



IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE  
COLLABORATIVE

## PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

# Short Report from the Consortium of Universities of Global Health

March 22, 2022

**Implementation Science Collaborative**

Connecting Stakeholders. Prioritizing Questions. Delivering Evidence. Informing Action.

[www.implementationsciencecollab.org](http://www.implementationsciencecollab.org)

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# A. Introduction



Session title: Implementation Science Field Building Collaboratives in Global Health: Strategies to build policy, program and project implementation capacity

Access full event recording here:

<https://cugh.confex.com/cugh/2022/meetingapp.cgi/Session/1503>

The Implementation Science Collaborative (ISC) is a multi-stakeholder network addressing a range of health and development priorities through the better use of evidence to inform implementation. The ISC advances implementation science within and across thematic areas, including issues such as woman-centered care, mental health and psychosocial support, protecting children from violence, and assistive technologies. The Collaborative seeks to expand and sustain the partnerships and activities born out of USAID's Health Evaluation and Applied Research Development (HEARD) Project.

On March 22, 2022, the Implementation Science Collaborative hosted a satellite session at the Consortium of Universities of Global Health's 13th annual (virtual) conference. The all-day event featured partner updates, progress and highlighted critical questions to be confronted as we advance partnerships and build networks to address pressing health and development issues.

## This session included four roundtable discussions:

1. The Changing Landscape of Global Health Implementation Science (GHIS) Collaboratives: stakeholder engagement in developing and advancing GHIS Priorities and Governance
2. Enhancing uptake of evidence-based Maternal and Mental Health Psychosocial Support interventions
3. Moving persistent challenges into the 'mainstream' of global health agenda setting: How implementation science collaboratives are building capacity and increasing priority for child protection and disability addressing strategies
4. Strengthening the Global Public Health Workforce: Systemic Challenges to Developing a Responsive Implementation Science Capacity between Academic and Practice Institutions

## B. Highlights Summary

The satellite session convened voices from across 21 global health and development institutions representing views from policy, professional associations, research, implementation assistance/practice and donor perspectives. The richness in perspective and focus within the global health and development arena reinforced the value derived from an implementation science collaborative that is inclusive of multiple issue areas, expertise, contexts and geographic locations.

Conversations throughout reflected uneven progress in terms of advancing more sustainable, locally led implementation science partnerships in support of policy and program priorities. Challenges include the inability to mobilize quickly to confront real-time needs. For example, in the context of COVID-19 we see challenges related to data systems and governance, access to data and the pull to publish as a top priority hindering rapid use of data for decision-making. As one participant remarked, ‘Why do we hold on to data that can potentially save lives?’

The discussion urged us to consider which partners, for which purposes, are engaged in the process—and questioned the underutilized role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the advocacy community to help us build trust and communicate important messaging on evidence for policy and practice.

Sessions two and three highlighted the value and opportunity of bridging issue area networks and the need to elevate others that have been traditionally left on the margins:

- The COVID-19 pandemic underscores the need for greater mental health and psychosocial support capacity and the intersections with other priority focus areas such as maternal health. The discussion illustrated how we can leverage implementation science learning networks to advance programming and address needs of health providers.
- Exploring Health Evaluation and Applied Research Development Project investments in the assistive technologies and protecting children from violence spaces demonstrated not only opportunities for cross learning, but how we must continue to position these historically 'marginalized' issues at the forefront of health and development if we are to achieve our sustainable and inclusive development goals.

Session four reminded us that even with increasing opportunities and support for implementation science approaches, efforts are stymied by power dynamics among global north academic institutions and low- and middle-income country-based institutions. Further, participants questioned whether we are training a public health workforce that values implementation-oriented science and has the capacity for real-world application of evidence to policy and practice.

## Participant Institutions

University of California at Berkeley, University of California at San Francisco, City University of New York, Universidad de los Andes, Africa Academy for Public Health, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, Makerere University, Boston College, University of Virginia, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center

World Health Organization, East Central Southern Africa Health Community, International Society for Wheelchair Professionals, International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics

Heartland Alliance International, WI-HER, Population Council, Together for Girls, World Vision, University Research Co., LLC

US Agency for International Development, World Bank

The following provides summaries of the final agenda, participants and discussion highlights on the way forward in terms of packaging and communicating this implementation evidence for different audiences.

