology; annex 5 contains the evaluation tools used and annex 6 details the evaluation matrix.



# **FINDINGS**

### 3. FINDINGS

**Finding 1:** 92–93% of surveyed delegates felt that the HSR2020 event fully or partially met their expectations, a similar result to HSR2018. HSR2020 was seen as successful in providing content that was relevant for their work and supporting delegates in acquiring new knowledge but it was less successful in providing opportunities for networking. Overall satisfaction was higher for delegates from LMIC compared to those from HIC.

Most of the surveyed delegates (93% for phase 1 and 92% for phase 2) responded that the event met their expectations<sup>2</sup>, similar to HSR2018 (95%). A higher percentage of HSR2018 delegates thought that it met their expectations to a “great extent” (54% compared to 37–38% for HSR2020). Expectations for phase 1 were met more for delegates from LMIC than HIC: for “great extent”—40% vs. 25% ( $p < 0.01$ ). Overall, as seen throughout this evaluation report, delegates from LMIC had higher satisfaction ratings across most factors compared to delegates from HIC (also seen for HSR2018). The following comments from delegates reflect how expectations were met:

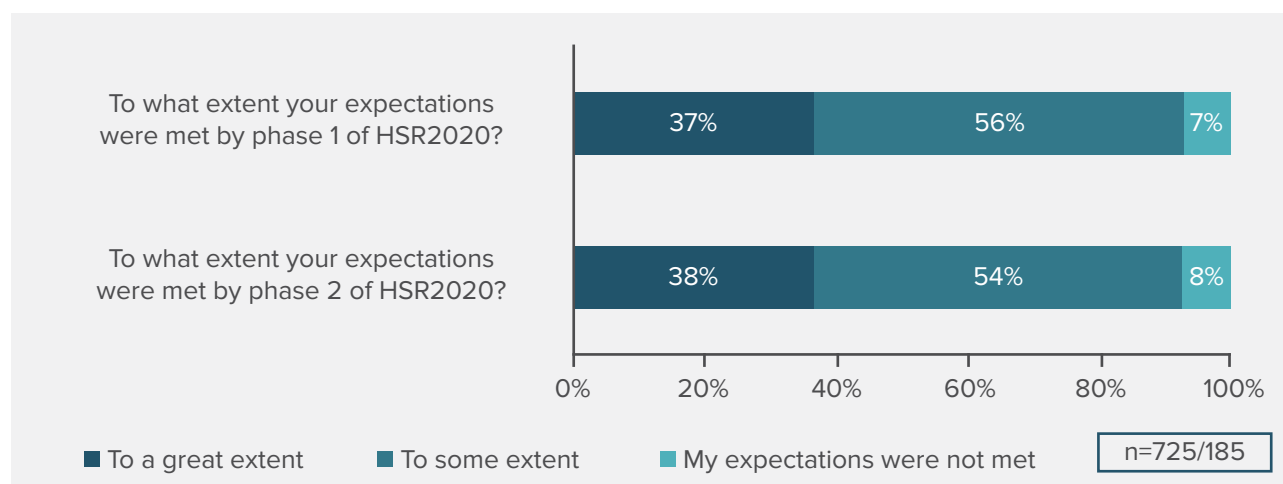
*“The sessions on research approaches and gaining insights from across the board from different contexts was something I was aiming for and I was quite satisfied with the way sessions were planned and the diverse perspectives it had.” (Survey participant—LMIC (India))*

*“The symposium gave the opportunity to catch up with recent research and best practices on key HSR methods and reforms worldwide, despite the pandemic. It also presented a medium for connecting and networking with other experts and sharing my research and experience.”—(Survey respondent—LMIC (Nigeria))*

*“The greatest value was to learn about what others are doing and getting new research ideas. Also, possibility to present a poster which was good for my career”—(Discussion group participant—LMIC (Colombia))*

<sup>2</sup> Criteria for rating the symposium in the survey included: to a “great extent”, “to some extent”, and “my expectations were not met”.

Figure 1: Expectations met by HSR2020—Phase 1 &amp; 2



The majority of survey respondents who felt that their expectations were fully or partially met described the benefits as mainly linked to the relevance of the content for their work and the value of acquiring new knowledge. As described throughout this report, the networking opportunities were challenging for many delegates with the online format.

A minority, whose expectations were not met, underlined improvements that they would like to see. The issues raised by these 37 delegates who provided feedback (17-HIC; 20-LMIC) were linked mostly to the online nature of HSR2020; the challenges of interaction during the sessions, difficulties to network outside of the sessions, and also the time zone differences for some. These issues were also raised in the group discussions.

### 3.1. Promotion of inclusiveness and connectivity

**Finding 2:** HSR2020 was a diverse symposium with a higher representation of LMICs than HICs compared to previous symposiums, both as delegates and presenters. While the benefits of providing knowledge increased at HSR2020, the contribution of the symposium to building networks decreased reflecting the challenges of networking in the online format.

Out of the total delegates who registered for HSR2020, 61% were from LMIC and 39% from HIC. Compared to HSR2018<sup>3</sup>, this shows a 17% increase in the number of LMIC delegates. The diversity of participants was confirmed by delegates both in the survey and discussion groups.

HSR2020 was strong in providing delegates with new knowledge; with 93% responding that they “strongly agree” or “agree<sup>4</sup>”, slightly higher than HSR2018 (89%). Where HSR2020 performed less well was in providing an opportunity for delegates to develop their professional network. This aspect decreased from 88% at HSR2018 to 62% at HSR2020, reflecting the

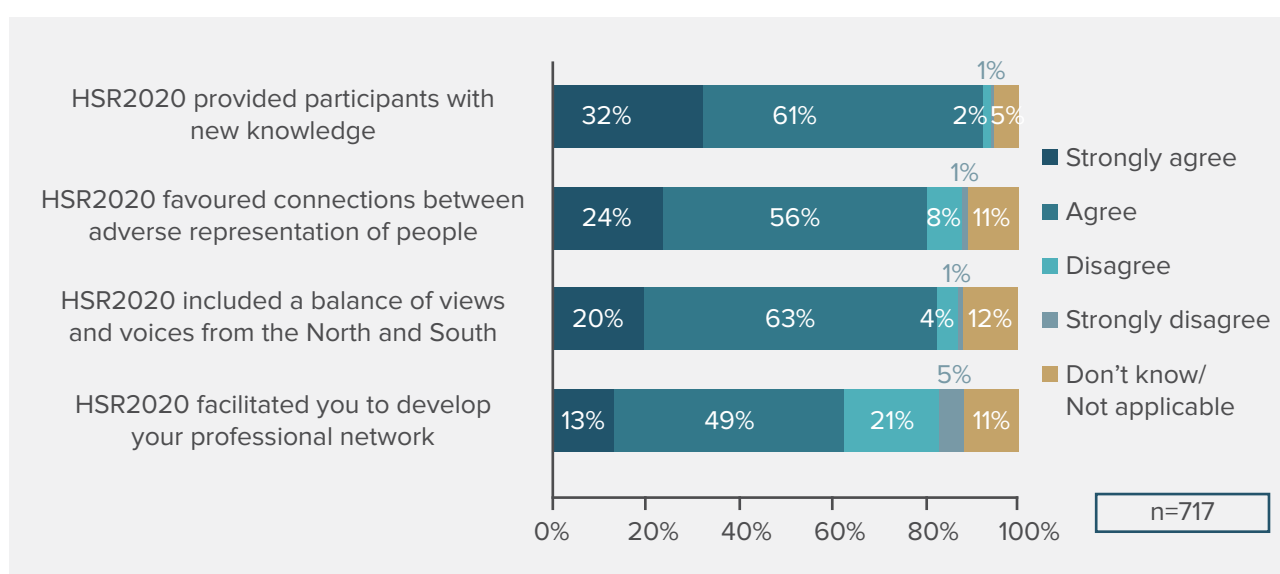
<sup>3</sup> For HSR 2018; 56%-HIC & 44%-LMIC, HSR2016: 58% HIC & 42% LMIC.

<sup>4</sup> The criteria included: “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “agree”, “strongly agree”, and “don’t know/N/A”

challenges of networking in the online format according to the comments received both in the survey and discussion groups. However, networking was rated higher by LMIC delegates than HIC delegates (average—72%-LMIC; 61%-HIC  $p<0.01$  excluding N/A).

In terms of connections between a diverse representation of people, there was a decrease from 86% at HSR2018 to 80% at HSR2020. This was also thought to reflect the challenges in networking rather than the representation of the delegates. For the balance of views and voices from the North and South, there was a slight increase from 80% at HSR2018 to 83% at HSR2020. At HSR2018 there was a statistically significant difference between delegates from HIC and LMIC (with the latter less in agreement of the balance of views); this was now absent from HSR2020; both HIC and LMIC had identical results on this factor for HSR2020.

Figure 2: Networking, knowledge and North/South balance factors



Concerning HSG membership, 36% of surveyed delegates were HSG members before registering and a further 38% joined at the time of registration, an increase from HSR2018 (21%) (see annex 2). 70% of surveyed delegates were attending an HSR symposium for the first time (66% for HSR2018); 30% had attended previous symposiums. Of registered delegates, 55% were female and 50% were 39-years-old or younger (see annex 2).

Diversity was also seen in those who presented their research at HSR2020: Out of a total of 910 presenters, 290 (32%) were from HIC and 620 (68%) from LMIC; a 15% increase in LMIC presenters compared to HSR2018 (325-47%-HIC; 358-53%-LMIC).

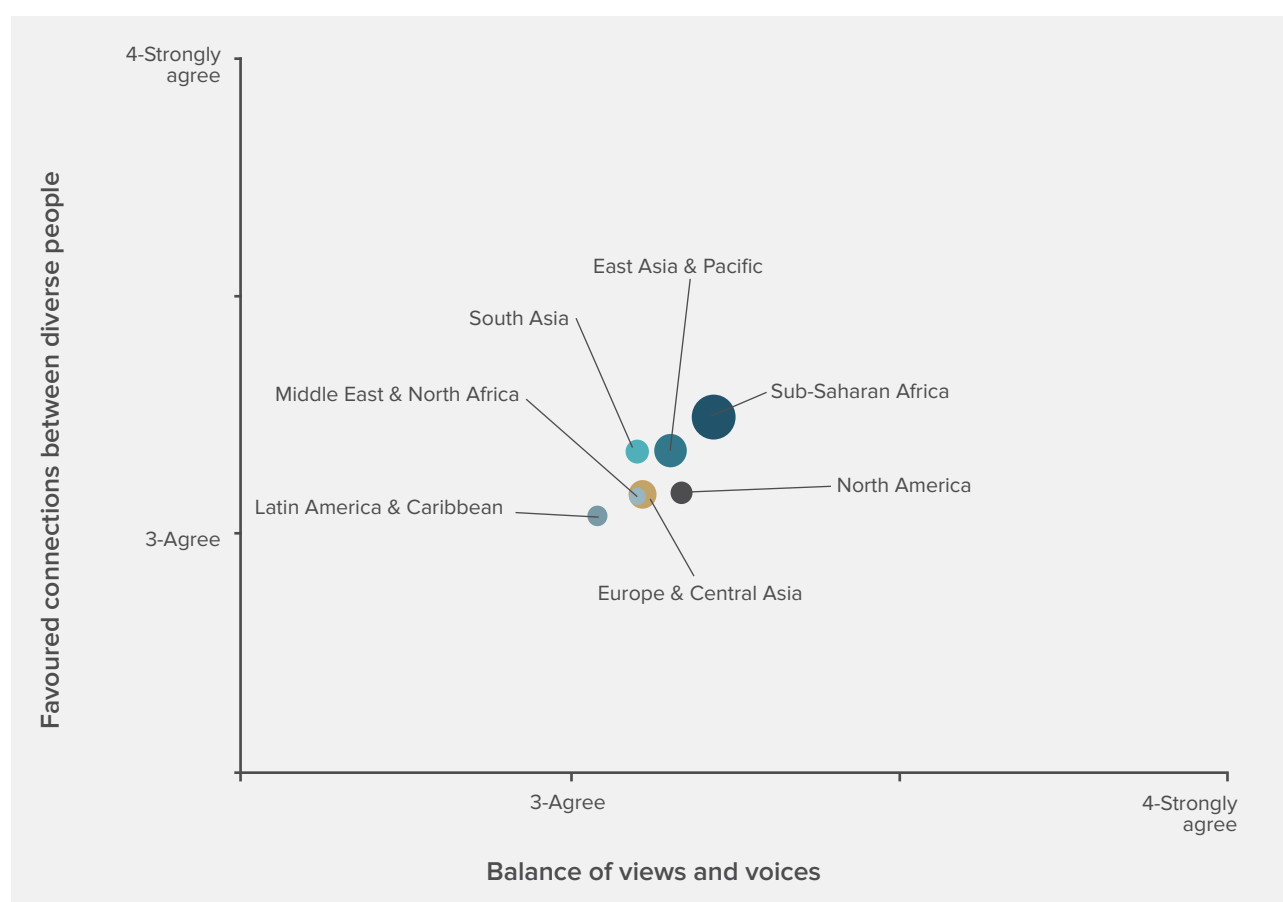
Delegates were represented from all regions of the world with most from Sub-Saharan Africa (27%) Europe and Central Asia (18%), and North America and East Asia and Pacific (both at 19%). Four main changes were seen from HSR2018:

- » An increase of delegates from Sub-Saharan Africa (HSR2020-27%(636); HSR2018-22%(490));
- » An increase of delegates from East Asia and Pacific (HSR 2020-16%(382); HSR2018-9%(190));

- » An increase of delegates from the Middle East and North Africa (HSR 2020-6%(147); HSR2018-2% (52));
- » A decrease of delegates from Europe and Central Asia (HSR 2020-18%(415); HSR2018-35% (761)).

Delegates from Sub-Saharan Africa were the most positive in terms of connectivity and North/South balance and those from Latin America and Caribbean less so, as seen in the chart below. Compared to HSR2018, there were less differences in general between regions on these aspects.

