

Communiqué - GRID3 Mapping for Health

Kinshasa, 25 November 2021 - For immediate release

After 18 months of work, GRID3 Mapping for Health convened national stakeholders for "Towards digital microplanning," a forum promoting innovative geospatial data and gender equity solutions that will support immunisation interventions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The event was opened by the Director General of Disease Control and the Deputy Director of the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI). Participants included representatives of the provincial health divisions of the Ministry of Health, Hygiene and Prevention (from Kinshasa, Kwilu, Kasai, Kasai Oriental, Lomami, Haut Katanga, and Haut Lomami provinces) and other national and international partners (such as the Institut National de la Statistique-Bureau Central du Recensement, the Division du Système National d'Information Sanitaire, the Agence Nationale d'Ingénierie Clinique d'Information et d'Informatique de Santé, the National Programme for the Elimination of Cholera and the Control of Other Diarrhoeal Diseases, UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH), the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), and Interchurch Medical Assistance.

The four days of workshops and discussions focused on the production, implementation, and use of innovative solutions that will, when integrated into health area immunisation plans, improve child immunisation coverage and move the DRC towards digital (and therefore more accurate) immunisation planning.

The event covered the project's various work areas:

- Maps of localities, health facilities, and health areas in the target provinces
- High-resolution estimates of the target populations' distributions and characteristics
- National estimates of population movements
- Integrated gender analysis and equity considerations
- Micro-planning support through the creation of geo-referenced support documents

Participants discussed the challenges posed by a lack of data on population and infrastructure (such as the location of villages, towns, and children to be immunised), or by the lack of knowledge on gender equity (which create barriers to/ discrimination in immunisation). The forum also served as a platform to assess the opportunities presented by the new maps; to review the estimates and statistics that have been produced by the project; and to determine how these solutions can be implemented in each target province's specific context.

Observations from participants

- Lack of sites for fixed sessions (vaccinations in existing facilities) or insufficient advanced sites (other facilities or pop-ups) often result in inadequate and inequitable delivery of immunisation services.
- Representative population estimates, both static and dynamic, provide knowledge of the number and movements of populations at the territorial and regional levels.
- Failure to consider equity issues, particularly gender, by health care providers and professionals leads to discrimination, injustice, inequality, inequity, and inefficiency in immunisation services.

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- The georeferenced support documents for microplanning were presented as simple tools for specifying the type of session, its exact location, the population to be covered, its frequency, and the villages or localities to be covered in order to improve immunisation coverage in a given health area.

Recommendations

- Focus on the Infirmiers Titulaires as the main users/beneficiaries of such tools.
- Establish a system of data cleaning before use and implement strategies to reduce errors in data collection.
- Integrate actual distances or accessibility indices into microplanning support maps.
- Continue to validate the maps in the provinces to clarify interpretations of the maps.
- In the case of optimising the placement of immunisation sites (fixed and advanced) where sites are classified into three priority categories, clarify the meaning and visualisation of the different categories.
- Identify gender considerations in the different interventions.

The forum was organised by the Flowminder Foundation and Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) at Columbia University, the two bodies delivering the GRID3 Mapping for Health project, an initiative by the Ministry of Health, Hygiene and Prevention that is implemented in partnership with the EPI and funded by Gavi (through its INFUSE programme).

END

Notes for editors

About GRID3 Mapping for Health in DRC

The GRID3 Mapping for Health in DRC project is an initiative of the Ministry of Health in DRC, supported by Gavi through its INFUSE programme. The project is carried out in partnership with the Flowminder Foundation and the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) at Columbia University. The project aims to strengthen the effectiveness and equity of immunisation interventions in DRC by providing solutions that make use of high-resolution geospatial data. The project directly supports DRC's Mashako Plan objective of increasing immunisation coverage in priority provinces.

www.grid3.org

About Flowminder

Flowminder is one of the core partners and founders of the GRID3 programme. Flowminder is a Swedish non-profit foundation with two subsidiaries in the UK and Switzerland, respectively. Its aim is to improve the well-being of vulnerable populations in low- and middle-income countries through the use of mobile operator data, geospatial data, and survey data. Flowminder provides information and capacity building services to governments, telephone operators, national and international agencies, and researchers in low- and middle-income countries for humanitarian and development purposes.

www.flowminder.org

About the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN)

CIESIN is one of the core partners and founders of the GRID3 programme. CIESIN is a research center within the [Columbia Climate School](http://ColumbiaClimateSchool). Its mission is to provide access to and enhance the use of information



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worldwide, advancing understanding of human interactions in the environment and serving the needs of science and public and private decision making. CIESIN works at the intersection of the social, natural, and information sciences, and specialises in on-line data and information management, spatial data integration and training, and interdisciplinary research related to human interactions in the environment.