



FEDERAL DIRECTORATE OF IMMUNIZATION



PATRON:

DR. MUHAMMAD AHMAD KAZI
*Director General
Federal Directorate of Immunization (FDI)*

EDITORS:

DR. ZAFAR IQBAL CHANNA, FDI
DR. ZAREEF UDDIN KHAN, FDI
DR. M. SARBULAND KHAN, FDI

PROFOUND CONTRIBUTORS:

DR. MUKHTAR AHMED
Director Health Services, EPI-Punjab

DR. IRSHAD MEMON
Additional Director, EPI-Sindh

DR. MUHAMMAD ARIF
Director, EPI-KP

DR. AKHTAR ALI BULEDI
Project Coordinator, EPI-Balochistan

DR. ABDUL SATTAR
Provincial Program Manager, EPI -AJK

DR. IQBAL RASOOL
Director, EPI-Gilgit

DR. MUHAMMAD FAYYAZ LODHI
Director General Health Services, CDA-ISB

DR. ZAEEM ZIA
District Health Officer, ICT

THIS ISSUE INCLUDES UPDATES FROM:

- FEDERAL EPI
- PUNJAB EPI
- SINDH EPI
- KP EPI
- BALOCHISTAN EPI
- AJ&K EPI
- GB EPI
- CDA EPI
- ICT EPI

WRITTEN & COMPILED BY:

ZAHID WASIF, FDI
NUR UL AINNIE KAZI, FDI

DESIGN BY:

REHAN SALEEM, FDI



MESSAGE BY HONOURABLE FEDERAL HEALTH MINISTER, MR. ABDUL QADIR PATEL

It gives me immense pleasure to reiterate Ministry's Mission Statement in FDI Newsletter. Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination is committed to helping the people of Pakistan to maintain and improve their health and to make our population among the healthier in the region.

Our vision is the provision of a health system for our motherland Pakistan that:

- Provides efficient, equitable, accessible & affordable health services with the objective to support people and communities to improve their health status.
- National and International Coordination in the field of Public Health.
- Oversight for regulatory bodies in health sector.
- Population welfare coordination.
- Enforcement of Drugs Laws and Regulations.
- Coordination of all preventive programs, funded by GAVI/GFATM.

Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination stands affirm to fight against these diseases and I assure you of all possible support from Government of Pakistan to make each and every child a fully vaccinated child. We are Pakistan, There's nothing — not a single thing — we're unable to do if we do it together. So let's stay together and achieve our targets.



MESSAGE BY WORTHY FEDERAL HEALTH SECRETARY, DR. MUHAMMAD FAKHRE ALAM

Vaccines are the world's safest method to protect children from life-threatening diseases. Immunization is a key component of primary health care and an indisputable human right. It's also one of the best health investments money can buy. That is why the Ministry of National Health Services Regulations & Coordination takes great pride in Pakistan's efficacious Immunization Programme being implemented by Federal Directorate of Immunization and provincial/area Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPIs). The programme is working day and night to convert vaccines into vaccinations.

We have a score of publications and information literature, out of which the FDI Newsletter that is published and circulated monthly aims to reflect the monthly developments from all across Pakistan in the immunization domain fighting against 12 targeted vaccine preventable diseases.

I would like to congratulate the Federal Directorate of Immunization Team and EPI Programme Teams all across Pakistan for achieving immunization milestones as per national and international frameworks. This newsletter serves as a great carrier of news and updates of such interventions enabling the programme to connect with national and international stakeholders.

I would take this opportunity and on behalf of the Ministry of National Health Services Regulations & Coordination, I highly commend the role played by all stakeholders (namely Religious Leaders, Academia, Doctors, Medical Forums, Media Personal, NGOs/CBOs, Parliamentarians, FBOs, Partner & Donor Organizations (Gavi, WHO and UNICEF), Government Departments, Volunteers and specially the Parents and Health Care Workers for making Expanded Programme on Immunization a Success).



MESSAGE BY

SPECIAL SECRETARY HEALTH, MR. MIRZA NASIR UD DIN MASHHOOD AHMAD

Immunization is a global health and development success story, saving millions of lives every year. Vaccines reduce risks of getting a disease by working with your body's natural defenses to build protection. When you get a vaccine, your immune system responds.

The Expanded Programme on Immunization, Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination is working against 12 vaccine preventable disease inclusive of Childhood Tuberculosis, Diarrhea, Diphtheria, Hepatitis B, Measles, Meningitis, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Pneumonia, Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid and Rubella. FDI Newsletter ensures to highlight the equity based coverage of the programme and on the other hand bring in lime light the unsung heroes i.e. the Vaccinators and other front line health care workers of the Immunization Programme. The Ministry of National Health Services Regulations & Coordination (MoNHSR&C) considers its 'human resource' as its biggest strength. Employee centered approach is embedded in the fundamentals of Ministry's working philosophy.

I would especially like to acknowledge and highlight the unwavering support of our national and provincial leadership, our communities, caregivers, parents and the EPI team/staff across Pakistan. With their support, we are working tirelessly to protect the children of Pakistan.