Figure 3: Connections and North/South balance factors by region



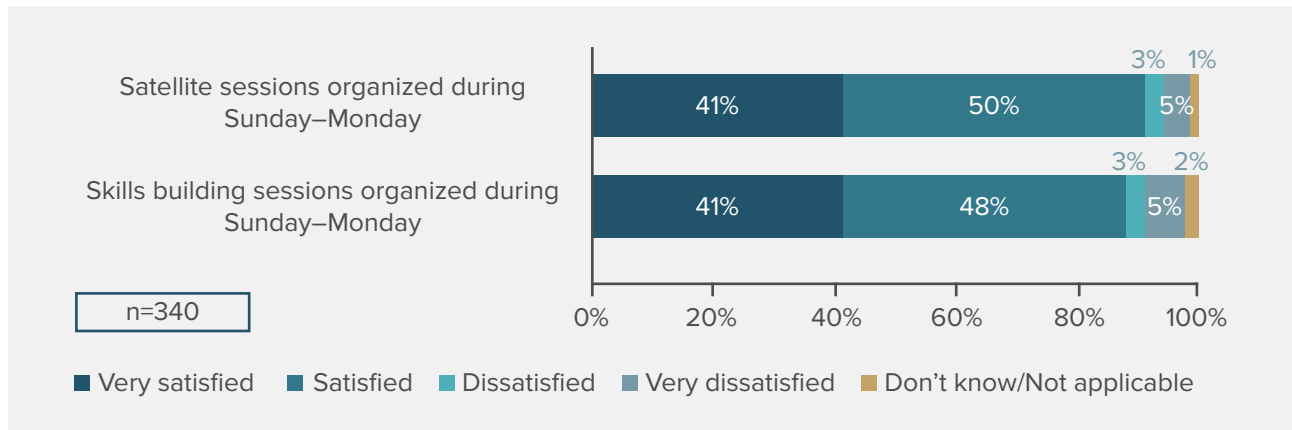
## 3.2. Equitable knowledge acquisition and dissemination

**Finding 3:** HSR2020 was successful in facilitating knowledge acquisition and dissemination around health policy and systems research. As seen for previous symposiums, it demonstrated greater acquisition from LMIC delegates than HIC delegates. Obstacles in knowledge acquisition identified during HSR2020 were mostly linked to the limitations of the online format, the format of the poster sessions and the time-zone differences.

In general, knowledge acquisition, as seen through both delegate satisfaction with HSR2020 sessions as described in this chapter. Similarly, knowledge acquired (figure 9) was also

consistently higher (statistically significant) for surveyed delegates from LMIC than those from HIC, as also found for previous symposiums (HSR2018 and HSR2016<sup>5</sup>). For the Sunday and Monday program in phase 1, satisfaction levels were very high: 91% for satellite sessions and 89% for skill building sessions, as seen in the chart below. Similar results for these sessions were also seen at HSR2018 and HSR2016.

Figure 4: Rating of satellite sessions and skills-building sessions—Phase 1



Delegates who participated in the Sunday and Monday programs were positive about the efforts made by the organisers and presenters to deliver the sessions in an interactive and engaging way. However, limitations were identified with the online format:

*“The variety of speakers and points of view presented was valuable. Many interesting initiatives were evaluated and presented. This was a great take out. I wish we had a chance to discuss verbally and have all our questions answered.” (Survey participant—HIC (USA))*

*“Great sessions! Kudos to the organizers, session chair, presenters and everyone behind this symposium. There are times though that technical difficulty/ errors are experienced while the session is running which affects the time at the end of the session. But overall, I’m satisfied with the conference.” (Survey participant—LMIC (The Philippines))*

*“The format was simply a little unsatisfying. The polls and Q&A capabilities were ok, but I think the online capabilities were not maximised. For example, there could have easily been a recommended reading list with documents you could download accompanying every presentation, or additional videos or podcasts.” (Survey participant—LMIC (India))*

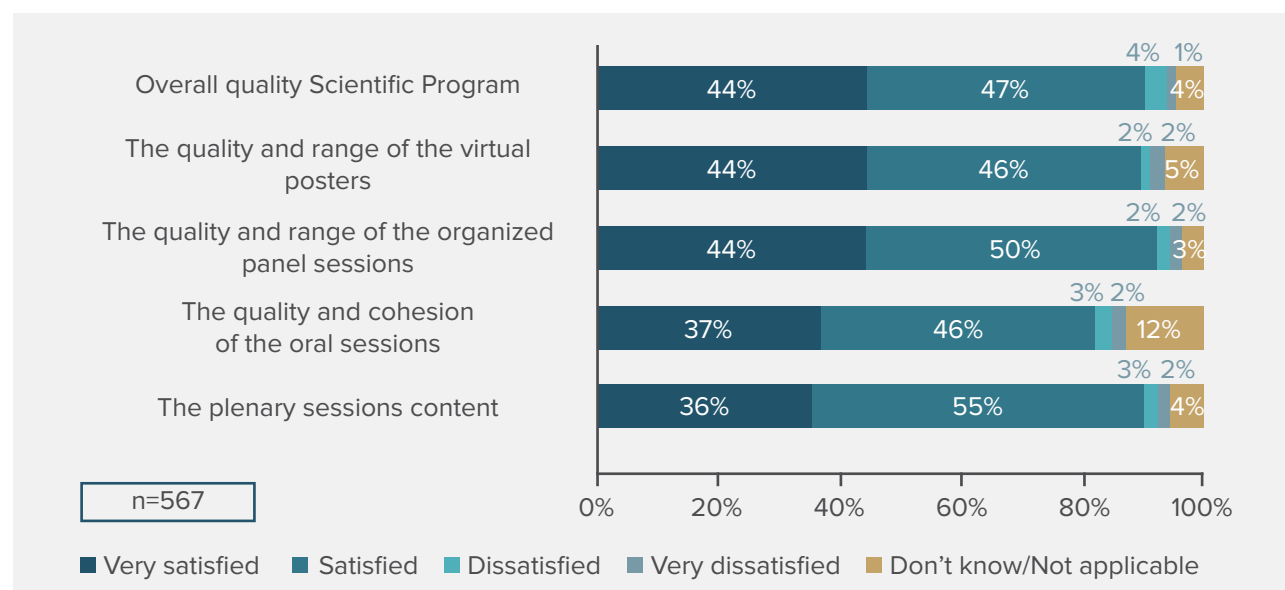
75% of the surveyed delegates participated in the scientific sessions of HSR2020. While this is a significant decrease from HSR2018 (98%), it is similar to the results found at HSR2016 (81%). The decrease in participation was thought to be related to the online and remote format of HSR2020, based on the survey responses and online discussions: delegates who intended

5 For these previous symposiums an evaluation and delegate survey was carried out.



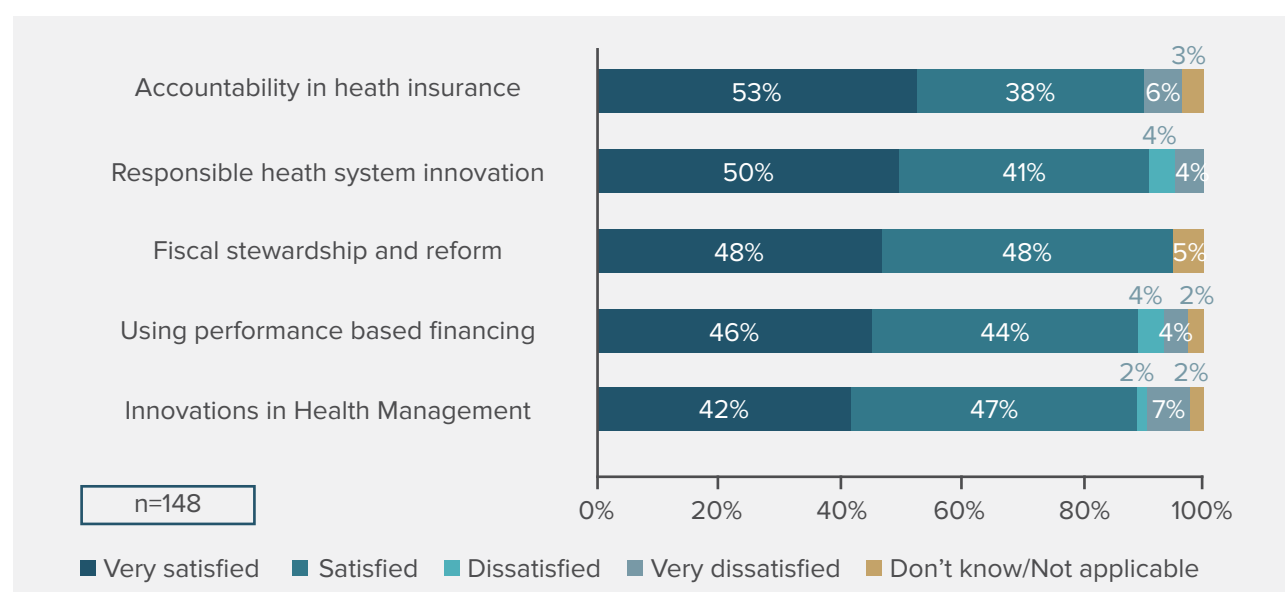
to participate had competing work and personal commitments that took priority given that they were not physically present at the symposium. Responses indicated that the overall quality of the scientific program was rated very positively (91% satisfied or very satisfied), the same as plenary session content (91%), the quality and range of the posters (90%), the quality and range of the organized panel sessions (94%) and the quality and cohesion of the oral sessions (83%). All ratings were similar to HSR2018 with the exception of the quality and range of the organized panel sessions, which increased by 6% to 94% at HSR2020. Delegates from LMIC were more satisfied with the scientific program than those from HIC ( $p<0.01$ ) as seen also for HSR2018.

Figure 5: Ratings of scientific program



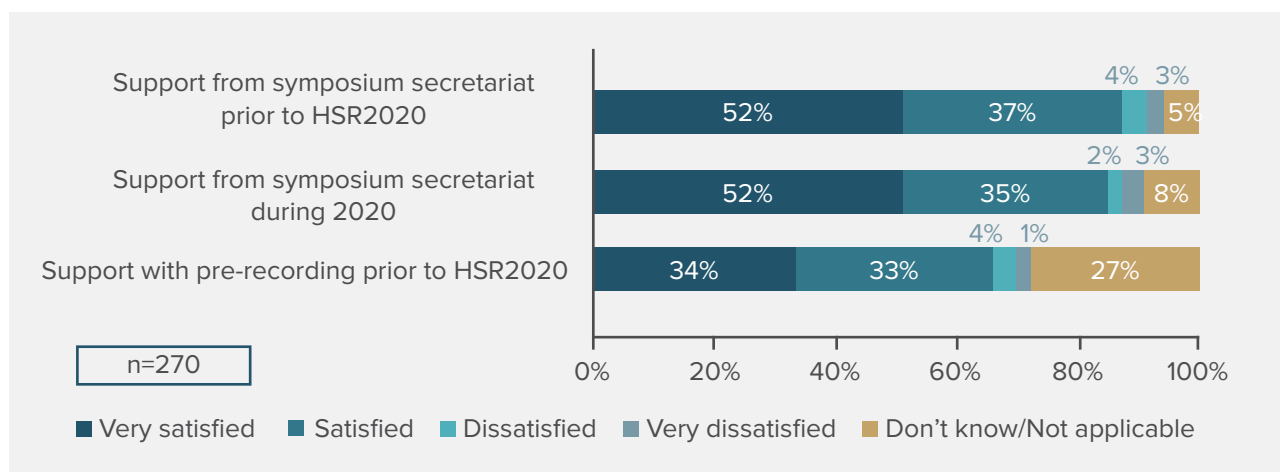
Delegates also rated the sessions they attended during phase 2 (November and December 2020). Overall, the feedback was very positive as seen in the chart below, rating the session between 89% to 95% satisfied or very satisfied (of note, most sessions were repeated over the two days).

Figure 6: Ratings of Phase 2 sessions (25 November and 2 December 2020)



Surveyed presenters were positive about the support they received from the symposium secretariat: prior to HSR2020 (89% satisfied or very satisfied) and during (87%). This was an increase from HSR2018, where satisfaction for both was at 80%. Satisfaction for support for pre-recording was at a similar positive level if the “don’t know / N/A” scores are not included. At HSR2018, delegates from LMIC were more satisfied with the support than delegates from HIC, while at HSR2020 there was no significant difference.

Figure 7: Rating of support from conference secretariat



The survey respondent comments were positive about the scientific content, both for phase 1 and phase 2: “very educative”, “very rich in content”, “extremely valuable”. Critical comments were mainly about the limited interactivity of the online format (while some did point out its advantages such as the possibility to re-watch sessions), the format of the poster sessions, and the time zone differences. There were very few comments on the overlapping of sessions, which was a concern for delegates at HSR2018 mentioned both in the survey and the online discussions; in this respect delegates appreciated that the sessions were recorded and they could watch them at a later date:

*“Excellent planning and execution. Topics relevant. Discussions very good. Panelists were never in hurry. Discussion based on live Q & A session was the heart of the program. Although I registered late, on 10th, but I am able to review the recordings. I am getting a feeling that for academic enrichment, online version is better than the live version.” (Survey participant—LMIC (India))*

*“I think the Scientific Program was good with a broad range of themes. Some of them were specially interesting. Due to hour differences, I wasn’t able to listen all the presentations at the time they were scheduled. However, I really appreciate that the recordings were available for attendees.” (Survey participant—LMIC (Peru))*

*“Given the timings were really unfavorable to my time zone, I was only able to participate in the session where I was a panelist (in the middle my night) and half listened into a couple of other sessions. It was extremely difficult to find focus because given the conference was overlapping with other work (would be less the case in-person), I found myself pulled into routine work/tasks. The material I did listen to was quite interesting and I wish I had been able to attend more sessions including the plenaries.”*  
(Survey participant—HIC (USA))

*“The poster platform was not good for interacting with the presenters. It’s also hard to browse through the posters. I wish there was a way to use tags or a way to make it more interactive.”* (Survey participant—HIC (USA))

*“Virtual posters were good idea, but, having presenters to present it in multiple slots could have been avoided. It could have been on demand video that would have been better and Q&A session attached to every poster would have been much better.”*  
(Survey participant—LMIC (India))

### 3.3. Dissemination of health systems research methods including knowledge translation

**Finding 4: 38% of HSR2020 session profiled research methods or knowledge translation. Delegates prioritized gaining new knowledge from research findings and learning of innovations and skills for research methods. HSR2020 did have a potential positive impact on changing the use of research methods and knowledge translation, most notably with delegates from LMIC countries.**

The content of HSR2020 created favourable conditions for learning about research and for knowledge translation methods. Overall, 38% (88/230) of parallel sessions, excluding business meetings and closed sessions, were found to showcase either a research method or a method for knowledge translation (an increase from HSR2020-29%; HSR2016–31%). Out of these, 21% (48/230) focused upon research methods, 14% (33/230) on knowledge translation methods, and 3% (7/230) considered both. It should be noted that the remaining 62% of sessions also showcased research methods or knowledge translation methods to a certain extent, but their focus was on mainly presenting research findings.

This was also illustrated when surveyed delegates were asked to identify the main value of attending phase 1 of HSR2020; for 80% of delegates it was in gaining knowledge on health systems research, also the highest rated for HSR2018. However, for HSR2020, the making new contacts dropped to 8<sup>th</sup> place from 2<sup>nd</sup> place for HSR2018 reflecting the challenges seen in networking online; learning about innovations in research approaches, methods and measures rose to 2<sup>nd</sup> place from 6<sup>th</sup> place for HSR2018. Similar ratings were seen for phase 2 (see annex 2).

