

Data Use Acceleration and Learning (DUAL)

Overview

The Data Use Acceleration and Learning (DUAL) initiative is a partnership between PATH and Cooper/Smith that aims to share what works to achieve digital transformation. DUAL is amplifying learnings from five focal countries—Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Malawi, South Africa, and Tanzania—that have been digitalizing their health systems and strengthening the use of health data to achieve better health outcomes. DUAL packaged these countries’ experiences into a model that distills their learnings into practical, measurable recommendations for digital transformation, representing a comprehensive approach to transforming a country’s health data systems and digital tools.

The model’s ten essential elements of sustainable digital transformation for data use (see figure 1) can be applied by countries at any stage in their process to accelerate data use. The model’s elements are highly interrelated and are intended to be addressed together. The DUAL model supports a range of digital health stakeholders—country governments; global and regional policymakers; implementers, including the private sector; and funders operating at a regional or global scale—collaborating with countries to help digitalize their health systems in alignment with their health targets and digital maturity.



Figure 1: The DUAL model for data use acceleration

How funders can use the DUAL model

Funders can champion the DUAL model and invest in programming that reflects its findings and recommendations. Funding organizations may operate at a global or regional scale, including foundations and multilateral organizations. They fund and support evidence-based interventions that have been shown to achieve system-wide results, demonstratable scale, and a return on investment. The DUAL model helps funders invest in country-driven digital health programming, while promoting integrated, interoperable digital tools and approaches.

Recommended actions for funders

- ❖ Ensure digital health investments align with countries' visions and strategies.
- ❖ Work with other funders to align investments and harmonize with country priorities for digital transformation to reduce the burden on countries and implementing partners.
- ❖ Invest in foundational country-led activities to lay the groundwork for sustainable, long-term digital transformation, including the development of:
 - National-level digital health strategies and roadmaps.
 - Policies to support digital transformation for data use.
 - Governance mechanisms to enforce new digital health policies, guidelines, and standards.
 - Enterprise architecture to define the current and future state of the national digital health system.
- ❖ Advocate for countries to establish governance bodies to oversee digital transformation for data use.
- ❖ Invest in global goods, standards, and interoperable systems instead of stand-alone systems.
- ❖ Leverage data, assessments, and evaluations to make investment decisions.
- ❖ Invest in building the capacity of health actors at all tiers of the health system to model and cultivate a culture of data use.
- ❖ Encourage user-centered design and interoperability during the development of digital health systems.
- ❖ Contribute to the evidence base for how digital health can improve health outcomes and advance health equity.
- ❖ Identify the true costs of digital and data infrastructure and work with country governments to determine sustainable funding streams.

Examples of actions being taken by funders



Investment

Planning for financial flexibility

In Burkina Faso, a six-month data strike in 2019 led health workers to refuse to collect or share data with national-level officials within the Ministry of Health. Partner and donor flexibility allowed the implementation team to postpone data collection efforts until a resolution had been reached.



Services & Applications

Providing learning labs for user-centered design

In Ethiopia, investments allowed the government and implementing partners to create the Digital Health Innovation Learning Center. The center provides an environment for the local development and testing of digital tools and applications where software developers can validate new requirements, try out use cases, and seek user feedback.



Leadership & Governance

Coordinating interventions within the health sector and beyond

In Tanzania, implementing partners and the Ministry of Health established a project governance unit to manage project work across multiple ministries and agencies. This governance unit helped to create digital health advocates within various ministries and departments and is ensuring better coordination of digital development investments.

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Visit the DUAL website: <https://www.acceleratedatause.org>