

Jeanne Liliane MBENGUE<sup>1,2</sup>, Armand S Nkwescheu<sup>2,3</sup>, Tianyi Tianyi Frank L<sup>2,4</sup>, Tchokfe Ndoula Shalom<sup>5</sup>, Njoh Andreas Ateke<sup>5</sup>, Bidjang Robert M.<sup>6</sup>, Bitu Fouda Andre Arsene<sup>7</sup>

1) District Medical Officer, Nylon Health District, Littoral Region of Cameroon, 2) Cameroon Society of Epidemiology (CaSE), P.O Box 1411, Yaounde, Cameroon, 3) Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences of the University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon, 4) Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, UK, 5) Expanded Program of Immunization of the Ministry of Public Health, Yaounde, Cameroon, 6) Regional Delegation of Public Health for the Littoral, Douala, Cameroon, 7) Faculty of Medicine and Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Douala, Cameroon

**Community engagement** is the key to be able to vaccinate children against **HPV** with their parents' consent.

Targets are mainly found in **schools** and **communities**.

**Catch-up** is the best opportunity to reach children missed during the **COVID-19**

## BACKGROUND

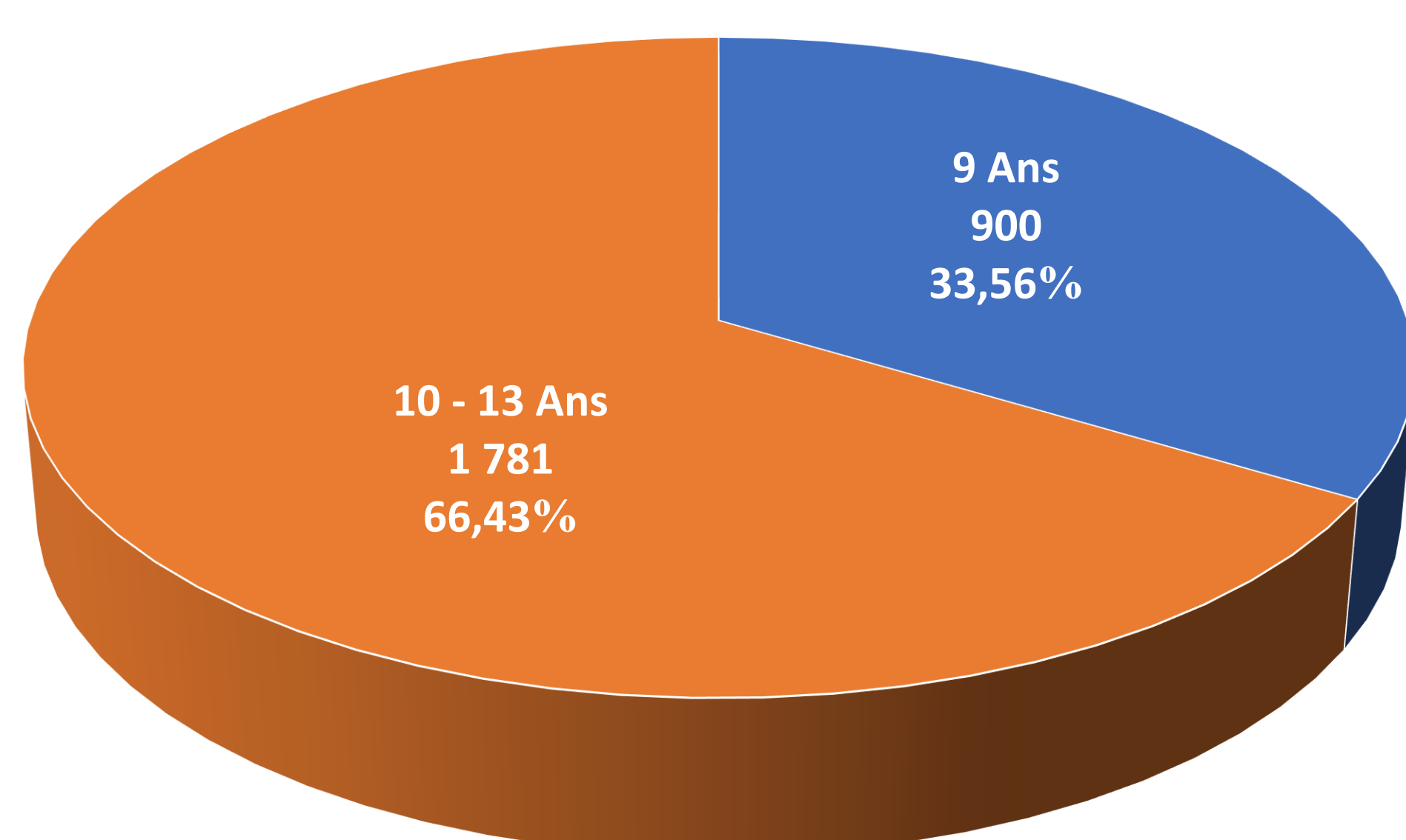
- The introduction of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccination in 2019 in Cameroon has been challenging and faced vaccine hesitancy.
- The COVID-19 pandemic may have contributed to increasing hesitancy for all vaccines.
- From 2019 to 2023, the HPV vaccine coverage was below 20% in the Nylon Health District.
- This study sought to improve the vaccination coverage through community-based sensitization activities targeting a critical mass of 1000 adolescents in the Nylon Health District.

