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IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH (IR) IN ACTION

THE SAVING CONSORTIUM PROJECT

BRIDGING CAPACITY GAPS IN IR

Welcome to the second edition of *IR In Action!*

In this issue, we're excited to share updates on our efforts to build both institutional and individual capacity in Implementation Research (IR), a key component in overcoming the challenges of scaling up and utilizing new medical interventions across Ghana.

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Work Package 1 with Members of Africa Regional Training Center (ARTC)



Newsletter Highlight

A Journey of Passion and Perseverance

In the heart of Ghana, a young scholar's journey has been marked by passion, perseverance, and the pursuit of knowledge.

Well Done, Jeremiah!

Find the full story on page 7

A Journey of Collaboration and Progress

A Year of Progress

Since the inception of the consortium, the Sustainable Access and Delivery of New Vaccines in Ghana (SAVING) Consortium have held twelve quarterly management board meetings as part of the project management and coordination activities. These meetings have been instrumental in tracking the activities of the various work packages (WPs) and ensuring that the Consortium stays on course.

The management board, comprising all WP leaders, the project manager, and chairs of the data management and communication sub-committees, have been at the forefront of these efforts.

During the inaugural meeting, Consortium lead, Professor Margaret Gyapong, outlined the key activities and milestones for the consortium, emphasizing the role of all WPs in achieving them. The focus was on year one activities, which included finalizing budgets and contracts, conducting project initiation meetings, establishing boards and committees, and holding regular communication sessions.

Additional tasks included identifying stakeholder needs, selecting master's and PhD students for scholarships, developing a communication strategy, and attending conferences. WP leaders were tasked with tracking activities and ensuring all consortium members were kept informed.

Achievements and Impact

The series of meetings held has helped the Consortium to:

- Make important decisions regarding the project scope, timelines, resource allocation, and budget.
- Facilitate effective communication among WP leaders and sub-committee chairs, ensuring that everyone is informed and aligned with the project goals.
- Provide a forum for identifying and addressing any challenges or obstacles that may impede project progress.
- Provide a platform for monitoring project performance and evaluating outcomes, assessing the project's success, and identifying areas for improvement.



Management Board members

Advancing Implementation Research: Insights from the SAVING Consortium's MOOC Journey

The Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Implementation Research (IR), organized by TDR, the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases in collaboration with the Africa Regional Training Center (ARTC), was a pivotal initiative within the SAVING Consortium. This course aimed to enhance capacity in IR among both individuals and institutions, fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in implementing health interventions across Ghana.

Let's delve into the details of this transformative training program.



One of the MOOC sessions

Participants

Our diverse cohort of participants included professionals from various institutions within the SAVING Consortium. In-person attendees represented organizations such as:

- Food and Drugs Authority (FDA)
- Ministry of Health (MoH)
- University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS)
- Institute of Health Research (IHR) of UHAS

Additionally, virtual participation extended to individuals from the Ghana Health Service Research and Development Division. This collaborative mix of expertise ensured a rich learning environment where experiences and perspectives converged.

Modalities of the MOOC

There were 5 modules with 2 modules taken on each meeting day except for module 5 which was taken alone. The modules included Understanding the Promise and Problems of IR, Laying the Groundwork for IR, Strategies and Design in IR, Measuring Efficacy and Effectiveness, and Summary of Modules 1 to 4.

Achievements and Impact

Out of the 54 participants who enrolled, an impressive 41 successfully completed the MOOC and received TDR certificates of completion. These dedicated individuals now form an integral part of their institutional work package teams, actively leading IR projects. Their work focuses on identifying and addressing bottlenecks that hinder the widespread adoption of efficacious interventions, ultimately contributing to the improved health of Ghana's population.



Prof. Margaret Gyapong facilitating one of the MOOC sessions

As we continue to build on this foundation, we look forward to witnessing the positive changes that our trained professionals will bring to the field of public health



Prof. Evelyn Ansah facilitating one of the MOOC sessions

The SAVING Consortium's MOOC has not only imparted knowledge but also ignited a passion for evidence-based implementation. As we continue our journey, we remain committed to strengthening IR capacities and fostering a community of change-makers dedicated to advancing public health in Ghana.



