Rapid Fire Talks on Vaccine Hesitancy / Resilience during the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Nigeria experience

**Presented during** 

**GTFCC** Annual Meeting,

Lyon, France

**Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2023** 

Dartnership for Service

**Dr Bassey Bassey Okposen** 

Nigeria



To share Nigeria experiences on vaccine hesitancy / resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic and how the country worked/ is working to promote vaccine demand using innovative efforts to get more people immunized, manage the infodemic and restore routine immunization

## **Outline:**

Vaccine Hesitancy/ Resilience during COVID-19 pandemic: **Nigeria Experience** 

Where we are on COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout and Routine Immunization

**Challenges and Observed Causes for Hesitancy / Resilience** during the COVID-19 Pandemic What We Have Done to Promote & Sustain Vaccine Demand for COVID-19 and Restore Routine Immunization

- Lessons Learnt and Practical Advice
- Way Forward / Recommendations 05
- Conclusion 06

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### Where We Are on COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout

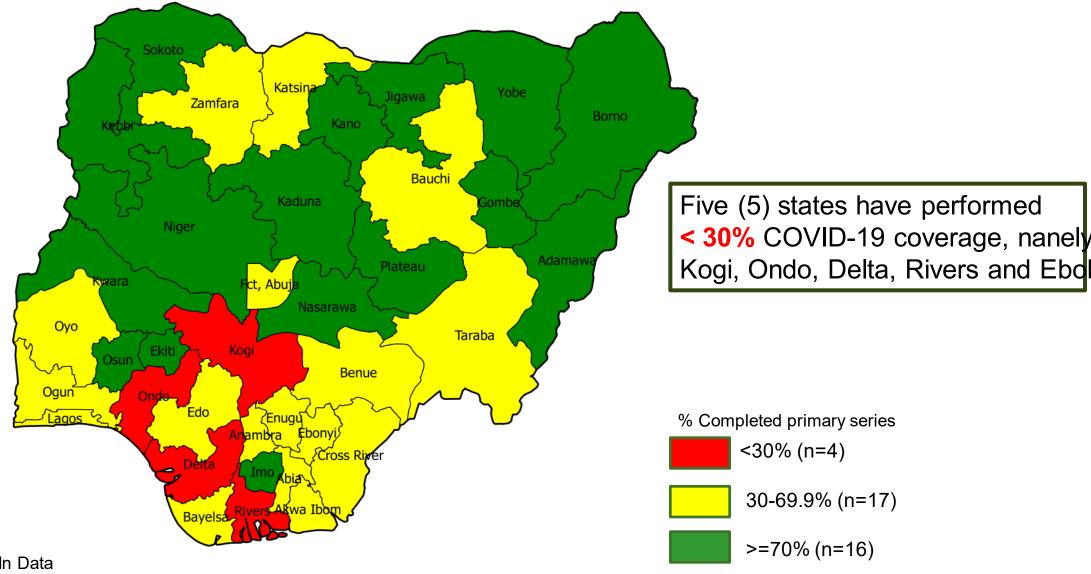


Burden: As at 30/10/2023, Nigeria has recorded a total of 266,675 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 3,155 deaths

- COVID-19 vaccination in Nigeria was launched on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021 flowing the pandemic
- The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGoN) plans to vaccinate at least 70% of eligible Nigerians (18 years and above) with safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines by end of December 2023 to achieve faster herd immunity and slowdown / interrupt transmission of COVID19 in all parts of the country
- The Agency in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Health and other stakeholders has taken several actions to interrupt COVID-19 community transmission, acquire herd immunity (through vaccination) and sustain PHC services delivery at the primary health care (PHC) centers.
- Though the target is about being achieved, several factors (**including hesitancy**) have contributed to the slow utilization of COVID-19 vaccines in the country

As of Oct 30th, 2023, a total of 81,186,158 (69.99%) eligible persons have been fully vaccinated while 93,717,785 (80.8%) of eligible Nigerians have so far been vaccinated with at least 1 dose of COVID-19 vaccine. 17,480,161 have received booster dose

As of October 30<sup>th</sup> 2023, 16 States have achieved 70% targeted coverage for COVID-19 vaccination. Delta, Kogi, Rivers and Ondo are still below 30% coverage Cumulative Proportion of eligible population completed primary series by states: (Data as at 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2023)



