



GPEI Gender Grant - 2024 Highlights - Djibouti





























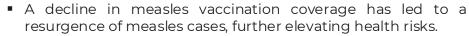


Background

Since 2022, Djibouti has been grappling with a cVDPV2 epidemic, exacerbated by migration from conflict-affected regions in Yemen and Ethiopia's Tigray region. The resulting population influx strained an already fragile health system, increasing the risk of disease outbreaks. To combat the spread, the country conducted four rounds of Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIAs) in 2022, followed by another round in April 2025.

Immunization & Disease Resurgence:

 Urban populations represent 77.65% of the country's total population, with over 60% of under-vaccinated children residing in cities.



The global acute malnutrition rate increased from 10% in 2019 to 13% in 2023, reflecting worsening nutritional conditions.

Nutrition & Household Decision-Making:

 Complementary foods are introduced to infants before six months, potentially impacting their nutritional health.

• The KAP study on nutrition reveals that husbands or fathers are the primary decision-makers regarding household meals, given their financial responsibility.















Gender barriers to immunization & family practices



Lack of Sex-Disaggregated Data

There is insufficient collection and use of data separated by sex at all levels, hindering targeted interventions for gender-specific health needs.

Limited Male Interest

Men often show low interest in their children's health and nutrition, limiting their involvement in promoting essential family practices.

Education Deprivation

High rates of school dropouts, especially among girls, contribute to deprivation in education, affecting awareness and access to health information.

Social & Gender Norms

Norms restrict
women's access to
healthcare services
including education
and vaccination for
children, reinforcing
paternal authority
and grandmother
influence



Limited Decision-Making Power

Mothers, though primary caregivers, have restricted agency and decisionmaking power due to paternal authority and influence of grandmothers.













Objective & strategies





Objective

Strengthening of community management committees in the promotion of essential family practices (routine immunization, exclusive breastfeeding, positive parenting) and gender in Djibouti-city & Tadjourah region.



Capacity Strengthening

Building capacities of community management committees (CMC) to effectively raise awareness on essential family practices focusing on infant and young child feeding, immunization, gender barriers, and female genital mutilation (FGM).



Social Mobilization & Communication

Engaging communities through social mobilization, community engagement, and external communication including visibility campaigns and mobile cinema to promote gendersensitive essential family practices.











Proposed country level activities







Community Dialogues with Key Influencers

Facilitating discussions with fathers, grandmothers, and other community members to increase awareness of recommended IYCF practices and support required by pregnant women and mothers of children under two years.







Capacity-Building for CMC Members

Training community management committees (CMC) members on IPC/SBC to raise awareness on essential family practices such as infant and young child feeding, immunization, and research on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), with a focus on addressing gender barriers.



Community School for Fathers and Husbands

Setting up schools specifically for fathers and husbands to raise awareness and build capacity on infant and young child feeding, growth monitoring, routine immunization, and prevention of FGM.







Mobile Cinema and Reward Programme

Organizing four film screenings per month for five months, using mobile cinema to promote essential family practices including IYCF, routine immunization, and FGM prevention, emphasizing gender issues within communities.



Mother-to-Mother Support Groups

Training and establishing communitybased mother-to-mother support groups focused on infant and young child feeding, growth monitoring, routine immunization, and FGM prevention







Expected results & budget request





Gender-Sensitive Community **Approaches**

By March 2025, the implementation of community approaches (immunization, nutrition, FGM) is gender-sensitive.



Capacity Strengthening

By March 2025, the capacity of community agents, community management committees, and health staff are strengthened in interpersonal communication and considering gender when implementing activities.



Budget Request

\$115,140.













Partnerships approach





Main Partners

UNICEF, Government (MoH), WHO, National Union of Djiboutian Women, Tadjourah Women's Association are the key organizations involved in this community health initiative.



Core Strategy

The approach is participatory and co-creative, ensuring active engagement and collaboration among all stakeholders for effective implementation.



