

POLIO STOP

Quarterly Newsletter of the Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee

SEPTEMBER 2022

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2 Years Anniversary of Africa Wild Polio Free Certification

**"ROTARIANS, OUR JOB IS NOT
DONE UNTIL THE WHOLE
WORLD IS CERTIFIED
POLIO FREE."**



**END
POLIO
NOW**

National PolioPlus Committee: PDG Joshua Hassan - Chairman, PDG Yomi Adewunmi - Vice Chairman, PDG Charles Femi Lawani - Vice Chairman, PDG Kazeem Mustapha - Vice Chairman, PAG Yakubu Ndanusa - Vice Chairman, PDG Obafunso Ogunkeye - Secretary, PDG Remi Bello - Treasurer, PDG Tolu Omatsola - Member, PDG Ijeoma Okoro - Member, PRIVP Yinka Babalola - Adviser, PDG Tunji Funsho - Adviser, PRIP Jon.B.Majiyagbe - Patron



CHAIRMAN'S REMARK

Even today, Rotarians in Nigeria and elsewhere across the world remain committed to this fight. In Rotary, we believe that a good Rotarian must be willing to commit the three Ts- Time, Treasure and Talents in support of our causes and that is exactly what we are doing. Across the Rotary International Districts in Nigeria, the Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee (NNPPC) has been carrying out training activities for this purpose, holding Seminars in Jalingo, Lagos and Sapele already and more to come in other places. We are refreshing ourselves with knowledge relevant to our fight, retooling ourselves and recommitting ourselves to sacrifice the effort and resources that will see us over the line. As we fight the new challenge of cVDPVs, Rotarians are coming out to support and monitor outbreak responses in different parts of the country, most recently in Kwara, Borno and Taraba States. But as there remains more to be done, so must we as Rotarians do more.

An estimated \$4.8 billion will be required to rid the world of polio by 2026 under the latest polio endgame strategy and with the global economic crises occasioned by the global pandemic and war in Ukraine, funds are increasingly hard to come by but the goal of a polio-free world is within sight and within reach and we cannot afford to revert to a situation where polio becomes prevalent again in most parts of the world. We have already seen with the recent wild polio outbreaks in Malawi and Mozambique and also the cVDPV outbreaks in the EU and US that polio remains ready to make a comeback if we let it. So we must strive to achieve Rotary's funding goals by increasing our commitment to the Rotary Foundation and improving our contributions to the Polio Fund. Every one of us is encouraged to become PolioPlus Society members through the payment of just \$100 per year. This will be acknowledged with a pin and a certificate and we must also ensure that every club is committed to raising a minimum of \$1500 for the Polio Fund in this Rotary year. This is what we must do.

Please as we approach the World Polio Day (WPD), visit the endpolio.org website to register your individual and club events. These events should focus on the thematic areas of Rotary's involvement in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Mainly, Advocacy, Awareness Creation, Social Mobilization, Support for Field Activities and Fundraising. If we are all committed and if all our hands are on the deck, we can bring major change and put an end to the scourge of poliomyelitis in our world.

Finally, let me wish you happy celebrations of the World Polio Day. I look forward to seeing reports and images of our interesting and innovative activities and events.

As we build up to this year's World Polio Day celebrations, it is important to remind ourselves what we have done, what we are doing and what we must do to keep polio at zero in Nigeria and make polio history in the world.

It is important to recall that when we started this project to eradicate polio from our world, polio was ubiquitous in the world, afflicting an estimated half a million souls every year. By the launch of Rotary's PolioPlus in 1985 and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988, we have records to show that there were 1000 new daily infections of this deadly disease spread across 124 countries of the world. From an initial estimate of \$100 million needed to eradicate polio, the world has committed almost \$20 billion to this fight of which Rotary alone is responsible for about \$2.5 billion. We have successfully chased wild polio out of every region in the world except one where it exists in just a narrow epidemiological belt that straddles the two nations of Pakistan and Afghanistan. We have reduced this disease from the global nightmare that it was by getting rid of 99.9 percent of its disease burden. In Africa, we have also come a long way. We achieved regional elimination in August 2020 by successfully interrupting local transmission of the virus. In Nigeria for example, we came from a situation where we had 122 cases in 2012 to a situation where 8 of the 10 years since have been wild poliovirus- free years. This is what we have done and we can be proud of it. Indeed, Rotarians in Nigeria and all across the world deserve accolades for the tremendous passion they have demonstrated and for their significant sacrifices in the fight to rid our world of poliomyelitis. We should be very proud of ourselves.