Participants at one of the MOOC sessions

Pictures

from

SAVING SYMPOSIUM AT EDCTP PARIS IN NOVEMBER 2023



Team SAVING Consortium at the 11th EDCTP Scientific Forum



Professor Margaret Gyapong delivering a presentation



Saving Consortium Board Chair, Cecilia Oh delivering a presentation



Prof. Olumide Ogundahunsi delivering a presentation



Prof. Evelyn Anshah co-moderating a session



Poster presentations

A JOURNEY OF PASSION AND PERSEVERANCE: A SAVING CONSORTIUM FELLOW'S STORY

In the heart of Ghana, a young scholar's journey has been marked by passion, perseverance, and the pursuit of knowledge. This is the story of Jeremiah Ewudzie, a beneficiary of the SAVING Consortium fellowship program who recently completed his Master's degree in Public Health. For his thesis, he conducted a **comparative analysis of the use of mobile applications versus other reporting channels for Adverse Events Reporting during COVID-19 vaccine deployment in Ghana.**



Jeremiah Ewudzie

A Passion Ignited

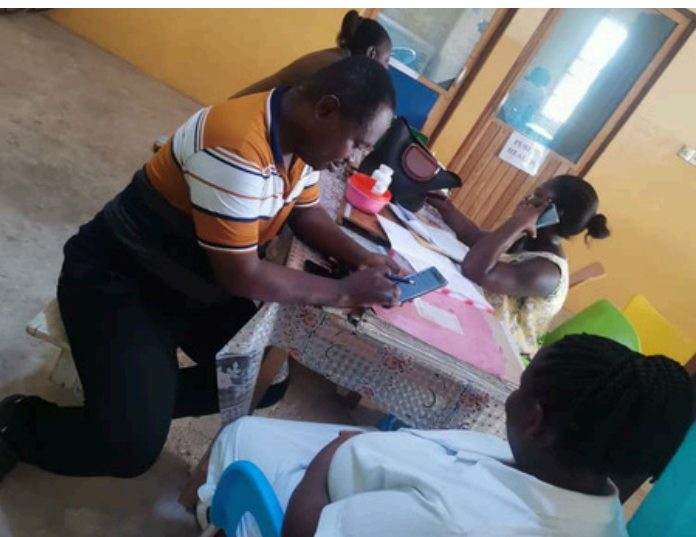
Jeremiah's journey began with a burning desire to make a difference in his community. His passion for Implementation Science was ignited by the pressing health challenges he witnessed in his surroundings. The SAVING Consortium fellowship program provided him with the opportunity to pursue this passion, supporting him throughout his Master's degree journey.

The Impact of the SAVING Consortium

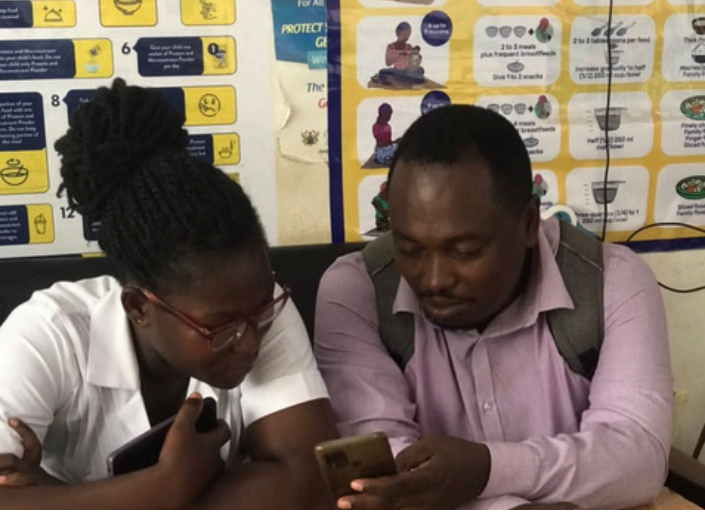
The SAVING Consortium has played a pivotal role in shaping our fellow's academic and career trajectory. The fellowship program provided not only financial support but also a robust academic and professional network, access to resources, and mentorship opportunities. This comprehensive support system has been instrumental in his successful completion of the Master's degree.