MESSAGE BY DIRECTOR GENERAL, FDI, DR. MUHAMMAD AHMAD KAZI

Immunization is the most cost-effective, safest, and efficient public health intervention. Due to routine immunization, millions of children are saved in Pakistan from illness and death by vaccine-preventable diseases. Federal Directorate of Immunization under the guidance and direct supervision of Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination is working to reach out every child especially zero dose children in hard-to-reach areas of Pakistan. GoP firmly believe, wherever children are not immunized, their lives and communities are at risk. That's why, FDI tailor new approaches to vaccinate every child against the targeted 12 vaccine preventable diseases in every community, no matter how remote or challenging by mobilizing the community at levels.

Bringing innovation and building capacities lies at the core of the programme hence capacity building is an ongoing process in the thematic areas of Cold Chain Management, Vaccine Logistics, Vaccine Safety, Campaign Planning, Surveillance, Monitoring and Evaluation, Waste Management, Advocacy Communications and Social Mobilization.

Capitalizing on the nationwide reach of FDI Newsletter, on Behalf of the FDI, MoNHSR&C. I highly commend the role played by all stakeholders; Religious Leaders, Academia, Doctors, Medical Forums, Media Personal, NGOs/CBOs, Parliamentarians, FBOs, Partner & Donor Organizations, Government Departments, Volunteers specially the Parents and Health Care Workers for making Expanded Programme on Immunization a Success. I would also like to take this opportunity to extend a gesture of gratitude to all donor and partner organizations inclusive of World Health Organization, UNICEF, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, World Bank, JICA, USAID, Aga Khan Foundation, ACASUS, IRD, Red Cross Movement also many other national and international stakeholders.



MESSAGE BY **MR. ABDULLAH A. FADIL, UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE IN PAKISTAN**

UNICEF takes pride in being a development partner to the Government of Pakistan, especially when it comes to promoting and safeguarding rights of children.

Investing in children is the best investment in a country's future. Protecting newborn children against vaccine preventable diseases through timely immunization, enables them to survive, thrive and reach their full potential in life.

Immunization remains a life-saving health intervention. As the world's biggest buyer and supplier of vaccines, UNICEF continues to play a pivotal role in supporting immunization efforts by governments around the world. In Pakistan, under the leadership of the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination and its Federal Directorate of Immunization, UNICEF is playing its role in helping the country move towards the goal of achieving universal vaccination for all children.

Let me reiterate that UNICEF is committed to supporting immunization efforts in Pakistan as an active and key member of the immunization team. We strive to reach the inaccessible, vulnerable, unvaccinated and under immunized children including zero dose as well as those who do not complete their immunization schedule on time.

Let us synergize and work hand in hand to present all newborn children the best gift in the form of a complete vaccination regime which protects them from childhood diseases and gives them the best start in life.

HANDING OVER CEREMONY OF 26 VEHICLES (MOBILE WORKSHOPS & DRY LOGISTICS TRUCKS)

FDI and UNICEF together achieved another project milestone as the handed over ceremony of 26 Vehicles (Mobile Workshops & Dry Logistics Trucks) was organized on 8th March. His Excellency Mr. Abdul Qadir Patel, Federal Health Minister handed over the vehicles to EPIs in Provinces/Areas on International Women's Day to the EPI Programmes in Provinces/Areas".

Honourable Minister during his speech stated that

"The Ministry of National Health Services Regulations & Coordination (MoNHSR&C) is committed to improving health of its people. In this regard, immunization against the 12 deadly vaccine preventable diseases remains our top priority" during the "Handing over ceremony of 26 Vehicles (Mobile Workshops & Dry Logistics Trucks). The said 26 vehicles will be a great asset to EPI programme all across Pakistan. Out of these 26, there are 18 Mobile Workshop Vehicles that will strengthen EPI capacity for the maintenance of the cold chain equipment and 8 Logistics Trucks that will ensure timely and optimum transportation of dry logistics. Hence the operations of Routine Immunization, Supplementary Immunization Activities inclusive of COVID-19 and Polio Eradication initiatives will foster. It is pertinent to mention that these vehicle will also add service delivery value to the ongoing emergency response immunization interventions in the flood affected areas.

The Minister also acknowledged the recent paradigm shift in the Immunization Programme of Pakistan due to the vision of Dr. Muhammad Ahmad Kazi, DG, FDI and commended Dr. Kazi and his team for leading such initiatives from concept to development.

Mr. Abdullah A. Fadil, UNICEF Country Representative in Pakistan during his speech said that "UNICEF takes pride in being a development partner to the Government of Pakistan, especially when it comes to promoting and safeguarding rights of children.

Dr. Palitha Mahipala, Country Representative of World Health Organization, Pakistan during his remarks stated that "WHO is partnering with the Government of Pakistan and supports ensuring that all children get vaccinated against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Dr. Muhammad Ahmad Kazi, DG, FDI thanked His Excellency Federal Health Minister Mr. Abdul Qadir Patel, and his dedicated team of senior health dignitaries from the MoNHSR&C including Dr. Mahesh Kumar Malani, Minister of State, Dr. Muhammad Fakhre Alam, Secretary Health, Mr. Mirza Nasir Ud Din Mashhood Ahmad, Special Secretary Health, Mr. Kamran Rehman Khan, Additional Secretary, Mr. Mustafa Jamal Kazi, Joint Secretary (Technical) and Dr. Baseer Achakzai, DG Health.



