Health systems, health workers and patients in Ethiopia suffer greatly from the lack of connections between components of the health system. Paid and volunteer health workers face both vertical and horizontal isolation from their health system due to geography and regional infrastructure limits on technology. Our project has attempted to address this problem during our two research phases. This semester we have designed and created a user-generated content site, which allows public health education materials and information to be exchanged quickly and democratically. It also allows isolated public health workers to communicate directly with eachother supporting south to south communication. We have also explored the ways that mobile phone technology can be incorporated into the site in order to improve and enhance interaction, idea sharing and knowledge transfer for patients and health workers.

Currently our site focuses on HIV/AIDS education materials. We hope to scale this site to include more public health concerns as well as other regions of the world.

This summer three of us will convene in Jimma, a city in southwest Ethiopia to conduct a needs assessment for the context of material creation at various levels of the health system. This will touch on education, expectation, avilability of materials and the technological context in which our audience works. This study will also involve a usability test of our site and a visual literacy survey of public health workers.