Source: Daily Call-In Data

### Trend of Monthly COVID-19 Vaccinations in Nigeria- Data as at 30th Joct., 2023

#### **COVID-19 Phase Vaccinations - Data as at 29th October 2023**

Source: Daily Call-In Data

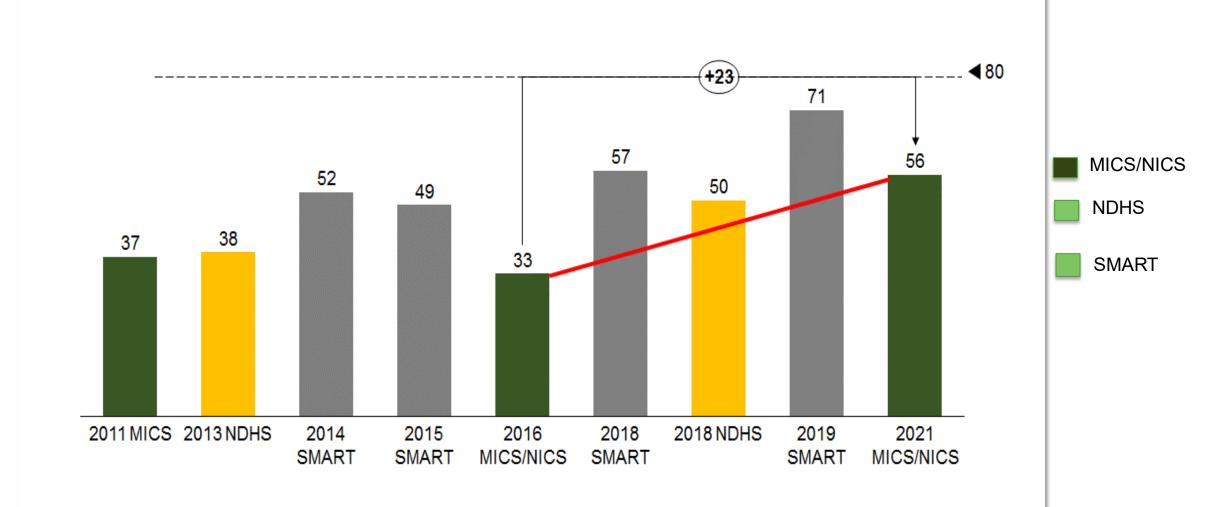
Phase 1: Mar 15, 2021 - Jul 08, 2021 Phase 2: Aug 16, 2021 - Nov 16, 2021 SCALES 1.0: Nov 17, 2021 – Feb 21, 2022 SCALES 2.0: Feb 22, 2022 – Aug 07, 2022 SCALES 3.0: Aug 08, 2022 - Date



Routine Immunization (Penta 3) Coverage Trend in Nigeria, 2011 – 2021:

There has been a progressive improvement in the RI performance

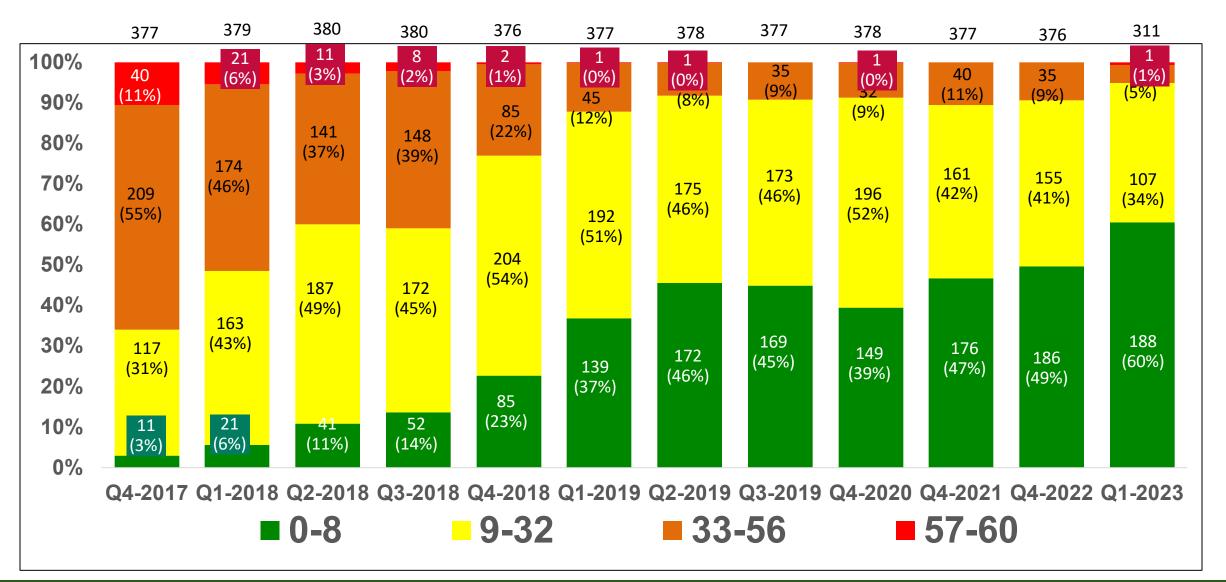




NPHCDA – National Primary Health Care Development Agency

Source: MICS/NICS 2021, 2020 Population Projections (U1) and CHAI Analysis; \*2021 MICS/NICS data looks at 2020 Birth Cohort

PAPA RI-LQAS performance in 18 NERICC states is showing an improvement in the proportion and number of LGAs passing Lots from 3% in Quarter 4, 2017 to 60% in Quarter 1, 2023



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Immunization ...... Challenges Observed during the COVID-19 Pandemic and 02 Causes for Hesitancy / Resilience What We Have Done to Promote & Sustain Vaccine Demand 03 for COVID-19 and Restore Routine Immunization ...... 04 Lessons Learnt and Practical Advice ...................

Where we are on COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout and Routine

Way Forward / Recommendations

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In spite of the efforts and successes achieved, several factors (challenges) contributed to the slow utilization of COVID-19 vaccine in Nigeria...1/2

Poor coordination structures and commitment, especially at the subnational levels (in the identified poor performing States/LGAs)

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- Persistent hesitancy from the public for the COVID-19 vaccine for reason of "No felt needs" etc (further details shortly)
- Inadequate resources (human, vaccine distribution, logistics etc) that is required to fully implement the optimized SCALES 2.0 strategy
- There was an initial challenge of receipt of inadequate quantity of COVID-19 vaccines and also delivery of vaccines with very short shelf life; but this has now improved

In spite of the efforts and successes achieved, several factors (challenges) contributed to the slow utilization of COVID-19 vaccine in Nigeria ...2/2

- Inadequate social mobilization activities to address the observed persistent hesitancy in most of the states
- Sub-optimal integration of the COVID-19 vaccine with routine immunization and other PHC services
- Challenges in the data collection, analysis and management, especially at the lower levels

