



Inside this issue:

It all started with the VFAN Ghana team 1

District supervisors in UER got their turn 2

And so did the facility in-charges in UER 2

There was also training on health promotion and demand generation 2



I have imbibed a lot from this training because the training has been more practical than theoretical unlike other trainings. Of my six years

in nursing practice this has been the best training I have been to. I think the COVID-19 protocols put in place too were adequate. We were made to put on our masks compulsorily, we only remove it when we had breaks or during lunch time which we had in our rooms. Hand washing facilities were at vantage points and sanitizers were on our tables and we were using it every time." Felicity Azoo (SGHN) Pusu-Namongo

...It all started with the VFAN team



For the rest of the VFAN team to be able to provide support to the Eye Health Team (EHT), The EHT took the Ghana team through a 2-day PEC training held in the office. The team were taken through the various algorithms in the Contextualized WHO PEC manual which is what is used for the training of nurses. All 9 VFAN team members (drivers inclusive) were trained and are now skilled

Stories from Ghana- Rising above COVID-19

A bi-weekly newsletter brought to you by Vision for a Nation-Ghana Programme

PEC Training in the midst of COVID-19

To kick-start the facility-based Primary Eye Care (PEC) pilot, there was the need to conduct training for Public Health Care (PHC) nurses to implement PEC at the PHC facilities.

The general concern was how to conduct PEC training in the midst of COVID-19 while ensuring that both staff and participants were protected. It was not just enough to follow the COVID-19 protocols of I. ensuring social distancing, wearing face mask and washing hands frequently. PEC training including examining the eye which requires that people come into close contact and touch the faces of others, actions that clearly deviates from the dictates of the protocols. There was the need to



Innovations in the midst of COVID-19. Using dummy heads for PEC training

think outside the box and that was how the idea of using dummy heads for practical sessions during the trainings was conceived.

For PEC trainings during this period, dummy heads were used for practical sessions. This was implemented along with the other protocols for preventing the spread of COVID-19.

To minimize the discomfort that continues wearing of face mask brings upon many people, the training sessions were broken into mini-sessions with frequent breaks. This allowed people to walk out into the open space, remove their mask to catch some air while maintaining social distancing.

This reduced the discomfort as well as ensured all participants were comfortable enough and participating fully in the trainings.

in PEC.

Also as part of the weeklong Training programme for staff was the training on monitoring and reporting conducted by the M&R team. The goal was to orient the team on the M&R procedures, protocols and tools including an orientation on the Mango mHealth application developed for data collection and monitoring

"this training has empowered me and positioned me to be able to give support during supportive supervision visits when the PEC starts in the various health facilities in Bongo and Talensi. Additionally, I am also empowered to be able to carry out eye screening in schools. Working in Primary Eye care is going to be a new experience for me" Titus Alzumah (UER Regional Coordinator)



District Supervisors from UER got their turn

District supervisors from the district health directorates (DHD) in the Talensi and Bongo districts in the Upper East Region (UER) were trained in PEC to equip them with the skills needed to be able to provide supervision and support to PEC nurses at the PHC facilities

The district health directorates are responsible for managing health care delivery in the districts. They have oversight over all health care facilities including the Primary Health Care facilities (PHC). To ensure sustainability and ownership, 4 members of the DHD and the district ophthalmic nurses receive PEC training to enable them provide direct supervision and



Participants being taken through how to place an eye pad

support to the PHC. The district supervisory team is made up of the district director of health service, district public health nurse, district health information officer, district health promotion officer and the district ophthalmic nurse. In UER, 10 supervisors were trained across the 2 pilot districts: Talensi and Bongo districts.

...And so did the facility in-charges



"The way the program was structured was very good. The practical sessions following theory sessions

helped a lot. I didn't have a problem recalling what I have learnt. Previously we were forced to refer all eye patients without providing any form of management and our facility is very far from the next referring facility but this training has increased our confidence level for treating eye patients and we can provide some management before referring them.

Juta Anafo (SSN) SHIA Health Center



A total of 31 PHC nurses (facility in-charges) were trained in PEC in the Upper East Region for the PEC pilot. These nurses in addition to the first batch of 30 nurses trained earlier in the year will implement the PEC pilot in the PHC facilities in the region

...There was also health promotion and demand generation

Demand generation and awareness raising is very key in the promotion of eye health. Encouraging people to seek eye care services involves raising awareness about eye care in general. It aims to make the target audience interested in eye health messages and inspire action for eye health services.

The Health promotion team therefore took their turn to train nurses on health promotion and demand generation strategies.

The purpose of this was to equip nurses with the required skills to conduct health promotion and demand generation activities at the various facilities for PEC.

It was also an opportunity to train nurses on VFAN health promotion and demand generation strategies and materials.