Figure 8: Main value in attending HSR2020—Phase 1 (multiple choice)



At the same time, the majority of surveyed delegates were positive about the fact that HSR2020 would impact on their use of research methods and knowledge translation: 64% said it would change how they share, disseminate or translate research results and 61% said it would change how they interpret or use research methods, as seen in figure 9. For both, impact was significantly higher for delegates from LMIC than those from HIC, as seen also at HSR2018 (see next chapter).

### 3.4. Capacity-building for health policy and systems research

**Finding 5:** HSR2020 supported delegates in building their capacity to work on health policy and systems research. The symposium was strong in supporting delegates in facing challenges, as well as using research methods and disseminating research findings. As for previous symposiums, capacity building was markedly stronger for delegates from LMIC than HIC, notably in the use of health research and methods.

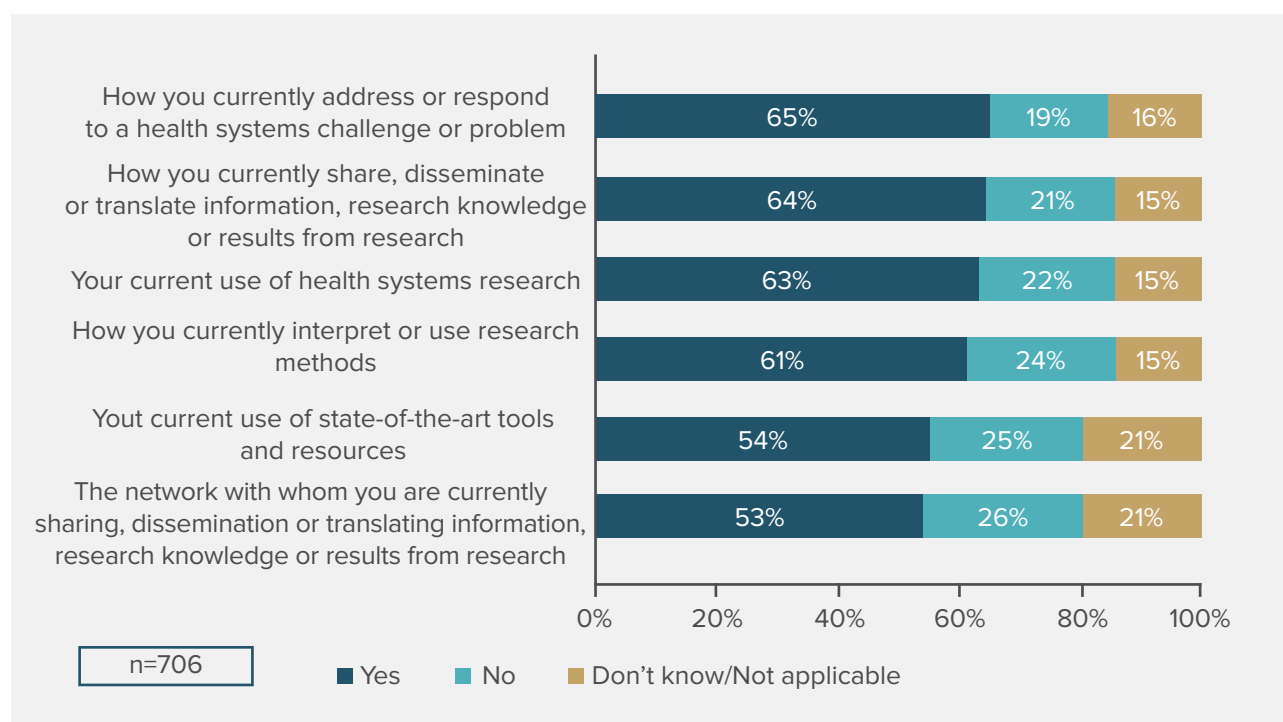
HSR 2020 supported delegates in building their capacity to work on health policy and systems research as confirmed by both survey and discussion group responses. As for previous symposiums, this capacity building was significantly stronger for delegates from LMIC than from HIC.

Surveyed delegates were asked if they thought their participation in phase 1 of HSR2020 would change certain aspects of their work and interaction in health research, as seen in the chart below. Most respondents (65%) agreed that their participation would help them address

how they respond to a health system challenges and problems and how they share, disseminate or translate information, research knowledge or results from research (64%). These were similar results to HSR2018, with the exception of the network with whom they are sharing, disseminating or translating information, research knowledge or results decreased to 53% for “Yes” from “73%” for HSR2018, reflecting the challenges of networking in the online format. Similar results were seen for phase 2 (see annex 2).

Figure 9: HSR2020 participation will change the following actions—Phase 1

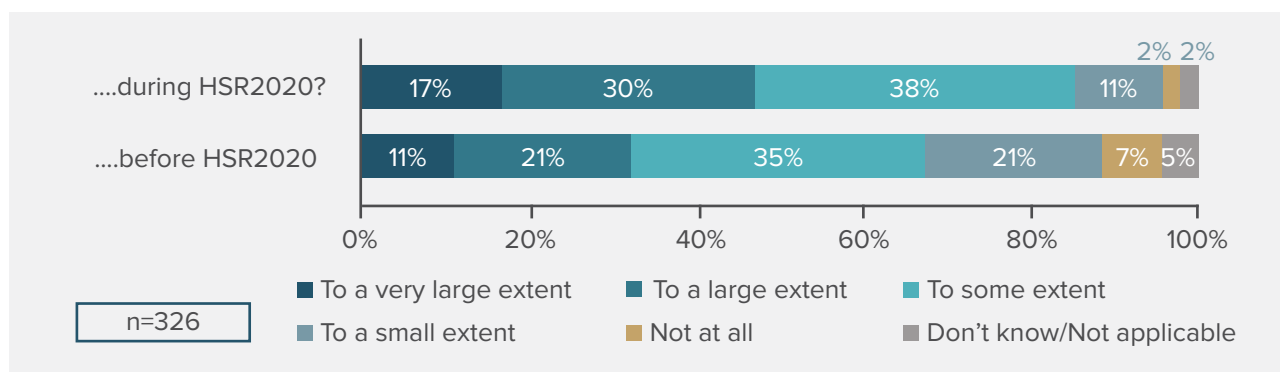
*(Q. Do you think your participation in HSR2020 will change any of the following?)*



For all actions, there was a major difference between surveyed delegates from LMICs and HICs for both phases, with the most significant difference being the greater change anticipated by LMICs for current use of health systems research-phase 1 (82%—“Yes” for LMIC; 47%—“Yes” for HIC, excluding N/A  $p < 0.01$ ) and the use or interpretation of research methods-phase 1 (79%-LMIC; 47%-HIC, excluding N/A  $p < 0.01$ ).

Surveyed delegates were asked to what extent social media contributed to their learning. Responses showed that 46% (26% for HSR2018) agreed (to a large or very large extent) that it contributed to their learning prior to the event and 33% (46% for HSR2018) during the event. The decrease in social media use during the symposium was thought to be due to the fact that it was exclusively online and no posting/searching from the event venue was possible. At HSR2018 posting and interacting via social media from the venue was seen as a motivating factor for delegates.

Figure 10: Contribution of HSG social media to learning



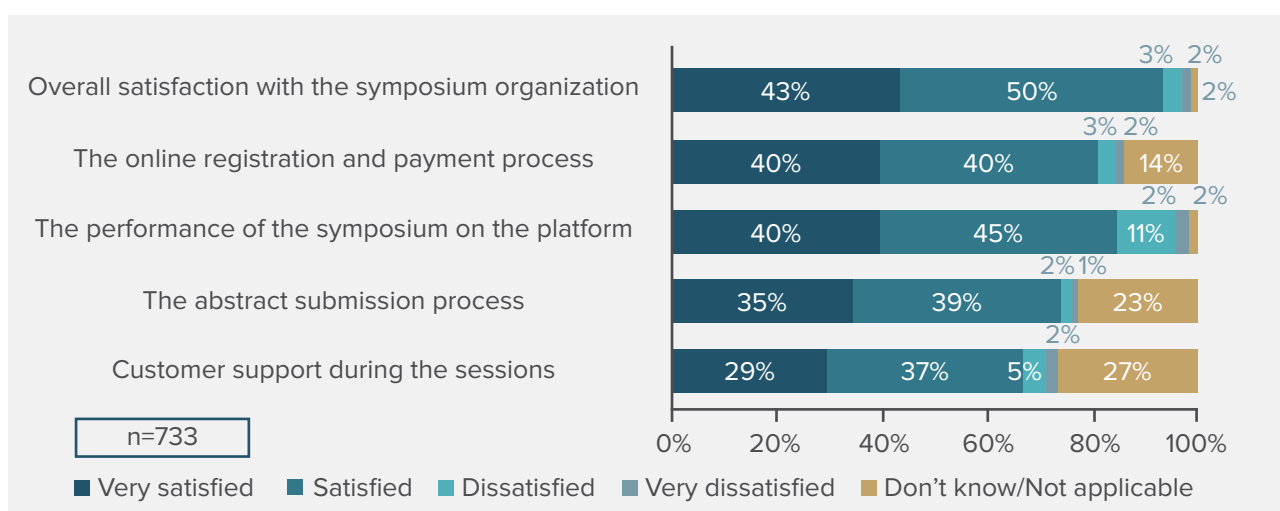
### 3.5. Organization and communications of HSR2020

**Finding 6:** HSR2020 was well organized in general, according to the feedback from delegates. The online platform was rated more positively in terms of the ability to find information but less so on the possibility to network, find and connect with peers. As for HSR2018, The conference App was seen as under-performing; social media provided visibility for HSR2020 but less than for HSR2018. The intention to attend the next symposium was very high at 96-97%, a considerable increase from 78% reported in the HSR2018 evaluation.

**HSR2020 organization:** The overall reaction to the HSR2020 symposium organization was positive, both in the survey (83% satisfied and very satisfied rating) and the discussion groups. Similarly, online registration and the online platform were rated positively (80% and 85% respectively). Ratings on organizational aspects were similar to those of HSR2018.

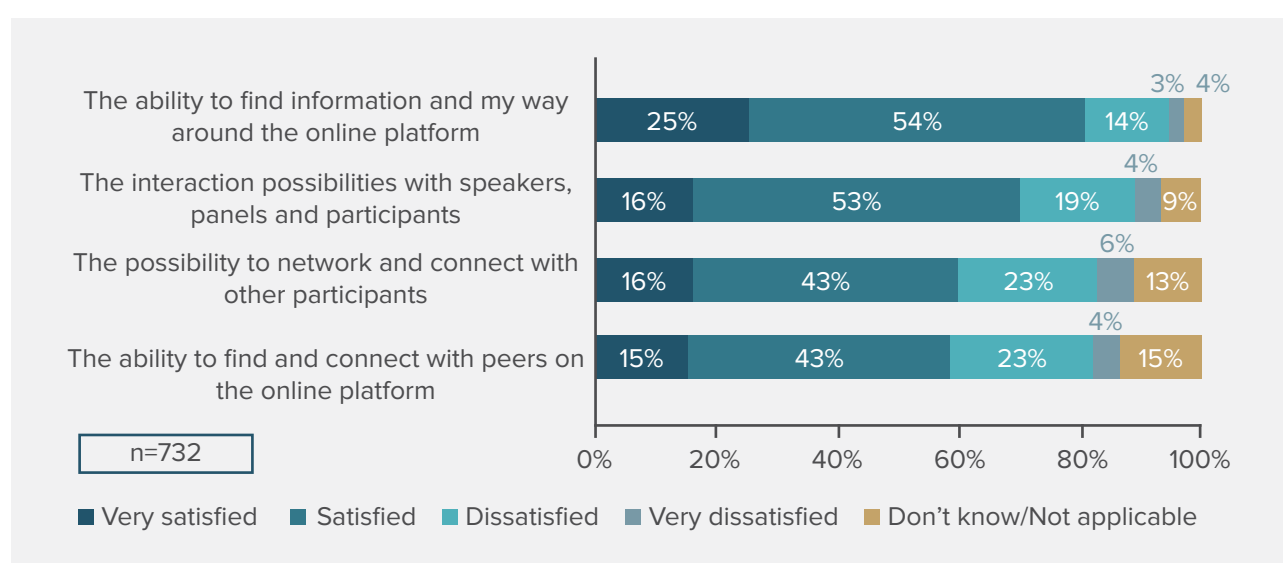
Over 220 comments were received from surveyed delegates on organizational aspects, with some one third providing positive feedback on the organisation of HSR2020. Other topics raised included issues with navigation and accessing the platform (including the poster sessions format and how/where the session recordings will be available); the challenges of the time zone differences; and the communication with the organizers (such as on abstract submissions).

Figure 11: Rating of organizational aspects



**Online experience:** As HSR2020 was held exclusively online, a series of questions were asked about the online experience. As seen in the chart below, the online platform for phase 1 was rated more positively in terms of the ability to find information and navigate the platform (79% for very satisfied and satisfied) and interaction (69%). The possibility to network and find and connect with peers was rated lower (59% and 58% respectively). This was reflected in the feedback from delegates who found it challenging to network and connect with other delegates through the platform, also seen from the observations of the evaluation team while on the platform. Responding to the same question for phase 2, delegates rated the different factors similarly but with an increase seen in the ability to find information and navigation (33%—Very satisfied), possibly reflecting delegates being more familiar with the platform in phase 2 and having to navigate less content/features (see annex 2 for the phase 2 chart).

Figure 12: Online experience of HSR2020—Phase 1



The surveyed delegates provided considerable feedback on the online experience with over 200 comments received. The main points of these comments were:

**Usability:** difficulty to navigate when using both Zoom and the platform; difficulty to view the agenda; search was not optimal; inability to see the chat box and Q&A box during a session at the same time; navigating between sessions; missing sub-titles/translation for non-English presentations.

**Meeting hub feature:** delegates not responding to meeting requests; difficult to know who is online at the same time; difficulty to find people in delegates directory, difficult to find people who spoke the same language.

**Interactivity:** no way for presenters to follow-up with delegates who asked questions during sessions; interaction mainly limited to the chat box; the platform Q&A and chat boxes were not visible in the Zoom platform to the panellists.

**Poster sessions:** lack of preparation for poster sessions; lack of live support for poster presenters; challenges to find and participate in poster sessions (issues with being accepted into



poster sessions); large number of posters to view; searching for posters difficult; questions for poster presenters went unanswered.

