



CGPP India continues to work with partners on prevention of COVID-19 and community mobilization for immunization.

The government of India planned polio SIA campaign for Sept. 20 2020, but few states including Uttar Pradesh postponed the same because of the rising number of COVID-19 cases. Only ten states, including Haryana, conducted SIA but only in selected high-risk areas of 13 out of 22 selected districts.

20th September 2020

SIA (Supplementary Immunization Activity)

In Nuh district of Haryana, the SIA was organized in 92 High Risk Areas. CGPP team through *Mobilisation Mitras* (Supported by government funds) conducted awareness through mother meetings, Village Health and Nutrition Days, mosque announcements, and influencer meetings. Booth were inaugurated by influencers, and team shared feedback with the health department through virtual meetings. Booth coverage in CGPP areas was significantly high compared to non-CGPP areas. Against 87,658 targeted under-five children from two CGPP intervention blocks from Nuh district, 38% were vaccinated at booths (fixed sites).



CGPP response to COVID-19

By the end of September 2020, the ex-CMCs, influencers and field staff contacted more than 21,000 community members over the phone and spread awareness on COVID-19.

'Aabhar Samaroh' (Felicitation & Appreciation programs for Community Mobilization Coordinators)

In September 2020, CGPP partner along with local NGOs organized 'Aabhar Samaroh' (Felicitation & Appreciation programs for CMCs) at the block level. 700 CMCs were invited and felicitated by the local leaders, district and block health officials. To make this journey memorable, each CMCs were given an umbrella, a stole, and a certificate of appreciation.



Memoriam



Dear David,

February 9, 1934 – August 4, 2020

Unlimited patience

Heaps of tolerance

Contagious attitude

Never angry or rude

Inspirational personality

Almost like a celebrity

Will be missed greatly

Our Partners

ADRA India

AFP Surveillance during the Pandemic

"Since the last 20 years, AFP case notification was one of my passionate areas. I was much worried when a nationwide lockdown was declared on March 24, 2020, and CMCs were also withdrawn in March 2020.

Since its inception, one of the focused areas of CGPP was to support AFP case notification. Until March 2020, more than 150 community mobilizers and 22 BMCs of Baghat, Bareilly, and Rampur districts notified 48 cases, which was 59% of the total 81 cases reported from CGPP catchment areas during the period from October 2019 – March 2020.

During the lockdown period (March 24, to May 31, 2020), travel was restricted for everyone. Immunization services were also suspended for around 40 days. However, ASHAs and other frontline workers were extremely busy with COVID-19 training and active case search activities. The CGPP team also contributed to COVID-19 response in term of training of front line workers and community leaders, virtual communication with the community with relevant IEC materials, engaging the community leaders in COVID-19 response, etc. Along with all these activities, the ADRA CGPP team did not lose their focus on AFP surveillance rather in coordination with WHO entire team kept a close eye on the trend of block-wise case notification. A sharp decline in the non-polio AFP rate was observed in all three ADRA CGPP districts. The situation was even worse in Bareilly and Rampur where the NPAPF rate came down to a single-digit first time since India attended the polio-free status.

DMC Irshad raised the issue and ADRA-CGPP team identified seven blocks of Bareilly district, and one district of Rampur district with zero AFP case reporting in last two months and shared the fact with the health department and other partners. ADRA CGPP staff were sensitized through internal AFP workshops conducted by SRC and DMCs and appropriate strategies was developed.

- Preparation of AFP case notification trend chart and shared with partners at the district and block level.
- The block medical officers and Block Community Process Managers (BCPMs) were sensitized by CGPP BMCs and field monitors of WHO.
- An orientation of FLWs (ASHAs, Anganwadi, and ANMs) was conducted.
- More than 1,500 ASHAs, 126 Sanginis, 255 ANMs, and 411 Anganwadi workers were oriented by the CGPP team through physical group and virtual meetings.
- More than 400 Community Action Group (CAG) members involving local community leaders, private medical practitioners, ex-CMCs were also oriented on AFP case notification.

With focused and consistent efforts, the situation started to improve gradually. In July 2020, four AFP cases were reported from seven identified blocks whereas in September 2020 the figure was doubled with the eight cases including the four cases from Tanda block after a gap of four months.



Orientation of CAG members



Orientation of FLWs

Project Concern International

How a Community Action Group in Obri, Sambhal succeeded in reversing reduction in Routine Immunization



Village Head mobilizing a mother for vaccination in Obri village



Tofiq Zehra, an ANM, is vaccinating the children from the refusal families

Obri, a medium-sized village in Sambhal, is home to a large number of nomads where vaccine hesitancy was the norm. A regular routine immunization (RI) program acted as an antidote and population immunity was maintained at a steady level.