The handing over ceremony was purposefully organized on 8th March International Women's Day. Which is an annual event where people across the globe celebrate women's achievements, raise awareness about gender discrimination and pays tribute to the women in general. FDI also commemorated the world International Women's Day by organizing a vehicles distribution ceremony on this day, sending out a picture message of all female colleagues of EPI and PEI with His Excellency Mr. Abdul Qadir Patel, Federal Health Minister and posting of DG, FDI Message on social media platforms.



International Women's Day 2023

Message from Dr. Muhammad Ahmad Kazi, DG, FDI



This day is an opportunity to acknowledge accomplishments of our determined Female Health Workers who are playing a pivotal role in Immunization Programme and Polio Eradication.

The UN theme for this year's International Women's Day is "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality". I would urge all the women of Pakistan to equip themselves with education and digital learnings that shall enable them to connect with the world and find opportunities to grow and prosper.

The resilience and bravery of Pakistani female health workers, where a few have even sacrificed their lives in the line of duty, is an example of women's determination to make Pakistan a better place.

Lastly, to mark the International Women's Day, I would like to thank all my Pakistani Sisters for their contributions in making the fabric of Pakistan. May all my Pakistani Sisters Rise and Shine.

DR. PALITHA MAHIPALA VISITED FDI'S INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTRE

Dr. Palitha Mahipala, Country Representative, World Health Organization Pakistan during his visit to FDI on 8th March was briefed on the Information Resource Centre (IRC) by Dr. Muhammad Ahmad Kazi, DG, FDI. IRC is a joint initiative of FDI and WHO initiative that provides a range of immunization information service to all stakeholders in soft and hard form.



FDI'S OCCUPATIONAL & HEALTH SAFETY COMPONENT

Dr. Muhammad Ahmed Kazi, DG FDI had comprehensive meetings and briefings with various direct and indirect stakeholders in order to discuss strategic alliances, documents and to be apprised on the developments of different projects and components of the EPI Programme. Meetings glimpses are as follow:

Mott MacDonald team called on Dr. Muhammad Ahmad Kazi, DG, FDI on 2nd March. Diane Northway, Technical Lead for Mott MacDonald presented COVAX Rollout Monitoring key findings for the first two rounds. It was appreciated that FDI/EPI has served the country by successfully providing quality vaccination to a large number of population.



Mr. Khurram Butt from Gates Foundation visited Dr. Muhammad Ahmad Kazi, DG, FDI office on 6th March to discuss the future road map of FDI and BMGF joint framework.



Dr. Shahzad Baig, National Coordinator, NEOC along with technical team called on Dr. Muhammad Ahmad Kazi, DG, FDI on 7th March to discuss enhanced and effective joint vaccine management interventions for future.



On 7th March Dr. Muhammad Ahmad Kazi, DG, FDI participated in a round table conference where National EOC & medical associations PPA & PMA, signed a Letter of Intent and renewed their commitment to end polio & promote immunization as a right for every child.



Mr. Saad B. Omer, Director, Yale institute for Global Health along with UNICEF Pakistan Social Behaviour Change (SBC) team members arranged a debriefing session on 10th March for Dr. Muhammad Ahmad Kazi, DG, FDI on Brand Lift Study carried out by FDI in association with Yale Institute for Global Health, Meta and UNICEF for strengthening demand for Routine Immunization.



A senior representative from Gates Foundation on 30th March called on Dr. Muhammad Ahmad Kazi, DG, FDI. After programmatic discussions the visiting delegation paid a visit to FDI's Information Resource Centre. Dr. Kazi shared that one of the most important tasks of FDI's Information Resource Centre is to make immunization related information available and encourage all stakeholders to use it, by offering a range of information on prevention of 12 Vaccine Preventable Diseases including of Polio.



FDI REPRESENTATION IN CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING FOR PRIORITY COUNTRIES ORGANIZED BY WHO EMRO IN CAIRO, EGYPT.

Deputy Director Monitoring & Evaluation, FDI, Dr. Basharat Ullah Baig recently participated in a Capacity Building Training for Priority Countries on Planning and Monitoring Interventions to Reach and sustain services for zero dose communities, organized by WHO EMRO in Cairo, Egypt from 19th to 22nd March. The training program equipped participants with the requisite skills and knowledge to effectively plan and implement interventions aimed at mitigating the issue of zero-dose communities and subsequently monitor the impact of these interventions.

EPI PUNJAB WELCOMES DR. MUKHTAR AHMED AS NEW DIRECTOR HEALTH SERVICES EPI

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Awan took over as Director Health Services (EPI) Punjab on March 24. This is Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed's second term as DHS EPI as he has rejoined the programme after leaving in the last quarter of year 2022. The provincial team welcomed Dr. Mukhtar hoping more successes for the programme under his leadership. A farewell for outgoing DHS Dr. Ahteshamul Haq was organized as well.



Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed's last term in EPI was marked with a lot of milestones in EPI history as Punjab conducted multiple rounds of COVID-19 vaccination RED campaigns under him including Pediatric Vaccination campaigns. Under his leadership Punjab conducted largest campaign in its Punjab history, the Measles Rubella Catch up campaign 2022. The initiation of Labour Room Birth Vaccination counters and beginning of Evening Shift Vaccination got underway in his term. Punjab also conducted several rounds of capacity building/trainings activities under him, flood response and EOAs under him.

'BIG CATCH UP' BEGINS AS PUNJAB LAUNCHES INTEGRATED OUTREACH ACTIVITY

Punjab is all set to start Integrated Outreach Activity (IOA) in 35 districts of the province to ensure each and every child is vaccinated. The activity is being carried out with the technical and financial support of the WHO. The IOA is aligned with the theme of the World Immunization Week 2023 'the Big Catch up'. Special focus of the activity is on weak Union Councils identified with the support of Synergy Evaluation System developed by PEI-EPI team. The



activity provides the provincial program a catch-up vaccination opportunity to cover Zero dose Children/Communities, Due & Defaulters, ensure COVID-19 Vaccination and administer OPV to still missed children.

The activity will be carried out from April 1 to 30 with the support of WHO in all the districts of the province. Current round is being a conducted in all districts except Lahore. This Round will be completed by 30th April and next round shall begin a couple of months later. The idea is to ensure no child misses his routine vaccination.

This special outreach activity follows an integrated approach where vaccinator visits villages and communities under a defined tour plan for Immunization Service Delivery, Social Mobilizers help in linking services with the community and EPI Supervisors and Managers conduct Supportive Supervision. The LHV's provide vaccination services at Fixed EPI Centers and LHWs support them in Community Mobilization and

provision of MCH services. Polio staff strengthening monitoring to identify gaps and frontline healthcare workers are ensuring preventive outreach team reach in villages and communities.

EPI PUNJAB REVIEW MEETING WITH WHO DIVISIONAL OFFICERS

The EPI Punjab conducted EPI Technical Review with WHO Divisional EPI Officers at the EPI Committee Room on March 14. NPO WHO Dr. Imran Qureshi led the WHO's provincial and divisional team during technical discussion on WHO's support for Punjab and planned activities for year 2023. The EPI Punjab team comprising Additional Director Dr. Samra Khurram, ADHS Surveillance Dr. Abdul Jabbar, ADHS Dr. Wasim



Ali, MO Dr. Sajid Bashir and partner staff engaged in detailed review of bottlenecks at divisional and district level. The Divisional Officers have played pivotal role in strengthening EPI presence at grassroots level. Punjab has added record number of new EPI centres since they joined ranks. Thorough analysis of due and defaulter children data have given fresh insights on the solutions rendering an impetus the program lacked hitherto.

MONTHLY MEETING OF DSVS/DEOS/ EPI FOCAL PERSONS HELD IN LAHORE

To strengthen the EPI services across the province, EPI Punjab and UNICEF organized a monthly meeting of DSVs/ASVs/EPI Focal Persons on March 17-18. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Abdul Jabbar, ADHS EPI while senior EPI officials including Dr. Waseem Ali, ADHS EPI, Dr. Samra Khurram, graced the occasion along with development partners' personnel including Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Shad, Urban Health Consultant UNICEF. The



meeting was held in two separate sessions on consequent days. On day-1, the participants from 18 districts of Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Gujranwala, and Faisalabad Divisions attended the proceedings on Mar 17. The participants from 18 other districts of the divisions including Sahiwal, Lahore, Multan, Bahawalpur, and DG Khan attended the second-day sessions on Mar 18.

The key objectives of the monthly meeting were to identify the provincial priorities in terms of service delivery to be focused on an agenda that included discussing routine EPI targets 2023, EMR Compliance, EPI MIS Compliance, Routine EPI Coverage Analysis 2022, and Jan & Feb 2023. VPD Surveillance. Dr. Abdul Jabbar ADHS EPI Punjab briefed the participants regarding the ADP scheme for 2023 to improve urban immunization in megacities of Punjab. He told the participants that the Department of Primary & Secondary

Health Punjab had PKR 400 million in funding to achieve the goals. He further said that preference would be given to the establishment of 24/7 fixed sites in the megacities of Punjab.

EPI TECHNICAL REVIEW MEETINGS

The EPI Technical Review meetings of the Programme were regularly held on a weekly basis throughout the month of March jointly organized by EPI Punjab and UNICEF. Director Health Services (EPI) Dr. Ahtisham Ul Haq along with senior EPI officials including Dr. Abdul Jabbar, ADHS EPI, Dr. Waseem Ali, ADHS EPI, and Dr. Samra Khurram, ADHS EPI monitored the indicators and reviewed the events. The members



of development partners including Dr. Qurat-ul-Ain Ahmed, Immunization Officer UNICEF, Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Shad, Urban Health Consultant UNICEF, Dr. Imran Qureshi, NPO WHO and Dr. Naeem Majeed TFP, BMGF, and others attended the technical reviews as well.

The emerging issues like Integrated Outreach Activity in the month of April, upcoming World Immunization Week, and the Immunization Plan for mega urban districts remained the main agenda items during this month while several other aspects including service delivery, social & behavioral change activities, and Cold Chain were also discussed in these technical reviews.

