



# IMMUNIZATION ADVOCACY INITIATIVE

## IMMUNIZATION ADVOCACY INITIATIVE (IAI) GHANA NEWSLETTER JULY, 2020



**Vaccination saves  
and improves lives;  
adequate funding  
prevents a possible  
outbreak of diseases.**



GHANA COALITION OF NGOs  
IN HEALTH  
*Working together to promote good health*



African population and  
Health Research Center



Promoting Unity and Excellence

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first Immunization Advocacy Initiative (IAI) Newsletter. While progress on improving immunization in Ghana has been positive, there remains some gaps that require critical attention from the government if SDG 3 and other international and national policies including, the WHO regional strategic plan for immunization – (2014 – 2020), the Comprehensive multi-Year Action Plan (2015-2019) and the Addis Declaration on immunization and political commitment, which enjoins member states to move from globally driven immunization agendas to nationally owned immunization programs with increased national budget allocations and political commitments, are to be achieved.

Ghana continues to have challenges in meeting its co-funding obligations to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI).

In response to these concerns, Hope for Future Generations (HFFG) consortium, SEND Ghana and Coalitions of NGOs in Health (GCNH) with support

from the African Population & Health Research Centre has launched the Immunization Advocacy Initiative.

The overall aim is to increase domestic financing of the Health budget with prioritization for immunization.

The specific outcomes are to ensure that financing to immunization in the Government of Ghana national budget is sustained every year. Again, ensure that the proportion of the budget allocation to immunization disbursed and spent in each financial year increases year on year by the Government of Ghana.

The IAI network has been at the forefront of several engagements with key stakeholders across Ghana. In this newsletter, you read about the successful campaign on domestic financing for immunization in Ghana.

# HOPE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

## MOBILIZES QUEEN MOTHERS FOR IMMUNIZATION ADVOCACY

The gains that the Government of Ghana has made in immunization coverage may not be sustainable if domestic funding for immunization remains limited.

Hope for Future Generations, an implementing partner on the Immunization Advocacy Initiative (IAI), in June of 2020 engaged 28 Queen Mothers in the Volta Region of Ghana with the goal of adding their voices to the call for the government of Ghana to commit more funding into health with prioritization for immunization.

Executive Director of HFFG, Cecilia Senoo noted that; gains that the Government of Ghana has made in immunization coverage may not be sustainable if

domestic funding for immunization remains limited hence the need for Queen Mothers, who command a lot of respect and influence in the traditional set-up to advocate for change in immunization financing.



*ED of HFFG in a Picture with Queen Mothers for Immunization Advocacy after a training Session*

## **ADVOCACY MOMENT: HFFG CONSORTIUM MAKE A CASE FOR IMMUNIZATION FINANCING ON INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR MIDWIVES**

*Executive Director, Hope for Future Generations making a case for immunization*



*Deputy Minister of Health, Dr. Oko Boye, making his presentation*



Like vaccines, midwives play an effective role in keeping new-borns alive and free from preventable diseases. International Day of the Midwife (IDM) is recognized around the world as a celebration of Midwives and their contribution to women, new-borns and family care.

On International Day for Midwives on the 5th of May, HFFG seized this key moment to present a position paper on the status of immunization financing in Ghana.

In attendance were the Technical Director of the Ministry of Health Dr. Mrs. Martha Gyansa Lutterodth, Deputy Minister of Health, Hon Dr Okoe Boye, Dr. Dinah Baah-Odoom, Registrar of the Psychology Council, Mrs. Eva Mensah, Director

Nursing and Midwifery, Ghana Health Service and media personnel among others.

The consortium outlined three main recommendations to the Government of Ghana: To Sustain annual financing for immunization in the Government of Ghana's National budget; To increase funding to sustain gains made in immunization; break the cycle of fluctuating the health budget and to progressively move the Ministry of Health's share of the country's total expenditure to a minimum of 15% per the Abuja declaration.



*Panel members at the ceremony*

# CELEBRATING AN IMMUNIZATION CHAMPION



*Evelyn Dzakah, a community health nurse and an immunization champion from Ghana*

Health workers throughout the world play a significant role in health care delivery. Majority of them especially in Sub Saharan Africa work under challenging conditions such as inadequate supplies, remote communities and poor working conditions yet, they strive hard to take care of the sick and also provide immunization services to children under five years of age.

To mark World Immunization Week (2020), team Hope for Future Generations (HFFG) threw a spotlight on Evelyn Dzakah, a dedicated Community Health Nurse at Botoku Community-Based Health Planning Services (CHPS) zone in the North Dayi district of the Volta region of Ghana.

As part of her work, Evelyn conducts daily Child Welfare Clinics (CWC) at the facility and also conducts outreach visits every month to six communities to provide vaccination to children under 5 as well as home visits to track those who may have missed out on their vaccination schedule.

