



Welcome to the Hub for Maternal & Sexual Reproductive Health (HASH) Newsletter! This edition serves as a recap of our captivating engagements in the realm of AI for Health this year. Our theme-leads shared some insightful takeaways from these engagements. Dive in to explore these insights and gather some food-for-thought regarding the global conversations that have been going on this year.



AfricAI Conference highlights:
Advancing responsible and open AI
ecosystems in Africa.



Spotlight: Subgrantee Highlights
and Collaborative Initiatives for
responsible AI for MSRH



Canadian Conference on Global
Health 2023: The role of AI of
MSRH in the Global South



AI in Global Health Meeting: The role
of AI in MSRH in the Global South



Quotes from the HASH secretariat



The Women Deliver 2023 Conference: Panel Session featuring one of the HASH Co-PIs.

The Women Deliver 2023 Conference one of the largest multi sectoral convenings to advance gender equality brought together thousands of AI for Health innovators to foster gender equality solutions. Dr. Rosalind Parkes-Ratanshi was part of a panel moderated by Senior Programme Officer, Sam Oji Oti.

The panel session was titled “Catalyzing Evidence Based Feminist and Responsible AI to Improve Women’s Health. Other panellists included other ladies at the helm of IDRC’s MSRH hubs in the Global South. The session emphasized the need for inclusive, participatory AI solutions. To quote Dr. Rosalind, “A medical doctor & computer scientist in a room won’t invent AI solutions that serve women & their health. We need participatory approaches, safe spaces4women to use & shape these tools, algorithmic transparency.”

AfricAI Conference: Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Sexual and Reproductive Health

Under the theme “Advancing responsible and open AI ecosystems in Africa,” the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and Niyel organised the inaugural AfricAI Conference to provide a forum for exchange, learning and networking between key AI stakeholders and to strengthen the understanding of the potential and challenges related to responsible and open AI in Africa.

The Hub for Artificial Intelligence in Sexual and Reproductive Health (HASH) was represented by a team led by the Director Dr. Rosalind Parkes Ratanshi, at the conference that hosted close to 300 participants. The conference was held from June 12 – 14 in Kigali, Rwanda.

Dr. Ernest Mwebaze and Wisdom Ceaser Favor’s interactive workshop shed light on Gender and Inclusion Challenges in AI for Development, fostering collaborative learning among participants. Concurrently, Dr. Elizabeth Oseku’s oral presentation, “What Does AI for Maternal, Sexual Reproductive Health Mean to You?” emphasized the importance of community engagement in cultivating responsible AI innovations.

A highlight of the conference was the panel featuring Dr. Joyce Nabende, Dr. Rosalind Parkes-Ratanshi, and Dr. Rose Nakasi, which explored the application of AI in Healthcare within Low Resource Settings. This session emphasized the necessity of robust systems monitoring and advocated for the incorporation of diverse health occurrences in datasets, enhancing the accuracy and relevance of AI outputs.



To further complement these discussions, a three day Crowdsourcing Interactive Workshop, themed ‘Let’s Talk About Sex,’ culminated the conference.

This activity aimed to create an open-source dataset for building chatbots, that could be used by three of our subgrantees who are building STI related chatbots. Conference participants were invited to submit questions anonymously through a QR code, through a handwritten question dropped in a question jar or through approaching one of HASH’s onsite doctors.

Answers to submitted questions were provided in real time and the question and answer pairs were displayed on a screen at the conference. Lacuna Fund advertised our crowdsourcing initiative in their September newsletter and questions will be welcome until 31st December 2023.

Together, these sessions at the AfricAI Conference echoed the significance of inclusivity, responsible innovation, and data diversity in harnessing AI’s potential for transformative healthcare solutions, epitomizing the conference’s commitment to advancing AI for societal betterment.

The conference, also served as a catalyst for knowledge exchange, fostering responsible AI ecosystems and future collaborations among a diverse array of participants.





AI for Global Health Meeting: The Role of AI in MSRH in the Global South.

