World Immunization Week
24–30 April 2017

India
Vaccines Work for Every Child

Note: All statistics are embargoed until 00:01 GMT Wednesday 26 April 2017.

Millions of the World’s Most Vulnerable Children Miss out on Vaccines

Immunization is one of the most effective and cost-effective ways to protect children’s lives and futures. Yet, more than half of the world’s most vulnerable children still miss out on the essential vaccines they need to survive and live healthy lives.

In countries where child mortality takes the heaviest toll, 53 per cent of the poorest children are not fully vaccinated.¹ And as many as 19.4 million infants worldwide do not receive all their immunizations.²,³

These children often face multiple deprivations. Many live in urban slums or camps for displaced persons, where poor nutrition and inadequate health, water, sanitation and social services increase the risk of diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhoea and measles – diseases easily prevented with vaccines. Similarly, in emergency contexts, the breakdown of essential services leaves children particularly vulnerable to disease outbreaks.

To mark World Immunization Week, 24–30 April, UNICEF will draw attention to the millions of children who miss out on the vaccinations that could save their lives and protect their futures.⁴ Throughout the week, UNICEF will join World Health Organization (WHO) and partners to support the goal of achieving universal vaccine coverage. The partners have agreed to a unifying hashtag – #VaccinesWork – and themes for each day of the week. UNICEF will lead on the theme of equity on Wednesday 26 April.

Key Messages and Facts

Vaccines are one of the most effective and cost-effective ways to protect children’s lives and futures.

- Vaccines save 2–3 million lives every year.⁵
- 1.5 million more lives could be saved if we worked together to make sure every child benefits from vaccines.⁶
- Every dollar invested in vaccines by 2020 could provide an estimated return of 16 times the cost in low- and middle-income countries; when the value people place on longer and healthier lives is added to the calculation, the return on investment reaches 44 times the cost.⁷
Every child has the right to life-saving vaccines. But far too many of the world’s most vulnerable children miss out.

- In the countries where 80 per cent of the world’s under-five child deaths occur, 53 per cent of the poorest children are not fully vaccinated.8
- In these countries, the poorest children are more than twice as likely to not be fully vaccinated as the richest.9
- Globally in 2015, more than 1.5 million children younger than 5 died from pneumonia, diarrhoea and measles – diseases easily prevented with vaccines and essential child health services.10
  - Pneumonia killed nearly 1 million children younger than 5.11
  - Every day, more than 1,400 children under age 5 died from diarrhoea.12
  - 74,000 children died of measles.13
- The poorest children are nearly twice as likely to die before age 5 as the richest.14

India Immunization Factsheet

- Full Immunization coverage is 62% (NFHS-4 data)
- Under five mortality in India is 45 per 1000 children as per SRS 2014 which translates into 1.17 million deaths per year
- Out of the total under 5 deaths in India (CHERG estimates 2014), pneumonia caused 13% (approx. 0.15 million deaths) and diarrhoea accounted for 10% (approx. 0.11 million deaths) of the under-five deaths.
- Measles killed an estimated 49,200 children in 2015 in the country, contributing nearly 36% to the global figures.

All too often, these children live in conditions that increase the risk of diseases that can be prevented with vaccines.

Children in urban poor communities, for example, face distinct risks.

- Populations of urban poor communities are growing rapidly, and these neighbourhoods present real health risks for children, including:
  - Hazards such as overcrowding, unsafe water, air pollution, and inadequate sanitation and garbage collection,15,16
  - Lack of access to quality health services including immunization.
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- Inadequate information, long working hours, high fees and social marginalization can also make it difficult for families in urban poor communities to access health services such as immunization.  
- Particularly for migrants and refugees, exclusion from official surveys and population counts makes it difficult to identify the children left out and contributes to the lack of services.  
- Low vaccination rates in poor urban communities will be a growing problem as urban populations increase. By 2030, an estimated one in four people will live in poor urban communities – mainly in Asia and Africa.

When some children miss out on vaccines, the risk of disease increases for all.

- When most of the children in a community are vaccinated, individual cases of disease rarely escalate into an outbreak.
- In contrast, outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases are common, severe and potentially deadly in urban and other high-population density areas where children remain unvaccinated.
  - For example, a 2015–2016 yellow fever outbreak in Angola's capital city, Luanda, led to hundreds of deaths in the city and across the country.

#VaccinesWork. And UNICEF works to make sure they are available #ForEveryChild.

- UNICEF is one of the world’s largest buyers of vaccines for children: In 2016, we procured 2.5 billion doses and 690 million syringes for immunization.
- We reach an estimated 45 per cent of the world’s children with life-saving vaccinations.
- From 2012 to 2015, UNICEF helped reduce the cost of some vaccines by up to 70 per cent, saving more than US$1 billion.
- To reach every child, we must work together to:
  - Tailor immunization services to the specific needs of communities and remove the obstacles that prevent children from receiving life-saving vaccines.
  - Encourage cooperation among the multiple government agencies and organizations that provide services that fight disease – agencies including health, water and sanitation.
  - Work together globally to invest in strong health systems that put the world’s most vulnerable children first in line for essential services like vaccines.
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1 UNICEF data.
3 UNICEF data.
8 UNICEF data.
9 UNICEF data.