## METHODS

- Community leaders and health workers with deep community ties were trained on the importance of HPV vaccination, and had their concerns addressed via community group dialogue sessions.
- Sensitisation activities were held during sixteen parent and teacher association meetings in schools, one information meeting, one advocacy and community engagement meeting.
- Each parent was fully sensitized before the child was vaccinated.
- 1000 adolescents were targeted.
- Children were vaccinated in schools, communities, and in health facilities.
- Through this cross-sectional study, a systematic selection of children whose parents gave a verbal consent was done.
- The data were collected between 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

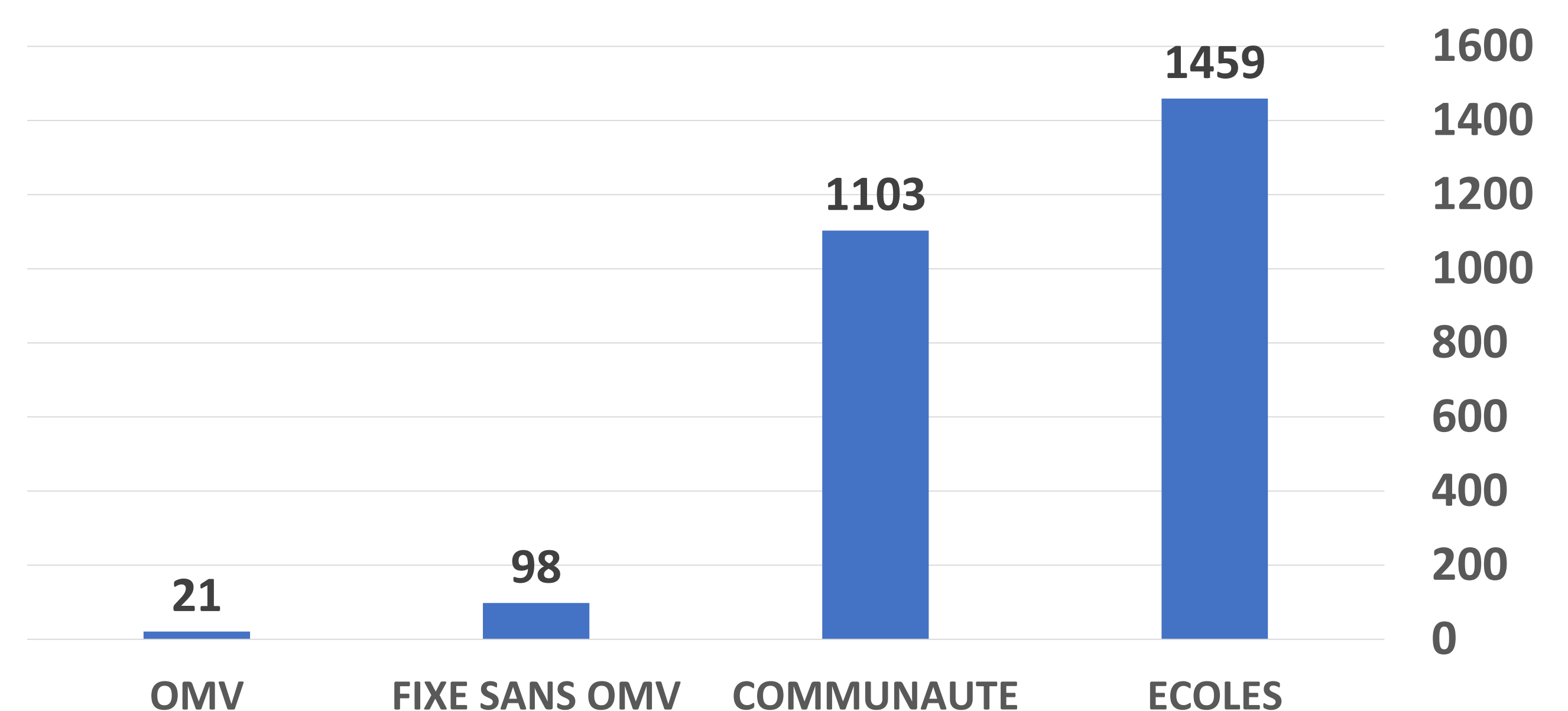
## RESULTS

- We sensitized 3247 parents and teachers.
- We vaccinated 2,681 children, among whom 1,517 (56,6%) were female.
- Most of children were vaccinated in schools 1459 (54,4%), followed by community 1103 (41,1%).
- Health facilities, (Fixed post 98/2681; 3,7% and Missed Opportunities for Vaccination (MOV) 21/2681; 0,8 %) were less successful strategies.
- We thus vaccinated 27 times more than at the same period of time previously.



**Figure 1:** Distribution of children vaccinated against HPV regarding their age, Nylon Health District, from December 2023 to March 2024

## RESULTS CONTINUED



**Figure 2:** Distribution of children vaccinated against HPV according to strategies, December 2023 to March 2024, at Nylon Health District



**Picture 1:** Children happy to present their certificates after vaccination against HPV in a school, during the project, Nylon Health District

**Picture 2:** Parent and teacher association meeting in a school, during the project at Nylon Health District

## CONCLUSIONS

- This study reviews the effectiveness and gains of community engagement and the contribution of each strategy, by reaching and vaccinating more than 2,6 times the number of adolescents initially targeted.
- We suggest to improve upon as a strategy to reach a reasonable number of the target, especially MOV in health facilities.
- Key words: **HPV, community engagement, improvement, vaccination coverage, Cameroon**

## ADDITIONAL KEY INFORMATION

Additional Resources: **None**

Author Contact Information: [jeaniliane@yahoo.fr](mailto:jeaniliane@yahoo.fr)

Funding Source: **Project funded by WHO and Sabin Vaccine Institute**

Conflicts of Interest: **None**

Acknowledgements: **Ministry of Public Health, World Health Organization, Sabin Vaccine Institute, Cameroon Society of Epidemiology, Dr Lassane Kabore, Nylon Health District team**