Dr. Elizabeth Oseku, our Project Coordinator and Dr. Agnes Bwanika Naggirinya, (Innovations Theme Lead the Academy for Health Innovations) attended the AI for Global Health Meeting in Nairobi from 13th - 15th November 2023.

AI for Global Health (AI4GH) is a five-year program funded by IDRC. It supports researchers in the Global South to strengthen health systems by leveraging contextualized responsible AI solutions to improve sexual, reproductive and maternal health and it promotes more effective preparedness and responses to epidemics and pandemics. The meeting brought together representatives of the eight hubs similar to HASH that are based in Asia, Middle East and North Africa and Latin America.

The event was the first time that the AI4GH members were meeting in person. It was an opportunity to strengthen connections between members, share knowledge and experiences, create opportunities to collaborate and to reflect and envision the future of the programme. Many thanks to IDRC and The Global Health Network for bringing together this exceptional team of innovators and researchers.



The Canadian Conference on Global Health 2023 & IDRC meeting: From Rhetoric to Action: moving policy, research, and practice.

We were honored to participate in The Canadian Conference on Global Health 2023, where our project lead, Dr. Elizabeth Oseku, highlighted our hub's impactful regional work, emphasizing how Responsible AI can transform healthcare.

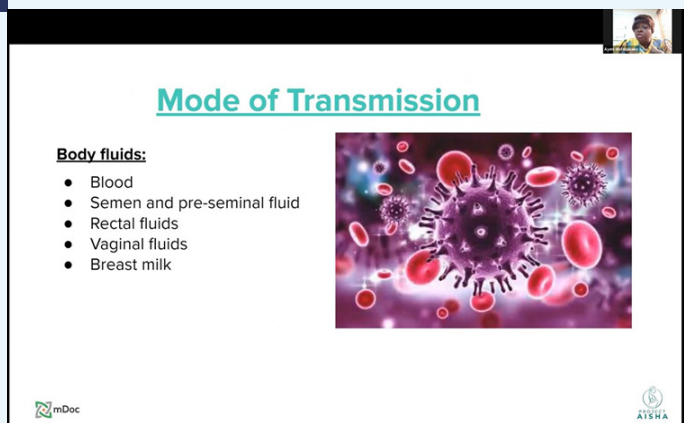
Dr. Oseku collaborated with International Development Research Centre Sexual Reproductive Health hub leaders, discussing ethical AI, cultural sensitivity, and AI's potential in addressing Maternal, Sexual, and Reproductive Health gaps.



The AIMED Conference 2023: Project Presentation by mDoc Healthcare

The AIMed Global Summit in San Diego gathered innovators for AI in medicine from 4th-7th June 2023. A team from mDoc Healthcare, a HASH sub-grantee, presented Kem, an AI enabled chatbot focused on Maternal Sexual Reproductive Health. Kem is designed to provide instant support, reduce stigma, and alleviate health coach workloads.

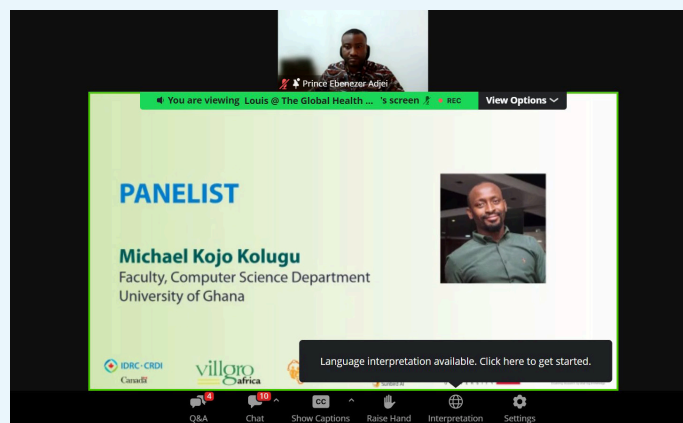
Its future scope includes broader applications in Maternal Health across Africa, showcasing AI's role in addressing health disparities and promoting equity for better outcomes in Africa and beyond.