EPI ROLLING WORK-PLAN 2023-24 PRESENTED TO DHS EPI PUNJAB

UNICEF-EPI team led by Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Shad, Urban Health Consultant UNICEF, submitted UNICEF EPI Rolling Work-plan 2023-24 to DHS EPI in an exclusive meeting. The UNICEF team presented a detailed overview of the work plan and discussed several activities in detail. DHS EPI shared his observations and suggested a few amendments as well. Mr. Aqeel Sarfraz, SBC Consultant UNICEF, shared the details of SBC activities proposed in connection with World Immunization Week 2023.

ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

Coordination meeting with lagging districts of Sindh for the workable solution for Immunization Coverage and Annual Work Plan was organized on 9th March. The meeting was chaired by Project Director Dr. Irshad Ahmed Memon attended by Districts and Provincial EPI Team.



EPI Sindh on 31st March organized the VPD Surveillance training attended by representatives of Districts (East, Malir, Central and South). Dr. Sara Salman given motivation speech and appreciated District Teams for their untiring efforts to support VPD Surveillance. Technical trainings sessions were facilitated by Dr. Waqar Ahmed Soomro, NPO, WHO, Dr. Khalid Brohi, TO, WHO, Miss Tahira Bano, Provincial EPI Coordinator Sindh, Dr Mehboob Khuwaja , Surveillance officer, Mr. Muzaffar Bhurt, Provincial Data Manager and. Mr. Aijaz Jamali, EPI Sindh.



EPI Sindh and IRD continued with the Mobile Immunization Van intervention for Routine Immunization throughout the month of March. In the pictures the initiative going on in different areas of District East, Gulshan Town and UC Pehlwan Goth can be seen working to cover zero dose and defaulters children in Sindh.



DG Health Dr. Muhammad Juman Bahoto in a ceremony held on 25th March to appreciate the hard work of staff, appreciated the efforts and support of EPI Sindh especially for excellent efforts, coordination and vaccinations drives in COVID-19, Measles and other VPD diseases.



EPI team conducted field survey in VPD high risk districts and conducted surveillance field reviews in District Dadu. Mission was lead by Dr. Khaliliullah Memon, Deputy PD EPI Sindh throughout the month of March.



ISD activity through Mobile Van with support of UNICEF is an ongoing continuous initiative all across Sindh. The picture file shows a van maneuvering in remote and high risk areas in different parts of Karachi with microplanning focusing on all zero dose, newborn and defaulters.



MNTE CAMPAIGN IN SOUTH KP

As per the vision of Director EPI KP, Dr. Muhammad Arif, Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus (MNTE) ought to be put on top of priority list as it has been among the most common life threatening consequences of unclean deliveries and umbilical cord care practices, and are indicators of inequity in access to immunization and other maternal, newborn, and child health services.



To overcome this life threatening disease, EPI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has launched a special MNTE campaign in South districts of KP from 15-23 March.

The Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus Elimination (MNTE) initiative aims to reduce MNT cases to such low levels that the disease is no longer a major public health problem.

Unlike polio and smallpox, tetanus cannot be eradicated (tetanus spores are present in the environment worldwide), but through immunization of children, mothers, other women of reproductive age (WRA) and promotion of more hygienic deliveries and cord care practices, MNTE can be eliminated.

This special campaign was carried out in D I Khan, Tank, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Bajaur, North Waziristan and Chitral Upper.



EPI BALOCHISTAN AND IRD SIGNS AN MOU TO PILOT ELECTRONIC IMMUNIZATION REGISTRY IN QUETTA DISTRICT"

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on March 20 between EPI Balochistan and IRD in Quetta, to pilot Electronic Immunization Registry only in Quetta District. The pilot project aims to register children after vaccination under the Electronic Immunization Registry in Quetta District, which will be managed by IRD -Zindagi Mahfooz. The Zindagi Mahfooz software will also be implemented across Balochistan with the



support of Gavi and WHO. Representatives of WHO, UNICEF, and Birth Dose Centers vaccinators participated in the event, where mobile phones were distributed to birth-dose vaccinators.

EPI BALOCHISTAN URGES PARTNERS TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE ON ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION IN QUETTA BLOCK.

On March 15, a meeting was held at the Provincial EPI headquarters in Quetta, Balochistan to discuss the Measles outbreak in the Quetta block. The meeting was attended by all partners of the Quetta block, including PPHI, WHO, UNICEF, and BMGF's active partners at the district level, TVI, and JPHIEGO. Dr. Akhtar Ali Buledi, the Provincial Coordinator for Immunization Balochistan, chaired the meeting and urged all partners to



plan mop-up activities for Measles for the next two days and start vaccination processes from the first day of the coming week in and around all outbreak areas. He also expressed concern over the efficiency of the DHMTs and vaccinators in the field and urged WHO and BMGF to monitor the performance of their partners. He further stated that he is not ready to risk the lives of the children of his nation and will write to the Secretary and Minister of health if the situation continues.

