Special Edition

January - April 2023

NEWSLETTER

Joint Learning Agenda

A Civil Society Learning and Advocacy Programme on Health Financing in Africa

coordinated by IMPACT SANTE AFRIQUE and WACI HEALTH

Champions for Health
**IN SUMMARY**

Joint Learning Agenda (JLA) is a joint learning program on health financing and Universal Health coverage (UHC).

This program was established by a consortium of global health organizations - the Global Financing Facility (GFF), the Global Fund, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, WHO, the World Bank, GAVI, and UHC2030 - coordinated by regional civil society partners - Impact Santé Afrique (ISA) and WACI Health.

Launched two years ago, the project has trained more than 400 civil society organizations (CSOs) in 20 Anglophone and Francophone countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda.

The main goal of the JLA program is to create a movement to bring about real change for the better by getting governments to fund and implement quality health care for all by all.

The program had two phases and three pillars: a learning/training phase for CSOs on health financing advocacy, followed by an implementation phase.

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<tr>
<th>Phase 1 – LEARNING</th>
<th>Phase 2 – SUPPORT</th>
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<td>• PILAR 1:</td>
<td>• PILAR 2:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional (Anglophone and Francophone) online Training of Trainers.</td>
<td>In-country practical and action oriented trainings focusing on building CSO's capacity on advocacy and accountability for health financing for UHC.</td>
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<td>• PILAR 3:</td>
<td>• PILAR 3:</td>
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<td>Putting learning into practice with the support of tailored capacity building, technical assistance, mentoring and grants.</td>
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*This newsletter allows us to follow the evolution of the advocacy and accountability activities carried out by the trained CSOs in their countries during Phase 2. Let's start with a few key events.*
THE WEBINARS...

Regional coordination meetings

Organized every month by Impact Santé Afrique for Francophone countries and WACI Health for Anglophone countries, these monthly meetings are an opportunity for the focal points to exchange on the activities that have been carried out during the month and on good practices.

WEBINAR: CIVIL SOCIETY INFORMATION WEBINAR ON THE UN HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON THE UHC

On January 27, 2023, a “Civil Society Information Webinar on the UHC High Level Meeting” webinar was organized by the Civil Society Engagement Mechanism (CSEM):

https://www.uhc2030.org/un-hlm-2023/

During this very successful webinar, CSOs were briefed on the UN High Level Meeting on the UHC (UN ULM) scheduled for September 21, 2023. A strong advocacy was made by the CSEM presenters.

The following timetable to prepare for this high-level meeting was shared with CSOs:

2023 Engagement calendar

Getting ready for the 2023 UN High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage

UN HLM on UHC

#UHCHLM

www.uhc2030.org/un-hlm-2023
Tools, including the action plan with 8 policy recommendations directed at national leaders (https://www.uhc2030.org/un-hlm-2023/action-agenda-from-the-uhc-movement/) and the advocacy letter and messages (https://www.uhc2030.org/fileadmin/uploads/uhc2030/UHC_MESSAGE_SHEET_FOR_2023.pdf) to be sent to our decision makers were also shared.

**BOOTCAMP 1: ENGAGING CSOS IN ADVOCACY ON HEALTH FINANCING AND SUSTAINABILITY IN THE GLOBAL FUND GC7 PROCESS IN AFRICA**

On February 6, 2023, the Global Fund had the opportunity to inform CSOs about their new funding cycle: the GC7 (7th replenishment) through the webinar “Engaging CSOs in advocacy on health financing and sustainability in the Global Fund GC7 process in Africa”.

In order to prepare countries for this new round of funding, the Global Fund emphasized the important role of CSOs in this new process.

The Global Fund has demonstrated the relevance and importance of CSO collaboration and the need for national advocacy and accountability plans that allow for in-depth analysis of the country health financing context and situation, as well as activity planning and budgeting.

Subsequently, presentations of concrete and recent examples from Malawi and Zimbabwe showed the importance:

- advocacy for health financing through national dialogues
- CSO engagement in these national dialogues.