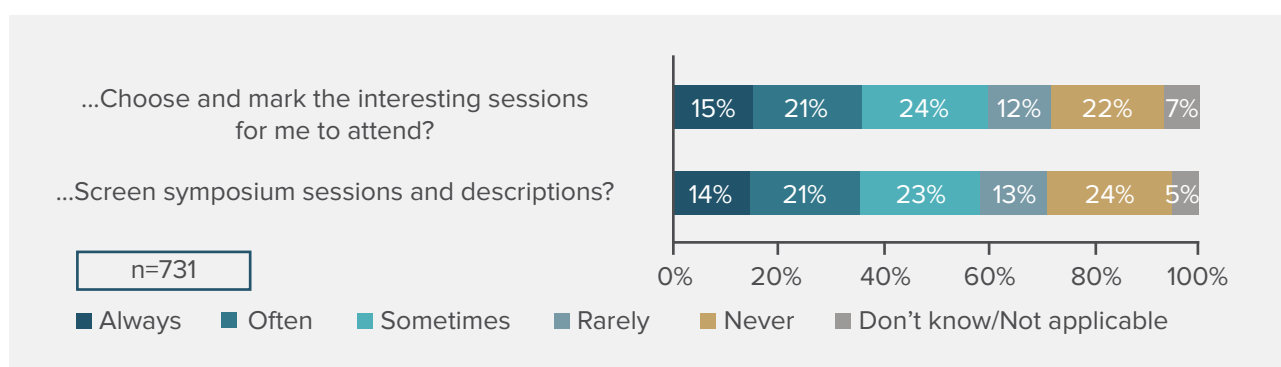
Surveyed delegates were asked of the advantages and disadvantages of HSR2020 being exclusively online, with their responses summarized in the following table:

Table 1: Advantages and disadvantages of HSR2020 being exclusively online (ranked)

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Flexibility</b> to participate and view sessions at times suited to delegates.</li> <li>• <b>Cost savings</b> on travel, accommodation and expense.</li> <li>• <b>Time savings</b> as no need to travel and can adapt workload accordingly.</li> <li>• <b>Access</b> to all the content, e.g. posters, presentations and recorded sessions.</li> <li>• <b>Participants</b> from broader and diverse locations and experiences and experience (visa issues to enter host country irrelevant).</li> <li>• <b>Health risks</b> avoided by not being potentially exposed to COVID-19.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Networking</b> limitations to meet and connect with peers.</li> <li>• <b>Time zone differences</b> making full participation challenging.</li> <li>• <b>Poor internet connectivity</b> making participation challenging.</li> <li>• <b>Distractions</b> (work and personal) due to not being physically at the symposium.</li> <li>• <b>No travel</b> and missing opportunity for new experiences; professional, cultural and social.</li> <li>• <b>Interaction</b> limited via online platform.</li> <li>• <b>Online fatigue</b> due to COVID-19 with most meetings held online.</li> </ul>

**Event App:** As for HSR2018, the event App received mixed reviews, with many delegates in both the discussion groups and the survey responding that they were not using it or it was difficult to use. Also, as some delegates indicated, they felt less the need for the event App given that HSR2020 was online (where as for HSR2018 the App was used to consult the program while at the venue). For those delegates who did download the App, 36% indicated using it “always” or “often” to choose and mark sessions of interest and 35% “always” or “often” to screen symposium sessions and descriptions. In their feedback, delegates commented that they could not watch the sessions via the App, it didn’t adjust to the time zone of the delegate, and it was difficult to see the session abstracts.

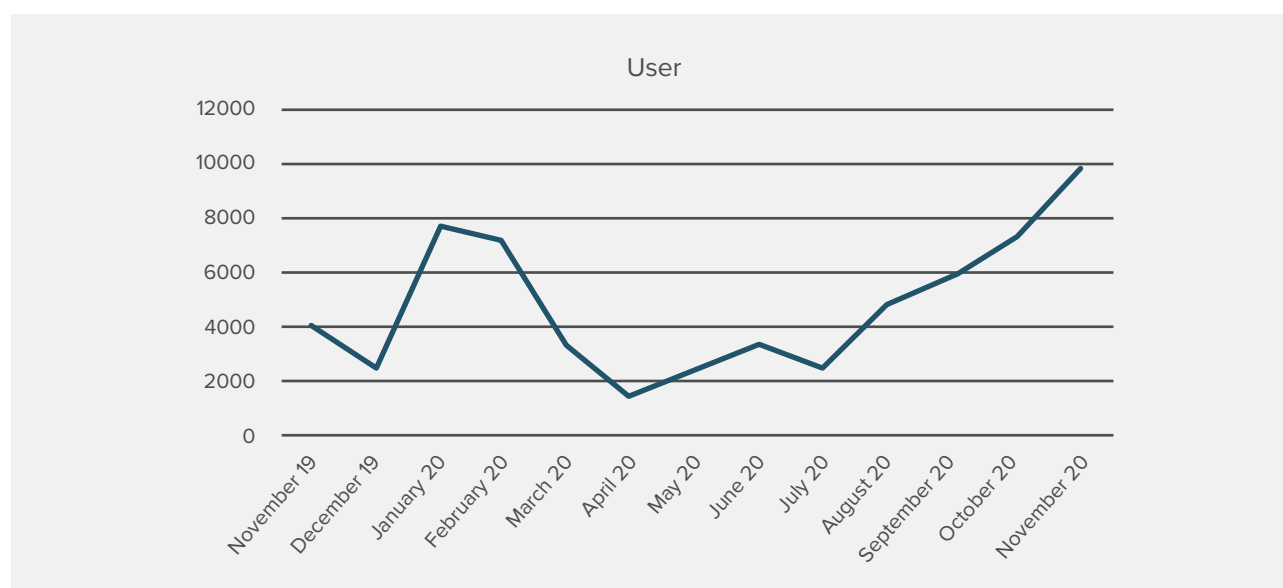
Figure 13: Use of the Event App



**Website:** The symposium website indicated the building of interest in HSR2020 from its launch and promotion in late 2019/early 2020 to November 2020 with nearly 10,000 visitors.



Figure 14: No. of visitors to HSR2020 website: November 2019—November 2020



**Social Media:** HSG was active on several social media platforms (LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook) prior and during HSR2020. As at HSR2018, the platform most used before and during the event was Twitter. Nearly half of the surveyed delegates (45%) responded that they followed HSR2020 on social media, a slight decrease from HSR2018 (51%).

The tables below show the evolution of tweets and Facebook interaction prior and during HSR2020 mainly during phase 1. The results show that reach increased during HSR2020 in November 2020, with the total reach peaking for the #HSR2020 hashtag at 11 million (6 million for same symposium month for HSR2018). Engagement was difficult to compare to HSR2018 as the platforms have changed the way they calculate it since 2018.

Table 2: Social media reach and engagement before and during the HSR2018

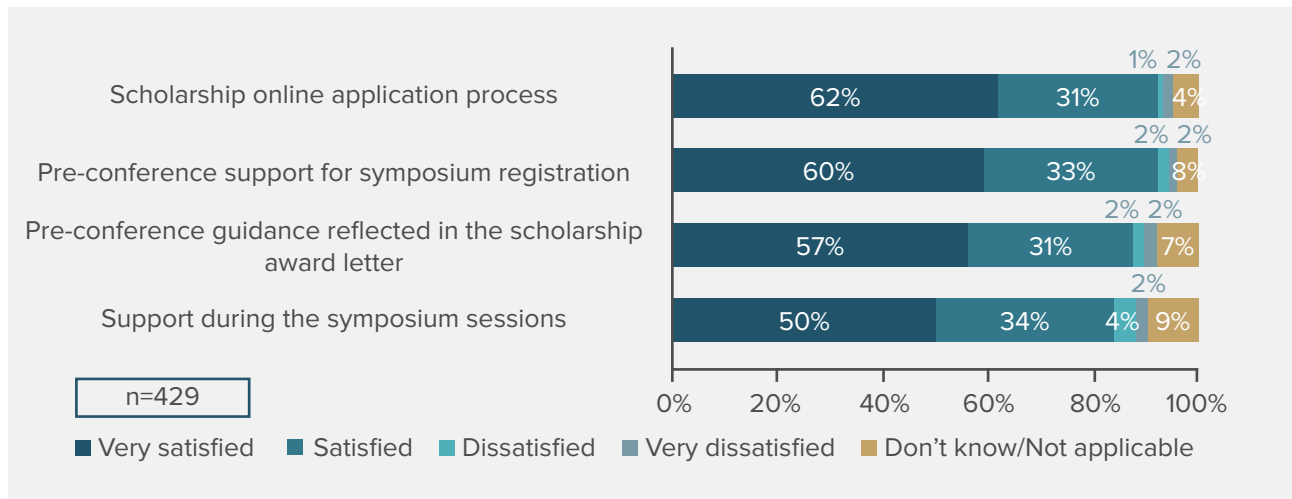
	Total reach for #HSR2020			Engagement rate (Number of engagements divided by the total number of impressions)		
	September 2020	October 2020	November 2020	September 2020	October 2020	November 2020
Twitter	1.3 million	1.8 million	11 million	1.7%	1.9%	1.6%

	Post Reach			Post engagements		
	September 2020	October 2020	November 2020	September 2020	October 2020	November 2020
Facebook	3786	4350	5980	720	750	780

**Scholarships:** Support provided by scholarship recipients was generally positive; between 83–88% for satisfied or very satisfied for the different aspects as seen in the chart below (similar ratings were seen for HSR2018). Some 100 comments were received from scholarship recipients; the majority being positive and thanking HSR2020 for the possibility to participate

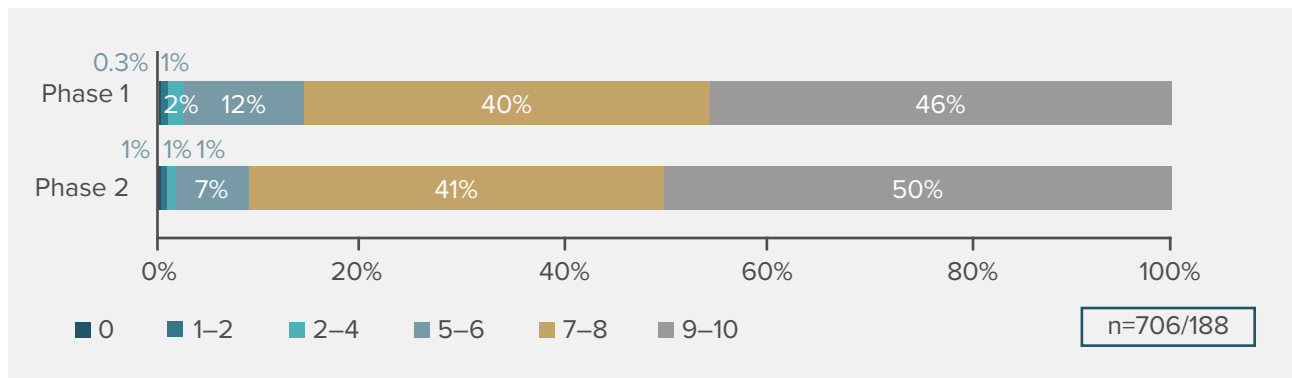
in the symposium. A few of the comments raised issues about communications (e.g. several mentioned being asked to pay the HSG membership fee when it was included in the scholarship) and the challenges of accessing the platform in countries with low (or paying) internet connections.

Figure 15: Ratings from scholarship recipients



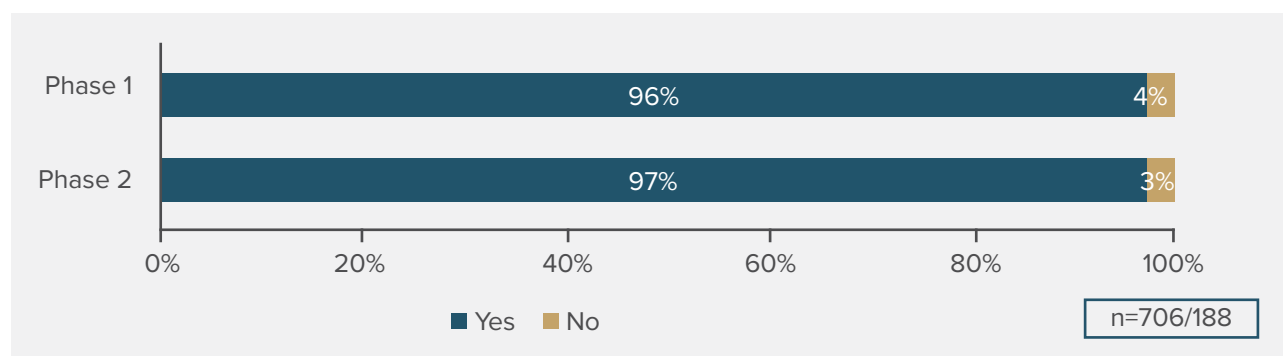
**Intention to attend/recommend:** surveyed delegates were asked to rate how likely they would recommend the symposium to a colleague on a scale from 1–10. As seen in the chart below, most delegates of both phase 1 (86%) and phase 2 (91%) selected from 7–10.

Figure 16: Recommend HSR symposium to a colleague



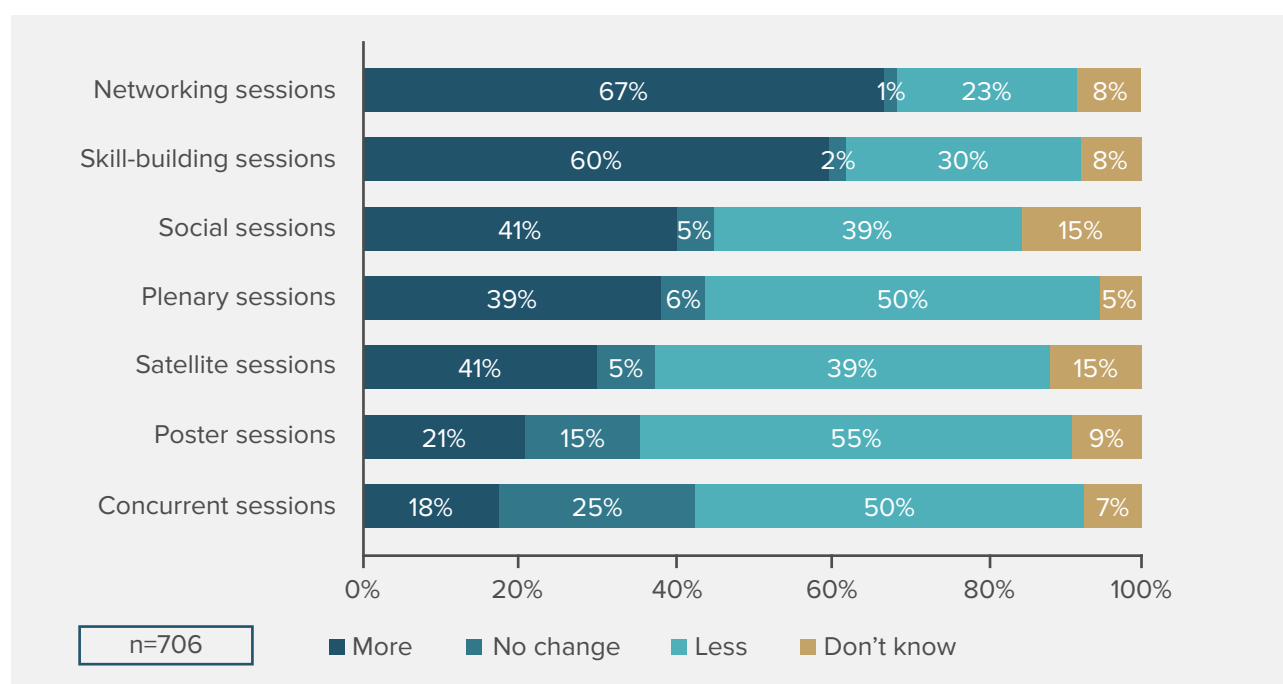
Similarly, most of the delegates—96% in phase 1 and 97% in phase 2 stated they would attend a future symposium in 2022. This was a considerable increase from HSR2018 where 78% said they would attend HSR2020.

