

Talking points

This month, we are asking you to visit or write to your MP, explaining why you support the work of DFID to overcome poverty; why it must be kept as an independent government department; and why, right now, it is vital for it to continue to support Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. These talking points on the importance of maintaining an independent DFID, and on the UK's support for Gavi, should help you guide the conversation.

An independent DFID

- DFID is a world-leading international development agency that delivers UK aid effectively to those who need it most. For example, between January 2015 and December 2017, UK aid supported immunisation of over 56 million children, saving 990,000 lives.
- It is vital to continue to deliver UK aid effectively and transparently, which can only be done by retaining DFID as an independent government department with oversight of all UK aid spending.
- International development must continue to be represented at Ministerial level in Cabinet.
- All government departments spending UK aid money should reach the high level of quality and transparency of DFID itself.
- DFID must retain its technical expertise as a world-leading development agency. In countries such as Australia and Canada, where development agencies and foreign ministries have merged, the quality of some aid programmes has reduced.

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

- Gavi is a global public-private partnership, involving donor governments, recipient country governments, UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank, philanthropic organisations, civil society and the private sector.
- Gavi was established in 2000 with the mission to save children's lives and protect people's health by increasing equitable use of vaccines in lower-income countries.
- Since 2016, Gavi has immunised 198 million children. Since it was founded, Gavi programmes have also helped prevent 13 million future deaths and helped strengthen health systems in over 60 countries.
- Immunisation rates have made slow progress over the last decade, so a fully-funded Gavi is vital. During the period 2021-2015, Gavi aims to immunise 300 million more children, help strengthen countries' healthcare systems, work with vaccine manufacturers to improve poor countries' access to vaccines, and increase the number of infectious diseases they vaccinate against.
- The UK should commit to funding at least 25% of Gavi's replenishment, around £1.65 billion.

Case Study: Good Data Saves Lives

With Gavi support, digital record-keeping is helping transform immunisation in the Ngorongoro region of Tanzania.

A new Electronic Immunisation Register (EIR) system now allows children's immunisation status to be easily tracked as they move between health facilities, clinics and outreach sessions.

This is particularly important when providing healthcare to Maasai, whose children are often invisible to health workers, making it difficult to ensure they receive all their vaccinations, on time. Maasai often live in remote communities in rural areas that are difficult to reach, and because many are nomadic, they do not always attend the same clinics.

The EIR enables health workers to proactively track which children are missing out or defaulting. In the past, this would involve regularly going through each child's paper records, a time consuming and error-prone process. Local Assistant Medical Officers like Bakari Shemagembe (pictured, far-left) use electronic tablets which automatically compile this information, enabling them to follow up with parents by text message or via tribal leaders. This, he says, has helped boost immunisation coverage in his Nainokanoka district from just 59% in 2013 to above 97% in 2018.

The EIR system has also been integrated with a national electronic vaccine supply level monitor. This allows health workers like Bakari to track how many vaccines are in stock, as they prepare for vaccination sessions in their clinic or community. With colleagues, they can coordinate stock levels and order new supplies. This helps them plan ahead, ensuring they have enough vaccine doses to immunise all children that attend, regardless of how far they have journeyed. Meanwhile, public health professionals can manage stock levels across the country, anticipating where demand will occur, reducing stock-outs and wastage.

With Gavi support, Tanzania plans to supply more tablets and train other health workers in other districts. The EIR has been so successful that the wider Tanga region is now embracing these digital platforms, with further plans to implement EIR across the country.

Shemagembe says he could never go back to a paper-only system. Because the introduction of the electronic registries now means that each time he comes across an infant, whether they have walked three hours to his clinic or if he meets them out in the field, he can be confident in knowing what vaccines that child needs, ensuring they will not be left behind.

Source: Gavi, 2018. [Read the full story here](#) or [watch a short clip](#).



Maasai tribespeople arrive for a health clinic in Ngongoro



Health worker Bakari Shemagembe using a tablet to access children's immunisation records