

PD-ABU-072

**WORKING GROUP ON IMMUNIZATION  
MEETINGS, 22-24 SEPTEMBER 1998,  
WASHINGTON, DC AND BETHESDA, MD**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On 22 -24 September 1998, I traveled to Washington, DC and Bethesda, MD, to participate, as a consultant, in strategy sessions and a brainstorming meeting on global priorities and inter-agency coordination in immunization. The trip was requested by the Working Group on Immunization, comprised of representatives from the World Bank, UNICEF, WHO, Rockefeller Foundation, and the vaccine industry.

## **PURPOSE OF VISIT**

The purpose of the trip was two-fold: 1) to participate in the 23 September brainstorming meeting, held by the working group and attended by representatives of U.S. technical and funding agencies, and 2) to participate in strategy meetings of the working group itself. The working group felt that the brainstorming meeting was a successful first step in soliciting open, honest opinions from those in the immunization field as to the global priorities for the next decade, and the best means by which to achieve those objectives. The strategy meetings, held on the evening of 22 September and on 24 September, were also very productive in that they provided for the opportunity for the group to discuss future brainstormings, as well as to agree upon the interview form, the interviewees, and the data storage/analysis methods.

## **BACKGROUND**

The working group process began as a result of a meeting in March 1998 on Leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century for Vaccines and Immunization. Hosted by James Wolfensohn of the World Bank and attended by agency heads such as Carol Bellamy of UNICEF and Gro Harlem Brundtland of WHO, the meeting lauded international achievements to date in immunization, while noting that new strategies must be developed to take advantage of recent developments in vaccinology. The meeting participants suggested the formation of a working group to solicit and synthesize the opinions of those working in vaccines and immunization. Comprised of representatives from UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank, Rockefeller Foundation, and the vaccine industry, the working group has organized a number of brainstorming meetings and individual interviews as the means by which to gather information. The Washington and Bethesda meetings were the first steps in this process, and they laid the groundwork for the process to move forward. I have been hired as a consultant to help the working group generate, store, and analyze the data.

## **TRIP ACTIVITIES**

I met with Amie Batson at the World Bank upon my arrival in Washington, DC, on the afternoon of 22 September, to discuss the upcoming meeting and strategy sessions. On the evening of 22 September, the whole working group met to discuss the brainstorming meeting and new

developments affecting the dynamics of the working group. On 23 September, the U.S. technical and funding agencies met. At this meeting, the working group members took a neutral role so that invited participants could share their thoughts in an un-biased, open atmosphere. I was responsible for recording the meeting as thoroughly as possible, so that the record can later be used in the data analysis process. On 24 September, the working group, met once again to discuss the previous day's meeting, plan for upcoming meetings, and come to agreement on the interview process. The group also discussed strategies for keeping the UN agencies, the Bank, the European funding agencies, and the developing countries involved in, and supportive of, the process.

## **RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Please see attached summary and minutes of the brainstorming and strategy meetings, respectively.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

No recommendations will be made until the process is complete.

## **FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS**

Follow-up actions for both myself and the group include brainstorming meetings in London and Geneva, individual interviews, data entry, analysis, and a final report detailing recommendations for global cooperation in immunization.

**APPENDIXES**

**APPENDIX A**

**SUMMARY OF THE U.S. BRAINSTORMING MEETING**  
**24 SEPTEMBER, 1998, BETHESDA, MD**

## I. Opening

Chaired by Dr Myron Levine of the University of Maryland School of Medicine, the meeting was held at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, MD, and was attended by people working in vaccines and immunization based in the USA, as well as a few from Europe. (Please see attached list of participants.) The Rockefeller Foundation sponsored the meeting.

## II. Introduction

Amie Batson of the World Bank opened the meeting by explaining to the participants that the working group that convened the 'brainstorming meeting' had been created after a meeting on immunization in March hosted by Dr James Wolfensohn of the World Bank. The purpose of the March meeting was to bring the established leaders in the field together with new partners to discuss how to maximize protection against infectious diseases through immunization. The meeting marked a change in the field, she explained, in that it involved high-level agency leaders, an increased participation on the part of the Bank, and the full participation of industry. A consensus emerged from the March meeting that increased attention needs to be paid to a global coalition, that there needs to be more thought about priority setting, and that new mechanisms for cooperation should be explored.