Figure 17: Intention to attend next HSR symposium 2022



**Improvements:** Surveyed delegates were asked which symposium components they would like to see more or less of (or no change). As seen in the chart below, similar to HSR2018, survey delegates would like to see more networking opportunities (67%) followed by skills-building sessions (60%). While social events had nearly equal “more” and “less”, for plenary sessions, satellite session, posters sessions and concurrent sessions there were more “less” responses than “more”.

Figure 18: Symposium components—more/less



Surveyed delegates were asked to provide suggestions or improvements for the next HSR symposium with some 200 comments received (most comments included several suggestions). Of note, there were much less comments on overlapping of sessions compared to HSR2018 and no comments on the venue/location given the exclusively online nature of HSR2020. There were also no comments on the cost (fees and travel costs) of attending HSR2020 as there were for HSR2018. Where comments were similar were in the desire for more interaction and networking, diversity of delegates and languages. Feedback focused mainly on the following with quotes from surveyed delegates to illustrate each area.

**Blended symposiums (50 comments):** use of blended version (online and in-person mixture) for future symposiums; rethinking balance of networking and scientific content for online format, preference for in-person format.

*“Blended version of face to face (for those who can join) and virtual (for those who can’t travel). Recording of sessions so that we can benefit from parallel sessions (if both of them are important).” (Survey participant—LMIC (Nepal))*

*“I assume it will return to a live event but would support a hybrid model, but with much greater opportunity for those engaging remotely to interact in sessions and with other participants.” (Survey participant—HIC (Australia))*

*“If the next one is in-person, I would prioritize the networking opportunities and social events.” (Survey participant—HIC (USA))*

*“It should be live...only face-to-face meeting has any practical utility for the health systems researchers, they need plenty of talking, discussing, arguing and gossiping on issues of their interest and maybe not-so-interest...these are not possible in an on-line-event!” (Survey participant—LMIC (Bangladesh))*

**Format (40 comments):** Rethink format in general for online version of symposiums; redesign poster sessions; redesign networking concept online; issue of overlapping sessions (although less of an issue compared to HSR2018).

*“With the networking sessions it was unclear who was invited to what. For example, the sessions were largely labeled by region - was this for people based in that region, people who work in that region, people interested in working in the region? This may be silly but it created a barrier for me to attend different sessions.” (Survey participant—HIC (USA))*

*“Please don’t make us queue for poster presentation. It was not effective. For me it was a total chaos. It did not learn anything from them.” (Survey participant—LMIC (South Africa))*

*“A seamless symposium. Having too many things happening at once made it confusing for me.” (Survey participant—LMIC (Nigeria))*

*“The advantages of attending online are many, in cost, travel, CO2 etc. And we may come to the conclusion that large gathering of this nature are no longer desired. But then, if symposiums as this are to be held online, it will need a (very) different format, not just a (shortened) version of the old format. With more attention to show who ‘our’ community is, and relevant debates.” (Survey participant—HIC (The Netherlands))*

*“It is inherently more challenging to deliver a conference online, and I think HSR was done quite well overall. If the next symposium is in person, I would suggest that not all satellite sessions are concurrent, and that there is plenty of time for networking built into the agenda.” (Survey participant—HIC (UK))*

**Interaction (40 comments):** more possibilities to connect and interact between delegates; increase interaction within sessions; more smaller group work; facilitate ongoing discussion on session topics once they are over.

*“Need to work on how we can have more networking and participatory sessions. Also more participatory skill building sessions. Some had via online polling, and it really helped to increase knowledge. We had to think and not just listen. So some online questions for us to think and answer.” (Survey participant—LMIC (India))*

*“Need small group sessions to be able to have conversations with a small diverse group” (Survey participant—HIC (UK))*

*“It might be good if the platform would allow audience to comment/ ask questions even if the session is not live anymore and audience can still receive answers to their questions while the symposium is ongoing.” (Survey participant—LMIC (The Philippines))*

**Access (30 comments):** easier access to symposium materials (presentations, recordings, posters), enhanced event App to view sessions and materials; continued access for remote delegates for future in-person symposiums.

*“I would like to see more sessions recorded. I would like that in-person conferences always offer the opportunity for attendees to participate online including as a presenter. The ability to travel should not be the deciding factor whether you can present and network.” (Survey participant—HIC (USA))*

*“I wonder what would happens to the access of the recordings—some of them are my favorites and I listen to them again similar to my favorite drama/movies. It would be nice to have option download certain interesting and useful recording.” (Survey participant—LMIC (Malaysia))*

*“If the next HSR symposium will be a physical event, it might be valuable to have a provision for recording that will be posted online to allow for ease of access for those who are not able to attend or even to allow some people to attend online.” (Survey participant—LMIC (Kenya))*

**Usability of platform (20 comments):** improve navigation and search of platform; interaction and networking features, live support and event App; improve poster area layout/navigation

*“Improve how website can be navigated—online event should make exploration of diversity of presentations/posters easier” (Survey participant—HIC (Belgium))*

*“The poster session was so complicated. Some of them could not be seen or listed for people to view directly in the sessions” (Survey participant—LMIC (Tanzania))*

**Language (10 comments):** more availability of translations and/or sub-titles for presentations.

*“Improve the translation into Spanish. For developing countries we need so much the new knowledge that you provide, we do not have fluent English, and also, we are in the disadvantaged field that we need major changes to face the inequality of the health systems” (Survey participant—LMIC (Argentina))*

*“To have a system that allows you to connect people from same language in different parts of the world would be useful.” Discussion group participant—LMIC (Niger)*

**Participants (10 comments):** more diverse participants, early career researchers and students

*“Dedicated opportunities for students and “early career researchers” to present their work.” (Survey participant—LMIC (Kenya))*

*“I think having a featured session just for the work of students and/or early career researchers would be great. The organizers could also be more proactive in starting social media discussions among participants rather than sharing updates.” (Survey participant—HIC (USA))*



# **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the exceptionally challenging environment created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the necessity to create an exclusively online event, HSR2020 did remarkably well in contributing to the key objectives of HSG and building on the work of HSR2018 and previous symposiums. Although HSR2020 could not provide the networking opportunities that an in-person symposium could, it compensated by providing access to a more diverse audience, notably with more LMIC presenters and participants than previous symposiums. The evaluation found that learning opportunities with the online format were equal to previous symposiums and that delegates from LMIC benefited markedly more than those from HIC.

**Conclusion 1:** HSR2020 largely succeeded with its online format, notably providing access to diverse audiences and possibly health researchers who would not be able to attend an in-person event, for example due to visa issues, their remote location, work commitments, financial limitations, etc. It is envisaged that future symposiums will be able to be held in person; at the same time, remote participation should be maintained given the benefits seen for some audiences. Combining in-person and remote participation (“blended approach”) is a relatively new event experience and good practices are only now starting to emerge, such as making sure physical venues are equipped to support remote participation, with full video and interactive conference services.

**Recommendation 1:** For future symposiums adopt a blended approach combining both online and in-person formats; ensure that physical venues are well equipped to support remote participation.

**Conclusion 2:** HSR2020 was not able to provide strong networking opportunities for delegates given its exclusively online format. In fairness to the symposium organisers and the platform, online networking for events is also a relatively new development and different approaches and tactics are being tested; such as networking online games, virtual environments and spaces to share and meet between conference delegates. In past symposiums, making contact and building relations with fellow health researchers was identified as a real added value for delegates. For both future online and in-person delegates, this will likely remain a priority.



**Recommendation 2:** Consider rethinking networking in any online format and finding a tool to facilitate it for future symposiums; for the in-person format, reinforce the networking within the program.

**Conclusion 3:** HSR2020 as an exclusively online event provided extensive feedback from delegates on what “worked” and did not for them. In general, the sessions worked well with improvements could be seen as needed in the interactivity and the ability to follow-up with participants (and possible build ongoing projects and a community with them). The networking aspects were less successful as described in the previous conclusion as was the poster sessions. The suggestions from delegates provide insights as to how the online experience can be improved (see Improvements above).

**Recommendation 3:** For the online platform of future symposiums, integrate the feedback from the delegates to improve the online experience, notably in interactivity, networking and poster sessions.

**Conclusion 4:** HSR2020 created a rich legacy of materials; content, presentations, session recordings and posters. These materials are available to delegates (and following March 2021 to the wider public). However, delegates were unsure of how to access these materials—and for how long they would be available—to further capitalize on them for their own learning and knowledge development.

**Recommendation 4:** Communicate to the delegates about access and availability of the HSR2020 materials.

**Conclusion 5:** Skills-building sessions were very popular with delegates for HSR2020 as seen with previous symposiums. Given their benefit for delegates from mainly LMICs, they appear to be a key benefit in addition to the scientific program, offered both in-person and online.

**Recommendation 5:** Consider increasing the number of skills-building sessions, offering them both online and in-person (when feasible).



# **ANNEXES**

# ANNEX 1: SURVEY DATA TABLES

The following table contains the key survey questions of phase 1 and 2 split by HIC/LMIC delegates. With the exception of the “Yes/No questions”, the calculations are for the mean (average) of ratings for a four point scale then converted to a percentage, excluding “Don’t know/NA” response. The numbers shown are percentages with the exception of “n” that are the number of responses for the given question. The differences between the HIC and LMIC delegates were mostly statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ )—those responses that were not statistically significant are marked with an \*.

## Phase 1 survey results

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following (Mean of 1=completely disagree to 4 fully agree):	HIC (%)	LMIC (%)	ALL (%)	ALL n
HSR2020 Included a balance of views and voices from the North and South*	79%	78%	79%	683
HSR2020 Favored connections between a diverse representation of people*	77%	80%	79%	638
HSR2020 facilitated you to develop your professional network	61%	72%	68%	635
HSR2020 provided participants with new knowledge	79%	84%	83%	683

As a presenter, to what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following?	HIC (%)	LMIC (%)	ALL (%)	ALL n
Support with pre-recording prior to HSR2020*	83%	85%	84%	196
Support from symposium secretariat prior to HSR2020*	87%	86%	86%	257
Support from symposium secretariat during HSR2020*	86%	87%	87%	284

To what extent were you satisfied with the session(s) you attended:	HIC (%)	LMIC (%)	ALL (%)	ALL n
Satellite sessions & Skills building sessions organized during Sunday-Monday*	81%	81%	81%	385

With regard to the Scientific Program to what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following?	HIC (%)	LMIC (%)	ALL (%)	ALL n
The plenary sessions content	83%	86%	85%	536
Overall quality of Scientific Program	82%	86%	85%	552

With regard to the online experience of HSR2020 to what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following?	HIC (%)	LMIC (%)	ALL (%)	ALL n
The possibility to network and connect with other participants	63%	72%	70%	636
The interaction possibilities with speakers, panels and participants	69%	73%	72%	667
The ability to find and connect with peers on the online platform	65%	72%	70%	617
The ability to find information and my way around the online platform	73%	75%	76%	695

To what extent your expectations were met by the symposium?	HIC (%)	LMIC (%)	ALL (%)	ALL n
Great extent	25%	40%	37%	265
Some extent	61%	54%	56%	407
Expectations not met	13%	6%	7%	53

Do you think your participation in HSR2020 will change any of the following (% of respondents)	HIC (%)	LMIC (%)	ALL (%)	ALL n
Your current use of health systems research (% of respondents)				
Yes	47%	82%	74%	443
No	53%	18%	26%	155
How you currently interpret or use research methods (% of respondents)				
Yes	47%	79%	71%	428
No	53%	21%	29%	171
Your current use of state-of-the-art tools and resources				
Yes	49%	75%	69%	384
No	51%	25%	31%	174
How you currently share, disseminate or translate information, research knowledge or results from research				
Yes	52%	83%	75%	450
No	48%	17%	25%	147
The network with whom you are currently sharing, disseminating or translating information, research knowledge or results from research				
Yes	51%	72%	67%	377
No	49%	28%	33%	183
How you currently address or respond to a health systems challenge or problem				
Yes	57%	83%	77%	456
No	43%	17%	23%	136

## Phase 2 survey results

To what extent were you satisfied with the session(s) you attended:	HIC (%)	LMIC (%)	ALL (%)	ALL n
Sessions attended—25 November 2020*	79%	84%	83%	134
Sessions attended—2 December 2020*	81%	83%	83%	146

With regard to the online experience of HSR2020 to what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following?	HIC (%)	LMIC (%)	ALL (%)	ALL n
The possibility to network and connect with other participants	63%	72%	71%	168
The interaction possibilities with speakers, panels and participants	70%	76%	75%	173
The ability to find and connect with peers on the online platform*	71%	72%	72%	163
The ability to find information and my way around the online platform*	77%	81%	80%	182

To what extent your expectations were met by the symposium?	HIC (%)	LMIC (%)	ALL (%)	ALL n
Great extent	11%	43%	38%	71
Some extent	71%	51%	54%	101
Expectations not met	18%	6%	8%	14

Do you think your participation in HSR2020 will change any of the following (% of respondents)	HIC (%)	LMIC (%)	ALL (%)	ALL n
Your current use of health systems research (% of respondents)				
Yes	57%	84%	81%	133
No	43%	16%	19%	32
How you currently interpret or use research methods (% of respondents)				
Yes	50%	83%	78%	125
No	50%	17%	22%	35
Your current use of state-of-the-art tools and resources				
Yes	47%	71%	68%	97
No	53%	29%	32%	46
How you currently share, disseminate or translate information, research knowledge or results from research				
Yes	45%	82%	78%	125
No	55%	18%	22%	36
The network with whom you are currently sharing, disseminating or translating information, research knowledge or results from research*				
Yes	64%	71%	70%	104
No	36%	29%	30%	44
How you currently address or respond to a health systems challenge or problem				
Yes	55%	85%	81%	132
No	45%	15%	19%	30

# ANNEX 2: EXTRA SURVEY CHARTS

The following charts and table detail the demographic profiles of delegates that responded to the online surveys, in addition to some extra charts for phase 2.

