Submitted by
PHARMACCESS FOUNDATION
Quarter 1 (Jun – Aug 2020)
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Executive Summary

COVID-19 pandemic is a global threat affecting the health and socio-economic activities of nations around the globe including Nigeria. PharmAccess Foundation’s commitment to building resilient healthcare systems is reinforced by the urgency of responding to the pandemic. Adapting and implementing innovative strategies to enable access to basic healthcare services remains a core PharmAccess objective as we leverage relationships amongst our healthcare partners to support the Lagos State government’s response to contain the virus.

Learning from countries in Europe where the spread of the virus resulted in a surge of patients in hospitals, PharmAccess Foundation with funding from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs partnered with the Federal Medical Centre Ebute-Metta (FMC-EB), Lagos and Luscii Technologies to establish the COVID Connect Centre, a digital service which leverages on mobile technology to prevent a surge of patients in hospitals in Lagos, the hot-zone in Nigeria. The purpose of this service was primarily to prevent the spread of the virus through information sharing, selfscreening of users via the application so that only high risk users were encouraged to visit the hospitals, thus freeing up hospital capacity for high risk patients, enabling home isolation and care for mild cases, early detection of suspected cases for testing and containment as well as generating pandemic-relevant data analytics and insights for better management.

The centre provides free actionable information, monitoring, and care of COVID19 disease to the residents of Lagos state. A mobile application – developed by Luscii Technologies – assesses COVID19 risk using the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) risk guidelines. It also monitors key COVID-associated symptoms and schedules diagnostic testing for the user if required. COVID-positive users receive treatment, continuous monitoring, and care from the FMC-EB, Lagos, a SafeCare Level 4 hospital.

The COVID Connect Centre was launched on the 3rd of June 2020 and has over 12,000 downloads, 3,257 users with over 60% of these active on the platform. 19 users have been tested, and 8 of them were diagnosed as COVID-positive and managed to recovery as at 28th of August 2020.
2 Background

The COVID19 pandemic has spread exponentially across the world and within Nigeria, causing discomfort, disability, and unfortunately, death among us. As part of our response to this global challenge, the PharmAccess Foundation, Luscii Technologies, and the Federal Medical Centre Ebute-Metta (FMC-EB), Lagos established a COVID Connect Centre, a free response centre that provides actionable information, monitoring, and care of the COVID19 disease to residents of Lagos State.

The Luscii mobile application works on both Android® and iOS® devices and can be downloaded from both mobile application stores.

- for Android® devices: https://bit.ly/3ga0koa
- for iOS® devices: https://apple.co/38cazeh

The work at the centre is mediated through a mobile app developed by Luscii Technologies with funding from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The application assesses COVID19 risk using the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) risk guidelines. It helps to monitor key COVID-associated symptoms and schedules diagnostic testing for the user if required. If diagnosed as positive for COVID19, users will receive treatment, continuous monitoring, and care from the FMC-EB, a secondary facility located in Lagos.

Based on the lessons learnt from countries that experienced a surge of COVID patients into the emergency rooms thus overwhelming the hospitals, this digital service serves to counsel, and manage patients at home while triaging higher risk patients into the healthcare facilities.

3 COVID Connect Centre Structure

The COVID Connect Centre is set up as a tripartite partnership between;

a. The PharmAccess Foundation, which provides organizational and management capacity for the centre, including funding for marketing and communication activities.

b. Luscii Technologies, a technology company that developed the Luscii app and adapted it to the NCDC and NITDA regulations and standards.

c. The Federal Medical Centre, Ebute Metta (FMC-EB) Lagos, which provides the clinical expertise, care, logistic and transportation support required in the diagnosis and management of COVID19 cases.
### 4 Stakeholder Responsibility Matrix

Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAKEHOLDER</th>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Design and Development</th>
<th>Technical Set-up (Incl. Laptops)</th>
<th>Location, Staffing, &amp; Remuneration</th>
<th>Capacity Building and Training</th>
<th>Call Screening &amp; Issue Resolution</th>
<th>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</th>
<th>Monitoring and Evaluation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PharmAccess</td>
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<tr>
<td>FMC, Lagos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luscii Technologies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 5 COVID Connect Centre Key Partner: The Federal Medical Centre, Lagos