**What is different about this new Strategy?**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Across all three diseases, an intensified focus on prevention.</th>
<th>Greater emphasis on programmatic and financial sustainability.</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Greater emphasis on integrated, people-centered services.</td>
<td>Greater focus on accelerating the equitable deployment of and access to innovations.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>A more systematic approach to supporting the development and integration of community systems for health.</td>
<td>Much greater emphasis on data-driven decision-making.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>A stronger role and voice for communities living with and affected by the diseases.</td>
<td>Explicit recognition of the role the Global Fund partnership can and should play in pandemic preparedness and response.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Intensified action to address inequities, human rights and gender-related barriers.</td>
<td>Clarity on the roles and accountabilities of Global Fund partners across every aspect of the Strategy.</td>
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*Country Dialogue is expected to be a critical lever to cascade the Key Changes of the new strategy into country-level discussions.*

boot camp Slide 1 «What’s different about this new strategy?»
BOOTCAMP 2: DOMESTIC HEALTH FINANCING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: CROSS COUNTRY COMPARISONS AND ANALYSIS UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL ACTION

On March 13, 2023, through the webinar «Domestic Health Financing in sub-Saharan Africa: cross country Comparisons and analysis upcoming opportunities for regional action,» organized by Impact Santé Afrique and Waci Heath, experts strengthened the capacity of CSOs on domestic resource mobilization for health in Africa.

Through economic comparisons of JLA countries, they also presented opportunities for improving disaster risk management, thus providing CSOs with a focus for advocacy. Regional Health financing initiatives and opportunities were also presented.
On April 5, 2023, through the webinar «UHC UN High Level Meeting and advocacy planning for CSOs» organized by Impact Santé Afrique and Waci Health, WHO presented to CSOs the key elements for advocacy for UHC: actions to be taken, meetings not to be missed, dates, recommendations. As an example of good practices, the focal points of Malawi and Benin presented to the other CSOs what is being done in their respective countries.
Congratulations to the following CSOs that submitted their advocacy and accountability plans developed and validated under the JLA program and won the first round of PAI grants:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>JLA COUNTRIES</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION/COALITION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>SOS Jeunesse et Défis</td>
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<td>Chad</td>
<td>Cellule de Liaison des Associations Féminines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>Health Rights and Education Programme (HREP)</td>
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<td>Youth Initiative for Community Development (YCOD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Réseau Jeunesse Population Développement (RJPD)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Alliance Nationale des Jeunes pour la Sante de la Reproduction</td>
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Thanks to these grants, by February CSOs were able to begin carrying out the activities outlined in their advocacy and accountability plans on health financing and UHC.

Result of this First Round of PAI grant offers:

🔗 https://www.csogffhub.org/gff-cso-grantees/

**COMMITMENT TO THE UHC**

- **African Health Agenda International Conference (AHAIC)**

From 5 to 8 March 2023, in Kigali, Rwanda, the African Health Agenda International Conference (AHAIC) was held. Conference in which Waci Health took part.

In collaboration with CSEM, Waci health also organized a side event on March 6, 2023, entitled «Preparing for the 2023 UN High Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage,» which was attended by the Rwanda Ministry of Health, the Rwanda Biomedical Center, the Rwanda CCM, and Rwandan CSOs. The event showcased the work done so far towards the UN High Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage and key advocacy opportunities for CSO engagement.
In Cameroon, the socio-economic vulnerability of the population is accentuated by the burden of health-related expenses. Poverty limits their access to quality health care and services and reduces their life expectancy.

This can change if people actually have access to and use basic services. In order to progress, health systems must be considerably strengthened to ensure coverage of essential services, if the target of MDG 3.8.1 is to be achieved by 2030. This is why, on the instruction of the Head of State, Cameroon has joined the march towards Universal Health Coverage, with the first phase of the latter starting on April 12, 2023.

It is in this perspective that Impact Santé Afrique (ISA) is actively participating in the implementation of the UHC by providing its expertise and support to the Ministry of Public Health in the implementation of phase 1 of the UHC, both in terms of communication and advocacy.

On January 27, 2023, ISA participated in the workshop to update the communication materials for phase 1 of the UHC organized by the Ministry of Public Health. The objective of this workshop was to update the communication plan and tools for phase 1 of the UHC: website, application, communication materials, press kit, advocacy kits.

