

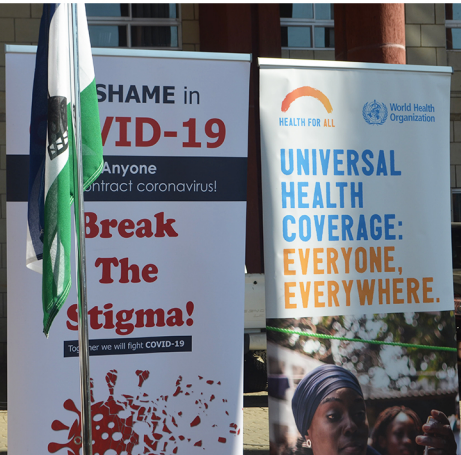


World Health
Organization

Lesotho

NEWSLETTER

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1st Floor UN House, P.O. Box 254, Maseru, 100



+266(0)22 38 21 22

NATIONAL ACTION TOWARDS A CERVICAL CANCER FREE GENERATION

With the aim to eliminate cervical cancer, Lesotho reintroduced the vaccination against Human Papillomavirus (HPV) through a national launch on the 25th April 2022. The event, graced by Her Majesty, Queen 'Masenate Seiso was organized by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.

Her Majesty the Queen indicated that cervical cancer is globally the fourth most widespread cancer among women. The Low and Middle-income countries bare the brand of the disease and Lesotho is no exception according to WHO, "We are equally hard hit by this disease" Her Majesty said.

500 women were diagnosed with cervical cancer and 346 of them died from the disease, this is an indication that cervical cancer is common among the Basotho women and appealed that young girl be assisted to access HPV vaccine.

Her Majesty further encouraged health workers to deploy best practices, especially those learned from the implementation of HIV programs in this campaign so that every village can be reached using the already existing structures, "We need to live up to our commitments as a country. In 2020, we joined the rest of the world and committed to ensuring that; 90% of girls will be fully vaccinated against HPV by the age of fifteen years; 70% of women aged between 35 and 45 will be screened for cervical cancer and; 90% of women identified with cervical cancer will receive appropriate treatment" she concluded.

The Minister of Education, Mrs. 'Mamookho Phiri, pledged the support of the Ministry of education to this campaign by offering that the schools can be used as vaccination points. The Minister also thanked Her Majesty for her commitment to ensuring that children in Lesotho are safe from cervical cancer.



Her Majesty, Queen 'Masenate Seiso

WHO Representative, Dr Richard Banda said there is now evidence that a single dose of HPV vaccine provides life-long protection against HPV infection and consequently, cervical cancer. He said the evidence is a major step towards reaching the WHO Global Strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer. "Based on this evidence, I encourage the government to use a one dose schedule."

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Cervical cancer elimination is an essential component of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) commitment to leave no one behind, tackle inequities and uphold the right of women and adolescent girls to health throughout their lives.

In 2009, Lesotho introduced the HPV Vaccine for girls aged between 9 to 14 years with the aim to combat cervical cancer in the country. However, the initiative was never sustained due to high cost of the vaccine.



Traditional dance performance at the HPV National Launch

MINISTRY OF HEALTH LEADERSHIP EMPOWERED

Effective leadership by healthcare professionals is vital in healthcare settings. The disruption caused by the most recent health crisis shows that there is a worldwide need for leadership training and capacity building among health leaders and managers. Lesotho held a high level Pathway to Leadership for Health Transformation workshop, a leadership training and strategic support to **senior leaders in the health sector to build the necessary leadership and management competencies to achieve universal health coverage and to effectively address the rapidly changing pandemic.**

"This program imparts knowledge on how to apply systems thinking, emotional intelligence and appreciative leadership to achieve a stronger and resilient health system" said Dr. Banda, the WHO representative.



Dr Matshediso Moeti, WHO Regional Director welcome speech

Acting Minister of Health, Mollohi Maliehe applauded the initiative saying that this would shape the ministry and drive it to succeed in the new normal, now and in the future. The Director General Health Services, Dr. Nyane Letsie acknowledged the support saying, "It is a very important training that comes after many storms especially the COVID-19 pandemic. This training will help improve the **standards of leadership and service delivery in the country**". Lesotho is the third country after Ghana and Niger to have this training.



Dr Richard Banda (WHO), Dr Melino Nloyizigye (PIH) & Dr Libetso Mochochalo (District Medical Officer Berea)

A MEMORIAL FOR THE LATE DR PAUL FARMER

Health partners in the country held a memorial service for Dr Paul Farmer, founder of Partners in Health (PIH) who passed on earlier this year. In his remarks, Dr. Richard Banda, WHO representative said the health sector had lost an important person who was set to advance health to the most vulnerable. "His mission to provide healthcare for people living in poverty is well-grounded in the principle of **Universal Health Coverage, for this, we are grateful**".



Dr Banda

OPTIMIZING SCHOOLS FOR COVID-19 VACCINE UPTAKE

After two years of responding to COVID-19 pandemic, the introduction of vaccines has shown the light into a better future, a better future for the economy, social life and academic life in the country. Education was disrupted by the pandemic with schools having to close for over a year. Even though online learning was introduced, it was a struggle for many students and teachers.

