

Research & Evaluation:

Conducting research and synthesizing evidence to identify effective approaches and inform product design



Jessica Scranton/FHI 360

FHI 360 RESEARCHERS
publish up to

200

peer-reviewed journal articles a year and hundreds of analytical and evaluation reports.

Dedicated to delivering “the science of improving lives”, FHI 360 has more than 40 years of experience conducting research including clinical trials, field experiments, health surveillance, educational policy analysis, school assessments, economic analyses, program evaluation and implementation science. Globally we have more than 150 full-time staff members with doctoral degrees from across the sciences and social sciences. FHI 360 researchers publish up to 200 peer-reviewed journal articles a year and hundreds of analytical and evaluation reports. We have dedicated support departments for statistics, data management and research utilization.

For digital solutions, we apply our research and evaluation expertise to inform specific approaches and products; to examine contexts, diagnose needs, and measure impacts; and to catalogue and synthesize existing evidence so that all digital development providers can learn what works. Since 2015, FHI 360 researchers have published over a dozen papers in peer-reviewed journals on digital solutions for development challenges.

FORMATIVE RESEARCH TO CUSTOMIZE DIGITAL APPROACHES AND PRODUCTS

FHI 360 conducts formative research based on human-centered design principles to identify opportunities for the use of digital tools and tailor product design to the needs of users in the communities where we work. For example,

- With our partners in Myanmar, FHI 360 produced an in-field assessment and a desk review of third-party data to assess mobile payment potential within agricultural value chains. The assessment identified information gaps, regulatory discussions, scalable business opportunities, and encouraged private and public investment in the digital payments sector.
- In Kenya and Tanzania, FHI 360 collected data using multiple methods, including SMS surveys and digital logging of queries, to analyze the reach and potential impact of FHI 360’s Mobile for Reproductive Health (m4RH) product.

About FHI 360: FHI 360 is a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions. Our staff includes experts in health, education, nutrition, environment, economic development, civil society, gender, youth, research, technology, communication and social marketing — creating a unique mix of capabilities to address today's interrelated development challenges. FHI 360 serves more than 70 countries and all U.S. states and territories.

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These feasibility studies found that m4RH users liked the simple language and confidentiality of receiving health information via mobile phone, and reported increased contraceptive knowledge and use after using m4RH.

- With our partners in Ghana, FHI 360 supported key informant interviews and focus groups to produce recommendations on how to streamline and improve existing payment services for fisherfolk and tailor a mobile money product.

PRIMARY RESEARCH TO UNDERSTAND MARKETS AND LEARN WHAT WORKS

FHI 360 conducts quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research to examine access to and use of ICTs and to evaluate the impacts of ICTs on the daily lives of users. We design and manage surveys for a wide range of respondents in a variety of contexts, often using digital technologies. For example,

- In Mozambique, FHI 360 conducted a multi-faceted mobile access and usage study (MAUS). The study featured two surveys. The household survey, utilizing traditional face-to-face interviews to obtain data for adults living in the target provinces, and the computer-assisted-telephone-interviewing (CATI) survey, featuring remote data collection using live enumerators to conduct thousands of interviews with a panel of active mobile users. The household survey pinpointed severe access issues and barriers to use, and the CATI survey measured the impact of using SMS reminders and airtime incentives to increase participation rates and retain respondents over time.
- In Tanzania, FHI 360 conducted a study on perceptions of UAV flights/drones among citizens and government officials. The study revealed overwhelmingly positive views about the potential of UAV technology in Tanzania to address development challenges and flagged serious concerns over the need to establish regulatory frameworks.
- In Liberia, FHI 360 conducted an ethnographic study to describe the experiences and attitudes of health care workers with regards to mobile phone usage and their salary payments. The study employed focus-group discussions, direct observation and walk-alongs to gain greater insights, painting a complex and rich picture of health workers' use of mobiles and their financial habits. This study informed government and mobile money service provider planning and implementation of a nationwide effort to disburse salary payments through mobile money.

EVIDENCE REVIEWS TO CONSOLIDATE AND SYNTHESIZE GLOBAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

FHI 360 conducts and publishes evidence reviews, including systematic reviews, to identify, catalogue, and synthesize high-quality evidence about ICT interventions to inform effective and contextualized program and product development. For example,

- “Electronic health, telemedicine and new paradigms for training and care” by Todd CS, Mills SJ, and Innes AL in Current Opinion in HIV AIDS, September 2017. This qualitative literature review assesses eHealth and mHealth training methods for HIV care that were published between 2016 and 2017.
- “Meet us on the phone: Mobile phone programs for adolescent sexual and reproductive health in low- to middle-income countries” by Ippoliti NB and L'Engle K in Reproductive Health, January 2017. This review covering 17 projects meeting the inclusion criteria presents a global landscape analysis of how programs are using mobile technologies to improve adolescent sexual and reproductive health.
- “How much evidence is there really? Mapping the evidence base for ICT4D interventions” by Brown AN and Skelly H, 2018. This evidence map developed using systematic review methods catalogues 254 impact evaluations on ICT4D into 11 intervention categories and nine sectors.

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