'Data-informed practices for precision public health: Case study of research frameworks for a digital health impact start-up'

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• Introduction

In this case study, authors explore the research/data approaches and implications of a digital health social enterprise working with rural populations across LMICs.

• Context and Aim (why this is important)

reach52 is a Singapore-based social enterprise impacting health access challenges for rural populations in LMICs. Their model relies on networks of community-based Agents, trained and equipped with a digital beneficiary management application, implementing mass campaigns focusing on health promotion; disease screening; and referrals to care across a range of health areas.

Whole populations are onboarded to the digital platform by Agents through the door-to-door collection of individual-level health and demographic data across 20+ indicators, providing detailed hyper-localized insights. These data also allow for the facilitation of targeted public health campaigns, where beneficiaries are identified and engaged by Agents through filtering of the larger data set. Quantitative data are supported with qualitative data from regular semi-structured interviews and focus groups with stakeholders and beneficiaries.

• Method

Mixed methods data for this case study have been collected through a variety of sources, including web-based surveys; semi-structured interviews; and internal reports. Participants include beneficiaries; participating CHWs; and multi-sectoral partners.

• Findings

In 2021, this approach upskilled 4500 Agents; onboarding 830,000 beneficiaries to the eHealth platform; and drove 260,000 targeted health engagements. External analysis indicates an SROI of $2.10 for each $1 invested in the model. The approach has been implemented across five countries: Cambodia; India; Indonesia; Kenya; Philippines. Private sector partnerships include Johnson & Johnson; Bayer AG; Medtronic Labs; and Pfizer.

For partnered local health systems, the approach builds capacity for Community Health Worker teams and provides technical inputs to inform wider resource allocation. This model also creates a scalable impact-on-demand platform for the private sector seeking to action their access/impact/CSR strategies, with the option to include program components supporting commercial strategies. Program beneficiaries, comprised of lower-income rural populations, gain improved access to health services and products.

• Implications
Overview of a replicable, scalable model that may be adapted for implementation in additional communities, including planned expansion to South Africa in 2022.