

Reaching the Last Mile



A Race to Search and Immunize Children with Humanity and Impartiality

In this Edition:

Monthly Highlights	Page 2
My Story	Page 8
Discovery	Page 9
January & February Data Board	Page 10

Ed.0003 of 01- 02/2024

"Let's ensure a better future for our children through immunisation."

A monthly publication of the RAISE for Sahel Project Team

Website

www.raise.cbchealthservices.org

Email

communications@raise.cbchealthservices.org

Executive Editor

Prof. Tih Pius Muffih

Managing Editors

Dr. Foyeth Eugene
Dr. Epie Njume
Banlack Hilary
Fuoh Cyril
Achoge Collins
Zodeh Yves

Editor in Chief

Fri Delphine Chifor

Deputy Managing Editor

Namondo Ewane
Ngange Divine
Ngassissou Simon
Fondjo Jerome

Associates Editors

Mbinkar Adeline
Dimba Marmo
Ngandi Alfred
Raise for Sahel Team

Layout/Design

Ngange Divine





Prof. Tih Pius Muffih

RAISE for Sahel CSD

Beginning May 2023, the CBC Health Services began the reprinting its name in the sands of time through the provision of lifesaving vaccines to Zero Dose Children and Under Immunized Children in the Far North of Cameroon; continued in the South West and finally the North West Region joined the race. This was done effectively by the RAISE for ZDC in Sahel Project and with funds from GAVI – the Vaccine Alliance through World Vision US and the Africa Christian Health Associations Platform (ACHAP). The goal remains to support National efforts towards achieving the WHO's Immunization Agenda 2030 by strengthening country strategies to reach Zero Dose Children and communities by 2025.

Statistically, the RAISE for Sahel Cameroon has effectively immunized over 2000 Zero Dose Children with lifesaving vaccines which will prevent them from contacting several vaccine preventable diseases. This has been thanks to the collective efforts of all our teams on the field in the 9 major communities where the project is being implemented.

From the month of November 2023, we started informing you about the progress of this project through a monthly newsletter. This continued

up till the December 2023 edition that actually ended the monthly nature of the publication. Following inconsistencies in the communication network between our offices and the field R4S Teams, we decided to make this publication to be once every two months.

In this edition, we present you major highlights of the auditing of financial procedures of the project which was conducted by a team from World Vision and ACHAP for a period of two weeks. Did you know there are still communities in Cameroon who for one reason or the other do not receive routine vaccines for years without knowing or having a possibility of getting things through? You can find out more about which community has for the first time in 3 years received lifesaving vaccines due to the presence of RAISE 4 Sahel project.

To be able to effectively identify, vaccinate and capture data of ZDC in the communities of the Ako, learn what strategy has been put in place to have data in record time in this edition. You cannot effectively say you know or understand what someone feels or goes through when you have never lived their realities; find out in this edition how the R4S team goes about this to

understand local realities.

This edition will also let you know some of the strategies we have been using to ensure access to certain inaccessible areas to provide immunization services. Meanwhile, a story is told of a 3 year old child who received her very first vaccine thanks to the R4S Project that identified and provided access to vaccine preventable diseases. Also, find out which community until February 2023 believed in the divinity of twins and how through health education, advocacy and other approaches, the mystery of twin divinity was broken.

All these and more are in this edition of the newsletter.

Enjoy Reading!

World Vision and ACHAP Pay Supportive Supervision Visit to R4S Cameroon



Working Session between World Vision , ACHAP and RAISE for Sahel Management Team

In the prelude to the project course redesigning and audit of the financial system of the R4S system in Cameroon, a World Vision and ACHAP delegation visited Cameroon in February 2024. The teams were led by Toni Mpoy, Chief of Party of World Vision and Nkatha Njeru, CEO of ACHAP.

From 4 to 22, teams came in and out of Cameroon to handle specific tasks to strengthen the systems. Innocent Manishimwe, Finance Manager World Vision and Chido Chetsanga, Regional Finance Director- WARO, joined the ACHAP team, including Chief Financial Officer Lonah Chebeh and Accountant Kelvin Kamande, to conduct an internal review to ensure that Team Cameroon had supporting documentation for every financial transaction and also strengthen the financial system of Cameroon to ensure that it meets all the expectations of the funder.

The feedback from this visit enabled Cameroon to align according to WV financial policies and fill the gaps to be more efficient in the future.

During the visit, the Chief of Party, Toni Mpoy, used the opportunity to work with the technical team on the 2023 annual report and the current redesign.



Cross Section of R4S Staff and World Vision and ACHAP Visitors

Zero-dose children in Digagouda receive vaccines at last!



