



Expanded Program on Immunization
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National Inter-Agency Coordination Committee Meets to review National Immunization Support Project

National Inter-Agency Coordination Committee held its meeting on February 14, 2019 to review the progress of the National Immunization Support Project-NISP. The meeting was chaired by the Director General, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation & Coordination, Dr. Assad Hafeez and attended by members of the NICC. Members of the Joint Supervision, Appraisal and Evaluation Mission-JSAEM also participated the meeting. In the meeting Representative of JSAEM presented their findings of their visit to all four provinces and interactions with Federal EPI and federating areas.

While summing up the discussion, Dr. Assad Hafeez reiterated commitment of the Federal Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination in improving the coverage of Routine Immunization. "Progress track of NISP will be reviewed and monitored regularly to maintain and improve the RI coverage in the country, all delays and bottlenecks in the implementation of the project will be addressed at priority", said Dr. Assad Hafeez. He also shared that Government is working to strengthen primary health care



“The Government of Pakistan is committed to improve existing health system. In line with the vision of the Government, EPI program will leave no stone unturned to improve immunization services in the country.”

***Dr. Arshad Karim Chandio,
National Program Manager,
Federal EPI***



Joint Supervision, Appraisal and Evaluation Mission for NISP

The Joint Supervision, Appraisal and Evaluation Mission led by the World Bank, joined by the Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) visited Pakistan on February 4-15, 2019. The objectives of the mission was to review progress of the NISP project and implementation by the Federal EPI, and four provincial EPI programs within the respective Health Departments. Specific areas that were reviewed were:

- Progress on implementation of the financing and operational plans for FY19/20 for the Federal and Provincial EPI programs – including services in large urban areas;
- Review of EPI program performance;
- Progress towards achievement of the project development objective and targets for disbursement of project funds (DLIs);
- Progress made in completion of third-party validation for DLIs;
- Implementation progress of financial management and procurement arrangements at the Federal and Provincial levels, including the availability of specialist financial management and procurement human resources in the implementing programs;
- Implementation progress of the Environmental and Social Management plans, as well as the grievance redressal mechanism of the project; and
- Progress towards meeting project covenants, including that to categorize all human resources currently within the Federal and provincial PCs-I as part of the recurrent side of the budget by June 2019.

The JSAEM visited all four provinces and held detailed meetings at the Federal EPI with Federal and federating areas to discuss progress made in all areas. The JSAEM was apprised of latest developments and activities undertaken to meet indicators of NISP.



Joint Monitoring of IPV Campaign by EPI and PEI staff

In connection of six new Polio cases and consistent positive environmental samples in mega cities of Pakistan in March 2019, TAG recommended to conduct an IPV campaign in tier 1 districts. The campaign was conducted from February 18th – 28, 2019 to increase herd immunity in Peshawar, Quetta block, and Karachi. Federal EPI constituted a team of monitors to assess coverage, identify gaps and to formulate recommendations to bridge gaps and improve quality of future campaigns. Recommendations made by the Federal EPI monitors are below:

- High quality micro plans need to be ensured,
- Appropriate time should be given for micro planning and its validation.
- Refresher training for the vaccinators and those responsible for the maintenance and handling of cold chain (Cold rooms, ILRs, fridge tags, thermostats etc.) need to be planned, in collaboration with Federal/ Provincial EPI.
- Community should be actively engaged by the influencers to effectively deal refusals.
- Media should be involved at all levels to dispel rumors.



ACTIVITIES

Undertaken
across Pakistan for EPI

“Creation of a healthy environment is imperative to improve and maintain immunization service delivery in communities.”

*Dr. Bushra Shams,
Program Manager EPI, AJK*

3 Days Micro-Planning Workshop on Routine Immunization held in Azad Jammu & Kashmir

By, Dr. M Umer Iqbal, EPI Program, AJK

Expanded Program on Immunization, AJK is striving hard not only to improve Routine Immunization Coverage but also to reach every child for service delivery. To achieve this goal, a workshop on improved RI microplanning was conducted in District Mirpur where technical issues related to microplanning of routine immunization were discussed and concrete steps were ensured to resolve issues in improving implementation and outcomes at all levels.

Dr. Bushra Shams, Program Manager EPI, AJK in her address to Provincial and District EPI Staff emphasized on creation of healthy environment not only within the office premises but also in serving communities and with all stakeholders.



She also focused on bottom up approach with maximum possible involvement of stakeholders and beneficiaries to have a true and representative picture. Dr. Ahmed Junaid, Provincial RED Consultant on that occasion highlighted achievements by EPI AJK in the year 2018 and the way forward for the year 2019 with expected outcomes. At the end of 3-day workshop participants assured that they will put their efforts to reach every child for routine

Interactive Seminar: PPA reaffirms commitment to promote Routine Immunization

By, M.S. Aftab & Sunil Raja, EPI, Sindh

Federal EPI and PPA Sindh chapter in collaboration of WHO, UNICEF & EOC, Sindh arranged a grand interactive seminar on February 17, 2019 at PMA House Karachi. Dr. Zahoor Baloch, Project Director, EPI expressed, in his remarks that joint efforts in Routine Immunization and Polio Eradication will prove to be a key to strengthen Routine Immunization system and lead towards polio eradication. He also highlighted the need to strengthen synergy and foster on the legacy of PEI to improve the Routine Immunization Program.

