

# BUILDING ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION CAPACITY, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (BRICKS)



## Comprehensive Framework for Strengthening and Sustaining Immunization Program Competencies, Leadership and Management

**J**SI builds in-country capacity to strengthen the management and implementation of routine immunization services, drawing on our foundation in the fundamentals of public health. JSI's BRICKS (Building Routine Immunization Capacity, Knowledge and Skills) framework is based on over 25 years of immunization and maternal and child health field experience in more than 50 countries worldwide — working hand-in-hand with government partners and through local staff and colleagues at all levels (community, facility, district, national). Our technical support links with existing in-country capacity building methodologies, programs and institutions, and professional bodies/associations. The focus is on immunization within the context and ecosystem of health system strengthening.

Although implementation may often include short-term and focused/targeted external technical assistance, it must be deeply informed by in-country expertise and context; it cannot be rushed nor perceived as project-driven by outsiders. The following graphic provides a snapshot of the “what”; but the “how” must be implemented as a process in which each component can receive specific focus. Optimal performance and country ownership are based on application of *all* components — within the country context and applying adult learning and professional development principles and approaches.



The BRICKS framework is also coordinated with — and builds upon — the capacity building systems, tools, guidelines and policies that already exist in countries. These are assessed in partnership with in-country MOH colleagues, ICC and other MCH/immunization/HSS partners (including, as appropriate, CSOs, research groups, local universities and community structures) as early in the process as possible. This allows for an ongoing and sustained exchange of ideas, supporting capacity to prioritize, design, execute and monitor interventions that improve coverage and strengthen all components of the RI system. The goal is not to develop new tools or “change” systems, but rather to strengthen what is in place in a way that incorporates modern principles of performance and quality improvement and is ideally affordable and able to be sustained by the country.

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The five components of BRICKS are considered together as a package. They are not “one size fits all” and certain components may receive more emphasis than others, based on the analysis with the countries. For example, for the last 15+ years, significant efforts have been made by WHO, MOH, JSI and partners for in-service training. JSI led the development of the USAID-funded “Immunization Essentials” guide and was a key partner in the development and roll-out of tools such as the WHO Global and AFRO Mid-Level Manager (MLM) Modules, Immunization in Practice (IIP), and the RED Guidelines. JSI has promoted their adaptation and supported their use by MOH and country partners.

Additionally, however, technical support is often needed beyond in-service training to support counterparts to determine the root causes and evidence-based responses for addressing inequity or immunization program gaps. Also, guidance on pre-service immunization curricula and reference materials is needed

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to update supervisors and instructors on immunization knowledge and strengthen their performance as mentors/coaches. Those focusing on immunization throughout the health system also benefit from having core immunization competencies and a basic understanding of their roles, responsibilities and management functions *before* entering these positions. This includes not only skills in providing vaccination and managing vaccine logistics but also capacity to use data for local decision-making, to analyze one’s own data, and to apply the latest in behavioral and social science thinking to partner with communities and clients. This capacity is reinforced through technical support for peer-learning, supportive supervision, and exchange through facilitated but participant-focused review meetings.

In close consultation and collaboration with in-country counterparts, JSI has also created technical reference documents and management tools<sup>1</sup>, to assist the EPI and partners in system strengthening as well as in analysis, prioritization, implementation and monitoring of coverage and equity improvement initiatives.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mchip.net/node/2605>; [http://www.mchip.net/search/apachesolr\\_search/RAP-ID](http://www.mchip.net/search/apachesolr_search/RAP-ID); [www.jsi.com/immunization](http://www.jsi.com/immunization)