



U.S. HELPS BOOST COVID-19 VACCINATION RATES IN ZAMBIA

U.S. Government support to the Government of Zambia contributed close to 2 million vaccines administered nationally in December, nearly doubling the fully vaccinated rate in the Copperbelt Province from 12 to 22 percent.

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ZAMBIA VACCINATION UPTAKE

Following the third wave of COVID-19 cases in Zambia and anticipating a fourth, the President of the Republic of Zambia, His Excellency Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, requested support from the U.S. Government (USG) to expand and accelerate vaccination efforts across the country. In response, the Government of Zambia, in partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), kicked off a national COVID-19 vaccination campaign on World AIDS Day, December 1, 2021. This launch leveraged the World AIDS Day slogan of “Ending Inequalities. Ending AIDS. Ending Pandemics” and added a second focus with the theme: “Fight COVID-19! Take the Vaccine! Protect Zambia: Two Million Doses in Arms By Christmas.” By joining these two events, pre-existing events across the country were utilized to reach key audiences and maximize investments.



(L-R) KITWE MAYOR MPANSA MWAYA, PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR FOR COVID-19 PROFESSOR CHILENGI AND KITWE DC LAWRENCE MWANZA ATTEND WORLD AIDS DAY/COVID-19 LAUNCH EVENT, KITWE, ZAMBIA (DECEMBER 2021)

The ambitious “two million doses in arms” target would nearly double the vaccine doses previously administered since COVID-19 vaccinations first started in April 2021. This joint campaign achieved exceptional results, including in the Copperbelt Province, Zambia’s second most populated region, where USAID supported vaccination efforts alongside Zambia’s Ministry of Health (MOH). The percentage of the eligible population fully vaccinated in the province nearly doubled, with rates jumping from 12 to 22 percent in just one month¹, the most striking increase since COVID-19 vaccines first arrived in-country.

ADAPTING EXISTING PROGRAMS TO INCREASE VACCINE DEMAND AND ACCESS

Since the onset of COVID-19 in Zambia in March 2020, USAID’s DISCOVER-Health project has been on the frontlines supporting the MOH with its COVID-19 response. The USAID DISCOVER-Health project contributes to HIV prevention and support with the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) funding, while also providing reproductive health, family planning, and maternal and child health services and products. Much of their COVID-19 response has leveraged this work, including disseminating key COVID-19 messages as well as helping the MOH and CDC to integrate COVID-19 vaccinations into HIV treatment centers and other health services to expand access to vulnerable groups, including people living with HIV. Building on this and other previous successes and long-standing USG support in Zambia, December’s vaccination campaign was able to adapt tactics and existing platforms to rapidly increase vaccine demand and access.

PHASED APPROACH LEADS TO VACCINATION SUCCESS

In the Copperbelt Province, USAID’s DISCOVER-Health Project, funded through the USG’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and leveraging other USG resources, applied a combination of community mobilization and service delivery interventions to increase vaccine demand and access. The approach included four phases: coordination and planning, media and leadership engagement, a

major vaccination drive kick-off event, and extensive community mobilization and service delivery. To get shots into arms, USAID engaged local leaders and prioritized delivering COVID-19 vaccines and messages directly to places where people gather, such as markets, stadiums, bus-stations, schools, universities, places of worship, businesses, and provided door-to-door vaccination services to reaching eligible people in their homes. In addition, the campaign utilized local media and national and community radio programs in local languages to deliver key messages directly to people, reaching population groups that might not have been contacted otherwise. Together, these interventions markedly increased awareness and access of COVID-19 vaccines among the target population, helping to increase vaccine acceptance and demand throughout the province.

The COVID-19 vaccination campaign reinvigorated Zambia's national vaccination efforts, which more than tripled the average daily reported doses. While this extraordinary uptake in vaccinations occurred over a relatively short period of time, a key lesson learned in the December COVID-19 vaccination rollout in the Copperbelt Province was the importance of supporting the entire COVID-19 vaccination process every step of the way to ensure effective delivery of vaccination services.



CHIEF SHAIBILA LEADING FROM THE FRONT (SPOTTY SHIRT ON THE RIGHT), JOINING THE QUEUE AND GETTING VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19 IN MKUSHI, CENTRAL PROVINCE, ZAMBIA (DECEMBER 2021)

ACCELERATING FUTURE VACCINATION EFFORTS

As Zambia works to get more citizens vaccinated against COVID-19, USAID/Zambia will continue coordinating with the MOH and other partners to get more shots into arms. Zambia has 10 provinces, each with its own socio-cultural and geographic profile. The Copperbelt Province continues to lead the way in Zambia, achieving the highest number of reported doses administered to date. The success seen within the Copperbelt Province can be appropriately tailored and replicated. Getting vaccines to people in remote areas requires strong planning and adaptation in community mobilization, transportation, distribution, and cold storage, while considering travel challenges such as rising fuel prices and flooding during the rainy season. Nevertheless, USAID is confident this campaign can be scaled and is laying the groundwork to expand and accelerate vaccination efforts. The ability for Zambia to utilize existing programs to support new approaches paved the way for communities to respond to the pandemic, without the need to create new systems. USG looks forward to continuing support for the people of Zambia and contributing towards the global goal of vaccinating 70 percent of the total population in every country.