

INCREASING COVID 19 VACCINE UPTAKE THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COORDINATION IN NAKURU COUNTY

BACKGROUND

COVID-19 vaccines have played a crucial role in bolstering immunity across the population, resulting in a notable decline in infections. Increased vaccination was associated with reduced spread of new infections, hospitalizations, and fatalities. However, the introduction of the vaccines led to misinformation and mistrust alleging low efficacy and safety. This contributed to hesitancy within communities. This hesitancy was highest in marginalized communities, particularly in rural areas.

METHODOLOGY

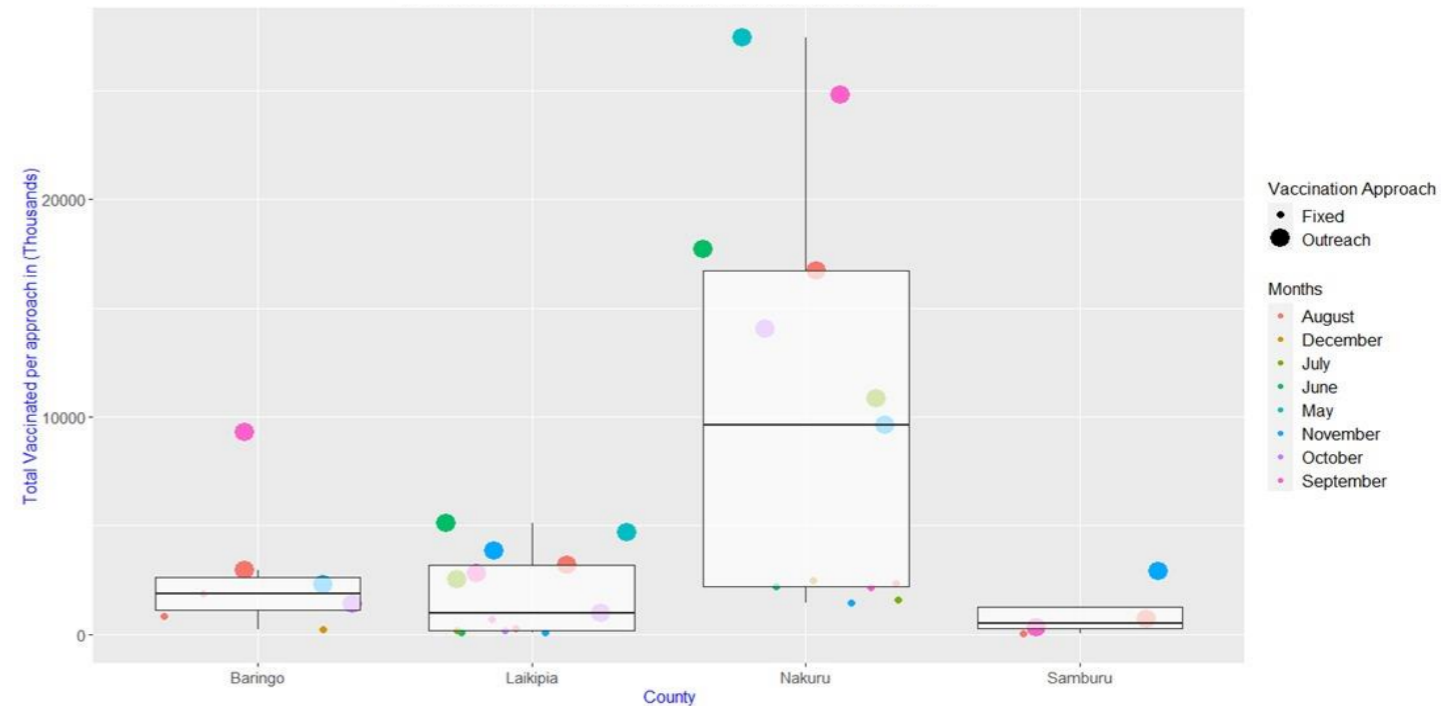
From April 2022, USAID Tujenge Jamii spearheaded a community-driven intervention to boost demand for and overcome access barriers to COVID-19 vaccination. This initiative fostered collaboration between the health, education, security, agriculture, and business sectors. Mobilization was done through radio shows, community meetings, town hall gatherings, and targeted sensitization to dispel the misinformation. A group of COVID-19 vaccination ambassadors were engaged.

RESULTS



COVID-19 Vaccination Outreach at Kiptororo Ward, Nakuru County.

COVID-19 Vaccination Output for Fixed sites and Outreaches



- 10 radio talk shows reached 95,000 people per show. 1,350 posters were distributed, focusing on vaccine safety, and efficacy, and covering other topics such as male virility.
- Vaccination coverage increased from 36.7% (April 2022) to 45.7% (November 2022).

CONCLUSIONS

- Targeting gatekeepers for sensitization and mobilizing communities helps overcome barriers to accessing and delivering services.
- Through active community engagement, strong connections are established which improve coordination, resulting in increased utilization of health services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is need for community interventions which address hesitancy through health education with messaging centered on vaccine benefits.
- Social mobilizations and messaging through trusted sources such as radio, is critical in addressing fear of side effects and misinformation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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