

# Evaluation of effectiveness of public health communication campaign on 2018 immunization programme in Agege Local Government, Lagos State, Nigeria

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## **ABSTRACT**

Evaluation is an important component of a public health communication campaign. It enables the communication specialist to critically assess his/her strategy and answer the question: How did we perform? What areas do we need to improve? How did the audience respond to the messages? This study assessed a Public Health Communication Campaign. It examined the strategies used to execute the communication campaign undertaken in Agege - Local Government of Lagos State during the 180 round of the 2018 National Immunization Plus days. Three research questions were formulated to examine the strategies adopted, the challenges and the effectiveness of the campaign. The study adopted survey research method, supplemented with key informant interview technique. Structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data while an interview guide was used to get information from two key health officials of the local government in charge of mobilization and sensitization for the exercise. The findings showed that the strategies were effective in that the respondents allowed their child/ward to be immunized during the 2018 1<sup>st</sup> round of NIPDs in Agege LGA. Secondly, 95% of respondents voluntarily released their child/ward for the immunization during the 2018 1<sup>st</sup> round of NIPDs in Agege LGA.

**Key Words:** Evaluation, Effectiveness, Public Health Campaigns, Immunization Plus Programme.

## **Introduction**

Immunization against childhood diseases such as diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio and measles is one of the most important means of preventing childhood morbidity and mortality. Achieving and maintaining high levels of immunization coverage must therefore be a priority for all health systems. (Ophori, Tula, Ikpo 2014). Every year, more than 10 million children in low and middle-income countries die before they reach their fifth birthdays. Most die because they do not access effective interventions that would combat common and preventable childhood illnesses. Infant immunization is considered essential for improving infant and child survival (WHO, 2017). Although global immunization coverage has increased during the past decade, African Region has consistently fallen behind (WHO (2017)). In response to challenges in global immunization, WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) set up the Global Immunization Vision and Strategy (GIVS) in

2003. The chief goal of GIVS is to reduce illness and death (WHO: 2017). Between 2000 and 2004, the African region made progress in increasing routine immunization coverage. Although the region fell well short of the target of 80% of countries achieving at least 80% coverage nationwide, coverage increased in a majority of countries. Despite this, more than one third of African Region districts did not acquire 50% DTP-3 coverage by the end of 2004 (Abdulkarim, 2011, cited in WHO (2017)).

Oku, Oyo-Ita, Glenton (2017) state that the role of health communication in vaccination programmes cannot be overemphasized. It has contributed significantly to creating and sustaining demand for vaccination services and improving vaccination coverage. Effective communication could improve uptake of childhood vaccination, address incomplete vaccination or missed children, further strengthen routine immunization programmes, and encourage the use of new and underused vaccines. Oku, Oyo-Ita, Glenton (2017).

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Communication is an invaluable tool in routine and campaign childhood vaccination activities, as well as in other health programmes. Effective communication strategies have possibility of complementing and boosting other immunization components, such as service provision, quality of care, capacity- building and the skills of health personnel, and disease notification and surveillance to bring forth success (Open Education, 2017),

Communication interventions have made significant contributions to the immunization coverage in Nigeria in regards to the behavioural change of knowledge, attitude and practice of the decision makers and caregivers. The immunization programme in Nigeria outlines communication objectives for each audience category. Thus, the communication objectives entailed informative and educative messages to induce behavioural changes with aid of multiple communication approaches (MacDonald, Guirguis, the SAGE Working Group on Vaccine Hesitancy (2015). Numerous communication interventions have been implemented with the aim of increasing acceptance of routine immunization and breaking the transmission of wild poliovirus and other vaccine preventable diseases. However, implementing these communication interventions has been challenging especially at the grass root where the beneficiaries reside. The challenges could be addressed when researches are embarked upon to identify the communication shortcomings and propose solutions. As a result, the thrust of this study is to examine the influence of communication campaigns on the success of immunization exercises at the local level, specifically in Agege Local Government Area, Lagos State.

### **Research Questions**

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What were the communication campaign strategies adopted in the first round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) in Agege Local Government Area (LGA), Lagos State?
2. What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of the communication campaign strategies in the first round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) in Agege Local Government Area (LGA), Lagos State?
3. How effective were the communication campaign strategies adopted in the first

round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) in Agege Local Government Area (LGA), Lagos State?

