

Africa CDC Saving Lives and Livelihoods

in partnership with



Newsletter – November 2022

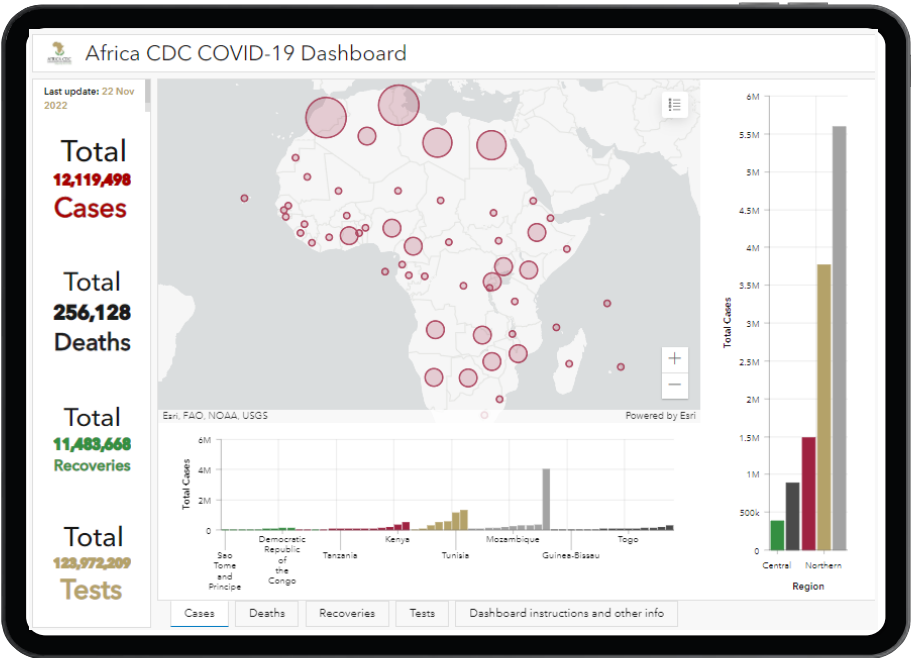
In June 2021, the Mastercard Foundation partnered with the [Africa CDC](#) to launch the \$1.5 billion [Saving Lives and Livelihoods](#) initiative. Together, we are purchasing COVID-19 vaccines for more than 65 million people, deploying vaccines to millions across the continent, enabling vaccine manufacturing in Africa by developing the workforce, and strengthening the Africa CDC's capacity.



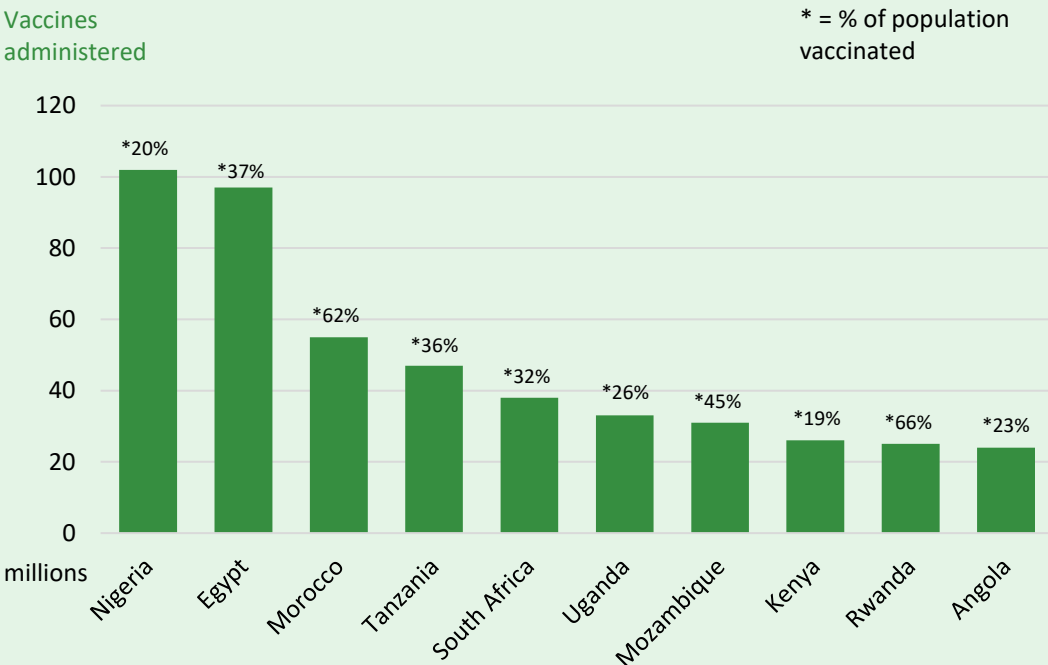
COVID-19 in Africa: Where we are today

Currently, Mauritius and Seychelles have 85 and 82 percent vaccination rates, respectively, surpassing the 70 percent target set by the [WHO](#) in 2021. Countries that have attained vaccination rates of between 50 and 70 percent include Liberia at 67 percent, Rwanda at 66 percent, Morocco at 62 percent, and Tunisia at 53 percent. Meanwhile, about 25.3 percent of the continent's population is fully vaccinated.

