Vx Data Insights
Mini Webinar Series

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How **WhatsApp is transforming communications** within the Kenyan healthcare system

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SPEAKERS:

Isaac Mugoya
Senior Technical Officer, Kenya - Immunization Center, JSI

Isaac has been working in immunization for more than three decades, supporting the Kenyan Ministry of Health in monitoring immunization programs, introducing new vaccines, and applying best practices.

Emilia Klimiuk
Project Lead, Sonder Design Collective

Based in Lagos, Nigeria, Emilia is a designer and researcher specializing in applying Human-Centered Design methods to the health, microfinance, and agriculture sectors in low resource settings.

Natasha Kanagat
Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor and Deputy Director, Center for Health Information Monitoring and Evaluation, JSI

Natasha's primary expertise is in research design, analysis and interpretation with the ultimate goal of generating evidence to inform policy and program strategy.
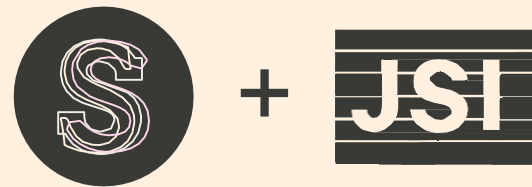
Sarah Hassanen
Kenya Lead, Sonder Design Collective

Based in Nairobi, Kenya, Sarah practices Human-Centred Design with a focus on health across multiple continents including Africa, Europe and the Middle East

The Vx Data Insights study is a joint research effort between Sonder Collective and John Snow Inc. (JSI) to apply the Human-Centered Design approach in order to uncover data specific painpoints and challenges that healthcare workers and managers at all levels within a country encounter in delivering immunization services in Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mozambique.

Note that today's discussion will be based on our conversations with nurses, EPI managers, and other decision-makers at all levels of the healthcare system in Kenya in early 2020. We conducted research in 3 Counties / 12 Sub Counties / 13 Facilities. We spoke to a total of 84 participants.

Kenyan healthcare workers and managers routinely use **WhatsApp as a trusted channel** to communicate, share information, provide feedback, even build skills and motivate more efficiently.

1 As a way to share information faster

Formal channels like email and paper reports don't always meet the time sensitive data needs of the dynamic immunization program. WhatsApp filled that gap, allowing for real-time information sharing.

WhatsApp reporting helped bypass issues around lack of access to transport, long distances, and staff shortages which usually make handing in physical reports on time a challenge.

1 As a way to share information faster
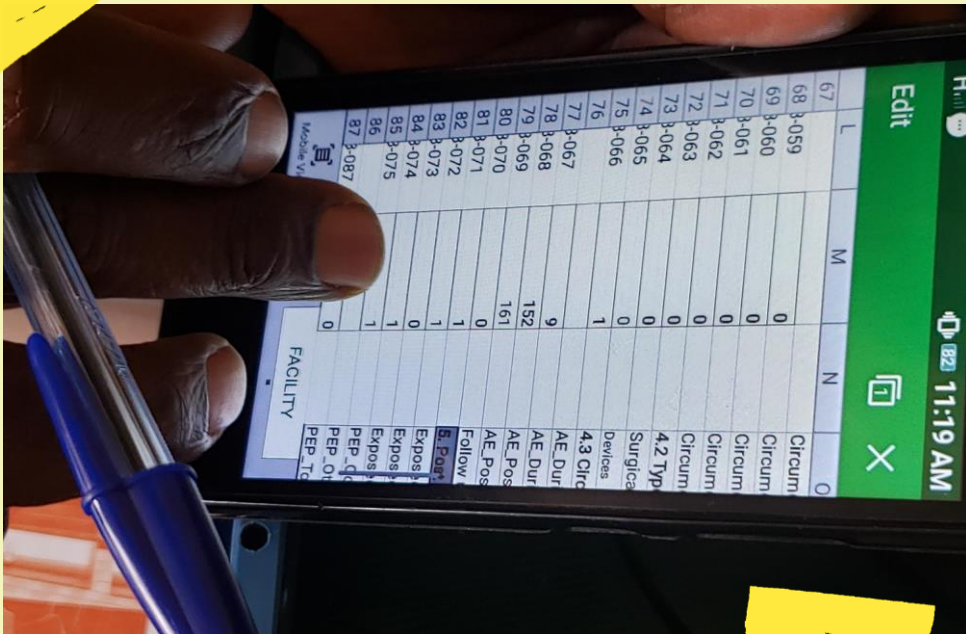
- to report data to others within a system by sending text, a physical photo of a hand written report, or even as an attached excel document.
- to share outbreak data with the surveillance team

2 As a widely accepted stock management tool

While there were many logistics tools that support the management of stock in the system such as ordering forms and online stock management platforms, WhatsApp played a crucial role in the often rapid and ad-hoc nature of stock ordering, management and distribution across Kenya's immunization program.

2 As a widely accepted stock management tool

- to organise and inform Sub Counties of stock movements, quantities, and pick-up details en masse and in real-time.
- to record and send stock data to Sub-County, County, or Regional actors
- to virtually hand over a stock ordering forms (especially in rural areas)

3

As a way to engage and motivate staff, or each other

Supportive supervision activities within the system were chronically underfunded, irregular and often seen as evaluative rather than an opportunity for feedback and motivation.

WhatsApp was used by many supervisors as a mechanism to motivate their team, make data more transparent, and allow peer-level data validation.

3 As a way to engage and motivate staff, or each other

- to review peer data and give feedback
- to send inspirational content
- to create a support network with peers, such as nurses groups at the facility level or HMT groups at the Sub-County level, to share information, challenges, ideas and potential solutions or workarounds that may already be solving problems for others in their peer network.

Formalizing the already widespread use of WhatsApp in Kenya could:

- Play a major role in **digitizing reporting** by overcoming Kenya's gaps in access to computers and networks which force staff to travel to offices or internet cafes to send reports.

- While much of the data in the immunization program moves in one direction — up, WhatsApp could also **help close the feedback loop**, allowing information to move down more easily.

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August 13, 2020
9:30 a.m. EDT / 3:30 p.m. CEST

Ad-hoc health facility tools & workarounds: How Kenyan healthcare workers create their own solutions to immunization data challenges

RESOURCES:

- Download the Initial Kenya Insights Report
- Read the Blog Series