A Battle Foretold

It is no longer news that in the last year, we have recorded new cases of the wild poliovirus in Africa. This is aside the escalation of outbreaks of the circulating vaccine derived poliovirus in many African countries. The 7 cases seen so far between the end of last year and the present moment in both Malawi and Mozambique indicate that the potential for an escalation of this crisis exists. These are two countries that have not had cases in a very long time and it makes one wonder if there are other countries where the virus might also be surreptitiously making a comeback. Apart from these cases in Africa, we also have isolates and cases in the UK, the EU and the US- in places where the virus has not been seen for decades and where immunity levels are relatively high when compared to the rest of the world. This has led to a bit of surprise and alarm that the virus is likely at the verge of making a big comeback.

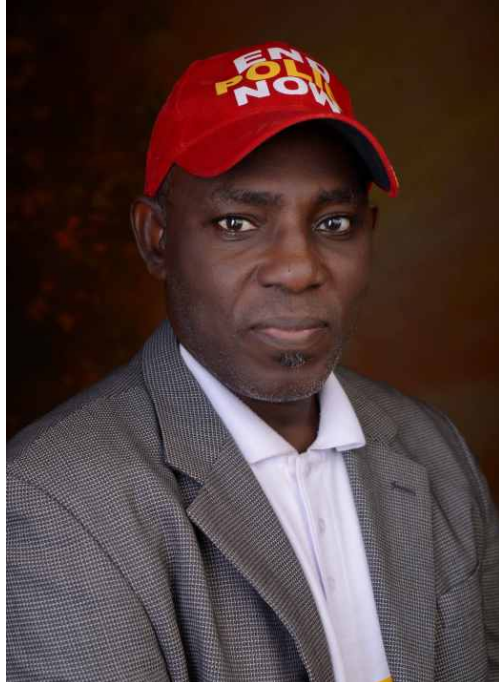
It is surprising that there is any wonderment at all that these cases are being recorded given what we know about the virus. We know that the virus likes to replicate in populations of with low immunity or where there are immunity gaps and could be present in populations without cases being seen. We know that for every case seen, there are likely to be as many as 200 more persons having the virus and presenting no symptoms but are perfectly able to act as reservoirs for spreading the virus within the population. We also know from research conducted by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) partners that in spite of the gains made in the eradication of the virus through the achievement of regional elimination in all but one of the epidemiological regions and the reduction of the virus incidence by as much as 99.9 per cent, that the virus could rebound with as many as 200,000 cases in just 10 years if our efforts and contributions towards polio eradication were not sustained. Above all these, we know that the virus in any part of the world is a threat to every unimmunized child in any part of the world and polio could potentially be just a plane ride, a bus ride or even a boat ride away. To make matters even graver still, we have seen links between isolates from Chad in Africa and Ukraine in Europe without

there being any direct flights between Chad and Ukraine. In many ways, the poliovirus making a comeback is a battle that has already been foretold. Unfortunately, we have had a global pandemic at a most inopportune time leading to lockdowns and restricted movement which facilitated the creation of huge immunity gaps in populations across the world. Following the relaxation of these restrictions and the rapid acceleration in global travel, we have also seen the rapid escalation in the number of cases in populations where these immunity gaps now exist. As this was happening, we are also confronted with a ramp down in resources because of competing priorities and a stress on the global economy. Donations are reducing at a time when they are most needed and resources are stretched thin trying to meet different emerging threats at the same time.