Roles of **Partners** UNICEF, MoH & WHO lead training of health officials and workers. Women's associations confirm gender norms and apply communitybased methods to transform them













Capacity strengthening results



112

CMC members trained on IPC/SBC, community feedbacks mechanisms



14

Community management committees involved in Djibouti-city



40

National Women's Union members trained

25

Tadjourah Women Association members trained















Social Mobilization & Community Engagement results



94

3,224

7

32

Community dialogue sessions

Fathers & boys engaged in Djibouticity & Tadjourah region Mother-to-mother groups established in various localities of Tadjourah region

Imams (including 8 women) in advocacy meeting in Djibouticity & Tadjourah





















Malnutrition screening



9,597

Children under 5 screened

227

Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) cases detected in children

849

Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) cases detected in children

1,419

Pregnant & breastfeeding women screened











Visibility

- ❖ Production of **177** plates of the immunization calendar for children, pregnant women and vaccine-preventable diseases for health facilities
- ❖ Production of five mini-films screened, featuring local actors, addressed crucial themes: Girls' education, End Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Promotion of exclusive breastfeeding, Antenatal consultation (ANC) Routine immunization
- ❖ Publications of activities on UNICEF Diibouti social media pages: https://www.facebook.com/share/18gkZfXY9a/v And National Union of Djiboutian Women (UNFD) facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/share/18qkZfXY9a/

For more engagement of community and stakeholders

























Mobile Cinema: A Powerful Tool for social mobilisation & Community engagement





Community Outreach Three mobile cinema sessions held in PK12, Hayabley, and District 4 reached over **800** people, creating inclusive spaces for learning and engagement.



Locally Relevant Films Five mini-films featuring local actors addressed Girls' education, Combatting FGM, Breastfeeding, Antenatal care, and Routine Immunization.



Interactive
Discussions

Post-screening discussions allowed participants to express concerns, absorb messages, and propose local solutions to eliminate harmful practices and foster positive behavioral change.



Promoting
Positive Change

The initiative demonstrated mobile cinema as a powerful tool to raise awareness and strengthen community engagement in health and family practices.













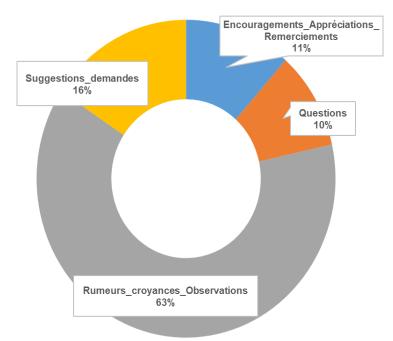


General trends in Community feedback topics



Feedbacks collectés par type

The **845** collected community feedback responses reveal a predominance of rumors, beliefs, and observations (530 responses, or 63%), highlighting the urgent need to strengthen information and awareness efforts. Meanwhile, the numerous expressions of encouragement (98) and suggestions (133) reflect strong community engagement and their willingness to actively contribute to improving health and nutrition interventions.







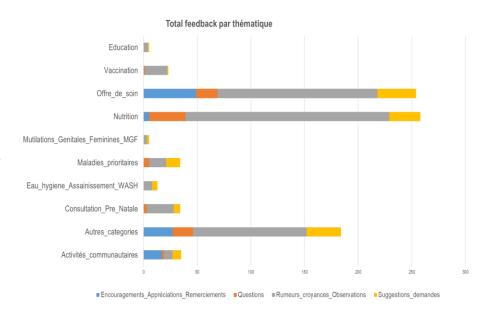




General trends in Community feedback topics



- Nutrition (258 feedback 30.5%) and Healthcare Services (254 feedback – 30.1%) are the most frequently mentioned topics, accounting for over 60% of the responses. This confirms that food security and access to healthcare remain major concerns for communities.
- Other categories (184 feedback 21.8%) encompass crosscutting issues (economic, social, etc.), highlighting a broader need for improving living conditions.
- Prenatal care (34 feedback 4%), Priority diseases (34 feedback 4%), and Water, hygiene, and sanitation (13 feedback 1.5%) reflect specific expectations regarding preventive health measures and access to clean water.
- Vaccination (23 feedback 2.7%), Community activities (35 feedback – 4.1%), Female genital mutilation (5 feedback – 0.6%), and Education (5 feedback – 0.6%) generate fewer responses but remain sensitive topics, particularly linked to rumors and misinformation.













