



STEP 2.0 Partners with Zipline to Strengthen Nigeria's Public Health Supply Chains

(Source: A Report by The Empower School of Health)

Organizations including Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, Zipline, The Africa Resource Center for Supply Chain Management, People that Deliver, and the Empower School of Health came together to create and implement the STEP 2.0 Zipline, a tailored version of the STEP program designed to strengthen multimodal supply chain management (SCM) through a systems-based approach. It emphasizes the integration of drone technology and last-mile delivery (LMD) operations into Nigeria's public health supply chains. The cohort is a collaboration of supply chain and cold



chain officers, logistics officers, chief pharmacists, and directors from three state-level institutions: Ministries of Health, State Planning Commissions, and Primary Health Care Agencies and Boards; across Bayelsa, Cross River, and Kaduna states.

The objective of the deployment is to ensure that participants learn how to effectively manage a multimodal supply chain that includes drone-based delivery (Zipline) alongside traditional transport. The goal is to accelerate the integration of Zipline's services into public health systems and improve system-wide efficiencies, such as stock availability, cost savings, treatment coverage, and patient access. At the end of the program, participants are able to make better data-driven decisions, understand system-wide impacts of logistics choices, and implement more uniform and strategic use of Zipline services.

The in-person workshop was held at The Providence Hotel, Lagos, Nigeria from 8 to 12 September 2025, and gathered participants, coaches, and facilitators, who all worked towards achieving the program's goal and objectives through the delivery of a customized and contextualized curricula. The program is well on its way to achieving its objectives, as evidenced by the feedback received from Caitlin Burton, Chief Executive Officer, Zipline Africa, on the effect of the workshop on-ground.

Next Steps and Expected Timeline. The next phase - implementation
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Around the Globe...

♦ The **U.S. State Department** has approved a grant of up to US\$150 million over three years to **Zipline**, the American robotics and autonomous drone delivery company, to significantly expand its health care operations in five African countries. This grant is one of the first major new U.S. global health funding announcements since the Trump administration's foreign aid funding freeze, dismantling of USAID, and release of its new "America First" global health strategy. State Department officials have portrayed the partnership with Zipline as an early example of the new direction of U.S. global health assistance.

♦ **Gavi the Vaccine Alliance** and the **World Bank Group** are expanding their partnership to strengthen immunization and primary healthcare systems and to advance regional vaccine manufacturing in Africa, with plans to mobilize at least US\$2 billion over the next five years in alignment with country needs. World Bank President *Ajay Banga* emphasized that this collaboration supports the goal of delivering quality health services to 1.5 billion people by 2030 while also creating jobs, driving economic growth, and enhancing long-term health sector resilience. To help low- and lower-middle-income countries transition to sustainable financing, the partners will use

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April 16, 2026 is the IFPW Foundation Benefit Dinner in Washington, D.C.

The IFPW Foundation 2026 Benefit Dinner will be held on the evening of April 16, 2026. The goal is to raise a total of US\$1.5 million, directly and through donor partners, for 2026-2027 to continue our work in implementing the STEP 2.0 leadership program, contribute to Fight the Fakes Alliance (FtF) mission of combatting substandard and falsified medicines, and to advance the wholesale distribution channels in the developing world.

The STEP 2.0 Leadership program focuses on development of foundational leadership skills in public health supply chain workers with the support of private-sector coaches supported by member involvement.

Expansion and focus of STEP 2.0 Leadership Program includes supply chain innovation as well as supply chain design and redesign support. Students are guided by mentors, from the private sector who are regularly volunteers from IFPW member companies, through a series of exercises and lessons culminating in a "Transformation Challenge" which includes a personalized improvement project that each participant develops and commits to implementing within their organization. This initiative ensures direct application of learned concepts, sustained engagement post-workshop, ongoing support from private sector coaches, and measurable impact on healthcare delivery.

The mission of FtF is to raise awareness of falsified and substandard medicines, and advocate for legislative and regulatory action to address the problems and challenges falsified/substandard medicines pose globally. Members and stakeholders of the FtF convene to share best practices and effective solutions. FtF also provides support to patients and consumers adversely affected by falsified and substandard medicines.

For more information on how to donate, or for tickets to the 2026 IFPW Foundation Dinner, go to <https://ifpwfoundation.org/2026Benefit.htm> or contact Christina Tucker at c.tucker@ifpwfoundation.org.

