

Impact of Result Based Community Engagement (RBCE) on Immunization, a case study of Balochistan, Pakistan

Zia ur Rehman, UNICEF

Background

In August 2020, the Polio vaccine refusals in Balochistan surged to a staggering 9.37%, instigated by the paralyzing fear of COVID-19 and a pervasive sense of mistrust. This placed immense pressure on the SBC team to demonstrate tangible outcomes and establish a sense of trust within the community. However, community engagement is a process that demands patience, and its effectiveness is often measured through outputs rather than outcomes. To overcome this challenge, an innovative solution; the Community Engagement Planning & Assessment tool (CEPAT) is introduced which revolutionized the result-based planning for community engagement. Through its successful implementation, the CEPAT not only reduced vaccine refusals but also enhanced staff performance, promoting a culture of self-motivation and accountability within the team.

Specific Aims & Objectives

Aim: To develop a result-oriented community engagement planning model that prioritizes outcome indicators over output indicators.

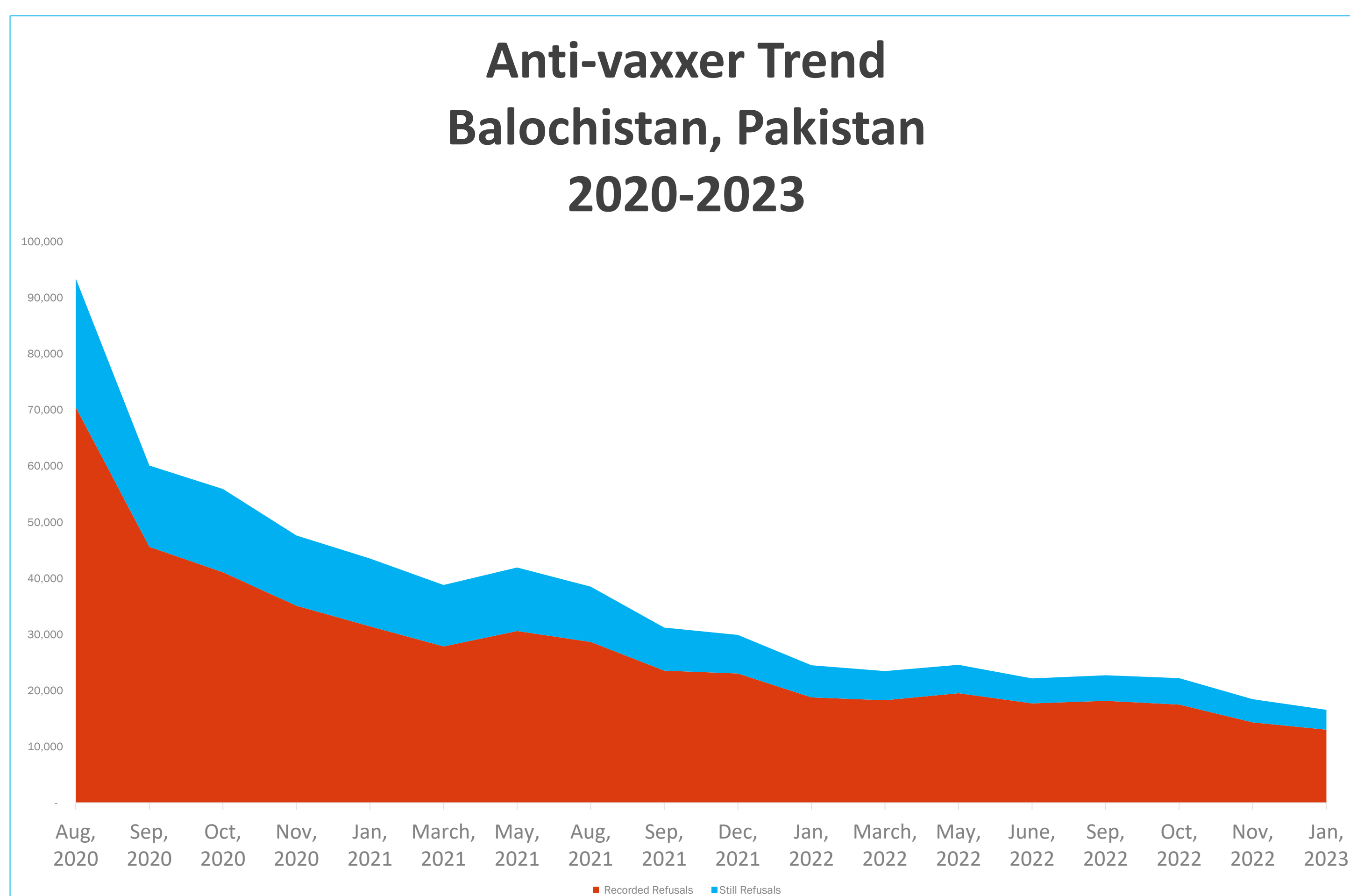
Objectives:

- 1.To create a community engagement planning tool that emphasizes outcome indicators as the primary measure of success.
- 2.To ensure that the community engagement activities can be remotely monitored through the developed planning tool i.e., CEPAT.
- 3.To establish a framework for evaluating the performance of COMnet staff based on the outcomes of community engagement activities

Methods

RBCE investigates the cause-and-effect relationship to provide concrete results in terms of behavior change. To understand the community, the scope of intervention is narrowed to the least possible micro level. Using The tool CEPAT (Community Engagement planning & Assessment tool), a street with the highest number of anti-vaxxer is selected, the behavioral analysis, channel analysis, and influencer mapping is done, and relevant, need-based community engagement activities are planned and implemented. Later, an assessment of pre- and post-situation of anti-vaxxers is compared and the cycle continues.

Graphs/Figures



Results

In August 2020, Quetta block, one of Pakistan's core reservoirs had the highest number of anti-vaxxers ever recorded, accounting for 9.71% of the target population. However, using the result-based community engagement (RBCE) approach and model of CEPAT in February 2023, anti-vaxxers reduced to the lowest level of 1.79%.

RBCE is a more effective way of measuring success as it focuses on the outcome of activities rather than just the output. This approach has improved the quality of work and created a robust monitoring system that helps to track the cause-and-effect of CE activities.

The RBCE has also helped to quantify the contributions made by field staff, which provides a more objective evaluation of their annual performance. This approach has become a source of self-motivation for social mobilizers in the field.

Conclusions

In conclusion, community engagement can yield significant results if implemented strategically, with a focus on targeting specific audiences. The CEPAT model serves as an excellent example of this, having achieved an impressive 82% reduction in anti-vaccine sentiment within a conservative and challenging community over a period of just 30 months. Additionally, the tool provides valuable assistance in remote monitoring and offers a baseline for assessing staff performance. However, to further improve community engagement efforts, research is needed to develop planning tools that prioritize not just awareness-raising, but also measurable behavior changes and outcome indicators. By taking a more holistic approach, we can build on the success of models like CEPAT and enhance the impact of community engagement efforts.

Acknowledgement

I want to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor Shahpur Suleman for believing in me and giving me the freedom to work independently. Without his guidance and support, I could not have accomplished what I did

References

www.eoc.gov.pk