

# Influencing Vaccine Hesitancy in Ghana

December 2022

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Goal:** To increase COVID-19 vaccination rates in young people by addressing vaccine hesitancy and skepticism.
- **Results:** We reached over 6.5 million people and saw an upward trend in perceptions of vaccine safety.
- **Top Lesson:** Balance transparency and authenticity for influencers; prepare for pushback.



## CAMPAIGN GOAL: Focusing on Young People to Influence COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake

In **Ghana**, our campaign sought to boost vaccination rates by addressing vaccine hesitancy and skepticism in young people ages 18–25 nationwide. Working through FHI 360’s **U.S Agency for International Development/Ghana Accelerating Social and Behavior Change (ASBC)** project, we collaborated closely with the **Ghana Health Promotion Division (HPD)** and **MullenLowe Accra**, a private sector partner. Our two-phase campaign focused on the safety and importance of vaccination, as well as social approval for vaccination. We featured Ghanaian celebrity influencers, who posted on and beyond Meta platforms and were featured in ads posted to the Meta pages for [GoodLife](#), an integrated health platform led by the HPD. The influencers were also featured on [You Only Live Once \(YOLO\)](#), a popular television series focused on young people’s health.

## Project Background

FHI 360 and Meta entered a collaboration to support selected FHI 360 projects working toward social and behavior change objectives; this case study showcases one of five such projects. Information about the other four projects can be found at [www.fhi360.org/projects/meta-program-scaled-support](http://www.fhi360.org/projects/meta-program-scaled-support). In addition to reporting other metrics, this case study presents findings from Meta’s Brand Lift Study (BLS) tool, which analyzes campaigns based on users’ ad recall and responses to questions relevant to behavior change goals. BLS determines if there was a significant “lift” for users who saw ads compared with those who did not in *recall* of ads, as well as in *knowledge*, *attitudes* or *agency* around a behavior.



## RESULTS: Translating Reach into Shifting Perceptions

This two-phase campaign reached nearly 6.5 million people, with nearly 4 million via paid ads on Facebook and Instagram, and almost 2.5 million through influencer posts; on average, users saw ads almost eight times over two months in phase one and almost nine over one month in phase two. While our BLS results were not significant in phase one, in phase two we saw a statistically significant lift for recall. An additional 169,000 users who saw our ads remembered them compared with those who did not see the ads. We also saw a marginally significant, positive trend for perceptions of vaccine safety: An additional 29,000 people may be more likely to see the vaccine as safe after seeing our ads. For perceptions of vaccine approval, overall, we saw no lift in those who saw our ads compared with those who did not.



## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT: Understand Your Audience and Their Influencer(s)

We crafted our campaign on a foundation of research, with target audiences of young people, divided by age ranges. The research included getting data on who the young people already followed on social media, who they would like to hear health messages from and which platforms they use to access health information. We used this data to develop a persona description for our target audience and to vet and select 15 Ghanaian social media influencers as the faces and voices of our campaign. These influencers — who included YOLO cast members and leading bloggers — delivered messaging on COVID-19 vaccination. This took the form of both project-created ads featuring influencers and influencers’ organic posts on their own accounts, using project messaging guides.



## LESSONS LEARNED: Monitor Your Ads; Understand the Space

During our campaign, we met a challenge: How do we balance influencer authenticity with campaign branding? Influencers posted organic content on their own accounts and were featured in project-developed content posted to the YOLO and GoodLife social media pages. In their organic posts, they tagged campaign partners and donors, and some audience members pushed back on this. Comments revealed some users saw these influencers as “cashing in” or pushing an agenda. By monitoring feedback to ads, and as part of regular check-ins with influencers, the project team was able to quickly recognize and respond to this. We provided influencers with guides of frequently asked questions to support their responding to comments. For trickier comments, influencers sought guidance from the campaign team via a WhatsApp group.

We believe our monitoring and support in real time was strong, and we recommend other campaigns build similar systems. In addition, we recommend having discussions on pushback at the outset of campaigns. We also recommend developing branding guidelines for influencers’ organic posts, which should make campaign affiliation clear while allowing individual voices to come through.



Figure 1: Two vaccine campaign ads from Ghana featuring influencers

### What’s Next for Us?

Increasing uptake of COVID-19 vaccinations, particularly among young people, is still a key priority in Ghana. Drawing on what we have learned from our campaign, like the **team’s** honed skill set in Ads Manager, we will continue to share content focused on COVID-19 vaccination for the coming six months, collaborating closely with the **government of Ghana’s national** vaccine campaigns.