



Strengthening Supply Chain Leaders through the GAVI-IFPW partnership in Nigeria

(Source: An article written by Martins Ifijeh for "This Day Live" News and George Bray, IFPW)

The supply chain for immunization comprises all individuals, activities, structure, resources and planning relevant for facilitating effective and safe delivery of vaccines to those that need them. In developing countries, such as Nigeria, supply chain capacity is inadequate to meet the ever-increasing population needs.

To improve immunization coverage and subsequently reduce infant and child mortality, a strong supply chain system is essential, requiring advanced technology to be applied to all aspects; from planning to cold chain equipment to data management and distribution of commodities. At the heart of all levels and aspects of the health system is the need for supply chain leadership with individuals who hold possess the skills and competence to properly maneuver through present and future challenges.

In a bid to strengthen the supply chain leadership in governments, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (GAVI), in collaboration with United Parcel Services (UPS) (a private global logistics company), developed the Strategic Training Executive Program (STEP). GAVI has partnered with the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Wholesalers (IFPW) (an international trade association with pharmaceutical manufacturers and wholesaler members) to deliver this training. IFPW members (such as GSK, Merck, Imperial Health Sciences, and Eurapharma) provide international facilitators and mentors to ensure that class participants walk away with a truly impactful experience.

Regional Director, Africa Resource Centre for Supply Chain (ARC), Azuka Okeke, explained that STEP presents a unique opportunity for countries like Nigeria to develop supply chain leaders who will advance transformation in effective and efficient immunization delivery. "One of the key areas of focus of the STEP training in Nigeria is building strong leadership at national and state Government levels that will drive ownership of health programs beyond Vaccines Management. ARC led the adoption of the STEP by the Nigerian government by providing insight on the relevance of the program to the decision-makers in immunization," Azuka explained.

Supply Chain Consultant for GAVI, Magloire Achidi, explained that GAVI fully recognizes the critical importance of investing in skill development for global supply chain leaders. As a result, GAVI partnered with IFPW to provide health supply chain management professionals and decision makers in various countries across the globe with leadership and management skills at all levels of the health system to enable them to overcome existing and emerging challenges.

The STEP training, which is based on an academic framework of professional competencies for supply chain managers, combines traditional learning with mentoring and on-the-job training, thereby assisting supply chain leaders to develop their problem-solving skills and foster effective team-building approaches.

"Leaders bring people together to tap their collective wisdom. When doing so, you must be prepared for differences of opinion and conflict.

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Around the Globe...

♦ The **Fight the Fakes** campaign, along with its 37 partner organizations, kicked off its first Fight the Fakes Week December 3rd through December 9th, elevating the campaign's focus on raising awareness of fake medicines and their negative impact on society around the globe. A number of activities, including lectures, exhibits, town hall style events and debates by organizations such as the **UCL School of Pharmacy**, **The International Alliance of Patient Organizations** and the **World Heart Federation**, also helped to highlight the campaign's message. IFPW is a strong supporter of the Fight the Fakes campaign and continues to serve as Secretariat through the end of 2019.

▪ Answering the call by Germany's *Angela Merkel*, Ghana's President *Nana Akufo-Addo* and Norway's Prime Minister *Erna Solberg*, 11 major health organizations signed a commitment to find new ways of working together to accelerate progress towards the **United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** at the close of the World Health Summit in Berlin. The commitment received overwhelming support from UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and was presented at the Berlin meeting by WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

♦ United Arab Emirates-based **Al Ansari Exchange** donated US\$1 million to **GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance** in support of the GAVI's mission to create equal and improved to new and under-utilized vaccines for children living in the world's poorest countries. Separately, GAVI also announced a transformational partnership with **Mastercard** to ensure that more children from poverty-stricken countries will be provided with an official birth and immunization record through the leveraging of Mastercard's expertise and technology. The program will strengthen the efficiency and reach of health services in developing countries.

▪ The **Cardinal Health Foundation** has pledged a US\$530,000 grant that will provide the **Ohio Hospital Association** funds to identify and deploy best opioid prescribing practices for pain management among OHA member hospitals across the state. The initiative will engage hospitals with a first of its kind statewide collaboration to gather and share benchmark data around the opioid prescribing practices, based on physician specialty, patient diagnosis and other variables. To date, 62 hospitals have committed to participation in the OHA initiative.

(Sources: *AllAfrica.com*, *BioSpace*, *Drug Store News*, *Health Policy Watch*, *New Zealand Sunday Times*, and *Press Releases*)

Becoming an effective negotiator can reveal new opportunities, sharpen your focus, satisfy your needs and improve your relationships" George Bray, Vice President, Programs and Initiatives, IFPW Foundation explained.

Kevin Etter, retired UPS executive and one of the developers of the STEP program, explained that the importance of leadership rings within every industry with leadership seen as a critical driver for success.

"Leadership is getting the work done through people. A leader sets direction, motivates and builds an inspiring vision, as well as creates something new. Leaders inspire others, possess decision-making

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Strengthening Supply (cont.)...

capabilities, and should be focused on the vision to inspire others to the overall goal” Etter stated.

Participants at the GAVI STEP training echoed how this training has reshaped their thinking, and how strategic and efficient they will be in discharging their duties as supply chain leaders in Nigeria.

“The GAVI STEP training has exposed us to what leadership is all about right from team building, success and sustaining success. I have gained useful insights on how to become more strategic, efficient and accountable for my actions in my organization” Deputy Director, NPHCDA, Pharm Chinenye Ekpemauzor, has said.

