



IMMUNIZATION ADVOCACY INITIATIVE BULLETIN



SEPTEMBER
2020

ADAPTING TO A NEW NORMAL

Early this year, before the Covid-19 pandemic hit Africa, the Immunization Advocacy Initiative (IAI) had implemented several high-level capacity training workshops and advocacy interventions in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Kenya. After this, despite the containment measures put in place, APHRC and the IAI consortium have found creative ways to advocate for increased domestic financing of immunization. In this issue, we look at how the project partners have adapted and used innovative means despite the Covid-19 restrictions to execute their activities and achieve results in the first half of 2020.



PROGRESS

As scientists labor to come up with a vaccine for Covid-19, all three countries have seen a decline in number of children receiving life-saving vaccines due to the pandemic's disruptions. Anti-vaccine movements have sprung up, primarily due to fake news and misinformation related to the Covid-19 vaccine search. Now more than ever, we must safeguard the progress made in ensuring routine childhood immunization continues even during the pandemic with the necessary guidelines to keep health workers and their clients safe and to ensure increased domestic financing of immunization.

In Kenya, the IAI consortium has engaged with the Ministry of Health through the National Vaccine and Immunization Program to shape the health and immunization financing space.

The Ghana IAI consortium conducted campaigns on social and mainstream media, engaged with presidential candidates and campaign managers, and asked for greater immunization investments.

In Côte d'Ivoire, FENOS-CI is working with the National Chamber of Traditional Kings and Chiefs as an ally to rally the government to make adequate provisions for immunization at the regional and municipal levels.



ADVOCACY GOALS



Increased engagement with - and use of - evidence by targeted stakeholders for decision making regarding immunization funding



Sustained annual financing for immunization in the Government of Ghana's national budget

RATIONALE

The focus is on domestic funding for immunization which remains limited due to inadequate budgetary allocation, as evidenced by the government's failure to meet its Gavi co-financing commitments over the past two years.

Additionally, not all of the resources allocated and approved in the national health budget for immunization are disbursed and spent on immunization activities.

Budget process engagement in Ghana

In order to have effective advocacy, the IAI consortium in Ghana through a consultation forum held in Accra on 9th March, 2020 identified the need to come up with country-level economic modelling to unpack the cost of immunization per child and have a deeper understanding of the government's obligation post - Gavi. The consortium resolved to identify champions and influencers who will present them at crucial discussions with technical partners and make clear recommendations to the government.

Promoting Immunization Financing through Media

The IAI consortium in Ghana adopted media advocacy, utilizing social media and mainstream media to champion for an increase in immunization financing. The IAI consortium engaged editors of nine media houses based in Accra, and a regional editor's forum was conducted for 10 community radio and online editors. All 19 editors pledged to work with the IAI network to popularize the communication pieces on immunization

financing and produce short audio-visuals from citizens to increase the campaign visibility.

Midwives advocating for improved immunization services

During the International Day of the Midwife held on 5th May 2020, the IAI consortium took that opportunity to engage key influencers such as the Minister of Health, Minister of Finance, Parliamentary Select Committee on Health. The Executive Director of HFFG, Ms



Ghana Deputy Minister of Health Honourable Dr. Okoe Boye gives his speech during the International Day of the Midwife.



Cecilia Senoo used the forum to present a position paper on the status of immunization in Ghana, which was presented to the Deputy Minister of Health, Honourable Dr. Okoe Boye.

Reaching politicians through election manifestos

Come 7th December, 2020 Ghanaians will

vote for their Members of Parliament and the President. This electioneering period has presented a good opportunity to engage politicians and political parties. The IAI consortium led by HFFG presented a proposal to the four political parties namely; New Patriotic Party, National Democratic Congress, Convention People's Party and People's National Congress to include immunization financing in their 2020 election

THE AFRICA VACCINE WEEK

Hope For Future Generations 🇳🇮 @HFFGat20 · May 1

A healthy child makes a healthy nation. Immunization keeps children healthy.
[#IAIGhanaImmunizationWeek](#)
[#VaccinesWork](#)
[@ParliamentGhana](#) [@SEND_GHANA](#)

Ghana Coalition of NGOs in Health
 @GCOHGH

To reach every child with life-saving vaccines, we need the commitment from the government of Ghana by increasing domestic funding on immunization
[@SEND_GHANA](#) [@GaviCSO](#) [@HFFG2001](#) [@aphrc](#)
[@gaye01](#) [#WorldImmunizationWeek](#)
[#iaighanaimmunizationweek](#) [#VaccinesWorkForAll](#)

SEND GHANA
 @SEND_GHANA

Remember, the cost of vaccination is far less than the cost of curing vaccine preventable diseases

[#VaccinesWorkForAll](#) [@HFFG2001](#)
[#IAIGhImmunizationWeek](#) [@mohgovgh](#) [@moigovgh](#)



SEND GHANA @SEND_GHANA · Apr 28

We must commit significant domestic resources for sustained financing of vaccines and immunization in #Ghana

[#VaccinesWorkForAll](#) [@HFFG2001](#) [#IAIGhImmunizationWeek](#)



Held on 27th April to 1st May, 2020, the Africa Vaccine week offered the IAI consortium an excellent opportunity to use different media platforms. They authored a press release that was viewed 782 times while the Facebook post had reached 623 people and was discussed on five media platforms, and two online platforms published the press statement on their website. On the other hand, SEND Ghana wrote an opinion piece on the impact of Covid-19 on child welfare clinics. This was published in SEND's Citizens

Watch Newsletter and uploaded online and via social media.

