

# UCHE RALPH-OPARA, MD

## GLOBAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT EXPERT

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[Uche's LinkedIn](#)

### BIO



Dr. Uche Ralph-Opara is an experienced Medical Doctor and Public Health Specialist with about two decades of experience in leading evidence-based public health interventions across the globe. With a strong background in managing programs funded by USAID, Global Fund, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Dr. Ralph-Opara has led initiatives in HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, RMNCH/Family Planning, and Nutrition. Currently serving as Chief Health Officer at Project HOPE, Dr. Ralph-Opara oversees the organization's global health initiatives, providing strategic direction and technical expertise. Previously, she held roles as Deputy Chief Health Officer, Deputy Regional Director for Africa and Team Lead/Associate Director for maternal and child nutrition projects. Dr. Ralph-Opara is renowned for her exceptional leadership skills, program management expertise, and commitment to driving positive health outcomes. She holds advanced degrees in Public Health, and Business Administration, reflecting her dedication to professional growth and excellence.

### EDUCATION

MASTER OF BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION  
University of South Wales  
Cardiff, Wales

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PUBLIC  
HEALTH  
London School of Hygiene and  
Tropical Medicine  
London, England

POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
University of London  
London, England

BACHELOR OF MEDICINE  
BACHELOR OF SURGERY  
University of Port-Harcourt  
Rivers State, Nigeria

Class Salutatorian  
Graduated as top Pharmacology and  
Public Health student  
Commonwealth Scholarship  
Completed medical elective  
attachment program at Royal Liverpool  
and Broadgreen Hospital in the UK

### AWARDS

Bill and Melinda Gates Breastfeeding  
Hero Award -2019

### LANGUAGES

English - Fluent

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

#### CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER, GLOBAL HEALTH

Project HOPE / Washington, DC / 2023 – Present

- Lead strategic planning efforts and reinforce organizational values to drive public health initiatives
- Spearhead the development of new programs and support existing initiatives to address global health challenges effectively
- Collaborate with regional teams and the Business Development unit to promote Project HOPE as a global health and development leader
- Set the tone for the organization's public health culture and drive positive health outcomes through strategic leadership
- Actively engage global and regional public health leaders to advance Project HOPE's brand visibility

#### DEPUTY REGIONAL DIRECTOR, AFRICA

Project HOPE / Washington, DC / 2021 – 2023

- Worked closely with Regional Director to oversee public health program development in Africa, supporting 6 country teams (Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Ethiopia, Namibia, and Zambia) with over 350 employees and facilitating communications between field programs and headquarters staff
- Led donor engagement, including identifying funding sources, and developing grant proposals in collaboration with programmatic and technical support staff
- Supported the development of a winning grant proposal with the Africa regional team to secure **\$18M** from African CDC and Master Card Foundation, allocated to establishing COVID-19 vaccination centers and staff training across 7 North African countries
- Won grants from USAID, BMGF and Corporations/Private sector totaling **\$3.9M to fund programs** addressing HIV epidemic in northern Nigeria and support scale-up for Group Antenatal Care Model aimed at improving RMNCH outcomes
- Led technical systems strengthening and public and private stakeholder engagement for the **\$1.5M** USAID/Integrated Child Health and Social Services

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Gender Equality and Development – World Bank, 2019

Negotiation Skills for Humanitarian Workers – Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2019

Evidence for Policy and Programming in Nutrition – TNWA, 2019

Leading Change in Nutrition – African Nutrition Leadership Programme, 2018

UNICEF Course on Nutrition – Cornell University, 2017

Project Management for NGOs – PMDPro1, 2016

Family Planning – Costed Implementation Plan (CIP) Skills and Tools – Palladium, 2016

Leadership and Management in Global Health – University of Washington, 2015

Operations Research in HIV and STIs – University of Washington, 2015

Clinical Management of HIV/AIDS – University of Washington, 2015

ART (eSCART) – Antwerp School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 2014

Lifesaving Skills (LSS) in Maternal and Newborn Health – Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, 2014

Integrated Management of Pregnancy and Childbirth (IMPAC) – Federal Ministry of Health, 2013

National Training: Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV, Early Infant Diagnosis and Reproductive Health – Federal Ministry of Health, 2012

National Training: Infant and Young Child Feeding – IYCF, Federal Ministry of Health, 2012

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)

Award (ICHSSA 2) program to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS on orphans and vulnerable children

- Spearheaded private sector involvement for ICHSSA-2 program, securing funding and Gift-In-Kind (GIK) support from Access Bank, Nestle, Honeywell, International Women Society, and Airtel for economic strengthening activities for vulnerable households

### TEAM LEAD / ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR – ALIVE & THRIVE LAGOS

FHI360 / Lagos, Nigeria / 2017 –2021

- Oversaw capacity building activities for **5K health care providers**, supporting 573 health facilities and 527 Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA) clinics
- **Reached 1.3M community beneficiaries** through mobilization and MICYN sensitization
- Drove program engagement with 310K+ mothers and infants, **improving exclusive breastfeeding rates from 45% to 79%**
- Influenced state's first multimedia MICYN campaign, boosting awareness and improving exclusive breastfeeding indices across state from 25% to 51.8%
- Recognized as a Breastfeeding Hero by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for launching Breastfeeding Guardians' Initiative, training 20 community influencers to better support mothers and children

### GLOBAL FUND PROGRAM MANAGER

Lagos State Ministry of Health – Grant Management Unit / Lagos, Nigeria / 2016 – 2017

