

Pairing Demand Creation and Service Delivery to Accelerate COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage in Tanzania

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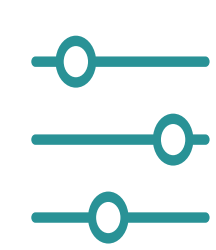
1. FHI 360 Tanzania; 2. USAID Tanzania

Addressing vaccine confidence and acceptance



CHALLENGE

Political opposition led to delays in the approval and roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine in Tanzania. In mid-2021, with a change in administration, the country reversed this stance and set the ambitious target of achieving 70% vaccine coverage among the eligible population by December 2022. However, the early high-profile opposition, combined with widely circulating COVID-19 myths and misinformation, created significant challenges for the country's COVID-19 vaccination efforts.



INNOVATION

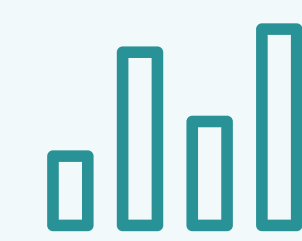
From April through September 2022, the USAID-funded Meeting Targets and Maintaining Epidemic Control (EpiC) project supported COVID-19 vaccination efforts in five regions (Lindi, Mtwara, Ruvuma, Njombe and Iringa) with COVID-19 vaccine rates between 8% and 30%. EpiC accelerated uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine through a combined demand creation and service delivery approach.

Demand creation activities were aligned with the national COVID-19 vaccine demand creation strategy—developed with support from the FHI 360-led USAID Tulonge Afya project—and included:

- Large public events (e.g., music festivals, football matches) where influential figures received their vaccination publicly and vaccine services were provided
- Community-based interpersonal communication activities
- Mass and social media campaigns
- Engagement of community influencers as vaccine champions such as village and religious leaders

EpiC worked with the Ministry of Health to expand access to vaccine services through:

- Vaccine provision at large public events
- Community-based vaccine services, including door-to-door vaccination and establishing temporary vaccine sites
- Facility-based vaccination targeting eligible patients with co-morbidities accessing services at facilities.



RESULTS/OUTCOMES

By October 2022, all five regions supported by EpiC had achieved 70% vaccination coverage. Between July and September 2022, EpiC reached 2,100,848 individuals with a COVID-19 vaccine. A total of 1,335 vaccination events were implemented reaching 645,827 individuals. An omnibus survey conducted in Q1 of 2022 shows overall exposure and recall to the national COVID-19 vaccination campaign increased from 68.2% to 87.4%. Exposure to the campaign through social media increased from 1.8% to 18.2%. Belief in the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccination increased from 61.4% to 79.8%. Belief in the safety of COVID-19 vaccination increased from 60.5% to 77.4%.

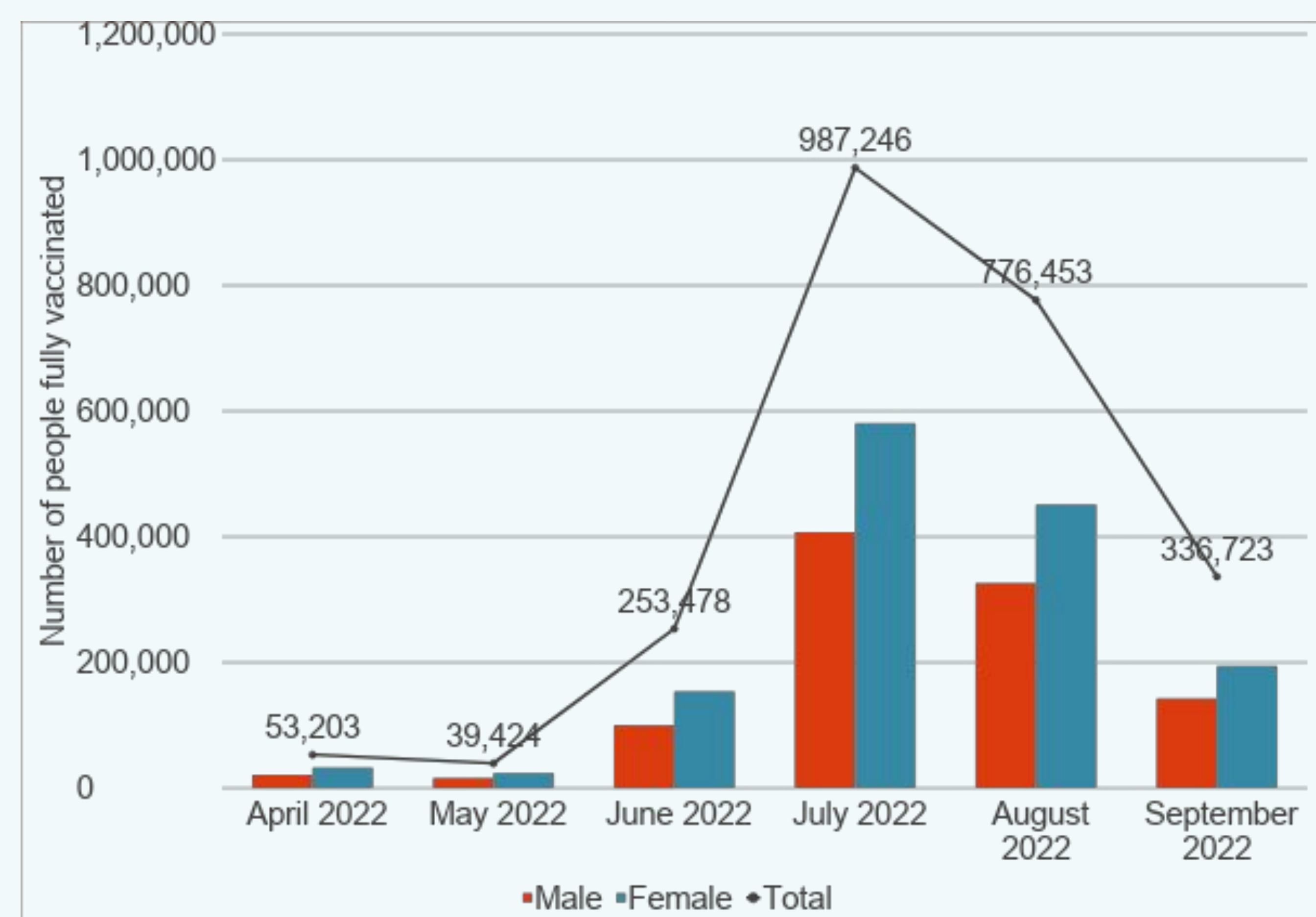


Figure 1. Increase in COVID-19 vaccination uptake across EpiC supported regions.



APPLICATION TO ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION OR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

EpiC's experience reinforces the benefits of close coordination between demand creation and service delivery to drive uptake of key health services. A one-team approach, from design through implementation, allows programs to better identify and understand audience segments and ensures that activities and approaches address their needs. In Tanzania, EpiC successfully paired targeted demand-creation activities with the requisite human resources, equipment, and supplies to meet increased demand for services. This experience can be used to improve service uptake during routine outreach immunization activities conducted by facilities.

EpiC's approaches to engaging facility-level healthcare workers to conduct vaccine outreach and promotion at the community level can be applied to routine immunization and infectious disease outbreaks (e.g., HCWs leading community outreach to vaccinate children during measles outbreaks).