

Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control Landscape in Displaced Populations

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UNICEF's Role and Activities

- Mission:** UNICEF works in over 190 countries and territories to save children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfil their potential, from early childhood through adolescence.
- Cameroon-Unicef CPD 2022-2026 outcome:** By 2026, pregnant women and children, including newborns and adolescents, **particularly the most vulnerable**, enjoy increased access and use quality essential health services delivering high-impact interventions and adopt healthy behaviors, **including in emergency contexts**
- Strategies:** 1st 1000 days of life, second decade and convergence
- Intervention :** Delivery of integrated Immunization Plus package for mothers and children
- UNICEF supports** the Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI) by working with countries, WHO, Gavi, and other partners to transform immunization into a universal tool for equity and survival: Advocacy, Technical support, resources mobilization, supply and logistic, SBC , communication, coordination, demand generation, service delivery.

Current HPV Project (2024-2025):

- HPV+ and adolescent programming for HPV Revitalization initiative in 21 country Unicef WCAR:** Advancing HPV vaccination with and for Adolescent girls in Cameroon - 9 districts targeted in 5 regions including 4 health districts with IDPs: Mbanga and Deido in Littoral region, Buea in South Ouest region, Mifi and Foumban in Ouest region.
- \$10 M 7% set-aside funding by Unicef WCARO; 300 000 USD for Cameroon

Objectives:

- Use HPV vaccination as an entry point to deliver a package of gender-responsive, health and wellbeing interventions targeting adolescents in a multi-sectoral approach:

Main activities (2024):

- Development of the national plan and regional SBC plans;
- Launch of the IoT (Internet of Good Things) digital platform;
- Integrated and user-friendly multi-sectoral service delivery model for adolescent
- HPV catch-up integrated into Big Catch-Up activities
- Community dialogue, advocacy and engagement session for religious leaders in favor of the promotion of the HPV
- Engagement of adolescent girls in promoting HPV vaccination ;
- 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women ;
- Empowerment of 5 AGAB Adolescent Girls Advisory Groups to mobilize their peers and engage their communities for HPV vaccine;

Main Results (2024) :

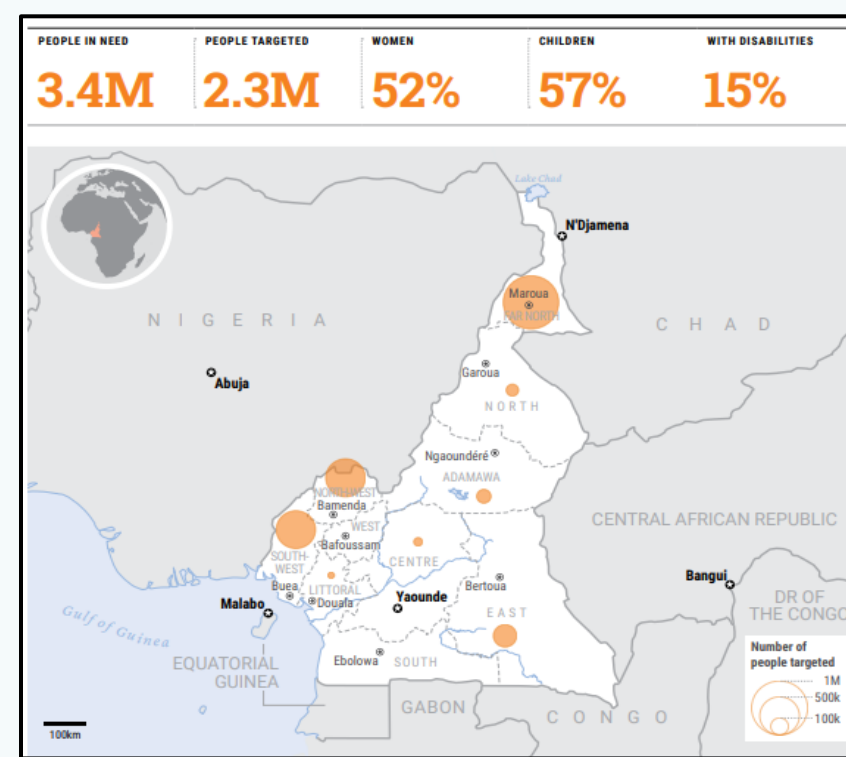
- 260 religious leaders Priests, Pastors and Imams from the West region engaged in the My Religious Community without HPV Initiative.
- 1000 adolescent girls engaged as champions of HPV vaccination
- 18 community dialogues with 492 participants on HPV vaccination organized with parents and young people in and out of school organized in Douala, Bafoussam and Foumban .
- More than 14 000 adolescent girls and boys vaccinated
- HPV national coverage raised from 18% in 2022 to 56.0 % in 2023,

Challenges

- Vaccine hesitancy, rumors, insecurity , funding ,
- Identification and estimating target groups (IDPs, nomads, migrants)

