

3-year grant proposal for GiveWell

SMS reminders programme

Our SMS reminders programme involves **sending SMS messages to the parents of new children, along the sequence of their vaccination schedule**. We currently deliver the programme in two states, Bihar and Maharashtra. The table below describes key features of the programme:

State	Bihar	Maharashtra	
Partnership with	State government (State Health Society)	State government (State Family Welfare Bureau)	
Enrollment strategy	We digitise relevant data to enrol children from labour wards in public health facilities	We enrol children and pregnant women from the government's existing (digital) Reproductive Child Health database, which primarily contains children born in public health facilities	
Included messages	Welcome message; breastfeeding reminders; reminders for vaccination visits at: 6 weeks (Penta-1 etc.), 10 weeks (Penta-2 etc.), 14 weeks (Penta-3 etc.), 9 months (MR-1 etc.), 15 months (MR-2 etc.)	<i>Pregnancy sequence:</i> Welcome message; TD vaccination reminders; message about government-provided pregnancy supplements / medications (iron, folic acid, calcium, deworming); reminders for ANC visits at 12, 28 and 36 weeks; information about high-risk pregnancy symptoms; encouragement to give birth in a public facility (with information about baby's birth-dose vaccines); breastfeeding reminder	<i>Vaccination sequence:</i> breastfeeding reminder; reminders for vaccination visits at: 6 weeks (Penta-1 etc.), 10 weeks (Penta-2 etc.), 14 weeks (Penta-3 etc.), 9 months (MR-1 etc.), 15 months (MR-2 etc.)

Currently in Bihar, we are delivering SMS reminders in 2 large districts (of 38 total), Patna and Saran, representing roughly 10% of the state's population. In Maharashtra, we are delivering SMS reminders in 2 districts (of 35 total), Satara and Jalna, representing roughly 5% of the state's population.

We propose to target the following scale during a 3-year grant:

- By the end of 2023, grow from our current (~5%) scale in Maharashtra to deliver SMS reminders across 100% of districts in the state
- Continue covering ~10% of Bihar

We estimate that in total, this will mean enrolling approximately **4.8 million children for SMS vaccination reminders** (plus a further 1.3 million already-born children who will be “back-enrolled” at the time of expansion in Maharashtra to receive any remaining messages of their reminder sequence - at minimum the 9-month and 15-month reminders). It will also mean enrolling approximately **4.9 million women for pregnancy reminders** (plus a further 1.4 million “back-enrolled”).

Planned steps

- Apr-Sep 2023:
 - Get government sign-off for planned expansion in Maharashtra (practical sign-off which builds upon our existing MoU).
 - Review of existing operational systems to ensure readiness for 10x expansion (e.g. ensuring tech system is prepared to handle a larger capacity of requests)
- Sep 2023:
 - Simultaneously add all remaining districts to scale to 100% of Maharashtra (this is our Plan A - the final scaling schedule will be determined through conversations with government partners). In new districts, back-enrol children and pregnant women from previous months who can still receive part of the message sequence.

Ambassadors programme

Our ambassadors programme involves conducting community-level surveys to identify community ‘influencers’, then asking these influencers to act as volunteer immunisation ambassadors in their communities. Ambassadors then engage parents and community stakeholders to support and encourage childhood immunisation in whichever way they see as most valuable for their own community. After they are recruited, we send ambassadors fortnightly motivational SMS messages.

So far we have delivered the programme in several blocks of Saran district, Bihar and Satara district, Maharashtra - our current capacity is to cover ~1% of a state per year.

We propose to target the following scale during a 3-year grant:

- Between Bihar and Maharashtra, double our total ambassadors programme capacity (from currently ~1% of a state per year) to cover ~2% of a state per year, and maintain this capacity. Concretely, we will aim to recruit **30,000 additional immunisation ambassadors** over 3 years across Bihar and Maharashtra, who we estimate will reach **455,000 families** to support and encourage them to access immunisation.
- Conduct **3 experiments** to iterate on our model of operational delivery of the ambassadors programme to make it more ready-for-scale.

Planned steps

- May 2023: recruit a Programme Coordinator for Maharashtra
- June 2023: recruit 16 Field Officers (8 in Bihar, 8 in Maharashtra)

- July 2023 onwards: experiments to iterate on operational delivery model

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

We will standardise and scale our **monitoring** systems for both the SMS reminders and ambassadors programmes, to ensure reliable delivery of both programmes as they scale.

Planned steps

- Conduct at least 3 feedback surveys with n=500 sample frames of SMS reminders users in each of Bihar and Maharashtra over 3 years
- Build automated process monitoring dashboards for both SMS reminders and ambassadors programmes, and establish associated monitoring practices for key programme metrics
- Select and improve priority programme metrics (likely including unit costs of programme delivery), supported by the monitoring dashboards

We will continue to refine our **evaluation and learning** strategy in close discussion with GiveWell over the coming months. Likely components could include:

- Make a well-justified estimate of our **best-guess impact** of the SMS reminders and ambassadors programmes, using secondary research (this may largely be led by GiveWell) and/or our own primary evidence and data
- Conduct research activities such as interviews or focus groups to increase our understanding of **context-specific barriers to and drivers of immunisation**, and how these may interact with our programmes, led by a specialist in human-centred design / social & behavioural change / participatory research / anthropology