Africa has registered over 12 million COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the pandemic. The following countries have recorded the highest number of cases: Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, Morocco, South Africa, and Tunisia. [Read more.](#)



The latest data from the Africa CDC indicates that the following 10 countries have administered the most vaccines so far:



Source: [Africa CDC](#) (2022) | As of 21/11/2022

Shots in arms: Updates on Saving Lives and Livelihoods initiative

The following are key highlights of the Saving Lives and Livelihoods initiative:

The Southern Africa regional launch event took place on November 12. It was officiated by H.E. President Hakainde Hichilema of the Republic of Zambia and provided an opportunity for stakeholder engagement and to activate the *Bingwa* (which means “champion”) Initiative.

Bingwa is a network of COVID-19 vaccination youth ambassadors across the continent, who will be mobilized to accelerate vaccination uptake among young people in 10 countries in Southern Africa. [Read more.](#)



H.E. President Hakainde Hichilema of Zambia (centre), the Acting Director at Africa CDC, Dr. Ahmed Ogwel (2nd right) and other dignitaries follow proceedings at the Southern Africa regional launch in Lusaka.



H.E. President Hakainde Hichilema of Zambia speaks during the Southern Africa regional launch in Lusaka.

Kenya marks yet another milestone with the launch of the *Kick out COVID-19 Tournament*. The tournament, which kicked off on November 19, [2022](#), in Homa Bay and Nyamira counties, seeks to amplify the COVID-19 vaccination message. The event will also include on-site vaccinations and screenings.

In total, 196 teams and 96 matches will be played across 6 counties from November 19 to December 10, 2022.

Kenya has made [significant progress](#) in the implementation of the Saving Lives and Livelihoods programme since it was launched on July 22,

2022. Saving Lives and Livelihoods has successfully tapped into the existing health strategies and structures of the Ministry of Health to enhance COVID-19 vaccination activities across selected counties within [a short time](#). Despite the successes, demand creation and mobilization remain inadequate due to [low risk](#) perception, hesitancy, and information overload. Youth-friendly strategies are needed to improve the current approach. [Read more.](#)



The football team in Homabay county during the launch of the tournament.



The launch was also attended by coordinators of the Kenya Red Cross and AMREF, as well as community health volunteers from Homabay county.

Shots in arms: Updates on Saving Lives and Livelihoods initiative

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100 youth selected as East Africa [AU Bingwa](#) COVID-19 champions following a rigorous and competitive process.

The applicants, chosen from over a pool of 2,000 applications, will undergo pre-deployment training in the next few weeks. [Read more](#).

As the focus shifts towards ensuring Africa’s youth are vaccinated through the Africa Union *Bingwa* Initiative, Saving Lives and Livelihoods is also identifying and addressing needs for the successful distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

These measures include the expansion of COVID-19 vaccination centres (CVCs), training of personnel to facilitate rapid and efficient vaccine deployment, and public awareness campaigns to encourage vaccinations and address vaccine hesitancy.

5 things you need to know about the Bingwa Initiative:

1

The initiative was officially launched in April 2022 as a public-private-youth initiative co-led by the Africa CDC under the name “**African Union COVID-19 Vaccination Bingwa Initiative**”.

2

Bingwa is the Swahili word for “**champion**”.

3

Bingwa Initiative is a one-year initiative that will equip vaccinated youth champions across the African continent with technical skills to reach, mobilize, and engage their communities and peers to get fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

4

The initiative aims to vaccinate at least 100 million Africans, including 30 million youth, as a direct outcome of its efforts.

5

Participants of Bingwa will be supported by experts from the African Union, Africa CDC, and partner organizations in key public health, social, and behaviour change communication fields.



Shots in arms: Updates on Saving Lives and Livelihoods initiative

The following are key highlights of the Saving Lives and Livelihoods initiative:

One-on-One with Africa CDC's Bingwa Initiative Coordinator, Dr. Chrys Promesse Kaniki



Dr. Chrys Promesse K. Kaniki is the Senior Technical Officer for Strategic Programmes within the Office of the Director for the Africa CDC and is responsible for coordinating the *Bingwa* Initiative. A medical doctor by profession, Dr. Kaniki is a passionate social and public health-oriented professional, driven to contribute to better and more effective social, health, and development policies and programs in Africa. He is also a Ph.D. candidate in Reproductive Health Sciences at the Pan African University Life and Earth Sciences Institute (PAULESI) located in the premier University of Ibadan in Nigeria.

