

## Digiredio Social and Behaviour Change platform addressing vaccine hesitancy and misconceptions among communities in Bungoma County

**D**igiredio ([www.digiredio.com](http://www.digiredio.com)), an initiative by the Centre for Behaviour Change and communication (CBCC Africa), stands as a groundbreaking Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) platform. This platform fosters dialogue between multi-sectoral players and the public to educate, amplify community voices, catalyse action, create social accountability, and enhance participation at all levels for sustainable development. Utilizing a network of radios, social groups, and online channels, Digiredio leverages these media to address critical issues and promote community well-being.

A flagship component of Digiredio is the weekly radio magazine show, 'Makala Ya Tumaini' (Program of Hope). This program has become a cornerstone for disseminating vital information, particularly regarding immunization. Through 'Makala Ya Tumaini', CBCC Africa through the support of UNICEF Kenya, delivers standardized immunization messages aimed at caregivers, adolescents, youth, and community groups. The show employs a two-way engagement strategy, featuring live interviews and expert discussions with national and county-based health experts, policymakers and community leaders.

In Bungoma County, health authorities are proactively combating vaccine hesitancy through enhanced community engagement and awareness programs. Health Promotional Officer Perita Baraza, speaking on Tandaza Radio, highlighted the issue of parents delaying subsequent vaccination doses, which disrupts the immunization schedule. Baraza, along with Jacinta Mutiso from Bumula Sub County, pointed out that misconceptions about vaccines significantly deter people from completing vaccination courses, including those for HPV and COVID-19.



*Jacinta Mutiso, Ministry of Health Bungoma County.*

Digiredio, through its innovative approach and dedicated initiatives like 'Makala Ya Tumaini,' exemplifies the power of social and behaviour change communication in fostering sustainable development. By empowering communities with knowledge and facilitating multi-sectoral dialogues, Digiredio is not only promoting health but also driving broader social accountability and participation. The ongoing efforts in counties like Bungoma serve as a testament to the platform's impact and the critical need for continued engagement in the fight against vaccine hesitancy and other public health challenges.

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Father holding her daughter

## 75% of children in Bungoma are fully immunized

Despite these challenges, approximately 75% of children in Bungoma are fully immunized, and continuous efforts are being made to improve these figures. Special attention is being given to the malaria vaccine, which targets children under three years in regions prone to the disease. Administered in four doses, this vaccine significantly reduces the severity and frequency of malaria infections in young children. County officials have celebrated the profound impact of vaccines on public health, crediting them with reducing the prevalence of diseases like polio, tuberculosis, and whooping cough, which were once widespread. These efforts underscore the vital role of immunization in safeguarding community health and highlight the importance of continuous public education and engagement to overcome barriers and misconceptions.



Jackiel Opiyo, Jacinta Mutiso, Perita Baraza