A few years ago, we celebrated the achievement of regional elimination of poliomyelitis in Africa. We must remain proud of this but at the same time we must remain mindful that our job is not yet done. In fact, the quantum of effort that we need to get the job done has just increased and it will take great effort and great sacrifice to see us fulfil our promise to gift the next generation a polio-free world. That is why, as we celebrate the World Polio Day in 2022 we must recommit ourselves to doing those things we did so well to achieve the successes we have achieved against polio. We must create more awareness of this disease and mobilize our communities to vaccinate our children against it. We must increase our advocacy to the stakeholders and gatekeepers in our society to secure the resources needed to plug immunity gaps and protect our children. We must also lend ourselves to support vaccination campaigns through active and effective supervision and monitoring of field activities. Most importantly, we must increase our fundraising and our support to the Polio Fund. To refuse to do this would be to prepare ourselves to lose a battle that was already foretold. And as the Yoruba people of West Africa say, no wise person gets lost in a battle that has already been foretold.

Please go to endpolio.org to get ideas for your World Polio Day activities and register your events. Happy Celebrations!

Rtn 'Gbenga Olayiwole
Editor



Surmounting the Remaining Challenges

Nigeria achieved Wild Poliovirus (WPV) free status from the African Regional Certification Commission (ARCC) in June 2020. This historic development paved way for the African Region to be certified WPV-free by the ARCC in August 2020. The last case of WPV in the country was from the security-challenged State of Borno and had a date of onset of paralysis on 21st August 2016. Vaccines save millions of lives each year. Vaccination drives, reaching up to 220 million African children multiple times every year, were integral to achieving this historic milestone.

Being WPV-free notwithstanding, the work of polio eradication is not yet complete. There are two remaining WPV endemic countries (Afghanistan and Pakistan) in the world that are potential sources of WPV importation. In addition, persistent transmission of circulating Vaccine Derived Poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) is a cause for concern and signifies poor population immunity.

Total global WPV1 cases as at 30th September 2022 is recorded as 27 (compared with 2 for the same period in 2021) with the total global WPV1 cases in 2021 remaining at 6.

Total global circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV) cases in 2022 stands at 337 (compared with 283 for the same period in 2021) with the total number of cVDPV cases in 2021 being 698.

Today, the fight continues against all forms of poliovirus. A rare vaccine-derived version “Circulating Mutant” of the polio-virus is affecting African countries with low immunization coverage, particularly among remote communities and those experiencing migration or conflict. Nigeria continues to implement supplemental activities and special interventions to sustain the gains the certification of the Africa region as polio-free since 2020. These activities are conducted within the context of Covid 19 guidelines to ensure vaccination is conducted and to curtail the impact of the disease on the immunization system.

Insecurity is a major impediment to accessing eligible children with vaccines. Across the country targeted campaigns are being conducted, including outbreak responses (OBR) to cVDPVs, targeted subnational immunization plus days (SNIPDs) and special interventions in security compromised areas.

The NEOC and partners stress the need for continuous advocacy in the wake of the political drumming (electioneering) period to various stakeholders as well as political, religious and community leaders to ensure every community is accessed and every child is reached with potent OPV and also to ensure that all parents and caregivers make their children available for integrated routine immunization services using the holistic PHC under one roof approach (PHCUOR). Thanks to the support from all partners as renewed efforts are underway to rid Africa of all remaining vaccine-derived Polio-viruses.

Amb. Aminu Muhammad
NPC



Oyo State Inaugurates Immunization Taskforce

In fulfilment of its role in ensuring that children are protected from childhood illnesses through immunization and in the spirit of the Abuja Commitment of 2011 by the Nigeria Governor's forum, the Oyo State Government recently inaugurated an Immunization Taskforce in Ibadan the State Capital.

The event which took place at the Emergency Operations Center in Yemetu was chaired by the Acting Governor Engr. Bayo Lawal who incidentally is also Chair of the Taskforce. It may be recalled that Rotary International through the Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee has been at the forefront of trying to ensure that every state in Nigeria has a functional and effective Immunization Taskforce in order to help improve the health and wellbeing of the children in the country. Other developmental partners involved in the setting up of the taskforce include the World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Institute of Human Virology of Nigeria (IHVN) Breakthrough Action Nigeria (BA-N), and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as well as the Gates and Dangote Foundations.