HASH ECHO SESSION: HIV- The Overview, Prevention of mother to child transmission

During a recent collaborative ECHO session, mDoc Healthcare, HASH, and Project AISHA brought together an array of subject matter experts, including doctors and healthcare professionals, from primary healthcare facilities, general hospitals, and nurse-led sites across Nigeria.

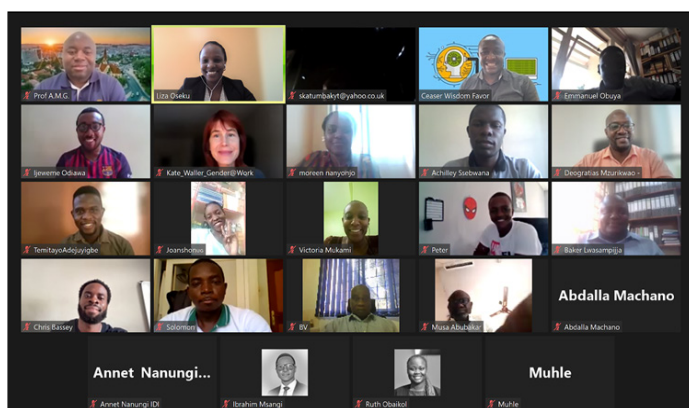
The session was expertly steered by Dr. Ayeni Omotayo Mofoluwake (MBBS, FWACS), concentrating on the crucial topic of “HIV: Overview and Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission.” The ECHO session shed light on the advancements and ongoing efforts in HIV prevention, with an in-depth lookout at PMTCT programs as a cornerstone for eliminating pediatric HIV. Participants left the session equipped with updated knowledge and resources to enhance their clinical practices and patient care approaches related to HIV.



The AI for Global Health Research Webinar: Integration AI in Sexual and Reproductive Health

The Global Health Network organized a webinar series titled “Tackling Health Technology Innovations: Case Studies from Africa” where Wisdom Ceaser Favor, our Public Health Data Scientist, & Kojo Michael Kolugu, a from the University of Ghana, our HASH subgrantee were speakers.

Michael was a panellist with other subgrantee representatives from York University and Villgro Africa. The panellists shared their experiences and insights, shedding light on the obstacles they have encountered in their work and the strategies they have employed to navigate the unique challenges posed by the intersection of AI and healthcare. This insightful discussion highlighted the pivotal role of involving users in the AI innovation development process for achieving successful outcomes in health technology innovations.



The First Peer Learning journey workshop:

The HASH Network Gender, Equity and Inclusion (GEI) SubCommittee led by Wisdom Ceaser Favor, held the first Peer Learning Journey (PLJ) for Network members on 12th December 2023. This workshop was based on the PLJ model introduced to us by the AI4D GEI team (Gender At Work, Ladysmith and Women at the Table). We were pleased to host nearly thirty Network members in an interactive exchange and learning workshop to discuss the kinds of GEI considerations

to make in predictive AI models, using three of our HASH Subgrantee projects as case studies. This workshop was the first of many to come. Look out for more PLJ workshops in the coming year, focused on Image Analysis tools and Information tools like chatbots.

The November AI4D Knowledge Synthesis Webinar

HASH was honoured to lead the November 2023 AI4D Knowledge Synthesis Webinar titled; AI in Healthcare, Representativeness and Medical Ethics. Dr Elizabeth Osekucurated and moderated the session with distinguished panellists, Dr Nneka Mobisson, Mr Wisdom Ceaser Favor, Ms Sylvia Nabukenya and Dr Rose Nakasi. The panellists shared their experiences of working in AI for health and gave a well-rounded perspective of recommendations and best practices for research and innovation in the space on the African continent. It was a very informative session that underscored the value of multidisciplinary conversations in steering the AI for Health ecosystem. Look out for the recording that will be shared soon on our website.

