

# MOMENTUM

Routine Immunization Transformation and Equity



## ■ Course Overview Guide

# GENDER AND IMMUNIZATION: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Integrating gender in immunization programs to improve coverage and equity.

## FOREWORD

The global immunization community has generally overlooked the role of gender-related barriers affecting vaccination services, on both the demand and the supply side. Recent evidence indicates that the level of gender inequality in a country is significantly associated with national childhood immunization rates.<sup>1</sup> Knowing that greater gender equality is associated with improved immunization coverage, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and key immunization partners are actively working to improve awareness and understanding of how gender can affect immunization outcomes and are dedicating resources to integrate gender throughout their immunization

programs. As part of this effort, in the summer of 2022, USAID’s MOMENTUM Routine Immunization Transformation and Equity project (the project) developed a four-session, one-month long course entitled “Gender and Immunization: Opportunities for Action.” The overall goal of the course was to provide national and sub-national participants from low-and middle-income countries with the knowledge, tools, skills, capacity, and confidence to reduce gender barriers to immunization and document their efforts to advance the knowledge base of this nascent critical technical area. The course was held on the Sabin Vaccine Institute’s Boost learning platform. The project conducted a post-session survey to gather views and perspectives on the course. Results were overwhelmingly positive and, as a result, the project developed a similar course for French-speaking participants, which was held in 2023.

## PURPOSE & AUDIENCE

The gender course materials are meant to serve as a practical reference to help inform and guide the work of immunization professionals (primarily at the sub-national or national levels), global health students and implementers, and policy makers interested in gender mainstreaming in immunization.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the Sabin Vaccine Institute for their collaboration and partnership in hosting this course on the online Boost platform. We would also like to thank colleagues from the Gavi-led Alliance for Gender Equality in Immunization working group who helped by providing key resources and presented during the course, in particular Jean Munro, Senior Manager, Gender Equality at Gavi and Alyssa Sharkey, Lecturer in Global Health at Princeton University School of Public and International Affairs (and formerly Senior Health Specialist at UNICEF). We thank our guest speakers and participants who were actively engaged and shared their experiences with gender and immunization during this course. Lastly, we would like to thank our donor, USAID, whose contributions and commitment to gender equity made this course possible.

## COURSE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The course goals and objectives were designed so, after completing this course, participants will have the knowledge, tools, skills, capacity, and confidence to address gender-related barriers to immunization. They will be able to recognize gender barriers; develop and implement gender-responsive interventions; conduct practical monitoring, evaluation, and learning functions; document efforts to integrate gender into their immunization activities; and find ways to support this work. As a result, they will become part of a growing cadre of professionals working to reduce gender-related barriers to equitable immunization.

Below are each of the four sessions’ learning objectives, descriptions, slide decks and other relevant information taken directly from the course. While each of these tools and resources can be used as singular learning material, they work best when used together sequentially.

Photo source on cover page: UNICEF/2018/Owoicho.

## Learning Objectives

The course was designed so that each session aligns with one of the four overall learning objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Describe and identify how and why gender impedes the achievement of immunization goals for coverage and equity.
- **Objective 2:** Access the tools, resources, and support (technical, institutional, financial, community, political, etc.) needed to take action to reduce gender-related barriers.
- **Objective 3:** Design and implement actions to address gender-related barriers to immunization.
- **Objective 4:** Assess and measure progress toward reducing gender-related obstacles to immunization.

*“Gender and immunization is a core concept of the immunization service delivery that could be a challenge, especially when it is not adequately prepared/planned for.*

—FEMALE PARTICIPANT FROM NIGERIA

*“...we do have so many gender-related barriers, particularly [because] females are not decisions makers, [and there are] cultural and religious barrier deteriorating vaccine acceptance. Hopefully we will learn to be part of multi-cultural world.*

—MALE PARTICIPANT FROM AFGHANISTAN

# SESSION 1: HOW AND WHY GENDER IMPEDES IMMUNIZATION COVERAGE AND EQUITY GOALS

## LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Describe and identify how and why gender impedes the achievement of immunization goals for coverage and equity.