There are several reasons for the documented vaccine hesitancy (VH) in the country; and VH is believed to be responsible for the decreasing vaccine coverage and an increasing risk of vaccine-preventable disease

- Lack of confidence in COVID-19 vaccines during the pandemic is now considered a threat to the success of other routine vaccination programs
- Individual behaviour and broader influences were observed during the pandemic

### Some of the reasons for the vaccine hesitancy in the country include:

- No felt need from lack of adequate knowledge and information about the importance of vaccination in maintaining health.
- Increasing rumors and negative communication about vaccination on media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter etc).
- Attitude of Health workers / professionals and their recommendations:
- Socio-cultural and Religious beliefs: Lack of moral, socio-cultural and religious convictions and perceptions
- Individual decision-making process and risks perceptions based on past experiences with vaccination service and lack of trust for vaccines.
- Social pressure and social responsibility

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What We Have Done to Promote & Sustain Vaccine Demand for COVID-19 and Restore Routine Immunization

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Nigeria has deployed several indigenous and innovative strategies to accelerate and improve on COVID-19 vaccine uptake:

- The Federal Government through the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Health and Partners plans to achieve at least 70% by December, 2022
- Nigeria have deployed several indigenous and innovative strategies to accelerate and improve on COVID-19 vaccine uptake:
  - $\circ~$  Phase 1 COVID-19 vaccine rollout was on 5th March 2021; and
  - $\circ~$  Phase 2 Launch was in May, 2021
  - Phase 3 (SCALES Strategy) was Launched in November 2021, and the
     ✓ Revised Optimized SCALES 2.0 Strategy was launched on 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb., 2022

To achieve the set vaccination targets, Nigeria rolled out the indeginous and innovative 'Optimized SCALES' 2.0 strategy to ramp up vaccination across all the states in the country

## S.C.A.L.E.S Strategy:

**Goal -** To ensure effective, efficient, and timely distribution and utilization of Covid-19 vaccines available in-country towards the vaccination of all eligible 112m Nigerians and their children with RI vaccines

The Optimized SCALES strategy is targeted to improve integrated service delivery, communication, accountability, logistics, electronic reporting and supportive supervision for the ongoing COVID-19 vaccination S.C.A.L.E.S Strategy: Description

**Service delivery** system that delivers vaccines to all eligible persons integrated with other PHC services without compromising efficiency

**Communication** strategy involving targeted advocacy, intensive media engagement, community engagement and participation

**Accountability** system to track vaccination activities, detect and promptly address inappropriate and fraudulent activities

**Logistics** system to adequately forecast, efficiently distribute and track vaccines and ancillary supplies

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**EMID** platform that provides a harmonised data system for reporting programmatic and logistic data to inform decision making

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**Supervisory** system that is robust, leveraging multi-agency collaboration at all levels







NPHCDA – National Primary Health Care Development Agency



## Integration approaches by thematic area:



#### 7. Data Management :

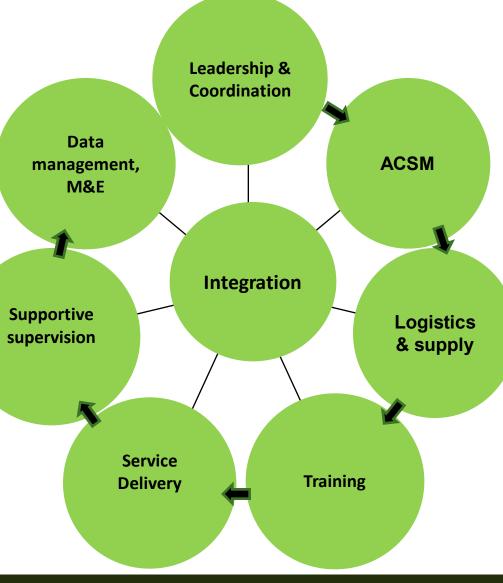
- Joint data reporting and feedback to all levels
- EMID for COVID-19

#### 6. Supportive supervision:

- Integrated supportive supervision
- Review the TOR of supervisors for the integrated campaign

#### 5. Service delivery:

- Integration of SIA, covid 19, RI, VAS in all fixed posts and temporary fixed post
- Integrate RI antigens in all temporary fixed post across the Zero-dose LGAs in Gombe -7, Lagos-3 & Ogun -3 states identified



#### 1. Leadership and coordination:

- Harmonize coordination structures for SIAs, VAS, RI & COVID 19 Task Force in all states
- One country, one team, one plan, one budget

#### 2. ACSM:

- Integrate all ACSM activities at national and state levels
- Mobilization by CHIPS & other community structures for all interventions

#### 3. Logistics and supply:

Harmonize logistics movement of SIA, RI, Covid 19 vaccines & VAS to the last mile

#### 4. Training:

 Integrated Implementation training at all levels The Agency was/is engaging with the identified poor performing Zones/States to develop states-specific interventions: Below are some of the pictures during the ED/CEO's visit to the South East Zone on 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> February 2022



