



POLIO STOP

Quarterly Newsletter of the Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee

JUNE 2023

Contribute	Participate	Change
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ADIEU



Jonathan B. Majiyagbe

Past Rotary International President

10 July 1934 - 27 May 2023



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





As we come to the end of one Rotary year and the beginning of a new one, I feel very grateful to everyone who has played a part in helping us achieve all that we have achieved in the fight against polio in the last year. As you are aware, Nigeria was declared polio-free and Africa certified polio-free in 2020 but since then the Nigeria Polio Eradication Initiative (PEI) and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) at large, has come under tremendous assault as the virus has tried to make a comeback. Even as the world grappled with the effects of the global COVID pandemic, we have also had to deal with the virus being discovered in places where it had not been seen for decades. Significantly, the virus was found in the US, the UK, Ukraine and Israel where there had been no cases for many decades. You may also have been made aware that even the wild poliovirus which had not been seen in Africa since 2016 was found in Mozambique and Malawi having been imported from Pakistan. We have also had a surge of new cases of the mutant variant of the poliovirus in Africa, especially in Nigeria and the DRC. In 2021 alone, there were as many as 418 cases of mutant poliovirus in Nigeria which is astonishing given that we were just declared polio-free in 2020 and although there was remarkable progress in 2022 there were 48 cases reported. Even in 2023, there have already been 10 cases recorded so far. This means that we still have enormous challenges to surmount and our job is not done yet.

In spite of these challenges, the programme has rallied and attacked the virus head on wherever it has been discovered and even with increasingly limited resources, we have achieved significant success against the virus. We have managed to keep the wild polio out of Nigeria and succeeded in stopping the outbreak in Malawi and Mozambique. We have also succeeded in reducing the number of new cases of mutant poliovirus by more than 90 percent in just one year. We have responded aggressively and effectively against the virus and it is once again receding and about to disappear from our country and our continent.

All these have been done with the support we have received from Rotarians and friends of our Rotary family. Rotarians have remained committed to advocacy for polio eradication, to helping to create awareness and in generously contributing their time, talent and treasures to our cause. Many of you have made significant donations to the polio fund and many have become polio society members in the last year, contributing over 100 dollars to polio eradication since the society was launched. On behalf of myself and the Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee, I want to thank you most sincerely for your contributions and support. It has been a blessing to be able to count on your support.

In the new Rotary year, we will need you even more. There are still families in Nigeria and around the world suffering from the effects of polio on a child or a loved one and as long as there is one child anywhere in the world with polio, every unvaccinated child remains at risk. This is more than just mere statistics. Every case represents a child and a family which has been altered negatively forever. We have made a promise to gift the next generation a world without polio. With your continued support, we will definitely achieve it.



A time for new ideas

There was a time when the Nigeria polio eradication initiative assumed a pariah status in the world. At that time, we were reporting the highest number of polio cases globally. Then came a period of innovation and new ideas. We started trying new things and with that came a period of remarkable progress in our programme. I remember staying late in the deathly nightly cold winds of Katsina to receive truckloads of materials supplied by UNICEF with funding from Rotary International to kickstart the introduction of volunteer community mobilizers in the state. That initiative would prove to be a game-changing one because it helped to create and maintain a database of children under the age of 5 in the high-risk communities and helping to target them for immunization. We also debuted the use of religious focal persons as influencers to change attitudes in communities where we were experiencing block rejections. We introduced Bluetooth videos to pass information in the markets debunking rumours and misinformation, we had Majigi film shows and papalolos dancing in settlements to create demand for our vaccines and we introduced the directly observed polio vaccinations to address the issue of teams missing children because of lack of access. The rash of new ideas was bold and unprecedented in the fight against polio and it helped to produce great success leading to the achievement of regional elimination of the poliovirus in Nigeria and the Africa region. ' With the twin challenges of a global pandemic and the escalation of insecurity in several parts of Nigeria which caused a reduction in access to children, we seem to have lost some of the momentum and the variant form of the virus seemed to have made a comeback. We have

had success with the deployment of the novel oral polio vaccine (nOPV2), the new, more stable live attenuated vaccine which was designed to help reduce the incidence of the variant type 2 poliovirus but lack of access and reduction in resources have proved serious barriers to the achievement of a country and continent that is free of the variant form of the virus.

