

An introduction to Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

Gavi is a global public-private partnership, involving donor governments, recipient country governments, UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank, philanthropic organisations, civil society and the private sector. Gavi was established in 2000 with the mission to save children's lives and protect people's health by increasing equitable use of vaccines in lower-income countries. Global immunisation rates have risen from 73% in 2000 to 84% in 2015.

One of the most important things about Gavi is that it is a partnership: designed to support Governments to increase spending on national immunisation programmes and to help provide access to lower priced vaccines, with the overall aim of helping prevent vaccine-preventable child deaths.

Gavi has supported 73 countries since 2000, with more than 20 countries expected to transition out of Gavi support in the next five years.

▶ So, how does Gavi work?

As a partnership, Gavi brings together country priorities and needs, and matches these with the funding support and technical expertise required.

The funding required for vaccines is led by country governments themselves. Gavi empowers developing countries to take the lead in applying for support, managing development grants and, ultimately, financing their own vaccine programmes.

Gavi does this by using two models:

The Partnership Model – Gavi provides catalytic funding to help Governments fund their own national vaccine programmes. All countries are required to pay part of the cost of vaccines bought with Gavi support. Finance from Gavi pays for the rest, but as countries become wealthier and their GNI increases, countries take on more and more of the costs of the vaccines. This encourages sustainability and long term investments in vaccine programmes.

The Business Model - Gavi works with vaccine providers (half of who Gavi works with are in developing countries themselves) to drive down prices through economies of scale.

By pooling demand for vaccines from around the world, securing long-term funding from multiple sources and shaping vaccine markets by increasing demand, Gavi is accelerating access to life-saving vaccines in the countries that need them the most.

▶ What has Gavi achieved?

Vaccine coverage has dramatically increased since the inception of Gavi in 2000, with immunisation with 84% of the world's children immunised with the most basic vaccines. In 2014, two out of every five children were given Gavi-supported vaccinations.

Gavi supports the current 11 WHO recommended vaccines, and throughout the years has been at the forefront of helping countries introduce new vaccines as they become available, including important pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccines which can help prevent pneumonia and diarrhoea, two of the main causes of under-five mortality.

From the start of 2011 to the end of 2014, Gavi-supported vaccines will have averted approximately 3.1 million future deaths. This number is expected to exceed 3.9million by the end of 2015 (soon to be confirmed). 243 million more children will have been vaccinated by the end of 2015 than would have without Gavi support in 2010.

Targeted disease elimination

Gavi also supports additional vaccination support which targets specific diseases and global priorities. For example, Gavi-funded measles vaccine campaigns conducted between 2013 and 2015 averted an additional 500,000 future deaths. On top of this, the Gavi board in December 2015 agreed to additional support for measles and rubella vaccinations (from \$600 million to \$840 million) to help eliminate a further 100 million deaths. This will help address the Global Vaccine Action Plan target to eliminate measles in four WHO regions by 2015 which has been drastically missed.

A billion vaccinations?

Since 2000, Gavi have supported countries to immunise close to half a billion children, saving 6 million lives – and this number is constantly increasing. The new strategy aims to vaccinate a further 300 million children to save a further 5-6 million lives bringing Gavi-support vaccinations close to one billion!

▶ What is the role of the UK Government?

In January 2015, the UK Government pledged £1 billion to Gavi. This will help immunise over 76 million children and save 1.4 million lives between 2016-2020, the equivalent of saving a life every two minutes.

The UK Government is the leading donor to Gavi, and they contributed a third of Gavi's total funding during the last strategic period 2011-2015.

Between 2000-2015, the UK Government contributed nearly 23% of total donor contributions to Gavi. The closest bilateral donor was Norway with just over 11%.

THE ROLL OUT OF ROTAVIRUS

Globally, rotavirus is the leading cause of severe diarrhoea and one of the main causes of death in children under five, killing over 400,000 children every year. 95% of deaths due to rotavirus occur in Gavi-eligible countries and in 2006 the Board of Directors approved plans for Gavi to introduce financial support to introduce and accelerate the availability of the rotavirus vaccine.

With Gavi's support, the rotavirus vaccine was made available to low income countries at almost the same time as it was available in Europe and the USA, eliminating the long wait countries usually face for vaccine prices to become affordable, in the places which they are normally needed most.

Gavi have introduced the rotavirus vaccine in 34 countries (exceeding its 2015 target), with 16 countries introducing the vaccine in 2014 alone. It is estimated that these efforts could save 800,000 lives between 2011 – 2020.

Even though coverage levels in this



short time have doubled, global coverage rates are still extremely low, with only 15% of children receiving their third dose of the rotavirus vaccine. Leadership from national governments to support the integration

of the rotavirus vaccine into routine immunisation schedules and continued financial support from Gavi and donors for the introduction and scale up of new vaccines will be essential to see these figures rise.