On behalf of the Immunization Advocacy Initiative partners, we say “AYEKOO” (Well Done) to Evelyn and all health workers saving millions of lives through administering vaccines.



## Sunyani Traditional Council pledges support for Immunization Advocacy Initiative



As part of the 2020 advocacy activities of the HFFG consortium, the West Africa AIDS Foundation, a consortium member engaged the Sunyani Traditional Council on the 3rd day of July 2020.

The meeting had in attendance the paramount chief of the Sunyani Traditional Council, Nana Bosoma Asornkrawiri, the Akwamuhene, sub-chiefs and Queen mothers.

On behalf of the consortium, Mr. Edward Ayabilah from the West Africa AIDS Foundation made a presentation on evidence of immunization financing gaps as well as on the general health budget outlooks in Ghana. He indicated that, the cost of immunization in Ghana is raising without a corresponding increment in gov't co-financing commitment to GAVI.

The general trend of the health sector budget was presented. In 2020, GH¢ 1,441 billion which is 22% of the total budget was allocated to the health sector representing a decrease of 5% point over that of 2019 (GH¢ 1,606 billion). 97.5% of

Goods and Services allocation is projected to be funded from IGF which are partly generated from NHIS claims payments to the facilities. However, governments frequent delays in releases of these funds means less operational activities not only for the Health of Ministry, but also for EPI at the districts, sub-districts and facility level.

The Omanhene of the Sunyani Traditional Council Nana Bosoma Asornkrawiri thanked the team and pledged his support to the team and added that he would communicate demands and objectives to government officials and policy makers who pay a visit to the palace and seek their support for them to carry this message to central government.

He acknowledged that the mentioned larger percentage of budget allocations to the compensation of workers within the health sector was in the right direction as government cannot cut the salaries of health workers who are the drivers of the service but rather efforts in securing more financial resources is the way to go.

# SEND GHANA ENGAGES NDPC ON DRAFT 2022-2025 GUIDELINES PREPARATION

SEND GHANA, one of the consortium implementing the IAI campaign dialogued with the National Development Planning Commission on the draft 2022 – 2025 guidelines preparation. The purpose of the dialogue was to make inputs to influence guidelines being put together and that are meant to respond to immunization financing at the local government level. Financial support for immunization services is limited and inconsistent not only at the central government level but also across Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemble (MMDA). This can be attributed to the absence of immunization and related issues in the policy and budgetary plans of the MMDAs.

Various reports indicate inadequate logistics such as road and water transportation systems and vaccines storage facilities in some MMDAs. Ghana's central government is already battling with continuous defaulting on its co-funding obligation with GAVI and how to be financially self-sufficient to fund all vaccines procurement and immunization services by 2026 when the current agreement is likely to end is a very essential topic. It is in this respect that the dialogue was initiated to influence guidelines being put together to guide in the development of the medium-term development plans of the MMDAs. Having been able to hold this dialogue at the same time when the NDPC had initiated the process of developing the guidelines was beneficial to the campaign.

In April 2020, the NDPC invited 25 stakeholders from government institutions, academia, international organisation and two local CSOs (SEND Ghana and ISODEC) to

review and comment on its draft 2022 – 2025 guidelines for the preparation of the medium development plans.

The NDPC was very responsive to the inputs from SEND Ghana and expressed satisfaction about the quality and relevance of the evidence produced. They also underscored the credibility of the information by attesting that: “recently, our annual progress report revealed that the country slipped on vaccines preventable diseases due to financial issues.”

The Commission committed to forwarding the inputs SEND Ghana submitted to the committee responsible for preparing the Medium-Term National Development Policy Framework since the guidelines will be informed by the framework.

"Many other interesting things were raised in addition to funding by government to ensure that vaccines reach hard- to-reach area and inclusion of immunization in the next Medium-Term Development Framework (MTDF) which has national priorities and upon which the MTDP guidelines could be developed" was agreed to be of utmost importance. The dialogue with the Commission happened on 8 June 2020 via virtual platform Zoom. Nine persons including five from the commission and four from SEND GHANA participated.

The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) is the agency responsible for the national and sub-national development planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation and policy research.



*Partners and Stakeholders on the Immunization Advocacy Initiative during an initiative meeting in Accra.*

The Immunization Advocacy Initiative (IAI) is a three-year project with funding from African Population Health Research Center (APHRC). The overall goal of the project is to advocate for government to increase domestic financing for immunization. This initiative is being implemented by SEND GHANA, Hope for Future Generation consortium (Ghana Registered Midwives Association, Socio-Serve & West African AIDS Foundation) and the Ghana Coalition of NGOs in Health.