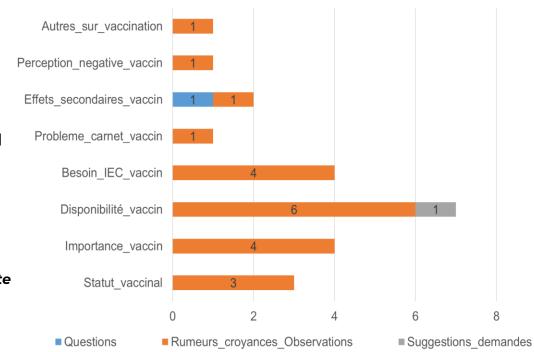


General trends in Community feedback topics - immunization



Feedback on immunization indicates strong awareness of its importance. However, concerns remain regarding vaccine availability, perceived side effects, and tracking vaccination records. These insights highlight the need to strengthen information and education efforts to dispel doubts and encourage greater family participation. A poignant testimony illustrates the impact of a lack of information:

> "My child contracted polio, and I was responsible because I refused to vaccinate him. He still lives with a disability, and I feel deeply guilty—I was ignorant."















General trends in Community feedback topics immunization





Need for IEC and Awareness on Immunization (17.4%)

Significant need for awareness-raising linked to illiteracy, lack of knowledge, and false beliefs. "The mother is unaware of vaccination because she is illiterate." "Some mothers forget about vaccination due to chores." "Neglect leads to abandoning vaccination."



Perceived Side Effects (8.7%)

Concerns about side effects after vaccination, especially fever and illness: "Why does vaccination cause fever?" "When a child is vaccinated, they fall ill."



Concerns about vaccine availability, supply delays, and absence of community health workers. "People complain about vaccine distribution issues." "Lack of clear communication on vaccination delays." "Never seen community health workers vaccinate at home."



Issues with Vaccination Cards (4.3%)

Importance of vaccination cards for tracking immunization schedules: "The vaccination card helps me track my child's immunization schedule."



Need for vaccine catch-up and tracking immunization status. "Mv son remained unvaccinated but is now treated." "Mv daughter missed vaccines but is now treated." "Our children are up to date with vaccination."



Negative Perception of Vaccination (4.3%)

Isolated case of community resistance due to negative beliefs: "My parents say vaccination is forbidden in our community."

















Lessons learned & challenges



Mobile Cinema as a Tool for Engagement

Films featuring local actors help communities connect with key topics, fostering meaningful discussions in dialogues.
Exploring theatrical performances could further enhance engagement and message retention.



Women's Associations as Key Drivers

Their active involvement in social mobilization and awareness efforts is crucial to ensuring an effective and lasting impact in promoting family practices and gender-sensitive health initiatives.



Challenges: Ramadan & Men's Engagement

Activities slow down considerably during Ramadan, affecting outreach and participation. Mobilizing men remains difficult as some view immunization and FGM prevention as women's issues.













Lessons learned & challenges

POLIC GLOBAL ERADICATION INITIATIVE

Lessons Learned:

- Mobile Cinema as a Tool for Engagement: Films featuring local actors help communities connect with key topics, fostering meaningful discussions in dialogues. Exploring theatrical performances could further enhance engagement and message retention.
- ❖ Women's Associations as Key Drivers: Their active involvement in social mobilization and awareness efforts is crucial to ensuring an effective and lasting impact.

Challenges:

- ❖ Ramadan Period: Activities slow down considerably during this time, affecting community outreach and participation.
- Men's Engagement: Mobilizing men remains a challenge, as some perceive topics like routine immunization and FGM prevention as women's issues.

Recommendations:

❖ Adapt activity timelines to account for cultural and religious considerations, ensuring sustained engagement despite seasonal challenges.

















Recommendations for Sustained Engagement



Cultural & Religious Adaptation

Adapt activity timelines to account for cultural and religious considerations, ensuring sustained engagement despite seasonal challenges such as Ramadan.



Engaging Men and promoting positive parenting

Recognize the importance of men's engagement in community health topics traditionally viewed as women's issues, and develop targeted strategies to include them



Culturally Respectful Communication

Incorporate culturally relevant and respectful communication methods to foster acceptance and participation in essential family practices.



Community Influencers & Flexibility

Utilize community influencers and leaders who understand local norms to facilitate dialogue and promote behavioral change. Maintain flexibility in programming to respond to feedback and evolving dynamics.