As established in March, the mission of the working group is to solicit the opinions of those who work in immunization as to the priorities for the next decade and the best mechanisms by which to achieve them. The working group is gathering opinions through regional brainstorming meetings and individual interviews, either phone or face-to-face. After the information gathering is complete, the working group will prepare a report highlighting two to three different options on how to proceed. These options will be presented at the next meeting of leaders in immunization, tentatively scheduled to take place in Annecy, France.

It is important to note, Ms Batson explained, that the working group is not looking to force a consensus, rather to gather diverse opinions for the creation of representative options -- even if they end up being diametrically opposed. In response to an initial question, she further explained that the meeting was designed to let participants think freely about priorities and then discuss the best means for achieving them, be it collectively, or not. Finally, specific discussion around the Children's Vaccine Initiative (CVI) is encouraged, as it is the current formal structure for a coalition. Participants should not feel constrained, however, to tailor their discussion around the CVI.

## III. Group Brainstorming on Global Priorities in Immunization for the Next Decade

David Salisbury began by suggesting that, as a complement to the gathering of opinions on global priorities, the working group should 'map-out' a description of the different players in the field -- who they are and what they do -- so that the visible deficits are readily apparent. After much discussion, the following three objectives -- originally introduced by Dr Salisbury as the objectives in the UK program -- emerged as the comprehensive priorities (in no particular order):

Objective 1: To ensure sustainable programs/coverage (basic infrastructure, surveillance).

Objective 2: To increase coverage/access to vaccines.

Objective 3: To introduce priority and new vaccines in developing countries (such as rotavirus)

Other objectives mentioned include:

- Ensuring adequate, affordable, quality supply;
- Polio eradication;
- Measles eradication;
- Adding adult vaccines to the immunization agenda (expanding EPI);
- Developing priority vaccines for developing countries (malaria, TB, HIV, schistosomiasis);
- Developing easily accessible, affordable technologies;
- Moving vaccines available in the US to developing countries (hepB, Hib, Varicella, and soon rotavirus and perhaps HPV);
- Funding of immunization (entire programs, not just vaccine purchase);
- Ensuring that industry operates in such a way to promote needed new vaccines (the strategy to achieve this was debated with Tim Evans suggesting ventures with developing countries and Carolyn Hardegree noting that this might be difficult given newer, more complicated technologies).

Difficulties in actually ranking objectives were noted by Mark Kane, who said that it is difficult to dichotomize when all objectives are so intertwined by the time they reach the program level. Roy Widdus also suggested that ranking is not necessarily the most useful approach. Rather, he said, we should have a balanced portfolio of objectives because different collaborators have different priorities and different strength to offer. We should, he stated, focus on the means for collaboration so that important issues do not fall through the cracks. Dr de Quadros agreed and said that it was important not to re-invent the wheel. Along the lines of both Dr Widdus comments and Dr Salisbury's opening remarks, he said that we should look at what different players are able to offer, rather than simply create another list of ranked priorities.

Claire Broome agreed and said that priorities had been discussed enough. She urged that there needs to be further talk of cooperative mechanisms, but after first looking to the existing problems and the functions needed to overcome them.

The following are some of the issues raised:

- Problems to address
- Functions to address the problem
- Need to strengthen infrastructure in Africa
- Financing of new vaccines -- either on a national or per vaccine basis
  - prioritize
  - identify needs, disease burden

- target
- Decentralization
  - information dissemination
- Demand creation -- with both governments and mothers
  - behavioral research
  - market survey
  - identify, engage key decision-makers
  - disease burden surveys
  - promotion of intrinsic value and 'sense of rights'
- Sustainable financing of existing programs
  - analyze problems
  - set priorities
  - advocacy
  - economics, price-tiering
- No clear market priorities so industry has no incentive for developing country disease
  - market studies in developing countries
  - increase incentives by decreasing risk through guarantees and long-term commitments
  - develop markets in developing countries with adequate return
  - develop alternate solutions to correct market failures
- Local production/viability studies
  - economic analysis
  - quality control

