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USAID'S HEALTH EVALUATION AND APPLIED RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT (HEARD) PROJECT

HEARD MHPSS CROSS-SITE LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

MEETING REPORT FOR LC #16
JUNE 30, 2022
VIRTUAL CONVENING

This report was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by University Research Co., LLC (URC) and City University of New York School of Public Health (CUNY SPH) and was authored by Weanne Estrada, Victoria Ngo, Emily Peca, Samantha Ski, and Kristen Kirksey. This report is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of URC and CUNY SPH and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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HEARD MHPSS PROJECT

The purpose of the HEARD Project is to leverage a global partnership to generate, synthesize, and use evidence to improve policy and program implementation in low and middle-income countries. With funding from USAID's Victims of Torture Program, the HEARD Project supports four studies to better understand the effectiveness and implementation of community-level mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) interventions, with an emphasis on the PSS intervention components and impacts. A fifth, related study is being funded by GIZ and will be implemented by War Child in Jordan. The HEARD MHPSS Cross-Study Learning Collaborative supports these studies by providing an avenue for knowledge and information sharing across the different study teams.

PARTICIPANTS

HEARD / UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CO., LLC

- Dutcher, Monica
- Kirksey, Kristen
- Peca, Emily
- Ski, Samantha

HEARD / CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

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- Estrada, Weanne
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- Barua, Sujit
- Le Roch, Karine
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- James, Leah

HIAS / COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

- Angulo, Alejandra
- Armijos, Andrea
- Bonz, Annie
- Cristobal, Maria
- Greene, Claire
- Guevara, Maria Esther
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WAR CHILD HOLLAND

- Brown, Felicity

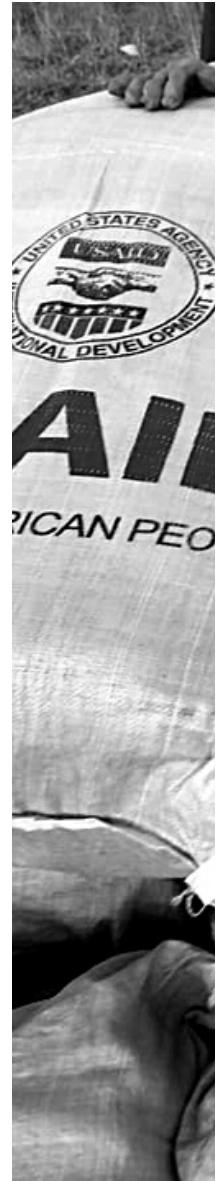
EAST, CENTRAL, AND SOUTHERN AFRICA HEALTH COMMUNITY

- Mwaisaka, Rosemary

AGENDA

Topic: Findings from Bangladesh, Panama, and Ecuador

9:00 - 9:10	Welcome and Meeting Overview Icebreaker Emily Peca, DrPH, URC
9:10-9:30	Scientific Evaluation of Psychosocial Impacts of Baby Friendly Spaces in Low-Resource Humanitarian Settings (Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh) Karine Le Roch, PhD, ACF Amanda Nguyen, PhD, UVA
9:30-9:50	Entre Nosotras: Designing and evaluating a community-based psychosocial intervention for women in Ecuador and Panamá Annie Bonz, LCAT, ATR-BC, HIAS Claire Greene, PhD, Columbia University Alejandro Angulo, HIAS Andrea Armijos, MSc
9:50-10:20	Discussion Victoria Ngo, PhD, CIMH Rosemary Mwaisaka, MSc, ECSA-HC
10:20-10:30	Next Steps and Closing Weanne Estrada, MPH, CIMH



MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

For this Learning Collaborative meeting, the Bangladesh and the Panama/Ecuador teams presented key findings from their evaluations and consulted with the LC members on project-specific issues, challenges, and next steps.

BANGLADESH

Action contre la Faim/Johns Hopkins University/University of Virginia

- Preliminary results indicate that with supervision and implementation support, integrating manualized psychosocial support activities with nutrition services holds potential for reducing **distress** and improving **subjective well-being** of conflict affected mothers of malnourished children. However, results were weaker for improving **functioning** and **positive coping**.
- All **dissemination and implementation outcomes** as reported by providers had similar results for both the standard and enhanced intervention. Scores were generally high across **adoption, acceptability, appropriateness, climate and leadership**. They were slightly lower, albeit still high, for **feasibility** and **reach**.

ECUADOR & PANAMA

HIAS/Columbia University/University of Copenhagen

- There were small to moderate improvements in **wellbeing, community connectedness, safety, social support, and problem-focused coping** among Entre Nosotros participants.
- The dimensions of wellbeing most strongly related to overall satisfaction and quality of life were **higher standard of living** and **level of safety**.
- The greatest levels of improvement were seen in **informal and formal workers (vs. unemployed)**, **people with higher distress, functional impairment, and lower wellbeing and coping at baseline**, and **people who attended more sessions**.

