

Question and Comments Transcript

Participants in the discussion, in order of appearance:

Loic Sanchez - VPPN Manager, UNICEF SD, Copenhagen

Aadrian Sullivan - Information Manager/Communication Specialist, MSFIC, UNICEF SD, Copenhagen

Heba Almohtaseb - Procurement Officer, JPD, MoH, Jordan

Phillip Kalpaxis - Market Research Manager, MSFIC, UNICEF SD, Copenhagen

Leslie Paas - VPPN Manager, UNICEF SD, Florianópolis

Chengetanai Mangoro -Supply Specialist (Procurement Services), UNICEF ESARO, Johannesburg

1. Question from Loic Sanchez to Aadrian Sullivan:

Do you have a sense of how much and by whom this market intelligence provided by UNICEF are used?
Are you monitoring the statistics?

Answer by Aadrian:

Yes I am. When we came in and we started publishing market notes (the market note is a brief of about 4-5 pages - we try to keep them short, simple, to the point), and we were putting these online - after about a year we were having some doubts. (Personally I was having some doubts because I didn't feel there was sufficient enough evidence proving that there was readership.) There was anecdotal information coming in showing that they were being read, but there was no way to get the scope.

So, through Google Analytics -and hence why on the web portal you will only access the notes from the URL - because going through the URL allows us to track and scrape through Google Analytics the access of the notes.

Over the past five years we have seen constant growth: out of the seventy market notes we have on 32 products (of which more than half are vaccines, in fact I would say three quarters are vaccine-related), the readership is just shy of thirty thousand a year.

And the trend is going from high-income countries where the vaccine industry is predominantly based, to much more now growingly middle-income countries – and LICs, and especially Asia- India, Bangladesh, China -China is now very often second, third, fourth.

And so I follow this very closely because it's also evidence that shows growing interest; growing readership, and that the evidence we are putting out there - the information - is being used.

It's not just countries - to understand that, we then did a deep dive using Google Scholar to do research. And what comes out is that, not only is the information we are giving being used to inform industry and countries and partners, but there's research & development and academia who are interested in the information, that are using it as sources for their peer-reviewed publications. It covers the gambit of all of them.

So it's now encouraging us to look at going global -not just UNICEF Supply Division focusing, but we need to put that into the context as best we can on a global level because that informs - obviously a wider audience.

2. Comment/request by Aadrian Sullivan to the VPPN Forum:

I have one request to the VPPN forum: it's to do with the information and the dissemination. I don't know if the members are familiar with this product - some I'm sure they will; others not. If there is any suggestion, advice and guidance on how - not only UNICEF - but VPPN members - can improve and ensure that this information is shared - and that maybe there's platform or a form or a nature of how it should be done to make it easier or more accessible, please weigh in.

Heba Almohtaseb replies to Aadrian's comment with a suggestion:

I think the perfect data that you are really working on, we really don't know most of it. So I think maybe your country offices – I suggest, in Jordan - we know the colleagues there, we are working together some workshops or something like that. I think maybe through your offices you can do it - maybe with brochures... maybe make a registration related to this type of procuring - you can send to institutions, not only just members. I really want to stress on this. Because sometimes the persons change, institutions can progress for forever. So please, if you can contact, through your offices in every country, - just to let these public officials or public institutions know that this type of data is available, so that we can get out of the box that we have; in order to get more efficient solutions in the end.

Philipp Kalpaxis responds to Heba's suggestion with a request to Jordan as a self-procuring country, and also to the entire VPPN:

I think we are very committed in doing so.

And I have in return a question for you - perhaps and not to you personally, but rather to you as a representative of a country – of a self-procuring country: As I said earlier, information that you are able to exchange is equally important as information as we put out. I really want to encourage you to use this platform and also be able to share it. For example, you have now a wealth of information from your own procurement - as you presented it very nicely.

I'm not saying to disclose any commercially sensitive information-

But you hold now a wealth of information that you might be able to share with other countries benefit from this, and slowly build the collective intelligence in this network that all can benefit.

It also really relies on self-procuring countries being able to and willing to share as much as they can their market intelligence that they are able to collect. Just putting it out there as a request for the entire community.

3. Leslie Paas (UNICEF SD VPPN Manager) asks a question to Heba Almohtaseb

Excellent suggestion Heba and thank you also Philipp for suggesting these things, as these are very important strategies that we can think of.

I'd also like to ask Heba - just on your second point about increasing cooperation between the Research & Development Unit: From the analysis of data to applying market intelligence - I think that's a really interesting point for me as a professional but also for what we can suggest to other VPPN members.

What were a couple strategies that you did to increase cooperation or knowledge sharing, if you don't mind letting me know?

Heba's answer:

First of all, the ordinary report done by the R&D unit and JPD - we have to go through it, as procurement professionals, with them, to analyze what is between the lines - in order to know why we are getting these results.

So we were putting these analytical information - or *readings* of this data - in the report. So in order just to make it easier for the decision-makers, in order to explain "okay, this is the case: in that type of tender, we have to do so-and-so..."

So we are still working on that, but the most important thing that we are doing now is just reading the lines - between the lines. I hope that we can make something more professional like Aadrian showed us in the future.

4. Comment by Chengetanai Mangoro

Thank you very much I thought this was very useful in my opinion -especially for self-procuring countries. And judging from Jordan's experience, maybe it would be good to have some kind of guidance in terms of how self-procuring countries can actually use this information to analyze their procurement, and this can be shared with other VPPN members.

Because I think we have a number of countries in our region who are self-procuring, and some of them will be attending the VPPN exchange forum this year. This would be very useful for them in terms of how they can use all this information. So maybe like a guidance in terms of what information - the information that is available is there, but *how do they use it* to improve efficiency of a procurement.

I think it would really be helpful.

Philipp's response to Chengetanai's comment

It's a great suggestion and we'll certainly take it on to a certain level - I think Aadrian will agree. We can provide from our knowledge of the markets and understanding of what are some of the factors that we can see that influence procurement outcomes, and how you can track them and how you can measure them, and perhaps influence them.

But again, we we're happy to work on this and put it out there. Again, I would say use this - whatever we put out there - as a basis, but learn from your peers at the VPPEF and in VPPN. Because again, while we understand the markets from a global level, and what are the dynamics there, we don't deal with the local representatives.

You are way better informed (in for example, how are price setting policies of local representatives in countries, or how do they behave in countries).

So whatever we put out there, I would encourage you to also complement that in your discussions in the VPPEF and VPPN with your own information.

But we will take it on and certainly work on making that available to you.

Aadrian Adds to Philipp's answer:

If I can just add - there's no "one way", or "only way" to analyze market intelligence, because when you deal with market intelligence, it really is within the context in which you're operating. For example, in UNICEF we have procurement systems, we collect data, and it's easy to process that data, and then to look at how to share that.

But at the end of the day, the basic breakdown of market intelligence is according to four or five pillars. What I will do, I'll work with colleagues in SD to see how we can put a little mini 1-2 page brief - a 101 breakdown - on how to get the basics. Because it really is looking at your demand, looking at your supply, looking at the pricing...

We can see what's the most appropriate way to share that. But of course, how that then works within the context of each country - each partner has to do that.

But we will certainly, if we can be a resource to help report, advice and guide partners on how to come up with their own analysis - to be able to facilitate that sharing within the wider community, we will certainly see how to facilitate that as best we can. It's all about partnership at the end of the day.