



LEARNING BRIEF:



Engaging CSOs in Gavi the FPP Process in Uganda

BACKGROUND

Gavi's 5.0 strategy aims to reach communities missed by previous immunization efforts, including those most marginalized by poverty, geography, and conflict. To achieve this vision, Gavi has embarked on a journey to deepen and expand context specific partnerships with a broader set of actors – notably civil society organizations (CSOs) – that possess the expertise required to reach the millions of children who are still missing out on vaccines.

It is critical to foster an enabling environment for inclusion of local CSOs in Gavi's partner ecosystem, including meaningful engagement in both national and global level Gavi processes. Meaningful engagement means having a seat at the table where decisions are made, as well as having perspectives heard and incorporated into action. These processes include Gavi's Full Portfolio Planning (FPP) process, in which countries comprehensively plan and prepare an application for the support they intend to receive from Gavi over the next five years.

The first ever engagement of CSOs in the FPP process in Uganda, carried out in 2023, was led by PATH. PATH leveraged 20 years of in-country expertise in advocacy, immunization, and existing work coordinating CSOs, and was able to help support the successful allocation of 10% of funding for CSOs in the country.

KEY LEARNING THEMES

1. Leveraging an existing platform is a highly efficient way to begin the process of identifying and reaching out to CSOs.

2. Building the capacity of CSOs so they are better equipped to receive funding for implementation once the grant funding is approved will help make the case for CSOs down the line as well as help them feel supported.

3. Using existing grants where CSOs are already demonstrating their value add to make a tangible case for CSO investments.

THE EXISTING CSO SPACE FOR IMMUNIZATION IN UGANDA

The immunization space has been a closed space in Uganda for more than 30 years, with the same select partners receiving funds and implementing projects. The game changer came when the Gavi Board introduced a requirement for countries to allocate 10% of funding to CSOs in 2023 as part of the FPP process. The newness of engaging CSOs in immunization work in the country was met with skepticism and a lot of questions.

"I have been put in the corner and asked very tough questions - how are we going to manage local partners? Who is going to manage the risks that come with local partners?"

– Deogratias Agaba, PATH's Regional Advocacy and Communications Manager, Advocacy & Public Policy, East and Southern Africa

LEVERAGING EXISTING GRANTS TO MAKE THE CASE FOR CSOs

While it has not been easy to convince partners of CSOs' role and value add as the FPP process has commenced, leveraging concrete examples to make the case for CSOs proved a helpful approach. PATH was able to cite successful partnerships under the existing a Targeted Country Assistance (TCA) grant in Uganda. For example, CSOs have proven valuable in improving the level of awareness in HPV vaccination, a space previously done with varying levels of effectiveness by the government and traditional partners in the immunization space.

Additionally, under another Gavi grant, the COVID-19 Delivery Support (CDS), that begins in early 2024, WHO, UNICEF, CHAI, and the Ministry of Health (MoH) have been invited to traverse the country and see what is being done by local CSOs - to provide mentorship, and if needed raise issues to be addressed and troubleshoot. This is intended to facilitate hands-on demonstration, partnership building and transparency.



www.gavi.org
Together, we make
#vaccineswork

@gavi @vaccines
facebook.com/gavi
linkedin.com/company/gavi

FPP IN-COUNTRY PROCESS OVERVIEW

- i. **For identification and engagement, an existing platform was leveraged.** The RMNCAH platform is a network of coalitions, with over 180 locally based organizations, including many working at the sub-national level. To engage CSOs in the FPP process, this platform was leveraged by focusing on the CSOs on the platform working with child health and maternal/ reproductive health who have experience with immunization.
- ii. **Initial strategic meetings** whereby the government explained the FPP process to a wide variety of CSO/ local partners e.g., faith-based organizations, professional organizations, and the private sector.
- iii. **Core and expanded MoH/EPI partners did the technical writing**—comprised of consultants and the MoH, a small, select group of people who could effectively and efficiently write the grant proved to be more effective than involving a large group of local civil society partners untrained in grant-writing.
- iv. **Via coalition meetings on key topics, and through the RMNCH platform, CSOs kept connected to the process.** The coordinator for the RMNCH platform helped connect CSOs to what was happening in the writing process. CSOs contributed clear examples of where their value add was across the pillars of demand generation, vaccine supply chain, vaccine service delivery, advocacy, program management, and M&E. These examples were compiled in a local partner scope of work. The overarching theme communicated was that CSOs can help the MoH/EPI Program take vaccines to the last mile in hard-to-reach areas and find the zero-dose child.
- v. **In parallel, capacity building workshops were held to prepare CSOs for implementation** when the grant was finally approved. When asked, one of the major requests CSOs made was to build their technical capacities. PATH had grant money to support capacity building and organized a series of workshops where they trained partners using PATH's proven ten-part advocacy curriculum.

CONCLUSION

While the work has just begun in many ways for CSO engagement in the immunization space in Uganda, the 10% funding allocation under the FPP process was a catalyst for capacity building, comprehension and case building. A key recommendation for Gavi going forward is to make sure the initial communication on how local CSOs should be included in the process is as clearly defined as possible, so that advocates for CSOs are as well equipped with clear answers to pointed questions. Otherwise, they are met with greater skepticism - including with regards to their own interest in promoting the CSO engagement agenda.

BIOGRAPHIES



Esther Nasiky is the Global Immunization/ MNCH Advocacy Lead at PATH and was at the same time the Advocacy and Policy Manager in Uganda at the time of writing the FPP application. She is also a member of Gavi's Civil Society Steering Committee. Her role on

the steering committee has helped her engage CSOs in the FPP process in terms of access to information that she used to help engage local partners in the coalition meetings. It has also given her greater clout in Uganda in championing the 10% allocation goal.



Deogratias Agaba is the Regional Advocacy and Communications Manager, Advocacy & Public Policy, East and Southern Africa for PATH and is based in Uganda. He was key in providing arguments for CSO engagement in immunization during the

FP writing Process.