

West Africa moves in unison to promote vaccination and curb falsehoods | Poynter

By Seth Smalley

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In West Africa, fact-checkers are cooperating to expand their influence on local, national and international levels to curb misinformation about vaccines. Organizations are banding together, forming alliances with intergovernmental groups and creating cross-continent task forces to elevate health knowledge across Africa.

“I think the most important thing is to highlight how fact-checkers leverage collaboration to maximize impact at the governmental level and the national level with the sole aim of tackling the infodemic,” said Rabiou Alhassan, managing editor of Ghana Fact, a fact-checking project of FactSpace West Africa.

Despite the increase in information on vaccines in West Africa, many are still concerned about their potential risks. The hesitance is fueled by misinformation spread through word-of-mouth, social media and even television and radio. According to aggregate Google data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other sources, only 16.3% of Ghana — or 5.3 million Ghanans — have been fully vaccinated. However, as with many nations, vaccine scarcity in Ghana is primarily what’s driving its relatively low vaccination rate.

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