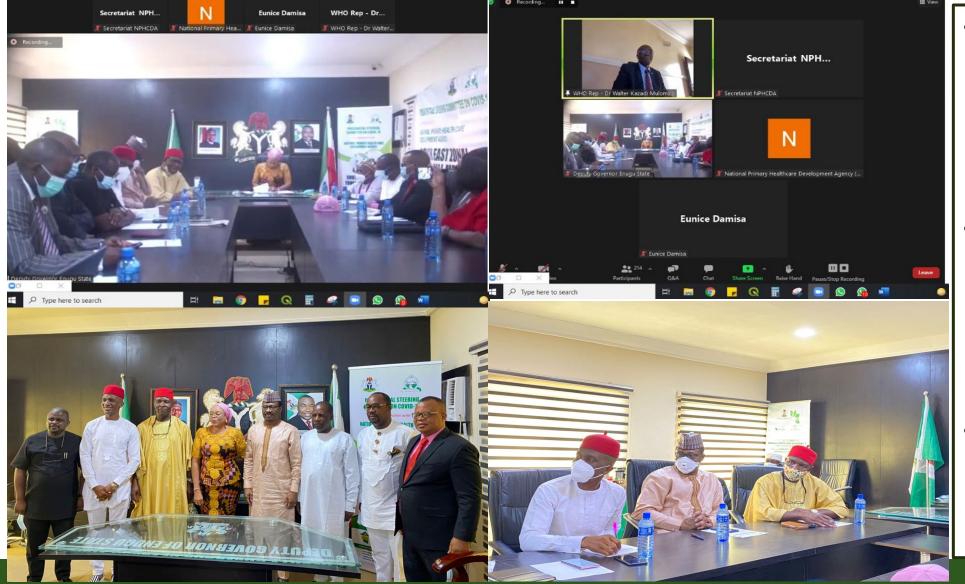
- Photos showing His Excellency The Executive Governor of Enugu State, Deputy Governor, Senator Otazi, ED/CEO NPHCDA and Commissioners for Health (South East) during the visit to SEZ
- Photos showing His Excellency The Executive Governor of Enugu State, Senator Otazi (Senate Committee Chair on PHC) and ED/CEO NPHCDA

Photos of ED/CEO/Partners engagement with the Leadership of the South East states (2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> February 2022) ...2



- Photos taken during the PHC-COVID-19 Review Meeting with the South East states
- Meeting was declared opened by the Deputy Governor on behalf of His Excellency
- Also photos taken during the engagement of the ED/CEO with LGA Chairmen in Enugu state on 2nd February

Photos: Town Hall Meeting (Webinar) was conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb 2022 during the ED/CEO's visit to Enugu State to take feedback from the public



- Photos taken during the SEZ Town Hall meeting (Webinar) held on 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb.,
   2022 to engage the public in the SEZ
- The Webninar meeting was Chaired by Her Excellency, Deputy Governor Enugu State
- Sen Otazi, ED/CEO NPHCDA, Commissioners, Religious/Traditional leaders in 22

attendance

Photos during the ED/CEO's visit to Executive Governor, Sokoto State and also visit to the Sultan of Sokoto on Improving PHC and COVID-19 vaccination service delivery



Engagement Meeting with SMOH, SPHCB, LGA program officers on development of micro-plans and Daily Implementation Plans (DIP) to ramp-up COVID-19 vaccination and other PHC services (7<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> February 2022)













The Agency has engaged with the leadership of the Military to ensure that their personnel/relatives are administered COVID 19 vaccination. There is also collaboration to reach eligible persons in the security compromised areas



Staff at the Defense Heaquarters, January 2022

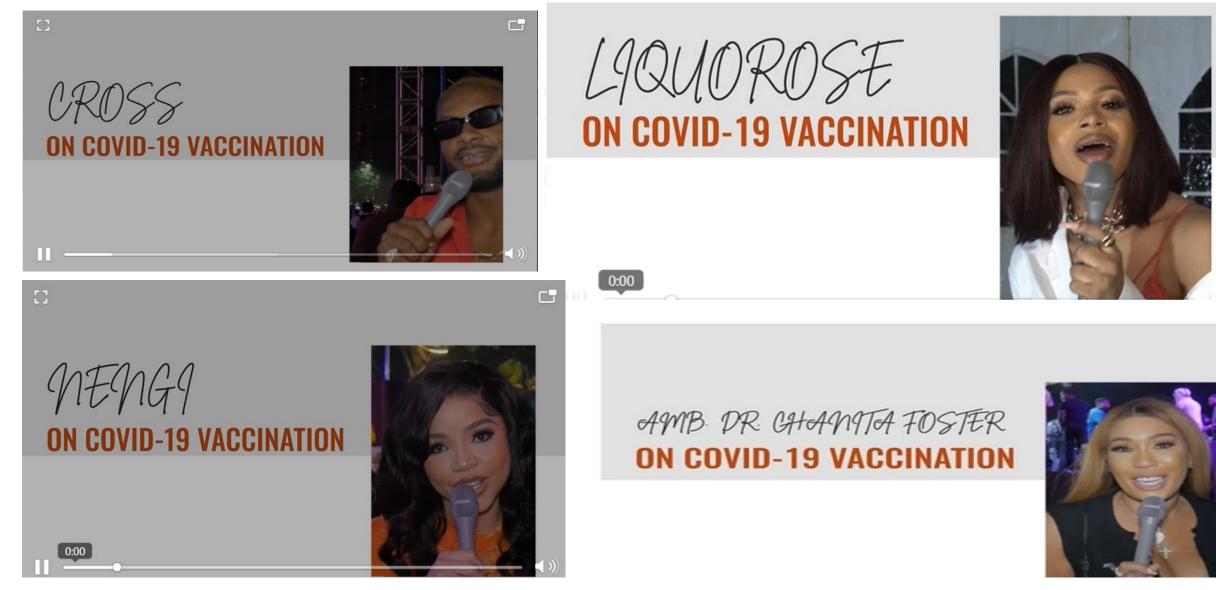
The Agency is engaging with the leadership of tertiary institutions. Campus COVID 19 vaccination was flag-off at the National Convention of National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) at University of Abuja Gwagwalada Campus



- Photos taken during the engagement with the NANS leadership and Cmpus presidents.
- Efforts are ongoing to continue to engage the leadership of all tertiary institutions in collaboration with the states
- The ED/CEO have also engaged with the leadership of the National Universities

Commission

Celebrities is also engaged to promote COVID-19 Vaccination – soundbites, drama skits, etc.



