National Immunization Programme Management: Functions and Competencies

Introduction, Jaleela Jawad
Changing Face of EPI Programme Management

- More vaccines
- More expensive vaccines
- Life course vaccination
- New technologies
- Anti-vaccination lobbies
- Health emergencies
- New funding mechanisms
- NITAG
- AEFI Assessment

Higher workload, diversity of functions requiring new, different and specialized competencies
Strong immunization systems are an integral part of a well functioning health system

- Strengthen capacity of managers and frontline workers
The most important factor for all other eight investments to succeed: A capable national team—supplied with sufficient resources and authority—to excellently manage each country’s national immunization program.
Strengthening Capacity of Programme Management at National Level: some current initiatives
Annex 4: Example EPI manager job description

National EPI manager

Title: National EPI manager
Rank: As per national personnel nomenclature
Identification of the post: As per national personnel coding system
Reporting to: As per national health system organizational Infrastructure
Objective of the post: To plan, organize, coordinate and ensure implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national immunization programme
Responsibilities/ functions: Under the supervision of the supervisor (head of unit, director or coordinator), the incumbent will be responsible for the following:

- To analyse and make decisions based on plans and programme development processes;
- To monitor implementation and evolution of the programme adopting to innovations and best practices;
- To ensure quality and safety of immunizations performed;
- To advise, orient, inspire and supervise the staff;
- To communicate with the communities, stakeholders and partners to maximize resources for immunization and provide them with feedback on programme achievements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main duties/tasks</th>
<th>Percentage of work time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Periodic (sequential) tasks:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing strategic and annual plans for immunization and budgeting for human, material and financial resources in line with national immunization policies/strategies;</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Monitoring the programme to ensure targets are achieved and the quality and safety of immunization delivery ensured;</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Arranging quarterly or semi-annual meetings of the ICC, acting as a Secretariat of ICC;</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conducting mid-term and end of planning cycle evaluation of the programme;</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Submitting annual, quarterly, monthly or any other regular reports as required by the health management information system (HIMS);</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous tasks:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Analyse incoming immunization coverage and surveillance data and make decisions on programmatical issues;</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Act as a technical advisor to the ministry or board of health on resources, recruitment, deployment of staff working in immunization programme.</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mid-Level Management Course for EPI Managers

Module 2: The role of the EPI manager
Immunization Competencies

- Immunization Competencies for Health Professionals: Canada, US, Australia, New Zealand, UK

- Targeted at health professionals engaged in vaccination NOT programme managers
Gavi has launched an approach to strengthen national immunisation programme management (‘LMC approach’)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Situational analysis</th>
<th>‘Menu’ of interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Empower the national EPI teams to effectively manage the EPI programme through enhanced   • structures  
  • competencies  
  • processes  
  • practices | Diagnosis of gaps in Gavi countries through   • Programme Capacity Assessments  
  • Joint appraisals  
  • Other processes (e.g. EPI reviews) | ‘Menu’ adjusted to country context and need – for example:   • EPI management partner – long-term embedded peer-coach with strong managerial/health experience (e.g. Malawi, Aspen Institute)  
  • Enhance EPI performance management practices (e.g. Uganda, CHAI)  
  • Exchange visits (planned)  
  • EPI management training programme (planned) |
Training and capacity building initiatives

- IAIM - global network of national & subnational EPI managers (230 members) from developed & developing countries
  - international and intra-regional meetings of EPI managers
  - Training programs via meetings, scholarships for self-identified training courses, and exchange visits between EPI managers
  - Online discussion forum and toolkit

- Mid-level management (MLM) courses, eLearning courses, Vaccinology courses

- EPI domain specific courses—vaccine supply chain, Monitoring, AEFI causality assessment etc.

There are isolated and ad hoc trainings for National Level staff; Comprehensive guidance of functions and competencies is needed at National level.
Session Agenda

- Introduction, importance, and ongoing initiatives. J. Jawad, SAGE Member, 10 min.

- Challenges in performing expected programme management functions: country presentations:
  - Pakistan, S. Gilani, EPI National Programme Manager, Ministry of Health, 15 min.
  - Armenia, G. Sahakyan, National Immunization Programme Manager, Ministry of Health, 15 min.

- Defining Functions & Competencies for the immunization program workforce. D. Traicoff, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 10 min.

- Global guidance to strengthen immunization programme management functions: proposed activities and process. J. Bahl, WHO, 10 min.

- Discussion: 1 hr.