- Collaborated with GMU manager to oversee program implementation plans for principal recipients, ensuring compliance with Global Fund processes
- Developed, managed, and oversaw work plans and budgets for principal recipients and sub-recipients and coordinated program activity implementation
- Assessed sub-recipient performance and objective achievements to determine funding and incentives

### STATE PROGRAM MANAGER

Pathfinder International / Lagos, Nigeria / 2015 – 2016

- Managed technical implementation and programmatic oversight for implementation of USAID Evidence to Action (E2A) project across private health facilities, including TBA clinics providing HIV treatment services to pregnant women and infants
- Facilitated HIV counseling and testing services for **36K+ pregnant women**, with 90% of identified positives placed on ARVs to reduce mother-to-child transmission
- Demonstrated clear improvements in maternal and child survival, ultimately earning recognition from Lagos State Government for program success

### SENIOR TECHNICAL OFFICER

FHI360 / Abuja, Nigeria / 2012 – 2015

- Oversaw technical and programmatic functions for the Projects' Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS (PMTCT) portfolio, including workplan development, budget, program design, and capacity building
- Coordinated with state teams, government stakeholders, and partners to conduct rapid health facility assessments, train health care workers, and **activate 3K+ health facilities** across Nigeria to provide quality HIV/AIDS treatment services
- Worked closely with government of Nigeria to design operational plans, HIV

## PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Administrative support  
Budget management  
Capacity building  
Community mobilization  
Data analysis  
Database management  
Employee development  
Employee training  
Grant management  
Grant writing  
Healthcare policy  
Mentorship  
Nonprofit management  
Organizational strategy  
Outreach strategy  
Program evaluation  
Program development  
Program implementation  
Program management  
Project management  
Public health advocacy  
Public speaking  
Quality assurance  
Stakeholder engagement  
Systems strengthening  
Technical support

## TECHNICAL SKILLS

Epi-Info  
Microsoft Office  
Stata  
SPSS

## FELLOWSHIP

Global Fellow, Gates Foundation  
Funded Women Lift Health  
Leadership Program 2026

## VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Catholic Action Committee on AIDS  
HIV/AIDS services volunteer  
2009 – 2010

Parish Action Committee on AIDS  
HIV/AIDS services volunteer  
2009 – 2010

Federal Capital Territory  
Development Authority  
MCH/Immunization volunteer  
2009

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)

treatment protocols, and job aids and IECs for health care workers

- Provided antiretroviral therapy (ARVs) to **600K+ patients** with HIV and facilitated HIV testing and counseling services for **2.5M pregnant women**
- Supported ARV treatment for 85% of HIV-positive pregnant women, **lowering mother-to-child transmission rate to under 2%**

### TECHNICAL OFFICER – CLINICAL SERVICES

FHI360 / Abuja, Nigeria / 2011 – 2012

- Provided extensive technical and programmatic support for PMTCT and ART services for beneficiaries in the **\$448M SIDHAS project**
- Contributed to multi-strategy outreach approach, including activating new health care facilities, ART decentralization, coordinating for workplan activities to integrate HIV/AIDS services, and communicating SOPs to stakeholders
- Trained 5K healthcare workers across 250 health facilities as part of PMTCT scale-up, ultimately **reaching 12K+ HIV/AIDS patients with ARVs**
- Participated in strategic planning at country offices and monitored facilities to ensure that set targets were met

### CLINICAL SERVICES OFFICER

FHI360 / Abuja, Nigeria / 2010 – 2011

- Managed TB portfolio under the Global HIV/AIDS Initiative Nigeria (GHAIN) funded by USAID, focusing on providing treatment and addressing social inequality
- Coordinated with 50 health facilities across the north central region of Nigeria to provide TB services to marginalized communities, including training staff on offering equity-focused care
- Integrated HIV/AIDS services into TB program, ensuring that co-infected patients received TB therapy and ARVs at one service point

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Addressing the Challenges of Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis (DR-TB), And Other TB Treatment-Outcomes in Selected Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Nigeria. - T Idaboh, H Khamofu, M Odo, B Olusola-Faleye, IEzekpeazu, **U Ralph-Opara**, G Akang, K Torpey. *47<sup>th</sup> Union World Conference on Lung Health, 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> October 2016, in Liverpool UK*

Strengthening Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices to Break the Intergenerational Cycle of Malnutrition in Adolescents Perinatally Infected with HIV In Nigeria: **Uche Ralph-Opara**, Tosin Idaboh, Oluwatosin Ogungbade, Omowumi Olowofeso, Adenike Oguntuase. *2<sup>nd</sup> International Workshop on HIV Adolescence, Challenges & Solutions. Cape Town, South Africa. 10-12 October 2018*

Lessons learnt from PMTCT Program Implementation in the Private Health Sector in Nigeria. **Ralph-Opara U**, Jagun A, Eguavoen A, Olorunnisola B, Olayiwola J, Azogu J, Jega F. *7<sup>th</sup> International Workshop on HIV and Women. 11-12 February 2017, Seattle, WA, USA*

Playing the Catch-Up Game: Accelerating the Scale-Up of Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT) Services to Eliminate New Pediatric HIV Infection in Nigeria: Edward Adekola Oladele, Hadiza Khamofu, Seun Asala, Mariya Saleh, Uche Ralph-Opara, Charles Nwosisi, Chukwuma Anyaie, Catherine Gana, Oluwasanmi Adedokun, Rebecca Dirks, Olufunsho Adebayo, Modupe Oduwale, Justin Mandala, Kwasi Torpey. *PloS One 12(1): e0169342 doi:10.1371/Journal.pone.0169342*