As COVID-19 control is now a global and national priority and because of the lockdown, most of the polio related activities have been put on hold for the time being. The existing CGPP staff as well as the ex-Community Mobilization Coordinators (CMCs) gave their specific time to COVID-19 message dissemination, willingly and voluntarily.

When Naushad with his son and brother, returned from Mumbai to their village, Binal in Baghpat, he was not prepared for the harassment and negative reactions of the locals there. After haplessly travelling more than 800 kilometers on foot, with very little money, they were very exhausted. Naushad called up CGPP Block Mobilisation Coordinator, Rehman, who listened to his concerns attentively.

There was not much help from the local government and community if they were quarantined and tested, they would be completely boycotted and asked to leave. Rehman immediately arranged a conference call to the ASHA and village headman and arranged food for the family. While counselling, Rehman tried to make Naushad understand the need for and importance of home quarantine and getting tested for COVID-19. He also connected Naushad with the block medical officer. Finally, COVID-19 tests were done for all three persons and they agreed to put themselves under home quarantine for 14 days.

Catholic Relief Services

Fear of COVID-19 leads to refusal of vaccination services

Village Pankhi Nagla in Mirzapur block of Shahjahanpur District is home to a mainly nomadic population and therefore there is a high risk of children contracting vaccine-preventable diseases. But when the routine immunization sessions restarted in early May, the entire village boycotted them for fear of COVID-19. When no child turned up for vaccination despite repeated reminders, the ASHA and ANM reported this to the Community Health Center In charge, but to no avail. They then turned to the CGPP BMC Balbinder Singh and sought his intervention. When Balbinder Singh tried to contact the village leader, he was not available.

He then approached the village influencer, who had been very supportive during polio campaigns and shared with him the government COVID-19 safe routine immunization guidelines and explained the importance of vaccination, especially at this time. Both of them then visited each house in the village to tell the parents that their children should not miss their due vaccinations. They also told them about the precautionary measures taken against COVID-19 at the session sites so that there was no chance of getting infected. Balbinder Singh, along with the ASHA, also convened a ‘moms’ meeting to share the same messages.

A day prior to the next immunisation session, he, along with the village leader and influencer revisited all the families and distributed masks to ward off COVID-19. His efforts paid off when 26 left-out children and 3 pregnant women received their due vaccinations.

CGPP India goes online

With twenty years of experience in communication and community engagement for public health, CGDB Core Group Polio Project India responded to this pandemic swiftly. About 800 Community Mobilization Coordinators recently disengaged from the project were requested to provide services to their communities. They were given a brief orientation about the disease and they shared correct information with the community and influencers to support affected families including addressing stigma and discrimination issues.

The CGDB Core Group Polio Project India, through its 12 consortium partners three international and nine local NGOs continues to support polio immunisation in 12 districts of Uttar Pradesh and one in Haryana by ensuring community mobilization for polio and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

Our Partners

ADRA India
Dealing with stigma and fear through risk communication

Project Concern International
Not just mobilization, CGPP’s Ex-CMCs produce masks to ward off COVID-19 from the community

Catholic Relief Services

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Grassland blowups

Due to COVID-19 a large number of immunisation sessions were missed in CGPP areas in the past six-to eight weeks, with an estimated 22,588 children missing their due vaccinations, leading to lowering of population immunity and increasing the possibility of VDPV emergence.

Safe session sites

http://www.coregroupindia.org
303 Bestech Chambers, B-Block, Sushant Lok-1, Gurugram-122001