I believe that another time for innovation has come in order for us to finally overcome this virus and make sure that no child is again afflicted by it. We are already implementing a campaign with a combination of a fractional dose of the inactivated polio vaccine and the nOPV2 but security challenges mean that our access is still limited and several vulnerable children will still be missed. So, we need new ideas. We need Rotarians and friends to think up new strategies for solving these security challenges and for reaching these children. Resources are also waning and political support is flailing. We need innovative approaches for fundraising and advocacy to help us mobilize the resources that will push us across the finish line. We need new approaches for awareness creation. A group of Rotaractors exemplified this excellently this past Rotary year by hosting a fashion show in support of polio eradication. We need more of such from Rotarians and from Rotaractors.

We are almost there. We have conquered wild polio. We have successfully eradicated 2 out of 3 forms of the virus. Yours might just be the idea that helps us eradicate the last one. Our dearly departed PRIP Jonathan Babatunde Majiyagbe spent his life pushing for the eradication of polio. Let's use his memory as the motivation to innovate and kick polio out of our world.

Rtn Olugbenga Olayiwole
Editor PolioStop



Progress so far in Nigeria Polio Eradication Efforts

Since the interruption of transmission of wild poliovirus in Nigeria in 2017 which culminated in the certification of the Africa Region as wild polio free in August 2020, Nigeria has experienced a series of outbreaks of the circulating variant poliovirus type 2 (cVPV2).

Great progress has been made in tackling the cVPV2 outbreak in Nigeria as shown in 89% decline in cVPV2 cases as at Week 15 of 2022 and 2023

Despite the huge progress, Sokoto and Zamfara are currently breakthrough states with the active circulation of VPV2. Sokoto and Zamfara have had more than 8 rounds of nOPV2 campaigns from 2021 till date. Still, these 2 states are responsible for 9 out of the 11 cVPV2 isolates in 2023.

Key issues identified are the isolation of nOPV2 from the stool of AFP cases indicating poor vaccination coverage and the historical emergence of cVPV2 lineage, low immunity to type 2 polio virus due to low IPV coverage. Insecurity restricting access to vulnerable children for vaccination has also helped to create a pool of unreached children that are PV2 naïve post the vaccine switch.

The Global Roundtable, 39th ERC, and the NEOC are aligned to the use of fIPV+nOPV2 to massively build population immunity in 13 high-risk states in 3 phases. The 1st phase was implemented from 11th to 16th May 2023 in 4 States (Zamfara, Sokoto, and Kebbi & Katsina), Phase 2 Kano Kaduna Jigawa Niger and FCT are now scheduled to commence on 22 July to 4 August 2023 alongside nOPV vaccination in 10 out of 14 Consequential geography states of Lagos Kwara Kogi Kebbi Borno Yobe Sokoto Zamfara Katsina and Bauchi

Globally, the number of wild poliovirus (WPV1) cases in 2023 stands at 6 (compared with 13 for the same period in 2022). The total global WPV1 cases in 2022 remain 30.

