

Engaging Vulnerable Social Groups For Improving Uptake of Polio Vaccination in Mau District of Uttar Pradesh, India

parul.ratna@crs.org / rainydey27@gmail.com



Introduction

The CORE Group, a consortium of private voluntary organizations operates social mobilization activities against polio and for routine immunization among vulnerable social groups in 12 high-risk districts in the state of Uttar Pradesh (UP), reaching an estimated 600,000 children under the age of 5 through 1,300 community mobilization coordinators (CMCs). In India, the consortium works with three partners and focuses on targeting the most inaccessible populations. Catholic Relief Services works in four districts of UP. The district of Mau has historically had the highest number of families resisting polio vaccination in vulnerable social groups due to misconceptions, including the fear of infertility.

Objective: Mobilizing vulnerable social groups for polio vaccination

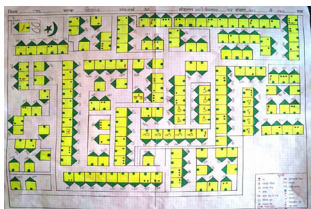
Methodology

Mapping resistant families

Engaging close associates of resistant families to encourage them to vaccinate their children proved to be an effective strategy in Mau district. The project mapped close associates of resistant families including-

- Pharmacists or medical practitioners from whom the family purchases medicine.
- Grocery shops from where they buy their daily needs.
- Wholesale shops from where small businesses get raw materials for power-loom.
- Close relatives of the family.
- Their Religious leader.

These associates were leveraged by the project to help convince the family for vaccination. This strategy was very successful in getting the messages across to resistant families and convincing them for vaccination.



Meeting at popular locations

Informal meetings were conducted by project staff, at popular gathering places like tea shops to reach out to resistant people who were otherwise difficult to meet at their homes. This was an effective strategy to communicate key messages related to vaccination among resistant families.



Results

Appropriate mapping and engaging with close associates of target households through informal meetings at popular places was found to be an effective social mobilization strategy to neutralize resistance to polio immunization. The project saw a large decrease in refusal families from 546 (of the 35,564 houses visited) in November 2006 to 2 (of the 27,719 houses visited) families in September 2016.

Conclusion

The program was particularly successful at reaching large numbers of resistant families with polio vaccination. Reaching high risk communities was done effectively through community mapping of resistant vulnerable families and by holding meetings at popular locations in high risk communities.



Parul Ratna | Co-ordinator CORE Group Polio Program | parul.ratna@crs.org
Rina Dey | Communication Advisor | rainydey27@gmail.com