Development and circulation of key messages for awareness creation and confidence building and increased uptake



#### National Primary Health Care Development Agency

Describe for description

This is to bring to your attention that **Pfizer vaccine is now** open for 1st and 2nd dose administration to eligible clients, in addition to being used for Booster dose.



The interval between the 1st and 2nd dose is 3 weeks

Pfizer booster should be taken from 6 months after 2nd dose of Pfizer

or 6 Months after 2nd dose of AstraZeneca





For Questions/Concerns on COVID-19 Vaccine, Kindly call 07002201122

#YesToCOVID19Vaccine



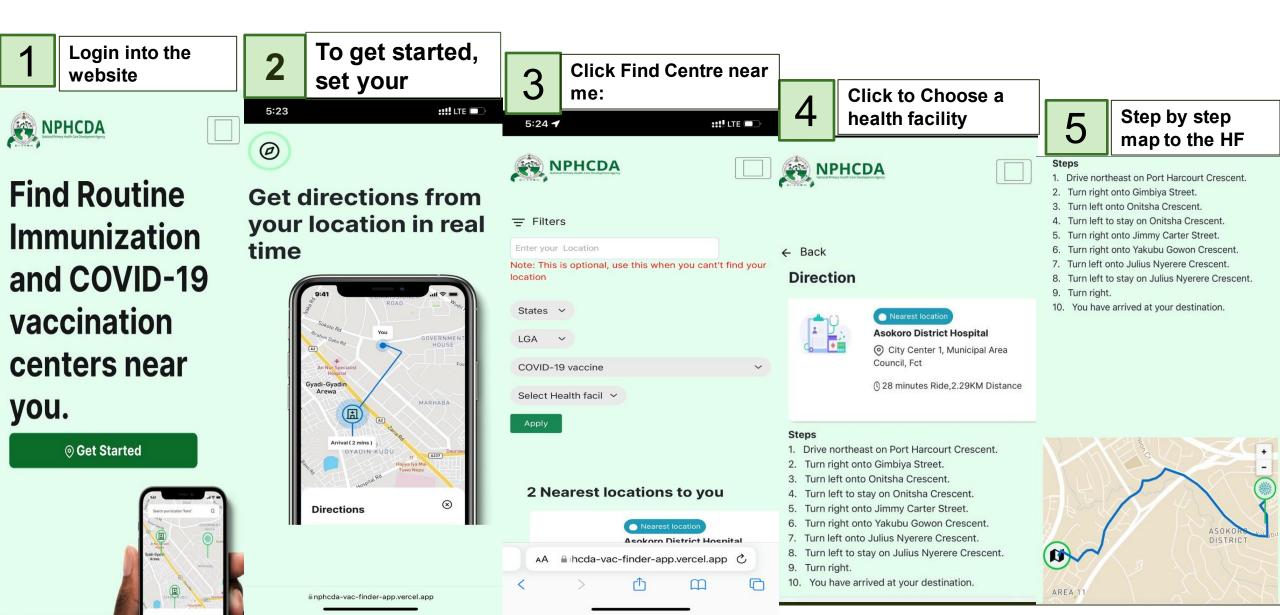
The Vaccination Site Finder APP was Launched on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 to guide clients to the nearest vaccination sites for services

- To ensure increased and seamless access to vaccination sites, NPHCDA in collaboration with the FMoH and Partners used the opportunity of the Optimized SCALES 2.0 Launch yesterday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 to Launch the 'vaccination site finder App'
- The vaccination site finder is as shown below:
  - www.vacsitefinder.nphcda.gov.ng
- The app uses geo-location to help locate and guide clients to the nearest COVID-19 vaccination and RI centers
- The launch is a unique opportunity to leverage on the SCALES strategy using existing structures to improve both COVID-19 vaccination and RI coverage, with improved efficiency and reduced duplication of efforts

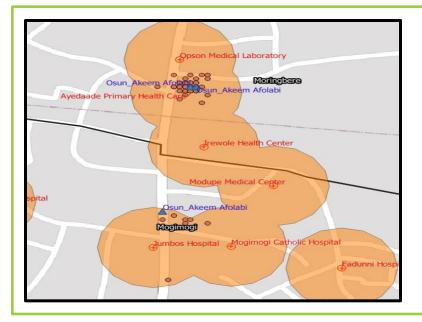


## Step-by-step guide to use the Nigeria COVID-19 vaccination sites finder





# The use of Geospatial Tracking System and ODK and Setting up of Joint Task Force have contributed to an Improvement in accountability



**Use of Geospatial Tracking System & Open Data Kit:** In-depth analysis of GTS and ODK submissions of supervisors to ensure staff are present at state of deployment and conducting supportive supervision at vaccination sites



## Setting up of Joint Task Force (JTF):

- A replication of the national level structure which oversees the State JTF
- State JTF inaugurated across all the 36 states + FCT chaired by the ES SPHCBs with membership comprising of SPHCDA, NAFDAC, ICPC, DSS with other security agencies to checkmate vaccination card racketeering.

