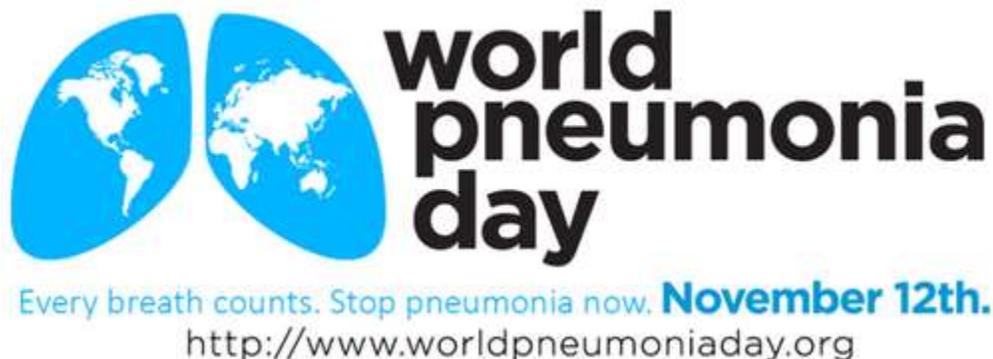


A Community Approach to World Pneumonia Day

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Vaccine implementation requires policy and community-level approaches to ensure on the one hand that vaccines are available and on the other hand that parents bring their children to be immunized. Two events held in Pakistan this year on World Pneumonia Day illustrate the importance of these approaches.

On the eve of World Pneumonia Day, as a joint initiative of the communications team at the Federal Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), which includes Pakistan's EPI and partners from Gavi, UNICEF, and Japan's International Cooperation Agency, a meeting with members of Provincial Assembly of Sindh was held to discuss immunization, not just for pneumonia but the entire routine immunization program and polio, which is of course a top priority for the country.



Deputy Speaker SyedaShehlaRaza opened the meeting, followed by remarks by Ms. Ayesha RazaFarooq, Coordinator Prime Minister's Polio Cell, who spoke about the role of the Federal government in routine immunization and the Prime Minister's commitment to the cause. More than 70 members of the Sindh Assembly attended the meeting. Ms. ShahnazWazir Ali, Provincial Coordinator for public and primary health care programme, spoke about the current status of polio and routine immunization in Sindh, where vaccine coverage levels are very low. Members expressed their concern about the overall 29% coverage of routine immunization in the province and recommended legislation on compulsory immunization to improve the current state of the coverage. The meeting concluded with a declaration presented by SyedaShehlaRaza on behalf of all members in support of Immunization and Polio Eradication Program.

The next day, in Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan, civil society organizations working with Expanded Programme on Immunization and Civil Society Human and institutional Development

Program held an awareness raising event in a minority slum community. More than 120 children and their mothers participated. The event included a puppet show that gave the children information about immunization, followed by a quiz with prizes awarded. The children also enjoyed face painting and games while an EPI vaccinator administered PCV 10 to children who had previously been missed in the community.

Many other organizations across Pakistan took advantage of the day to draw attention to pneumonia, which kills more than 100,000 children in Pakistan each year and sickens many more.



Above: the one day event for under privileged children in Islamabad, Pakistan. Messages on pneumonia and other preventable diseases were given by doctors to children and their mothers. A quiz competition on vaccine preventable diseases and a puppet show was also part of the event.

Photo: HumaKhawar