Step 2.0 (cont.)...



of individual transformational challenge projects, by participants, within their workplaces ran until the first week of December 2025. During this transformational challenge phase, there are three main types of interactions to ensure active and continuous engagement:

1. Coach-facilitator interaction and calls to provide guidance and support to coaches and monitor the team dynamics and transformational challenge implementation progress.
2. Coach-participant team calls where coaches guide and support their teams as they implement their transformational challenges.
3. Full cohort interaction and discussion forums conducted monthly where participants report on the progress of their transformational challenge implementation as a means of ensuring engagement and monitoring completion during this virtual phase.

Project staff tracked assignment submissions and provided follow-up support along with timely reminders to ensure timely submissions of updates on the fast and adaptive action plans. As well as providing any support to ensure that participants are fully supported in their transformational challenge implementation, an example of this is the creation of an advocacy brief that highlights the work done and transformational challenges selected during the workshop, so participants can use the document to garner support from supervisors.

After successful completion of certification requirements and



eligibility for graduation, as certified by coaches, successful participants attend a virtual graduation ceremony.

IFPW Foundation, in collaboration with Pfizer, provided a grant to Gavi in support of this implementation, and also supplied several of the private sector coaches.

Around the Globe (cont.)...

innovative tools such as blended finance, buydowns, and guarantees, and coordinate on improving public financial management.

◆ The **Fight the Fakes Alliance's** "Fight the Fakes Week" culminated with a very informative webinar panel session on fake and substandard GLP-1's. The panel, *Deadly Deceptions: The Rise of Falsified Weight Loss Medications and How to Fight Back*, featured experts in the field

including *Justin Presant*, AVP, Assistant General Counsel, Special Investigations for **Eli Lilly**, *Anne Devaud*, Global Product Security Head for **Novo Nordisk**, *Oksana Pyzik*, Associate Professor, **UCL School of Pharmacy** and Academic Chair of Fight the Fakes Alliance, *Justin Macy*, Director of Innovation, **National Association of Boards of Pharmacy**, and was moderated by *Shabbir Imber Safdar*, Executive Director, **Partnership for Safe Medicines**.

◆ The **World Health Organizations (WHO)** has issued its first guideline on using GLP-1 therapies to treat obesity, recognizing it as a chronic and relapsing disease affecting over one billion people and contributing to 3.7 million deaths in 2024. The new guidance builds on WHO's 2025 decision to add GLP-1 drugs to the *Essential Medicines List* for high-risk diabetes patients. The WHO now offers conditional recommendations for using these therapies as part of a comprehensive approach that includes healthy diets, physical activity, and professional support. WHO leadership emphasizes that while medication alone cannot solve the crisis, GLP-1 treatments can meaningfully help millions reduce obesity and its related harms.

◆ Cambodia's Ministry of Health has introduced the rotavirus vaccine into its *National Immunization Schedule*, a major step toward protecting infants and young children from one of the leading causes of severe diarrhea and child mortality. Rotavirus is responsible for roughly half of Cambodia's severe diarrheal cases and is a major contributor to dehydration, malnutrition, and stunting. Globally, diarrheal disease claims more than 443,000 children under five each year, with rotavirus as the most common cause. By adding this vaccine, Cambodia aims to significantly reduce childhood illness and death, particularly among children under two who are most affected.

◆ Since 2000, countries across all regions and income levels have generally expanded health service coverage and reduced financial hardship from medical costs, according to a new **WHO/World Bank** report. The *Service Coverage Index* increased from 54 to 71 between 2000 and 2023, and the share of people facing large or impoverishing out-of-pocket health expenses dropped from 34% to 26%. Despite this progress, major gaps remain including 4.6 billion people who still lack essential health services, and 2.1 billion facing financial strain when seeking care, with the poorest populations hit hardest, including 1.6 billion people pushed into or deeper into poverty due to health spending.

◆ The **Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)** renewed its call for countries in the Americas to close vaccination gaps amid a resurgence of pertussis, or whooping cough, which has been steadily increasing since 2023, according to the latest epidemiological update released yesterday. Globally, whooping cough rose sharply in 2024, reaching 977,000 cases, nearly six times the 167,407 cases reported in 2023. The Western Pacific accounted for the largest share (591,193 cases), followed by Europe (296,543 cases).

◆ The **United States** and the **Government of Uganda** signed a five-year, US\$2.3 billion bilateral health cooperation *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)* that outlines a comprehensive vision to save lives, and strengthen Uganda's health system. The MOU advances the U.S – Uganda bilateral relationship and supports Uganda to develop a resilient health system that prevents the spread of emerging and existing infectious diseases globally. Under the MOU, the U.S. plans to support priority health programs, including HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria, maternal and child health, polio eradication, global health security, human resources, disease surveillance, and emergency preparedness.

(Sources: Press Releases from The Fight the Fakes Alliance, Gavi the Vaccine Alliance, The Pan American Health Organization & The World Health Organization)