### **2018 Immunization in Lagos**

Lagos State in the South West is the most economically important state of Nigeria and the nation's largest urban area with an estimated population of over twenty one million. The state consists of twenty Local Government Areas (LGAs) and thirty two Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs), and one of the most populated state in the country with land Area of 3,474 km<sup>2</sup> (1,341sq ml).

The health care system in Lagos State is highly graded in the country. Musbau R. (2017) posits that when it comes to matters of health, Lagos is listed among States in the “high end” class because of the high number and variety of general and specialist health facilities on offer. Statistics from the Healthcare Facilities Monitoring and Accreditation Agency, HEFAMAA, shows that in Lagos, there are 26 registered General Hospitals, 256 public healthcare centers, 2,886 private hospitals or specialist clinics and laboratories or diagnostic centers in addition to an estimated 160 traditional medical centres.

In 2018, the state started the annual immunization programmes with measles vaccination campaign to cover over 3.6 million children in the state, regardless of whether they had been immunized against measles in the past. Working towards the success of the campaign, various programmes were mapped out.

The objective of the campaign was to immunise at least 95 per cent of children aged nine months to five years with measles vaccine in all local government areas regardless of their previous immunization status. The measles vaccination campaign was implemented in two streams, the first phase was held in Alimosho, Agege, Ajeromi-Ifelodun, Amuwo-Odofin, Epe, Ikorodu, Lagos Island, Lagos Mainland, Mushin and Ojo local government areas between 17 and March 22, 2018 and the second stream was held from March 22 to 29, 2018 in Apapa, Badagry, Eti-Osa, Ibeju-Lekki, Ikeja, Ifako-Ijaiye, Kosofe, Oshodi-Isolo, Somolu and Surulere LGAs.

The mop-up exercises were carried out for the first and second streams from March 21-22 and March 28-29, respectively in wards and communities adjudged not to have been adequately covered, as set out in the objectives of the campaign.

As part of Lagos State Government's efforts to enhancing immunization exercises and fight against vaccine preventable diseases, several communication strategies are initiated which include:

- i. Sensitization, advocacy seminars and some training sessions were conducted to strengthen the capacity of relevant health workers.
- ii. Community dialogues with relevant stakeholders.
- iii. Advocacy meetings with LGA Chairmen, Ward Councillors, Supervisory Councillors for Health among others.
- iv. Religious platform (mosque and church) announcements.
- v. Community mobilization and awareness programmes (Town announcements).
- vi. Advocacy meetings with key traditional and religious leaders.
- vii. LGA social mobilizers are moving within communities to sensitize and mobilize citizenry.
- viii. Mass media campaigns (jingles/programmes).
- ix. Organising press conferences and briefings to create awareness.

### **Method of Study**

The study thus adopted survey research method, supplemented with key informant interview technique as its strategy in examining the communication strategies and their effectiveness on the immunization exercise. The dual techniques of research gave room to observe the phenomenon from different points of view so as to improve the accuracy of research findings. Neuman (2014) notes that mixing approaches, as adopted in this study, could be scientifically rigorous and challenging, but it enables researchers to draw on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Participants in the 2018 immunization exercise in Agege Local Government Area (LGA), of Lagos State constituted the population of study. They included nursing mothers, parents and guardians. The selection of this population is based on the fact that they are the regular caregivers and participants in immunization exercises. The Key informants interviewed were selected from the related health institutions in the local government area as those who participated in immunization campaign, to be able to give insight into the arguments. Agege Local Government is

presently one of the twenty local government areas in Lagos according to Nigeria's constitution.

Structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data for the study. According to Ajala (2009) cited by Lagada-Abayomi (2015), choice of questionnaire is based on its ability to aid the researcher in the collection of a large volume of data from respondents simultaneously. The questionnaire used in this study was comprised of multiple choice questions (close-ended questions) and open ended questions. The respondents were selected largely from the non-indigenes segments of the wards in Agege local government who in the past have shown reluctance to immunize their children during the previous immunization campaigns.

The key informants interviewed for the study are the Chief Health Education Officer, Agege Local Government who is in charge of mobilizing and sensitizing participants for immunization exercises in Agege LGA, and the Apex Community Health Officer in Orile-Agege who is in charge of coordinating and supervising other community health workers for immunization and other health related campaigns in Orile-Agege Primary Health Centres. These are the top health officers who participated in the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) in Agege LGA, hence, their responses provided more accurate details to complement the outcome of the survey, and consequently entrenched the accuracy of the research findings. An interview guide was used to conduct the interview with the key informants. The interviews were conducted in their respective offices. For secondary data, available reports issued at the end of the immunization campaign were reviewed to give critical analysis to the findings.

