

Behavioral Science Immunization Network



Globally, progress towards high, equitable vaccination coverage has been uneven. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a decline in childhood vaccination and exacerbated existing inequity. To strengthen routine immunization and overcome the challenges that have led to a decline in vaccination, it is critical to improve the understanding of and address factors associated with low vaccine acceptance and uptake. Behavioral science, the evidence-based study of how people behave, make decisions, and respond to context ([UN Innovation Network](#)), offers promise in designing interventions to increase vaccine uptake, but its application in immunization has been limited to date.

Through the Behavioral Science Immunization Network project (September 2021 – March 31, 2023), JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI) and Sabin Vaccine Institute are supporting efforts to strengthen the capacity of immunization practitioners to use behavioral science to improve vaccine confidence and uptake. The project supports peer-learning and knowledge sharing at the global level through Sabin's Boost Community. In Ghana and Nepal, JSI supports offline and online engagement on behavioral science approaches and helps strengthen the capacity of partners to use behavioral science approaches to design and implement behaviorally-informed interventions for immunization. The project's primary objectives are to:

- Learn what it takes to establish and foster global and country networks focused on behavioral science to improve immunization confidence and uptake.
- Adapt and use behavioral science tools/approaches in the immunization context to help build the evidence base.
- Increase the capacity of immunization and other health professionals to implement, analyze and use behavioral science data for immunization programming.

In Ghana, JSI works with the Ghana Health Service to strengthen the capacity of health and immunization professionals to understand and apply behavioral science approaches to develop effective interventions to increase immunization confidence and uptake. In collaboration with local partners, JSI will use human-centered design to develop and test behaviorally-informed interventions to increase COVID-19 vaccine uptake among urban populations in the capital city, Accra.

In Nepal, Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences established a Behavioral Science Center with a sub-team focused on immunization supported by JSI and UNICEF. Through the Center, JSI will collaborate with Nepali government, academic, and civil society stakeholders to identify ways to continue to strengthen behavioral science competencies and sustain and maintain the use of behavioral science in health policies and programs.

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