Engr. Bayo Lawal, in his role as the Acting Governor, inaugurated the body and stated in his role as the Chairman of the Taskforce that the body would seek cooperation and engagement with public health institutions, traditional leaders, religious leaders, civil society, community influencers, market associations, opinion leaders, other developmental agencies, gatekeepers and relevant stakeholders in the state to facilitate the implementation of key important immunization policies in the State. He stated that "Immunisation has been widely acknowledged to be one of the best health interventions to curtail or eradicate vaccine-preventable diseases globally and this is why it is classified as one of the global human rights for both the young and the old."



"Immunization record in Oyo State has indicated that some children are being denied of this golden opportunity, perhaps as a result of poor access, being poorly informed, myths and misconceptions, poverty and other sundry reasons. The case with COVID-19 vaccination has not been totally different from the observed hesitancy at the onset.

"These have led to the high number of the unimmunized eligible population and which we must all now collectively bring to the fold of well-protected individuals against all vaccine-preventable diseases so that with our collective efforts, we will have a healthy community. We will be able to attain herd immunity for the benefit of all." Commissioner for Health in the state, Dr. Bode Ladipo, noted that Oyo State had been rated second in Nigeria in terms of immunisation of children and adults against diseases that can be prevented with vaccines.

The Executive Secretary, Oyo State Primary Health Care Board, Dr. Muideen Olatunji delivered a presentation on the immunization status and performance in the state while the Chairman Primary Health Care Board, Dada Awoleye and development partners also delivered goodwill messages at the event.

Delta Govt Inaugurates Task Force on Primary Health Care



Delta State Government (DTSG) has inaugurated an eighteen-member state Task Force on Primary Health Care to enable various communities to attain the level of health that will allow their members to live socially and economically productive lives.

The State Governor, Senator Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, who was represented by the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Chief Patrick Ukah, inaugurated the committee in Asaba.

Governor Okowa said the objective of the inauguration of the taskforce was to elevate primary health care facilities at the community level to a comprehensive, effective and efficient health care delivery system.

Some of the terms of reference of the taskforce include ensuring effective leadership and coordination of Primary Health Care (PHC) activities, intensify routine immunization activities required to sustain the interruption and eradication of polio outbreaks and to advocate for timely and adequate resource allocation as well as

ensure judicious use of the funds, among others.

He urged members of the committee to ensure replication of their activities at the local level, adding that their meetings should be held quarterly. He equally noted that the state government intended to strengthen active community participation, intra and inter-sectorial linkages, using appropriate technology for virile primary health care delivery in the state.

Those inaugurated are the state Governor, Senator Ifeanyi Okowa, as the Chairman and Commissioners for Health, Education, Women Affairs, Information, Finance, Environment and Economic Planning, Chairman of Delta State Primary Health Care Development Agency (DSPHCDA) Board, Chairman of Association of Local Government of Nigeria (ALGON), Chairman Delta State Traditional Rulers Council are members.

Others are representative of National Orientation Agency (NOA), State Based Organisations (SBOs), Faith Based Organizations, Media in the state and partner agencies active in PHC/Immunisation in the state, while the Permanent Secretary DSPHCDA would serve as the Secretary of the committee and the Director Immunisation as Assistant Secretary.

The Commissioner for Health, Dr. Mordi Ononye, speaking on behalf of the members of the committee, thanked the state government for finding them worthy to serve and pledged to carry out their duties diligently to the best of their abilities.

Merit Ugolo thenews-chronicle.com

Rotary Club of Jos Tin City donates wheelchairs to Plateau Polio survivors



The Rotary Club of Jos tin City recently donated wheelchairs to polio survivors in the state to help them with their mobility. This was at the installation of the Club's 18th President Oyewole Michael. At the event, the newly installed President said that the donation was part of the club's effort to fulfil their commitment to helping eradicate polio from the world and supporting those who have been affected by the disease. "We are donating wheelchairs to the special ones in our society. These people are survivors of poliomyelitis, who cannot afford these facilities on their own. As part of our commitment, Rotary knows that these equipment will aid their mobility and make life better for them," he added.