The Federal Medical Centre, Ebute-Metta (FMC-EB), Lagos, led by its Chief Medical Director, Dr Adedamola Dada is the anchor partner for the COVID Connect Centre. FMC-EB provided a location, cofunded equipment for the center, and seconded the trained medical personnel as the center’s response team. FMC’s already established COVID testing and isolation facilities enabled the COVID Connect Centre to “complete the loop” and provide the entire continuum of COVID care – from risk assessment and identification, follow-up and daily monitoring, to testing, transportation, and treatment.

PharmAccess Foundation is supporting FMC-EB’s hospital-wide quality program using our SafeCare quality improvement methodology. This hospital has recorded notable achievements in infrastructural upgrade from extensive renovations to digitization of payment, medical records, communication and inventory management.

*Federal Medical Center Ebute Metta Lagos*
Objectives

The overarching goal of the COVID Connect Centre is to reduce the burden and spread of the COVID19 disease in Lagos, and the rest of Nigeria through the following key objectives;

1. By empowering users to remotely screen themselves for COVID19, and be continuously monitored by trained health professionals.

2. By reducing the burden on the health workers and responders to screen, monitor, and followup potential COVID19 cases.

3. By enabling the health workers and responders to rapidly identify, test, and isolate COVID19 cases.

Launch of the COVID-19 Screening Digital Service

On the 3rd of June 2020, the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Ebute-Metta, and PharmAccess Foundation launched "Luscii" COVID-19 screening digital service. This innovative digital service, Luscii, screens for COVID-19 symptoms and connects users to dedicated medical responders for advice on how to manage their care. The launch was attended by Jan Van Weijen, Consul General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, he congratulated the Lagos State Government and PharmAccess Foundation on the launch of the Covid Connect digital service. According to him, the digital service will help in the fight against COVID19 in Nigeria and the government of the Netherlands would continue to support the Nigerian government in their fight against the COVID19 pandemic.

Similarly, Prof. Akin Abayomi, the Hon. Commissioner for Health Lagos State, during his speech added that the digital service platform could help support Lagos State's fight against the COVID19 virus and is looking forward to reviewing the benefits.

A live demonstration of the digital service platform and tour of the COVID Connect call center was conducted by Dr. Ademola Serrano, the Digital Health Innovations Manager at PharmAccess Foundation who reiterated that this digital service has been successfully deployed in several other countries. Dr. Serrano demonstrated the download and signup process and subsequently explained the process for triaging of suspected COVID patients identified by the digital service. Such users will be contacted by the medical responders and transported to Lagos State approved testing, isolation and treatment facilities.
COVID Connect Virtual Launch Pictures

To Access CovidConnect Services Download Lusell on

iOS or Google Play

CovidConnectNg @covid_connecting

Tweet

Dutch Consul General Lagos
@janvanweijen

@followlasg #Lagos is launching with the Federal Medical Centre, Ebute Metta the #CovidContactCentre with @PharmAccessNIG and @ProfAkinAbayomi by using tested and trusted technology from the #Netherlands by cooperation with #Dutch health providers @OLVG Hospital & @Luscii

Tweet your reply
9 Operational Performance

Implementation Planning for the COVID Connect Centre commenced in mid-April – soon after the start of the State lockdowns – and continued to its launch on the 3rd of June, 2020.

Planning activities included:

- Project management activities – scoping, budgeting, resource planning, process flow mapping
- Location and human resource activities – location preparation and equipping, training and capacity building of health workers and responders
- Technology set-up and modifications – ensuring regulatory compliance of the technology to be used
- Piloting and test running the application and centre activities before launch

The COVID Connect Centre was launched on June 03, 2020, with the following first quarter (Jun – Aug 2020) performance summary as at 30th of October, 2020:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1 COVID CONNECT CENTRE PERFORMANCE SUMMARY</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Downloads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Registrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Users</td>
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<tr>
<td>Users Tested</td>
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<tr>
<td>Users Treated</td>
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Table 2:

10 Marketing and Communications

As response to information fatigue and skepticism, health influencers were engaged including Aproko Doctor and Dr Zobo, as well as dialogue with NCDC to endorse the digital service on their social media platforms.
Opportunities

The key opportunities identified during a survey of application users conducted during the quarter include:

The Utility of Self-Monitoring: Satisfied users who were more likely to promote the COVID Connect Centre and the application determined that being able to monitor COVID19 symptoms and their general health status was a key benefit of the response centre.