PRCS AND IRC MEET WITH PROVINCIAL COORDINATOR, EPI BALOCHISTAN TO DISCUSS FUTURE COLLABORATION IN THE EPI PROGRAMME

Representatives from PRCS/IRC on March 28 met with Provincial Coordinator EPI Balochistan Dr. Akhtar Ali Buledi to express their gratitude for the special support of the EPI programme during the previous project. Dr. Buledi expressed his determination to continue the support in the future. He urged the PRCS team to work on all seven of EPI's components without compromising on the quality-of-service delivery



and to conduct a district analysis in collaboration with the district and provincial teams whenever they start working in a district. The meeting was also attended by Deputy PC-EPI Dr. Amin Amir, Dr. Waheed Lashari, and Dr. Rehmatullah Kakar. PRCS/IRC has offered to work in District Qila Abdullah, Chaman, and Pishin.

WHO SIGNS MOU WITH HEALTH DEPARTMENT BALOCHISTAN TO SUPPORT HEALTHCARE PROJECTS

On March 22, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Health Department and the World Health Organization (WHO) at the provincial office of EPI Balochistan in Quetta. During the ceremony, various projects were inaugurated, and donations from WHO were handed over to the Health Department. These included a solar system in the EPI program, repairs and renovation to 100 primary health



centers across Balochistan, the Provision of a CT Scan machine to the Turbat Teaching Hospital, and the provision of maternal and child care and birth-related essentials to support the MNCH program. Health Minister Balochistan Syed Ehsan Shah, WHO Pakistan Representative Dr. Palitha Mahipala and other officials were present at the event. Syed Ehsan Shah expressed gratitude to WHO for their continue assistance, while Dr. Palitha Mahipala emphasized the organization's responsibility to support the government in improving health services in Balochistan.

Secretary Health Department, Saleh Nasir, DG Health Services Balochistan, Dr. Noor Qazi, Provincial Coordinator EPI Balochistan Dr. Akhtar Ali Buledi, Head of Office WHO Balochistan Dr. Asfandiyar Sherani and other officials from WHO/UN agencies as well as health department participated in the ceremony.

HUMAN INTEREST STORY

Title: "Revolutionizing Emergency Response in Khuzdar: The Story of the Medical Motorcycle"

Contributed by: Shay Abdul Salam Baloch, SBC Consultant /EPI Baluchistan at Quetta

Caption: "In the remote and challenging terrain of Khuzdar, the medical motorcycle designed by Dr. Bashir Baloch has transformed emergency response times, providing quick and effective care to those in need. A true example of service and duty in low-resource settings."

In the challenging terrain of the Khuzdar district, a need for quick and effective emergency response is critical. However, due to the area's remoteness and

difficult road conditions, it was often difficult for medical teams to reach patients in need on time. In immediate rapid healthcare response addressing this challenge Dr. Bashir Baloch, the District Health Officer, came up with an innovative solution to improve emergency response times and ensure routine immunization services to under-reached population.

Dr. Baloch designed a specialized motorcycle carrying necessary medicines and vaccines in case of emergencies, disease outbreaks (Measles in particular), and epidemics. The bike was presented to the designated healthcare workers in the presence of Deputy Commissioner Khuzdar, Major Retired Muhammad Ilyas Khibzai, and Health Advisor to CM Balochistan Dr. Shahzad Alam.

The motorcycle's design and capabilities meant that it could navigate the difficult terrain of the area, even during rainy seasons, and quickly reach those in need. It was a great example of service and duty in low-resource settings, and a tremendous advantage for the medical teams also utmost dedication working in the district.

The success of this initiative did not go unnoticed, and the Chief Minister's health advisor pledged to provide more bikes of this type in the district. With improved emergency response times, the people of Khuzdar can rest assured have a medical team dedicated to providing quick and effective care in tough circumstances.



INTEGRATED HEALTH OUTREACH SERVICES IN BALOCHISTAN: A SUCCESS STORY IN REACHING UNDERREACHED POPULATIONS

Contributed by:

Shay Abdul Salam Baloch- SBC Consultant/EPI Balochistan/ Syed Tahir Ali- Health Officer UNICEF (for Analytical figures)

The Balochistan government has faced challenges in providing essential healthcare services due to difficult terrains, scattered populations, financial constraints, and political unrest. The EPI program played a critical role in reaching unreached and underreached populations. To address these challenges, the EPI Baluchistan, with support from the health directorate, the Director General Health Services Baluchistan, and the UNICEF Balochistan team, initiated an innovative approach called Integrated Health Outreach (IHO). The IHO aimed to provide primary healthcare services, particularly Routine Immunization services, at the doorsteps of people in far-flung areas. The IHO sessions were initiated in 14 priority districts in refugee and host communities and divisional headquarters which extended to 18 Districts by including 4 flood effected Districts. The service providers reached people who normally do not have easy access to, or are less likely to attend, facility services.

The IHO sessions were organized outside health facilities in temporary facilities such as vehicles, tents, schools, religious buildings, or social/town halls. Around 518,217 individuals benefited from UNICEF supported PHC services during 1,559 Integrated Health Outreach sessions in 18 Districts of Balochistan, among them 68,631 Children (Male 33,843 – Female 34,788) received routine Immunization, 13,350 Zero dose children covered for RI, 19,615 women were provided TT vaccination.

