

Communication update

EOC Pakistan

Issue XI March 6, 20115



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Convergence of EPI and Polio

Polio eradication initiative is by far the largest child health intervention led by the government of Pakistan with support from national and international partners. During each campaign, the vaccination teams are able to reach more than 95 percent children below the age of five years, which is seen by the health authorities as a program with the potential to provide support for improvement in the quality of routine immunization coverage and outreach. The polio teams and social mobilizers are equipped with the (IEC) material meant for awareness of all Routine Immunization. Social mobilizers are given the orientation for IPC skills for both EPI and Polio.

More and more stress is being laid on strengthening convergence between routine and polio immunization as success in one should supplement the other and not vice versa.

On October 16, 2014, the Focus Group Meeting chaired by Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif issued a directive to revise the communization strategy and create new branding. The directive says that convergence of routine immunization and polio eradication social mobilization to educate community for polio vaccination and routine immunization.

Earlier, the communication unit had agreed upon five principles to guide all communication work under the altered circumstances:-

- Departure from focused communication activities on polio campaign awareness to generate awareness and create demand for the broader child health education agenda.
- Reframing of polio within the broader context of preventive health services for children and their wellbeing (polio-plus, with all nine antigens promoted, as well as exclusive breastfeeding, hand washing with soap and diarrhea management).
- Shift from aggressive and high-visibility campaigns to content integration and long-format programming.
- Building social and professional platforms to drive the programme at community level.
- Delinking the programme from the “outside Western conspiracy” view by repositioning the campaign as a Pakistan-driven campaign with a strong local image.

Polio Endgame Strategy Focus on Convergence

The Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan 2013–2018 is a comprehensive, long-term strategy that addresses what is needed to deliver a polio-free world by 2018. The plan was developed by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in 2013, in consultation with national health authorities, global health initiatives, scientific experts, donors and other stakeholders, in response to a directive of the World Health Assembly in May 2012.

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Objective 2 of the Endgame Plan calls for the introduction of at least one dose of inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) into routine immunization schedules by the end of 2015, strengthened routine immunization services, and withdrawal of oral polio vaccine (OPV) in a phased manner, starting with the switch from trivalent to bivalent OPV in April 2016.

The report by Independent Monitoring Board in October 2014 also emphasized on increased focus on routine immunization. IMB recommended that the programme should integrate its work to strengthen routine immunization along with efforts to stop polio transmission. Many public health leaders have long championed the value of strengthening routine immunization programme as the most desirable way of achieving sustained reductions in polio transmission.

Why focus on creating synergies

- RI strengthening is the top public health priority of the country
- Strengthening RI is also imperative to achieve and maintain the polio eradication status
- Immunization system strengthening is also one of the key objectives of the polio eradication endgame strategic plan 2013-2018

Branding

In the light of the directive of the Prime Minister the branding was revised to reflect both polio and routine immunization and develop a synergy between the two.



National Theme

- The theme talks about a healthy Pakistan, which gives it a national identity
- The images of children are incorporated to emphasize the fact that for a healthy future we need to protect our children
- The 'teeku' character represents the mission and vision to provide care and protection against disease
- The visual identity also depicts the on-ground health interventions related to immunization

Zero Doze Children Coverage

The polio teams provide support for outreach to zero doze children coverage for routine immunization during the campaign. The health department terms zero doze children as those who are not in the government record and had never received vaccination against any of the nine antigens being offered at the government health facilities free of cost.

The data provided here is for the coverage of zero doze children during January and

Province / Region	Zero Routine Dose Children (Reported) 2015 Jan NID	Zero Routine Dose Children (Reported) 2015 Feb NID
AJK	1,030	1,004
BALUCHISTAN	7,520	7,800
FATA	6,286	5,787
GBALTISTAN	820	847
ISLAMABAD	265	Campaign with measles
KP	10,219	11,384
PUNJAB	91,456	99,340
SINDH	27,559	24,316
Total	145,155	150,478

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February campaign for polio and in both the cases, the polio vaccinators were able to identify and reach nearly 150,000 children in this category, directly provide support for strengthening routine immunization. Once such zero doze children are identified, it becomes smooth for the health authorities to ensure that they are inoculated with vaccine preventable childhood diseases.