R4S team escorted by vigilance committee members

Over the years, the island's inhabitants and those of Dana mainland lived harmoniously until an incident in 2022 created a rift between them. In 2022, a man from Digagouda died mysteriously in Dana, and the people of Digagouda accused those of Dana of killing their kinsman, raising tension between the two communities to the point where Digagouda people banned anyone from Dana from entering their community for any reason. This ban was extended to health-care workers from Dana who were unwilling to conduct outreach

RAISE for ZDC in Sahel (R4S) creates new pathways through its SBC strategies

For three years, no outreach team visited Digagouda. However, determined to leave no one behind, R4S brokered negotiations with the leaders of Dana and Digagouda and other stakeholders for vaccination teams to access Digagouda. The ZIP vaccination team lead for Dana led a delegation to mediate and help find common ground to allow vaccination teams to enter and vaccinate Zero-dose children (ZDC) and underimmunised children (UiC). After multiple attempts, the fourth mediation session bore fruit, with Digagouda leaders granting access to vaccination teams on the condition that the vaccination session be held outside the village.

Zero-dose children vaccinated at last!

The first vaccination session was held on January 16, 2024, during which the team identified and

campaigns, including vaccination sessions. This rendered delivering healthcare to this hard-to-reach community complex and life-threatening.

“People had to mount a lot of courage to accept crossing over for outreach activities three years ago. The conflict has worsened the case as no service provider wants to put their life on the line to a community where they would not be welcomed.” Benard, R4S Vaccinator, explained.

Digagouda is an island community in the Logone River, located about 24 km from the leading health facility in Dana Health Area. Getting to Digagouda from Dana involves a 30-minute crossing of the Logone River by canoe and then a 7 km walk through the forest. While its location has attracted fishermen, farmers and traders from Chad, who explore the natural resources and trading opportunities along the Cameroon-Chad border, it poses a challenge for health workers to conduct outreach activities routinely.

vaccinated 95, including 31 ZDC and 19 UiC. Thanks to the R4S initiative, the children of Digagouda received life-saving vaccines to protect them from vaccine-preventable diseases and go a long way to reduce the risk of their community becoming a reservoir of outbreaks.



Team R4S in a mediation session in Digagouda

R4S North West Team Rolls Out CommCare in Ako



Trained community Health workers using Commcare to enroll ZDC in Tubemi Community

Zero Dose Community clusters of Ako and Bamenda 3 Health Districts have been effectively trained to capture and synchronize vaccination data into the CommCare Application. This training was done by the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Officer during routine onsite supportive supervision exercises in Ako and Bamenda 3 Health Districts. The MEL Officer

practically demonstrated how to capture information from the disaggregated data from the tracking log.

The Application/Vaccine Solution is expected to facilitate the collection and registration of data during community mobilization and vaccination in the communities. Meanwhile, to ensure effective

data entry, the RAISE 4 Sahel Project donated eight Samsung Galaxy tablets to all the health areas that were being implemented. In addition to the tablets, the project also donated 48 jackets to the vaccination teams to assist with identifying the health teams during vaccination sessions.



Vaccination of More Identified ZDC in Jevi Community

Adverse Events Create resistance: R4S team Step up its Game



R4S Team Lead of Ndzah Giving Health Talk to the Wives of Mr. Mamadou.

“Whatever I do for my family, I do it for love. My limited knowledge can sometimes make me make bad decisions. However, I am happy I had a team to show me the right way.”

After initiating vaccination activities in the forgotten community of Tarre, situated on the plateaus bordering Babanki (Kedjum Ketinguh) and Awing in Bamenda 1 Cluster Communities, the R4S mobilization team encountered resistance from some community members as they planned for the second trip to administer DPT2 in January 2024.

Adamu Muhamadou, a Bororo herdsman based in Tarre, was

unhappy when his wife vaccinated his children with DPT1, which made them develop a mild fever for some days. He gave firm instructions against administering any other vaccination for his children. He refused any discussion with the mobiliser until the community leader had to talk with him amicably. This opened room for the mobilisers to educate Mamadou on the importance of vaccination and the mild effects the vaccination sometimes causes. They also gave him referral pathways in case the adverse event was severe.

“My wife told me it was normal and gave me the number to call if the situation was serious. I was worried

because my children had never been sick,” Mamadou confessed.

Mamadou personally brought his four eligible children from his two wives for the second vaccination dose and instructed his wives to ensure his children received other vaccines even in his absence.

“Whatever I do for my family, I do it for love. My limited knowledge can sometimes make me make bad decisions. However, I am happy I had a team to show me the right way.” Mamadou praised the R4S team for their patience in ensuring that he learned the comparative benefits of vaccinating his children.

R4S Strengthens the Capacities of Vaccination Cluster Teams in the NWR Through Supportive Supervision



Effective Identification and Vaccination of ZDCs Door to Door in Nyokwe - Berabe Community

A series of onsite supportive supervision was organized to clean the discrepancies experienced in the data presented weekly, the cluster's team's inability to understand the new template for sharing vaccination outreach schedules, non-capturing of DTP 1 and 3 on the tracking log and the identifiable low zero-dose yield in Bamenda 3 HD.

At the end of the supervision exercise, the team filled all the gaps and helped the team identify missing and unreported data. It was also a time for the team to re-orientate the field teams on the importance and how to fill out the supporting documents as expected by the finance team. The supervision exercise contextualized the

project and the target antigens to be provided amongst the lots. "This supervisory visit helped us understand our indicators, target populations, and the strategies to reach them." Akwaja, the team lead, explained.