Improving accountability: Validators have been recruited for all the vaccination teams to ensure validation of every client vaccinated

 $( \bullet )$ 

VACCINATION e-CERTIFICATE



JOSHUA MOSES VAC ID: NG-FC30734682DM

SEX: MALE | DOB: 41

NIN NO : -

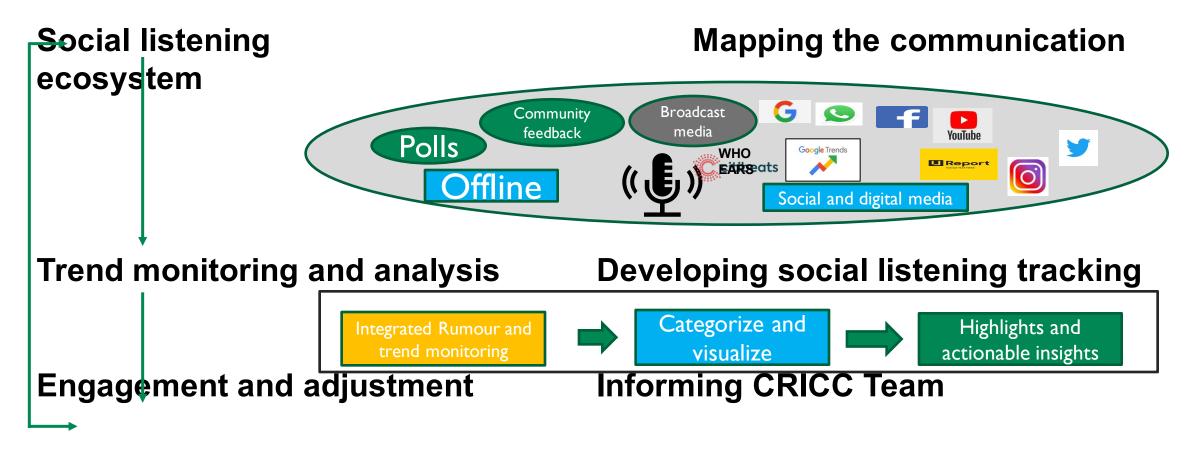


VALIDATION ID : 86980 SITE ID: false GEO-LOCATION 8.8940658 7.2136164 233.9 4.528

## Validation:

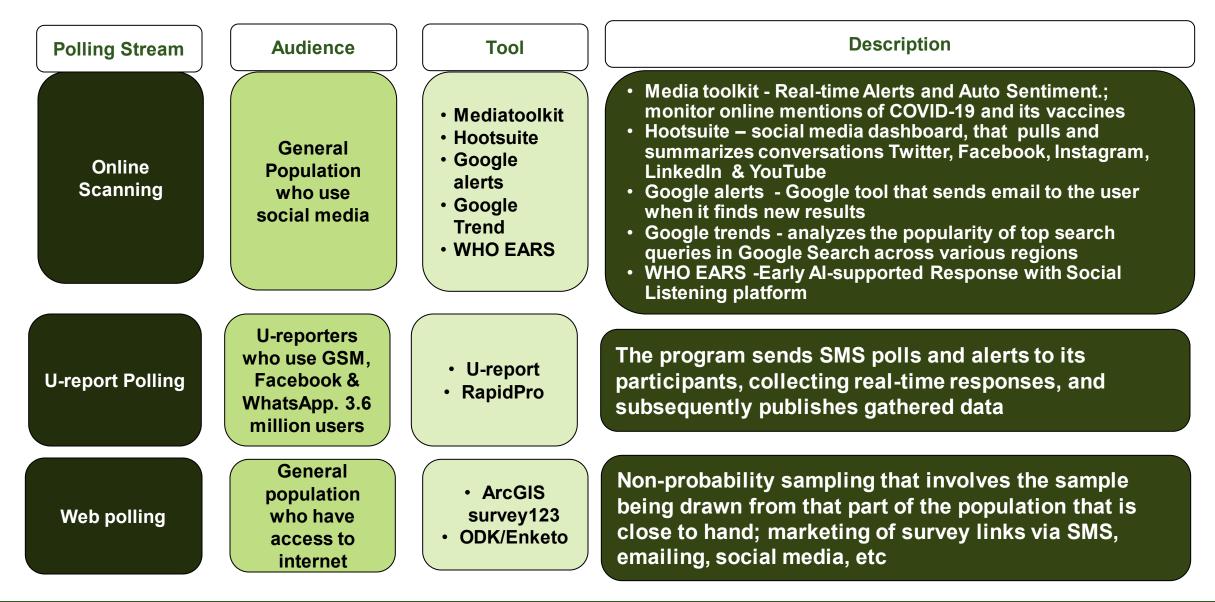
- Vaccination card racketeering is a global issue. Nigeria has instituted the validation process as an additional security layer to improve the credibility of the vaccination cards
- The validation process specifically links the image of the vaccinated client and geolocation of the vaccination site to the vaccination record
- Validation can only be done at the designated vaccination site with a preprogrammed device

**Social Listening Framework** was adopted to track, analyze and manage rumors and myths on Social Media Platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, WhattsApp etc):



