Enhancing AI Adoption in African Healthcare: Insights from a Global Community of Practice

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Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has great potential applications for improving global health outcomes. However, its uptake in Africa and Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) remains low.

This project aims to strengthen healthcare systems by leveraging contextualized solutions of responsible AI to enhance:

- Sexual Reproductive and Maternal Health (SRMH)
- Epidemic/Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Readiness (E/PPPR)

AI for Global Health (AI4GH) explores AI applications in critical health domains, emphasizing knowledge transfer (KT) to engage stakeholders.

The focal points of this collaborative project:
- The Global Health Network (TGHN)
- The Global Health in Infectious Disease Research Group (GHID-KCCR)

AI4GH Community of Practice is a trusted, neutral knowledge hub that is providing valuable resources, toolkits, discussion forums, and knowledge transfer activities in multiple languages. This paper sheds light on sub-grantees for commercial health and related AI projects in Africa.

Funded by:

The AI4GH Knowledge Hub is accessed via a website established in March 2023. AI4GH offers a wealth of resources and practical insights in multiple languages.

Methodology

The research methodology emphasizes co-creation, intercultural knowledge exchange, and capacity building, based on Wenger’s social learning theory of Communities of Practice (CoP).

Practice: Learning as doing

Community: Learning as belonging

Meaning: Learning as experience

Identity: Learning as becoming

The AI4GH Knowledge Hub is accessed via a website established in March 2023. AI4GH offers a wealth of resources and practical insights in English, French, and Spanish.

Metrics such as visitor numbers, views, engagement, and device types are used to evaluate the impact of the AI4GH.

Results

Africa leads in new and returning visitors, suggesting effective user acquisition and retention.

The engagement rate, defined as the percentage of visitors who actively interact with the content and engage in discussions, in Africa (49.6%) is lower than in Asia (56.6%) and in Latin America (57.8%) indicating potential areas for improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Visitors (New)</th>
<th>Visitors (Returning)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFRICA</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIA</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sessions by Device - Desktop: 45.1%; Mobile: 54.1%; Tablet: 0.8%

Users in Africa are more likely to perform searches rather than downloads, but downloads are less frequent.

Commercial start-up projects, funded by the IDRC through HASH, predominantly concentrated on radiological applications.

Conclusion

Promoting inclusive AI adoption in healthcare across Africa through knowledge transfer and digital resources can lead to improved health outcomes. This initiative helps in bridging the gap between AI research and implementation. Commercial AI projects must diversify into various healthcare domains to achieve AI’s full potential in advancing health service and its delivery across the continent.