The questionnaire, 315 copies, was administered to the respondents in seven out of the 13 wards in Agege Local Government. The seven wards were purposively chosen where non-Yoruba's were more populated in the LGA. This is because northerners who pre-dominate in those seven wards have been immunization-reluctant in the past. 289 questionnaire were properly filled and returned to represent the data for this study. The collated data which formed 91.8% of the administered questionnaires formed first data of the study, while the transcribed interviews of two key informants who are top health officers that participated in the 2018 Immunization exercises in Agege Local

Government Area were also used.

## **Results**

**RQ1:** What were the communication campaign strategies adopted in the first round of Year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days in Agege Local Government Area (LGA), Lagos State?

The two key informants the Chief Health Education, Agege Local Government and the Apex Community Health in Orile – Agege agreed that the communication strategies employed to reach the target populations and the caregivers were of multi-faceted which include the following:

### **1. Advocacy visits to the key stakeholders**

The preparation of immunization campaigns in Agege Local Government Area (LGA) kicked off with the planning meetings within the LGA team which consists of senior health officers in the LGA. They are Medical Officer of Health (MOH), Local Immunization Officer (LIO), Cold Chain Officer (CCO), Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (M&EO), Health Educator (HE), Disease Surveillance Officer (DSO), Apex Nursing Officer and Apex Community Health Officer. In regards to the meeting on the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs), members discussed and deliberated on the plans towards implementing the campaign successfully. Thereafter, each officer was requested to prepare work plan for his/her department. The work plan contains performance, objectives, responsibilities, time frame and the outcome expected of the work plan. The heads of the departments returned for another LGA team meeting to submit their work plan for deliberation and necessary adjustment.

The next line of action was to pay **advocacy visit** to the Chairman of Agege Local Government Area and his management team, to include the Supervisory Counselors and a meeting was scheduled to discuss the programme. The meeting was held at the Agege LGA Headquater, Stadium B/stop, Agege. The LGA leadership was properly briefed on the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIDPs) exercise. Each head of departments presented his/her plan work and stated the necessary interventions expected of the government team. The Chief Health Educator (CHE), who shoulders the responsibilities of mobilization and sensitization of participants, also presented her work plan with regards to the implementation of the immunization exercise. The CHE went further to pay advocacy visits to the relevant stakeholders for sensitizations and

interventions.

### **Advocacy Meeting with Social Mobilization Committee**

This is the committee that comprises of major stakeholders in Agege LGA, as the representatives of Community Based Organizations (CBOs), ethnic groups, traditional leaders, religious leaders, marketers, community development associations amongst others. In the same vein, the Social Mobilization Committee in the area consists of Olu of Agege, Iyaloja of Agege, Seriki of Hausa Community, EzeNdigbo of Agege and major stakeholders. The committee meets with government representatives at both the state and local government level to discuss issues pertaining to health care. Through this, it avails the opportunity to persuade the government at all levels on issues that could be favourable at the local level. As a result, the LGA team regularly holds meeting with the committee, especially on some issues that could not be tackled at the local government level. Such issue would be raised at the state level meeting and solution could be possibly proffered. The Chief Health Education Officer established the important role played by the committee in the LGA. According to her:

There are some issues, even as civil servants, that we don't really have the boldness to say. But the Social Mobilization Committee' chairmen will be able to confront the commissioner.

The Chief Health Education Officer and her team held a meeting with the committee to recommend community mobilizers for the first round of 2018 Immunization Plus Days (NIDPs). The house-to-house mobilizers were used to mobilize members of the community to participate in the programme. In the process, the group met with a committee, **Ward Health Committees (WHC)** to choose such community mobilizers. The WHC discharge similar responsibly of SMC but at the ward levels of the LGA and work with their respective Primary Health Centres.

### **Advocacy meeting with Community Based Organizations (CBOs)**

The Chief Health Education Officer and her team held advocacy meetings with various organizations operating in Agege LGA to sensitize them on the immunization programme.

Some meeting were held at the Agege main market in Sango area. The Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA) and traditional medicine materials sellers were also included in the sensitization activities to enable them mobilize their patronizers to receive the immunization for their children/wards.

