

# URBAN FRIENDLY IMMUNIZATION SERVICES ACCREDITATION INITIATIVE

## Background

Over the past several years, studies conducted in Kyrgyzstan documented facts that affect immunization service outcomes especially in the urban settings.

The Joint national-international review of the national immunization programme in Kyrgyzstan, conducted jointly by Ministry of Health, UNICEF, WHO, Gavi and CDC in 2016 indicted that health work force is a major issue at all levels – along with shortage of staff the study underlined low motivation among health workers. The review also revealed that training of health staff was insufficient. One other important finding was that dropout rates for immunization services was increasing.

Analytical review of documentation on the system of home visits in the Kyrgyz Republic, conducted in Bishkek in 2016 documented insufficient communication skills of health personnel along with lack of motivation. Home visits were considered as to provide comprehensive services not only on the health of children, but also on the social and economic conditions of the family.

The JSI report of 2018 on the technical assistance to the government of Kyrgyzstan to improve immunization service delivery for the urban poor, identified declining vaccination coverage rates and increasing dropouts. The report underlined three major risk groups not receiving vaccinations, vulnerable children (transient families, parents absent for work with a grandmother leading the family, unemployed families) being one of them. Qualitative information obtained through focus group discussions and interviews helped in better understanding of reasons behind the low immunization coverage from mothers and/or caretakers perspective. The findings from these qualitative study can be summarized as follows:

- Mothers/caretakers are less satisfied with attitudes and behavior of health workers
- Insufficient information is provided
- Being intimidated and criticized for refusals
- Health facility too far, lack of transport
- Health staff less tolerant of 'special needs' children
- Fear of side effects from vaccination
- Long waiting time
- No health services in squatter communities
- Receive little information about vaccines and vaccination
- Distrust in health workers

In 2018, MoH, Gavi and UNICEF jointly conducted two surveys: Knowledge, attitudes and practices towards immunization in Kyrgyzstan and informative study to examine reasons behind vaccine refusals, resistances and barriers. Similar points were discovered in these studies as well:

- Long queues
- Unkindly attitude on the part of health professionals
- Health facilities not having comfortable conditions
- Healthy and sick children wait in the same room

- Dissatisfaction with the information received from healthcare professionals

Long waiting time seems to be the main problem that parents faced when visiting health facilities for vaccination.

A Tailoring Immunization Programme (TIP) project commenced in Kyrgyzstan in September 2017 with the aim to identify the factors related to sub-optimal vaccination uptake among urban migrants in order to inform a long-term strategy to increase vaccination uptake and avoid future disease outbreaks. Vaccination behaviors were studied through factors related to capability-opportunity-motivation; long waiting time in health facilities and parents not being able to leave the house and having no time were highlighted.

Based on these findings with a special focus on the complaints on convenience of immunization services it can be concluded that [though not in majority] some mothers and caretakers complain on the distance of the health facility, long waiting queues as well as inconvenience of the facilities (sick and healthy children waiting in the same room, and not having places for changing nappies).

As part of the Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) project, urban friendly immunization services (UFIS) accreditation initiative was suggested to promote immunization services in urban settings.

The UFIS focuses on protecting, promoting and supporting immunization in facilities providing immunization services in urban settings. Through the UFIS initiative, immunization rates can be substantially increased and the mothers' and/or caretakers' satisfaction dramatically improved. The core purpose of the initiative is to ensure that mothers and caretakers receive timely and appropriate care during their visit to health facilities, to enable children vaccinations, which promotes their health.

The objective of the initiative is to help motivate facilities providing immunization services to implement 10 steps<sup>1</sup> to urban friendly immunization services. The 10-steps will summarize a package of approaches, applications and procedures that facilities providing immunization services in urban settings should implement to support 'urban friendly' immunization.

In order to establish criteria (10-steps) related to urban friendly immunization services, a qualitative survey is planned to obtain views of both health professionals and parents to shape the criteria.

### **Terms of Reference**

The contractor (local company/group) will be responsible for the following:

The contractor will conduct a series of interviews with health professionals involved in immunization activities as well as parents. The main purpose of these interviews will be to obtain personal views on how to offer better immunization services that satisfies parents in urban settings. The interviews should be done in an informal and semi-structured way rather than set questions.

