

# The Digital Health Applied Leadership Program

BUILDING A NEW CADRE OF DIGITAL HEALTH LEADERS

## University of Global Health Equity

Partners In Health (PIH) has been delivering health care and social services in some of the most underserved communities in many countries for 30 years (PIH, 2019). Founded in 2015, the University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) represents a natural extension of PIH's mission to strengthen health systems and change the way health care is delivered around the world. UGHE inspires to be an innovative, world-class education institution that would train global health professionals - clinicians, researchers, and public health and policy experts - into leaders and change makers.

We will achieve this by:

- Providing high quality education by world renowned instructors and global health practitioners
- Encouraging students to be critical of the status quo in global health delivery and health system strengthening
- Promoting the application of evidence-based best practices that have the potential to enact real change
- Undertaking well-designed research and translating findings to practical solutions to improve the health of people in resource-limited settings

## Digital Square

Digital Square is a PATH-led initiative funded and designed by the United States Agency for International Development, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and a consortium of other donors.

## The Challenge

Governments across sub-Saharan Africa are committed to using digital technologies to improve their health systems, increase access to health data, and advance health equity. Strengthening digital health knowledge and leadership skills across the health workforce is key to scaling up digital health systems. However, no program currently exists that focuses on building the professional and institutional capacity within government, and promoting the level of interagency participation, leadership, and coordination required to enable digital transformation for health systems strengthening. The Digital Health Applied Leadership Program (DHALP) is designed to address this challenge.



## About the Digital Health Applied Leadership Program (DHALP)

Launched in 2021, the DHALP is a year-long learning program that enhances participants' capacity to successfully lead and execute digital health programs. With support from Digital Square, the University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) is leading the DHALP's implementation with a consortium that includes the University of Thies, the Stanford Center for Health Education, and Inshuti Mu Buzima-Partners in Health. Other partners are the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, and TechChange. The concept of the Program was co-created at the November 2019 *Digital Health Leadership Capacity Building Conference* by representatives from 17 low- and middle-income country governments, the WHO, investors, and educators.

Designed as a comprehensive leadership curriculum for a diverse cohort of learners, the DHALP consists of core online courses, a virtual workshop, instruction from tutors, and guidance from country-specific coaches who support participants in planning and delivering a country team project designed to build digital health capacity across participating countries. This model provides opportunities for learners to reflect on and apply their new knowledge and skills, while also sharing their experiences with a peer group during regular meetings with their tutors and coaches. **The Program places a premium on leadership development alongside training in technical skills.**

**At an individual level**, learners who complete the Program will receive a digital health leader practitioner certificate, demonstrating that they have acquired relevant technical skills and knowledge to implement, scale, and sustain digital health interventions. In addition, they will have gained an understanding of how to build inclusive teams, articulate a strategy, advocate for resources, and collaborate effectively across departments, as well as with donors and other partners. **At the country level**, teams of learners will gain the necessary skills and experience to strengthen governance structures required to drive robust, country-owned digital health programs. **At the global level**, the DHALP will establish a global network of practitioners who can continue learning from each other and advocate for the policies and resources needed from multilateral institutions, donors, and the private sector to advance global digital health.



### The Digital Health Applied Leadership Program (DHALP): Fast Facts

**Overview:** A 12-month learning program to prepare participants to successfully create and execute digital health transformation initiatives for health systems strengthening.

**Participants:** 40 individuals selected from Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Malawi, and Zimbabwe.

**Educators:** With support from Digital Square, the **University of Global Health Equity (UGHE)** will leverage its Center for Executive Education and a consortium composed of:

- **The University of Thies:** Francophone learning and training with a telemedicine specialty.
- **The Stanford Center for Health Education:** Anglophone learning and training with a data science science specialty.
- **Inshuti Mu Buzima-Partners in Health:** Selection and training of coaches with a strong understanding of digital health needs at the community level.

**Additional Partners:** The World Bank and TechChange.

## The DHALP is Robust by Design

### Active and continuous learning with both individual attention and peer exchange

The training program consists of several online modules, tutoring for six months of the training, and coaching all year to support the planning, implementation, evaluation, and presentation of a digital health capacity building project from each of the five country teams.