#### **Advocacy visit/meeting with relevant school authorities in Agege LGA**

Advocacy visits were paid to some relevant institutions such as Association of Private School Proprietors/Proprietress, Education Secretary of the LGA and others to sensitize them on the immunization scheme and also to seek for their support towards the implementation of the programme. Meetings were held with various managements of kindergarten/primary schools and advocacy efforts were equally made. Letters were there afterwards issued to the schools for parents to be abreast of the programme, and most importantly to see the need for their consent to immunize their children/wards.

#### **Advocacy visits/meetings with traditional leaders in Agege LGA**

The Chief Health Education Officer and her team also paid visits to the traditional leaders in the LGA. The purpose of the visit was to sensitize the traditional leaders on the importance of the immunization exercise as well as to seek their support towards effective implementation of the programme. According to the Chief Health Educator, the traditional rulers in the community which include Obas, Baales (High Chiefs), Seriki (Head of Hausa community), Eze Ndigbo and heads of other ethnic groups in Agege LGA were included in the awareness campaign. In her words:

We visited our traditional leaders in the Agege LGA. Like in Agege, we have three (3) Obas - Olu of Agege, Ologba and Alagege, and all our Baales (High Chiefs), to inform them of the immunization. At times, a Baale can tell me as the Health Educator to come to the meeting of Council of Baales at a particular date. I normally leverage on that too to tell them of our activities during such meetings.

This is to establish the essence of engaging traditional leaders in creating awareness and

sensitization at the grass root. They are believed to be more familiar with the people at the grass root and consequently have positive impact in sharing information with them. This also includes holding meetings with members of various ethnic groups in the LGA, such as Hausa, Igbo Efik/Ibibio, Ibir, Igara, Igala, Tapa, Egun and other ethnic group at the consent of their leaders. Their respective weekly meetings were largely used as for a to sensitize them on the immunization campaign.

## **2. Community Dialogue**

This is the second major communication channel through which participants were massively mobilized for the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) in Agege LGA. As the name implies, 'Community Dialogue', the dialogue involves the people living in the same geographical area, cum various ethnic, religious and other groups. So, the community leaders would be involved and also invite various stakeholders in the area. This is a follow up of the advocacy visits and meetings with the major stakeholders. The meetings discussed and addressed lingering issues that could hinder a smooth implementation of the NIPDs in a community. Members of a community, ethnic groups, associations or organizations were given privilege in this forum to express their views or perceived shortcomings on any immunization exercise. The issues were discussed together and the CHE was able to address the issues to their conviction. This is an interpersonal communication approach that requires the health educators to personally stand before the group of various stakeholders and able to address issues, though it demands high commitment of the health workers. The CHE recast her experience with the Hausa community during the first round of 2018 NIPDs:

But the only thing is that I would be having meetings with men and women separately. You know they don't mingle together. After sensitizing men, they would take me to women separately to sensitize them, so everybody can be on the same page.

The community dialogue is perceived to be one of the most effective communication strategies adopted by Agege LGA in implementing the first round of 2018 NIPDs, and virtually applicable to other immunization exercises as

confirmed by the key informants interviewed. The rationale behind this argument is that as an interpersonal means of communication, members of the community were able to express their differences to the health workers face-to-face, with issues being possibly addressed immediately. This would eventually create an enabling surface for other communication channels to work efficiently. The community dialogue was held in all the thirteen (13) wards of Agege LGA during the first round of the 2018 NIPDs.

### **3. Compound Meeting**

This is another communication strategy adopted by Agege Local Government during the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) to mobilize participants. This approach is meant to address some specific issues bordering a particular unit of the community that could possibly prevent smooth running of the immunization exercise in the area. For instance, a particular house in a street might refuse to accept vaccines for its children as a result of a negative attitude towards immunizations. Having observed the trend, the health workers, particularly the health education officers, would visit the owner or the coordinator of the house and later hold meeting with the entire members of the house to address the issue and correct the notions. This approach was also adopted during this immunization campaign, through which some units expressed their grudges and opinion on immunization exercises. Thereafter, the differences were addressed amicably. Consequently, virtually all the units in the area accepted and received the vaccine for their children/wards. This, hence, established the essence of compound meeting.