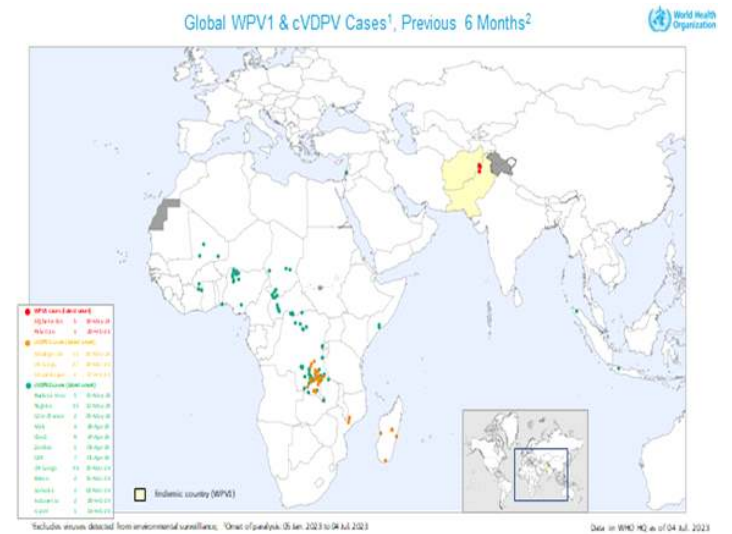
Circulating variant poliovirus (cVPV) globally in 2023 stands at 136 (compared with 164 for the same period in 2022), The total number of cVPV cases globally in 2022 remains 865. The breakdown shows that 5 of the

WPV1 cases reported this year are from the Nangarhar province of Afghanistan while one case has been reported from Pakistan's Bannu which is one of the seven polio-endemic districts located in the southern area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In Nigeria, six cVPV2 cases were reported, one each in Kebbi and Enugu and two each in Zamfara and Sokoto. There have been 16 cVPV2 cases reported this year and 48 cases in 2022 and one cVDPV2 positive environmental sample was reported in Sokoto.

The major task ahead of us all is to ensure the state and LGA leaders improve their ownership of the program, by mounting aggressive advocacies to our royal fathers, and new political leaders and also cascade to our religious groups and influencers as well as build our partnership with security agencies to gain and maintain their support in order to reduce to the barest minimum, our challenges ranging from insecurity, poor funding from the state and LGA counterparts as well as persistent non-compliance which has hindered access to children.

Remember Together Everyone Achieves More!



There was an 83% reduction cVPV2 in 2022 compared to 2021 and 89% reduction in 2023 compared to 2022 as at week 15



The trajectory of cVPV2 suggests that its possible to interrupt transmission by Dec 2023 if current momentum is maintained

Amb. Aminu Muhammad NPC

Rotary Supports FIPV and NOPV campaign in Zamfara State



FC Sadiku Inspecting the Routine Immunization Card of a child during the campaign

Rotary International recently deployed field officers from various locations to support supplemental immunization activities in different parts of the country to aid the uptake of doses of the fractional inactivated polio vaccine (fIPV) and the novel Oral Polio Vaccine (nOPV2).

Field officers were deployed to Borno, Katsina and Zamfara States from the Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee (NNPPC). In Zamfara State, the campaign was conducted between the 13th and 18th of May with additional two days for mop up. The campaign objective was to vaccinate all eligible children with fIPV and nOPV2 vaccines and routine immunization antigens in all settlements in the state. Children between the age of 6 weeks and 59 months were targeted for the fIPV vaccination while children from 0-59 months were targeted with the nOPV2. In addition, children 0-24 months were targeted with the routine immunization antigens.

Over 100 senior personnel were deployed as members of the management support teams (MST) from the government and the partners including CDC/ AFENET/ NSTOP, UNICEF, WHO, Rotary International, BMGF, SOLINA, Red Cross, Chigari Foundation and others.



FC Sadiku inspecting materials before take-off for the campaign

Before the implementation began, a number of activities were conducted under the guidance of the Polio National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC). Plans were developed for accessing the insecure areas. The MSTs were deployed from the state to the implementing LGAs. The State Technical Facilitators (STFs) and the implementation team members were all trained at all levels and the state was supported to conduct daily planning meeting. They were also supported to develop and review daily implementation plans (DIP) and microplans. There were also demand creation activities and advocacy visits to secure the support of the different stakeholders such as the traditional, religious and political leaders. The data tools and vaccines were also distributed to all the implementing LGAs. Strong leadership by the State Primary Health Care

Board during the pre/implementation phases of the campaign.