Randomly selected 30 health professionals involved in immunization activities and 30 parents with children not more than 2 years of age should be included.

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<sup>1</sup> Number of steps (indicators) will be finalized through a national consultation. Currently, it is taken as 10-steps.

The purpose of the study should be explained to interviewee and consent should be taken to participate. In this explanation, you need to explain that for quality of the study, you will be audio recording the interview, but this will only be used for decoding of the answers. Personal information will not be revealed at all. All answers will be treated as anonymous.

The following semi-structured questions are established for the groups:

***For health professionals***

Previous studies have shown that some mothers especially in urban settings complain on the convenience of the immunization services. The Ministry of Health along with WHO and UNICEF have decided to promote immunization services in urban settings through 'urban-friendly immunization services' initiative. The objective of the initiative is to help motivate facilities providing immunization services to implement a group of approaches, applications and procedures to promote immunization within the reality of urban settings. In order to establish these approaches, applications and procedures, we are having a series of interviews with health professionals as well as parents with small children.

Studies conducted between 2016-2018 underlined the dissatisfaction of some mothers and caretakers regarding immunization services. These included long waiting queues, healthy and sick children waiting in the same room, facilities not being comfortable, not having a space for changing nappies, and dissatisfaction with the information received from healthcare professionals.

Taking these into account, we would like to obtain your views on what makes an immunization service 'urban friendly'?

At this point, without any probe, listen to the health worker. If not mentioned, probe the following issues and ask about their opinion whether this could be included as a criterium in the initiative:

- Accessibility issues (health centre being too far to its target audience)
- Healthy child consultations (follow up and vaccinations) and sick child consultations entrance and waiting area being the same
- Long waiting times
- Room or facility to change nappies of the babies
- Facility comfort (light, temperature, space)
- Appointment system
- Health workers having sufficient knowledge, competence and skills to support immunization
- Health workers explaining about vaccines before and after the vaccination
- Support mothers in answering any hesitations they might have
- Inform mothers so that parents and their infants have timely access to ongoing support and care
- Organize home visits and vaccinations for families who cannot bring their children
- Extended hours for working parents bringing their children for immunization

- Discuss the outcome of the services with all staff on a regular basis and take measures when necessary

Each interview is estimated to take not more than 30 minutes.

### ***For parents***

Previous studies have shown that some mothers especially in urban settings complain on the convenience of the immunization services. The Ministry of Health along with WHO and UNICEF have decided to promote immunization services in urban settings through 'urban-friendly immunization services' initiative. The objective of the initiative is to help motivate facilities providing immunization services to implement a group of approaches, applications and procedures to promote immunization within the reality of urban settings. In order to establish these approaches, applications and procedures, we are having a series of interviews with health professionals as well as parents with small children.

Studies conducted between 2016-2018 underlined the dissatisfaction of some mothers and caretakers regarding immunization services. These included long waiting queues, healthy and sick children waiting in the same room, facilities not being comfortable, not having a space for changing nappies, and dissatisfaction with the information received from healthcare professionals.

Taking these into account, we would like to obtain your views on what makes you satisfied with the service you receive when you take your child for vaccination?

At this point, without any probe, listen to the mother. If not mentioned, probe the following issues and ask about their opinion whether this could be included as a criterium in the initiative:

- Accessibility issues (health centre being too far to the house)
- Healthy child consultations (follow up and vaccinations) and sick child consultations entrance and waiting area being the same
- Long waiting times
- Room or facility to change nappies of the babies
- Facility comfort (light, temperature, space)
- Appointment system
- Health workers having sufficient knowledge, competence and skills to support immunization
- Health workers explaining about vaccines before and after the vaccination
- Support mothers in answering any hesitations they might have
- Inform mothers so that parents and their infants have timely access to ongoing support and care
- Organize home visits and vaccinations for families who cannot bring their children
- Extended hours for working parents bringing their children for immunization

Each interview is estimated to take not more than 30 minutes.

**Analysis of the interviews**

Each interview should be summarized along with some direct quotations by the interviewees. The criteria suggested by interviewees should also be listed. Report should be submitted within 15 days of the signed agreement.