Understanding Local Realities for Development of Context Based SBC/GESI Strategies

R4S Gains Access to Vaccinate Children in Kangarawa Bounderi



R4S team on his way to Digagouda for an outreach session

Accessing Kossa, Boundéri, and Magdémé in Mora Cluster has been daunting as it is in one of Mora's red zones. Since 2014, these communities have been experiencing sporadic gunshots and criminal incursions from Boko Haram. Hence, to penetrate this community, the R4S teams used the Fly-in-and-out

strategy to conduct vaccination sessions and vaccinate its zero-dose children.

The R4S vaccination team gathers quietly; vaccinate quickly and go out without wasting too much time, with the cover of the vigilance committee.

"We are overwhelmed by this insecurity situation, which hinders the normal conduct of vaccination sessions. This programme is actively helping and supporting us in this humanitarian struggle to vaccinate our children successfully", said the Chief of Health area to express his gratitude to the RAISE 4 SAHEL project team.

RAISE 4 SAHEL manages to brave the insecurity to reach zero-dose children and the under-immunised in this risky area. Sometimes, the vaccination sessions occur under heavy military escort or through vigilance committee members.

On 26/01/2024, the case of Ibadado and Kangarawa, two communities under high surveillance, was successful for RAISE by applying the "kick and run" strategy. The ZIP team succeeded in vaccinating as many children as possible.

Stakeholder's Voice

Buku Team is Now Able to Vaccinate ZDCs in Hard to Reach Communities

By the end of 2018, the ongoing crisis turned bloody in Ako, and health workers stopped going into some communities for fear of being kidnapped for ransom or killed by NSAGs who revindicated the use of government-related services. Places like Akwancha were left entirely in oblivion.

After four years of no activity in the various communities, we were all over the moon when we heard that CBC Health Services, through the RAISE for Sahel Project, would champion the vaccination services in our district.

Thanks to this project's funds, we have



Mr. Mburu Tankfu Gideon
R4S Cluster Lead - Buku

conducted several vaccination sessions in Akwancha, Ndaka, Mpentaba, etc. They selected accommodating vaccination teams, especially those who could trek for over 40 km and spend nights in bush houses to carry out their vaccination services in these underserved communities. The Data in DHIS2 says it all." The R4S Cluster Lead- Buku

3-Year-Old Gets His First Shot of Vaccine

“Elvis has for no reason ever been to the hospital. I am glad he can receive such lifesaving vaccines to remain strong.” Grandma Lucy beamed.

Elvis is a 3-year-old boy born through home delivery by a Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA) in Takwe, Menji Health Area. He lost his mum when he was nine months old and has since lived with his grandmother.

Little Elvis had not received a vaccine since birth due to the insecurity of the crisis in his communities, which scared inhabitants to seek medical care and medical personnel to conduct outreach activities in Menji before the coming of the R4S project in Fontem Cluster Community.

Grandma Lucy also believed herbs could reinforce her grandson’s immunity. She



Vaccination of Young Elvis for the First Time since Three Years

was amazed to learn the comparative benefits of vaccinating a child and pleaded with the vaccination team never to skip her door again. Her acceptance began a journey to protect Elvis from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Despite the security situation in Takwe and most parts of the Fontem health district, the R4S vaccination cluster team has followed up to ensure that Elvis was fully immunised per the EPI catch-up immunisation calendar.

The R4S Breaks the Mystery of the Superpowers and Divine Protection of Twin Children in Beguele



Twin children registering to get vaccinated in Beguele

The birth of twin children is a rare phenomenon in Beguele, a ZIP community in the Far North Region of Cameroon. Whenever a family is blessed with multiple births, the social norms warrant them to believe that the children have superpowers and special immunity. Hence, they do not need any man-made protection like vaccination. This explains why children from multiple births have not received vaccinations. "For us, twins are hyper-protected by God himself. They don't need vaccines from white people," A parent of twin children explained.

After continuous education within the community of Beugele, Mamadou took the bull by the horns to set the pace for vaccinating his twin children, ISSUA and ISAAC—an act which amazed the community. Despite the rumours spread that the children would die, the children woke up the following day stronger, causing more parents to bring their twin children for vaccination during the following outreach.

The R4S hopes to break the barriers around such myths to ensure it reaches the last mile to vaccinate every child.

Achievement of the immunization KPIs;
August 2023 - February 2024

IMMUNISATION KPIs	ACHIEVEMENT
Number of infants and children immunised with DTP 1	8586
Number of infants and children immunised with DTP 3	6815
Number of infants and children immunised with MCV1	7216
Number of Children immunised with MCV2	4930
Total doses of vaccine administered	27,547

Appreciation

Thank you for standing with the RAISE for Sahel Team and contributing your quota to ensure we reach the last mile and vaccinate every child. Your daily input has amounted to the considerable result we are seeing today, and we believe with your continuous support to the RAISE for Sahel Team, no child will be left unvaccinated in Cameroon. We are immensely grateful!!!

Contact Info:

CBC Health Services

RAISE for Sahel

www.raise.cbchealthservices.org

communications@raise.cbchealthservices.org

(+237) 6 77 76 47 81

