



Similar workshops for deaf and mute communities in northern and southern Jordan are being scheduled over the next few months. World Health Organization, in cooperation with Ministry of Health Jordan and UNICEF, conducted a workshop last week for more than 60 members of Amman's deaf and mute community on the importance of polio and routine immunization.

Delivered verbally and in sign language the workshop is the first of its kind held in Jordan and is part of an innovative pilot project developed by WHO and its health partners to reach isolated members of the community who do not have the same level of access to health education messages.

"Communication on health topics such as polio immunization usually takes place through traditional media channels," said Dr Ahmed Darwish, WHO Jordan polio specialist.

"This was an important measure to ensure we reach people who may not be receiving key vaccination messages, and inform them of the steps they can take to protect their children," he said.

After 15 years of absence, polio resurfaced in the Middle East in October 2013 with a case discovered in Syria. Another case of the virus was confirmed in March this year in Iraq. WHO and its partners are working to interrupt the transmission of wild poliovirus in the region through repeat mass vaccination campaigns targeting more than 20 million children under five years of age across the Middle East. Awareness-raising initiatives are vital to achieving maximum coverage.

“Enhancing public knowledge of polio transmission and immunization is crucial in combating the disease,” said Dr Ratib Suroor, Ministry of Health Jordan epidemiology manager.

“Workshops such as this help to inform parents and community leaders about the dangers of the disease, the need for repeat immunization, and upcoming vaccination rounds,” he said.

Similar workshops for deaf and mute communities in northern and southern Jordan are being scheduled over the next few months with participants from Amman due to attend and train their peers. WHO hopes to extend the programme to neighbouring countries in the Middle East.

Jordan's next vaccination round will be held 10–13 August with select areas of the country targeted. Nationwide rounds will follow in October and November. Since November 2013, 29 national and subnational immunization activities have been conducted in seven countries in the region.

Click to see [Roya News' coverage of the workshop \(in Arabic\)](#)

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