The Rotary president sought partnerships to deliver projects and harness both human and natural resources to better humanity.

He said: "Imagine access to good and affordable healthcare, public schools with standard libraries and well-furnished classrooms. Imagine a protected environment and scholarships to indigent students, as well as skills for young people. Imagine a Rotary that meets the needs of the special ones in our society and protects the vulnerable.

"For us, the Rotary Club of Jos Tin City, these are in our profound imagination. We have set out our vision and plans as part of our projects for the year to contribute meaningfully to the development of the people and society. We appeal to Nigerians to rise up to the occasion of supporting massively and partnering the club as we serve humanity."

*From the reporting of Barakat Akolade for
guardian.ng*

UNVEILING OF POLIO GOODWILL



Rotn. Kunle Adeyanju being presented with a flower by "Keep Polio@Zero baby"



Some members of the NNPPC unveiling Rotn. Kunle Adeyanju



Polio Goodwill Ambassador, Rotn. Kunle Adeyanju



From Left - Rotn. Mojeed Momoh (D9141 DPPC); Dr Tunji Funsho; PDG Tolu Omatsola; PDG Joshua Hassan (NNPPC Chair); Rotn. Kunle Adeyanju; Rotn. Khadijat Yusuf (D9125 DPPC); Rotn. Demola Olutusin (D9110 DPPC); PDG Remi Bello; PDG Deinde Shoga at the recent NNPPC meeting in Lagos.



Group photograph of NNPPC members with Rotn. Kunle Adeyanju

AMBASSADOR & FIELD ACTIVITIES



Vice President Yemi Osibajo (in black cap) admiring the Rotary flag during a courtesy visit by Rotn. Kunle Adeyanju to the Presidential Villa



From Right- DG Goddy Nnadi(D9125)
Vice President Yemi Osibajo and
PDG Kazeem Mustapha



Rotn. Kunle Adeyanju vaccinating a child during an OBR activity in Ilorin Kwara state.



Rotarian Kunle Adeyanju during a market sensitisation in Ilorin, Kwara state.



Some Rotarians at the Polio Awareness Walk in Enugu .



Advocacy visit to ALAKE OF EGBALAND HRM Oba Adedotun Aremu Gbadebo III. To the right - DG Omotunde Lawson



Rotary President Jennifer Jones announces US\$150 million pledge toward polio eradication

Rotary International President Jennifer Jones appeared on the main stage at the star-studded Global Citizen Festival on 24 September to highlight Rotary's commitment to eradicating polio and announce an additional US\$150 million pledge toward that end.

Jones, who spoke in front of 60,000 people in New York City and tens of thousands more online and on TV, noted the state of emergency that the governor of New York state recently declared to combat a resurgence of polio in the region.

Jones stressed that polio is preventable through vaccines and that wild poliovirus is endemic in only two countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Although female vaccinators are critical to building relationships with mothers and reaching children in these areas, they sometimes can face harassment or even attacks.

In Pakistan, "frontline female health workers put themselves at risk every day," Jones said. "They are committed, even with obstacles, to reaching every last child with polio vaccines." The vaccination program works with the local police and government to ensure the safety of these health workers.

Jones talked about the effect of polio vaccinations in some countries being disrupted by COVID-19. She pointed out that in 2021, about 25 million children went without critical immunizations. "The world has beaten back this disease significantly, but we must redouble efforts," Jones said.

The additional funding Jones announced will go to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, which said in August that it was seeking new funding commitments for its 2022-26 polio eradication strategy. "We want this to be the start of a massive effort to reach the initiative's US\$4.8 billion funding goal," Jones said.