### Meticulous country and participant selection

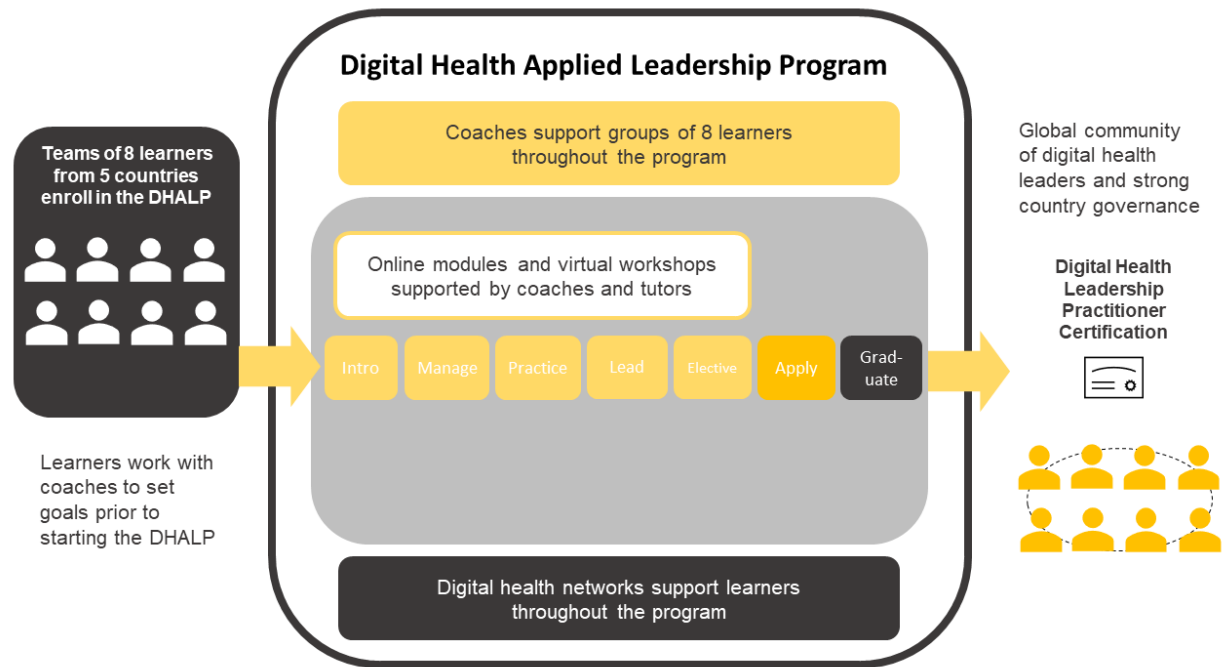
Two main goals guide the criteria for both country and participant selection regarding enhancement of digital health capacity: *scaling up* within a country and *scaling across* a region. Within a country, the DHALP recruits mid- to senior-level managers and leaders from digital health decision-making bodies within governments at the national level. To successfully scale across the region, participating countries come from different regions of sub-Saharan Africa to foster the development of regional hubs in each of these areas

### Rigorous standards for expertise and involvement from coaches

Coaches are being recruited from a wide pool of experts suggested by consortium collaborators, in consultation with participating country stakeholders and Digital Square. Each country team will be assigned a coach for the duration of the training program who has expert knowledge of the country's digital health capacity, and the specific digital health system and stakeholders in the assigned country.



## DHALP Framework



## Participants

A maximum of eight participants from each of the five country teams will be selected according to:  
As an individual

- Senior-level or mid-level position within the government, prioritizing mid-level officials
- Working in the ministry of health and government-based stakeholders
- Some non-technical knowledge of digital health
- Motivated to develop career in digital health
- Medium-level of digital literacy
- Committed to engage in the program
- In a leadership role or have leadership potential
- Willing to continue engagement as alumni
- Act as agent of change
- For non-government employee, must be directly embedded in government digital health work



As a country team

- A combination of people with a mix of skill sets
- Have a wide range of influence and decision-making authority
- Representativeness of the country population and inclusivity through an equitable election process in terms of gender, sex, and sexual orientation, race, religion, and ableness

## Curriculum

### Months 1-6: Deliver the training modules and plan country team projects

This stage will begin with a synchronous online workshop that will introduce each country team to the program, lecturers, tutors, and coaches. Four training modules will be delivered, with an optional fifth module:

1. Introduction: Digital health, planning national systems (TechChange)
2. Manage: Managing digital health programs (UGHE)
3. Practice: Workshop on artificial intelligence in health (World Bank)
4. Lead: Digital health leadership (UGHE)
5. Optional course: Health informatics (World Bank)

During the Introduction module, participants will assess their country's digital health landscape using the Global Digital Health Index. During the Manage module, participants will use their findings to develop their capstone project.

## Capstone

### Months 6-12: Implement, evaluate, and present country team projects

The final six months of the project will center on the implementation, monitoring & evaluation, and presentation of country projects. Country teams will also:

- Complete a written report of the change project to circulate among pertinent country-specific stakeholders and training participants.
- Summarize findings in an oral presentation during the final two-day leadership workshop/conference.
- Participate in the final workshop focused on leadership, reflection, and goal-setting that will end in a graduation.
- Invite informants to participate in the co-teaching or coaching of future DHALP training.



## Prioritizing Partnership

Digital Square and the UGHE consortium prioritize partnership in launching and growing the DHALP. Donors and stakeholders, including the World Bank, are working with us to further augment the training content in the final DHALP curriculum. Donors are also exploring funding opportunities to enable training support for additional cohorts.

For more information, please contact Dr. Rex Wong, Director of the Bill and Joyce Cummings at the Institute of Global Health at University of Global Health Equity, at [rwong@ughe.org](mailto:rwong@ughe.org).

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