## DESCRIPTION

In setting the stage of how and why gender impedes immunization coverage and equity goals, we'll unpack what's meant by gender-related barriers in immunization and hope to increase your awareness and recognition of how **gender is on the critical pathway to improving equity for immunization**. We'll go over some of the big issues for gender and immunization and provide some familiar examples of challenges in immunization viewed through a gender lens.

## SLIDES

[View the presentation slides from session 1.](#)

## HOMEWORK

1. Watch short BCL video (5:45) – [Understanding Gender-Related Barriers to Immunization](#).
2. Identify three gender-related barriers that affect utilization of routine immunization or COVID-19 vaccination in your own work and prioritize one of them to focus on throughout the course. With the barrier you have identified, compose a three to five sentence story/experience of a person encountering this gender-related barrier.

## KEY RESOURCES

- [Gavi Video: Why a gender lens is needed for the COVID-19 response](#)
- [Gavi Guidance to Address Gender-related Barriers to Maintain, Restore, and Strengthen Immunisation in the Context of COVID-19](#)
- [WHO/IA2030: “Why Gender Matters: Immunization Agenda 2030”](#)
- [Bull City Learning video: Understanding Gender-Related Barriers to Immunization](#)
- [Gender & Health Hub: How to create a gender-responsive pandemic plan](#)
- [GPEI Gender Strategy](#)
- [UNICEF/ROSA: Immunization & Gender: A Practical Guide to Integrate a Gender Lens into Immunization Programmes](#)
- [Gavi’s gender policy and revised application material](#) (\*this site has multiple links to good resources)
- [WHO’s webpage: Gender and immunization](#) (\*this site has multiple links to good resources)

## GUEST SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS

Jean Munro, Senior Manager, Gender Equality at Gavi – [“Gavi’s commitment to gender equity in immunisation programming”](#)

## REFLECTIONS

*“Knowing that gender is a learned constructs and that it can be unlearned is a very strong take home [message] for me. I'm already seeing how it can influence behaviors towards immunization programs.*

—MALE PARTICIPANT FROM NIGERIA

# SESSION 2: IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES AND MAKING THE CASE

## LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Access the tools, resources, and support (technical, institutional, financial, community, political, etc.) needed to take action to reduce gender-related barriers.

## DESCRIPTION

In this second session, we'll go further in identifying some gender-related obstacles and talk about the relevant tools, resources, and support needed to make the case to mitigate some of these barriers.

## SLIDES

[View the presentation slides from session 2.](#)

## HOMEWORK

1. Watch short BCL video (6:39) – [Using Sex-Disaggregated and Gender-Related Data for Program Improvement](#).
2. Go through the [Why Gender Matters Checklists](#).
3. Bonus Activity (optional): Thinking about opportunities for action and the story/experience you composed about someone encountering the gender-related barrier in Homework 1, come up with a two-minute advocacy pitch on what you can do in your role to help address that gender-related barrier to immunization. As a starting point, think about the immunization journey they are on.

## KEY RESOURCES

- [Adapting to Audiences and Navigating Power Dynamics](#)
- [Leaders that Listen Public Speaking Curriculum Advocacy Guide](#)
- [Advanced Audience Segmentation for Social and Behavior Change](#)
- [Human-centred design for tailoring immunization programs \(WHO and UNICEF\)](#)
- [Little Jab Aid: 5 Ideas to increase COVID-19 vaccination for women in Middle East and North Africa \(MENA\)](#)
- [HCD Masterclasses – Journey to Health and Immunization: Identifying Community Centric Health Interventions](#) (UNICEF PowerPoint Slides)
- [Masterclasses – Introduction to human-centered design: Identifying Community Centric Health Interventions](#) (UNICEF PowerPoint slides)

## GUEST SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS

Alyssa Sharkey, Lecturer in Global Health at Princeton University School of Public and International Affairs (and formerly Senior Health Specialist at UNICEF) – [“Gender barriers to immunization and primary health care services”](#)

## REFLECTIONS

*“...a reminder of how little of the data we see is disaggregated by [sex]. I was thinking back to even something like COVID-19 data. Most often what we see is geographic disaggregation or maybe caseload etc. However, if I close my eyes and think back to media reports for e.g. I can't quickly recollect seeing much on gender related data at all. Much more can be done in this aspect in all spheres.*

—FEMALE PARTICIPANT FROM INDIA

# SESSION 3: DESIGNING GENDER-SENSITIVE INTERVENTIONS AND TAKING ACTION FOR CHANGE

## LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Design and implement actions to address gender-related barriers to immunization.