Rotary members have been at the center of the worldwide effort to eradicate polio for more than three decades. Rotary launched PolioPlus in 1985 and helped found the GPEI in 1988, when there were an estimated 350,000 polio cases across more than 125 countries in one year. Since then, cases have plummeted more than 99.9%, sparing more than 20 million people from paralysis. Rotary has helped immunize nearly 3 billion children against polio, contributed more than US\$2.5 billion to global polio eradication efforts, and helped secure more than US\$10 billion from donor governments.

The Global Citizen Festival, an annual music celebration, urges world leaders to end extreme poverty, take action on climate change, empower girls and women, and dismantle systematic barriers. This year's Global Citizen Festival, which took place in New York City and in Accra, Ghana, called on global leaders to invest US\$600 million into the future of women and girls, narrow the US\$10 billion climate change shortfall, and provide US\$500 million to help farmers in Africa to respond to the global hunger crisis.

The New York component, hosted by actor and Global Citizen ambassador Priyanka Chopra Jonas, included performances from Metallica, Charlie Puth, Jonas Brothers, Måneskin, Mariah Carey, Mickey Guyton, Rosalía, Angelique Kidjo, and Billy Porter. Presenters included celebrities Amber Ruffin, Bill Nye, Connie Britton, Katie Couric, Tamron Hall, Katie Holmes, and more.

Global Citizen says that since its first concert in 2012, more than US\$41 billion in funding has been dispersed that's affected the lives of more than 1.1 billion people.

Jones urged people to get involved: "Global citizens, use your voice — help us call on governments, businesses, and other leaders to join us in pledging ambitiously at the World Health Summit in October to end polio forever."

Rotary has worked with Global Citizen for a more than decade, primarily regarding the effort to eradicate polio worldwide. At last year's event in Paris, France, Jones announced \$97 million pledge for sustainable project. At the 2012 concert in New York City, Rotary General Secretary and CEO John Hewko announced Rotary's \$75 million commitment to polio eradication. Rotary and Global Citizen have also connected at Rotary International Conventions, the Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meetings, polio advocacy events, and polio funding announcements.

Ryan Hyland for Rotary.org

Rotary statement on recent Polio detections in US and EU



Mike McGovern Chair of Rotary's International PolioPlus Committee

The recent detection of the vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 case in New York, USA, and isolates in several environmental samples collected in London are stark reminders that as long as polio exists anywhere, it is a threat everywhere. It also highlights the importance of vaccination as the only form of protection against polio and other vaccine-preventable diseases and the work that needs to be done in our communities to encourage the uptake of vaccines. Also, as the world gets closer to zero wild poliovirus cases, it is increasingly important to track all forms of the virus wherever they may appear, including in polio-free regions. The U.S. is still considered low risk for paralytic outbreaks of polio due to the high level of vaccine coverage across the population. If a child has received the entire course of vaccines, the risk of becoming paralyzed by polio is negligible. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 92.6% of children aged 24 months are fully vaccinated against polio, slightly below the 95% World Health Organization target.

The best things countries can do to protect themselves from polio until the disease is eradicated from the world are to: maintain high vaccination coverage and robust disease surveillance and be ready to respond in the event of an outbreak to minimize the risk and consequences of polio re-introduction or re-emergence anywhere.

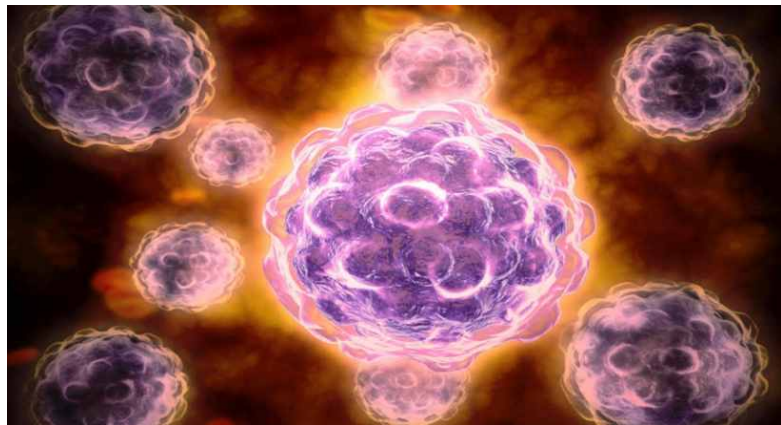
The world currently has a unique opportunity to stop virus transmission for good. Still, all parties, including donors and country governments, must re-commit to polio eradication by fully supporting the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) 2022-2026 strategy. This focuses on adopting an emergency posture while generating greater accountability and ownership from country governments to eradicate wild polio and end variant poliovirus (cVDPV) outbreaks.