After discussion on the issues to be addressed and the functions that must be performed to address those issues, the group dialogue spun into a lengthy debate over vaccine development and financing. The majority of people seemed to think that uncertainty in markets was a hindrance to the development of vaccines for developing countries. There also seemed to be a majority opinion that new strategies needed to be created to motivate large manufacturers to develop priority vaccines for developing countries. Dr Jacques-Francois Martin noted the need to focus on long-term guarantees of credible markets (as opposed to short-term operational issues), the need to further explore tiered-pricing, and the need to create the political will to make financing mechanisms a reality.

Bill Watson urged that people not think solely in terms of new vaccine development, but also around how to get existing vaccines into use. Roy Widdus suggested that people begin to think of vaccine introduction in new ways -- even if they break from the traditional strategies of Universal Childhood Immunization -- and suggested that introduction could be targeted to specific areas of high endemicity, rather than at an entire nation, or region.

In her summary of the morning session, Amie Batson re-iterated comments made throughout the discussion regarding the importance of continuing to work in, and advocate for immunization, because it is so cost-effective and can have such an important public health impact. She then summarized the three main, comprehensive global priority areas identified by the group:

sustainability of programs, increasing coverage and new vaccine introduction. She also reviewed the different issues to be addressed and functions needed to address those issues.

#### IV. Group Brainstorming on the Structure of a Coalition

The afternoon session was opened by a review of prior comments made by Dr Steve Landry who said that it is important to look at the specific role(s) which a global shared effort in immunization could play. He had also reminded participants that there must be involvement at the country level for any true impact to be made. The group then 'brainstormed' the following important roles that need to be played and looked at whether or not there was any value added by a coalition playing those roles:

- Role/Activity
- What is the added value of a coalition?
- 'Keeper of the Vision'
  - gives credibility (a sort of corporate mask)
  - same shared vision across/down organizations
  - meets to update vision
- Development of coherent strategies in line with the vision
  - mobilizes resources
  - builds a consensus on the roles and responsibilities of governments, donors and agencies (example given that it could be hurtful if one agency is trying to encourage sustainability, and then another comes in with complete financing)
  - transcends turf
- Implementation of strategies
  - facilitates interaction between partners who have their own mandates
  - enables better implementation by partners
  - idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts
  - lets there be an identification of needs and a leverage of comparative strengths
  - solutions require multiple partners at all levels
- Advocacy to policy makers
  - can be seen as 'rights' of the poorest
  - can pull together key leaders
  - lets leaders communicate and re-enforce each other's programs
  - neutral
  - captures enthusiasm and can get the commitment to focus on goals/objectives
  - keeps momentum going
  - set ambitious goals for buy-in
- Promotion of development
  - arbitrates discussion between public and private sectors, as well as the MOFs and users
  - is cross-sectional
  - links partners along the continuum, creates mechanism for 'looping or feeding-back'
  - provides for input to decision-makers at different stages
  - influences the thinking of industry

- Maintenance of a neutral forum
  - allows all partners to come to the table
  - creates a forum for honest discussion
  - allows people to address difficult issues
  - allows partners to challenge each other in a collegial, non-adversarial way

Following the discussion on the potential roles and added value of a coalition, the working group asked each participant to state whether or not they felt a coalition should have a budget and be able to commission work. The following were the participants' thoughts on the topic (non-binding):

David Salisbury: Yes, the coalition should have a budget so that they can commission certain work, although implementation is perhaps best done through the members.

John LaMontagne: Yes, the coalition should have a budget for some commissioning of work and limited programmatic capability -- the Task Force on Situation Analysis and the Mercer Report are two examples of positive work initiated by CVI.

Ciro de Quadros: No, there should be no secretariat, no office and no budget. The coalition representatives should just decide to meet and fund their own participation.