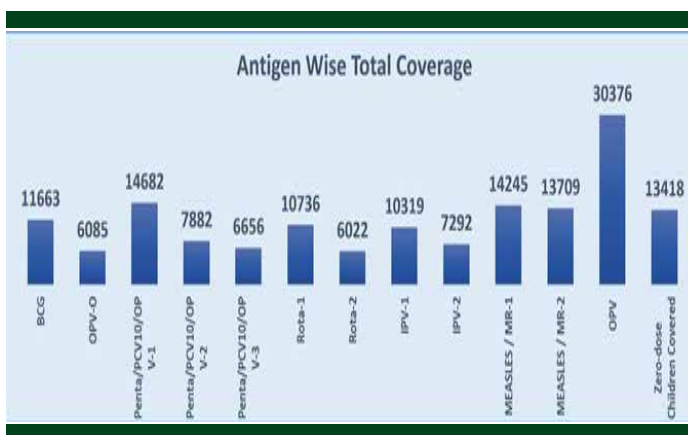
The IHO-supported districts contributed to covering 30% of the provincial Immunization target for February 2022 to December 2022. The outreach services contributed to including children in the EPI program and immunized 11663 children for BCG and 14682 for Penta 1, of which 91% were zero-dose and defaulter children.

Lessons learned from the IHO sessions that could be followed by other replicators include assessing community needs, issues, and resources; maximizing outreach through service integration; and considering how to sustain outreach services during the planning process. By providing a package of services, including routine immunizations and other related health services, outside health facilities, health teams can reach community members who might not be willing or able to seek or access health care. The provision of integrated services helped reduce the stigma of some health services, such as family planning or tuberculosis. Parents were more willing to avail of the Routine Immunization services as they were provided with antipyretics to subside the fever caused during the immunization process.

The IHO sessions were successful in Baluchistan due to the passionate and dedicated DHMTs and community health workers who drove outreach efforts. The DHMTs regularly conducted planning meetings on a monthly basis to assess community needs and resources and maximize outreach through service integration. Advocacy meetings were conducted with national, provincial, district, and community

stakeholders to ensure resources were allocated and available and that integrated outreach activities were sustainable.

In conclusion, the IHO approach in Balochistan has proven to be a benchmark activity in routine immunization service provision and other primary healthcare services in selected districts. The success of the IHO sessions can be attributed to assessing community needs, issues, and resources; maximizing outreach through service integration; and considering how to sustain outreach services during the planning process. By providing a package of services outside health facilities, health teams can reach community members who might not be willing or able to seek or access health care. The provision of integrated services has helped reduce the stigma of some health services, such as family planning or tuberculosis, and parents were more willing to avail themselves of the Routine Immunization services.



INAUGURAL CEREMONY OF REFURBISHMENT CENTER SUPPORTED BY WHO IN DISTRICT KOTLI

EPI AJK in collaboration with WHO inaugurated a newly refurbishment center in district Kotli on Mar 8, by Dr.Nisar Ansar Abdali, Minister to Health AJK, along with Dr.Palitha Mahipala WR WHO, Dr.Abdul Sattar Khan, Provincial Program Manager EPI, Dr.Shafqat Shah, District Health Officer Kotli, Dr.Bushra Shams Technical Officer PHC WHO and representatives from WHO and Department of Health were also present. WHO



also supported the District with 1 ambulance, 6 Basic Health Units, 1 Mobile unit, and 1 Supervisory vehicle and assured to upgrade of 10 more Basic Health Units along with a well-equipped training hall in the upcoming months. Minister of Health, Dr.Nisar Ansar Abdali thanked Dr.Palitha Mahipala for the generous support and for enhancing health access in AJK.

EPI AJK MEETINGS, ACTIVITIES WITH STAKEHOLDERS:

- 2 Days Consultative Meeting on March 10-11, on Behavior Change Communication (BCC) organized by UNICEF at Islamabad. Honorable Dr. Abdul Sattar Khan, PPM EPI AJK also participated from AJK and gave a presentation on BCC Strategy.
- WHO PEI Team called on PPM EPI AJK on 31st March and had a meeting on AFP Surveillance. PPM assured them of every cooperation and reiterated that already planned training in May 2023 will surely boost the capacity building of DSCs and added that such training also needs to be arranged for ADs Surveillance.
- On 30th March, department of Planning & Development AJK with the support of UNICEF Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) organized an Awareness walk in City campus of AJK University. Dr.Abdul Sattar Khan participated along with representatives from parallel departments to sensitize youth and community on the importance of nutrition.



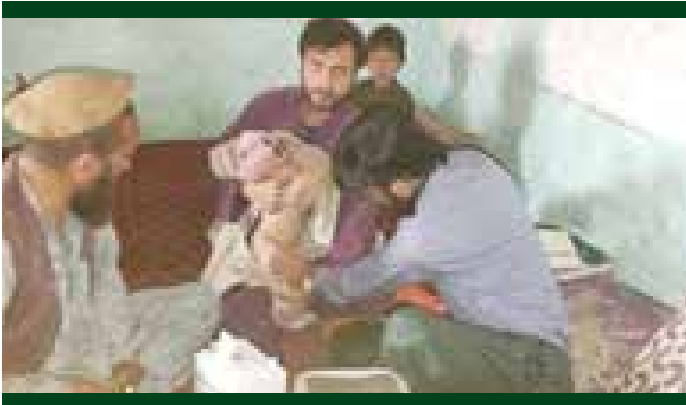
ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

