About the Project

Through Care Community Hub (CCH), Concern Worldwide’s Innovations for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health is working to improve motivation among frontline health workers through a mobile technology application (“app”). By providing this mobile phone app to community health officers, community health nurses and their supervisors, CCH will combine virtual peer-to-peer support with improved connectedness to a professional network and supervisors for frontline health workers involved in maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) service delivery.

The Ministry of Health and Ghana Health Service recently identified equitable distribution, retention, recruitment and professional development of health workers as a priority. Health workers are deployed to locations far from family and are offered few if any opportunities for professional development. While salaries are one element of job satisfaction, non-financial incentives also play a critical role in keeping health workers engaged in rural areas. Health workers who feel isolated, unappreciated, without connection to a larger support network and without the ability to stay in contact with family are less likely to remain in remote rural posts, leaving underserved populations even more vulnerable.

Innovations is partnering with Grameen Foundation in country, leading the implementation of this 18-month (July 2014 to Dec 2015) pilot in Ningo Pram Pram and Ada East and West of Greater Accra, and South Tongu and South Dayi of the Volta Region through community health nurses and their supervisors. Through CCH, Grameen is expanding the MoTeCH program, which works to reduce high infant and maternal mortality rates in Ghana, across Ghana and in partnership with the Ghana Health Service.

JSI Research and Training Institute will collaborate with Innovations to provide technical oversight and support for research, monitoring and evaluation along with Ivy League Consult Africa, the in-country research partner.

Design Techniques in Social Innovation

Using human-centered design, one of several design techniques to promote social innovation, Innovations facilitated targeted end users of the app – community health nurses and their supervisors – through a process in which they all actively participated in identifying components of the app that would provide professional development support and connectedness with their social networks. In the context of the human-centered design process, community engagement occurs when designers ask targeted end users to participate actively in idea generation, prototyping and implementation by contributing ideas and feedback. Community engagement aims to make program designs/solutions better tailored to target populations or end users, build community ownership, and increase community capacity to continue activities once initial program investment has ceased.

During the design process for CCH, the targeted end users identified six concepts that will eventually form the content of the app: Learning and Growing, Providing Good Care, Knowing How I am Doing and Feeling Appreciated, Connecting with Others, Managing my Work and Keeping Well.

POLICY SIGNIFICANCE: CCH fills an unfilled need in the Ghana mHealth landscape. The CCH platform will provide complementary services to existing mHealth initiatives that focus on community level demand generation and data collection/reporting by providing additional social and professional support to frontline health workers. Innovations is partnering with existing mHealth initiatives in Ghana in order to coordinate technologies used and services provided.