# C. Session Overviews

## 1. The Changing Landscape of Global Health Implementation Science (GHIS)

**Collaboratives:** Stakeholder engagement in developing and advancing GHIS  
Priorities and Governance

Established, trusted partnerships enable rapid collaborative responses to new challenges. How do global health implementation science mechanisms balance speed and trust, especially considering new global health priorities during the pandemic? What have we learned as a global community from the last decade of building partnerships and collaborative development in global health implementation science? This session's panelists will share the experiences of NGO, university, bilateral and multilateral stakeholders that have hosted and supported collaboratives. They will examine what has worked well and what needs to be adapted to new dynamics and asymmetries in the global and local health agendas.

## The discussion questions were:

- How do we bring science to problems that we don't yet have programmatic solutions for? (e.g., PPH, preventing violence against children, MHPSS interventions)
- What has been the value of an implementation science approach and adaptive learning through the collaborative work in each area? (What has worked well and what hasn't?)
- Who owns Global Health Implementation Science? What changing priorities have you observed in this area?
- How can Principles of Stakeholder Engagement in global health implementation science priority setting address asymmetric influences in setting research priorities?

# Session 1 Discussants



**Stef Bertozzi**  
MD, PhD (co-chair)

Dean Emeritus, Berkeley  
School of Public Health



**Neal Brandes**  
MS (co-chair)

Chief, Research and  
Policy Division and AOR,  
HEARD Project, USAID



**Danielle Charlet**  
MD, PhD

Implementation  
Research and Evaluation  
Specialist, Global  
Financing Facility, World  
Bank



**Jeanine Condo**  
MD, PhD

Adjunct Professor,  
University of Rwanda  
and Tulane University  
and CEO of CIIC-HIN  
(Center for Impact,  
Innovation and Capacity  
building for Health  
Information systems  
and Nutrition), Rwanda.

# Session 1 Discussants



**Mary Mwanyika-Sando, MD, MPH**

Chief Executive Officer,  
African Academy for  
Public Health



**Jim Sherry,  
MD, PhD**

Director, USAID's Health  
Evaluation and Applied  
Research Development  
(HEARD) Project and  
Director, CUNY Center  
for Immigrant Refugee  
and Global Health



**Rachel Vreeman,  
MD, MS**

Director, Arnhold  
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Medicine at Mount Sinai



**Peter Waiswa,  
MD, MPH, PhD**

Associate Professor and  
Lead, Maternal and  
Newborn Center of  
Excellence, Makerere  
University School of  
Public Health

## 2. Enhancing uptake of evidence-based Maternal and Mental Health Psychosocial Support interventions: engaging policymakers in evidence communication

The COVID-19 pandemic has made a substantial contribution to the global burden of mental illness. As awareness and urgency of mental health and psychosocial support needs increase, including how to address needs within the general population, and importantly, among frontline health workers who are so key to the pandemic response, where do evidence users stand on what they need to act? How can evidence gaps be address and how can donors support? How can an Implementation Science collaboration be facilitative of sustainable solutions? Panelists will share experiences communicating evidence on interventions to address maternal health provider burnout and community-based psychosocial support needs in trauma-exposed populations.

## The discussion questions were:

- How has the urgency around MHPSS shifted because of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What evidence gaps do implementers and policymakers have in relation to community-based psychosocial support interventions and other MHPSS priorities?
- What evidence and advocacy are needed to make the investment case to Ministries of Finance for MHPSS intervention funding for integration of services within the healthcare system?
- How are donors supporting a response to MHPSS priorities?

# Session 2 Discussants



**Victoria Ngo, PhD, MS**  
(co-moderator)

Director, CUNY Center for  
Innovation in Mental Health  
Community Health and  
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**Neerja Chowdhary,**  
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# Session 2 Discussants



**Rosemary Mwaisaka,**  
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NCDs, Food Security and  
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# Session 2 Discussants



**Alethea Desrosiers,**  
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**Rebecca Levine,**  
MPH

Senior Maternal Health  
Advisor, USAID

### 3. Moving persistent challenges into the 'mainstream' of global health

**agenda setting:** How implementation science collaboratives are building capacity and increasing priority for child protection and disability addressing strategies.

The International Society for Wheelchair Professionals (ISWP) and the Together for Girls (TfG) Partnership have made significant progress over the last decade to advance and socialize the issues of addressing disabilities through assistive technologies and protecting children from violence, respectively. This session will look back at the collaborative efforts these partnerships have leveraged including through building data capacities, developing normative standards, and mobilizing advocacy resources. The discussion will consider how these partner communities are now poised to build on efforts to strengthen implementation science for more significant and inclusive impact globally.

