**The importance of administering all 8 basic antigens to children in East Africa**

By Rachael Nagaddya, 22nd August 2025.

Vaccines have for over two centuries safely reduced the blight of diseases like polio, measles and smallpox; placing them among the greatest advances in global health and development. As one of the most cost effective first line of defence against a host of diseases, vaccination helps children to not only survive but also thrive. In the long run, not only is the health and wealth of individuals improved, but there can also be a reduction in spending on health care as well as supporting societies and economies in developing human capital and productivity.

However, violent conflicts, displacement, covid-19 related disruptions, and vaccination misinformation have cut children off from routine immunization. In their “[State of the world’s children report](https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-worlds-children-2023#SOWC) 2023”, UNICEF estimates that 67 million children missed essential vaccines in the last three years due to the aforementioned reasons; 60 percent of whom live in 10 countries including Democratic Republic of Congo. Hence, it is a no brainer that latest data shows DRC has the lowest percentage of children that have received all 8 antigens, exposing a large number of children to otherwise preventable diseases.