Some of the best practices observed on the ground in Zamfara State include:

- a. Ownership of the campaign by traditional institutions who supported social mobilization and distribution of pluses
- b. Daily organization of State hybrid Evening Review Meeting (ERM) for MSTs, ZSPHCDB and State Partners during the pre/implementation phases of the campaign
- c. Integration of services at CMAM and ANC sites
- d. Early deployment of MSTs from the National EOC and partners to the states.
- e. Early orientation of the MSTs at the state before the commencement of the campaign.
- f. Payment of counter funds for supervision and AEFI kits
- g. Campaign Flag-Off by Emirs in their emirates and conduct of Supervision by some these Emirs during the campaign implementation days e.g. Emirs of Gusau, Talata Mafara, Maru etc.
- h. Assigning a staff of the DSS in the state to participate in daily evening review meeting to be providing daily security update.
- i. Provision of Storage facility by the traditional leaders to store pluses.
- j. Prompt budget support gap in logistics and movement of pluses from state to LGAs/Wards.
- k. Provision of escort by the military in supporting the state to transport vaccines from the state to LGAs with security challenges.
- l. Independent monitoring in inaccessible settlements supported by Solina.
- m. Early deployment of over 100 MSTs and Senior supervisors from the state to the LGAs
- n. Negotiation by the state and gate keepers for access into security comprised areas to improve access.
- o. Innovative approach by the state team to resolve unpredicted challenges
- p. Alternative means of providing resources in the absence of State counterpart funds
- q. Mobilization of additional health workers outside of the government employment (volunteers, students)
- r. Mobilization of cold chain equipment from neighboring states to cover for shortfalls.
- s. Involvement of stakeholders to resolve challenges including traditional and religious leaders
- t. Deployment of security agencies including the "Yan Sa Kai" (Vigilantes), DSS, Military

-Rotn Grace Sadiku
Field Coordinator, Kaduna State
(deployed to Zamfara State)

Nigeria restates commitment to eliminate variant poliovirus by 2023



Vice President Kashim Shettima and Mr. Bill Gates of the BMGF

Nigeria's Vice President, Kashim Shettima recently restated the country's commitment to the eradication of the variant poliovirus by the end of 2023 and to ensuring that every Nigerian child is covered in routine immunization campaigns.

He stated this at the meeting he held with Co-Chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Bill Gates; Nigerian Industrialist, Aliko Dangote; and some governors under the auspices of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, at the Banquet Hall, Presidential Villa, Abuja.

While pointing out that Nigeria achieved wild polio elimination in 2020 with the support of sub-national governments and development partners, the vice president said there was still much work to be done as the country faces new threats.

"We don't intend to slow down until we deliver on our promise to eliminate the polio virus by the end of 2023.

"We won't stop until we build a robust framework to ease access to vaccines and palliatives.

"We won't stop until we ensure that the resources deployed by our partners and our counterpart funding are disbursed for the intended purpose.

"We won't stop until we ensure that the children in our remotest villages have access to first primary healthcare and nutrition like their peers in our cities."

The Vice President said that three-dose pentavalent vaccine coverage has improved in Nigeria from 33% in 2016 to 57% in 2021.

He stated further that "the variant polio virus has declined in Nigeria by 84% from 2021, falling to fewer than 100 cases in 2022."

The Vice President commended the states that have achieved high-category immunization coverage, which is between 60% and 80% of the target demographic and added that the number of such states has expanded from 12 to 21 states in five years.

He assured that "The Federal Government and our respective state governments are going to set in place a transparent process and structure to undo the reality of the country as one with one of the highest proportions of non-immunized infants in the world over the last decade."

On the issue of the production of vaccines for the immunization of children, the Vice President assured that "we are going to work together to ensure that these vaccines are made available even to zero-dose children, of which ours, at 2 million, are the highest in the world after India."

The Vice President expressed the appreciation of the Federal Government to partners such as Alhaji Aliko Dangote's Foundation and of Bill Gates Foundation, whose empathy shone through the uncertain period in Nigeria's history.