Figure 19: Role of surveyed delegates—Phase 1

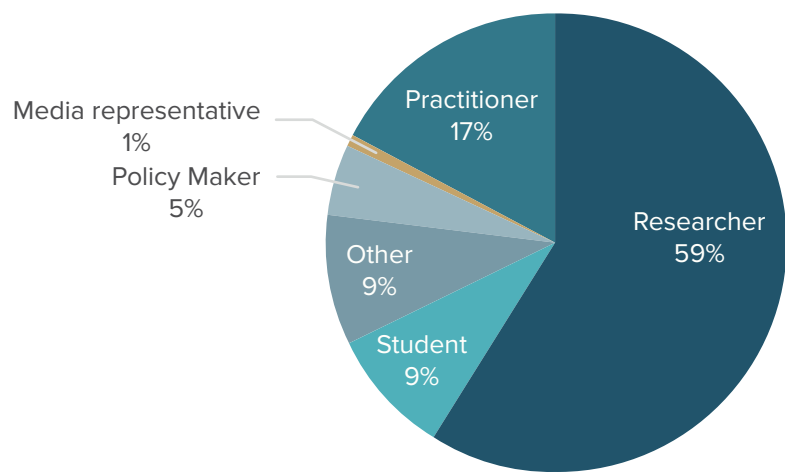


Figure 20: Type of organization of surveyed delegates—Phase 1

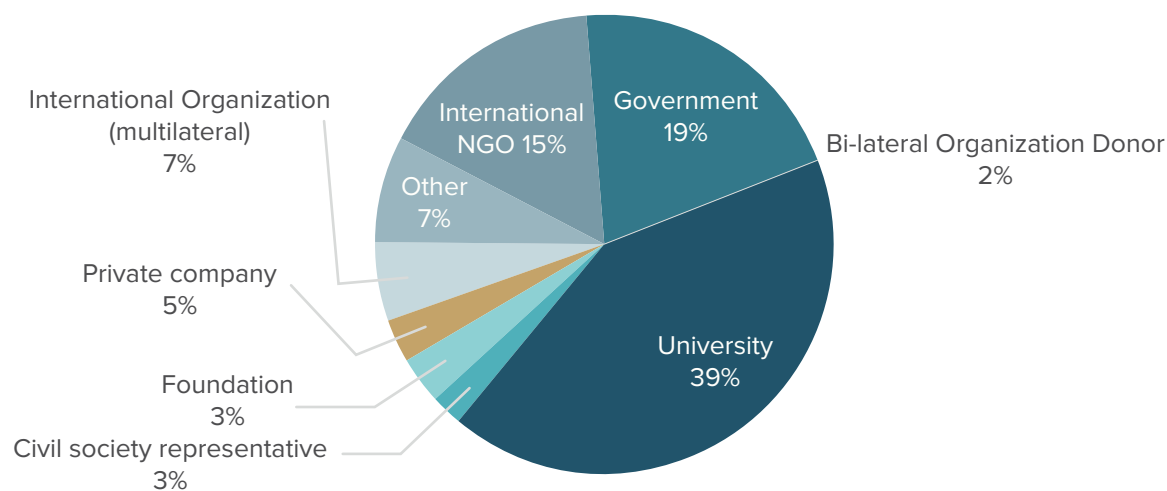


Figure 21: Gender of surveyed delegates—Phase 1

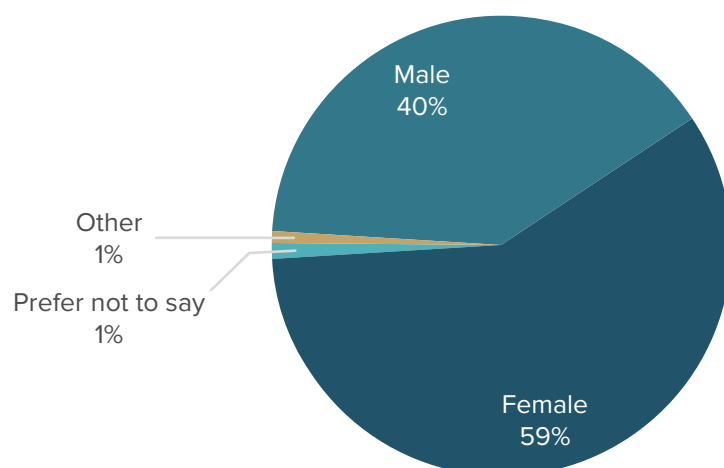


Figure 22: Age of surveyed delegates—Phase 1

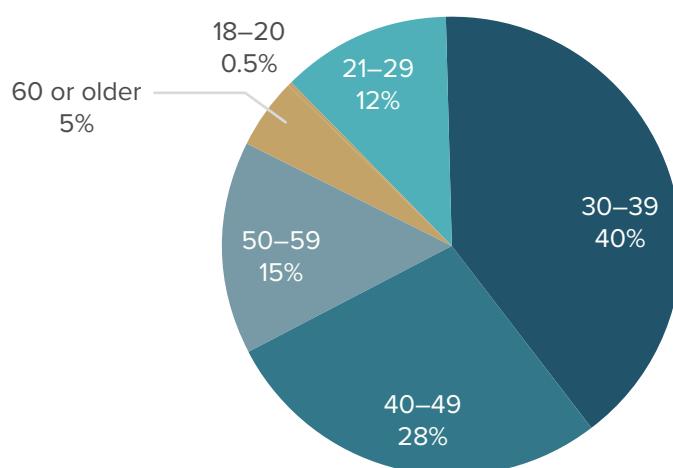


Table 3: country of surveyed delegates—Phase 1

Country	Number of Responses	Country	Number of Responses
India	55	Ghana	18
Nigeria	54	China	16
United States of America	51	Lebanon	15
United Kingdom	47	Switzerland	15
Kenya	38	Peru	14
South Africa	34	Australia	13
Philippines	29	Thailand	13
Bangladesh	24	Canada	12
Myanmar	23	Ethiopia	12
Uganda	23	Tanzania	12
Indonesia	22	Colombia	11
Malaysia	20	Argentina	10
<b>5–9 participants per country:</b> Georgia, Malawi, Burkina Faso, Nepal, Netherlands, Pakistan, Belgium, Brazil, Senegal, United Arab Emirates, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Sweden, Germany, Vietnam			
<b>Less than 5 participants per country:</b> Bahrain, Côte D'Ivoire, Mexico, Sierra Leone, Ukraine, Zambia, Cameroon, Chile, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Other (Palestine), Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Benin, Botswana, Cambodia, Gambia, Italy, Japan, Liberia, State of Palestine, Timor-Leste, Uruguay, Burundi, Croatia, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Grenada, Kuwait, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, New Zealand, Niger, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Northern Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Yemen.			

Figure 23: region of surveyed delegates—Phase 1

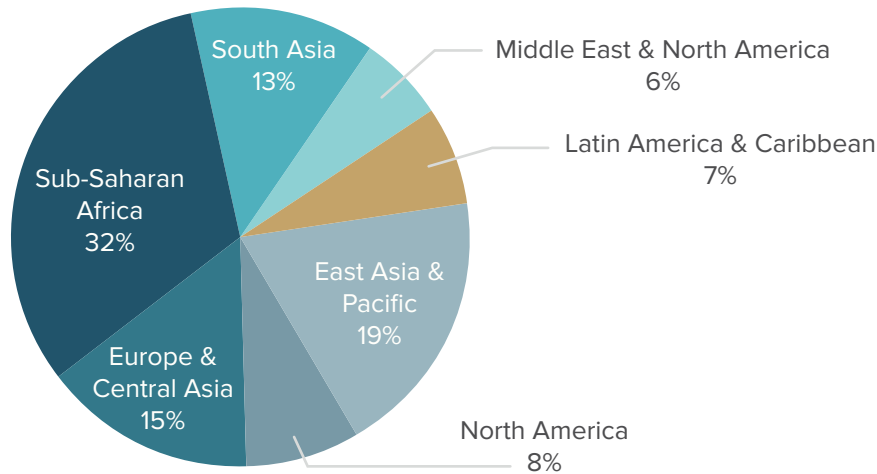


Figure 24: joined HSG as a paying member before HSR2020 symposium or during the registration process

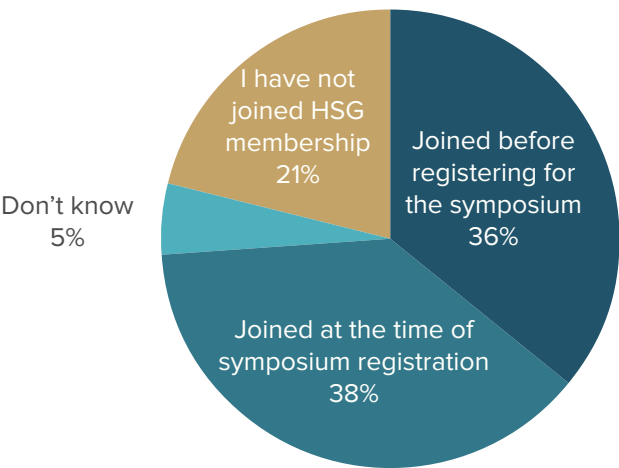


Figure 25: if you did not become an HSG member during registration, based on your experience at the symposium do you plan to become an HSG member and pay membership fees?

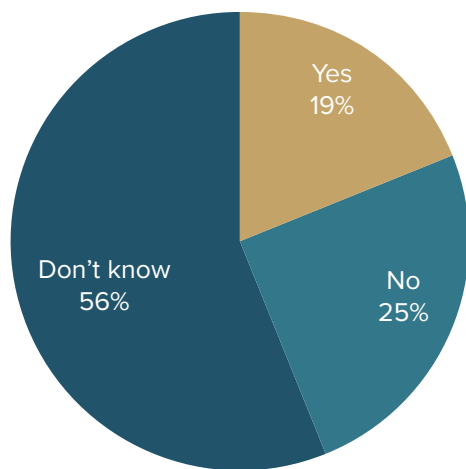




Figure 26: previous HSR symposiums attended  
(Q. How many previous symposiums have you attended?)

