Immunization programmes are challenged by vaccine stock-outs, resulting in interrupted or delayed routine immunization, reduced coverage, and, ultimately, deaths from vaccine preventable diseases. UNICEF is helping countries to reduce the risk of vaccine stock-outs with ViVa (Visibility for Vaccines), a free, online tool that visualizes vaccine stock status and deliveries, allowing decision-makers to take timely, corrective action. ViVa is easy to learn and use, with no special equipment needed, so that countries can be up-and-running quickly, helping to safeguard a healthy future for children.

Introduction

UNICEF procures vaccines for nearly 100 countries annually, working with governments to identify vaccine requirements through an annual forecast exercise and with suppliers to negotiate pricing and quantities. As the global supply for some vaccines is limited, and the lead time to produce vaccines can be as long as two years, the planning and forecasting process is crucial to ensure an uninterrupted supply of vaccines throughout the year. In 2016, UNICEF procured 2.5 billion doses of vaccines, reaching 45 per cent of the world’s children.

Up until now, countries did not have an easy way to see the pipeline of forecasts and planned deliveries from UNICEF. This meant that countries had difficulties in planning their vaccine procurements in the future and in linking those procurements with their expected vaccine stock levels.

In 2013, the UPS Foundation provided funding to UNICEF to develop the Visibility for Vaccines (ViVa) tool to fill this gap. ViVa is intended for use by the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), including EPI managers, national vaccine supply and logistics managers, and other counterparts in the Ministry of Health, to view current stocks and upcoming orders and enable them to take corrective actions.

What is ViVa?

ViVa is a free, web-based dashboard available in English and French for country governments to improve their vaccine forecasting and prevent stock-outs. Only a computer and internet connection is needed. ViVa indicates when potential stock-outs or overstocking could happen, helping countries to plan their future vaccine procurements accordingly and advocate for timely funding decisions. When stock levels approach minimum or maximum levels, an alert is sent to the country or stakeholder identifying the potential risk and recommending corrective action.

ViVa is meant to complement existing stock management tools by providing key data in a clear visual format and bringing UNICEF, WHO and country data into a single system for improved monitoring and analysis. Using ViVa encourages country staff to collect and utilize data for management decisions and

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How does it work?

On a regular basis, countries update their vaccine stock data in ViVa. On a weekly basis, UNICEF uploads into ViVa its pipeline information. ViVa generates a visualization of future stock projections and provides alerts on critical situations. This allows EPI staff to see the potential impact of orders and take timely, corrective actions – such as ordering more vaccine or delaying upcoming orders – to avoid stock-outs and to minimize wastage. Having this information clearly and readily available also allows EPI staff to communicate and advocate for timely funding from domestic sources or external donors for vaccine procurement.

ViVa takes four sets of data to calculate stock projections and generate alerts:

1. Annual Vaccine Requirements
2. Forecasted Deliveries
3. Confirmed Orders
4. Stock balance inputs

The process of getting ViVa in-country

Introducing ViVa to any country is a relatively quick and easy process. The Ministry of Health needs to contact the UNICEF office in their country, their UNICEF regional office or make direct contact with the UNICEF Supply Division in Copenhagen, Denmark, to request ViVa and discuss the practical steps needed to establish ViVa within their EPI.

The key prerequisites for a country to use ViVa are:

- The country has a vaccine stock management system at the central level
- A standard desktop or laptop with Internet connection
- At least one staff who will be responsible for entering data into ViVa
- At least one staff who will be responsible for monitoring the information shown in ViVa

Training is provided by UNICEF in one of two ways:

- Fully online via Skype, led by a trainer at the UNICEF Supply Division and facilitated by the UNICEF Country Office
- Face-to-face training (for countries with slow connectivity or for large numbers of people) whereby UNICEF staff at the Regional Office or Supply Division delivers training on-site
Learning to use ViVa is simple and straightforward even for staff who have never used an online program before.

Contact your UNICEF country or regional office, or the UNICEF Supply Division, to begin the process of using ViVa: viva@unicef.org.

Visit https://www.vivaplatform.org/ to learn more.