Rotary, a global service organization with over 1.4 million members, has been at the center of the worldwide effort to eradicate polio for over three decades. Every year, through our funding partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary commits \$150 million to the global effort to eradicate polio. We have contributed more than \$2.6 billion and countless volunteer hours to end polio forever. Together with our partners, we engage communities everywhere to encourage high vaccination rates, immunizing over 400 million children annually. More than 20 million people are walking today who otherwise would have been paralyzed because of our efforts and those of our partners in the GPEI.

The time for urgent action is now. A new vaccine has been deployed – novel oral polio vaccine 2 (nOPV2) – which is more genetically stable to stop outbreaks of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus effectively. With sustained political and financial commitments, the GPEI is confident that we can achieve a world in which no child is paralyzed by polio again

Rotary.org

Why has polio been found in London, New York and Jerusalem, and how dangerous is it?



Polio, a deadly disease that used to paralyze tens of thousands of children every year, is spreading in London, New York and Jerusalem for the first time in decades, spurring catch-up vaccination campaigns.

Polio terrified parents around the world for the first half of the 20th century. Affecting mainly children under five, it is often asymptomatic but can also cause symptoms including fever and vomiting. Around one in 200 infections leads to irreversible paralysis, and among those patients, up to 10% die.

There is no cure, but since a vaccine was found in the 1950s, polio is entirely preventable. Globally, the wild form of the disease has almost disappeared.

Afghanistan and Pakistan are now the only countries where the highly infectious disease, spread mainly through contact with faecal matter, remains endemic. But this year, imported cases were also found in Malawi and Mozambique, the first in those countries since the 1990s.

There are two main forms of poliovirus. Alongside the wild-type outlined above, there are also rare cases of what is known as vaccine-derived polio. It is this second form detected in wastewater in the British capital, London, and in New York in the United States, with one case of paralysis reported in New York State. Genetically similar virus has also been found in Jerusalem, Israel, and scientists are working to understand the link, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) said.

While vaccine-derived polio is almost unheard of in the above locations, it is a known - albeit rare - threat in other countries, causing outbreaks every year, including 415 cases in Nigeria in 2021.

It stems from the use of an oral polio vaccine containing weakened live virus. After children are vaccinated, they shed virus in their faeces for a few weeks. In under-vaccinated communities, this can then spread and mutate back to a harmful version of the virus.

While countries including the Britain and the United States no longer use this live vaccine, others do - particularly to stop outbreaks - which allows for global spread, particularly as people began to travel again after COVID-19, experts said. But experts agree that the major driver behind both vaccine-derived and wild polio outbreaks remains under-vaccinated populations, said Derek Ehrhardt, global polio lead at the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Vaccine hesitancy was a growing problem before the pandemic, then COVID-19 caused the worst disruption to routine immunization in a generation, according to the United Nations.

In 2020, there were 1,081 vaccine-derived polio cases, around three times as many as the previous year. In 2022 so far, there have been 177 cases, after major efforts to get polio vaccination campaigns back on track.

But the wastewater findings are still a wake-up call for parents with one key message, according to scientists around the world, including David Heymann, epidemiologist at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine: Protect children by getting them vaccinated.

-Jennifer Rigby for reuters.com

In remembrance of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and in recognition of HM King Charles III's support for polio eradication



HRH Prince Charles observing the vaccination of children in a village on the outskirts of New Delhi. © Kiron Pasricha

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is deeply saddened by the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Her leadership, steadfastness and commitment to service were exemplary throughout her life, and made her a globally-respected moral voice for some of the most marginalized people in our world. We wish to express our deepest sympathy to her family and of course to all the people of the UK and indeed the Commonwealth.

