

# dash Labs



Case Study for



**Health Volunteers Overseas**  
*Improving Global Health Through Education*

eLearning Conversion Projects

2020 - 2021

## DashLabs Engagement with Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO)

### SUMMARY

#### **About Health Volunteers Overseas**

Since 1986, Health Volunteers Overseas has improved the availability and quality of health care through the education, training, and professional development of the health workforce in resource-scarce countries. HVO invests in health workers, building health system resilience and capacity to ensure all people have access to high quality health care delivered by local health professionals. Based in the District of Columbia, HVO's mission is to improve the availability and quality of health care in resource-limited countries through the training and education of local health care providers. HVO addresses a complex challenge—the global shortage of health care providers—by partnering with more than 100 hospitals, universities and health institutions in low-resource countries to teach, train and mentor. HVO projects are staffed by skilled health care professionals who demonstrate the highest standards of professional and personal conduct. HVO's international partner institutions include both universities and health institutions and span at least 15 health care specialties and 20 countries. Each HVO project is unique, based on HVO partner institutions' educational infrastructure (academic/formal or continuing education/informal), training priorities, resources, etc. (Source: *hvousa.org* website and direct engagement.)

#### **Problem Statement**

Since the early 2010s, HVO has been exploring the development of e-volunteering options as a means of augmenting teaching by the 'boots on the ground' volunteer. Within ten years, HVO had successfully implemented a handful of exclusively e-learning projects as well as integrated opportunities for volunteers to support longstanding projects and partner institutions remotely. However, COVID-19 hastened the need for HVO to expand and scale our e-learning opportunities. The challenge was how to organize these opportunities into a coherent and effective strategy for delivering educational and professional support to our partners overseas. The strategy needed to be developed in the context of the very real constraints faced by HVO colleagues with limited access to internet and technology, low band width, time zone differences, and varying degrees of access to video streaming and communication platforms. Designing an e-learning strategy and individual projects that fits the needs of local health professionals and would be adaptable within the restraints and available technologies of individual sites was paramount. Therefore, HVO sought technical expertise with a diversity of professional experience in e-learning that would enable successful navigation and work within HVO's programming model.

#### **DashLabs' Solution**

With years of experience supporting course development for learners in remote locations with limited bandwidth and internet connectivity, DashLabs approach this project with these limitations front and center without allowing these parameters to stifle innovation. On the contrary, DashLabs presented HVO with a *lean* iterative product development approach that would allow them to build their product offerings and solutions bit by bit—enabling rapid production for small wins and opportunity for scalable expansion.

#### **The Final Product**

DashLabs began by taking inventory of HVO's carefully curated and organized data and content to determine a launching point—considering what existing materials can be repurposed or reformatted to enable virtual access to learning, resources, and reference materials. Because HVO had been actively engaging remote populations via webinar-based lectures, DashLabs proposed building a virtual learning environment that would support learners without regard to time zone, bandwidth, or internet access. Such a virtual learning environment, called a Remote Education Interface (REI) by HVO and their participating partner institutions, acted as hub location for different learning needs before, during, and after lectures. Instructors were able to provide upcoming lecture details and invitation links, and later house these recorded lectures for asynchronous engagement. DashLabs built several models for the REI that would be compatible with existing technology and easily maintained by novice developers.

**Scenes** (snapshots purposefully blurred to protect copyright)