Advocacy with Parliamentarians

Advocacy sessions are being carried out with members of the national and provincial legislatures on the need of proactive role of the political leadership at the floor of the house and also at the local level in support of polio and routine immunization.



Media Support to Convergence

The promotion of polio vaccination as part of the routine vaccination and raising awareness for the importance of routine immunization has been an important aspect of all the media and mass media interventions. It is now a policy that all the material that is broadcast through the print and electronic media or placed on the outdoor billboards and banners carry messages that promote convergence.

Social Media and Convergence

The official website of polio eradication initiative (www.endpolio.com.pk) frequently highlights stories and IEC material that promotes convergence between routine immunization and polio.

The messages shared through the website are simple for the audience and stress on the need for immunizing children against all the vaccine preventable diseases, including polio.



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Social Mobilization Services

The COMNet staff is assigned to conduct awareness sessions before and during the conduct of the campaigns in polio high risk districts to strengthen understand and support for routine immunization. The impact of these sessions are witnessed during campaigns in the form of complete synergy between the EPI and PEI communication activities.



Convergence on Measles

The convergence between polio and routine EPI continues to strengthen in the recent months. A special focus has laid on reaching children with measles vaccine during the Measles SIAs across country in phased manner. Social mobilizers and COMNet staff of polio high risk districts conducted community awareness sessions to convince caregivers for immunization of their children against measles. Measles SIAs conducted in Sindh and Khyber Pukhtunkhwa in May 2014 while Punjab and Islamabad had conducted measles SIAs in 2015 (nearly 270,000 children were vaccinated against measles during March in Islamabad; more than 14 million children were reached with measles in AJK and nearly 28.6 million in Punjab)

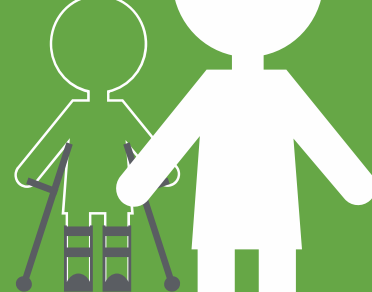
SIAD Campaign Update

The recently concluded SIAD was planned in 60 districts (24 whole and 36 partial). The planned and conducted in 57 districts where the total planned target population was 7.7 million children. The data available with the EOC shows a total average coverage of 89 percent, partially because of the fact that rain affected the campaign activities in Islamabad, delay in data submission from FATA and deferred campaign in three districts of Balochistan (Quetta, Zhob & Sherani). The number of children that still remain unvaccinated stands at 246,557 while the zero routine doze children reported during the campaign stands at 24,727.

Province / Region	Total target population for the campaign	Children reported vaccinated		Reported unvaccinated children			Zero Routine dose children reported
		No. of children reported vaccinated	% Children vaccinated Based on Total Target	Children still unvaccinated among recorded unvaccinated			
				Not Available	Refusal	Total	
BALUCHISTAN	804,854	463,131	58%	8,636	3,680	12,316	1,994
FATA	1,144,764	638,906	56%	15,376	229	15,605	4,880
ISLAMABAD	52,288	13,365	26%	745	40	785	21
KP	2,712,929	2,651,244	98%	61,508	24,037	85,545	6,329
PUNJAB	2,009,301	2,061,547	103%	107,696	630	108,326	8,963
SINDH	983,545	999,785	102%	23,625	355	23,980	2,540
Total	7,707,681	6,827,978	89%	217,586	28,971	246,557	24,727

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Polio Case Count

As of March 6, 2015, 13 confirmed cases of wild polio virus have been reported in the current year. Of which six are from the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, five from Federally Administered Tribal Area and one from Sindh.

PROVINCE	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
PUNJAB	17	7	9	2	7	4	0
SINDH	12	27	33	4	10	30	1
KPK	29	24	23	27	11	68	6
FATA	20	74	59	20	65	179	5
BALUCHISTAN	11	12	73	4	0	25	1
GILGIT-BALTISTAN	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	89	144	198	58	93	306	13