FROM THE SECRETARIAT



In this edition of the HASH newsletter, we asked our HASH Secretariat to share their key highlights from all their engagements in the AI for health field this year. Take a look below to discover what they had to say.

I have come a long way in appreciating the potential role of AI in accelerating progress in healthcare service delivery in the community. I hope that local resources will be invested in development of context specific innovations that best suit our interests.

Dr. Ruth Obaikol, Academy Co Lead

"The surge of Large Language Models and Generative AI in the past six months has revealed transformative potential of AI for MSRH. Now, we can envision a 2-5 year future where responsible AI is harnessed at full potential to improve MSRH outcomes while rigorously addressing accuracy, bias, ethics, privacy, and accessibility concerns.

Prof. Engineer Bainomugisha, HASH Co-PI

This year I have been reminded in many ways that Artificial Intelligence is enriched by people, and so it cannot exist independent of them, nor should we try to innovate for that. Therefore, to be truly responsible, we have to give everyone a voice through multi-disciplinary community engagement. There is a significant need to invest in education at all levels to create an AI literate population that can be empowered to participate meaningfully.

Dr. Elizabeth Oseku, HASH project coordinator

I have been excited by the progress that the first network members - the grantees of HASH, have made this year, to collect data, build models and take active roles in the network to help guide its future. Overall though I am excited that the network and its members are building AI artifacts responsibly to impact the societies in which they live.

- Dr Ernest Mwebaze, HASH Co-PI

With all the progress on large language models this year, there's a lot of momentum on chat interfaces that can give people advice on MSRH issues. However, this is almost all in English and for people with internet access, so there's a challenge ahead on how to make this more inclusive in the African context.

- Dr John Quinn, HIV Theme Lead

I've been quite impressed with the challenging work one of our sub-grantees has been doing in the adolescent health theme while working with adolescents with disabilities. Not only do they have to collect and work with large amounts of SRH data in multiple spoken languages, but also in braille and sign language in order to be inclusive to young people who are blind and deaf.

-Dr Rachel King, Adolescent SRH Theme Lead

Over the past one year, I have learnt that AI-innovations in MSRH is unique, which requires multidisciplinary and community-engagement methods backed by contextualised Gender Equity and inclusion (GEI) approach. Thus there is no "one size fit all" or "free lunch". This must be meticulously included from ideation to implementation and monitoring of the AI innovation.

Cesar Wisdom Favor, Data Scientist

PICTORIAL



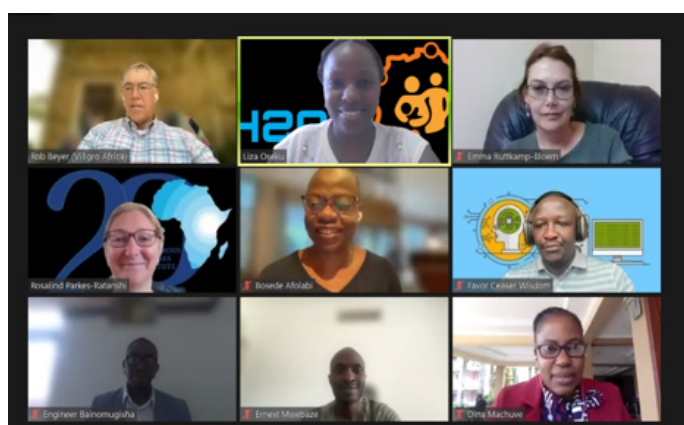
Our theme leads Dr Daudi Jjingo and Dr Joyce Nabende at the IDI@20 Data Science Seminar 14th Nov 2023



Dr. Daudi Jjingo, Dr Rosalind & Dr. Nneka Morrison (Mdoc Healthcare) at the 2023 BMGF AGM in Dakar.



Dr Rosalind Parkes-Ratanshi at a technical consultation on AI in Sexual and Reproductive Health at WHO



The first HASH Advisory Committee meeting on 13th June 2023



For more information



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