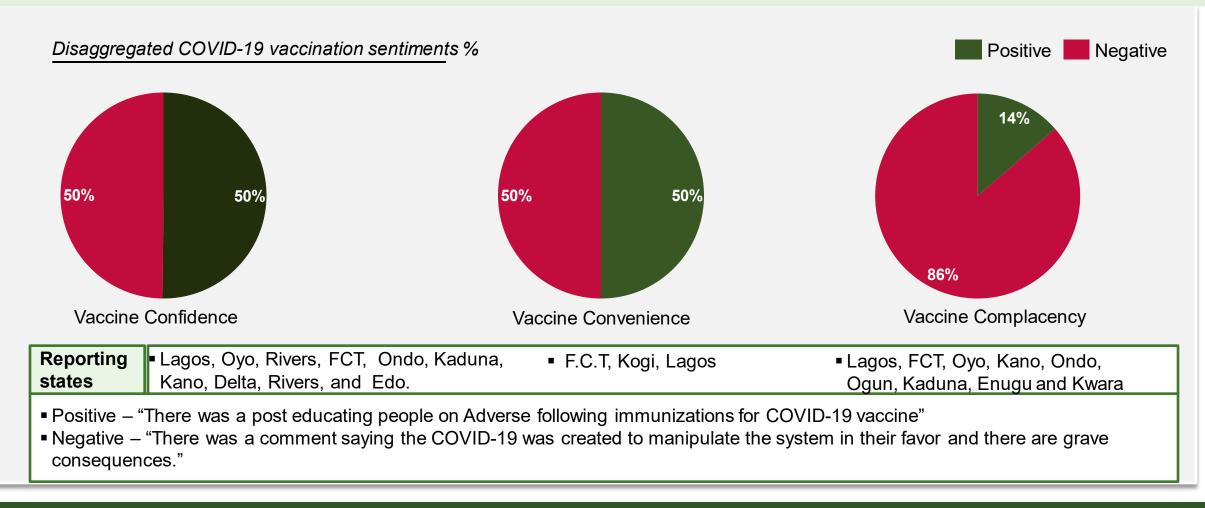


# We generated social and behavioural insights about the uptake of COVID-19 vaccines using various polling streams and tools



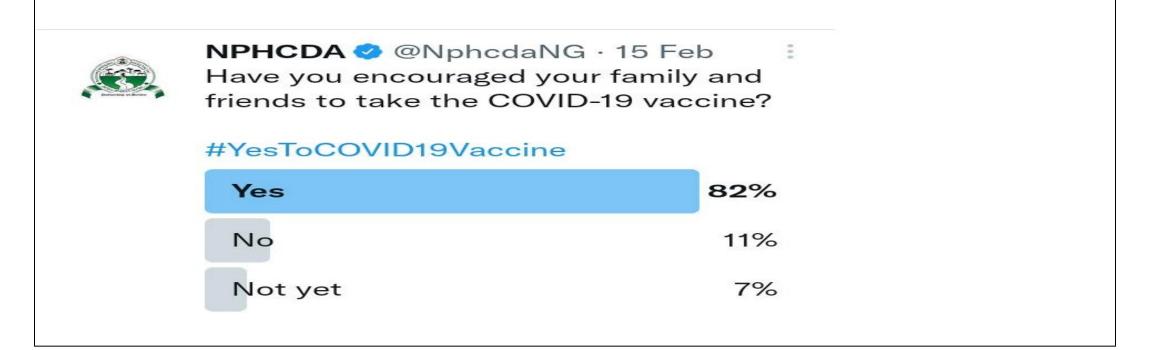
# Example of Social Listening Findings on Vaccine confidence for June 6th– June 12th, 2023

- The daily social listening reports were tailored to specific states, while the negative sentiments were prioritized for immediate action
- Findings that require immediate attention is escalated to the CRICC team and sometimes to the COVAC strategy group to proffer appropriate solutions



#### **Example of our Social Media Poll across Platforms**

- > One (1) Poll conducted weekly
- Response collated across platforms
- > Analysis of poll results is shared with the CRICC team for necessary actions



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Vaccine Hesitancy/ Resilience during COVID-19 pandemic: Nigeria Experience

Where we are on COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout and Routine Immunization

Challenges and Observed Causes for Hesitancy / Resilience during the COVID-19 Pandemic

What We Have Done to Promote & Sustain Vaccine Demand for COVID-19 and Restore Routine Immunization

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## Several Lessons have been learnt in the course of the COVID-19 Response in Nigeria (1/2)

- Particularly for primary health care, we have learnt that resources are not enough yet to achieve universal health care and the pandemic exposed those gaps. Our health system needs to be better prepared in terms of resources (human, materials and financial) needed for an emergency response plan
- Government ownership, readiness and community participation, at all levels (national and sub-national) is critical to detect, mitigate and respond to any pandemic
- Availability of a functional coordination structure for immunization was helpful as it was immediately expanded to become the COVID-19 TWG and also Strategy Group
- Service Providers (health workers) are the frontline in routine immunization service delivery. Their knowledge, skills, attitude, acceptance and practice to service delivery can increase uptake of routine immunization
- Active social media presence responding to enquiries and debunking rumors and using infodemics have also contributed to an improvement in the vaccine update

## Several Lessons have been learnt in the course of the COVID-19 Response in Nigeria (2/2)

- Religious and community leaders are gatekeepers at the community level. They can support this course by sensitizing their subjects to bring their children for immunization. Improved contact with persons through community engagements, buy-in from traditional and religious leaders has contributed to an improvement in vaccine uptake
- The expansion of vaccination to more vaccination sites, aggressive demand generation effort, integration of COVID 19 vaccination, vaccsite finder app and validation app contributed to increased access and uptake of COVID 19 vaccination and strengthen overall health systems in Nigeria
- Close monitoring and active supportive supervision has also boosted accountability. Supervisors are deployed using data and to areas with low coverage. They are monitored real time (GTS & ODK) from the National operation room to ensure work is done and issues resolved timely
- The introduction of the Electronic Management of Immunization Data (EMID) has contributed to an improvement in timely the of reporting, intervention and validation of persons that have been vaccinated and tracking/follow up of persons that are yet to return for their second or booster doses
- Development partners have been very helpful through the provision of technical and financial support for routine immunization service delivery, COVID-19 vaccine rollout, conduct of non-polio SIAs and outbreak responses etc. CSOs and Professional Associations and Bodies have also been of help in implementing

