



BID INITIATIVE

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

SAVING LIVES THROUGH BETTER DATA

Strategies and Tactics from the BID Initiative

Q3 2019

Letter from the director

Sometimes the greatest satisfaction comes from taking a step back. Country ownership has been central to the BID Initiative from the beginning, whether in the formation of User Advisory Groups, or the evolution of our training and change management approach. It can take place in big and small ways, but at either end of the spectrum, it requires centering country needs, interests, and priorities from the beginning. In this issue of the BID newsletter, we celebrate the ownership of the governments in Tanzania and Zambia.

In Tanzania, the government furthered its commitment to digital by officially launching a series of digital platforms that go beyond the electronic immunization registry (EIR) introduced under BID, to offer a holistic wraparound series of tools to close the immunization gap. By doubling down on its digital commitment, the government reinforced that the EIR was just the beginning,

and is now applying this approach to the entire primary care system.

In Zambia, we profile a health worker who helped define the system requirements that would eventually become the country's EIR, and has come to champion it as a focal point person for Livingstone, modeling system use for his peers.

And earlier this quarter, BID Learning Network members embraced the principles of South-South learning when they met in Lusaka, Zambia, to share progress on their countries' data quality improvement plans and partnered with peers to further each member country's digital journey.

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Sincerely,



Laurie Werner
Global Director, the BID Initiative
PATH

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Government of Tanzania embraces package of digital technologies



Tanzania furthered its commitment to digital health earlier this year by formally announcing the launch of a series of platforms,

devices, and technologies that will advance immunization services. The [declaration, made by Honorable Ummu Mwalimu, the Minister of Health](#), goes beyond the electronic immunization registry introduced under the BID Initiative. The platforms range from a mobile application that collects immunization information at the health facility level; to remote temperature monitoring devices to ensure vaccines remain within a safe temperature range; and a cold chain equipment optimization platform, which promises to improve vaccine safety and effectiveness.

The decision is accompanied by a series of policy shifts, including the government's decision earlier this year to begin [transitioning health facilities in Tanga Region](#) to an entirely paperless immunization system. These investments will help countries reach more children with lifesaving vaccines.

"Our goal is to reach every child. If you want to reach every child, you need to know where these children are," explained Dr. Dafrossa Lyimo, Tanzania's Immunization and Vaccination Development Manager. "I'm happy to see the scale-up of [the system], and I have the [support] of the Permanent Secretary and Minister. They have supported me to make sure we [achieve] country-wide rollout."

Though many of these systems have been in use for several years now, the launch ceremony signaled the government's digital leadership. The announcement was reinforced by several commitments, including a promise to expedite national scale-up of systems and a shift toward more government-driven training, such as the use of district and regional mentors to ensure they own and operate the system at all levels.

Health workers prove driving force behind digital success



Zacks Banda can remember being passionate about his community's health from a young age. He has been working as a health worker since 2006. Recently, he assumed the role of [focal point person \(FPP\)](#) for Livingstone, promoting data use in the district.

FPPs are the district's first contact if health workers encounter issues with the Zambia Electronic Immunization Registry (ZEIR). The BID Initiative worked closely with the government of Zambia to promote the identification of data use and digital champions like Zacks throughout Southern Province to serve as digital champions and help troubleshoot system challenges as they come up.

Zacks is uniquely equipped for this task because he's been involved with the BID Initiative from the earliest days. He participated in the design of the system as a member of [Zambia's User Advisory Groups](#) and offered feedback on different iterations of the registry as it was refined. Having seen ZEIR take shape and grow from a list of software requirements to a digital platform with the ability to dramatically reduce workloads, improve patient care, and reach the last mile of unvaccinated children, Zacks feels very invested in its success.

"Having participated in that process, I became eager to see the system being implemented in the facilities," said Zacks.

"Championing the system has helped me to orient new users in system use, help them with troubleshooting and solving challenges, and encourage other users to make decisions about the data collected."

While digital technologies can be a powerful equalizer for health, they are ultimately just a tool. Health workers themselves are the

change agents who can determine how the data at their fingertips are applied to provide better, more targeted care. And their embrace of the system has been a critical part of the success.

