



Expanded Program on Immunization
Government of Pakistan



FEDERAL EPI

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Content

01	Pakistan appreciates Gavi's support in protecting children against deadly diseases	05
02	Sehat Tahaffuz Helpline 1166 Launched	06
03	NICC endorsed the Measles Rubella Application (January 15, 2020)	07
04	UNICEF Head Quarters Mission to Pakistan	07
05	Orientation/Refresher Session for Sehat Tahaffuz Call Agents	08
06	Orientation of students of Rawal Institute of Health	08
07	Activities Undertaken across Pakistan for EPI	09
-	Balochistan	09
-	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	10
-	Punjab	11
-	Sindh	12
-	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Marged Districts	13

PREFACE



I vouch to bestow the best of my services to the children of Pakistan as lead of the country's largest public health program. We are tasked to ensure a healthy future for the children of Pakistan where immunization is seen as a norm and a basic right, making diseases like polio to become an alien term for our people.

Pakistan is the country with diverse terrain and socio cultural variation. The myriad of issues ranging from limited healthcare services to their suboptimal utilization, demand a constant thinking process and use of local knowledge and wisdom to overcome barriers in enhancing the coverage of essential immunization. Rapid urbanization is a visible phenomenon demanding development and implementation of appropriate strategies to reach children in rapidly growing urban slums as well as the high risk and mobile migrant populations.

Despite enormous challenges, we have some real opportunities. Our recent synergized efforts between the EPI and PEI program helped us considerably in achieving the desired results. The renewed vision of moving from synergy to integration shall further bring benefits and enable us reaching every last child with different essential vaccines in equitable manner. The wealth of data collected by PEI and the most successful experience of linking security with public health overtime provides a great platform for optimizing service delivery to the most vulnerable communities.

I am further encouraged by the renewed interest of partners and donors to support the Government in making quick gains in health in general and immunization in particular. Under the able leadership of Dr. Zafar Mirza, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health, with the support of motivated colleagues, teams and partners at all levels, I am sure that our goal to stamp out polio and to achieve universal immunization coverage in Pakistan will be a reality soon.

It is a collective responsibility to work for the children of Pakistan as we owe them a healthy, polio and disease free future.

Dr. Rana Muhammad Safdar
National Coordinator for EPI and PEI



Pakistan appreciates Gavi's support in protecting children against deadly diseases

Prime Minister of Pakistan, H.E Imran Khan met the Chief Executive Officer-Gavi, Mr. Seth Berkley In the sideline of World Economic Forum (January 21-22, 2020), to discuss the issues of mutual interest. Prime Minister of Pakistan apprised Mr. Seth Berkley the policy reforms, Government has taken to strengthen the health sector in the country. Mr. Imran Khan also appreciated Mr. Seth Berkley for Gavi's uninterrupted support to Pakistan in protecting the children against deadly vaccine preventable diseases. Through the support of the Gavi, Pakistan has introduced a number of new vaccines. Also Pakistan became the first country in the world to introduce Typhoid vaccine in its Routine Immunization schedule.

Prime Minister said that wellbeing of mothers and children is a core area of country's health reforms agenda, therefore the Government is committed to leave no stone unturned and no opportunity unveiled in a bid to improve child's health.

Mr. Imran Khan also highlighted the efforts Pakistan is undertaking to eradicate menace of polio from the country and achieving the goal of Universal Immunization Coverage to sustain the goal of polio eradication.

The meeting discussed various initiatives taken by the Government to improve health indicators including the primary healthcare essential package based on Disease control priorities (DCP3), Integrated essential services Package for polio high risk districts, country's flagship program **Ehsaas** to track un-immunized children through data mapping, urban immunization initiative to promote equity based Immunization coverage and private sector engagement to strategically enhance service delivery;

Seth Berkley offered all out support to immunization programme in Pakistan and expressed his trust and confidence in present leadership of the country.



Sehat Tahaffuz Helpline 1166 Launched

Dr. Zafar Mirza, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health, launched the **“Sehat Tahaffuz” helpline 1166** to provide health-related information services to the people.

The Sehat Tahaffuz helpline is an initiative of the Government of Pakistan which is anticipated to bring lasting health benefits to all citizens of Pakistan,” said Dr. Zafar Mirza. “By calling on a dedicated 1166 number, the citizens will get access to reliable information relating to immunization and vaccine-preventable diseases and enable them to take an informed decision,” he added.

The state-of-the-art call centre will help in meeting the growing needs of health-related information. It will also provide information and address queries of parents and caregivers related to the vaccine. Dedicated experts will be available to provide information and support as needed.

Run by well-trained staff with local language capacities; the Helpline operates from 8 am to 12 midnight every day. It can immediately report a missed child to relevant staff for follow-up and resultantly vaccinate the child. The Helpline is also providing information related to other health services,” said Dr. Rana Muhammad Safdar, National Program Manager/NEOC Coordinator.

