

MOMENTUM

Routine Immunization Transformation and Equity



Xavier Sahaya Rani
Tamil Nadu

Xavier Sahaya Rani is a refugee leader who is a resident of the Moongilurani camp where she has been working as a leader since the 90s. Social workers like Xavier were well aware of the misinformation and lack of medical facilities that were dampening vaccine-confidence of the camp comprising 183 families and a total population of 583 people.



The MOMENTUM Routine Immunization Transformation and Equity Project, supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), ensures equitable vaccination to vulnerable, hard-to-reach, and marginalized communities.

The state government collaborated with the Project, and delegated the awareness programs and vaccine dispensation activities to local change agents to increase vaccine uptake among under-represented groups.

In Tamil Nadu, the Project has engaged with local non-governmental organizations like ISAP, SAATHI, HelpAge, TCIF and Leprosy Mission to maximize reach amongst the priority groups.

Easy-access vaccination camps were setup in the refugees colonies. Frequent interpersonal communication including door-to-door visits and counselling was done to mobilize people to take the vaccine. The hesitant people started showing faith in the vaccine once their trusted leader and other health workers from their community came forward to take the vaccine. As more and more community members came out unscathed and healthier after the vaccine, the community sealed their trust in the vaccine and uptake of vaccine grew.

Community leaders such as Xavier Sahaya Rani have played a crucial role in defeating vaccine-hesitancy and ensured increased vaccine-penetration of the COVID-19 vaccine among minority groups such as Tamil Nadu's Srilankan refugees. She is our COVID-19 Vaccination Champ!