



Academy for
Health Innovation
Uganda

ACADEMY NEWS

JANUARY 2021



CONTENTS

Rising to call: COVID response

New IVR up for grabs

Call For Life in Karamoja

Staff News

Welcome to this edition of our Newsletter. The year 2020 was quite the make or break year for many an organization; deeply defined by the COVID-19 pandemic which came with so many cancellations and postponements. Adapting to the new normal was no walk in the park but we nonetheless persevered and managed to grab onto our silver lining.

Being a Health Innovations hub, we managed to find strength in a global crisis; innovating and supporting the MoH national response to the pandemic using Call for Life™. We also utilized our time to lay the ground work in preparation for our Medical Drones project in Kalangala as well as secure funding to scale up the ARTAccess™ project that is an integral component of the Differentiated Service Delivery models aimed at improving care and treatment for HIV and TB.

Through this period, we also managed to evolve as a unit and build a strong internal business continuity system that saw The Academy increase in productivity despite working remotely. A new management structure was formed to widen the leadership role and strengthen teams to work remotely. This has been a successful model and will be maintained going forward.

We hope that you find it enlightening and insightful.

JANUARY 2021

Rising to the Call:

The call to join the fight against the global pandemic, COVID-19, was sounded by the Ministry of Health and The Academy rose to the challenge using the Interactive voice response (IVR) technology; Call for Life™. This is a web-based platform that uses a simple ka-torch phone which was quickly adapted to support Ministry efforts in COVID surveillance. Using automated calls, it was able to carry out symptom assessment, follow up with high-risk travellers and contacts of positive patients during quarantine and post-quarantine. This was done in 10 districts of (Mbarara, Jinja, Kyankwanzi, Kiryandongo, Kanungu, Nebi, Adjumanin, Kagadi, Yumbe, Kalangala). For 14 days, 672 clients were followed and this generated 829 COVID alerts.



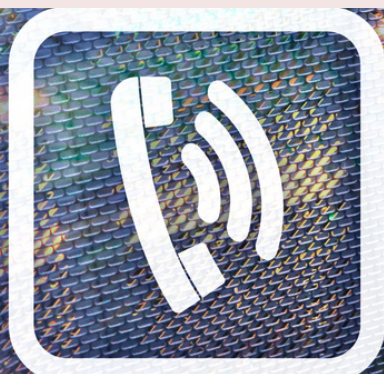
CFL-C Surveillance was later set up in 13 districts in the West Nile region and since 1st August the system has followed 570 high-risk persons. Of which 269 have reported alerts that have been triaged and responded to by the CFL-C medical team. With COVID numbers increasing and hospitals stretched, the Ministry approved to adapt CFL-C to offer psychosocial and clinical follow-up to clients post COVID treatment. Since 1st September, we have trained 9 COVID treatment units and deployed a stable and functional psycho-social module for discharged COVID patients. We have supported 1648 clients to date; 440 of these reported psycho-social concerns and were offered tele-counselling by Strong Minds Uganda. Both the surveillance and psycho-social modules have up to 9 local languages in content that was all approved by the Ministry of Health.

New IVR service available from The Academy!

We are excited to inform you that The Academy is now able to offer connectivity to our fully Ugandan based interactive voice response tool at very competitive rates. This is through connection of your existing software system to route IVR calls and we can also tailor the software to your needs. Some of our upcoming opportunities include use of IVR for delivering short trainings and quizzes to health care workers, and using this IVR technology to undertake research surveys. Please do get in touch with mbalaba@idi.co.ug if you are interested in using this technology.

Call for life Tackling TB in Karamoja!

For the first time we are deploying call for life in an implementation project (outside on a study setting) and in Karamoja, the most rural part of Uganda. Call for Life TB has been deployed and integrated into the USAID funded Programme for Accelerated Control of Tuberculosis PACT. The project has so far been rolled out in 4 health facilities; Matany Hospital, St Pius HC3, Loputuk HC3, Iriiri HC3 where a total of 8 health facility staff were trained to use the tool and 153 patients were enrolled.



IVR



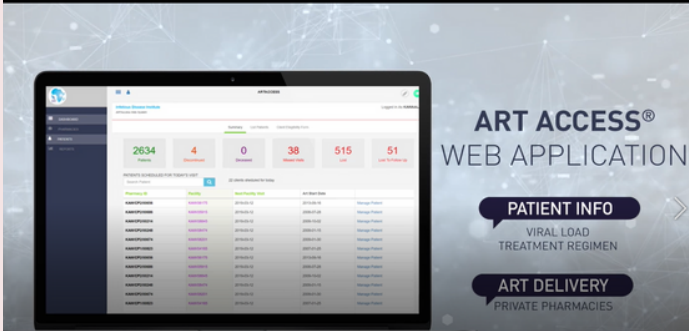
IAS 2020 23rd IAS Conference

The Academy was ably represented during the 23rd International AIDS Conference which took place from the 6th to 10th July 2020. It was a virtual conference where Eva Nakibuuka presented a poster titled Call for Life™; Supporting People Living with HIV (PLHIV) with an Interactive Voice Response tool during the COVID-19 lockdown in Uganda. During lockdown, CFL provided key support to PLHIV through connecting them to nurses who provided information on alternative ways of accessing ART such as use of nearby health facilities and motorists to pick medicines from facilities. The presentation illustrated how simple phone based tools supported the continuity of HIV care during the outbreak, by allowing triage of PLHIV concerns.