The onset of COVID-19 however dampened the footfalls at the RI session sites. Parents were worried to step out with their children for immunization from the safe haven of their homes. The dwindling numbers at the RI sites called for immediate attention to reverse the slide in child immunity. In the absence of the Community Mobilization Coordinators (CMCs) – the ground force of CGPP, it was difficult to reach out to the community and convince them to access the RI services as they did in the pre-COVID era. The community needed more information to weigh in the benefits of timely immunization over the risks of contracting the new virus.

Rafiq, a local Block Mobilization Coordinator (BMC) was desperately searching for a strategy to improve the situation. With the help of three ASHAs in the village, he prepared a list of a hundred and fifty refusal families who did not visit the RI sites since the COVID-19 outbreak. In one of the Community Action Group (CAG) meetings in Obri, Rafiq shared his concerns with the members who then decided to visit all the refusal households. Fatima Begum, the village head and one of the CAG members led the team and three groups, one for each ASHA catchment area, carried out the visits. They heard the parents' apprehensions, answered all their queries, cleared their doubts, giving examples from their own personal experiences, and stressed on the fact that delayed administration or missing a vaccine would do more harm to their children as it would leave them exposed to many diseases, not just COVID.

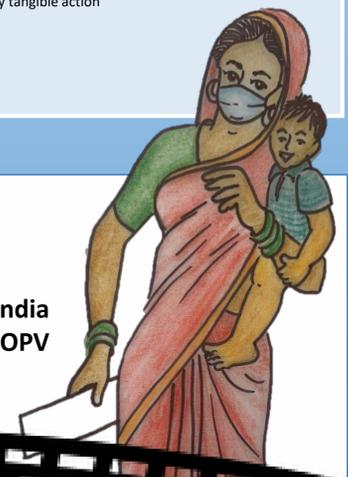
This simple strategy infused confidence among the parents to shake off their hesitation. It was more than an appeal, rather an inter-personal communication where the essence of the exchange was targeted at problem solving, improving motivation and busting the myths and misinformation surrounding immunization. As an immediate result, it encouraged 57 refusal families to change their stance. They agreed to administer the missed vaccines to their children and promised to follow the RI schedule. Between June and September 2020, Obri witnessed a steady rise in routine immunization. The full immunization coverage among the children ages 12-23 months old increased by 12 percentage points from merely 38% to 50% in just a period of three months.

Catholic Relief Services

ASHA and CAG remove the Stigma/fear of COVID-19

To deal with stigma related to COVID-19 and improve the vaccination coverage among under-five children, Community Action Groups (CAGs) were formed at the community level under CGPP recently. The set-up has proven to be beneficial, with the following successes in Kopaganj block of Mau district:

- Nine families in the Kurthi Zafarpur area refused to vaccinate their children due to fear of contracting COVID-19. The ASHA, Ms. Sangita Chauhan, brought this issue to the notice of the Community Action Group (CAG) during their meeting. Subsequently, the CAG members visited all these families, had separate discussions with the heads of these families and explained that COVID-19 preventive measures are ensured in each session. They also explained the importance of vaccination, especially during the pandemic. With their intervention, eight out of the nine resistant families vaccinated their children in the RI session. The remaining family could not vaccinate their child, as they were out of the village on the session day.
- During a vaccination session in Mahatabpur it was noticed that very few families had turned up to get their children vaccinated. Subsequently, the CGPP team, along with the ASHA, Ms. Kiran, visited the houses in the area and explained to them the importance of vaccination. They also explained the same to the influencers in the area and requested them to further convince the parents. After consistent efforts by the CGPP team, the influencers, and the ASHA, most resistant families agreed, resulting in 27 out of 32 children from these families getting vaccinated in the subsequent RI session. Out of the remaining five children, two did not get vaccinated as their families are not yet convinced, two were sick and one was traveling out of the village on the session day. The project team will continue to support the ASHA and influencers to follow-up with these families and ensure vaccination of the remaining children in the upcoming session. The Community Action Group (CAG) is a community-focused model that works on integrating social, cultural, and educative approaches to combat fear and stigma related to COVID-19, and other issues like vaccine hesitancy resulting in low immunization coverage. The purpose of the CAG is to engage influential people from the community as volunteers or partners to inform and support their communities about health issues affecting them with correct information, respect, concern, courtesy, and more importantly, by tangible action



Grass land blowups



Wall writing sponsored by Community Action Group in district Shamli, UP

About 92 percent of children aged 12-23 months from CGPP India work areas were vaccinated with at least eight doses of OPV through polio SIA or RI.

CMC Felicitation Program

