

From Evidence to Action: How Patient-led research is leading the way to Quality care in Ghana



AT A GLANCE

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) emphasises *what* services are available and *how* they are funded, managed and delivered. For the health system in Ghana to shift from being rigid and disease specific to a system that provides integrated, patient-centred care, there must be data systems capturing the needs of people and communities.

Health research that generates realtime service data is critical to tailor care to a populations needs. Using tools that produce point-of-service data, health providers can efficiently respond to service provision challenges to increase patient satisfaction and ultimately improve health outcomes.

CHALLENGE

Malaria is endemic in all parts of Ghana. Although, the entire Ghanaian population is at risk of malaria infection, some subsets of the population are at great risk due to social determinants of health such as their education, income status and other environmental or geographic factors.

The Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights (ARHR) advocates for patient-centred healthcare through the use of a community-led research. The power of this type of research is harnessed in the patient-focused data it produces that can be used to catalyse health system improvement. This data is essential in strengthening health systems that are deliberate about attaining Universal Health Care (UHC).

APPROACH

The ARHR is leading the Bridging Gaps, Innovate for Malaria (B4M) project — a project using community-led scorecard assessments and stakeholder engagements to reduce the impact of Ghana's malaria burden on individuals and families in rural Ghana. The project aims to build the capacities of communities and health systems to demand and supply quality malaria education and treatment. The project uses a Scorecard assessment tool that strengthens social accountability systems at community level, empowering individuals to voice the challenges they face at local health facilities while encouraging service providers to engage community members on potential solutions.

“Now we are giving healthcare that is responsive to the actual needs of the people, which we were not doing earlier,”

- Dr Wilhelmina Tiwa Duah

District Director of Health Services, Mporhor District

RESULTS

For Dr Wilhelmina Tiwa Duah, District Director Health Services for Mporhor District in the Western Region of Ghana, the scorecard assessment has improved community engagement and overall patient-provider relationship. She stated that the assessments were an eye opener for her and has allowed her to hear directly from her constituents – an uncommon feat for her previously. They have since used the results to direct resources to meet the needs of community members. Since the assessment, they have been dedicated to providing essential health equipment, malaria test kits and essential malaria treatments in health facilities that were not well-resourced. Additionally, as a result of the reformed accountability system, she stated that there is less time lapse between stock out to restock of malaria drugs.

WHATS NEXT

The assessments continue to be used to improve the uptake of anti-malaria medication for pregnant women and inspire innovation in the referral systems and drug supply chains in the district. Dr Duah has renewed commitment to regular customer service training for health providers in the district and continues to champion the use of data for targeted action. In low resource environments the scorecard tool must be exploited to achieve quality care.



Find out more about The Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights

Website <https://arhr.org.gh>



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The B4M project has supported the education of 36,898 community members in Ghana since the start of the project, contributing to efforts to empower communities through rights based education. The project uses community-centred research to provide health providers and decision makers with the evidence to supply quality health care.