



UNICEF

Ensuring Immunization for Children in Developing Countries, Promoting and Overcoming Vaccine Hesitancy Around the World.

Fear of vaccines has been a growing problem in the world for many years. Many of these problems arise through rumors. The most recent example is the case of COVID-19. ¹According to Dr. Felix Drexler, a renowned virologist, and professor at the prestigious Charité University Clinic in Berlin, the main fear was that the vaccine containing materials with ribonucleic acid technology could change the genetic patterns of our DNA, however, as RNA is far removed from DNA in our body, this is far from happening.

The website "Scientific American" mentioned in one of its articles that Similar cases have happened over the years with other vaccines², such as when doses of measles and rubella were administered, mentioning that these vaccines could cause autism in those who took them. Still, despite all these beliefs, "The number of immunizations through vaccines has been growing positively", mentioned. "Saving the lives of all those who choose to be vaccinated against diseases".

¹ *Understanding Vaccination Progress by Country*

² *Vaccine Myths Debunked*



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The World Health Organization states that “vaccination is one of the most effective public health interventions available”. Over the past two decades, they have helped millions of children significantly reduce diseases such as smallpox, measles, and polio. Thanks to health interventions, children can engage in activities knowing that they are protected against infections, and because of this they not only survive but can develop to their full potential in the best way possible. However, this does not mean it is perfect, as vaccination coverage has stagnated recently.

The World Health Organization also added, “During the COVID-19 pandemic, health systems around the world were affected, causing vaccination numbers to spiral out of control and reaching 23 million unvaccinated children³ during 2020, surpassing the 2019 figures by 3.4 million unvaccinated children, the highest number seen since 2009”.

At present, one of UNICEF's⁴ main objectives in the field of health, like that of the World Health Organization, is to provide doses of the DTP vaccine to 17.1 million children who are isolated from access to health services. Also of utmost importance is to provide vaccination coverage to the above 23 million children, of which more than 60% are in the following ten countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Pakistan, Nigeria, Philippines, Mexico, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, and Brazil.

³ *HealthyChildren*

⁴ *UNICEF. (n.d.)*



General History

During the 1920s the United States was plagued by diphtheria, a disease that primarily attacked children, claiming more than 10,000 deaths per year. The following years were even worse with the emergence of polio, pneumonia, encephalitis, and measles in the 1940s and 1950s, and once again, children were the most vulnerable. But it was thanks to Edward Jenner, who since 1796, after having experimented with bovine smallpox, managed to initiate the era of vaccines, a fact that was indispensable for poliomyelitis since without vaccines it would never have been possible to combat the disease⁵.

However, following advances in vaccines, those diseases were eradicated from the planet. Smallpox was eliminated in 1977. Polio disappeared from Mexico in 1990. What used to be 7,000 to 12,000 cases of polio within Mexico per year, thanks to vaccines, were no longer reported by the year 2000. What had been 12,230 deaths from diphtheria in 1921 became a single case of diphtheria by 1998. Thus, many serious diseases gradually disappeared, reducing their numbers to zero. All thanks to vaccines, which even today continue to show beneficial results for those who decide to take them against new diseases.

⁵ *A Brief History of Vaccination*



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