Altogether, over 800,000 listeners were reached on the four radio stations and the state-owned GBC radio with nationwide coverage.



ADVOCACY GOALS



Inclusion of immunization as a priority in the National Health Development Plan (2021-2024) of Cote d'Ivoire



Sustained increase in budget allocations to immunization as a percentage of the health budget every year

RATIONALE

The desired outcomes were based on findings from an extensive landscape and stakeholder scoping analysis conducted by APHRC in 2017 and 2018 as well as from discussions from the first-ever national dialogue for health financing held in Abidjan in 2019. During the national dialogue, the government of Cote d'Ivoire pledged to shift more resources towards preventive health, and FENOS-CI shall hold them accountable to its promise.



Members of the National Chamber of Kings and Traditional Chiefs during a stakeholder engagement forum

Traditional rulers offer support for local immunization financing

The National Chamber of Kings & Traditional Chiefs is a powerful entity made up of local rulers who operate in parallel with the country's political government. The chamber can influence numerous decisions at the local and national levels. FENOS-CI mobilized two of their local organizations and partners in the IAI initiative (MOCAM in San Pedro and Flamboyants in Bouna) to meet the kings and traditional chiefs of these regions. FENOS-CI developed information packs and immunization statistics and funding information. They shared these with the traditional leaders to enable them to lead efforts to ensure immunization takes prominence in the National Health Development Plan 2021-2024 being developed.

Continuity of vaccination despite pandemic

To ensure continuity of vaccination services despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic, FENOS-CI and other advocacy actors proposed the development of a communication plan that included social media engagement and collaboration with technical partners to come up with key messages. The discussions were held together with the Organization of Francophone Africa for the Strengthening of Health System and Immunization (OAFRESS), the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) Managers of Côte d'Ivoire and Central African Republic, UNICEF and WHO.

Immunization performance during the pandemic

Evaluating the performance of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) performance for the first trimester January-April 2020 has revealed that vaccine misinformation and containment measures to prevent the spread of the Corona-virus has led to the resurgence of measles and polio in certain regions of Côte d'Ivoire. To counter this, FENOS-CI together with regional health directors and directors of Côte d'Ivoire resolved to develop a communication strategy to tackle misinformation on vaccines. They will also conduct community outreach and sensitization campaigns to increase visits to health facilities for immunization, strengthening disease surveillance and identifying mechanisms to control the spread of measles and polio.



ADVOCACY GOALS



The Ministry of Health forms a technical working group to develop a matrix for vaccine distribution



Sustained increased disbursement of the budget allocated to immunization by the national government of Kenya (MoH to the EPI) and by the Kilifi and Narok county governments

RATIONALE

Currently, there is no guiding document within the Ministry of Health that clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of vaccine distribution from the regional depots to the county health facilities. The scope and capacity to collect vaccines from regional depots by different county health facilities vary from county to county and are mainly dependent on how constrained facilities are with time and transportation logistics. This has led to confusion and procurement challenges, which service delivery and in some cases, stock-outs.

Additionally, immunization spending does not match budget allocation and there is scanty information on expenditure at the county level, making it difficult for the government to ascertain immunization spend.

Guidelines for efficient delivery of vaccines

KEPRECON, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health's National Vaccines and Immunization Program (NVIP), provided technical assistance in the drafting and review of the Standard Operating Procedures (SoP). These will serve as a guideline to the Ministry of Health to efficiently deliver vaccines from the regional depots to the counties and the populations that need them.

On 21st February, 2020, KEPRECON and IPFK were invited to the Kenya National Immunization Technical Advisory Group (KENITAG) meeting held in Nairobi to discuss and validate the contents of the guidelines. KENITAG approved these guidelines on vaccine distribution SoPs and submitted them to the Ministry of Health, which committed to ensuring the rollout of the SoP to all counties to streamline a longstanding impasse on how vaccines get to the marginalized. Additionally, the Ministry reached out to KENITAG to support in reviewing the National Guidelines on Immunization 2013-2018 in line with the

WHO-led global immunization 2030 agenda.