For Zacks, one of the pivotal benefits of ZEIR is its ability to save patients and other health workers time, while ultimately improving the patient experience. In high-volume facilities, the “supermarket” approach allows patients to receive immunizations daily, which can save them time in long queues and allow health workers the convenience of streamlining their record keeping. Zacks is especially excited to see the [integration of ZEIR and mVacc](#) because it will help mothers, health workers, and the community work hand in hand to close the immunization gap.

BLN members pair up in Lusaka to help one another achieve digital transformation



The BID Learning Network (BLN) and representatives from the countries participating in the Gavi Data Quality and Use (DQU) Collaborative met in Lusaka, Zambia, between July 24 and 26 to exchange experiences, partner with peers, and further develop and refine each country’s data quality improvement plan (DQIP). Twenty-five members convened from across eight countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, The Gambia, Liberia, Mozambique, Malawi, Uganda, and Zambia. Though the countries are at varying stages of digital maturity, the meeting provided a chance to learn from each other and to address the shared challenges they faced—an invaluable opportunity said BLN members.

“We discussed a challenge most countries face around limited financial resources to implement the proposed DQI plans and solutions,” recalled Dr. William Kaboré, a BLN member and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for Burkina Faso’s Expanded Programme on Immunization. “This was a significant conversation because it’s a problem many countries encounter.”

Throughout the meeting, BLN members were paired with peers based on where each was at in their digital journey. Countries in need of more support were paired with representatives from countries that were further along in adopting data quality and use interventions. Members reviewed each other’s DQIP and provided feedback. They set targets to achieve within the next three months and reviewed one another’s intervention packages to achieve these targets.

The meeting provided an opportunity to establish several lessons learned. For instance, countries agreed that stakeholders should be involved at all levels of the health system when developing their country’s DQIP.

BLN DQU Collaborative members agreed to continue monitoring and supporting one another to see through the completion of each country’s DQIP. Visit the BID website to explore [presentations](#) and the [full report](#) from the BLN DQU Collaborative meeting.

New publication maps building blocks for a successful electronic immunization registry



Developing EIRs in Tanzania and Zambia was not a linear process. In fact, it required four different systems and continuous trial and error to land on the EIRs used in both countries today. To capture these learnings and help other countries benefit, the BID Initiative team published a journal article summarizing its iterative development processes. Through the article, "[Electronic immunization registries in Tanzania and Zambia: Shaping a minimum viable product for scaled solutions](#)," which appears in the multidisciplinary journal *Frontiers in Public Health*, BID hopes to help other countries avoid the time-consuming, costly, and often complex process of selecting and ramping up the most appropriate EIR for their country context.

Throughout BID's journey, it defined a comprehensive set of system requirements to ensure that both countries' EIRs meet the needs of the end users—the health workers using them. System requirements are the building blocks that define the capabilities of a digital system, allowing it to run smoothly and efficiently. Although it was not the countries' original intent, the requirements documented by Tanzania and Zambia are on the cutting edge of EIR technology, and allowed for a comparison of the functional and system requirements needed to allow for a usable EIR.

"A comprehensive understanding of system requirements early in the design process is critical for ensuring that the EIR works well and is embraced by its intended users," reads the article.

The requirements fit into five thematic areas of functionality, including vaccine administration, client management, stock management, reports, and registration and search requirements. Read the full article in [Frontiers in Public Health](#).

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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 they face similar challenges.

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NOTEWORTHY BLOG POSTS

[The key to better primary health care? Human-centered design](#)

[BLN members convene in Lusaka to trade learnings,](#)

[share progress on digital journey](#)

[Preparing the health workforce to make the most of data](#)

[Global knowledge sharing: New PATH IDEAL-Vietnam project collaborates with BID Initiative](#)

NOTEWORTHY RESOURCES

[BLN/Gavi Data Quality and Use Collaborative meeting presentations: Lusaka, 24-26 July 2019](#)

[BLN webinar: Cultivating a data use culture – lessons learned from the BID Initiative](#)

[Electronic immunization registries in Tanzania and Zambia: Shaping a minimum viable product for scaled solutions](#)

[From fragile to resilient health systems: A journey to self-reliance](#)

Led by PATH in partnership with the governments of Tanzania and Zambia, 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.



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