



**BID INITIATIVE**

Better data. Better decisions. **Better health.**

# SAVING LIVES THROUGH BETTER DATA

## Strategies and Tactics from the BID Initiative

Q3 2016

### Letter from the Director

I am pleased to report excellent progress in Tanzania as we continue to roll out across the Arusha region! In Zambia, the team is preparing to roll out data-use interventions to train and educate health workers on data quality, collection, and use, and we are wrapping up critical work to determine BID's total cost of ownership to inform country planning and decision-making.

We are at a critical point in the BID Initiative and are working closely with both demonstration countries and our global partners to plan for scale and sustainability. I am excited to share that we will be expanding rollout in Tanzania to the Tanga region and potentially to an additional region early next year. The Tanga region is much more rural than our initial test region of Arusha and, therefore, presents different logistical challenges. Rolling out to Tanga will help ensure the BID Initiative is applicable and adaptable to different contexts.

The BID Learning Network (BLN) conducted their first study visit to Benin and awarded our first BLN small grant to The Gambia. This work continues to inform our strategy to successfully package BID solutions so they are relevant for and can be

adopted by other countries interested in improving their health programs through better data and decision-making.

Please continue to follow along our journey by finding us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and subscribing to our [blog](#).

Sincerely,



Laurie Werner  
Global Director, the BID Initiative  
PATH

Si vous désirez recevoir la version française de notre bulletin d'information, veuillez vous [abonner ici](#).

## Village Leaders Trained on SMS Birth Registration in Tanzania



Last quarter, we met with village leaders in Karatu District, our third implementing district, for training on registering home births via Short Message Service (SMS) in the new Tanzania national electronic immunization registry. In this district, some villages have high rates of home births. For example, Upperkitete Village in the district sees up to 90% of births take place at home.

Only basic information is needed to register a child (e.g., mother's name, baby gender, village, and date of birth) so the training is straightforward, but important to ensure all children are entered into the registry correctly at birth. An immunization schedule will then be automatically generated for each child. Current practice in Tanzania is to record the birth vaccine doses (BCG and OPV) on the mother's antenatal card and start the child's health card at the six-week visit. At that time, the child's minimal birth registration data will be confirmed and augmented (adding, for example, the

child's name, mother's phone number, etc.) and the birth doses will be back-entered into the registry.

Since the birth is now registered through SMS by village leaders, the nearby health facility will expect the child at six weeks and have enough information to not only trace them if they miss their first visit, but also plan to have enough vaccine stock for those children. Currently, there is no way to know who does not appear for their six-week visit and so it can be difficult to ensure all kids are fully immunized and plan for adequate vaccine stock.

## Costing Data Analysis for Implementing and Sustaining BID



In Zambia, our team is laying the necessary groundwork to determine the **total cost of ownership of the BID Initiative** through a costing analysis in preparation for rollout across Southern Province.

This is a critical component for the package of BID Initiative interventions. The costing analysis details the financial and economic costs incurred to plan, develop, test, implement, monitor, and operate the interventions. This data accounts for the differences between the current manual data entry for immunization workflows and the enhanced workflows using the BID Initiative interventions. Data is being collected from the health facilities, districts, and provinces in order to account for the resources used at all of these levels of the health system for each of the BID interventions.

The costing study is in progress in Zambia (as well as a similar study being conducted in Tanzania) and will be conducted in about 20% of the facilities in Southern Province, the test province,

that provide immunization services; a total of up to 55 health facilities. Sampling criteria include location of facility (e.g., rural, urban, peri-urban facilities), type of health facility (e.g., health post, health center, hospital), and the size of the children-under-five population served. This data will help our team and other countries interested in adopting and applying the BID Initiative to understand the differences in costs to implement and sustain new interventions in different types of facilities.

## The BLN Travels to Benin on the First Study Visit



Nine BLN members from across sub-Saharan Africa joined us in Benin on the first **BLN study visit**. The group spent a week in mid-July learning how **VaxTrac's Android-based system** collects and manages immunization data to help the ministry of health (MOH) improve service delivery for children in Benin.

In addition to learning about the technical functionality, the group learned about the practical implementation, such as sensitizing the community so they know what to expect when they see tablets being used at facilities. Mothers and caregivers were very accepting of the new system and clearly understood the function of the tablets in relation to their child's health card.

The MOH explained to the group how the seamless interaction with VaxTrac has been critical in the successful implementation of the system.

*"I think this level of engagement is one of the reasons why VaxTrac interventions have been embraced by their MOH and why they view VaxTrac as an integral part of the work they do," said Fred Njobvu, provincial coordinator for BID Initiative Zambia.*

We are eager to continue sharing key learnings from projects across the continent. Please follow our [Google Group discussions](#), [webinars](#), and [BLN meetings](#) for updates.

## Packaging BID Solutions

Last quarter, we facilitated a one-day meeting in Washington, DC, attended by more than 20 participants to discuss collaboration and alignment of digital health approaches and investments to build a stronger, more accessible, and more usable [digital health knowledge base](#).

To this end, the BID Initiative has partnered with the World Health Organization to contribute to the larger knowledge base by deploying an easily consumable and adaptable package of products, policies, and practices that programs and countries can use as a how-to guide for building effective health data initiatives, which can be applied to areas across the health system. This package will include multiple components, including the mechanism through which the BID Initiative theory, and the research behind it, can be made actionable, providing the direction and documentation needed to implement impactful health data system interventions.

Organizations acknowledge that they often unknowingly are developing similar or overlapping training resources, data collection tools, guidance, and other resources. And these are shared on different platforms, despite similar areas of focus and target audiences. The meeting confirmed commitment across the board from partners and organizations to further collaborate and align on the knowledge base.

We plan to continue these conversations at a second convening at the [Global Digital Health Forum](#) in December.

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The BID Learning Network (BLN) is intended to be a platform where participants can contribute ideas, share experiences and actively participate, helping each other as you face similar challenges.

[JUMP IN. GET INVOLVED. →](#)

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### EVENTS

December 13-14: [Global Digital Health Forum](#) (Washington, DC)

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## NOTEWORTHY BLOG POSTS

[Implementation and Expansion in Tanzania](#)

[My Reflections: Melinda Gates Visits the BID Initiative](#)

[Nurse Joyce Ngowi: Learning a new electronic immunization registry to provide better service](#)

[BLN Awards Grant to The Gambia](#)

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## NOTEWORTHY RESOURCES

[Small Grant Program](#)

[BLN Study Visit Application](#)

[Webinar: VaxTrac Benin Study Visit – Reflections and Lessons Learned](#)

[Webinar: Development of a Health Information Systems Strategic Plan – The Liberian Experience](#)

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## STAY CONNECTED

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[SUBSCRIBE TO AND VIEW PAST ISSUES OF \*SAVING LIVES THROUGH BETTER DATA: STRATEGIES AND TACTICS FROM THE BID INITIATIVE.\* →](#)

*Led by PATH and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the BID Initiative is grounded in the belief that better data, plus*

*better decisions, will lead to better health outcomes. Its vision is to empower countries to enhance immunization and overall health service delivery through improved data collection, quality, and use.*



*Photos: PATH/ Saumu Juma, Fred Njobvu, Laura Di Giorgio.*

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