## DESCRIPTION

In this third session, we'll go over how to design programs and activities to take action to mitigate gender-related barriers to immunization. We'll hear from Wendy Abbey, Technical Officer, JSI, who developed a human centered design intervention for second year of life (2YL) vaccination efforts for 'Kayayei' in Ghana.

## SLIDES

[View the presentation slides from session 3.](#)

## HOMEWORK

Please view one of the following four videos. Make your selection based on whichever topic is most related to your priorities for action. All videos are less than nine minutes long.

- [Coaching Health Workers to Create a Welcoming Environment](#)
- [Reaching All Audiences with Immunization Messages](#)
- [Encouraging Fathers' Participation in Immunization](#)
- [Reaching Women with the COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

**Written Assignment:** Based on the gender barrier you prioritized in your first homework assignment; describe how you would start to put an intervention into practice. (If you want to change your priority from what you had originally chosen, that's fine.) Then, please write:

- The gender-related barrier that you plan to address.
- The types of information you would need to make the case for addressing the barrier.
- One proposed solution for addressing it.
- Who you would work with to implement your solution.

## KEY RESOURCES

- [Video on Immunization Academy’s IA Watch: Coaching Health Workers to Create a Welcoming Environment](#) (7:02)
- [Video on Immunization Academy’s IA Watch: Reaching Women with the COVID-19 Vaccine](#) (8:10)
- [Video on Immunization Academy’s IA Watch: Encouraging Fathers’ Participation in Immunization](#) (6:54)
- [Video on Immunization Academy’s IA Watch: Reaching All Audiences with Immunization Messages](#) (6:24)

## REFLECTIONS

*“The course is a real eye-opener to me on how gender can influence the uptake of vaccination by caregivers with no specific difference between the vaccination coverage of boys and girls.*

—FEMALE PARTICIPANT FROM NIGERIA

# SESSION 4: ASSESSING PROGRESS AND LEARNING TOGETHER

## LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Assess and measure progress toward reducing gender-related obstacles to immunization.

## DESCRIPTION

In this fourth and final session, we’ll talk about how to assess the progress you’re making in your efforts with gender-related barriers to immunization.

## SLIDES

[View the presentation slides from session 4.](#)

## KEY RESOURCES

- [Analysis of Gender and Social Determinants of Health in Urban Poor Communities - Dr. Khawaja Aftab and Waqas Shafi](#)

Links to VillageReach's work:

- [Study overview – Let's Talk about Vaccines! A multi-site participatory study to identify drivers and solutions to routine immunization dropouts](#)
- [Mozambique study findings- Determinants of immunisation dropout among children under the age of 2 in Zambezia province, Mozambique: a community-based participatory research study using Photovoice](#)
- [Caregiver Researchers and methods - Project Report: Bate Papo Vacina! \(Let's get vaccinated!\)](#)

## GUEST SPEAKER PRESENTATION

Gaspar Come, Project Manager at VillageReach – [“Identifying drivers and solutions to under-two under-immunization in Mozambique”](#)

## REFLECTIONS

*“Community-based participatory research and human centered design are KEY to and for community health strategy universally.*

—MALE PARTICIPANT FROM KENYA

*“Fail often and fail fast is very essential for reiterative prototyping, which is so integral to HCD.*

—FEMALE PARTICIPANT FROM INDIA

## RECORDED SESSIONS

- [Session 1: How and Why Gender Impedes Immunization Coverage and Equity Goals](#)
- [Session 2: Identifying Challenges and Making the Case](#)
- [Session 3: Designing Gender-Sensitive Interventions and Taking Action for Change](#)
- [Session 4: Assessing Progress and Learning Together](#)

\*Please note: content could move, so links may not work depending on when they are accessed.




# REFERENCES


<sup>1</sup> Vidal Fuertes C, Johns NE, Goodman TS, Heidari S, Munro J, Hosseinpoor AR. The Association between Childhood Immunization and Gender Inequality: A Multi-Country Ecological Analysis of Zero-Dose DTP Prevalence and DTP3 Immunization Coverage. *Vaccines*. 2022; 10(7):1032. <https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines1007103>.


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