On February 2 and 3, 2023, experts from the Ministry of Public Health, in collaboration with Impact Santé Afrique (ISA), went into the field to gather the population's opinions on the communication materials (leaflets, posters, etc.) before finalizing them. During this very successful pre-test, different opinions were collected, thus allowing us to obtain communication materials that correspond to the expectations of citizens.
On February 14-17, 2023, in collaboration with GIZ, AFD, Impact Santé Afrique (ISA) participated in a workshop on the integration of the Chèque Santé, a free health care voucher for pregnant women in the Cameroonian Septentrion (Adamaoua, Far North and North regions), at the national level in phase 1 of the UHC. This workshop was organized by the Ministry of Public Health.

On April 12, 2023, the historic day of the start of the UHC in Cameroon, CSOs including ISA relayed communication messages on the various networks.

In addition to the Ministry of Public Health, Impact Santé Afrique (ISA) also supports local CSOs in the JLA program in advocating for health financing and UHC.

Indeed, one of the recommendations at the end of the training of the first phase of the JLA program was the need for these CSOs to form a coalition in order to contribute more effectively to health financing and the implementation of the UHC in Cameroon, this coalition dedicated solely to health financing and the UHC being the first of its kind in Cameroon.

With this in mind, and in alignment with their 2022-2024 National Civil Society Advocacy and Accountability Plan, JLA CSOs, in collaboration with Impact Santé Afrique (ISA), developed the 2023 bylaws and operational plan for the new CSO coalition on health financing and UHC in Cameroon, called COFIS-CSU. These bylaws and operational plan were validated during a workshop organized by CSOs in collaboration with Impact Santé Afrique (ISA). Key health partners were present: the Prime Ministry, the Ministry of Public Health, and GIZ. They gave their recommendations to the newly formed coalition.

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?s- tory_fbid=pfbid02Lfi9N3Aqb25b4e-BH2e8QpdmvmGbYxg6H7pnPho-zUdUpSEGL88RW2SxELEqWskqSN- l&id=100063566712851&sfnsn=mo&mibex- tid=RUbZ1f

Family photo of the COFIS-CSU coalition launch workshop
The management of complaints in hospitals is one of the essential elements for improving the quality of health services and care for the population, and is closely linked to the application of the UHC. In Benin, as part of the implementation of the Health Insurance component of the Insurance for Human Capital Strengthening (AM-ARCH) project, a new complaints management system was put in place that places civil society organizations at the heart of the management mechanism in order to ensure transparency in the management of complaints with an effective return to the complainants. In order to assess the effectiveness of this new complaints management system and to make concrete proposals for its implementation to the State in its march towards the UHC, a call for tender was launched for the recruitment of two Civil Society Organizations.

With this in mind, in November 2022, the JLA program focal points, armed with the training they had received in the framework of health financing and advocacy for the march towards UHC, trained local Beninese CSOs on complaint management and accountability. This training was very successful and allowed them to strengthen their capacities in these two areas and thus better respond to the call for proposals launched by the Accelerator project to support the Beninese government.

Subsequently, after deliberation of the bids related to the management system, two major CSO coalitions were selected:

The Benin Coalition of CSOs for Universal Health Coverage (COBCUS), a member of the JLA program, experienced in managing complaints at the community level, and the National Platform of Health Service Users (PNUSS), which specializes in complaints management and is present in several departments of the country, are the two civil society organizations selected.

Their main mission is to (i) strengthen outreach in 6 communes covered by the ARCH (Assurance pour le Renforcement du Capital Humain) health insurance scheme; (ii) coordinate the management of complaints in the communes concerned in relation to the Agence Nationale de la Protection Sociale (ANPS), the Ministry of Health (MS) and other stakeholders; (iii) conduct periodic satisfaction surveys among beneficiaries. The objective is to improve the quality of services offered in the implementation of the government’s flagship social project in the achievement of the UHC.

In addition to this mission of complaint management that was entrusted to them, while being in close line with their advocacy and accountability plan on health financing and UHC, and thus have more impact in their advocacy, the CSOs of the JLA program undertook to form an overall Movement in favor of advocacy for the financing of the UHC with other coalitions. Thus, on February 27 and 28, the CSOs trained with the support of JLA participated with the focal points in the workshop to prepare the launch of this Movement in the presence of CSOs from the Maison De la Société Civile (MDSC).
In addition to these actions, Benin provided technical support to CSOs in Togo on the tools of budget advocacy for health for all (CSME) in a spirit of experience sharing between JLA countries. An approach that Impact Santé Afrique is trying to promote. The main objective of this workshop, apart from sharing experiences between countries, was to strengthen the capacities of CSOs in Togo on these new tools (CSME), to enlarge the JLA CSOs in Togo through the establishment of contacts between the JLA CSOs and the trained CSOs (Union of NGOs in Togo (UONGTO) and International Network for Social Protection Rights (INSPIR Togo). Technical support was provided by the Benin ALJ Focal Point who used the toolkits developed by the WCT through the Health for All Advocacy Kit. At the end of the workshop, the CSOs of Togo saw their capacities strengthened to put into practice the lessons received to facilitate advocacy with the Togolese authorities for a good march towards the UHC.