A child receives a polio vaccination at a health center



Keeping an eye on the budget

The IAI consortium members led by the Institute of Public Finance Kenya (IPFK) submitted inputs to the budget for the financial year 2020/21 at the sub-national level in Narok and Kilifi counties. The consortium urged members of the county executive to give prominence to immunization during the preparation of the County Fiscal Strategy Papers 2020. This is a key policy document that provides useful information on revenue collection, sector priorities, sector performance, and sector budget ceilings. Additionally, the submission to the county assembly of Kilifi highlighted concerns that despite there being an allocation of Kes 9 million (USD 90,000) for the immunization program, the department of health had not made public expenditure for the first and second quarter of FY2019/2020, a prerequisite for effective planning.



Briefcase containing the Kenyan budget

In a separate event, IPFK, together with International Budget Partnership (IBP) Kenya, jointly submitted the Budget Policy Statement 2020/21 targeting the National Assembly and the Senate. They noted that the health budget ceiling had reduced from Kes 115.6 billion (USD11,560,000) in the first supplementary budget of 2019/20 to Kes 114.5 billion (USD 11,450,000), and they called on the legislators to increase the ceiling to factor in provision for Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Through champion and influencer building and engagement, Narok County was able to incorporate immunization in the investment document of the government's priority development agenda known as Big Four Agenda in arid and semi-arid land (ASAL) counties organized by the Ministry of Devolution and ASAL state department of devolution.

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STRONGER ADVOCACY INSTITUTIONS



Participants during a budget analysis

Budget Analysis

APHRC in partnership with SEND Ghana conducted a budget tracking and analysis training in Ghana from 10 -14th February 2020. In partnership with IPKF, APHRC supported an online training for the Kenyan team from 12-25 June 2020. The training equipped members with skills to analyze the health and immunization budget and advocate for sustained increased allocation using evidence. In Ghana, the CSOs have cascaded the knowledge to about 88 stakeholders among them, civil society members, traditional and religious leaders.

Organizational leadership and sustainability

All eight partners, with support from APHRC, have undertaken a Good Financial Grant Practice (GFGP) assessment and have made progress in addressing the non-compliant areas highlighted in their assessment reports. GFGP is an innovative standard for best practice in the management of funds.



Participants from Côte d'Ivoire during a capacity building session



Participants during a capacity strengthening workshop in Kenya

Monitoring, evaluation and learning:

Three learning and review meetings were held between February and March for IAI CSOs in Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana. Staff responsible for the implementation, evaluation, planning and budgeting for the program within their institutions were in attendance. Participants identified IAI learning outcomes and learned about MEL tools they can use to track the impact of their advocacy activities for the project. Additionally, the IAI CSOs got to understand the process of outcome harvesting and its importance in reporting advocacy successes.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

"If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together" says an African proverb.

To ensure lasting solutions APHRC and the IAI Consortium held a one-day stakeholder's forum in Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. The forum brought together technical partners from WHO, UNICEF, Ministries of Health and Finance as well as CSOs and the private sector. The IAI consortium shared their progress for 2019 and sought to build new partnerships and align advocacy efforts for 2020.



Evelyn Dzekah a community health nurse

Meet Evelyn who is working towards improving access to vaccination for all

Since the eradication of smallpox and the recent announcement of Africa being free from wild poliovirus, vaccines have proven they can reduce greatly the prevalence of diseases everywhere in the world. However, this would not have been possible without the dedication of health workers like Evelyn Dzekah from Ghana.

Evelyn is a community health nurse at Botuku Community based Health Planning Services (CHPS) zone in the northern Dayi district of the Volta region of Ghana. Just like other health workers, Evelyn works under challenging conditions such as having to reach remote communities and inadequate supplies but she strives to ensure children under five years of ages get vaccinated.

According to the World Health Organization, in 2019, about 85% of children worldwide (116 million infants) received three doses of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP3) vaccine, protecting them against infectious diseases that can cause serious illness and disability or be fatal.

To ensure every child under five fully benefits from vaccines for good health and well-being, Evelyn conducts daily Child Welfare Clinics (CWC) at the facility and conducts outreach visits every month to six communities to provide vaccination as well as home visits to track those who may have missed out on their vaccination schedule.

The Immunization Advocacy Initiative recognizes the efforts of Evelyn and we say **AYEKOO** (well done) to Evelyn and all health workers saving millions of lives through administering vaccines.

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By Daily Kenyan News - May 1, 2020

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Bold & Frank

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Health Non-Governmental Organizations Network (HENNET) wants Government to increase funds for immunization

The NGO said the Government is concentrating on dealing with Covid-19 at the expense of funding other immunization programs

By hotnews - May 1, 2020 in Health

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GHANA MAKES GAINS AS WORLD STARTS IMMUNIZATION WEEK



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Reduced funding pose challenges for immunisation programmes

By Mliam Marig
Monday, May 4th, 2020



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Health News of Wednesday, 29 April 2020 Source: www.ghanaweb.com

Ghana makes gains as world celebrates immunization week

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ABOUT THE IMMUNIZATION ADVOCACY INITIATIVE

The Immunization Advocacy Initiative with the support of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is a 5-year project that seeks to strengthen the capacity of national organizations to carry out national and sub national advocacy to increase budgetary allocation for immunization programs in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Kenya.

THE IAI CONSORTIUM