ARTAccess™

In a bid to scale-up the ARTAccess™ tool, The Academy is one of the new grantees in the COVIDAction grant that was won from IMC Worldwide Limited. The grant will facilitate the digitalization of health care services for PLHIV and TB (D-PCT). The grant will support PCT (Prevention, Care and Treatment) clinic to roll out the community pharmacy refill program using ARTAccess™ and Call for Life™ systems. This will involve decentralized ART refill services where stable patients will use private pharmacies as ART pick-up points in efforts to decongest health facilities.



Capacity building: GIZ internship programme

The year 2020 also ushered in a new partnership between GIZ, The Nelson Mandela African Institution for Science and Technology (NM-AIST) and IDI. This partnership presented through an internship opportunity for students from the Centre of Excellence for ICT in East Africa (CENIT@EA) Young Professionals Program. The interns are attached to The Academy and are currently working on projects in Machine learning and artificial intelligence using existing data sets to improve health services delivery.

Hillary Kaluuma is working on an application that will facilitate the provision of Home Based Care for Covid19 in Uganda while Favor Wisdom Caesar is working on a tool for DTG Associated Hyperglycemia Among HIV Patients in Uganda. They both Software Development Graduate students at The Nelson Mandela African Institution for Science and Technology (NM-AIST) in Arusha, Tanzania.



STAFF NEWS

We closed off 2020 with mixed feelings as we bid farewell to some members of our team.

Eunice Kyomugisha holds a Master's in Education (Economics Education), a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (P.G.D.E) and a B.A in Economics and Political Science all from Makerere University. She also holds various short course certificates in research and gender. Prior to working with The Academy, Eunice was an independent social science researcher with different national and international organizations including academic institutions. She joined the Academy as a qualitative researcher and later was Social Scientist under the Social Science Unit. She has been involved in collecting data, analyzing and writing analysis reports; contributing to protocol development, and writing abstracts and manuscripts from different projects hosted in the Academy. **She is going to start her PhD in Public Health under the School of Public Health, Makerere University. Her area of interest is Alcohol abuse motives and HIV prevention, Testing and Care; with a gender dimension.**



Annet Nanungi Kabuye is an innovative computer engineer with five years' experience of programming, devOps, systems administration and IT project management. She has interest in incorporating technology into routine processes to address organizational and social challenges. During her time at The Academy for Health Innovation Uganda, she worked on a couple of projects, including the development of in-house IVR system. Annet was involved in the implementation of Call for Life system as a Covid19 surveillance tool. **She is currently pursuing MSc. Advanced Computer Science at the University of Manchester, having obtained the Equity and Merit scholarship award 2020.**



Dr Elizabeth Oseku gained interest in digital health while working at The Academy three years ago as a Coordinator for a research project that leveraged mHealth and interactive voice response to offer remote treatment support to patients with HIV and Tuberculosis. **She won a scholarship at LSHTM- The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, where she is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Public Health. Liza is also a Project Management Fellow under the Global Digital Health Network and is passionate about empowering people to take charge of their wellness.**



We are happy to report that in the same year, we had new members join; they continue to contribute towards the success of The Academy.

Dr Ruth Obaikol is a Surgeon by training who has a passion for Health Management and leadership. She has previously worked as the director for Kumi Hospital, a private not for profit rural hospital in Eastern Uganda; Director Health services at Church of Uganda and senior lecturer at UCU school of medicine. She is now the Deputy Director at The Academy and in providing oversight for scale up projects.



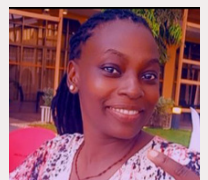
Loduk Patrick Bosco from Napak district holder of diploma couple with certificate in Nursing, worked in Kanawat hc iii, KDDS hc III, Tororo Medical Centre and Matany hospital but now working with The Academy as mHealth Nursing officer in the CFL TB in Karamoja.



Jackie Lydia N Ssemata has MSc. Public Health, a Post Graduate Diploma in Monitoring and Evaluation and a Bachelors of Community Psychology with strong inclination and expertise in implementation research, clinical research studies and trials looking at behavioral and neurocognitive outcomes. She has been involved in clinical and child health research since 2011. She has previously worked as a Study coordinator, Neuropsychological tester, Quality Assurance Officer and Social scientist in different research organizations.



Dr Hope Mackline is medical doctor with a bachelor's degree in Medicine and surgery from Makerere University, a diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She holds a Master's degree in Public Health from the University of Cape Town. She currently the study coordinator Call for Life™ (CFL) projects with The Academy for Health Innovation Uganda, mainly leading the CFL Tuberculosis (TB) research study and the CFL TB PACT implementation project.



An Innovations hub improving Health services and systems, through multidisciplinary development and evaluation of technology.

Vision:

Sustainable health care accessible to all in Uganda

Mission:

To improve health outcomes through innovations in clinical care, capacity building, systems strengthening and research, which inform policy and practice, with a strong emphasis on HIV and TB.