Members of PPA Sindh Chapter, Districts Health Officers, and Tehsil Health Officers were invited to the interactive seminar. Around 100 Pediatricians from Major Hospital attended, DHOs, THOs, EPI, EOC & UNICEF officials also attended.



BALUCHISTAN

The Opportunity

Routine Immunization staff conducts monthly outreach activities to immunize children in respective areas. However, these opportunities are under-utilized because only RI services are provided. RI with integration of other services can boost the RI service coverage and improve overall health of communities.

To address the issues, an integrated package was planned and piloted in Kotwal 1 Union Council in Quetta where two sessions were conducted with effective social mobilization.

The Package Components included;

Health:

Routine immunization services, provision of basic ANC services to pregnant mothers including blood pressure checkups, provision of folic and iron tablets as well as referrals as appropriate – by the LHW and CBMs, treatment of minor ailments for children (0-5 years) and pregnant women and referrals for the complicated cases to the nearest health facilities

Nutrition:

Mass screening of 06-59 months for Mid Upper Arm Circumference - MUAC and Edema check, provision of Ready to Use Therapeutic Food –RUTF and follow-up for malnourished children, provision of micro-nutrients for moderately malnourished children, administer Vitamin A and deworming for 6 to 59 months as appropriate, provision of relevant infant and young children feeding (IYCF) counseling.

WASH

Provision of washing, hygiene promotion activities in the communities as well as distribution of IEC materials, distribution of WASH supplies (water treatment products, hygiene kits and other WASH related non -food items (NFIs)

Prof. Dr. Ghaffar Billo presented the important aspects of Routine Immunization strengthening and polio eradication with special emphasis on synergizing efforts to win benefits on both fronts. The seminar was organized in the backdrop of the IPV campaign therefore practical demonstration of fractional dose of IPV administration was also done.

All participants expressed their commitment to promote and improve Routine Immunization and polio eradication. PPA members reiterated their support and shared that similar seminars will be arranged in other institutions and health facilities and all PPA members will be approached for their active support. Pediatricians will be provided promotional material for awareness and information sharing.

Promoting Routine Immunization Through Integrated Health Package – A pilot

By. Zoheb Mandokhel, EPI, Balochistan

Balochistan has the most alarming indicators for child immunization (29%), stunting (38%) and wasting (17%) as per the recent Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 2018. Factors contributing the worrying statistics are both on the supply as well as on the demand side. Therefore, it is high time to bring improvement and innovation in that way health interventions attract populations to avail health services.

Based on the gravity of situation, Quetta, Pishin and Killaabdullah are ranked as high risk districts. These densely populated districts face issues like low RI coverage, high polio incidence, burden of VPDs, malnutrition, poor sanitation and lack of clean drinking water and high rate of school dropout children.

Results

- 48 Children were immunized for RI of these 14 were zero dose aged from 2 months to 11 months.
- 61 Children were screened for Malnutrition, of these 4 were SAM, and 6 MAM
- IEC Materials of RI and WASH were distributed

Due to integrated package, demand for RI also increased. During routine outreach activities, teams used to immunize 8 to 10 children but with other interventions merged a total of 48 children were immunized.





Urban Immunization - Initiative undertaken in Lahore

By Sajjad Hafeez, EPI, Punjab

The Punjab EPI PC-1 lays great emphasis on improving immunization in urban slums in big cities. The routine immunization coverage in five big cities of Punjab including Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala and Faisalabad requires special strategy. The meeting was convened in order to improve immunization and to implement the activities stipulated in the PC-1. The meeting was called by the DGHS Punjab Dr. Munir Ahmed to discuss ways and strategies to improve urban immunization in Punjab. He shared that urban slums have been identified as priority area in the PC-1 and workable strategies need to be developed and devised to improve it. He shared that specific interventions are needed to boost up routine immunization in these cities. The Chair shared that focus has to be on two areas: a) Zero Dose children B) Drop Outs and defaulters

UNICEF representative delivered a presentation on the number of slums in five big cities and shared that Lahore with 112 slums has the highest number of slums.

The participants discussed that complete breakup of Town and UC wise Lahore slums will be shared based on the demarcation, with a complete action plan to be prepared by the EPI team. Need Assessment for urban slums based on data analysis and comparisons with neighboring planned/settled UCs will be conducted. The Need Assessment will specify additional resources required for slums including complete costing, Implementation and Monitoring Plan. The Implementation Plan will incorporate complete accountability and monitoring indicators with detailed log frame spanned over a period of two years. The number of required social mobilizers and area supervisors will be based on geographic spread and population size. Social Mobilizers will be required to identify and track the eligible children and facilitate setting up of Kit Stations at specified areas. Medical camps/mobile health units will be set up in coordination with district administration. EPI vaccination of the target children may be incentivized wherein, any toy gift may be offered to the children upon completion of his/her vaccination schedule. The possibility may further be explored.

“It is the high time to ensure immunization service delivery on equity basis for improved coverage.”

Dr. Munir Ahmed, Director General Health, Punjab



Federal Expanded Program on Immunization
EPI Building,
National Institute of Health,
Chak Shehzad, Islamabad
+92 51 9255101
www.epi.gov.pk



+92 51 9255101



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