**OTHER HIGH IMPACT ACTIVITIES...**

**Burkina Faso: Capacity Building for Parliamentarians**

Despite the geopolitical security situation, JLA CSOs, through the focal points, have been able to carry out high-impact activities.

On January 16-19, 2023, CSOs from the JLA program strengthened the capacities of 30 parliamentarians from the Transitional Legislative Assembly (TLA) on the state budget and the role they can play in its oversight. The training provided an opportunity to discuss with parliamentarians the role they should play throughout the budget process, what is currently being done according to the rules, and what elements need to be improved to strengthen parliamentary oversight of government action. This capacity building was timely due to Burkina Faso's exceptional regime, as these new decision makers are open to a positive change in the country's governance. This knowledge will allow them to have a more critical look at the government's management of resources, to improve what was already done in terms of budgetary control and to innovate so that public budgets can reflect the real needs of the population.
On January 19-20, 2023, in Nairobi, the CSO coalition organized a two-day workshop bringing together civil society actors who had been trained and deployed to replicate the training in 10 counties (Busia, Migori, Homabay, Nairobi, Kakamega, Kwale, Mombasa, Siaya, Vihiga and Kisumu). An invitation was sent to four participants representing youth-led organizations. 24 participants, including 10 from outside Nairobi, attended the workshop.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- Align the coalition’s advocacy and accountability plan with the follow-up to the AU African Leaders’ Meeting and the health financing progress matrix of WHO, GAVI, UNICEF, Stop TB, UNAIDS, and other key global indicators (which include sub-indicators to track changes in health financing levels and coverage for nutrition, immunization, HIV, RMNCAH, TB, malaria, and other areas)

As a follow-on from the introduction WACI Health made in late 2022 of N’weti to the Global Fund (GF) focal points, N’weti became the representative organization in Mozambique that is supporting the GF. The GF, together with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Government of Mozambique, is organizing a National Health Financing Dialogue in Mozambique to take place in 2023. The goal of which will be to accelerate health financing reforms in Mozambique by giving them greater political visibility. As part of this process the GF aims to consult with a number of stakeholders including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) prior to the high-level event.

Given this context, N’weti supported the prior engagement activities that took place in February with GF’s mission visits to the country. N’weti prepared and received from 8 to 11 February a mission composed by colleagues from the GF – Geneva and the SADC secretariat. The purpose of the visit was related to the National High-Level Dialogue on Health Sector Financing. The mission had meetings with the Ministry of Health, with the Ministry of Economics and Finance, the private sector, parliamentarians (Commission of Planning and Budgeting), and the Health Partners Group. Those meetings represented a pre-assessment of these actors’ understanding of the Health Financing Strategy and their willingness to contribute to the debate. As a result, the National High-Level Dialogue will be preceded by a set of pre-meetings with the contacted stakeholders, with exception of the Ministry of Health but including civil society organizations. The pre-meetings will prepare the actors for the dialogue, which will include representatives from Mozambique’s provinces. Documents of consensus will be produced and widely shared and after the High-Level Dialogue the Health Financing Strategy will be updated and a clear follow-up plan will be set.

In parallel to supporting GF’s visit to Mozambique as preparation for the National High-Level Dialogue on Health Sector Financing, N’weti has also shared with the GF the terms of reference and budget for the event for comments and approval by the GF.
The DRC focal points organized a working session with the Honorable Parliamentarian who initiated the law on UHC at the National Assembly. During this very fruitful exchange, issues related to the evolution of the law on UHC and the establishment of a network of parliamentarians, in collaboration with Congolese civil society, in favor of health financing and UHC were discussed.

