

Campaign essentials for World Immunization Week 2018

Immunization saves millions of lives and is widely recognized as one of the world's most successful and cost-effective health interventions. Yet, there are more than 19 million unvaccinated or under-vaccinated children in the world, putting them at serious risk of these potentially fatal diseases. Of these children, 1 out of 10 never receive any vaccinations, and most likely have never been seen by the health system.

World Immunization Week is celebrated in the last week of April and aims to highlight the collective action needed to ensure that every person is protected from vaccine-preventable diseases. This year's theme: "Protected Together, #VaccinesWork", encourages people at every level – from donors to the general public – to go further in their efforts to increase immunization coverage for the greater good.

To do so, governments must invest in immunization efforts, advocates must make vaccines a priority, and people must get themselves and their families vaccinated.

2018 Campaign objectives

The goal of World Immunization Week 2018 is to urge greater action on immunization around the world, with a particular focus on spotlighting the role that everyone can play in this effort, from donors to individuals.

As part of the 2018 campaign, WHO and partners aim to:

- Highlight the importance of immunization, and the remaining gaps in global coverage
- Underscore the value of vaccines to target donor countries and the importance of investing in immunization efforts
- Highlight the ways in which everyone – from donors to individuals – can and must drive vaccine progress.

Progress towards the Decade of Vaccines

The Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP) is endorsed by 194 Member States of the World Health Assembly in May 2012 and aims to prevent millions of deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases by 2020 through universal access to immunization. Despite improvements in individual countries and a strong global rate of new vaccine introduction, all of the GVAP targets for disease elimination – including measles, rubella, and maternal and neonatal tetanus – are behind schedule.

In order for everyone, everywhere to survive and thrive, countries must make more concerted efforts to reach GVAP goals by 2020. Additionally, those countries that have achieved or made

forward progress towards achieving the goals must work to sustain those efforts over time ó so that no person goes without life-saving vaccines.

Why immunization matters now more than ever

Expanding access to immunization is crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Routine immunization is a building block of strong primary health care and universal health coverageô it provides a point of contact for health care at the beginning of life and offers every child the chance at a healthy life from the start.

Immunization is also a fundamental strategy in achieving other health priorities, from controlling viral hepatitis, to curbing antimicrobial resistance, to providing a platform for adolescent health and improving antenatal and newborn care.