

DevInfo in Action

Using DevInfo to Strengthen Communication Efforts for Global Polio Eradication (20 December 2011)

In Nigeria, following a dramatic 95 per cent reduction in polio cases last year, the disease is once again on the rise – due in large part to lingering community resistance to polio immunization. To tackle this issue, the country recently launched the “[Polio-Free Torch Campaign](#)” with the support of the Nigerian Olympic Committee and a number of Nigerian Olympians, to mobilize support for the country’s polio eradication efforts.

Campaigns such as these rely heavily on a range of social data that help shed light on, among other things, the reasons some communities are refusing to vaccinate their children with the oral polio vaccine (OPV). This underscores the importance of UNICEF’s decision to launch a new polio website on the occasion of World Polio Day (24 October 2011): [PolioInfo](#).

A new polio communications data portal

The newly-launched [PolioInfo](#) website shares polio communication data – collected, analyzed, and applied to country-specific contexts – to strengthen community support and commitment towards the goal of global polio eradication. Underpinning the website is the online [PolioInfo database](#), an adaptation of the UN-endorsed [DevInfo](#) database system created to organize and compile data on the Global Polio Eradication Initiative’s global communication indicators for all eight priority polio-affected countries.



The Vice-President of the Federal Government of Nigeria, Namadi Sambo, on behalf of the President, lit the torch to mark the beginning of the Polio- Free Torch Campaign on 24 September 2011 in Abuja.

Photo courtesy PolioInfo website.



PolioInfo website home page

PoliInfo showcases the type of data that UNICEF and its national partners use to improve their understanding of whether children, especially in the farthest and most remote communities, are receiving the polio vaccine; and if not, why.

For each of the eight priority countries, social risk is assessed by evaluating progress against the global communication indicators, developed following an inter-agency process involving polio communications experts from around the globe. Country risk assessments are displayed on the site, which contribute to a better understanding of the social challenges limiting polio vaccination. This analysis is then used to guide the development of communication strategies at national and community levels.



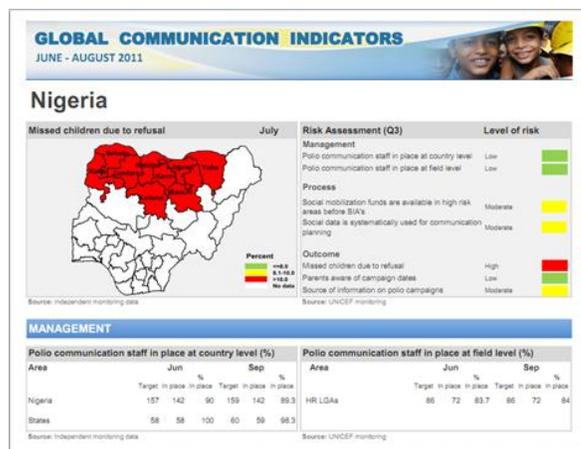
PoliInfo database home page

The PoliInfo website also contains links to [downloadable country data profiles](#) generated from the database which are updated each quarter, as well as an [interactive data dashboard](#) that provides live data against the global communication indicators with greater geographic disaggregation.

Social data is 'invaluable'

“If we are to succeed in eradicating polio, we need to reach every last child with vaccine,” said Jos Vandelaer, Chief of Immunization, UNICEF. “But first we have to reach every last parent and caregiver and ensure they have the knowledge they need to make critical choices about vaccinating their children. This is where timely access to social data is invaluable.”

To this end, the PoliInfo site comes as a much-needed complement to the official website of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. While the latter focuses on the epidemiological and logistical aspects of polio eradication, PoliInfo focuses on the social data critical for strengthening communication efforts in all the polio priority countries.



PoliInfo country data profile

Together, the two websites – which are linked - provide a complete spectrum of information to experts and community members, demonstrating the importance for service delivery and community demand to work in harmony in order to ensure that every child under five receives the oral polio vaccine.



Challenges and solutions

"The polio virus exploded in Chad," says Dr. Marzio Babilie, UNICEF Representative in Chad, in a [video](#) on PoliInfo. But many parents refused to have their children vaccinated, fearing the oral polio vaccine would cause anaemia, paralysis or death. Fortunately, four months of awareness-raising by communications experts helped parents understand that vaccination protects children rather than harming them – underscoring the importance of social data to supplement epidemiological data in guiding community interventions.

With PoliInfo in place helping to ensure that the best possible social data are available to experts, health workers and community leaders, the international community moves one step closer to eradicating polio from the globe.

Data making a difference.

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