

Lyon Catholic University & International Federation of Catholic Universities,
Lyon, Paris, Tuesday 7th February 2023.

PRESS RELEASE

NHNAI project teams set for ethical capacity-building with societal communities in 8 countries

NHNAI is an international multi-actor capacity-building project coordinated by the Confluence: Sciences and Humanities Research Center of Lyon Catholic University (France), with Prof. Dr. Mathieu Guillermin as main leader, under the aegis of the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU). It gathers [10 academic partners and multiple communities of societal actors in 8 different countries](#).

The project, which was officially launched in January 2022, puts academic resources at the service of collective and societal reflection upon the core question of *humanism* or of *what it means to be human* at the time of neurosciences (NS) and artificial intelligence (AI), with a view to co-constructing an ethical compass for regulating AI and NS technological developments and societal impacts. NHNAI thus aims at empowering communities of concerned actors in the different participating countries about the ethical issues stemming from these scientific and technological domains in three main fields (health, education and democracy). NHNAI intends to contribute to ethical capacity-building by organizing and facilitating societal debate in the different local communities through face-to-face events and online discussions on the digital platform [CartoDEBAT](#). More than a mere international debate allowing for the confrontation of various individual opinions, the goal is to open spaces for the elaboration of a collective analysis of complex questions where tensions are not considered as simple divergences of opinion, but are rather seen as intrinsic and significant frictions or dilemmas permitting to deepen and refine our understanding of *who we are* and *who we should be as humans* at the time of NS and AI.



The NHNAI Project Has Identified Context-Sensitive Key Issues to Foster Societal Debate

New Humanism at the times of Neurosciences and Artificial Intelligence

The project, which is now entering its second year, has accomplished several milestones, including the organization of the first **Academic Workshop** that gathered academic experts across the world at Lyon Catholic University on March 10-12, 2022. On that occasion, scholars looked into what means to be human at the present time, going beyond purely technical issues in order to integrate ethical, moral and spiritual dimensions. Some extracts from the workshop may be viewed hereafter to learn more about ethical issues raised by the AI and neurosciences era:

- <https://youtu.be/P-e-Gn21ow> (Prof. Francisco De Lara López, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile - Reflection on the kind of societies we wish to live in)
<https://youtu.be/xEFHvYqHP4> (Dr. Brian P. Green, Santa Clara University, United States - Presentation of existing tools for ethical decision-making)
<https://youtu.be/WIOrLxwTy8c> (Prof. Fabio Macioce, Libera Università Maria Ss. Assunta di Roma, Italy - Opportunities and risks derived from a changing workplace)

After that first academic workshop that provided preliminary material, academic partners in the 8 different countries organized **Problem-framing workshops** with the communities of local societal actors to co-construct with them questions that should be explored during societal debates. On this ground, experts of the academic network have been asked to enrich and complement the preliminary material to maximize its relevance and usefulness as a tool at the service of societal debate. Among the numerous questions animating societal debates there are:

- What are the core traits of what it means to be a genuine human being that should be preserved/reinforced in the age of AI and NS?
- Does the development of AI and NS not risk leading to a dehumanization of teaching as well as reducing the diversity of sources?
- What in healthcare is inherently human and should not be delegated to AI or robots?
- Does the development of AI and NS risk depriving humanity of its autonomy and freedom? Can persons decide to live outside such technological developments when their deployment is decided at the collective level?

As for communication, an **International website** and eight country-specific versions were built up, and a first international **Newsletter**, which was also translated into local languages, was issued in early September. Additionally, several **videos in English** have been prepared for dissemination purposes: [one presenting the main project features](#) and [a series on the functioning of CartoDEBAT](#), the platform allowing for conducting digital debates. All the videos are available on the project Youtube Channel called "[NHNAI Network](#)".

Next Steps with Societal Debates Look Promising to Raise Ethical Awareness at a Large Scale

From February to April next year, academic partners will organize **ethical capacity-building workshops** with local communities in the 8 different countries, through both face-to-face and online digital debates.

Each local community will discuss on their own societal questions linked to humanism at the time of NS and AI, as they emerged from co-construction processes during problem-framing workshops and with proposals for enrichment coming from the other communities.

New Humanism at the times of Neurosciences and Artificial Intelligence

Based on common methodological guidelines and a shared toolbox for facilitating both face-to-face and online capacity-building workshops, each partner will prepare **outreach materials** to initiate and animate societal debates on these co-constructed questions.

Following capacity-building workshops, the corpuses of contributions thereby created (in the various local languages) will be collectively analyzed at the global level of the project. A workshop devoted to the elaboration of a global grid of analysis will gather academic partners in a second time in Lyon in April-May 2023. This global analysis will ultimately allow for producing recommendations and guidelines on AI and NS regulation based on a refined understanding of what it means to be human in our era marked by such new scientific and technological fields.

Contact:

Prof. Dr. Mathieu Guillermin,
Lyon Catholic University, France
nhnai-network@univ-catholyon.fr

Follow us : www.nhnai.org #nhnai LinkedIn