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User Experiences

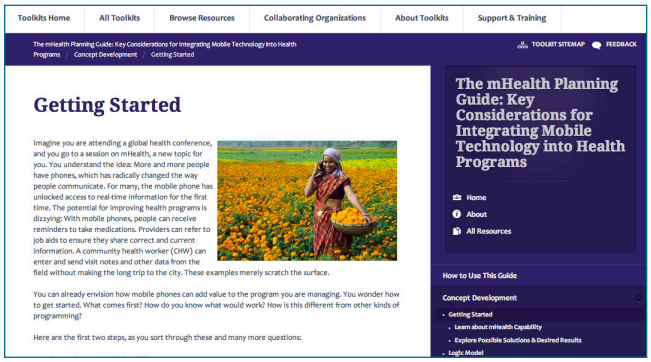
The mHealth Planning Guide: Helping the Health for Life (H4L) Project reach adolescents in Nepal



Khemraj Shrestha, a behavior change communication (BCC) advisor for the Health for Life (H4L) Project in Nepal, was recently tasked with designing an effective and efficient mHealth intervention to reach young people ages 10 to 24 years old with essential family planning and reproductive health information. Though he has 15 years of experience in health communication, Khemraj was new to mHealth and unsure how to design and implement an mHealth program.

K4Health: Connecting people with mHealth Knowledge

Currently employed by RTI, Khemraj previously worked for the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Center for Communication Programs (JHU•CCP), so he visited JHU•CCP's website. This led him to the K4Health website, where he found The mHealth Planning Guide: Key Considerations for Integrating Mobile Technology into Health Programs.



Khemraj downloaded the Guide, scanning the headings to find the information he needed to get started. He browsed journal articles and other relevant resources hyperlinked in the text of the Guide. As he read, he found the information he needed to plan and design his mHealth intervention.

How did the Guide help Khemraj plan his mHealth intervention?

- The Guide helped him understand and become familiar with mHealth language and terminology. (For example, he learned what an aggregator is.) This enabled him to communicate about mHealth knowledgably with partners and key stakeholders.
- The Concept Development section prompted his landscape analysis and feasibility study, helping him to determine whether mHealth would be an appropriate intervention in Nepal.
- The Expert Tips shared throughout the Guide helped him understand what details he needed to focus on as he developed his mHealth concept.
- He used the information in the Guide to develop a tailored checklist to steer his planning and discussions with various partners, such as the aggregators. Face-to-face meetings with these stakeholders allowed him to speak in a very free and frank manner and collect essential information.
- The Guide gave him a sense of how to develop messages specifically for mobile phones, allowing him to successfully conduct a message development workshop to draft effective and mobile-friendly messages for adolescents on key health topics.

Fostering collaboration in mHealth

Khemraj also established key partnerships and focused his efforts on identifying relevant needs and opportunities. Khemraj worked with a number of projects and organizations, including USAID, GIZ, UNFPA, and the National Health Education Information and Communication Center (NHEIC), to form an mHealth working group, or "core group," to coordinate mHealth efforts in Nepal. This core group, which meets regularly, will play an important role in the implementation of this and future mHealth interventions in Nepal.

Reaching young people

With limited funding, Khemraj partnered with GIZ on a landscape analysis and feasibility study to examine two things: (1) the behavior of adolescents with mobiles and (2) the technical capacity for mHealth of service providers and aggregators in Nepal. With this newly gathered information and the help of the Guide and his partners, Khemraj designed an mHealth program that will be implemented later this year. The interactive package targets adolescents and youth with information on key topics: delayed marriage, healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy, hygiene, and gender-based violence. The SMS system includes push-messages sent to users, an encyclopedia that provides on-demand information, role model stories tailored to particular users based on their age and sex, and quizzes.



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What's so great about the *mHealth Planning Guide*?

> ***"The three-step layout was so simply done. The sections seem small and manageable, but as you click through the pages and links, you get all the information you need."***
>
> – Khemraj Shrestha, H4L

Khemraj found the simple layout of the Guide easy to navigate. Each of the three mHealth planning steps—(1) Concept Development, (2) Solution Design & Testing, and (3) Planning for Implementation— contains useful links so that users can easily access more in-depth information if they wish. The Guide provides a simple, straightforward introduction to the technical aspects and terminology of mHealth—just what an mHealth novice needs to begin the planning process. Khemraj now shares the knowledge he gained from using the Guide with his colleagues and friends from other organizations who are working to further the reach of mHealth in Nepal.

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For more information about K4Health's mHealth Portfolio, please contact Heidi Good Boncana, K4Health mHealth Portfolio Manager | Program Officer II, ICT & Innovation | Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Center for Communication Programs (JHU·CCP) | heidi.good@jhu.edu | www.k4health.org | www.mHealthKnowledge.org

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