Nigeria State Immunization Officer, Dr Samuel Jiya, explained that “One measure of one’s success is the degree to which one builds up others who work with that individual. Team effectiveness happens when there is a clear and compelling purpose, skills that are complementary & mutual accountability. Everybody in a team is important, and that is why we must sustain team relationships.”

It is noteworthy that the African Resource Center’s (ARC) advocacy for the adoption of the STEP program, and support for GAVI and IFPW to deliver the one-week classroom training, support the STEP Mentorship phase by identifying and engaging private sector mentors for the public health leaders has been critical to the success of STEP in Nigeria.

Ten Threats to Global Health in 2019

(Source: A WHO article by Samuel Aranda)

The world continues to face seemingly insurmountable health challenges on many fronts, from vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles and diphtheria to increasing reports of drug-resistant pathogens, growing rates of obesity and physical inactivity, and the impact of environmental pollutions, climate change and humanitarian crises.

To address these threats, the World Health Organization developed a new 5-year strategic plan, “*The 13th General Programme of Work*” focuses on a triple billion target - ensuring one billion more people benefit from access to universal health coverage, one billion more people are protected from health emergencies, and one billion more people enjoy improved health and well-being. The top ten issues that will demand much of the attention from WHO and its health partners in 2019 are as follows:

Air pollution and climate change. It is estimated that nine out of ten people breathe polluted air every single day, making it the greatest environmental risk to health. Microscopic pollutants cause respiratory and circulatory damage to the heart, lungs and brain, and kill 7 million people prematurely every year from diseases such as cancer, stroke, heart disease and lung disease. Approximately 90% of these deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries. The burning of fossil fuels is also a major contributor to climate change, and subsequently a danger to human health worldwide.

Non-communicable diseases. Diabetes, cancer and heart disease, are collectively responsible for over 70% of all deaths worldwide, totalling approximately 41 million people. Many of these deaths occur prematurely and are driven by five major risk factors – tobacco use, physical inactivity, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diets, and air pollution.

Global Influenza Pandemic. The world will face another influenza pandemic at an undetermined point in the future. Global defenses are only as strong as its weakest link in any country’s health emergency preparedness. Each year, WHO recommends which strains should be included in the flu vaccine to protect people from the seasonal flu. When a new strain develops, WHO has a unique partnership with all the major players to ensure effective and equitable access to diagnostics, vaccines

and anti-virals, particularly in developing countries.

Fragile and Vulnerable Settings. Twenty-two percent of the world’s populations reside in areas where protracted crises (including challenges such as famine, drought, conflict and population displacement) and weak health services leave them without access to basic care. These fragile settings exist in almost all regions of the world, locations where half of the key targets in the sustainable development goals remain unmet. WHO will continue to work with these countries to strengthen their health systems so that they are better prepared for such outbreaks and catastrophes.

Anti-microbial Resistance. Antimicrobial resistance – the ability of bacteria, parasites, viruses and fungi to resist medicines – remains a constant threat that would literally send us back to a time when it was difficult, if not impossible, to treat infections such as pneumonia, tuberculosis (TB), gonorrhoea and salmonellosis. Resistance to TB has become a formidable obstacle, causing an estimated ten million people to fall ill every year, and 1.6 million to die from the disease. In 2016, 600,000 cases of TB were resistant to rifampicin – once considered the most effective first-line drug.

Ebola and Other High-threat Pathogens. In 2018, the Democratic Republic of Congo experienced two separate Ebola outbreaks, both of which spread to cities with populations of more than one million. A critical fact is that what happens in rural outbreaks of these pathogens in the past does not always apply to densely-populated urban areas or conflict areas. WHO’s R&D blueprint identifies diseases and pathogens that have potential to cause a public health emergency but lack effective treatments or vaccines. The watchlist includes (but is not limited to) Ebola and other hemorrhagic fevers, Zika, Nipah, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Weak Primary Health Care. Primary health care is often the first point of contact for individuals. In a perfect world, this should provide comprehensive, affordable, community-based care throughout life. Adversely, many countries do not have adequate primary health care facilities. In October of 2018, WHO co-hosted a major global conference in Astana, Kazakhstan, at which all countries pledged to renew their commitment to primary health care made in the Alma-Ata Declaration in 1978.

Vaccine Hesitancy. Reluctance or refusal to vaccinate despite availability of vaccines threatens to reverse progress made in tackling preventable diseases. Vaccination is one of the easiest and most cost-effective way of avoiding disease, and currently prevents 2-3 million deaths a year. An additional 1.5 million deaths could be avoided if global coverage of vaccinations improved.

Dengue. Dengue, a mosquito-borne illness that manifests in flu-like symptoms and kills up to 20% of those with the severest form of the disease has been on the rise for decades. It is estimate that 40% of the world is at risk for Dengue Fever, and currently there are approximately 390 million infections a year. WHO’s Dengue Control Strategy aims to reduce deaths by 50% by 2020.

HIV. Enormous progress has been made in the fight against HIV (in terms of testing, antivirals and preventative measures) but the battle continues with nearly a million people dying every year of HIV/AIDS. To date, more than 70 million people have been infected and approximately 35 million have died, with approximately 37 million people living with the disease. This year, WHO will work with countries to support the introduction of self-testing so that more people living with the disease can know their status and receive treatment.

For more information on the WHO’s priorities for 2019, visit <https://www.who.int/about/what-we-do/gpw-thirteen-consultation/en/>.