### **4. Collaboration with MDAs**

This is another communication strategy engaged by Agege Local Government to improve the coverage rate of the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs). This is a partnership approach with the related ministries, departments and agencies in the LGA to be able to create enabling atmosphere for the smooth running of the immunization campaign in all the institutions. According the Chief Health Education Officer, the heads of Education Department, Women and Poverty Alleviation Affairs, Agriculture Departments among others, were involved in the collaboration during the first round of the 2018 NIPDs. For instance, a school might refuse to accept the immunization

for its children, but with the intervention of Education Department of the local government, such a school may be called to order.

### **5. Training of the community mobilizers**

This was the follow-up action after several advocacy visits and meetings with the relevant stakeholders in Agege LGA. This entailed training and retraining of the community mobilizers including announcers, who were recommended by the Social Mobilization Committee, to assist in mobilizing people from their respective wards for the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs). They engaged in house-to-house mobilization within their respective wards and could visit members of the ward at any available time to sensitize them. According to the Chief Health Education Officer, the training process involves educating the mobilizers on the significance of a particular vaccine to children, like this vaccine which was meant for polio eradication. Also, the community mobilizers were taken on the application of the vaccine which was oral and two drops for each child. Venue, date and time of the exercise as well as mobilization skills were included in the trainings.

### **6. Production of below-the-line media**

This was the stage of decision making in producing eye-see items for immunization campaigns such as banners, hand bills, postals and other literature. The banners which contain several information about the programme, such as duration, date, time, places of receiving the vaccines, were hung at various strategic areas to create awareness. Postals were pasted across the community while hand bills and other materials were distributed among people at the health centres, community meetings and other related fora to create awareness and sensitize people.

### **7. Motor rally campaigns**

This is another communication approach employed by the health workers at Agege LGA to mobilize participants for the implementation of the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs). This is a mobile measure of sensitizing residents on the incoming immunization exercise. This was intensively used to complement the advocacy visits and meetings with the stakeholders. Therefore, the campaign was able to reach residents at the grass root. According to the Chief Health Education Officer, an open roof vehicle was hired to convey the announcers with

use of public address system (PAS) and band set of drums to create awareness for the programme. The vehicle stopped in strategic locations (such as markets, junctions, streets, motor parks) to announce and sensitize people about the immunization programme. The other type of the motor rally is the use of jingles to disseminate information through vehicle. The audio jingle was produced by the state government to sensitize people at the local government areas, hence there was uniformity in the contents across all the local government areas of Lagos State. The jingles were produced in four major languages – English, Hausa, Pidgin and Yoruba, spoken in Agege community.

The process sometimes involved street sensitization whereby the announcers boarded off vehicle and trekked down a street or a market with public address system to sensitize people. This approach played vital roles at disseminating information to the door step of the residents as was revealed in the outcome of the study's survey. The Community Health Apex Officer in Orile-Agege, who was the second key informant, also stressed the significance of this communication approach:

The motorized rally is to intensify what you have given the SMC. While you play drum and sing, people see you dancing on the road. There and then you give them information again directly. The mobilizers used the venues to distribute postals, hand bills and other materials among the residents.

#### **8. Entertainment rally show**

This is another mobile sensitization approach to mobilize participants for the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs). The concept involves adapting entertainment measures infused into sensitizations to attract participants. According to the Chief Health Education Officer, the mascot was employed to attract children. And while the children were outside, some of their parents came out to know what was happening. So, the venue was leveraged upon to sensitize parents and guidance on the immunization programme, while postals and hand bills were shared among them.

#### **9. Employment of more interpreters for indigenous languages**

The outcome of the research attests to the essence of local languages in the implementation of the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) in Agege LGA. Interpreters were employed as ad hoc officers in mobilization

capacity. The mobilizers accompanied the health educators to different advocacy visits and meetings as well as other community dialogues and compound meetings to interpret in their respective languages. This embraced the clarity of messages to members of the ethnic group and averted any possible misconception. The Chief Community Health Officer asserted that introduction of Hausa language through the use of interpreters in all processes was helpful in the campaign to increase coverage. He said this:

Considering the problem we have been having with the Hausa community, I will rather say this time around we are able to penetrate the Hausa community, because we were able to involve the youths of Hausa community in all our planning. At least we got about five of them that worked along with us. So Hausa language really gave us the highest figure.

The Health Education Officer also testified to this trend when she insisted to use interpreters in any community dialogues or meetings with other ethnic groups other than Yoruba speakers, to interpret discussions and speeches in order to avert information misconception. This, to a large extent, enhanced smooth communication.