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

DISCUSSION POINTS

Challenges of pragmatic field research

- **The challenge**

- Because of the many different variations in the study population and intervention aspects, the study teams have had to cluster their data in multiple ways during analysis. This has implications on the causal inferences that can be made about the data, as the role of context might even outweigh actual intervention details/approaches in explaining the outcome effects in some ways.
- Because of the complexity of pragmatic research, it can be challenging to present a complete but clean and concise version of the results, especially for publication in journals with strict space limitations.

- **Reflections and responses**

- In order to narrow down the complexity of the findings and provide a clear, focused message, the following questions need to be asked:
 - What data do we value?
 - What are the most important messages for system leaders and policy makers?
- Some journals are allowing additional tables and extended descriptions to be included as annexes to the manuscript. This can provide the necessary space to discuss clustering/contextual details.
- Creating a manual for the intervention and reporting the findings are important for presenting a full picture of the intervention. Future implementers who wish to use the intervention can take a look at the complete picture, and then based on their specific purpose and contextual situations, can just select, pilot, adapt, and implement which aspects of the intervention are most appropriate or meaningful to them.
- These challenges highlight the importance of the Learning Collaborative's work. Our work brings together evidence from multiple smaller studies and explores the ways to unpack that variability and complexity.

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

DISCUSSION POINTS

Measuring the added value of community-based design

- **The challenge:**
 - The community-based design process promotes engagement and develops community ownership of the intervention. However, it is a time-intensive and resource-intensive approach that may not be feasible for everyone.
 - How can we empirically measure or operationalize the true value of community participation in the design process?
- **Reflections and responses:**
 - Other research consortiums and MHPSS groups have also been grappling with the challenge of measuring the value of the community design process. This seems to be a novel but common thread in implementation science circles.
 - Ripple effects mapping is a qualitative approach that can be used to identify events and impacts that occurred as a result of the community-based design process.
 - Other projects and studies such as the Harlem Strong intervention in New York City are comparing the effects of a standard, as-is intervention versus an intervention adapted through a community-engaged approach. This process would allow a direct comparison of the effects of the two approaches.

Opportunities for the Learning Collaborative

- The process of selecting and harmonizing measures for wellbeing, coping, functioning, and distress have uncovered challenges and gaps in using these measures. For example, analyzing the Brief COPE requires extensive clustering, and there aren't many robust measures for evaluating subjective wellbeing. There may be an opportunity for the Learning Collaborative to fill in this gap by creating and adapting better cross-cultural measures for trauma-impacted communities in its next round of work.

POST-MEETING EVALUATION

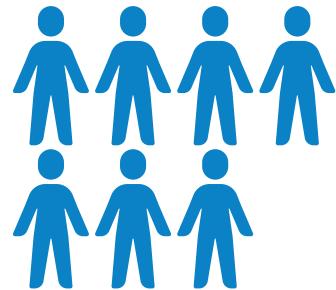
An anonymous post-meeting survey was issued to all individuals who attended the Learning Collaborative Meeting. The attendees were asked to rate the quality and utility of the meeting as well as provide written feedback and suggestions for improvement.

RESULTS

- Of the 15 attendees from the study teams, seven participated in this evaluation (46.7%).
- Except for TPO/WUSTL, all study teams were represented in the survey.



All (100%) of the respondents rated the meeting topic as **moderately to extremely useful**.



All (100%) of the respondents stated that the meeting delivered the information they expected to receive.

RELEVANCE OF TOPIC



NOVELTY OF INFORMATION



MEETING DURATION



“

I liked learning about the study designs, specifically about the adaptations that were made to both study designs in order to best serve the communities.

“

It was great to see the results of the teams' research and how they chose to frame them - very relevant for us.

“

It was interesting to learn about the field-level challenges and solutions from the various projects.

Next Learning Collaborative (LC) Meetings

LC #17 FINDINGS FROM JORDAN

July 2022

This Learning Collaborative Meeting will focus on key findings and evaluation results from the pilot study of War Child Holland in Jordan.

LC #18 LESSONS LEARNED & NEXT STEPS

September 2022

The Learning Collaborative will convene to reflect on the lessons learned from the LC process and discuss future opportunities and partnerships.



Zoom ID: 599 794 7941

ABBREVIATIONS

ACF	Action contre la Faim
CUNY	City University of New York
ECSA-HC	East, Central, and Southern Africa Health Community
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
HAI	Heartland Alliance International
HEARD	Health Evaluation and Applied Research Development
JHU	Johns Hopkins University
JoL	Journey of Life
LC	Learning Collaborative
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
TPO	Transcultural Psychosocial Organization
URC	University Research, Co.
UVA	University of Virginia
WCH	War Child Holland
WUSTL	Washington University in St. Louis

For additional information, contact isc@iscollab.org

iscollab.org | mhpssknowledgehub.org