The UK, Commonwealth and indeed the Royal Family have long been a proud and important supporter to the global eradication effort, and none has arguably been a more committed advocate than His Majesty King Charles III. While still HRH Prince of Wales, Charles III engaged personally in this effort, adding his voice and commitment to ensuring children around the world are fully protected from lifelong polio paralysis.

In October 2003 in India, HRH Prince Charles participated in Polio National Immunization Days, observing the vaccination of children in villages on the outskirts of New Delhi. In 2018, at the Commonwealth Leaders Summit, HRH Prince Charles highlighted the polio programme as an example of successful, joint action against disease, noting that hundreds of millions of children have benefitted from polio vaccination thanks to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. In 2013, during another visit to India, he acknowledged Rotary's tremendous efforts in eradicating polio in India, as he accepted and posed with a Rotary 'End Polio Now' scarf for media photographers.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative would like to extend our very best wishes to His Majesty King Charles III, for a long and successful reign. Under his leadership, and indeed the UK and the Commonwealth's, the effort to eradicate polio will continue unabated until our common goal of achieving a lasting world free of all forms of poliovirus is fully achieved.



Afghanistan completes largest ever review of Polio surveillance system

"It's important to show that the surveillance system has the strength and the ability to detect any poliovirus circulation that may be happening," said Dr Irfan Elahi Akbar, Polio Team Leader at WHO Afghanistan. "Because if we don't detect and investigate cases quickly and respond, more and more children will be paralysed."

The last international surveillance review team visited in 2016, meaning a review was also overdue. Insecurity and the polio programme's lack of access to much of the country meant the small team could visit just a handful of locations including the cities of Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Mazar-e-sharif and Kunduz.

This time round, the reviewers visited 76 districts in 25 of the country's 34 provinces, interviewing 899 people, among them volunteers who form part of the community surveillance network made up of more than 46,000 people including pharmacists, community health workers, faith healers, nurses, imams, and bone fixers.

Following a desk review of the system late last year in which the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) partners Hub in Amman analysed the existing country data, a physical visit was necessary in order to verify the findings and get as accurate a picture as possible of the surveillance system.

For the last two decades, the prospect of sending 16 visiting polio experts out across the provinces of Afghanistan would have been impossible but from 6 to 19 June 2022, WHO Afghanistan's polio eradication programme did just that. Their mission? To review the country's polio surveillance system, assess its functionality at all levels and make specific recommendations for maintaining and improving surveillance quality.

"It was an extraordinary achievement by WHO Afghanistan's polio team. The logistic and administrative challenges alone were enormous," said Dr Luo Dapeng, WHO Representative in Afghanistan. "Afghanistan is one of the last countries where polio is endemic and we must do all we can to stop this virus from infecting any more children."

The review was necessary for several reasons one of which was to ascertain whether the sharp decline in the number of children paralysed by wild poliovirus in Afghanistan in the last eighteen months was an accurate reflection of the reality on the ground. From 56 cases in 2020, the number dropped to four in 2021. So far this year, two children have been paralysed by the virus.

Source: World Health Organization

PHOTO NEWS



Rotarians from RC Jalingo and Jalingo Prestige during the September round of OBR



Rotarians at the D9141 Polio Seminar



Rotarians and Partners at the 2022 Africa Vaccination Week Polio Walk in Abuja.



Presentation of Polio Champion Award to Rotary International by the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, on behalf of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency



DG Omotunde Lawson(D9110) presenting an appreciation plaque to Dr. Memuna Esan of the WHO during the Polio Seminar in Lagos



DG Mightyman A. Dikuro promoting the Polio Book "SO THEY CAN WALK" at the Polio Seminar



DG Goddy Nnadi giving a child the polio-drop in Kaduna



Advocacy Visit to Jalingo LGA Chairman Honorable Aminu Hassan by PDG Joshua Hassan

POLIO STOP

Rotary



END
POLIO
NOW



WORLD
POLIO
DAY



24TH OCTOBER 2022

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