#### **10. Radio and Television**

Radio and television were also among the communication channels through which messages on the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) passed to people. Some jingles and announcement were made by the state government on the programme through the channels. However, the traditional media did not have much influence on the reception of the information by the participants.

The two key informants, Mr. Olugbile Ebenezer Temitope, the Apex Community Health Officer in Orile-Agege and Mrs. Adesola Hunfor, the Chief Education Officer, Agege Local Government both agreed that the communication strategies employed to reach the target populations were mostly void of traditional media, though jingles and public service announcements were made on state-owned broadcast media but through multiple interpersonal communication approaches. Olugbile added that:

The communication strategy we

used mostly is advocacy. Advocacy to the stakeholders, like the Chairman, council manager, the Baales, the Obas in Council, the traditional ruler, the market women and the youth leaders too. Two, we had a motor rally campaign to sensitize the entire community, that there is going to be polio eradication campaign in the entire community. So also we went to the market to speak with mothers. You know, the market women, we speak with them to understand that during the period where going to have an eradication of polio vaccine that we are going to give people within the

community. Another one is the radio jingle that was done by the state government. State had the radio jingle that was targeted to sensitize people for awareness of what is coming up. So also we went to schools and we sensitise the school authority that there is programme that is coming up.

Both the key informants stated how mobilisation and sensitization through interpersonal communications were the main communication strategies while other means were complementing. The analysis further shows in the survey below.

**Table 1: Media through which Respondents received information during the 2018 1st round of NIPDs in Agege LGA**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	39	13.1
Television	10	3.5
Newspaper	10	3.5
Community Leaders	25	8.6
Posters/Handbills	32	11.1
Health Workers in Clinic/Hospital	22	7.6
Motor Rally/Street Sensitization	124	42.9
Friend/Relations	18	6.2
Multiple Sources	4	1.4
Others	5	1.7
Total	289	100.0

Table 1 showed that 124 (42.9%) of the respondents received information on immunization exercises through the motor rally or street sensitization, 39 (13.1%) of the respondents received theirs on radio, 32 (11.1%) of the respondents from posters and handbills, 25 (8.6%) of the respondents from community leaders, 22 (7%) from Health workers in Clinic/Hospital and 18 (6.2%) from friend/relations. More so, 4 (1.4%) and 5 (1.7%) of the respondents heard about the immunization exercise from multiple sources and others.

The deduction here is that below-the-line means of communication were more effective than the traditional media in passing information about the immunization exercise to the beneficiaries who were the respondents to this study. Based on the table 1 and the statements of the two key informants interviewed for this study, one can make the conclusion that below-the-line media and sensitization were the major communication strategies and the participants

generated data also confirmed the communication strategies employed.

**RQ2: What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of the communication campaign strategies in the first round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days in AgegeLGA, Lagos State?**

According to Mrs. Adesola Hunfor, the Chief Heath Education Officer, Agege Local Government, one of the challenges is that most of the mothers want foodstuff to come with the immunization especially since they have released their children before to receive vaccines. She said, “they will say “shebi you just came last month to come and give them immunization why are you bringing another one, tell those who that are sending you to bring rice, fish and all those stuff”. This literally means that immunizations for children were too many and even too consistent for their liking.

She added that through sensitization they were able to pass messages that the exercise is



not about rice and foodstuff. “That the health of our baby is very important by telling them that it is only when our baby is healthy that parent can continue daily activities”. She also mentioned being short of staff and unavailability of few mothers during the exercise were also challenging.

Also, Olugbile Ebenezer Temitope, the Apex Community Health Officer in Orile-Agege said that their major challenge is training health workers and also ad-hoc staff who are non-health workers to partake in the exercise and co-opting them to work together. He added that:

One of the challenges is the man power. You know when you want to recruit people to do this job it's not the health team alone; you need non health workers to assist you in doing this job. For you to recruit them you must train them and train

them. So by the time you are now through you set an exam, it is those one that pass exam that you employ. You now co-opt them to work with your health team. It is a lot of challenges to get those ones that will really work with you. But we are lucky today we are able to scale through. Another one is funds to pay the mobilizers at when due.

From this above, it has shown that challenges encountered in the implementation of the communication campaign strategies in the first round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days in Agege LGA, Lagos State are shortage of manpower, participants asking for gratifications, shortage of fund and making sure health workers and non-health workers worked together to achieve success.

