United States President's Malaria Initiative
Digital Community Health Initiative
April 2023 Newsletter

Representatives from the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and other stakeholders at the National Digital Health workshop in Sierra Leone. Photo: PSI.

Designing a National Digital Health Roadmap in Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, PSI organized a workshop at Doha's Hotel in Bo City, Southern Sierra Leone, from April 17 to April 20, as part of the Digital Community Health Initiative project funded by USAID/PMI. The purpose of the workshop was to design a National Digital Health Roadmap for three years with key stakeholders at the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS) in Sierra Leone. More than 60 participants, including the Ministry of Information and Communications and key partners, attended the workshop. The MOHS Directorates represented at the workshop were the Policy, Planning and Information; Science, Technology and Information; Primary Health Care; Disease Surveillance; and Health Security and Emergencies, among others. Key partners included Community Health Access and Finance, Njala University, Statistics Sierra Leone, USAID-PMI, Project Last Mile, Last Mile

Left to right: Sheila Mutheu, PSI; Samba Kamara USAID PMI; Samuel Saidu, PSI; Nathaniel Moller, USAID PMI. Photo: PSI

"I was encouraged by the engagement and energy from a diverse group of stakeholders in this process. I am excited to see a push towards non-donor financing and the incorporation of private sector engagement activities into the early stages of the roadmap. I am hopeful that this momentum around the roadmap will translate to strong implementation of the roadmap by MOHS leadership."

NATHANIEL MOLLER, SENIOR INNOVATION ADVISOR, PMI

About this project

The U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) launched its Digital Community Health Initiative (DCHI) with a vision to strengthen quality health delivery at the community level. Led by USAID and co-implemented with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), this initiative aims to invest in the scale-up of digitally enabled community health platforms. DCHI is implemented by PATH's Digital Square initiative and its subawardees, including John Snow International, Last Mile Health, and Population Services International. Learn more about Digital Square and the DCHI Initiative.

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Health, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, eHealth Africa, Medtronic LABS, Macro-Eyes, and others. At the close of the workshop, the National Digital Health Roadmap (2023-2025), Monitoring and Evaluation framework and costing plan had been formulated.

The roadmap defines the activities that will be undertaken for the key strategic pillars identified, which include Leadership & Governance, Strategy & Investment, Services & Application, Infrastructure, Standards & Interoperability, Legislation Policy & Compliance, and Health Workforce.

The MOHS, UNICEF consultants, and PSI will review and refine these draft materials together. All stakeholders will be invited to reconvene for a validation workshop in May (tentatively) where the materials will undergo the final review for consensus and sign-off.

Ministry of Health Zanzibar Partners with Digital Square to Digitize Malaria Prevention Campaign

The Ministry of Health Zanzibar (MOH) through the Zanzibar Malaria Elimination Programme (ZAMEP) is implementing a mass replacement campaign that aims to increase coverage and use of long-lasting insecticide-treated nets in a bid to ensure that the Republic of Tanzania is free from malaria. Since its inception, the campaign has been using paper-based tools to register and monitor net distribution.

The MOH consulted Digital Square on the digitalization of the process from April 3-5. Digital Square conducted a stakeholder workshop with the MOH, Information and Communication Technologies Commission, ZAMEP, and PMI Tanzania Control Activity to understand, develop, and validate the system requirements (functional, those being requested by end users, and nonfunctional, describing how a system should behave and what limits there are on its functionality), business processes, and user personas for the mass replacement campaign insecticide-treated nets distribution digital solution. The business processes included household registration to quantify the number of nets needed, quantification to determine the number of nets per household, and issuing to ensure nets are distributed to registered households.

Digital Square will support ZAMEP to develop a custom-built digital tool that will be used to register and track the number of treated nets distributed in different parts of the island.

The Ministry of Health and stakeholders in a workshop discussing the digitalization of the process. Photo: Digital Square.

Recent milestones

- In Madagascar, digital health stakeholders met on April 27 for a one-day workshop to review and provide feedback on a draft community digital health evaluation tool, intended to support the MOH to assess proposed digital tools. The final tool will be validated in a workshop in May. The assessment tool aims to improve the MOH's ability to coordinate and supervise digital health initiatives.

Upcoming priorities

- A stakeholder workshop is being organized in Zimbabwe by Digital Square and the Ministry of Health (MOH) to review the country profile and the National Digital Health Strategy 2021- 2025 to formulate a an MOH strategy for digital community health. Workshop outcomes will include an established set of guidelines for acceptable digital tools for community health workers for use by the MOH and its cooperating partners.
- In Angola, PSI and the MOH are organizing a workshop from May 8-10 to develop a costed roadmap for community health and community health digitalization.

New hires

We are excited to announce the addition of two technical field officers to the team, Dr. Aung Than Oo and Dr. Han Lin Aung to support DCHI efforts in Myanmar.

DCHI launch with Vihiga County leadership in Kenya

Digital Square and Vihiga County leadership staff during the project launch. Photo: Digital Square.

Digital Square is supporting the Kenyan Ministry of Health (MOH) to implement the Electronic Community Health Information System (eCHIS). The goal is to contribute to strengthening sustainability efforts for digital health initiatives that aim to reduce the malaria burden. Digital Square is supporting the MOH to collect data to inform the scale-up of the eCHIS to Kenya's 47 counties.

On April 4, the Kenyan Digital Square team met with Dr. Nicholas K. Mwandihi (Vihiga County Executive Committee Member, Health), Mr. Gabriel Masinde (Vihiga County Community Health Services Coordinator), and Mr. Dalmas Ayieko (MOH Kenya Division of Community Health). The purpose of the meeting was to launch the project, gain the support of Vihiga County leadership, review the project's main objectives, and approve the monitoring and evaluation framework. County leadership shared that they were glad to have PATH's support on this key initiative and declared their readiness to collaborate to ensure smooth implementation.

Digital Square and Vihiga County leadership staff during the project launch. Photo: Digital Square.

Staff highlights

Simret Habtezgi, Digital Square's PMI DCHI's Project Manager, roasting coffee beans in preparation of a traditional coffee ceremony for Easter.

Fatoumata Selle Diagne, Digital Square's PMI DCHI's Project Administrator, led a training on the crucial role of operations in our implementation efforts in Senegal.

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