

HPV Vaccination: Paving the path toward Cervical Cancer elimination in Africa



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World Health
Organization

African Region

Cervical Cancer: An African priority

Cervical cancer is the 4th most common cancer in women yet is preventable. Annually, it claims 300,000+ lives globally. Africa bears the highest burden with 77,000 deaths. 19 out of 20 of the hardest-hit countries are in Africa. The disease disproportionately impacts underprivileged and HIV-positive women.



HPV Vaccine introduction status in WHO/AFRO region

26 WHO AFRO COUNTRIES HAVE INTRODUCED HPV VACCINE

with disparities observed in Central and West Africa

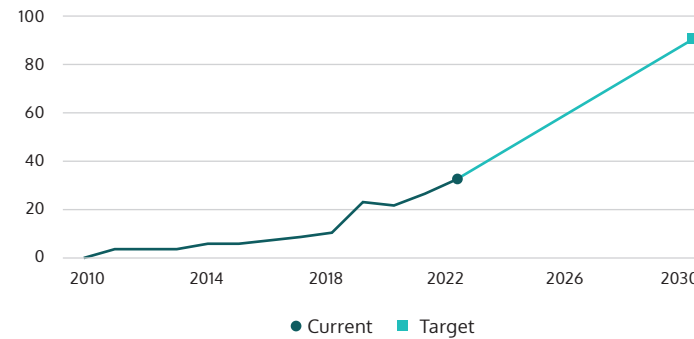
2/5TH OF COUNTRIES THAT PROVIDE HPV VACCINES

have first dose coverage above 70%

The roadblocks to achieving high HPV Vaccination coverage

- Limited awareness and knowledge about cervical cancer prevention.
- High vaccine costs and limited supply affecting accessibility and affordability.
- Cultural beliefs and social stigma hindering vaccination uptake.
- Health system weaknesses and challenges in reaching diverse populations.
- Vaccine hesitancy due to misinformation and mistrust.

The WHO's 90-70-90 goal aims for 90% HPV vaccination, 70% screening, and 90% treatment by 2030.



WHO/AFRO trends HPV first dose vaccine coverage (%)

■ OUR GOAL
90%

● WHERE WE ARE
33%

HPV VACCINATION IN AFRICA: PROGRESS MADE, MORE TO ACHIEVE

- 1** Advocating for a more substantial commitment to prioritize cervical cancer control.
- 2** Optimising resources by adopting innovations like Single-Dose and integrating with other health programs.
- 3** Addressing health disparities to ensure equitable and affordable HPV vaccine access.
- 4** Building multisectoral partnerships, particularly with communities, for a more efficient healthcare system.
- 5** Strengthening health systems for the entire life course, particularly for adolescents and adults.

Country highlights

Nations, with the backing of partners like WHO, UNICEF, and Gavi, are innovating policies and fortifying health systems to reach adolescents with this life-saving vaccine.

“In unwavering commitment to the Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative's 2030 vision, we pledge a brighter, healthier tomorrow for Africa's women and girls. Every milestone in HPV vaccination is a step closer to an Africa where cervical cancer is a relic of the past — a promise we uphold with resolute determination.”

DR. MATSHIDISO MOETI, Regional Director, WHO Africa

ESWATINI



Pupils from local schools participating in the HPV campaign.

Addressing the pressing challenge of cervical cancer, Eswatini has made a commendable stride by introducing the HPV vaccine for girls aged 9-14. Notably, the nation has taken upon itself the entire financial burden of vaccine procurement, signaling a clear commitment to its citizens' health. The campaign, championed by Her Royal Highness Inkhosikati LaMatsebula, is a testament to Eswatini's broader health strategy. Along with a proactive approach to prevention, the country has invested in

enhancing local healthcare infrastructure. The Phalala Fund is a pioneering initiative, expanding access to specialized cancer treatments domestically and internationally. Furthermore, the HPV vaccine isn't just a solitary endeavor. It is part of a grander vision, serving as a foundation for integrating and emphasizing adolescent health, ensuring a comprehensive healthcare approach for Eswatini's younger generation.

CAMEROON



Community members unite, improving HPV vaccination acceptance through open dialogues and dedicated outreach.

Facing the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, Cameroon took a bold step by introducing the HPV vaccine to girls aged 9. Amid skepticism and misinformation about the vaccine's long-term health and fertility effects, the country utilized digital platforms, community dialogues, high-level advocacy, and the engagement of educational and community leaders to foster understanding and trust. In January 2023, the program expanded to a single-dose strategy and began vaccinating boys to increase overall vaccine acceptance. Personal narratives, like Madame Youssouf's heart-wrenching loss of her sister to cervical cancer and Yvan's positive vaccination journey, further solidified program support. Cameroon's success underscores the importance of community involvement and communication awareness in health initiatives.



Official launch of the introduction of vaccination against HPV. Cape Verde, 2021

In a progressive fight against cervical cancer, Cabo Verde has exemplified adaptability and ambition in its HPV vaccination initiatives. By 2022, Cabo Verde embraced the one-dose HPV vaccination and expanded its target age to 10-14-year-old girls and boys. Furthering their mission in 2023, the nation broadened this age range to 26 years. This audacious

extension, driven by a desire to amplify impact, was accompanied by a remarkable surge in vaccination coverage. Underscoring their dedication, Cabo Verde's approach highlights the power of flexible policymaking and robust political support in catalyzing transformative public health outcomes.



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