## Key questions/topics addressed in this session:

- What have been the successes and challenges of efforts to bring these issues to the forefront of global health?
- How has the urgency shifted in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How are donors supporting bringing these issues into the mainstream of global health?

## The agenda included:

1. Opening remarks – United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
2. History and Evolution of International Society of Wheelchair Professionals (ISWP)
3. Case Study on Development of the International Society of Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO)
4. History and evolution of Violence Against Children and Youth Survey (VACS)/End Violence Against Children movement – Together for Girls (TfG)
5. Case Study on Colombia National Action Plan— Universidad de los Andes (UAndes)
6. Facilitated Discussion – United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

# Session 3 Discussants & Presenters



**Rebecca Levy, MA**  
(opening remarks)

Acting U.S. Government  
Special Advisor on  
Children in Adversity,  
USAID



**Mattito Watson,**  
MA, MPH (chair)

Senior Technical Advisor,  
Children in Adversity,  
USAID



**Jon Pearlman,**  
PhD

Co-Director,  
International Society for  
Wheelchair  
Professionals (ISWP)



**Mary Goldberg,**  
PhD

Co-Director,  
International Society for  
Wheelchair  
Professionals (ISWP).

# Session 3 Discussants & Presenters



**David Rusaw,**  
PhD

Co-Chair, Education  
Committee,  
International Society for  
Prosthetics and  
Orthotics (ISPO)



**Begoña Fernandez,**  
MPH

Director of Data and  
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Girls



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Director, IMAGINA  
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#### 4. **Strengthening the Global Public Health Workforce:** Systemic Challenges to Developing a Responsive Implementation Science Capacity between Academic and Practice Institutions

The Deans and Directors Roundtable on Implementation Science brings public health partners together to examine public health workforce capacity. Building from engagement that began at CUGH 2017, the group will discuss the role academic and research institutions should play in building implementation science capacity to better respond to program and policy-makers' evidence needs. This discussion will include a reflective look at how a range of technical collaborations played a role in pandemic response. Panelists and participants will consider in hindsight what role a stronger implementation science approach might have played and consider lessons learned for future outbreaks.

## Key questions/topics addressed in this session:

**Broad Need** (20 min): Roundtable from International Implementing Partners: What are the challenges in finding high level technical capacity to support implementation activities? What have your workforce needs been over the last few years? Where do you get technical capacity during global pandemic, humanitarian response, emerging priority issues?

**Current Efforts to Train the Global Health Workforce** (20 min): Roundtable from Deans and Directors: What are academic institutions doing to train global health practitioners in implementation Science? And what challenges are you experiencing in doing so?

**Collective Efforts needed to Bridge Going Forward** (30 min): Discussion with All: What can we collectively do and how do we support overall? What did COVID teach us about the shortcomings in our public health workforce? Where are the opportunities for improvement? What can academic community do? What can donor/foundation community do? What can the implementing partner community do (from audience participants)?

## Group Discussion

- To what extent have recent global events earned a failing grade for the design, use and/or performance of our international health system?
- How do we improve real-time responsiveness of the science community researchers to implementing organizations?
- How do we ensure the right constellation of stakeholders in our international health efforts?
- How do we balance Responsiveness, Relevance and Rigor in global health research and implementation?

# Discussants



**Ayman El-Mohandes,**  
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Colombia, Heartland  
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**Allison Foster,**  
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# Discussants



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## D. Knowledge Sharing and Communication Plan

**This event presents an opportunity to package and share Implementation Science Collaborative partner highlights from the CUGH satellite session. We plan to do the following:**

1. Create a less than 10 min cross-session highlight video pulling footage from the CUGH satellite to deliver key field building messages around implementation science. This is intended to be used as a promotion and awareness raising product to strengthen engagement within and beyond the ISC.
2. Two 5-minute video summaries highlighting the content areas (1) maternal mental health and psychosocial support (from session 2) and (2) mainstreaming protecting children from violence and assistive technologies (from session 3).
3. Newsletter summary of the event and aforementioned products distributed widely as part of an ISC update.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank our speakers and panelists for their generous time and contributions.

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This report was prepared by University Research Co., LLC. We acknowledge support from the Health Evaluation and Applied Research Development Project funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under cooperative agreement AID-OAA-A-17-00002. The project team includes prime recipient, University Research Co., LLC (URC) and sub-recipient organizations. The information provided in this report is not official U.S. Government information and does not represent the views or positions of the U.S. Agency for International Development or the U.S. Government.