Because young Africans make up over 60 percent of the continent’s population, mobilizing and meaningfully engaging them could significantly help control the spread of COVID-19 across Africa.

In this interview, Dr. Kaniki highlights key lessons from *Bingwa* and what lies ahead.

1

Q: What does the *Bingwa* Initiative aim to achieve?

The vaccination rate in Africa is still low, at about 25 percent against a target of 70 percent by the end of 2022. The majority of Africa’s population is below 25 years. Previously, the vaccination targeted an older demographic, which may have hampered our vaccination goals. This is why *Bingwa* was launched in early 2022 to bring Africa’s youth to the fold; to recruit, train, and deploy them to mobilize their peers and communities to get vaccinated.

2

Q: Please explain how the Africa CDC is working to achieve its vaccination goals through *Bingwa*. Also, have there been any challenges with implementing this initiative, and how you are overcoming them?

When the initiative started, we needed to critically examine the most effective means of engaging Africa’s youth and enlisting their support towards attaining the goal of 70 percent vaccination rate by the end of 2022. This is a public health issue, and we need to constantly think about how best to engage young people in the different member states.

Secondly, we have a human resource challenge with no dedicated staff for the [*Bingwa*] initiative. This has impacted the scale and impact of the initiative. At the moment, we have enlisted the support of colleagues from different divisions within the Africa CDC to execute this program.

Shots in arms: Updates on Saving Lives and Livelihoods initiative

The following are key highlights of the Saving Lives and Livelihoods initiative:

Initially, we set out to pilot *Bingwa* in the five most populous member states. However, we concluded that focusing on regional implementation might be a more efficient approach. This is why earlier in November 2022, we launched the Eastern Africa regional implementation through a successful call for participation. We are working with Saving Lives and Livelihoods implementing partners, including Ministries of Health in the focus countries, the Mastercard Foundation, the German Development agency GIZ, Red Cross, AMREF Health Africa, and other relevant stakeholders to mobilize as many people as possible to get vaccinated. We are about to launch *Bingwa* in Southern Africa before the end of the year, and it will be extended to Western Africa, Central Africa, and Northern Africa after that.

I should also mention that we work closely with GIZ and Trace TV to drive on-the-ground activations. We do this by mobilizing musicians and influencers to attract young people and amplify our call for Africa's youth and their communities to get vaccinated. During these activations, we set up vaccination centres targeting the unvaccinated and equipping the vaccinated with information on how to best engage their peers and families to get vaccinated.

With the support that we have received from the Mastercard Foundation, we intend to recruit full-time staff to support the program.

3

Q: As the continent continues to vaccinate against COVID-19, what is the Africa CDC's message to youth across the continent?

Like Dr. Ahmed Ogwell Ouma, the Acting Director at the Africa CDC, says, we cannot address this challenge if Africa's youth are not a part of the solution. First, we need them to come out and get vaccinated so that they can protect themselves and their families. Secondly, we urge them to mobilize more of their peers and their communities to also get vaccinated.

4

Q: Any final words?

We appreciate the support of the Mastercard Foundation to the Africa CDC through the Saving Lives and Livelihoods initiative. We are especially grateful that the *Bingwa* Initiative is now part and parcel of Saving Lives and Livelihoods and look forward to continued support and collaboration as the initiative evolves to accelerate vaccination, specifically among Africa's youth.

Additionally, we will review our impact so far and plan for the coming year to make the *Bingwa* Initiative successful in the five regions we have mapped, alongside our (implementing) partner. Thank you.



Spotlight on Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

Snapshot of key successes for COVID-19 vaccination acceleration in Southern Africa.

Community mobilization in the streets of Lusaka, Zambia

In the lead up to the regional launch for Saving Lives and Livelihoods in Southern Africa, the Zambia Red Cross Society engaged 50 community volunteers to mobilize people in the capital, Lusaka, for COVID-19 vaccinations. The volunteers mobilized the public through door-to-door visits, engagements in malls, shops, factories, and schools. A total of 1,500 households and 4,188 individuals were reached with COVID-19 vaccination messages.

During the four-day engagement, volunteers identified different reasons why people are not getting vaccinated: misperceptions that COVID-19 is over; misperceptions that COVID-19 is no longer deadly; concerns about vaccine promoters being unvaccinated, including health care workers; and, concerns about the vaccine’s side effects.



A community volunteer engaging with a community member in Lusaka, Zambia.

Malawi conducts a KAP survey in Lilongwe, Blantyre, and Mzuzu

Malawi Saving Lives and Livelihoods RCCE is conducting a Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices (KAP) survey to identify and understand issues related to hesitancy and rumours surrounding COVID-19 vaccines. This will contribute to understanding and finding community-based solutions for increasing vaccination rates in the country.