The Convenience of Remote Care: Users identified the reduced requirement for health facility visits as a key advantage of the COVID Connect Centre – which provides remote healthcare monitoring through trained responders.

Out-of-State Interest: Though the response centre activities are limited to the residents of Lagos state, the responders have received requests for care from residents of other states (about 2% of active users are residents of other states). This shows there is still an existing information and care gap that the COVID Connect Centre can provide.

Challenges

Some challenges encountered in implementing the response centre’s activities include:

COVID Information Fatigue: Response analyses of our communication activities at the start and end of the first quarter of operations suggests that there may be information fatigue regarding COVID19. This has led to population apathy concerning the pandemic, thus making prevention and tracking measures more difficult.
Long-term Sustainability: Without a drug or vaccine, the COVID-19 pandemic state may continue into the near future; with waxing and waning infection spikes in various population centres. Sustaining the response centre’s operations in Lagos over such a period may prove difficult for a private organization with limited funding.

14 Other COVID response projects by PharmAccess include:

The SafeCare COVID Webinars: a series of well-attended webinars helping to strengthen Nigeria’s COVID response by enabling cross-learning from other African countries where PharmAccess has a presence.

The SafeCare4COVID Provider Assessment: a self-assessment tool for health facilities and providers to assess their preparations for the COVID pandemic in terms of infection prevention and control, work scheduling and resource planning, and in other areas of service provision.
Partnership with Novartis: To support our frontline healthcare workers, we donated surgical masks, N95 respirators and IEC posters to public healthcare facilities in Lagos State.

Next Steps

Continued Marketing and Communication Activities

PharmAccess Foundation and its partners will continue to support the development of appropriate communications and messaging for the COVID Connect Centre, and more generally for preventive and tracking measures necessary to reduce the spread of COVID19 in Lagos and the other states of Nigeria.

Integration of the COVID Connect Centre into the wider Lagos State Public Health COVID Response

The COVID Connect Centre has demonstrated its demand, utility, and impact in its first quarter of operations. To increase its reach and benefits to all residents of Lagos state, the COVID Connect Centre needs to be integrated into the state’s broader response and expanded to include other healthcare Facilities. The integration would enable:

- Home-based care and monitoring of asymptomatic and mild COVID cases; which the mobile application can already perform.
- Remote and automated risk assessments for COVID19, thus unburdening the healthcare workers to focus on more serious cases, and
cost reductions for COVID treatment in the state through the more efficient deployment of human and facility resources in the management of active cases.

**Minister of State for Health, Dr Mamora visits Covid Connect Center FMC Ebutte Metta**

On Friday, 28th of August 2020, the Hon. Minister of State for Health Dr Olorunimibe Mamora visited the FMC Ebutte Metta, Lagos including the COVID Connect Centre. The Minister commended the Covid Connect project which was done in conjunction with PharmAccess Foundation, saying that he is very pleased and satisfied with what the team has been able to achieve in terms of improving the service delivery and infrastructure of the medical center. He noted that the team has raised the bar in terms of quality standard, despite the COVID-19 pandemic which has the tendency to make routine services suffer because of the tension that has been focused on the pandemic.

'There is a lot of commendation for the team, from the chairman of the board to the medical director, the staff, doctors, nurses, laboratory scientists, pharmacists,' he said. Speaking about PharmAccess Foundation's SAFECARE initiative which helped in the project, he said: 'It is also good to learn of your Processes and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in partnership with SAFECARE. I hope to be back here sometime soon when this relationship will lead to international accreditation of this Federal Government Institution.'
Figure 3: Users Journey through COVID Connect Centre