Carolyn Hardegree: Ideally yes, the coalition should have some budget and functions so as to be able to get things done. However, there needs to be funding, clear objectives and industry involvement up front.

Claire Broome: Yes, thinking back to the coalitions she has been a part of it, there are pluses and minuses to having a group that is more established. Looking at the successes of CVI, however, it would be better not to create a new separate structure, but to have new energy and new input [into CVI].

Steve Landry: Yes, agrees with Claire Broome. Thinks that there should be minimum change and that the experience of the past decade should be built upon. There should be some operating budget and some seed money.

Sunil: (No?), strong belief in the power of individual organizations and cautioned the group to take a hard look at the operational issues of where the coalition is based.

Jacques-Francois Martin: Yes, although the vision is more important than the structure, there should be a budget and some ability to initiate work. This would allow for sustainability (if the organization is too loose the sponsors will disappear); for some liability, responsibility as an organization; and for leadership -- personal and institutional identification and communication of goals.

Mark Kane: (?): Reserving comments.

Sam Katz: Yes, thinking of a coalition that would relinquish individual independence and cooperate based on majority vote. It should have some sort of dues. Further thought needs to be devoted as to how this best relates to WHO.

Bill Watson: Yes, if you want to have an effective coalition, you should come up with specific goals -- perhaps the coalition won't be involved in operational activities, but in fact finding, data analysis and research.

Rob Breiman: Yes (?), agrees with the opinions voiced so far and would stress that all should share the feeling that the coalition is adding value.

Suomi Sakai: Yes, favors a coalition that might take on some projects, but with the agreement that all partners will cooperate. Would not favor the creation of an entirely new entity, wants a coordinating body, not another body to coordinate with. Thinks it's important that the leaders are committed -- won't do any good to have middle management saying it would be nice if x,y, and z\_ -- need leaders to be committed so the whole of the organizations are pulled along.

Bjorn Melgaard: (?) Not sure yet if WHO will be supportive of a virtual coalition, or one with a budget and some ability to initiate work. He read an excerpt of Gro Harlem Brundtland's speech to PAHO in which she stated her opposition to the creation of new structures. Rather, she emphasized that the new leadership in WHO is committed to working out to form broader, stronger partnerships. WHO is still in transition and the means for working in partnerships are not yet developed.

Roy Widdus: Yes, there has to be some sort of secretariat for coordinating functions to take place. It has to be directed by and responsive to members, and needs management structures responsive to constituents. There has been an idea that CVI shouldn't be operational. This was originally intended so that its actions were not duplicative. However, this should not preclude specific activities not undertaken by others that are approved by an advisory council. We must encourage partners to live up to their commitments and increase participation.

Amie Batson: Yes. The bank does not yet have a model in mind given that it is a new player in the field. WHO and industry will influence it. Does think that a secretariat is needed and that a virtual coalition (without a budget and the ability to commission work) will not be able to get things done. It is important to create a neutral zone for organizations to bring up issues outside of internal regulations and politics. Leaders must be on board.

Ruth Frischer: (?), we need to look at what works and what doesn't work in what we have. We also need to look at other existing models, such as the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI).

After the 'straw poll', there was an open discussion about the ideal function and form of a global coalition, including the perspectives of the organizations/sectors represented through the working group. To summarize industry's discussion with regard to the type of organization, Jacques-

Francois Martin said that, "We [industry] deeply believe that the magnitude of the task means that an alliance is needed." Even with respect to the recent comments from WHO, he said, the fact remains that profit matters in the private sector and that any action which goes beyond normal risk means that a counter-balance is needed for the long-term. Furthermore, one should take advantage of the momentum in industry to find ways for people to participate in a societal good. He urged participants to work together and to remember that an estimated five million children die annually from diseases that are, or will soon be vaccine preventable.

The importance of financing was stressed once again as an important problem to be addressed by any type of coalition. Dr. de Quadros announced his support of the creation of a revolving fund for vaccine purchase. With the goal of raising 3 to 5 billion dollars, he said, he could see the fund ensuring vaccines to all the children of the world. Some countries would receive free vaccines, while others would have specific percentage discounts.

