

MOMENTUM

Routine Immunization Transformation and Equity



**Block Development Officer
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The Rural Development Block in Bilkhawthir, Kolasib District, Mizoram, witnessed many highs and lows during the COVID-19 vaccination drive.

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 expended its social welfare resources, collaborated with the Project, and delegated the awareness programs and vaccine dispensation activities to local change agents such as community leaders, local Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Auxilliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), and others. In Mizoram, the State Government joined hands with the Project and engaged local NGOs like- Mission Foundation Movement to maximize reach, build vaccine confidence, and increase vaccine uptake among under-represented groups.

When the COVID-19 vaccine was made available it received an overwhelming response. Later, when the second dose was made available, many people in the villages did not come forward to take their vaccination due to lack of awareness regarding the second dose. To ensure that communities come forward to take their second dose, Timothy Vanlalmangaiha, the Block Development Officer (BDO) closely worked with other district officials and local NGOs to mobilize the communities for their second dose and later for their third dose.

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With support from the BDO, prior announcements were made in the village about the vaccination camp so that the villagers could come and take their vaccination. The villagers were also made aware that if they are not completely vaccinated, they can be denied employment under the MNREGA Government scheme. Once the villagers were told this they queued up for vaccination. With involvement from the Government Officials, social mobilizers, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and other NGOs the block saw great enthusiasm from communities to get vaccinated. The successful strategy was later replicated across Mizoram.

Partnership with the Project and other stakeholder helped strengthen the team and build their capacities to undertake a vaccination drive at this level. This strategy and approach was later replicated throughout the state. It was with efforts of the Government officials that vaccine resistance was overcome in the state and the communities were well aware and completed their vaccination.

