

What happened after the short course in Public Health Planning for Hearing Impairment (PHPHI)

The PHPHI course is run in low- and middle-income countries across the world, in collaboration with the International Centre for Evidence in Disability (ICED), based at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine in the United Kingdom. Below are two examples of what happened after the course.

CASE STUDY INDIA

K Suresh Kumar, Co-organiser, PHPHI Course in Hyderabad; Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Public Health, Hyderabad, India.

Since 2010, the PHPHI course has trained over 500 participants at the Indian Institute of Public Health in Hyderabad.

A critical barrier reported by participants is the lack of opportunities for putting into practice what is learned during the course. Many of the participants were students and clinicians who do not get an opportunity to be involved in programme planning and management, which usually happens outside classrooms and clinics. These participants gain planning perspectives from the PHPHI course but lack skills for identifying funding opportunities or networking with organisations to take their project ideas forward.

Although there is a national programme for hearing and ear care in India, the use of this trained workforce for its effective implementation is hardly evident. Additionally, there have not been any nominations of participants working in the national programme for the PHPHI course, despite several requests and invitations over the past five years.

Therefore, opportunities for translating knowledge into action include (1) engaging PHPHI participants in planning and programme management; (2) building capacity for securing funds (writing grants) for their projects; (3) nominating participants implementing hearing and ear care programmes through national or civil society-led



PHPHI course in Hyderabad, INDIA

initiatives; and (4) creating a sustainable support system for continued ear and hearing care at all levels of care.

The PHPHI course itself has the potential to generate solutions:

- It could be tailored to people involved in ear and hearing health exclusively from a planning and programme management perspective.
- Its core content could include the development of strategies for addressing these barriers.
- Follow-up programmes, refresher sessions, and specific support could be offered to those who require it.
- The course could offer training in advocacy for capacity building and its content could be redesigned to emphasise the translation of knowledge into action.

CASE STUDY ZIMBABWE

Lucia Nkomo, Organiser, PHPHI Course in Harare; Programme manager, WizEar Trust, Harare, Zimbabwe.

In Zimbabwe, the WizEar Trust has trained 220 people with the short course on PHPHI since 2017. Design and Frank Pamire are two of the participants who attended the 2021 PHPHI course. Frank has Usher syndrome (which causes vision and hearing loss) and relies on his wife for some of the daily chores through tactile sign language.

After the training course, Design and Frank collected Information, Education Communication (IEC) materials on ear and hearing health. They began raising awareness at their church, after which they cascaded awareness training to their community. They found out that a number of children and adults had hearing impairment or chronic otitis media. During community awareness programmes, they met sign language interpreters who later encouraged them to become members of the Sign Language Interpreters of Zimbabwe. This provided an opportunity for them to ensure that ear and hearing health messages are shared widely.



Frank and Design Pamire, ZIMBABWE

Successes and challenges

- Frank and Design managed to create a budget-free project which became successful not only in their church but also in their community.
- The snowballing effect has been very effective as more people want to get trained. Frank and Design started getting calls from members of the public who needed ear and health care services. These were referred to the Wizear Trust for assistance.
- When they came across children and adults with Usher syndrome, Frank and Design created a WhatsApp group for parents and caregivers of people with Usher syndrome (17 members). This was later extended to parents and guardians of children with hearing loss (a further 33 members). This helps parents of hearing-impaired children to connect and support each other.
- Frank and Design sometimes fail to visit some of their hearing-impaired members due to incapacity, e.g. lack of money for petrol.