

# A novel approach to building evidence for improving communication about childhood vaccinations in low- and middle-income countries: The ‘COMMunicate to VACcinate’ project

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## Background

Effective provider-parent communication can improve childhood vaccination uptake and strengthen immunization services in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). However, demand-side interventions to improve vaccination uptake have been neglected and existing rigorous research is often not readily found or easily applicable to LMICs. This makes it difficult for policy makers to access or use evidence to inform policies and practice.

## Objective

To describe the approaches used by the ‘Communicate to Vaccinate’ (COMMVAC) project to explore, evaluate and disseminate evidence on strategies for improving communication about childhood vaccinations with parents and communities in LMICs.

## Methods

COMMVAC uses an innovative combination of methods.

1. Systematic map of communication interventions: Systematic maps use the same rigorous methods as systematic reviews of effects but focus on describing the range of interventions. For each intervention identified, we are extracting information on the population/s targeted, settings, intervention purpose and delivery mechanism (and evaluation design and outcomes in trials).
2. Taxonomy of interventions to improve communication around childhood vaccination to: (a) understand the relations between different types of interventions; (b) facilitate conceptual mapping of these interventions; and (c) clarify the key purposes of interventions (Table 1).

**Table 1: Examples from the COMMVAC taxonomy of interventions oriented to consumers and communities to increase childhood vaccination**

Taxonomy categories and definitions	Intervention types and examples
Inform or educate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face-to-face interactions</li> <li>• Postcards, letters or email</li> <li>• Phone calls or SMS</li> </ul>
Teach skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parenting skills programmes</li> <li>• Peer-to-peer information sharing</li> </ul>
Increase community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community coalition</li> <li>• Community input</li> <li>• Community-based spokesperson</li> </ul>

3. Deliberative fora with key stakeholders to discuss priorities for systematic reviews of effects, informed by the systematic map and taxonomy.
4. Systematic reviews on high priority topics.
5. Web-based evidence summaries that translate the review findings into accessible messages for LMICs and allow users to add implementation commentary.

## Conclusion

COMMVAC takes a novel approach to building knowledge resources and making more effective use of existing research and practice descriptions. Key outputs will include high quality evidence on the scope and effects of interventions to improve provider-parent communication around vaccination and knowledge resources tailored for LMICs.

## Funding

This project is funded by the Research Council of Norway. For further information, visit the COMMVAC website: [www.commvac.com](http://www.commvac.com) Or contact Simon Lewin: [simon.lewin@nokc.no](mailto:simon.lewin@nokc.no)

