

[Community Engagement to Uptake the childhood immunization service utilization during the COVID-19 Pandemic in four districts of Uttar Pradesh]
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Background

The CORE Group Partners Project (CGPP), a consortium of private voluntary organizations, implements social mobilization activities as a direct intervention to mobilize communities for childhood vaccination among vulnerable social groups of Uttar Pradesh.

In India, the consortium works with three partners and focuses on targeting the most inaccessible populations in 12 districts of Uttar Pradesh. Catholic Relief Services, one of the consortium partners, works in four districts of Uttar Pradesh, covering 58,630 families covering 41,590 children under the age of five years.

Due to the lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic, childhood routine immunization sessions were put on hold across the state of Uttar Pradesh for 49 days impacting the vaccination of 1.5 million children in the state, as they missed their doses of the due vaccines during this period resulting in reductions in the uptake of routine childhood vaccination, and parental fears of disease risk from immunization session site visits.

Specific Aims & Objectives

Increase the uptake of routine childhood vaccination, and decrease in parental fears of COVID-19 disease risk from immunization session site visits.



Methods

Using the following interventions to catch up with the un-vaccinated children.

1. Engaging community influencers is a community-focused approach to catching up with unvaccinated children. Community influencers are community leaders, and health workers such as ASHA, school teachers, religious leaders, ration dealers, shopkeepers, etc. Community influencers meet regularly, to develop a plan carrying out the following responsibilities.

- Support unvaccinated families in availing of the childhood vaccine.
- Dispense critical information about childhood vaccination.
- Prevent and address any issues due to vaccine hesitancy.
- Sanitization and crowd management at the immunization session sites.

1. Review of accredited social health activists (ASHA) childhood immunization session planning on the following aspects.

- Review of the due list
- Refusal families had visited along with the community influencers' members and announcements from religious institutions.

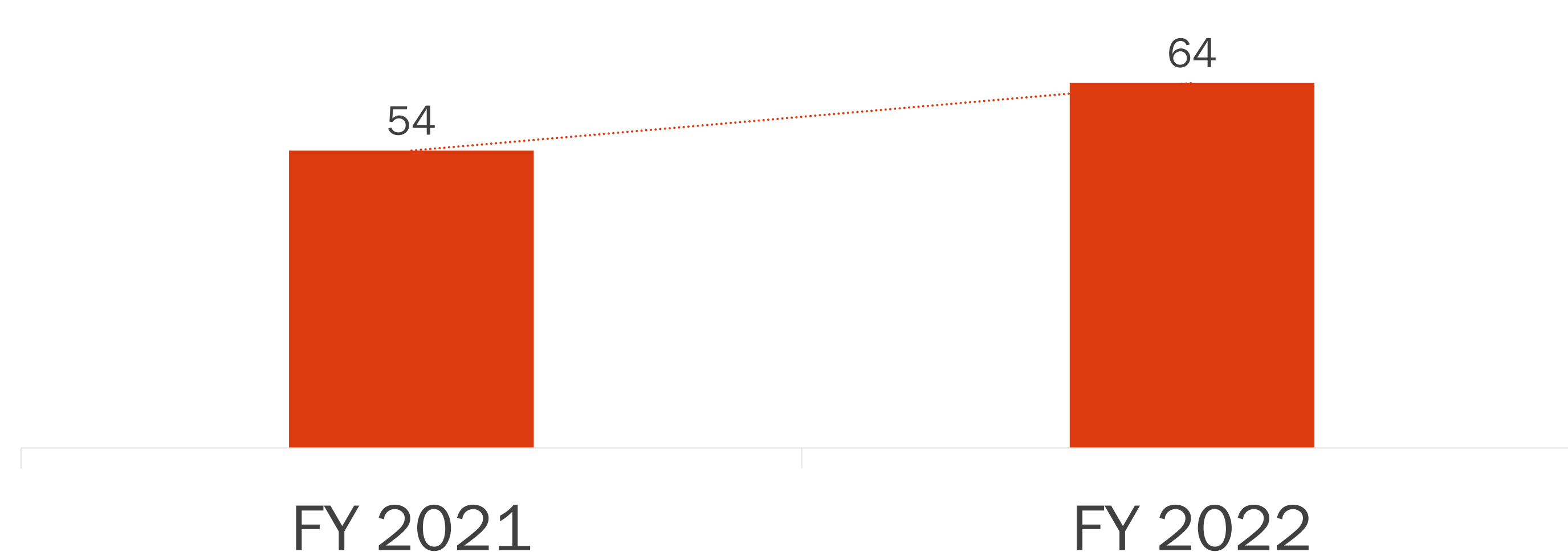
2. Grading tool for Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA). The key Indicators captured in these tools are

- Antigen-wise coverage,
- ASHA record updating, and communication activity with the use of IEC.

The key benefits of the ASHA grading system are –

- ❖ Enables to identify of underperforming areas.
- ❖ Identifies training/capacity-building needs of Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA)

% -Fully Immunization coverage in four districts of the CGPP area in Uttar Pradesh



Results

A tailored communication package using simple language and key facts on the importance of childhood vaccination assisted in breaking down barriers, resulting in an increase in uptake of childhood vaccination in the community from 54% in FY 2020-21 to 64% eligible children fully immunized.

Conclusions

Engaging with the close associates of target households through informal meetings at popular places in community settings was found to be an effective social mobilization strategy to neutralize resistance to childhood vaccination

Acknowledgments

CORE Group Partner Project

References

Monthly progress report of CORE Group Partner Project