

Vaccination, a gift for life

**AFRICAN VACCINATION AND CHILD HEALTH
PROMOTION WEEK
April 23 – 28, 2015
OAFILA TOOLKIT**



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How to use this toolkit

African Vaccination and Child Health Promotion Week 2015, which runs from April 23 – 28 represents an exciting opportunity for the Organisation of African First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA) to help raise awareness of immunisation and role of stakeholders to strengthen immunisation services overall.

In line with the OAFLA 2014-2018 strategic plan African First Ladies continue to be strong advocates for CARMMA. In this framework, by promoting the vaccination of children and mothers the African First Ladies have shown their commitments to support their countries effort in reducing maternal and child health.

OAFLA member states have also embarked in cervical cancer prevention and treatment hence are engaged to ensure the reach of adolescents girls (9 – 13 years) for HPV vaccines.

This toolkit is designed to provide the First Ladies with ideas and activities for African Vaccination Week and other opportunities for immunisation advocacy throughout the year. This toolkit briefly describes the current regional facts around routine immunisation in Africa and how to address its associated challenges.

This toolkit has been created in collaboration with Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance – a potential partner of OAFLA.

World Immunization Week 2015: Close the immunisation gap

World Immunization Week 2015 signals a renewed global, regional, and national effort to accelerate action to increase awareness and demand for immunisation by communities, and improve vaccination delivery services.

This year's campaign focuses on closing the immunisation gap and reaching equity in immunisation levels as outlined in the [Global Vaccine Action Plan \(GVAP\)](#). The Plan - endorsed by the 194 Member States of the World Health Assembly in May 2012 — is a framework to prevent millions of deaths by 2020 through universal access to vaccines for people in all communities.

Africa Immunisation Week 2015: Vaccination, a gift for life

This year, African Vaccination Week will be celebrated from 24 to 30 April under the theme “*Vaccination a gift for life.*” African Vaccination Week provides an opportunity for countries to strengthen immunization services and systems through advocacy, education and communication tools and activities.

<http://www.afro.who.int/en/media-centre/events/african-vaccination-week/2015.html>

KEY MESSAGES FOR AFRICAN VACCINATION WEEK: A GIFT FOR LIFE

A. TOP LINE MESSAGES

- Immunisation is widely recognised as one of the most successful and cost-effective global health interventions, saving up to three million lives each year.
- One in five children currently misses out on immunisations: in 2013, an estimated 21.8 million infants do not receive a full course of even the most basic life-saving vaccines.
- If countries improved routine immunisation coverage by an additional 2% per year, it would avert approximately 300,000 additional deaths due to vaccine-preventable diseases.
- When kids are reached with vaccines, they can be reached with many other health services.
- Immunisation services are a cornerstone of the health system—a basic public good that virtually all governments provide to their populations. Vaccination is an important gift of life for every African child.

B. HOW TO CLOSE THE GAP ON VACCINE AND GIVE A GIFT FOR LIFE

- Kids don't receive vaccines because stocks run out, health clinics are too far away, some people have misunderstandings about vaccines, data about coverage is poor, and politicians don't prioritise vaccination or give it enough funding.
- Closing the gap means families know where and when to go for immunisation, there are enough health workers, local leaders support health workers, and political leaders provide enough funding and support needed to pay for vaccines, health worker salaries and transportation.
- Improving immunisation services sustain gains made and helps close the gap in vaccine coverage.
- To help close the immunisation gap, we must reach children of vulnerable populations who are not yet vaccinated against measles and rubella.
- Closing the gap on vaccination coverage and strengthening immunisation systems can only be achieved when countries have the strong political will to achieve them.

C. BENEFITS OF ROUTINE IMMUNISATION

- Routine immunisation is often the first and only contact a child in many parts of Africa has with primary health care after birth.
- No child is safe from the risk of polio until every child is reached regardless of where they live, their ethnicity, gender or household income. The children most likely to be missed by routine immunisation are often those at highest risk of contracting polio.
- Routine immunisation creates a stronger base for building population immunity to interrupt polio transmission and builds a sustainable platform to introduce the injectable inactivated polio vaccine, HPV, along with the full range of immunisations needed across a healthy lifespan.
- Routine immunisation is not routine in many countries. If it were, it would be a remarkable achievement.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR AFRICAN VACCINATION WEEK: A GIFT FOR LIFE

The list below provides a list of possible activities with groups you may wish to involve.

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS

- National Leaders: policy-makers, local authorities, and political leaders
- Health sector: doctors, nurses, administrators, public health personnel and volunteers
- Education: teachers, students and children
- Faith-based leaders: Religious groups and community leaders
- National icons: celebrities, musicians, actors, artisans
- Private sector: business owners and leaders
- NGOs, civic groups, development partners

PROPOSED IMMUNISATION ACTIVITIES TO CELEBRATE AFRICAN VACCINATION WEEK

Vaccine launches, introductions and catch-up

- Participate in the media launch of new vaccine introductions and catch up campaigns targeting the unvaccinated and under vaccinated children during African Vaccination Week activities
- Include messaging on the benefits and importance of immunisation when addressing parliament, at national forums, in national speeches and events launched

Roundtables

- Hold a high-level policy discussion roundtable with other women community leaders
- Engage with market women's associations and women's associations in your country to become advocates for immunisation as it is an important gift for life

Sport

- Sponsor a 10km walk or sporting event to promote the importance of immunisation, where the end point is close to a health clinic/center

Education

- Attend a school assembly with Minister of Health and discuss the importance of immunisation with students
- Encourage school districts to hold poster competition to highlight their knowledge and perspective on immunisation.

Culture/Arts/Music

- Encourage an immunisation music concert with a national musicians, celebrities and actors
- Involve theatre groups to create street performances on immunisation
- Engage local actors/personalities to be 'town criers' to promote immunisation messages in local dialects

ENGAGING THE MEDIA

- Encourage media coverage and attendance at events throughout African vaccination week
- Provide an Opinion editorial by the First Lady to a national newspaper on importance of immunisation
- Produce a public service announcement for TV or radio, promoting immunisation
- Submit a news release on any of the events by First Lady
- Use social media to highlight importance of immunisation as a **gift for life**

PHOTO CREDITS

- Photo 1: Gavi/Jiro Ose 2013
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