

POLIO IMMUNIZATION CAMPAIGNS

SECURING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR YEMENI CHILDREN



YEMEN

More than 1.2 million children under the age of five were vaccinated against polio during the door-to-door immunization campaign launched by UNICEF and its partners across 12 Yemeni governorates in February 2024.

To safeguard Yemeni children from polio, UNICEF, in collaboration with its partners, initiated the first round of the door-to-door Polio vaccination campaign in February 2024. The campaign aimed to vaccinate over 1.2 million children under five years of age across 12 governorates in Yemen. The campaign was supported by more than 6,727 health workers, who, as fixed and mobile teams, reached urban, rural, and remote children, effectively curbing polio's spread in the targeted areas.

Safe Vaccines to Protect Children

Eileen Shafer, a health worker at Al-Mualla Health Facility in Aden, has contributed to vaccination campaigns for six years.

«During these campaigns, I've provided immunization services directly to children at their homes, ensuring those who couldn't reach health facilities were not left out. My role extends beyond administering vaccines; it involves educating hesitant parents about the importance of immunization and vaccine safety», she says.

«Despite the exhaustive nature of door-to-door visits, the fulfillment I gain is immense. Each vaccinated child feels like my own, and I'm honored to provide them with this essential protection against diseases.

Easy Access to Vaccination Services

Immunization campaigns are vital for saving children's lives and securing their future. Nadeem Muhammad Saeed, a 40-year-old father from Al-Mualla, Aden, emphasizes this point. *«The ease of access these campaigns provide is crucial», he says. «When I heard about it through the media and announcements, I knew I had to get my daughter vaccinated against polio right away. I was concerned about her health, but the relief I felt after the vaccination team visited our home was enormous. Knowing her immunity is fortified brings me great peace of mind».* Nadeem adds a heartfelt plea: *«I urge all parents to do the same and protect their children with vaccines».*



A little girl receives a polio vaccination and vitamin A supplementation during the campaign in Aden governorate, Yemen. Photo Credits: UNICEF/Yemen/2024



Eileen Shafer marks a child's finger to indicate she has received the polio vaccine in Aden. Photo Credits: UNICEF/Yemen/2024

Awareness Raising – Converging Efforts

An educational initiative ran parallel to the vaccination campaign, aiming to boost public awareness and encourage parents to vaccinate their children.

Widyan Abdel Wahab, a community mobilizer, explains:

“Vaccination is key for healthy communities. I strive to inform mothers about the significance of routine and special campaign vaccinations in maintaining their children’s health. Understanding the benefits of vaccination can inspire parents to participate, safeguarding the community’s overall health.”



Widyan Abdel Wahab discusses important topics from brochures handed out to mothers during an awareness session in a mother-to-mother club. This UNICEF-supported initiative educates mothers on the critical nature of vaccinating their children. Photo Credits: UNICEF/Yemen/2024

Beyond Numbers: The Human Impact of Vaccination

Through their dedicated efforts, the Scouts and Guides successfully reached 12,100 individuals through vaccination and educational sessions. The initiative highlighted the pivotal role of youth engagement in health campaigns.

By leveraging the enthusiasm and dedication of these young volunteers, the polio vaccination campaign not only achieved its objectives but also fostered a sense of community responsibility and empowerment. The impact of their involvement extends beyond the immediate success of the campaign, serving as a testament to the positive influence that youth-led initiatives can have on public health outcomes.

The polio immunization campaign in Yemen has achieved remarkable progress, reaching over 1.2 million children under five in 12 provinces. The united efforts showcase the strength found in collaboration, crucial for fighting preventable diseases and enhancing community health.

«Polio is a real threat to unvaccinated children», says Tafa’ol Fare’a, a resident of the Al-Mualla district, Aden. He adds:

“Protecting our children from preventable diseases is a shared responsibility. Vaccines are the key to a healthier future for all the children.”



A young scout member educates a group of parents about the importance of polio vaccinations in protecting their children, in AIMukalla, Hadramaut. Photo Credits: UNICEF/Yemen/2024