- EPI annual review meeting was convened on 1st March in Gilgit under chairmanship of Secretary Health GB. DG Health GB, Directors from Regions, DHOs, DSVs, partner staff and EPI provincial staff attended the three daylong meeting.
- Provincial EPI with the support of WHO conducted Integrated Outreach Activities in all districts of Gilgit Baltistan throughout the month of March. This will provide massive support to the coverage of Routine Immunization in Province.
- Dr. Iqbal Rasool Director EPI GB grace the event with his presence in the training session and appreciate the support of UNICEF and partner organization for their continuous support for routine immunization in GB.
- To ensure effective communication between vaccinator and caregivers, EPI GB and UNICEF organized Interpersonal Communication Skills training on 30th March for all the vaccinators in province with the support of UNICEF-Pakistan. Around 300 vaccinators have been given training on IPC skills in 12 batches throughout the province.
- EPI GB on 4th March arranged a training session on effective vaccine management with the support of UNICEF in Gilgit Baltistan. The meeting was attended by focal persons from districts for EPI and partner organization staff.
- Dr. Iqbal Rasool Director EPI GB grace the event with his presence in the training session and appreciate the support of UNICEF and partner organization for their continuous support for routine immunization in GB.



ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

- Monthly review meeting of Outreach vaccinators convened at Directorate of Health Services MCI on 10th March.
- Polio NID has been conducted in Islamabad from 13-19 March. Dr. Muhamamd Fayyaz Lodhi, Director General Health Services monitored the campaign being head of department. Dr. Fayyaz directed teams to give a special attention to Zero Dose coverage and still NAs and Refusals.
- EOA is being implemented in Islamabad from 20th March till 3rd April 2023. More than 80% recorded Zero Dose children have been covered during this activity. However a large number of still NAs were approached and vaccinated. Data could not be incorporated at national dashboard.
- Training of UCMOs on Polio Vaccine Management on 20-21 March.



SURVEILLANCE MEETING AND INTEGRATED OUTREACH

A meeting was chaired by Dr. Zaeem Zia, DHO on 6th March in District Health Office Islamabad. Progress regarding Surveillance of Routine Immunization. The Chair directed teams to constitute the Measles task force comprising of DHMT, NSTOPs, WHO-EPI, WHO-PEI, COMNet. It was decided by core team of EPI and PEI that Evening Outreach will be started in Islamabad in order to vaccinate maximum children.



MONTHLY EPI REVIEW MEETING

Monthly EPI review meeting was conducted of vaccinators at RHC Tarlai on 9th March. Opening remarks were given by Dr. Shazia Gul EPI Focal Person. Coverages of vaccinators were discussed and they were directed to achieve the defined UC wise targets.



TRAINING UNICEF INTEGRATED EPI OUTREACH SERVICE DELIVERY

A series of training started in the month of March for all vaccinators, Lady health supervisors and Social Mobilisers for the activity of "Integrated EPI Outreach Service Delivery". The initiative is being led by Senior Manager, Immunization Dr Yasmine Challoub and team. The presentation of roles and task responsibility was managed by Dr. Muhammad Jaohar Khan, Health Specialist, UNICEF the event was graced by Dr Zaeem Zia,

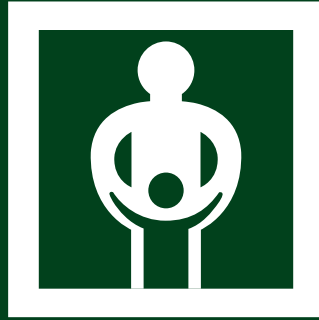


DHO. The event's importance highlighted of reaching out to the poor children and families to increase coverage on immunization against life threatening diseases. A very productive session all front-line healthcare workers planned the microplanning for implementation in ICT/CDA with success. The aim is to provide sustain services such as vaccinations and nutrition treatment because high number of children suffer a disproportionate burden of child deprivation and die before they reach age 5. UNICEF provides long-term aid against all odds and deliver lifesaving supplies in hard-to-reach areas;

moreover, strengthen protection for children affected by conflict. UNICEF will provide every ounce of support in this activity to protect children, vulnerable women today and in the future. Newborn kits to be distributed immediately after birth delivery of newborns. Also, clean delivery kits are to be utilised to provide relief and assistance in prevalent circumstances to which health facility are not



facilitated with equipment. The labour room is primitive and not accessible. Therefore, clean delivery kits are used for pregnant women on 4th antenatal care visit and for the last neonatal tetanus dose vaccine. In the activity a reporting and recording tool aiming for going green and saving trees advancement has been made with design in digitilisation. A high technology programmed software introduced KoboCollect for conducting operation in the fieldwork. This ensures a coherent checklist for surveillance and monitoring includes a site organisation, session conduction and injection practise, injection safety, AEFI management, Cold chain, Logistics, social mobilisation, number of MUAC, ORS, Paracetamol syrup, other medicines administered to patients. In Islamabad UNICEF is responding to compounding health crises for children in need of support.



**FEDERAL DIRECTORATE
OF IMMUNIZATION**
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN



@epipakistanofficial



epi.gov.pk