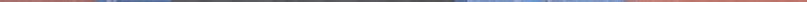


HPV Vaccination: Social Mobilization

Increasing community awareness through a timely, targeted, easily understood, and context relevant communications strategy is one of the most important factors for ensuring uptake in national or sub-national HPV vaccine programs.

Within communities (including online communities), misunderstandings about the vaccine can circulate. Unlike other common routine-childhood vaccines, the HPV vaccine targets young adolescent girls, it prevents a sexually transmitted infection, and its major benefit (cancer prevention) is not evidenced by large scale data until decades later, given the amount of time it usually takes for HPV to develop into cancer.

It is essential to accompany the introduction and scale-up of HPV vaccine programs with a communications plan to ensure that there are important positive associations with the vaccine (cancer prevention) and that it becomes a socially acceptable service, under public demand.



Different Audiences

Individuals who influence the success or failure of HPV vaccination programs, include (but are not limited to): vaccination-age girls, parents (or caregivers), teachers, education-authorities, health-workers, community leaders, popular artists, and religious leaders.

Each of these audiences is important. Their understanding, engagement and support can make the difference between high or low uptake of an HPV vaccination program. Each of these audiences has a different perspective and may have questions or concerns about the vaccine.

Identifying the key audiences early is essential, so that strategies can be **planned proactively** to address and rapidly respond to common questions, concerns, or rumors.



Tailor Messages

There are some common messages for all audiences, such as: (1) the HPV vaccine is cervical cancer prevention, (2) the HPV vaccine is safe and effective, (3) the HPV vaccine is recommended for girls age 9-14 for maximum effectiveness, and (4) details on number of doses and where target aged girls can receive the vaccine.

However, beyond these broad messages **different audiences will have different needs** in terms of engagement, information, questions and concerns. For example, a mother will likely have different questions than a teacher.

Identifying target audience, and understanding their drivers, will help to create tailored messages to promote the HPV vaccine that are more likely to resonate with them.



Tailor Channels

People are more likely to believe information from sources they trust.

Therefore, once the different audiences to have been identified, it is also important to evaluate which channels of information they use and trust (for example: communications from Ministry of Health, advice from teachers, health care workers or peers), and who could helpfully promote HPV vaccination.

For example, a country advocate in a country with a majority Muslim population that has achieved high HPV coverage levels reports: *"To ensure HPV vaccine was acceptable culturally, our religious leaders issued a fatwa for girls to be vaccinated."*

Similarly, while an East African country notes that *"The First Lady can be a wonderful champion to mobilize high-level stakeholders"*, another country notes *"girls will also respond to celebrities."*

Where can I learn more about creating an HPV vaccine communication strategy?

This factsheet provides a broad overview of some of the key considerations in creating an effective communications strategy to accompany the roll-out of HPV vaccination programs. However, there are many more considerations and nuances that should be considered to effectively drive up vaccination rates and ensure positive associations with the vaccine. For more complete information, including and practical *how-to* guide and tips for preemptive contingency planning, please visit the WHO guide on **HPV Vaccine Communication: Special Considerations For A Unique Vaccine**



About Cervical Cancer Action for Elimination

Cervical Cancer Action for Elimination (CCAIE) is a community of organizations and individuals working together to accelerate global progress towards cervical cancer elimination. CCAIE builds connections and synergies between organizations advocating for cervical cancer elimination regionally and globally. It provides a forum for sharing information and resources, as well as amplifying the work of civil society and its shared messaging across the world. **To learn more about cervical cancer elimination, please visit <https://cervicalcanceraction.org/>**

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