



USAID MCH Program – Health Communication Component Post Event Report on World Health Day



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Introduction:

World Health Day is celebrated every year on April 7, the founding day of the World Health Organization. Established in 1950 this event has a theme each year to draw attention to health issue. The WHO puts together regional, local, and international events on this day related to that particular theme. This year World Health Day was celebrated with the theme on diabetes – a largely preventable and treatable non-communicable disease that is rapidly increasing in numbers in many countries, most dramatically in underdeveloped and developing countries.

USAID MCH Program:

USAID has been a determined supporter to Pakistan's development. USAID's current flagship Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Program, with its five interrelated components: 1) Family Planning/Reproductive Health (FP/RH); 2) Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH); 3) Health Communication; 4) Health Commodities and Supply Chain; and 5) Health Systems Strengthening, is an innovative program designed to improve health outcomes of women and children in target areas. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Center for Communication Programs (JHU-CCP) in partnership with Center for Communication Program Pakistan (CCPP), Mercy Corps and Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) is implementing the Health Communication Component. Under this component the RSPN/RSPs are responsible for demanding creation of MNCH/FP services and referral to public and private facilities. In addition, the RSPN/RSPs are responsible for community mobilization. Celebration of International observance/ advocacy events is an important component of community mobilization. In this regard, the RSPN in collaboration with the (NFPF&PHC) celebrated the World Health day at community level in ten districts of Gotki, Shikarpur, Larkana, Mirpurkhas, Jacobabad, Sukkur, Umarkot, Matiari, Sanghar, and Nosheroferoze.

World Health Day/Health Mela:

The event was organized by District Health Department in collaboration with the Health Communication Component (HCC) USAID's MCH program. This event was attended by public and private sector Stakeholders, local NGOs working on health issues, Community members through village health committees, CHWs and LHWs.

The main agenda of celebrating this day was:

- I. To provide the implementing partners of MCH program and health departments of government with a platform to inform the communities about their projects and services in the area.
- II. To ensure the visibility of USAID's MCH Program at community level and provide an opportunity for the community members to access information regarding MNCH/FP issues and services.
- III. To introduce Community Health Workers (CHWs) to representatives of Department of Health, MCH partners, and other stakeholders working in target districts.

Activities of the Day:

World Health Day activities started off by welcoming the audience in events in all target districts followed by briefing the audience about the services and areas where MCH partners are working in integration along with explaining the five components; Family planning reproductive Health, Maternal Newborn Child Health (MNCH), Health Communication, Health commodities and Supply Chain, and Health System Strengthening of the Program. The importance of the day, in addition to, mother and child healthcare was highlighted in the introduction session.

The following activities were arranged during Health Mela in all districts:

- I. Ajrak ceremony
- II. Skits on maternal and child care including antenatal checkups, birth spacing, neonatal care, immunization, and institutional delivery
- III. Real life experience sharing on birth spacing
- IV. Placards presentation on MNCH/FP and prevention of diabetes
- V. Quiz competition on MNCH/FP and prevention of diabetes
- VI. Healthy baby competition
- VII. Closing ceremony and remarks of the chief guests

Importance:

Respective district health officers were the chief guests in all ten districts who briefed the audience on the importance of World Health Day. They shed light on this year's theme "Beat Diabetes".

Diabetes is a chronic, progressive non-communicable disease (NCD) characterized by elevated levels of blood glucose (blood sugar). The number of people living with diabetes has almost multiplied since 1980 to 422 million adults, with mostly living in developing countries. In the rural areas many individuals are unfamiliar with this disease which escalates the issue and increases mortality rate.



Interactive Session on MNCH and birth spacing:

An interactive discussion with the community on Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH), and birth spacing was facilitated by MCHIP representatives, Lady Health Workers/supervisors and Marie Stopes Society Officials, respectively. During the interactive discussion the community members were briefed on the MNCH services that are being provided in the area by the MCH partners, and the importance of diabetes with special focus on gestational diabetes during



pregnancy. After the presentation the audience asked a number of questions regarding diabetes during question-answer session.

Ajrak ceremony:

After the welcome note, the chief guests were presented with Ajrak as souvenirs to acknowledge their presence at the event.



Skits on maternal and child care:

To bring the community's attention to the issues related to mother and child health care, each district prepared 10- 15 minutes of skits on various themes. These skits were prepared and performed by the community members on the importance of antenatal checkups, birth spacing, birth preparedness and institutional delivery, neonatal and postnatal care highlighting Post-Partum Hemorrhage (PPH), and vaccination/immunization. These skits not only entertained the audience but also educated them on a range of issues related to mother and child health.



Real life experience sharing on the importance of birth spacing:

The community members who had used various contraceptive methods for birth spacing were invited on stage to share their stories with the audience. From district Ghotki, a local Mr. Shahid shared his experience narrating, "I have four children. Initially I was against family planning but now I have realized the importance of my wife's health." From district Larkana, community member Zahida told that she has five children and the youngest child is six months old, however, after receiving training through MCH Program she has inclined towards family planning and is using injections as a contraceptive method. Similarly, other community members also talked about diversity of their experiences.



Placards' presentation on MNCH/FP & prevention of diabetes:

For this activity the community members and CHWS held placards with succinct messages related to diabetes during pregnancy along with ways to prevent diabetes. Each message was discussed to ensure the understanding of the community members.



Quiz competition on MNCH/FP & prevention of diabetes:

Once all messages were discussed the community members were being asked question from the discussion. The community members participated enthusiastically and answered the question correctly. Small prizes were given on correct answers. This session was very interactive and was particularly enjoyed by the community members.



Healthy baby competition:

A competition was held among the community members in which they nominated the healthiest baby under one year of age from the participants. The mothers with their babies came on the stage where the audience voted for the healthiest baby through raising their hands. The healthiest baby's mother was awarded with a prize. The winning mother shared her experience of healthy diet during pregnancy, ANC visits,



breastfeeding and child immunization.

Vaccination and Immunization:

In district Shikarpur, vaccination and diabetes screening booths were set up. Around 40 community members were screened for hepatitis by the Health Department and 54 for diabetes by High-Q Pharma. Four children were give measles' vaccine and six children were vaccinated with Pentavalent while eight women were given Tetnus Toxide vaccine.



Closing ceremony:

In all districts, respective chief guests marked the end of the day by thanking everyone for participating in the World Health Day activities. They encouraged the audience to indulge into a healthy lifestyle and to take precautionary measures in order to prevent diabetes. The role of USAID, community members, Sindh government, implementing partners of MCH Program, civil society members, and sister organizations in promoting maternal child healthcare was appreciated and the community members were encouraged to participate devotedly in future activities.



Joint signatory campaign:

After the chief guests' remarks, the announcements were made to initiate the joint signature campaign by signing the banner and pledging to the key MNCH/FP messages written on it. Not only educated but also the uneducated participants endorsed the messages through their thumb impressions and pledged to practice good and safe health practices.



Visit to the stalls:

To provide the community members with further information on natal and antenatal care, institutionalized delivery and vaccination & immunization stalls were set up by MCHIP, MSS, PWD, PPHI and other local NGOs. These awareness booths encouraged the community members to inquire and receive information regarding their problems and available services in the area.