The Ministry of Education in Lesotho is directing its effort to ensure that every student receives high-quality education, while working to safeguard the health, safety, and well-being of students, families, teachers, and staff. The education ministry is working with the Ministry of Health to ensure that schools and teachers get involved in the roll-out of vaccination initiative. This gives a good opportunity to address vaccine hesitancy and promote uptake by teachers, students and the entire community, all of which could help the country reach its targets.



Nurse Tsita giving an orientation to the school board

Tsita Maqatsa, a nurse and trainer, said “it dawned on us that people wanted to receive education for them to make informed decisions”. She further said vaccine uptake has increased significantly after introducing this initiative supported by the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) project in partnership with Lesotho Red Cross.

The project focuses on engaging the private sector and non-state actors in strengthening equitable access to relevant COVID-19 response interventions. The introduction of the COVID-19 vaccines restores hope for full-time schooling.



Students holding SDG cards

Mathabiso Motsoeneng, is a member of the Kolojane primary school board who received orientation on COVID-19 and vaccines as part of improving community engagement and vaccine demand creation. “We learned about how vaccines work and now that we are knowledgeable we will pass that on to our communities and children”.

Thabiso Motsoeneng, Mathabiso’s 14-year-old son, is among the first beneficiaries who received the COVID-19 vaccine. He has only started his secondary school, but does not stop to express his love for science. “I have been reading a lot of articles online about the pandemic and the discovery of the vaccine was the best news for me” he says.

WHO EVALUATES THE COUNTRY COOPERATION STRATEGY

In order to address health related challenges and to meet the population's growing demand for quality healthcare and the changing health needs of the population, the country office has evaluated its Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) in preparation for the new strategy. The Strategy provides a roadmap for WHO support to the **Government**. As key counterparts the Ministry of Health and partners in the health sector participated in the evaluation of the 2014 to 2019 CCS document. The overall objective of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of WHO's work in response to country's health needs and strategic priorities in **alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals** and General Programme of Work (GPW-13).



COVID-19 SUPPORT FROM SADC AND AfDB



SADC & AfDB mission with WHO team

As part of effort to provide appropriate solutions to respond to COVID-19 pandemic, The African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) partnered with WHO Lesotho to supply biomedical equipment, diagnostics supplies and Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) to the Lesotho Ministry of Health.

The equipment which valued over \$500,000, included 800 ventilator accessories and parts, 20 oxygen concentrators, 80 humidifier bottles with tubes, 600 Bioar RT-PCR automated extraction kits and over 80,000 PPEs.

The **Country Office** received a team of public health specialist from SADC for an in-country mission to ascertain the level of impact of the project.



Dr Banda handing over biomedical equipment to Minister of Health, Semano Selstrate



A multidisciplinary team of experts from WHO Afro, and the COVID-19 Genomic Sequencing Laboratory Network, in Lesotho on a mission to assess the country's readiness to begin implementing pathogen genomic surveillance.



Capacity building of the National & District RCCE teams on how to develop community feedback mechanisms for effective #COVID19 response.

Training of Trainers workshop on the updated National Family Planning Guidelines based on new WHO recommendations.



Improving quality of healthcare for children

The In an effort to scale-up child health and Integrated Management of Childhood illness (IMCI), the Ministry of health facilitated a Training of Trainers (TOT) on how to use the IMCI Computerized Adaptation and Training Tool (ICATT) for health workers. ICATT is an innovative software application to support the implementation of the WHO/UNICEF strategy on the. The tool enables the adaptations of **IMCI guidelines at national and sub-national levels, and to develop ICATT-based training courses that fit into various training approaches.** This tool will be useful in improving quality of health for children in the country.



Private Sector and Non-state Actors ENGAGEMENT

Engagment of Private sector and Non-state Actors for the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT-A)

Represented: **Christian Health Associations of Lesotho(CHAL), World Vision Lesotho, Lesotho Red Cross and Global health Access Initiative (GHA).**

Lesotho establishes District GBV Multi-sectoral Technical Working Groups

The Ministry of health Gender Based Violence multisectoral Technical Working Group hopes to achieve effective and efficient referral of survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence. This is a joint effort between the Ministries of Health, Police and Social Development.



VACCINATION STATUS



DOSE RECEIVED: 1 874 890

TOTAL DOSES ADMINISTERED: 1 021 112

FULLY VACCINATED : 839 282 (41% entire population)

18 + year olds 772 903 (58%) 12-17 year old cohort: 66 379 (28%)

RECEIVED AT LEAST ONE DOSE: 895 271 (56%)

BOOSTER SHOTS: 21 677

(30 May 2022)

COUNTRY COVID STATUS

POSITIVE CASE

RECOVERIES

DEATHS

33465

24810

698

Epi-week 20

DOCUMENTS DEVELOPED

- The Lesotho COVID-19 Oxygen Capacity Estimation,
- COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan,
- COVID-19 Surveillance guidance,
- **Lesotho COVID-19 Resurgence Plan,**
- Report on the Facilities' Assessment for COVID-19 preparedness and surge capacity in Lesotho.

- COVID-19 Biomedical Equipment Assessment Report
- Data Quality Improvement
- Lesotho Quarantine Guidelines
- COVID-19 Intra-Action Review
- COVID-19 Vaccine Intra-Action Review
- National Vaccination Deployment Plan

DONOR APPRECIATION



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We
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