**Table 2: Challenges encountered by respondents in the frequency of reception of the immunization messages**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Use of Foreign languages or local language you did not understand	50	17.3
Lack of electricity to receive the messages	22	7.6
Non-Usage of community/religious leaders to pass the messages	48	16.6
Unclear of the messages	38	13.1
So busy to access information	15	5.2
None	116	40.1
Total	289	100.0

Table 2 showed 116 (40.1%) of the respondents stated that they did not encounter challenges when receiving the immunization messages. 50 (17.3%) of the respondents said that the use of foreign language or local language they did not understand was their challenge. 48 (16.6%) of the respondents stated that Non-Usage of community/religious leaders to pass the messages in their area posited a challenge. 38 (13.1%) of the respondents mentioned ‘unclear messages’ as their challenge. 22 (7.6%) of the respondents said lack of electricity to receive the messages affected the rate of receiving the immunization message, while 15 (5.2%) of the respondents said they were too busy to access the information frequently. The above analysis showed that most of respondents experienced one challenge or the other in receiving the immunization messages as frequent as possible.

### **RQ 3: How effective were the communication campaign strategies employed in the first round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days in Agege LGA, Lagos State**

Mr Olugbile Ebenezer Temitope and Mrs. Adesola Hunfor who were the informants interviewed for this study stated that effectiveness of the message was based on interpersonal means of communication that is one-on-one sensitization and using health workers who spoke the target participants’ languages. Mr Olugbile Ebenezer Temitope, the Chief Community Health Apex Officer, Orile-Agege Primary Health Centre said this:

Whatever you do, if you don’t carry the stakeholders along it is as if you are not doing anything; so we went to meet leaders of the Hausa, Igbo and other communities. Since majority of us we don’t hear their

language, we need to go along with those people that hear their language. So it would really assists us to bridge the communication gap. Even along the line we are going we went there with pluses and other things we took along. We did motor rally campaigns with posters and handbills being translated in their language So to so many people that were used during the campaign, most of them are Yoruba speaking people. But notwithstanding they are literate though in a language, some will speak in English when they come across those they wanted to immunize. But as per communication, it was made in

Yoruba, in Pidgin, in Igbo and Hausa Language So, to those Hausa community, the people that hear Hausa language were used in that environment to immunize them. To those that does not understand Yoruba but speak Pidgin. People that understand Pidgin language were also used to do the programme. To me generally, communication has gone down to the grass root to everybody.

The effectiveness of the communication strategies adopted by Agege LGA towards implementation of the first round of 2018 National Immunization is further analysed through the survey:

**Table 3: Respondents Knowledge and Acceptance of NIPDs in Agege LGA**

<b>Respondents awareness of the 2018 1<sup>st</sup> round of NIPDs in Agege LGA</b>		
<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	289	100.0
No	0	00.0
Total	289	100.0
<b>Respondent allowing Child/Ward to be immunized during the 2018 1<sup>st</sup> round of NIPDs in Agege LGA</b>		
Yes	289	100.0
No	0	00.0
Total	289	100.0
<b>Respondents voluntarily release of child/ward for the immunization during the 2018 1<sup>st</sup> round of NIPDs in Agege LGA</b>		
Yes	275	95.2
No	14	4.8
Total	289	100.0

Table 3 showed that 289 (100%) which means all of the respondents were aware of immunization campaign. Also, all the respondents according to the table above allowed their children/wards to be immunized though 275 (95.2%) of the respondents voluntarily allowed their children or wards to be immunized while 14 (4.8%) did not do it voluntarily. From the above analysis of table 1, it is deduced that respondents to the study were aware of the immunization campaign in their local government area and participated in the process as projected by those who design the programme.

### **Conclusion**

From the analysis and interpretation of our findings, the following conclusion could be

drawn: First, Interpersonal communications were the main communication strategies while the mass media were complementing. This demonstrates the effectiveness of interpersonal over mediated mode of communication in health campaigns. Secondly, the challenges encountered were that mothers resisted sending their children for vaccination unless they were promised some material benefits like foodstuffs this shows that people in the rural semi-urban area ranked food on the same level with the health of their children. Thirdly, the ability of mobilizers and sensitizers to speak the language of the participants created environment of truth which contributed to the effectiveness of the campaign.

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