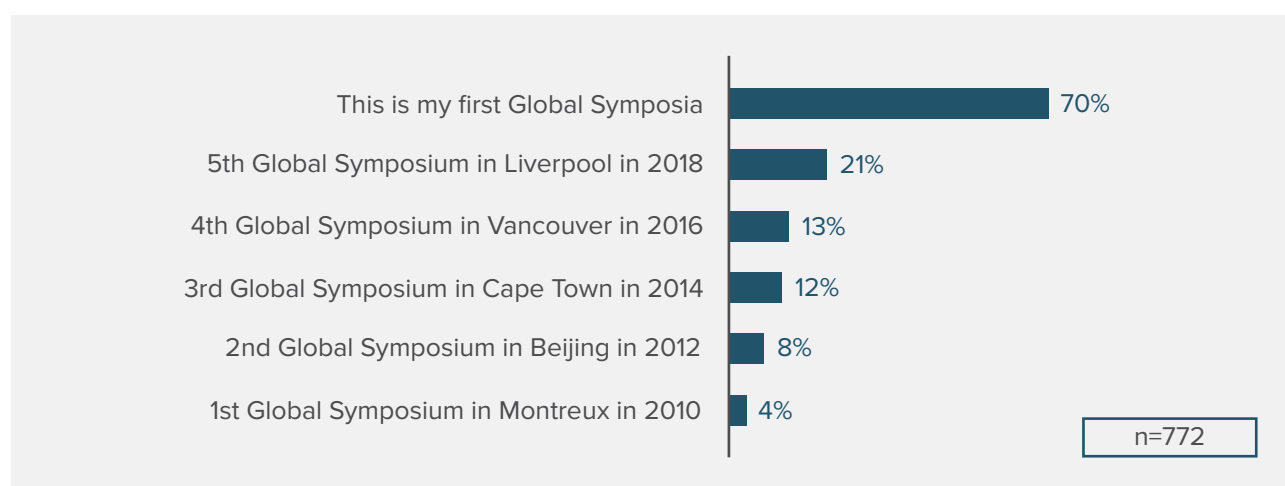


Figure 27: Role of surveyed delegates—Phase 2

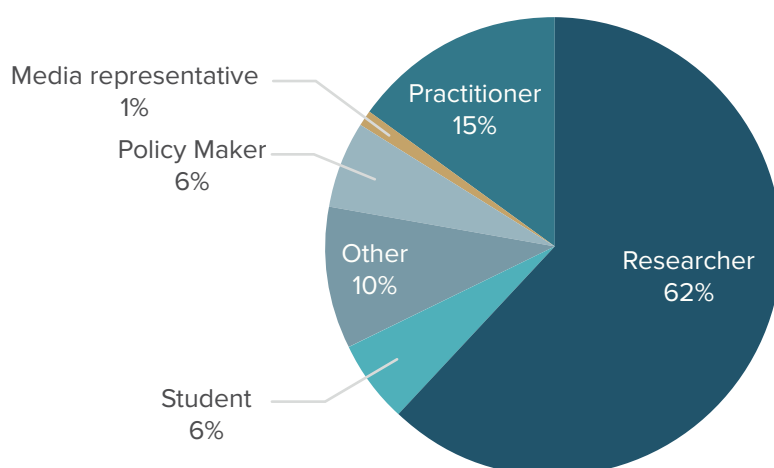


Figure 28: Type of organization of surveyed delegates—Phase 2

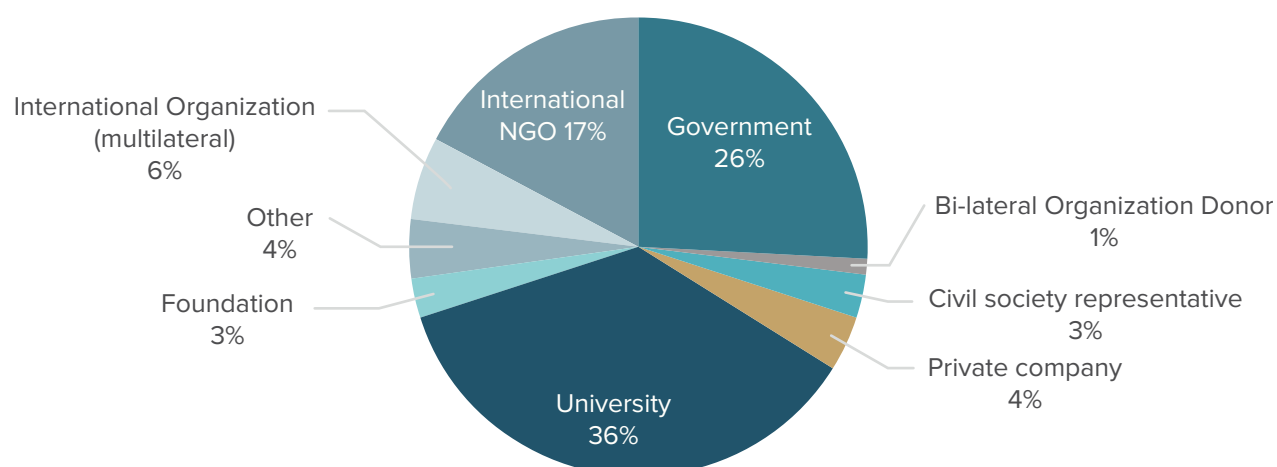


Figure 29: Gender of surveyed delegates—Phase 2

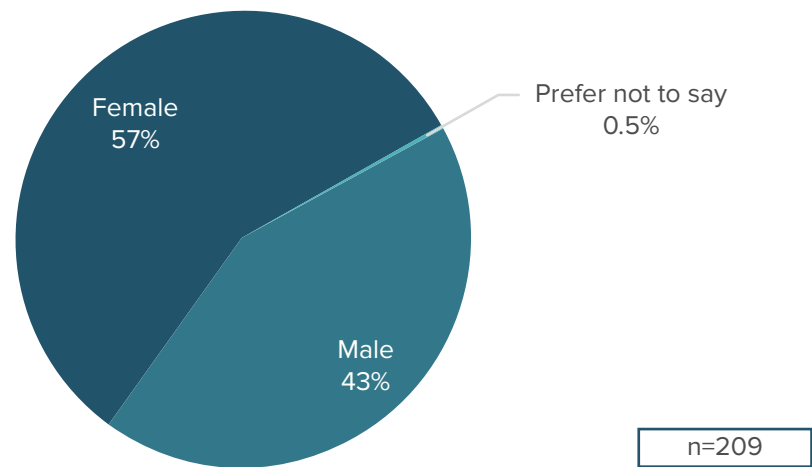


Figure 30: Age of surveyed delegates—Phase 2

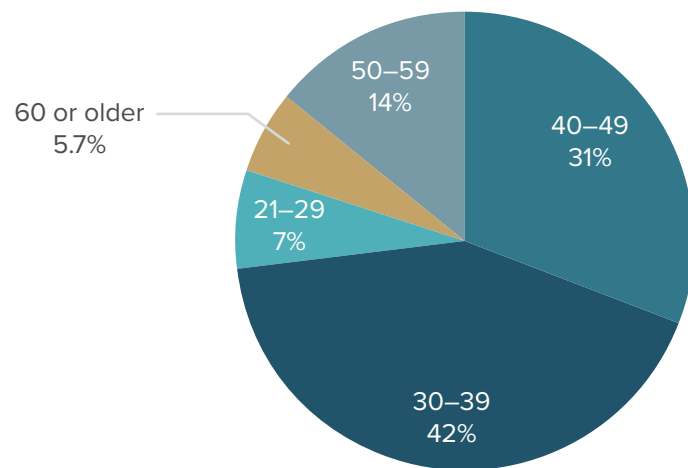


Table 4: country of surveyed delegates—Phase 2

Country	Number of Responses	Country	Number of Responses
Nigeria	21	Malaysia	10
India	17	Philippines	10
Myanmar	11		
<b>5–9 participants per country:</b> Kenya, South Africa, China, Pakistan, Uganda, United Kingdom, Bangladesh, Colombia, Ghana, Peru			
<b>Less than 5 participants per country:</b> Georgia, Nepal, State of Palestine, United States of America, Canada, Jordan, Sweden, United Republic of Tanzania, Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Côte D’Ivoire, Italy, Liberia, Malawi, Netherlands, Rwanda, Thailand, Ukraine, Yemen, Bahrain, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Germany, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Niger, Palestine, Romania, Senegal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, Zimbabwe			

Figure 31: region of surveyed delegates—Phase 2

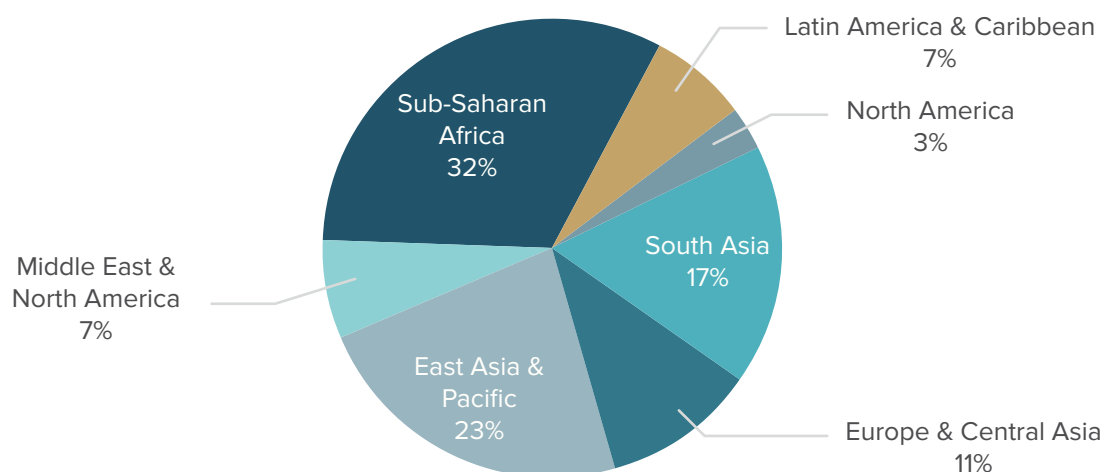


Figure 32: Online experience of HSR2020—Phase 2

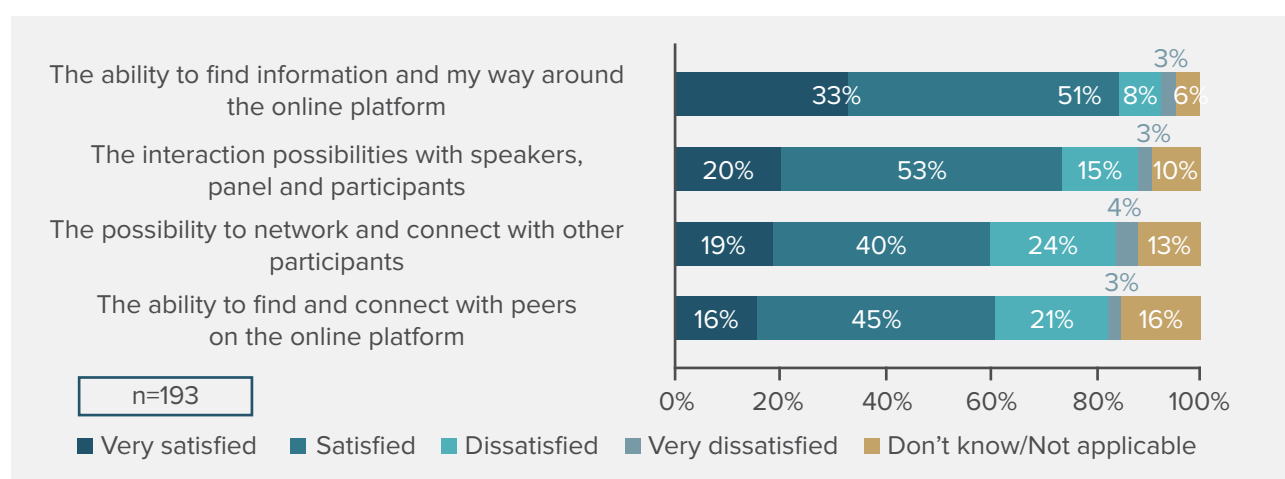
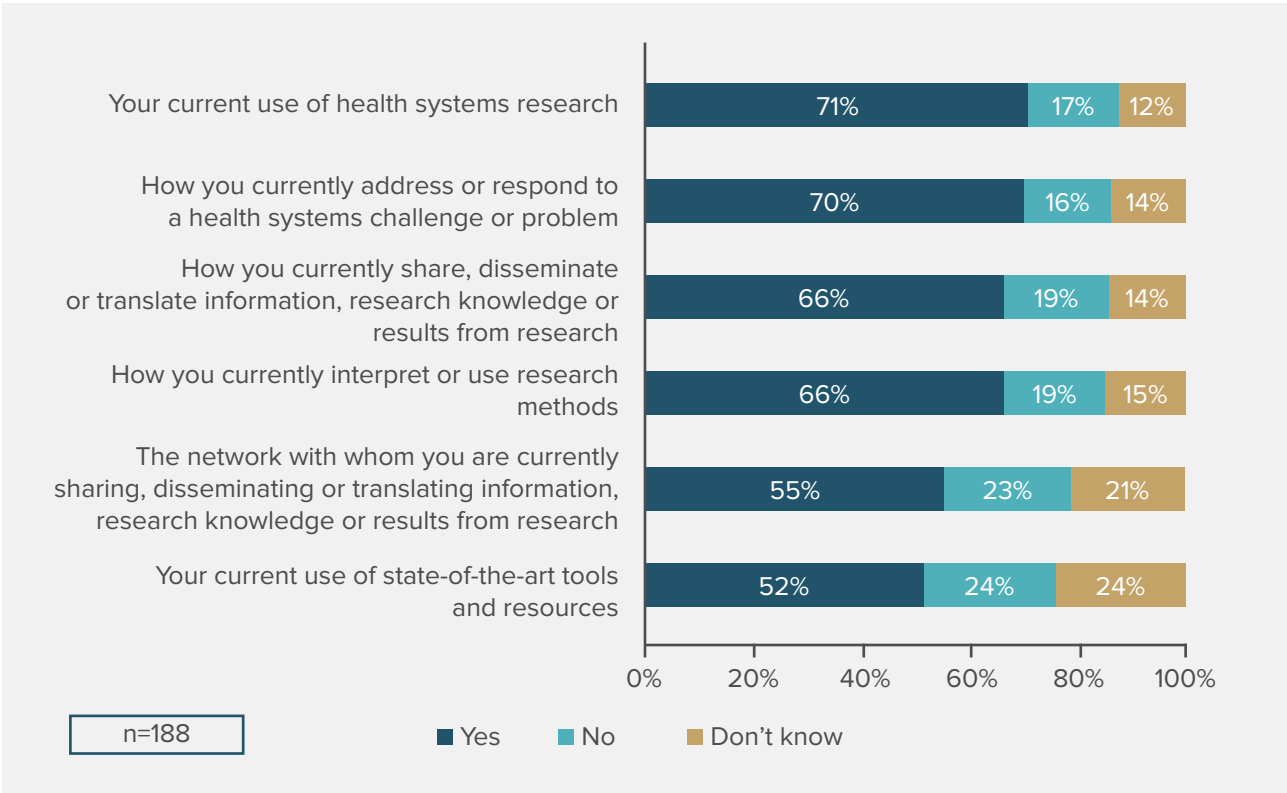


Figure 33: Main value in attending HSR2020—Phase 2 (multiple choice)



Figure 34: HSR2020 participation will change the following actions—Phase 2  
(Q. Do you think your participation in HSR2020 will change any of the following?)



## ANNEX 3: COMPARISON OF KEY RESULTS BETWEEN SYMPOSIUMS

The following tables provide a comparison of key survey results from HSR2016, 2018 and 2020. Not all of the questions asked in 2018 and 2020 were asked in 2016 (thus the N/A results). Further, the scales and questions used were identical for 2018 and 2020; there were some variations with 2016.

To what extent your expectations were met by the symposium?	HSR2016	HSR2018	HSR2020
Great extent	N/A	54%	37%
Some extent	N/A	41%	56%
Expectations not met	N/A	5%	7%

Intention to attend next symposium?	HSR2016	HSR2018	HSR2020
Yes	N/A	78%	96%*

\*Phase 1 result of HSR2020; phase 2 result was 97%.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following (Mean of 1=completely disagree to 4 fully agree):	HSR2016	HSR2018	HSR2020
Symposium included a balance of views and voices from the North and South	79%	76%	79%
Symposium favored connections between a diverse representation of people	83%	79%	79%
Symposium facilitated you to develop your professional network	81%	80%	68%
Symposium provided participants with new knowledge	77%	80%	83%

With regard to the Scientific Program to what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following?	HSR2016	HSR2018	HSR2020
The plenary sessions content	N/A	83%	85%
Overall quality of Scientific Program	N/A	81%	85%

<b>Do you think your participation in the symposium will change any of the following (% of respondents)</b>	<b>HSR2016</b>	<b>HSR2018</b>	<b>HSR2020</b>
<b>Your current use of health systems research (% of respondents)</b>			
Yes	N/A	68%	74%
No	N/A	32%	26%
<b>How you currently interpret or use research methods (% of respondents)</b>			
Yes	N/A	58%	71%
No	N/A	42%	29%
<b>Your current use of state-of-the-art tools and resources</b>			
Yes	N/A	58%	69%
No	N/A	42%	31%
<b>Do you think your participation in the symposium will change any of the following (% of respondents)</b>	<b>HSR2016</b>	<b>HSR2018</b>	<b>HSR2020</b>
<b>How you currently share, disseminate or translate information, research knowledge or results from research</b>			
Yes	N/A	68%	75%
No	N/A	32%	25%
<b>The network with whom you are currently sharing, disseminating or translating information, research knowledge or results from research</b>			
Yes	N/A	82%	67%
No	N/A	18%	33%
<b>How you currently address or respond to a health systems challenge or problem</b>			
Yes	N/A	71%	77%
No	N/A	29%	23%

*\*Phase 1 results of HSR2020.*

## ANNEX 4: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The following table contains a description of the methods used, including sampling targets, which aimed to gather sufficient responses for a representative and credible evaluation.

Table 5: Evaluation methods, sampling targets and results

Tools	Description	Sources	Sample	Result
Delegates survey	The two online surveys included a majority of closed questions with a limited number of open questions. There surveys were distributed in English and sent to participants as a link at the closure of phase 1 and phase 2 (December 2020). The survey used a selection of questions from the HSR2018 symposium survey to allow for comparisons. The survey questions are found in annex 5.	All participants (including presenters)	30% of total participants (~700)	Phase 1: 793 responses 42% response rate  Phase 2: 209 delegates 26% response rate
Group discussions	four group discussions with 12 delegates were held; 2 in English; 1 in French and 1 in Spanish. The group discussions were based on a series of points found in annex 5.	4 groups	4 groups	4 groups (12 delegates)
Onsite observation	The evaluation team participated in the HSR2020 as observers, being on the platform during phase 1 and 2.	N/A	N/A	Carried out
Secondary data	An analysis of secondary data, such as abstract submission rates, registration data, social media and web analytics.	HSR2020 secretariat	N/A	Carried out

The HSG key objectives were transformed into evaluation questions and matched to tools and indicators in the evaluation matrix found in annex 6.