The Sehat Tahhafuz helpline is aiming to assist the programme in reaching every child with essential polio vaccine as parents are encouraged to report if their children were missed during door-to-door national immunization campaigns.



NICC endorsed the Measles Rubella Application (January 15, 2020)



National Inter-Agency Coordination Committee held its meeting on January 15, 2020 in the chairmanship of Special Assistant the Prime Minister, Dr. Zafar Mirza to review salient features of the MR application. The committee endorsed the MR application for submission to Gavi for further process.

The meeting was organized in a context to discuss all aspects and appropriate timings for the introduction of **Measles-Rubella Vaccine** in the Routine Immunization Schedule. The meeting also discussed the options for the pool funding for MR vaccine. Meeting endorsed the decision of NITAG to replace Tetanus Toxoid (TT) with Tetanus-diphtheria (Td) from January 2020.

UNICEF Head Quarters Mission to Pakistan



A mission from the UNICEF Head Quarters visited Pakistan (January 27 – 31, 2020) as a learning country to develop sectoral guidance for the use of digital technologies for performance management and client targeted communication through immunization. The visit was organized in the context of successful Measles SIA in 2018 and recently concluded Typhoid Vaccine Introduction campaign experience in employing real-time monitoring (RTM) approach by using digital technologies. The initiative was jointly overseen by UNICEF's Programme Division/Immunizations and Information Communication Technology Division in coordination with a reference group of Head Quarters teams and regional offices.

Johns Hopkins University will work with UNICEF to document good practices/lessons. In the same background, a team comprising of members from UNICEF Headquarter, Regional Office for South Asia, and John Hopkins University visited Pakistan to document good practices/lessons learned in relation to immunization activities by using RTM and mobile technology approaches.

The Mission interviewed National Program Manager and Sindh EPI to document experiences.





Orientation/Refresher Session for Sehat Tahaffuz Call Agents

As part of the Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM) under the NISP, a series of refresher sessions are being conducted with the Sehat Tahaffuz Call Agents. The Federal EPI has nominated a designated GRM focal person Dr. Raafia Azhar, Assistant Director –Surveillance. In the capacity of a GRM focal person she conducted a series of refresher trainings for call centre agents to equip them with updated information to handle calls, address issues regarding immunization services, gaps in services delivery, general queries and community concerns.

Orientation of students of Rawal Institute of Health

Federal EPI organizes a series of orientation for medical students on the Immunization program. In this connection, a delegation from the Rawal Institute of Health visited the Federal EPI on **January 23, 2020** for basic orientation on the scope, services, magnitude of the program. The students also visited the state of the art Warehouse to witness the cold chain mechanism.

The basic introductory presentation was followed by question answer session by the students. Students asked multiple questions on various components of the EPI program.

ACTIVITIES

Undertaken
across Pakistan for
EPI

BALUCHISTAN

By Zoheb Mandokhail

Quetta Integrated Urban Immunization Plan

The Quetta Integrated Urban Immunization Plan aims to improve the immunization indicators by addressing the key barriers both on the supply as well as the demand side of immunization system. In this regard, a workshop was held on January 21, 2020 in Quetta. Prior to the workshop, a planning meeting was held in the office of the District Health Officer (Quetta) on 21st January 2020. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the objectives, proceedings, agenda and the formats to be used for the development of the costed action plan during the workshop.

Workshop Objectives

1. To discuss and understand Zone and UC wise Profiles to prioritize high risk union councils for Quetta, including Polio Super high risk union councils.
2. To identify the Barriers to Immunization in urban context focusing on urban poor (Zero dose and defaulters resulting in high dropout (Penta-1 to Penta-3)
3. To Develop a costed Action Plan for 2020 to reach the unreached population in city Quetta

The workshop started with a comprehensive presentations, group works and exercises. The participants were divided in 6 groups each lead by dedicated facilitators and the group works primarily focused on the following key priority areas (Global Urban Toolkit);

- Review of 2019- plans for 2020
- Coordination, Governance and Management of resources
- Immunization service delivery
- Engaging and eliciting participation of urban communities
- Monitoring, evaluation, supportive supervision and research

Outcome

A Comprehensive draft and action points were submitted by all groups as an outcome of the workshop. It was agreed that the group works will further be discussed with DHO, EPI, UNICEF and WHO for finalization and implementation.



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

By Dr. Kamran Qureshi

Training of Trainers (ToT) on Interpersonal Communication Skills of Frontline Health Workers

Training of trainers for frontline workers on Inter-Personnel Communication was conducted on January 7-8, 2020 in Peshawar where participants from 12 districts participated. The objective of the ToT was to enable and engage frontline EPI Workers in a meaningful conversation with caregivers that will lead to improve trust among communities.