**CSO ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

- United Nations High Level Meeting on Public Health, Tuberculosis and PPPR (UN-HLM)
  
  The President of the United Nations General Assembly announced a series of multi-stakeholder hearings on Universal Health Coverage (UHC), Tuberculosis and Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response (PPPR), to be held on May 8 and 9, 2023, in a lead up to the UNHLs in September 2023.

  For the first time in history, the United Nations will hold three high-level meetings at the same time.

- Stop TB Partnership publication except on World TB Day

  We remember the 2018 United Nations High Level Meeting (UNHLM) on TB and its goals and commitments, as well as the community progress report A Deadly Divide: TB Commitments Vs TB Realities released two years later.

  On World TB Day 2023, we will reflect on the progress, successes, and gaps in our efforts over the following years. On World TB Day, March 23, 2023, the STOP TB Partnership released the Deadly Divide report, which highlights six priority areas. [priorities_to_close_the_deadly_divide_-_call_to_action_0.pdf](stoptb.org).

  We are working to chart a course for the second UNHLM on TB in 2023 and beyond and to end TB by 2030. We also build on the roadmap set by the Global Plan to Stop TB 2023-2030 and, most importantly, affirm the six thematic calls to action for TB control.

  We affirm that the six thematic calls to action are critical to ending the current TB pandemic. They require us to prioritize and address three facts that have historically stalled progress. First, TB must be given the political attention and ambition it deserves. It must be an economic and political priority, approached from a human rights and social justice perspective. Second, we must ensure that domestic and external financial resources are immediately available to end TB. The funding gap must be closed, existing innovations and tools must be available and accessible to all, and TB research and development (R&D) must receive the levels of investment we saw for COVID-19. Third, the empowerment of TB-affected communities and civil society partners has been excluded for too long. Our distinct lived experience and complementary expertise must be recognized, developed, and integrated into TB control design, planning, and funding. Without these steps, progress will be halted, lives will continue to be lost, and economies will continue to suffer the consequences of this neglect.

  **Call to action to civil society:**

  This year we are reminding our government, in advance of the UN High Level Meeting on TB in September, of the need to take concrete action to fight TB.

  1. Urgently accelerate TB control to meet the targets set at the UN High Level Meeting on TB in September 2028.

  2. Give urgent attention to preventive treatment of TB, which prevents infection from becoming
disease, and reduce vulnerability. Household contacts of TB patients, especially children, are among the most vulnerable groups.

3. Allocate more resources to increase investments in TB prevention, treatment, research and innovation to ensure more effective drugs, vaccines and tools, which are urgently needed to break the trajectory of the TB epidemic to break the trajectory of the TB epidemic through rapid and effective treatment.

**United Nations High Level Meeting on Public Health, Tuberculosis and PPPR (UN-HLM)**

The Pandemic Fund is a collaborative partnership of donor countries, co-investors (potential implementing country governments), foundations, and civil society organizations (CSOs). It is hosted by the World Bank and WHO is the technical lead. The Pandemic Fund will provide a dedicated stream of additional long-term funding to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response capacity and address critical gaps in low- and middle-income countries through investments and technical support at country, regional, and global levels.

In September 2022, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution to convene a high-level meeting on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response in 2023, no later than the end of September 2023. This focused high-level meeting is urgently needed and long overdue, given the deadly and costly impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic and the existential threat that other pandemic threats pose to the collective well-being of humanity and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

WACI Health is an advisor to the Global South Board Representative of the Pandemic Fund to EANASSO and is also a member of a CSO advocacy group to influence the UNHLM policy statement on PPPR. In addition, WACI is working with the Pandemic Action Network (PAN) to influence and contribute to Africa’s common position on PPPR, explore opportunities for an interface session at the AU level, and ensure equity in the pandemic countermeasures platform for low and middle income countries. We are also in contact with Africa CDC to explore partnership opportunities on the above joint activities.

**What are the next steps?**

- Implementation Advocacy and Accountability Plans
- Preparations for the UHC High Level Meeting in September
- Advocacy and accountability stories to be collected from participating countries for the creation of the community of practice
- Boot camp 4: Monitoring AU health financing and the GFF RMET tool

**Calendar**

- Multi-stakeholder Hearing Series on Universal Health Coverage (UHC), Tuberculosis and Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response (PPPR), **May 8-9, 2023**
- World Health Assembly – **May 21-30, 2023**
- World Blood Donor Day - **June 14, 2023**
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Together for Quality Health for All by All