

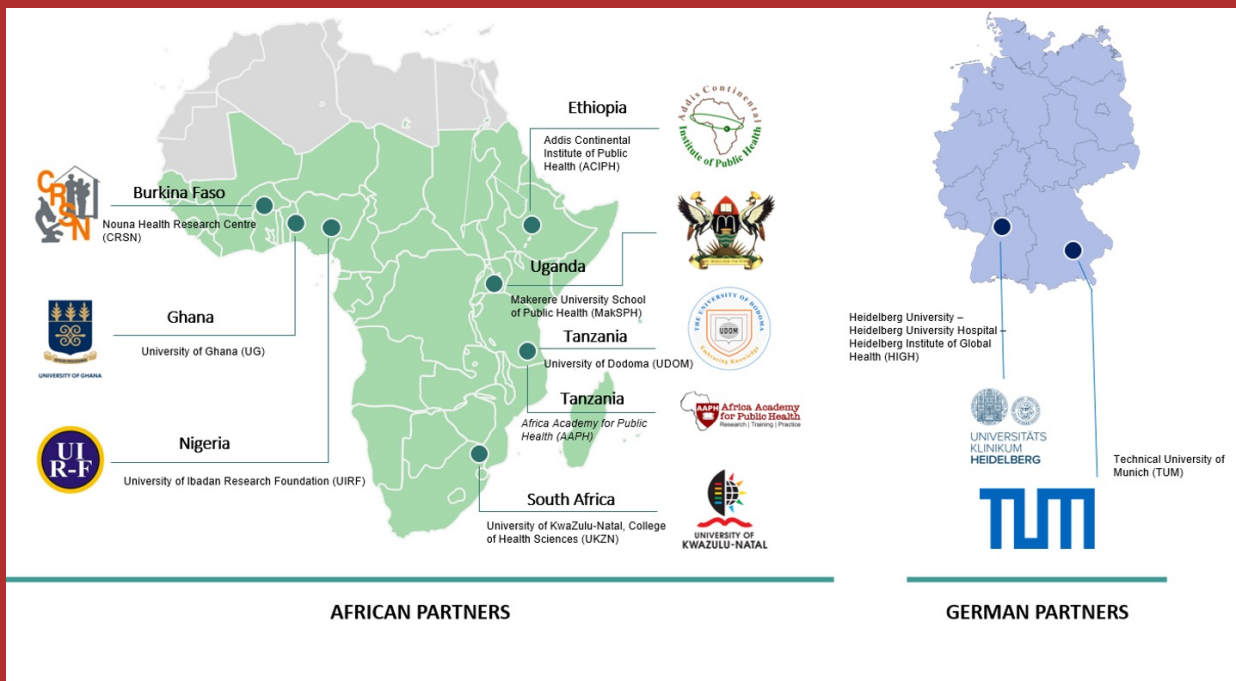


Design and Evaluation of Adolescent Health Interventions and Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa

November 2023



DASH Consortium



AFRICAN PARTNERS

GERMAN PARTNERS

DASH

Research Network for Design and Evaluation of Adolescent Health Interventions and Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa

This project is a collaborative initiative project, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and is one of the Research Networks for Health Innovations in Sub-Saharan Africa (RHISSA). The DASH project started in 2023 and members convened in early January for kick-off meetings in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (*picture below*). The DASH collaboration builds upon an established research network on adolescent health in SSA. DASH brings together researchers working in population health and epidemiology, public health, health economics, health systems research, implementation science, design research, and intervention and policy evaluation with a focus on nutrition and physical activity, sexual and reproductive health, and mental health and violence.

DASH Network Partners include:

1. Africa Academy for Public Health (AAPH)
2. Addis Continental Institute of Public Health (ACIPH)
3. Nouna Health Research Center (CRSN)
4. Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH)
5. University of Dodoma (UDOM)
6. University of Ghana (UG)
7. University of Ibadan Research Foundation (UIRF)
8. University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)
9. Heidelberg University – Heidelberg Institute of Global Health (HIGH)
10. Technical University of Munich (TUM)

DASH External Partners include:

11. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (HSPH)
12. Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS)
13. Management and Development for Health (MDH)

The ARISE Network, which stands for “The Africa Research, Implementation Science, and Education”, was established in 2014 by the Africa Academy for Public Health (AAPH) to address the need for greater, sustainable public health capacity in Africa. ARISE is a collaborative effort involving leading African institutions, the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and the Heidelberg Institute of Global Health. It serves as a platform for robust research and cutting-edge education in the region, with member institutions from nine Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries.

ARISE aims to advance implementation science in priority research areas and develop the next generation of public health leaders in Africa. The network's expertise lies in maternal, neonatal, and child health, but it also prioritizes adolescent health as crucial for sustaining childhood improvements and advancing maternal health.



DASH Network members at Kick-off Meeting in Dar es Salaam in January 2023

The overarching and long-term goal for DASH is to boost adolescent health in SSA through rigorous population-based intervention and policy research. In pursuit of this goal, we have designed the following 5 specific research objectives, which will be addressed in 6 Research Tasks (RTs):

1. **Determine the key health risk factors and intervention needs among adolescents in SSA**, adding novel measurements to existing Health and Demographic Surveillance Systems (HDSS) (RT1);
2. **Develop a methodological framework for researching adolescent health interventions in SSA** comprising (i) collaborative design research, (ii) impact and process evaluation, (iii) transportability and adaptation studies for transfer of research results and interventions across communities and countries (RT2);
3. **Locally design and pilot test adolescent health literacy and nudge interventions** in the three domains of (i) nutrition & physical activity (RT3), (ii) sexual & reproductive health (RT4), and (iii) mental health & violence (RT5), using ideation and implementation methods from design research;
4. **Establish the effects, impacts and mechanisms of adolescent health literacy and nudge interventions on health knowledge and understanding, health behaviors and outcomes in SSA**, targeting the three key adolescent health domains using randomized controlled trials (RCTs) nested within HDSS and mixed-methods performance evaluations. These home-based interventions will be delivered by community health workers (CHWs);
5. **Establish the effects, impacts and mechanisms of key national and regional adolescent health policies in SSA** in the three domains using policy mapping, quasi-experimental study designs and mixed-methods performance evaluations (RT6).

The key functions to address these objectives are to combine the efficient collection and use of relevant adolescent health data, and the employment



Colleagues from ACIPH, AAPH, and HSPH in January 2023

of robust quantitative and qualitative methods with local domain-specific expert knowledge on the health domains nutrition & physical activity, sexual & reproductive health, and mental health & violence.

Alongside our research agenda, we will actively invest in activities that assure the sustainability and societal impact of our work. Our research network will invest in capacity building and networking activities to train the next generation of population and public health researchers in SSA and to promote a long-lasting infrastructure and strong and efficient research teams built on personal relationships. We will also maximize the relevance and the transfer of evidence to policy and practice.



DASH colleagues during strategic planning meetings in January 2023

Follow our activities on LinkedIn and Twitter to stay up to date:

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/arise-dash/>

Twitter: @DASH_RHISSA

More information can be found on our website, [here](#).