Following areas were covered in the TOT:

Section 1: Community Stories & Routine Immunization in our Country/Province

Section 2: Basics to Behavior Change Process

Section 3: Communication Model, Interpersonal Communication and its Components

Section 4: Self Awareness: Appearance and Presentation

Section 5: Planning fixed site session or outreach

Section 6: Dealing with different types of refusals to cover missed children

Effective Vaccine Management Assessment (EVMA) training

Federal EPI organized an Effective Vaccine Management Assessment (EVMA) on January 20-24, 2020 in collaboration with Provincial EPI, KP in Abbottabad. Participants from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Tribal districts; GB & ICT attended the training. The training was organized with the technical support of UNICEF. Effective Vaccine Management assesses supply chain and its functionality at each level. These supply chain operates on the EVM criteria (EVM 2.0). The assessment is conducted on the following criteria:

- A representative sample of sites are selected at each level of the supply chain;
- Each of the EVM criteria is assessed at each supply chain level by observation, inspection of infrastructure and records, and by interview of staff;
- Inputs, process and performance indicators are evaluated in each area at each level;
- Indicator scores are combined to give criterion scores for each area at each level;
- An area of vaccine management is considered "Effective" if its criterion score is greater than or equal to 80% - the EVM standard.

PUNJAB

By Dr. Aftab Khawaja & Dr. Imran Qureshi

Two day's Provincial Workshop on “Equity Focused Lahore EPI Uplift Plan 2020”

Provincial Expanded Program on immunization (EPI) Punjab in collaboration with UNICEF organized a two days' workshop on “Equity Focused Lahore EPI Uplift Plan 2020” on January 29-30, 2020 in Lahore.

The objective was to prepare a comprehensive plan to improve the coverage of routine immunization of district Lahore. Inaugurated by Director General Health Services Dr. Haroon Jahangir, the workshop was attended by Chairman NITAG Prof. Dr. Tariq Bhutta, Director EPI Punjab Dr. Bashir Ahmad Siddiqui, Chief Health UNICEF Punjab, Chief Executive Officer Health, District Health Authority Lahore, and DHO (Preventive Services along with all the DDHOs of Lahore.

The participants made detailed deliberations and as a result Comprehensive Town wise action plan was developed which will be further refined into UC wise plan, ready for implementation during 2020.

EPI Monitoring

Provincial EPI Monitoring Team visited district Mandi Bahauddin and Multan on January 24-25, 2020 and 31st January & 1st February 2020 respectively. They monitored District EPI stores, Provincial EPI warehouses, UC Haslan wala, UC Mojian Wala, UC Harrisa and BHU Bhagowan Mandi Bahaudin while in Multan they monitored UC Hassan Parwana, UC Peer Colony, UC Sheeni, UC Inayatpur, UC Urban Shujabad and UC Chak RS.

Key findings included:

- Over reporting of M2 & DTP
- Poor knowledge of MDVP.

Procurement & Distribution of Motorbikes

Procurement and distribution of 1855 Motorcycles for the vaccinators and EPI supervisors of Punjab was done during January 2020



EPI Review Meeting For 2019 & Planning For 2020

World Health Organization Pakistan conducted an “Annual EPI Review 2019” in the country office on 29th January to 1st February 2020. A detailed review was conducted for EPI activities during 2019 and costed action plans were developed for all the planned activities in 2020. All provinces and areas actively participated to discuss the best utilization of all available resources especially for urban immunization and HSS equity focused districts of Pakistan during 2020.

SINDH

By Sunil Raja



Refusal Conversion for Polio NIDs

EPI Team remained engaged to support in NIDs monitoring and covering refusals. EPI team was assigned different districts and towns. Local influencers and medical doctors were engaged to convince community to vaccinate the children.

Accelerated Outreach Activity in Sindh



EPI Sindh in collaboration with Provincial EOC has started an Acceleration of EPI Outreach activity in all six districts of Karachi. As per guidelines, outreach activity was conducted to extend the current routine immunization with special focus to cover zero dose and defaulters.

Accelerated outreach activity is also focused to report and cover the due, defaulters and missed children in order to prevent disease outbreaks and increase immunity in children in remote, slum and poorly covered areas.



To support outreach activities and mobilize frontline health workers, LHWs, CBV staff and vaccinators also conducted awareness sessions in the communities where outreach activities were planned. Megaphone announcements and trainings were also given to the LHWs and vaccinators on IPC and social mobilization prior the outreach campaign.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Merged Districts

By Asad Zia



To improve the EPI working and coordination among all agencies, weekly review meetings are held under the supervision of District Health Officer of the agencies. In the meeting regular updates are shared and bottlenecks are addressed at local level. Weekly plans of actions are developed in the meetings.

A monthly review meeting on Synergy between PEI and EPI staff was held in Orakzai District. EPI technicians participated in the review meeting. They shared their respective areas updates and informed the concern officers regarding their issues and accomplishments. An integrated approach is being advocated and implemented to improve synergy between both programs.