On a final note, one other, very important point that was brought up throughout the day's meeting, was the need for high level buy-in to any coalition. This point we re-emphasized by Suomi Sakai, Mark Kane, Bjorn Melgaard and David Salisbury, among others. It was also noted that this 'buy-in' might be achieved by couching discussion in terms of immunization and 'the rights of the child' and 'the rights of the poorest'.

**APPENDIX B**

**MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON  
IMMUNIZATION  
24 SEPTEMBER, 1998, WASHINGTON, DC**

I. The meeting was held at the World Bank and attended by: Molly Abbruzzese, Consultant to the working group; Amie Batson, World Bank; Mark Kane, WHO; Jacques-Francois Martin, Biocine; Bjorn Melgaard, WHO; Suomi Sakai, UNICEF; and Roy Widdus, CVI.

II. The first item discussed was a review of the 'US Brainstorming Meeting' on 23 September.

Comments/perceptions noted by the working group members included:

- The overall tone of the meeting was positive;
- A coalition [of those involved in vaccines/immunization] already exists in terms of both CVI and people coming together to discuss issues;
- The issues raised in the meeting are already 'on the table' -- some older issues are no longer a problem and weren't focused on, while some of the newer ones haven't been addresses yet, but none were new;
- In a sense, the meeting re-affirmed that the immunization community has been on the right track in terms of coordination and the raising of issues;
- Comments indicated a general consensus on the need for continued coordination among partners and the need for a secretariat to manage that coordination;
- The working group needs to do some strategic thinking of its own before December, particularly with regard to the approach taken towards advocacy & financing;
- The working group needs to be prepared with a summary proposal with two to three recommendations for discussion and agreement prior to the December meeting;
- It would be ideal to have the recommendations broadly outlined by the time of the G13 on November 8, if a consensus is beginning to emerge by that time;
- It is important that the recommendations reflect the diverse input the working group is seeking;
- Agreement on the way forward, or favored option, should happen prior to the December meeting (at least in terms of the structure of a possible GSE), as that meeting will be a time for leaders to commit on a level of 'political will', as opposed to the hashing out of technical details.

Action:

I. Molly Abbruzzese to prepare a report of the 'US Brainstorming Meeting'.

III. The second item raised was the upcoming meetings in London, scheduled to take place on 5 and 6 October, 1998.

It was noted that there has been a poor response from European bilaterals regarding the meeting on 6 October. Roy Widdus warned the group to expect a certain level of criticism from the bilaterals for not having a developing country representative, nor a European donor in the composition of the working group. Ensuing discussion revolved around the problem of getting the bilaterals to attend the Tuesday meeting so as to seek their ideas and encourage them to

participate in the process. It was suggested that they might be drawn back into the process through the solicitation of their ideas on the technical issues. Bjorn Melgaard offered to make personal phone calls to some of the donors to encourage them to attend. Jacques-Francois Martin noted that he had already received an indication from the European Union that this was not a meeting that they felt it was appropriate to attend. However, JFM said that he would continue to try to access the EU through Jacques Santer.

Further discussion around the London meetings included the following proposals for meeting chairs, introductory remarks and facilitators:

1. Monday, 5 October: Technical Introduction, Amie Batson; Chair, Mike Levine; and Facilitator, Mark Kane.
2. Tuesday, 6 October: Technical Introduction, Amie Batson; Chair, Jacques-Francois Martin; and Facilitator, Michel Zaffran.

It was also noted that the Dean of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine will be hosting a reception on Monday evening, 5 October, directly following the meeting. The working group decided to have a working dinner on Tuesday evening and a working breakfast on Wednesday morning, 7 October, to review the London meetings and plan for the G13 meeting which will precede the CG in November.

Action:

1. Bjorn Melgaard to make follow-up calls to European bilaterals to encourage their attendance on 6 October -- MA to forward updated response lists to him.
2. Jacques-Francois Martin to continue efforts to seek an access to the European Union.
3. Molly Abbruzzese to arrange for a breakfast meeting on 7 October.

