

International Conference on

BREAST CANCER

&

ANNUAL BIOPROCESSING OF
ADVANCED CELLULAR THERAPIES CONGRESSDecember 03-04, 2018
Dubai, UAE**Fighting breast cancer one smartphone per village (FBCOSPV)****Philippa Kibugu C Decuir**

Breast Cancer Initiative East Africa (BCIEA) Inc., USA

Is it possible to leverage technology and exponentially increase breast cancer educational awareness using an innovative Mobile Application developed by Philippa Kibugu Decuir, a 24-year breast cancer survivor, founder and CEO of Breast Cancer Initiative East Africa (BCIEA) Inc.? Philippa was inspired to address the dire lack of access to life-saving information compounded by limited health services linked to late stage disease presentations, late diagnosis and treatments that result in unnecessary suffering and death. According to Global Cancer Facts & Figures (2015), African countries (15% of world population) represent 8% of world deaths because of poor survival due to late stage diagnosis, delayed and limited treatment. Guided by the premise: "We can use what we have to get to where we want to be," Philippa decided to leverage the explosive penetration of cell phones in Africa, starting with Rwanda. Of Rwanda's 11.5 million populations, 78% own cell phones. Cell phone interventions are being used successfully to tackle HIV, Maternal and Infant Public Health issues and reliable data transfer in Rwanda.

Objectives: Leverage existing, relevant platform (cell phone) to support interactions between village ambassadors and grassroots. Use cell phones to empower, dispel fear, silence, myths, misinformation, stigma. Reinforce critical values to marginalized rural women: dignity, accountability, collaboration, innovation and use of technology. Instill best practices for cancer risk reduction: diet, lifestyle, wellness, and timely help seeking behaviors. For villagers to own the burden of breast cancer as information disseminators and change agents.

Methods: BCIEA values the importance of "easy entry" "nonthreatening communication approach to empower women and men in their own safe space (village). Utilizing village ambassadors (survivors or volunteers) who are familiar with their own people empower them

and extend the ownership to their own people because of a strong pre-existing element of trust. Culturally and linguistically appropriate content is relayed and enhances the ambassador's ability to consistently disseminate and reinforce practical information. The Smartphone serves as an incentive-teaching and reference tool and it is accompanied by a printed guide translated in Kinyarwanda. The Smartphone allows Ambassadors to document images, clips and pertinent information. The Village Ambassadors are supervised and monitored by BCIEA Coordinators. Ambassadors remain connected with their BCIEA supervisors via text messaging, attending biweekly meetings and the entire program team share and network via FBOSPV WhatsApp Group.

Outcomes: BCIEA is collaborating with the Rwanda Ministry of Health and Airtel Rwanda on this program. Airtel Rwanda, Cell Phone Company donated 15 new Android Smartphones and in addition to 2 donated iPhones, BCIEA was able to train 23 Village Ambassadors who in 2017 reached 13,600 people compared to 7,000 people we had direct impact with 2008-2016 using the traditional breast cancer awareness modalities. Rwanda has 14,847 villages with an average of 800 people per village. Implications: Projections point to exponential increase of awareness that translates to: increased knowledge, attitudinal and behavioral change. Successful implementation of this strategy will lead to scaling up and replicating to district level; engaging government and policy makers. Innovation in technology based communication has been proven as a way to sustain health promotion and behavioral change programs particularly in remote areas. Access to information will likely prevent late stage presentations of breast cancer in Rwanda. This program has potential for replication in similar settings.

bciafrica@gmail.com