



ASCA

Dialogues to defeat meningitis: from community to policymakers

The **Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques en Côte d'Ivoire (CSRS)** organised a high-level panel discussion event for World Meningitis Day 2024. They also raised public awareness of meningitis using an educational cartoon, shown to schoolchildren and shared online. These activities were all part of their *Dialogues to defeat meningitis* project, funded by the CoMO World Meningitis Day 2024 Advocacy Fund pilot.

Organisation

Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques en Côte d'Ivoire (CSRS)

Background

Scientific research organisation containing a meningitis research group that also does health communications work

Location

Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)

Project aims

CSRS wanted to increase awareness of meningitis in Côte d'Ivoire and build a case for more attention to the cause from political and social leaders.

They hoped to use World Meningitis Day 2024 to highlight:

- The poor understanding of the disease within the communities most affected.
- The limited knowledge of the national meningitis surveillance system among health practitioners.
- The absence of follow-ups for survivors with after-effects.

Panel discussion

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, CSRS organised a high-level panel discussion event. 140 people attended, including representatives of the Ministries of Health and Education, the World Health Organization, health workers, medical students, people living with

disabilities and non-governmental organisations. Such a gathering of varied stakeholders for meningitis was a rare and unique opportunity to prompt dialogue and create new connections.

The event included:

- A panel discussion and Q&A, covering public awareness, national health systems, current meningitis research and the role of civil society.
- Videos of survivors and a documentary about the death of singer Ruth Tondey from meningitis. This created a visible impact on the audience, as most people knew of her death, but very few knew the cause.

The discussion concluded with the agreement of several recommendations about improving meningitis diagnosis, surveillance and aftercare. Notably, officials engaged in public conversation about a recently proposed law that would allow trained nurses to take samples of cerebrospinal fluid, which is crucial to meningitis diagnosis. CSRS are hopeful that

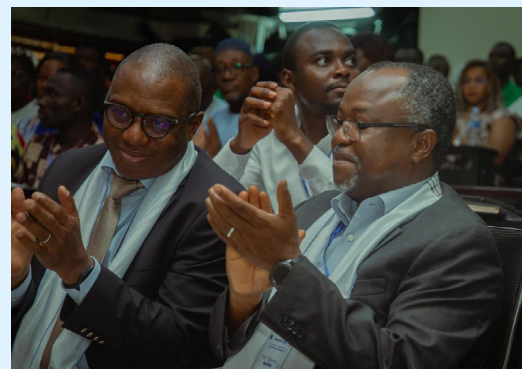
this will accelerate the passing of the law in the national parliament.

Educational cartoon

CSRS had previously created a seven-part animation, *Kolo and Meningitis*, in collaboration with researchers from the University of Oxford, about a boy who survives meningitis but has amputations. The Advocacy Fund enabled them to promote this resource much further than before.

The animation was projected at five primary schools in Abidjan, reaching 330 pupils, ten teachers and five school directors. CSRS distributed 100 printed *Kolo* comic strips, so that the schools can continue to share the information.

CSRS also ran a week-long online communication campaign, sharing all episodes of the animation on Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, X and TikTok. Each one was accompanied by an interactive quiz about an aspect of meningitis covered in the episode. The campaign reached a total of 20,202 social media accounts.



Further resources

 [CSRS meningitis research group website](#)

 [CSRS meningitis research group Facebook page](#)

Contacts

Meningitis Research Foundation:

 meningitis.org

Confederation of Meningitis Organisations:

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 comomeningitis.org

We run sensitisation campaigns every year in schools and online, but with very limited means. The Advocacy Fund grant gave us the courage to reach out to other stakeholders, such as civil society and policymakers, and greatly increase our impact.

Dr. Kanny Diallo, Research Associate at CSRS and project coordinator