#### IV. Review of Interview Lists - Addition and Division of Names

The working group reviewed the list of those to be interviewed in the survey, added some new names, and re-assigned interviewers/interviewees.

Action:

1. Molly to update the list and forward it to the WG for review.
2. Working group members to begin/continue with interviewing and then e-mailing completed interviews back to Molly in excel format.
3. Working group members to take the initiative to conduct ad-hoc interviews as appropriate.

## V. Discussion of Africa and Other Developing Country Interviews/Meetings

The group discussed the necessity of increasing developing country participation in the working group process through arranging additional interviews and possibly 'brainstorming meetings' in Asia and Africa.

Bjorn and Mark offered to take care of interviews with Asian participants during travel to the region during the 13-15 October and the WPRO TAG meeting on 4-6 November.

Although the generous offer from Rockefeller Foundation to support an Africa meeting was noted, the group felt it would be extremely difficult logistically. An alternative solution of holding both an Africa and other developing country meeting on the Saturday before the CG was proposed. This would have the advantage of being able to pull together the views of a large number of developing country participants at one time. It would also reduce the cost of the meeting (as their airfare would already be covered), and might allow for a few more people to attend both the brainstorming and CG (perhaps Neil Cameron and Adelaide Shearley). Both Amie and Molly said they would be available for such meetings on the 7th of November. The possibility of asking Michel Zaffran to facilitate was also discussed. Roy Widdus volunteered that the letters of invitation for the meeting could be sent from CVI as it would be less confusing logistically.

### Action:

1. Mark and Bjorn to handle interviews in Asia.
2. Amie to discuss the possibility of an Africa meeting in Geneva with Mike Levine, acting as a representative of Rockefeller Foundation. Amie or Mike to discuss the possibility of Rockefeller funding the extra per diem of participants already coming to Geneva, as well as funding a few additional participants.
3. Molly, Amie and Roy to further coordinate the logistics of the Geneva meetings.

## VI. Review of Memo to Jonas Store and Letter of Invitation to Annecy

The group reviewed and edited Amie's draft of a memo to Jonas Store outlining the objectives for the Annecy meeting. This memo was requested by WHO from the Bank. The memo outlined the Bank's view of the importance of a continued effort of the UN and the industry leaders to explore the global priorities in immunization and the best mechanisms to increase the buy-in and participation of all partners.

Also reviewed was the letter of invitation to the Annecy meeting. The group felt that, due to their commitment to the working group's process, it would be appropriate for the Rockefeller Foundation to sign, as well as the World Bank, WHO, UNICEF and IFPMA.

### Action:

1. Amie to discuss with Rockefeller their signing of the letter.
2. Working group members to secure the signature to the letter from their respective agencies.

Scheduling Notes/Additions:

London:

- 5 October, technical partner meeting at LSHTM, 10am-5pm, 51 Bedford Square G6
- 5 October, reception hosted by the Dean of the LSHTM, 5:30pm, Keppel Street
- 6 October, bilateral partner meeting at LSHTM, 10am-5pm, 50 Bedford Square G4
- 6 October, working group dinner
- 7 October, working group breakfast meeting to be held from 8-11am (St Giles Hotel?)

Asia:

- 13-15 October, Asia meetings/interviews by BM and MK
- 4-6 November, WPRO TAG, more meetings/interviews by BM and MK

Geneva:

- 7 November, concurrent meetings with Africa and other developing country representatives in Geneva to attend the CG (10am to 4pm)
- 8 November, (expanded?)G-13 meeting in Geneva 2-4:30
- 8 November, G-13 (5-6pm)
- 9 November, CVI CG 8:30am-6pm, International Conference Center, 15, rue de Varembe
- 9 November, CVI CG reception, 6-7:30pm
- 10 November, CVI CG 9am - 6pm, International Conference Center, 15, rue de Varembe

Annecy:

- 3 December, dinner for those attending meeting on 4th
- 4 December, meeting of agency and industry leaders