A community-based volunteer collects data for the KAP survey in Ndirande Ward, Blantyre, Malawi.

Engaging public transport owners and drivers in Lesotho

Public transport owners and drivers of public transit are critical stakeholders for RCCE due to their diverse network. They frequently interact with clients, enabling them to have meaningful discussions, both formal and informal. This is why the RCCE is encouraging public transit owners and drivers to incorporate COVID-19 vaccination messages in their conversations.



Volunteers from the Lesotho Red Cross encourage community members in Khubetsoana to vaccinate against COVID-19.



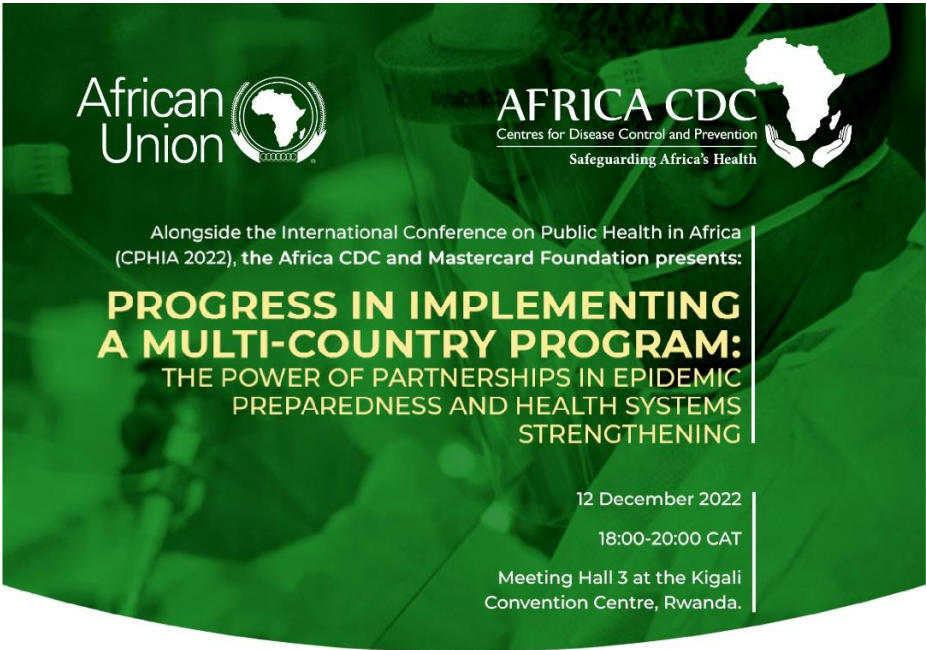
The Lesotho Red Cross Society Volunteers also focus on industrial sites. Volunteers are pictured here engaging with workers during their break to discuss COVID-19 vaccination.

Other important developments

Africa CDC Announces Second Annual International Conference on Public Health in Africa 2022

Taking place between December 13-15, [2022](#), in Kigali, Rwanda, the conference theme is *Preparedness for future Pandemics and Post-Pandemic Recovery: Africa at a Crossroad*. The forum provides a unique opportunity for African leaders, researchers, [policymakers](#), and stakeholders to exchange scientific findings and public health perspectives. In addition, it provides a unique opportunity to collaborate on research, innovation, and public health.

[Read more](#)



Consultative workshop on Revised COVID-19 Testing and Surveillance Strategy

The Africa CDC, in collaboration with the Africa Society for Laboratory Medicine, Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics, and Clinton Health Access Initiative, held a consultative workshop on November 16, on the Revised COVID-19 Testing and Surveillance Strategy. The theme was ‘Transitioning from Emergency Response to Integration into Routine Healthcare Services’. This three-day forum brought together laboratory directors, surveillance leads, and incident managers for COVID-19 from the 46 African Union members states to jointly deliberate, explore, and formulate practical approaches and interventions that will foster integration and expansion of COVID-19 testing services and surveillance into routine health care service while leveraging existing structures within other disease programs. [Read more.](#)



Other important developments

Making Africa's vaccine manufacturing sustainable

According to Dr. Ahmed Omgwelle Ouma, the Acting Director at the Africa CDC, and Dr. Seth Berkley, a medical doctor and infectious disease epidemiologist, even as COVID-19 continues to spread, the risk of another pandemic occurring on a similar scale is now increasing, by as much as 2 percent each year. This rise is partly driven by climate change, which also threatens to trigger a range of dire public health consequences, especially in Africa. [Read more.](#)



Africa CDC urges more COVID-19 testing as cases rise

Africa CDC is urging authorities across the continent to step up COVID-19 testing amid a concerning rise in new cases in some countries. [Read more.](#)