### **Outline:**

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The Agency working with partners will take the following priority actions to improve on COVID-19 vaccine uptake and RI coverage

- Provide support for coordination at State/LGA levels through the state Ministry of Health/State Primary Health Care Boards and deployment of State facilitators for more supervision to the LGAs and health facilities
- Sustain mobilization for the required additional resources (human, vaccine distribution, logistics etc) for the full implementation of the Optimized SCALES 2.0 strategy and Launch of the SCALES 3.0 Strategy
- Sustain support to the states/LGAs for social mobilization activities through engagement and dialogues with religious/political/traditional leaders and special groups/associations, TV/Radio programs and jingles, town criers; and engagement of mobile operators for SMS reminders and phone calls

# The Agency working with partners will take the following priority actions to improve on COVID-19 vaccine uptake and RI coverage

- Support the states/LGAs to ensure integration of PHC services and sustain other PHC services delivery in all the health facilities
- Provision for incentives/rewards to best performing states/LGAs/teams/individuals; and sanctions where applicable
- Leverage upcoming SIAs, OBR rounds and Hajj to boost COVID-19 vaccination
- Continue reminder phone calls and messaging to reduce dropout rates

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Where we are on COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout and Routine

#### Conclusions

- I wish to sincerely appreciate the organizers of this training for the opportunity to share the Nigeria experiences on COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and how the country have worked to promote vaccine demand since the pandemic to get more people immunized and restore routine immunization
- Let's ALL use the opportunity of the available resources for the COVID-19 pandemic response to strengthen the health systems and ensure integration of PHC services for optimal performances





# Thank You

NPHCDA – National Primary Health Care Development Agency





	Findings and why it is concerning	Recommendations
1 Vaccine complacency	<ul> <li>There was a comment encouraging people to take the COVID-19 vaccine and observe all COVID-19 protocols Someone made a post saying that those who have been vaccinated should fast and pray because of the possible side effect that may occur. This post suggests to those who see it that there may be issues with the vaccine and might make them apprehensive</li> <li>A comment was made on the lack of improvement in the health sector with the dwindling effect of COVID-19. This shows that people are not aware there's still COVID-19 in Nigeria</li> <li>Someone made a post that they were extorted last month after getting the COVID-19 vaccine in the General hospital</li> <li>Someone mentioned that he was mandated to take the vaccine before getting a job. This shows that hiring companies can contribute to the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine by mandating employees be vaccinated</li> <li>There was a comment from someone saying that the COVID-19 Sensitization jingle on the MTN caller tune was not necessary as the COVID-19 era is over. This shows that people are not fully aware that the COVID-19 disease is still rampant.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Posts on the importance of taking the vaccines, and the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines previously developed by the NPHCDA should be shared and reposted across all social media platforms</li> <li>Posts educating people on the presence of COVID-19 and the need to practice safe and precautionary measures should be reposted across all social media platforms.</li> <li>Disciplinary measures should be put in place by the NPHCDA to curb fraudulent activities on COVID-19 vaccination.</li> <li>Hiring Companies can help increase the uptake of the vaccine by ensuring all employees are vaccinated.</li> </ul>

Report June 6th– June 12th, 2023





STREET DURING	Findings and why it is concerning	Recommendations
2 Vaccine confidence	<ul> <li>There was a post informing people on the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine for pregnant women after consultations with their doctors. Posts like this can drive vaccination uptake and clear misconceptions that pregnant women shouldn't take the vaccine</li> <li>Someone mentioned they experienced swollen arm, headache, cold, and catarrh after taking the booster dose. This shows the prevalence of AEFI and the lack of knowledge to handle it</li> <li>There was a comment saying the Pfizer second dose made them sick. This shows low awareness of AEFIA</li> <li>Someone commented asking if there's still Coronavirus in Nigeria. This shows there's low information on the Coronavirus.</li> <li>There was a post on the need to encourage all to get vaccinated.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Informative posts on the safety and efficacy COVID-19 vaccine for pregnant women should be shared and reposted by the NPHCDA continuously across all social media platforms</li> <li>Developed posts, FAQs on the possible AEFIs should be shared continuously</li> <li>Posts educating the public on Corona virus and its health implications should be reshared across all social media platforms.</li> <li>Posts encouraging the public on the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine should be reposted across all social media platforms.</li> </ul>

Report for June 6th– June 12th, 2023





	Findings and why it is concerning	Recommendations
3 Vaccine convenience	<ul> <li>There was a comment on the poor storage and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine. This could discourage people from going to get vaccinated</li> <li>There was a post saying "When I saw the needle, my arm started paining me from the last shot if one can take the COVID-19 vaccine in Ebonyi after flying from Lagos to Asaba". This indicates that the availability of the vaccine at different locations enables people to get vaccinated where it is convenient for them</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>The NPHCDA should enforce rules and regulations to ensure the proper storage of vaccines and adequate distribution of the COVID- 19 vaccines to increase uptake</li> <li>Posts educating people on COVID- 19 AEFIs should be reshared across all social media platforms</li> <li>COVID-19 vaccines should be readily available at health facilities in the country</li> </ul>

Report for June 6th– June 12th, 2023