

THE POLIO ERADICATION

# MOBILIZER



मेरे बच्चे को दो बूँद, हर बार

unicef

VOLUME 3, OCTOBER 2011

## Nepalese mobilizers help boost vaccination at border

The polio vaccination sites along the Indo-Nepal border in Bihar are now being “manned” by Nepalese women. Ever since these mobilizers from across the border have joined the polio vaccination teams, there has been an almost 25 per cent increase in the number of children immunized at the border polio vaccination posts. Initiated along Jogbani border in Purnia, now all border polio vaccination posts in Bihar have Nepalese mobilizers.

After a day’s training in IPC skills and sensitized on their roles and responsibilities as transit team members, the Nepalese mobilizers are deployed along with the vaccination teams. They work in two shifts of three hours each in the morning and the afternoon.

Parmila Basnet one of the mobilizers, says, “Since I speak their language, Nepalese parents trust me more than the other mobilizers.” Often it was difficult to convince parents to immunize their child at the border where language became an additional barrier in communicating with them.



A Nepalese mobilizer counseling parents

## Decorative polio messages in henna

The Hindu month of ‘Shravan’ is one of festivities and celebration with women decorating their palms with beautiful henna designs and wearing colorful bangles. In Bihar’s East Champaran this year, the henna on the palms of women was different. Beautiful, yes, but also conveying the importance of two drops of the oral polio vaccine. At a ‘Mehandi Rachao Karyakram (henna applying ceremony) organized by the SMNet in Raxaul, mothers of children up to the age of 5 years were oriented on polio and convergent issues and given henna mix. The enthusiastic participants came up with interesting polio eradication designs and messages on their hands.



Innovative polio messages in henna

## World Breastfeeding Week observed at Jaunpur

The SMNet helped deliver information on health, nutrition and exclusive breastfeeding to 1195 pregnant and lactating mothers during the World Breastfeeding Week in Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh. IEC on exclusive breastfeeding was distributed in hospitals and health centres and 45 mothers’ meetings were held to educate women on the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for first six months, routine and polio immunization.



A CMC counsels mothers on breastfeeding

## DID YOU KNOW ?

- For the first time, the polio endemic states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are concurrently free of poliovirus for more than a year.

There has been no case of polio in these two key states together since September 2010.

- Like on the Indo-Nepal border, polio vaccination has begun along the Indo-Pakistan border.

Children coming into India in buses, trains and on foot are given polio vaccine at the Wagah border immigration posts in Punjab.

## Rickshaw pullers support polio programme in Begusarai

SMNet partnered with rickshaw pullers in the Ballia block of Begusarai, Bihar to reach the children of people on the move. An orientation of 40 rickshaw pullers was organized and they were sensitized on polio and associated risk factors. These new polio advocates now check finger markings of children during polio rounds and persuade parents to vaccinate their children.



Polio advocacy meet with rickshaw pullers

## Priests advocate for polio immunization in Shravani Mela

UNICEF mobilized and oriented 60 priests to advocate for health at the Shravani Mela. Pandit Pradip Jha, President Jahanvi Ganga Panda Kalyan Mahasabha from Bhagalpur Bihar, said "two drops of OPV is the only protection from polio. Parents are responsible for their children's physical as well as spiritual health." These priests helped reach and sensitize a large number of people gathered during the annual religious fair, on the need for polio vaccination.



Priests turn polio advocates

## OUR STAR MOBILIZERS



Neelam counseling mothers on RI and polio

Neelam Kumari is a Star CMC from Badapareuwa village in Raxaul district of Bihar. Raxaul is a polio high-risk district of Bihar and the epicenter of the 2006 polio outbreak in the state. There are 506 households in Neelam's area with 448 children below the age of five. Neelam's tireless effort to counsel parents has ensured that each and every family in her areas accepts polio vaccination. There is not a single case of refusal. Doubts on side effects and misconceptions, have all been allayed through regular mothers' meetings and community meetings that Neelam organizes.

Neelam is successfully mobilizing parents for routine immunization. She also counsels them on the benefits of exclusive breast feeding, hand washing, diarrhea management and the use of ORS and zinc. Neelam visits each household, keeps a record of all newborns and pregnant women. The unstinting efforts of dedicated mobilizers such as Neelam have helped Bihar make unprecedented progress against polio.

## A veteran Polio Warrior

Pravall Chandra Sharma, a 74-year-old retired government servant from Bihar's polio high-risk block of Marwan in Muzaffarpur district, is an active supporter of the polio programme. Motivated by the SMNet, he moves with the vaccination teams during polio rounds, participates in social mobilization activities and provides valuable feedback during debriefing meetings with health authorities at the Primary Health Centre. Working on a voluntary basis, his commitment and dedication is an inspiration for all.



Sharma, a Star polio advocate

## QUOTABLE

"Almost isn't good enough with a disease this terrifying. If we don't reach every child with the vaccination they need, more than 200,000 children are again going to be paralyzed by this disease every single year. There's absolutely no question."

**Bruce Aylward**

Director - Polio Eradication Programme  
Global Polio Eradication Initiative

## POLIO FACTS

China has reported polio cases for the first time in 11 years. The poliovirus detected in China is an importation from Pakistan.

Globally there has been a reduction in the number of polio cases in 2011 (410, as of 10 September) compared to the same period last year (682).