Overview of Displaced Populations

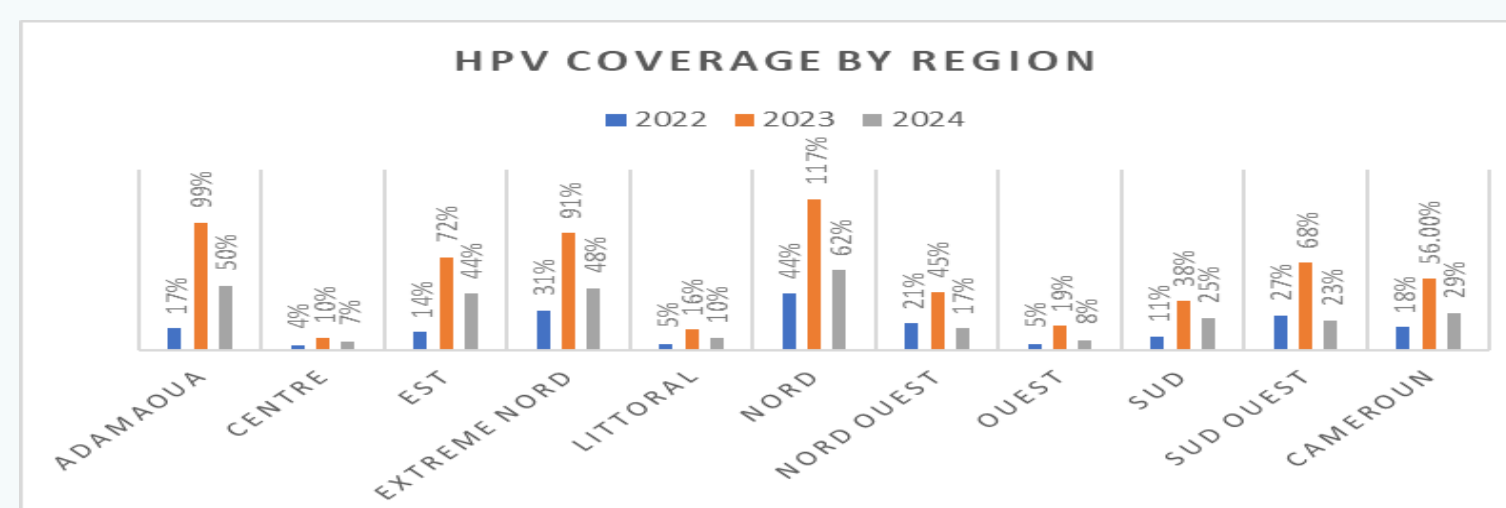
- In 2024, an estimated 3.4 million people in Cameroon was in need lifesaving assistance and protection due to the impact of the humanitarian crises (Cameroon Humanitarian Response Plan , OCHA, 2024).
- Cameroon Is affected by 3 main humanitarian crisis:
- Lake Chad crisis (Boko Haram crisis) that affected mostly the far north region: , 573,263 IDPs and 200,000 returnees;
- CAR crisis affecting East , Adamaoua, North Regions: 353,000 refugees;
- Socio political crisis in NW / SW regions : 648,421 IDPs
- Environmental and climatic crisis: flood in far north region,
- One in five women in Cameroon is likely to be carrying a high-risk HPV strain including IDPs
- Limited data is available on HPV infection rates and HPV-related diseases among displaced populations



POPULATION GROUP	PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE TARGETED	IN NEED	TARGET
Internally displaced people	929.7k	689.7k	■	■
Returnees	556.5k	444.4k	■	■
Refugees	486.3k	389.1k	■	■
Host communities	1.4M	801.2k	■	■

Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control

- The most common cancers in adults in Cameroon are breast (3,265), cervical (2,349) and prostate (2,064) new cases per year.
- National Committee for the Fight against Cancer restructured in 2020;
- National Strategic Plan for Prevention and Fight against Cancer (2020 - 2024) elaborated;
- One of the strategic objective is to strengthening primary and secondary prevention by intensifying the fight against STIs, vaccination, screening and early diagnosis of cancers by Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid and Lugol;
- Introduction of HPV vaccination in the routine EPI in 2020, in a 2-dose vaccination schedule, 9-year-old girls only (mono-cohort).
- In 2023, switch from 2 doses to a single dose and vaccination of 9-year-old girls and boys. Significant gain of 15 points in national HPV coverage;
- Over 30% of adolescents in conflict regions, including IDPs, receive the HPV vaccine yearly
- A new application to Gavi for HPV Multiple Age Cohort (9 – 14 years)
- HPV vaccine is delivered in health facilities, in outreach activities, in routine and during campaigns, in school and out of school, integrated with other adolescent interventions.
- Cancer screening capacity is limited : HR, infrastructures, laboratory, cost
- Continuity of care Is also limited: Health infrastructure, technical services.



Barriers to Access and Implementation Among These Populations

Supply-side barriers to HPV vaccination

- Geography
- Transient or nomadic movement
- Insecurity due to war and conflict FN, SW, NW
- Lack of healthcare provider recommendations
- Legal restriction (refugees without legal documents)
- Shortage of vaccines

Demand-side barriers to HPV vaccination

- Distrust, rumors and misinformation
- Religious beliefs
- Lack of awareness, Lack of time
- Poverty or low socioeconomic status
- Poor education level
- Gender-based discrimination

Barriers to Cervical cancer screening

- Lack of awareness
- Poverty , insufficient financing
- Limited skilled personnel for screening
- Limited number of laboratories or services for cancer screening and care

The Way Forward

- Multi age cohort (MAC) vaccination for HPV ; Vaccination of girls and boys; Scale up the HPV+ programming project in other priority health districts; Specific activities for IDPs, refugees, migrant population ; Advocacy and resource and funds raising

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