**Ensuring sufficient responses:** The approach that was used to ensure sufficient responses to the survey and discussion groups included:

- » HSR2020 Secretariat provided the evaluation team with the contact details of the proposed participants of group discussions so initial contact could be made and the discussions scheduled.
- » The online surveys were sent following the completion of phase 1 and phase 2 (November and December 2020 components).

**Analytical approach:** The data collected was compiled and analyzed with findings, conclusions and recommendations extracted from the analysis. Appropriate qualitative and quantitative analysis may be found below. To determine trends and results of interest, data was segmented as follows:

- » Income group (e.g. Low-middle income countries compared to high-income countries)
- » Region of origin
- » Gender (if available)
- » Age

Statistical testing was carried out on the delegates survey results to determine statistically significant differences based on income group and region. Statistical tests used were T-test, Chi-square test and Anova test.



# ANNEX 5: EVALUATION TOOLS

This annex details the three main evaluation tools used by the evaluation team.

## Online survey–phase 1

### Introduction

Thank you for attending phase 1 of the Sixth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR2020), from 8–12 November 2020. We would appreciate it if you could complete this online survey for the evaluation of the conference. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and your input and feedback would be an important contribution. The survey will be available for a limited time; therefore, it would be helpful if you could complete it as soon as possible. Your responses will remain confidential, used only for the purpose of this evaluation.

Thanking you in advance for your contribution,  
Glenn O’Neil  
Symposium evaluator

Please click the “Next” button below to start.

Questions marked with \* are mandatory.

### Section 1: Please tell us about yourself

1. Which of the following best describes you?\*

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Researcher
- ☐ Practitioner
- ☐ Media representative
- ☐ Policy maker
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2. For which organization do you do most of your work? \*

- ☐ University
- ☐ Government
- ☐ International NGO
- ☐ Civil society representative
- ☐ Bi-lateral Organization/Donor
- ☐ International Organization (multilateral)
- ☐ Foundation
- ☐ Private company
- ☐ Other (please specify)

3. What is your gender?\*

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

4. What is your age?\*

- ☐ 17 or younger
- ☐ 18–20
- ☐ 21–29
- ☐ 30–39
- ☐ 40–49
- ☐ 50–59
- ☐ 60 or older

5. What country do you currently reside in? \*

6. Did you join HSG as a paying member before the HSR2020 symposium or during the registration process?\*

- ☐ Joined before registration for the symposium → [Go to question 9](#)
- ☐ Joined at the time of symposium registration → [Go to question 9](#)
- ☐ I did not join the HSG membership
- ☐ Don't know → [Go to question 9](#)

7. If you did become an HSG member during the registration, based on your experience at the symposium, do you plan to become an HSG member and pay the membership fees? \*
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know
8. Which of the previous HSR symposia have you attended? (Select all that apply)\*
- ☐ 1st Global Symposium in Montreux in 2010
- ☐ 2nd Global Symposium in Beijing in 2012
- ☐ 3rd Global Symposium in Cape Town in 2014
- ☐ 4th Global Symposium in Vancouver in 2016
- ☐ 5th Global Symposium in Liverpool in 2018
- ☐ This is my first Global Symposia
- ☐ Don't know / N/A
9. Did you participate at the symposium as a presenter (ex. session chair, presenter, panel or plenary speaker)?\*
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No → [Go to question 12](#)
10. As a presenter, to what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following?\*

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know / N/A
Support with pre-recording prior to HSR2020				
Support from symposium secretariat prior to HSR2020				
Support from symposium secretariat during HSR2020				

11. Please provide any comments on the support here:

## Section 2: Your overall appreciation of the symposium

12. Did you attend a satellite or skills-building session on Sunday 8 November or Monday 9 November? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No → [Go to question 16](#)

13. Which category of satellite or skills building session(s) did you attend? \*  
(Select all that apply)

☐ Satellite sessions organized during Sunday-Monday

☐ Skills building sessions organized during Sunday-Monday

☐ Do not remember

14. To what extent were you satisfied with the session(s) you attended: \*

☐ Very dissatisfied

☐ Dissatisfied

☐ Satisfied

☐ Very satisfied

☐ Don't know / Not applicable

15. Please provide any comments on the session(s) here:

16. Did you participate in the Scientific Program (Tuesday 10 November to Thursday 12 November)? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No → [Go to question Error! Reference source not found.](#)

17. With regard to the Scientific Program to what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following?\*

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know / N/A
The plenary sessions content				
The quality and cohesion of the oral sessions				
The quality and range of the organized panel sessions				
The quality and range of the virtual posters				
Overall quality of Scientific Program				

18. Please provide any comments on the Scientific Program here:

## Section 2: Your overall appreciation of the symposium

19. Did you receive a scholarship to attend the symposium? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No → [Go to question 22](#)

20. With regard to the scholarship, to what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following?\*

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know / N/A
Scholarship online application				
Pre-conference guidance reflected in the scholarship award letter				
Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know / N/A
Pre-conference support for symposium registration				
Support during the symposium sessions				

21. Please provide any comments on the Scholarship Programme here:

### Section 3: The organization of the symposium

22. With regard to the organization of HSR2020 to what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following?\*

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know / N/A
The abstract submission process				
The online registration and payment process				
Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know / N/A
The performance of the symposium online platform				
Customer support during the sessions				
Overall satisfaction with the symposium organization				

23. Please provide any comments on the symposium organization here:

24. With regard to the online experience of HSR2020 to what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following?\*

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know / N/A
The possibility to network and connect with other participants				
The interaction possibilities with speakers, panels and participants				
The ability to find and connect with peers on the online platform				
The ability to find information and my way around the online platform				

25. Please provide any comments on the online experience here:

26. What were the **advantages** for you of HSR2020 being exclusively online:

27. What were the **disadvantages** for you of HSR2020 being exclusively online:

## Section 4: Communications and Social Media of the symposium

28. To what extent did you use the Conference App to... \*

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Don't know/ N/A
... Screen symposium sessions and descriptions?					
... Choose and mark the interesting sessions for me to attend?					

29. Did you follow the HSR2020 on social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram)? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No → [Go to question 31](#)

30. To what extent has Health Systems Global social media contributed to your learning... \*

Not at all	To a small extent	To some extent	To a large extent	To a very large extent	Don't know/ N/A
... before HSR2020					
... during HSR2020?					

## Section 5: Value and learning of the symposium

31. What was the MAIN value for you in attending phase 1 of HSR2020? (select all that apply)\*

- ☐ Gaining new knowledge on health systems research
- ☐ Gaining new skills and research methods
- ☐ Sharing and/or presenting health systems research
- ☐ Learning about capacity development strategies
- ☐ Learning about innovations in research approaches, methods and measures
- ☐ Learning about knowledge translation strategies/approaches
- ☐ Learning about innovations in health system practice
- ☐ Making new contacts/opportunities for future collaboration
- ☐ Strengthening collaboration with existing contacts  
(i.e., people you already knew before)



- ☐ I cannot identify a main value from phase 1 of HSR2020
- ☐ Other, please specify:

32. To what extent your expectations were met by phase 1 of HSR2020? \*

- ☐ To a great extent → [Go to question 33](#)
- ☐ To some extent → [Go to question 33](#)
- ☐ My expectations were not met → [Go to question 34](#)

33. Please explain how your expectations were met by the symposium?  
→ [Go to question 35](#)

34. Please suggest what could have been done differently to meet your expectations:

35. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following:\*

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know / N/A
HSR2020 Included a balance of views and voices from the North and South				
HSR2020 Favoured connections between a diverse representation of people				
Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know / N/A
HSR2020 facilitated you to develop your professional network				
HSR2020 provided participants with new knowledge				

## Section 6: Looking forward

36. Do you think your participation in phase 1 of HSR2020 will change any of the following: \*

Yes	No	Don't know / N/A
Your current use of health systems research		
How you currently interpret or use research methods		
Your current use of state-of-the-art tools and resources		
How you currently share, disseminate or translate information, research knowledge or results from research		
The network with whom you are currently sharing, disseminating or translating information, research knowledge or results from research		
How you currently address or respond to a health systems challenge or problem		

37. What would you like to see more or fewer of at the next HSR symposium:\*

More	No change	Less	Don't know
Satellite sessions			
Skills-building sessions			
Plenary sessions			
More	No change	Less	Don't know
Concurrent sessions			
Networking opportunities			

38. Please provide any suggestions or improvements for the next HSR symposium here:

39. How likely is it that you would recommend attending HSR global symposium to a friend or colleague? \*

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Extremely likely

40. Do you plan to attend online sessions of phase 2 (November 2020 to March 2021) of HSR2020? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No

41. Do you plan to attend the next HSR symposium in 2022? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No

42. Please indicate if you would like to be entered into the prize draw for three Amazon \$100 gift voucher (please note your email address will not be connected to your responses)\*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Thank you very much for your participation! We will look forward to seeing you at phase 2 of HSR2020.

End of the survey

## Online survey–phase 2

**Note: survey content will need to be adapted once the content on phase 2 is known in more detail.**

### Introduction

Thank you for attending some sessions of phase 2 of the Sixth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR2020), November–December 2020. We would appreciate it if you could complete this online survey for the evaluation of the conference. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and your input and feedback would be an important contribution. The survey will be available for a limited time; therefore, it would be helpful if you could complete it as soon as possible. Your responses will remain confidential, used only for the purpose of this evaluation.

Glenn O’Neil  
Symposium evaluator

Please click the “Next” button below to start.

Questions marked with \* are mandatory.

### Section 1: Please tell us about yourself

1. Which of the following best describes you?\*
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Researcher
- ☐ Practitioner
- ☐ Media representative
- ☐ Policy maker
- ☐ Other (please specify)
2. For which organization do you do most of your work? \*
- ☐ University
- ☐ Government
- ☐ International NGO
- ☐ Civil society representative
- ☐ Bi-lateral Organization/Donor
- ☐ International Organization (multilateral)

- ☐ Foundation
- ☐ Private company
- ☐ Other (please specify)

3. What is your gender?\*

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other

Prefer not to say

4. What is your age?\*

- ☐ 17 or younger
- ☐ 18–20
- ☐ 21–29
- ☐ 30–39
- ☐ 40–49
- ☐ 50–59
- ☐ 60 or older

5. What country do you currently reside in? \*

## Section 2: Your overall appreciation of the symposium

6. Which session(s) did you attend during November 25th? \*

- ☐ None → [Go to question 9](#)

7. To what extent were you satisfied with the session(s) you attended: \*

- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Don't know / Not applicable

8. Please provide any comments on the session(s) here:

9. Which session(s) did you attend on 9 December? \*

☐ None → [Go to question 12](#)

10. To what extent were you satisfied with the session(s) you attended: \*

☐ Very dissatisfied

☐ Dissatisfied

☐ Satisfied

☐ Very satisfied

☐ Don't know / Not applicable

11. Please provide any comments on the session(s) here:

12. With regard to the online experience of phase 2 of HSR2020 to what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following?\*

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know / N/A
The possibility to network and connect with other participants				
The interaction possibilities with speakers, panels and participants				
The ability to find information and my way around the online platform				
The ability to find and connect with peers on the online platform				

13. Please provide any comments on the online experience here:

### Section 3: Value and learning of the symposium

14. What was the MAIN value for you in attending phase 2 of HSR2020? (select all that apply)\*
- ☐ Gaining new knowledge on health systems research
  - ☐ Gaining new skills and research methods
  - ☐ Sharing and/or presenting health systems research
  - ☐ Learning about capacity development strategies
  - ☐ Learning about innovations in research approaches, methods and measures
  - ☐ Learning about knowledge translation strategies/approaches
  - ☐ Learning about innovations in health system practice
  - ☐ Making new contacts/opportunities for future collaboration
  - ☐ Strengthening collaboration with existing contacts  
(i.e., people you already knew before)
  - ☐ I cannot identify a main value from phase 2 of HSR2020
  - ☐ Other, please specify:
15. To what extent your expectations were met by phase 2 of HSR2020? \*
- ☐ To a great extent → [Go to question 16](#)
  - ☐ To some extent → [Go to question 16](#)
  - ☐ My expectations were not met → [Go to question 17](#)
16. Please explain how your expectations were met by the symposium?  
→ [Go to question 18](#)
17. Please suggest what could have been done differently to meet your expectations:

## Section 4: Looking forward

18. Do you think your participation in phase 2 of HSR2020 will change any of the following: \*

Yes	No	Don't know / N/A
Your current use of health systems research		
How you currently interpret or use research methods		
Your current use of state-of-the-art tools and resources		
How you currently share, disseminate or translate information, research knowledge or results from research		
The network with whom you are currently sharing, disseminating or translating information, research knowledge or results from research		
How you currently address or respond to a health systems challenge or problem		

19. Please provide any suggestions or improvements for the next HSR symposium here:

20. How likely is it that you would recommend attending HSR global symposium to a friend or colleague? \*

Not at all   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   Extremely likely

21. Do you plan to attend the next HSR symposium in 2022? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Thank you very much for your participation! We will look forward to seeing you at phase 3 of HSR2020 or at HSR 2022.

End of the survey



## Discussion Guide

### General questions (for all)

1. Please tell us of your reasons for participation in HSR2020?
2. What has been the greatest value so far of your participation in HSR2020?
3. Where would you describe you have gained the greatest knowledge or learning from HSR2020?
4. How has the online experience of HSR2020 been? From phase 1 to phase 2? (if phase 2 already started)
5. What do you think needs to be improved for future HSR symposiums?

## ANNEX 6: EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation questions	Key indicators	Participants surveys	Online discussions	Online observation	Secondary data
1. How did the HSR2020 activities promote inclusiveness and connect diverse stakeholders from different geographic regions and language backgrounds?	Representation of participants across low-high income countries				X
	Inclusiveness of LMIC countries and presenters				X
	Level of perceived connection between diverse stakeholders	X	X	X	
	Level of perceived balance of views between North and South	X	X		
2. How did the HSR2020 activities facilitate equitable knowledge acquisition and dissemination around health policy and systems research?	Level of participants identifying knowledge acquired	X	X		
	Level of participants identifying knowledge disseminated	X	X		
	Level of satisfaction with HSR2020 knowledge content		X		
3. How did the HSR2020 activities disseminate health systems research methods including methods for knowledge translation?	Level of participants identifying learning of research methods	X	X		
	Availability of sessions showcasing research methods			X	X
4. How did the HSR2020 activities support capacity-building for the conduct, translation and utilization of healthy policy and systems research?	Anticipated use of HSR2020 learning in capacity building	X	X		
	Level of satisfaction with skills-building sessions	X	X		
	Level of opportunities for networking	X	X	X	