Overcoming Challenges

The journey was not without its challenges. Balancing rigorous academic requirements with personal responsibilities presented a significant hurdle. However, the resilience and determination instilled in him by the SAVING Consortium fellowship program enabled him to overcome these obstacles and emerge stronger.



Jeremiah in the field



Jeremiah in the field

Key Outcomes of the Study

The usefulness of the Med Safety App (a mobile application for healthcare professionals and members of the public to submit reports of suspected adverse events from medicines and vaccines) cannot be overemphasized; it showed clearly to be the best tool for surveillance on Adverse Effects Following Immunization (AEFI) and vaccines related events in terms of timeliness in the receipt of report. The App supports a real time reporting of events which will ultimately contribute to timely intervention by the Food and Drugs Authority and the other collaborating stakeholders in the immunization programmes in any case of vaccine related events (VREs).

The Med Safety App has the potential to improve the rate of reporting of AEFIs because it facilitates timely reporting to the FDA compared to the other reporting channels. This will help in responding rapidly to serious AEFIs and other vaccine related events.

Recommendations from the Study

1. The Food and Drugs Authority (National Pharmacovigilance Center) and its collaborating partners should work together to enhance the level of awareness of the Med Safety App among healthcare professionals. Additionally, general knowledge about AEFI and the availability of tools for reporting them should be promoted through continuous education and training programmes.
2. The use of the Med Safety App should be promoted through both traditional and social media all year round to sensitize the general public on its use. Uses of the App should not only be promoted in emergency situations. It should also be at the back of the COVID-19 vaccination card and other vaccine recipients' documents (Yellow fever card, Child health monitoring booklet) as one of the reporting channels for reporting AEFIs in addition to the telephone numbers.
3. The bureaucracies involved in reporting of AEFIs under the Ghana Health Service public health programmes should be revised. The back end of the Med Safety App should be designed in such a way to transmit reports to all operational levels necessary to encourage direct reporting using the App. The parties involved may consider merging the functionality of the District Health Information Management System (DHIMS II) and the Med Safety App to achieve this goal.



Jeremiah in the field



Jeremiah in the field

Jeremiah's story is a testament to the power of passion, the value of education, and the impact of supportive programs like the SAVING Consortium. His journey serves as an inspiration to us all, reminding us that with determination and the right support, we can overcome challenges and make significant contributions to our communities.

As we celebrate his achievement, we also look forward to the positive impact he will undoubtedly make in the field of Implementation Science in Ghana. His journey is just beginning, and we can't wait to see where it leads.



Jeremiah at his graduation ceremony

FROM NEEDS ASSESSMENT TO TESTING INTERVENTION OPTIONS

Work Package 1

- 2 Advisory Board Meetings organized
- Subcommittees constituted
- Quarterly Management Meetings organized
- 2 EDCTP Forums attended
- Annual Reports submitted

Work Package 3

PHASE 1

- Practical training workshops organized
- Policy Briefs developed
- Stakeholder workshop on implementation of HTA recommendations held

PHASE 2

- Stakeholder manual is being implemented on the Malaria vaccine HTA
- A second meeting with users of evidence (National Malaria Elimination Programme) scheduled for July
- Setting the stage for evidence informed strategies for information dissemination on new technologies.

Work Package 4

PHASE 1

- IR study to identify and address implementation challenges with the use of the app by patients conducted
- Dissemination meetings held
- Visit by a team from the MHRA to discuss the findings from the Phase 1 Study and discussions with the Deputy Director for safety and pharmacovigilance at the Gates Foundation on the findings from the Phase 1 study.

PHASE 2

- Deployment or upscale of the revised App to be done
- Development of awareness creation materials and concept note to be done.



Work Package 5

PHASE 1

- Study on implementation challenges for sustainable access and delivery of new vaccines as seen by different stakeholders conducted
- A living systematic review was started and the first round completed

PHASE 2

- Final data analysis and final report of stakeholder analysis to be done
- Rounds 2 and 3 of the living systematic review to be done



We want to hear from you.

We sincerely value your input and kindly request your feedback to help us enhance subsequent editions.

So please take a moment to share your thoughts, as they are invaluable to us.

Thank you for being a part of our journey towards excellence!

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