

UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Region

SBC Works!

“É tic-tac, e já está!” – COVID-19 vaccine demand generation among adolescents (12-17 years old) in Mozambique



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About SBC Works

SBC Works! shares success stories in Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) from Eastern and Southern Africa. SBC uses research and consultation to promote human rights, mobilize leadership, influence attitudes and social norms, and transform behaviours for the well-being of communities. In UNICEF, SBC is guided by the [Behavioural Drivers Model](#) (BDM)¹, the [Journey to Health and Immunization](#)², and the [Socio-Ecological Model](#) (SEM)³, which help diagnose and analyse what drives behaviour, design effective interventions targeting those drivers, and measure the achievements of such interventions in the field.

The issue

In September 2022, adolescents (12-17 years old) were included in the COVID-19 vaccination program in Mozambique. The Government of Mozambique has administered two doses of the Pfizer vaccine in schools, health facilities, and communities. However, at the time, COVID-19 vaccination was not considered a top priority among adolescents in Mozambique due to the improvement of the epidemiologic situation, the lifting of COVID-19 containment measures (the Government announced the end of the public emergency in April 2022), and the decreased media coverage of COVID-19 narratives and associated stories.

To understand the drivers and barriers to COVID-19 vaccine uptake among adolescents, UNICEF Mozambique conducted three studies based on the Behavioural and Social Drivers (BeSD) [WHO-UNICEF tool](#). The results detected that while risk perception (89%) and willingness (72%-74%) among adolescents to get the COVID-19 vaccine were relatively high, a large proportion expressed mistrust (40%-58%) on COVID-19 vaccines safety in the qualitative component of the research (SMS Biz/U-Report, N=3600; BeSD Study, N=98; PENZA Quick Survey, N=131).

Considering this challenging situation, UNICEF Mozambique supported the Ministry of Health in designing and implementing an evidence-informed COVID-19 vaccination campaign strategy to increase demand and uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine among adolescents (12-17 years old).

SBC Actions

In addition to these assessments, UNICEF Mozambique was supporting a social listening

working group to monitor on and offline rumours and misinformation around COVID-19 vaccines and response to COVID-19 prevention more broadly. Based on the evidence from assessments and social listening, the campaign had three main objectives:

- **Increase knowledge** among adolescents, parents and caregivers about the Pfizer vaccine, vaccination process, eligibility, vaccination locations and dates;
- **Increase confidence and acceptance of vaccines** by adolescents, caregivers and guardians by promoting vaccine safety and its benefits;
- **Influence social determinants** of vaccine uptake through community engagement.

Strategic approaches included:

Advocacy and Mass Media Campaign

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Health, which ensured strong coordination of the different actors through the National COVID-19 RCCE Technical Working Group, UNICEF Mozambique launched a national-level campaign across different media channels, engaging with high-level government representatives (especially from the education sector at all levels) and using images and voices of credible and influential messengers.

Informed by the research, the campaign was designed into two phases. The first phase (10 initial days) focused on COVID-19 vaccine promotion, emphasizing the main acceptability drivers and addressing questions, concerns and barriers to vaccination. The second phase (remaining 15 days) mainly shared practical information (when, where, and how to get access to the vaccine) to maximize the chances of vaccination among those who are willing to. The vaccination campaign was held mainly in schools, but also at the community level, with temporary vaccination posts, mobile brigades, and caravans of vaccination.



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1 [The Behavioural Drivers Model: A Conceptual Framework for Social and Behaviour Change Programming](#)

2 [Journey to Health and Immunization](#)

3 <https://www.unicef.org/media/135011/file/Global%20multisectoral%20operational%20framework.pdf>

Social Mobilization and Community Engagement



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UNICEF Mozambique aligned the community engagement intervention at both provincial and district levels. Mobile brigades and caravans of vaccination were used to reach to adolescents in and out of schools. UNICEF Mozambique actively mobilized youth organizations and adolescent mentors and established a pool of local social media influencers as ambassadors. Teachers, religious and community leaders, journalists, and social media influencers, were also trained on the basics of the vaccine (safety, efficacy, and potential side effects) and their role as social mobilizers. The training included how to address the most frequent questions adolescents might raise, based on the formative research conducted, and on the main rumours identified which would influence hesitancy to the vaccine among adolescents.

Rumours Management

UNICEF Mozambique was supporting a national-level social listening technical working group (TWG) which has been monitoring on and offline rumours and misinformation and tracking specific responses. Social listening reports were shared by the TWG every week to help define actions. Social media and other tools were used to answer teenagers' questions and address concerns about COVID-19 vaccination.



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UNICEF Mozambique encouraged adolescents to beware of “fake news” or rumors and to seek information from credible sources or to ask their teachers and caregivers questions. Specific references to existing helplines as credible sources for clarification and help were reinforced through tailored content and materials. A module with easy-to-understand information and frequently asked questions about COVID-19 vaccines for adolescents was also included in [Mozambique IoGT](#).

Results

With the engagement of decision-makers and key influential stakeholders, the 15-day COVID-19 vaccination campaign managed to reach almost 100% of the target group with a total of 4,790,035 adolescents vaccinated. Multiplication of key messages were disseminated through different mass media channels (TV, Radio, and community radios), reaching an average of 46% of the population⁴. Social media influencers from the established pool (referred as “Ambassadors for LIFE”) also amplified the reach of campaign messages across social media platforms. Around 200,000 people were reached by these influencers in just 2 months. Two videos launched by UNICEF (one with UNICEF National Ambassador Neyma and her son, and another with a group of school children and a teacher) had more than 2.8 million views across its 5 social networks.



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Increasing community mobilization for vaccine uptake has been achieved through the engagement of community leaders and other actors (27 teachers

4 Estimates are based on a previous assessment of a media campaign conducted in 2021 on COVID-19 prevention.

participated in the ToT on key issues related to the vaccination campaign; 9 religious leaders and 15 young media representatives from TV, radio and community radios were trained in COVID-19 prevention and COVID-19 vaccine). As an overall result, from September to November 2022, 98.4% of adolescents (12-17 years old) have been fully vaccinated with two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Lessons & way forward

- Leadership from the Ministry of Health is critical to gather support and ensure coordination among different partners.
- Close involvement and collaboration with the Ministry of Education allowed greater mobilization of adolescents in schools.
- Socio-behavioral insights were key to informing the campaign and tailoring the framing of key messages around shared values and inspirations about the vaccine for this age group.
- A joint media plan helped amplify key messages across different media channels. The engagement of social media influencers was key to raising awareness among adolescents.
- The empowerment and active engagement of youth organizations and adolescent mentors helped mobilize adolescents.
- Continuous rumor management and active response to concerns and questions helped to sustain vaccine confidence.



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