Earlier in his remarks at the interactive session, Mr Bill Gates disclosed that his foundation recently announced the intention to commit \$7 billion to Africa in the next four years to support routine immunization in Nigeria, and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in Northern Nigeria.

Gates said he was optimistic about the future of Nigeria and urged the Nigerian government to invest in the health and opportunities of the youth.

In his remarks, Alhaji Aliko Dangote stated that he had been partnering with Bill Gates, the Federal and State Governments for several years, in the efforts to eradicate polio and improve routine immunization, nutrition and primary healthcare in the country.

"We genuinely believe that the National Economic Council and the decisions that you will make over the next four years will determine whether Nigeria has sound economic growth, by keeping its citizens happy and achieving the sustainable development goals," he said.

Governor of Zamfara State, Dauda Lawal, who spoke to State House correspondents, said that the parley would continue because it would look at the overhaul of the entire health delivery system in Nigeria.

In separate remarks, the Chairman of Nigeria Governors' Forum, Kwara State Governor Abdulrahman Abdulrasaq and some Governors who spoke at the parley lauded the philanthropic interventions of the Dangote and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundations in critical areas including healthcare, education, agriculture and human capital development.

The Governors expressed their readiness to further collaborate with the Dangote and Gates Foundation in the coming years.



Our Fight Against Polio is not done yet- Chairman NNPPC



The Chairman Nigeria National Polio Committee of Rotary International, Past District Governor Joshua Hassan has warned that the fight against Polio is yet to be completely won. He said despite the declaration of Nigeria as polio free in August 2020, there's still need to raise \$4.8bn to intensify efforts in fighting the virus globally till 2026.

Rotary has been at the forefront of war against Polio having contributed \$2.5bn to vaccinate 300 million children amongst others, and holds credits for its role in polio free Nigeria.

PDG Hassan speaking through Rotarian 'Gbenga Olayiwole during the Nigeria Rotaract Multi-district conference (NIGEROTA) in Lagos said the mutant polio virus is still found in Nigeria. The public health consultant said though only Pakistan and Afghanistan are still having cases of wild polio, it is already being exported to other countries.

"Only two countries (Pakistan and Afghanistan) remain endemic to wild polio today down from 124 in 1988.

"These two countries have however been exporting the virus to other countries including Mozambique and Malawi in Africa. Let me even shock you that our own country at a time was exporting variant of polio.



PDG Hassan Supervising Polio Immunization at an IDP camp



PDG Joshua Hassan Helping to Create awareness for Polio Eradication

"Until the world is totally free from all forms of polio, our children remain risk of polio."

Warning further, Olayiwole disclosed that the mutant polio virus is still prevalent in Nigeria.

"Our work is not done yet, wild polio virus is still paralyzing children in the world. Mutant polio virus is also an issue. Nigeria is responsible for many of the cVPV cases in 23 countries in the past few years.

"In 2021, Nigeria had 415 out of 698 cases recorded globally. The country recorded 48 out of 787 in 2022 and just 1 out of 61 global cases in 2023," he added.

Olayiwole canvassed that Rotaractors who are the youth wing of Rotary in action, donate polio fund to the Rotary Foundation.

He explained that the fund will be dedicated to different categories in ensuring the provision of nOPV2 vaccine and its availability globally, advocacy at state and local government levels, community engagement and mobilization as well as prioritizing immunization at primary health centers.



The Late HRH Alhaji Ado Bayero, the esteemed Emir of Kano, was posthumously honored with an award, which was duly received by Alhaji Abubaka Sule Ganya.



Sir Emeka Offor Foundation award to the Best Supporting Polio Survivor Group won by Kudu Ward 3, Katsina State.



Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee Chair, Past District Governor Joshua Hassan with some Polio Survivors



Mal. Nasiru Hussaini bestowed with the prestigious Overall Best Field Worker award in Sokoto State.



Hussani Sule bestowed with the prestigious Overall Best Field Worker award in Gombe State



Best Awardee in Kastina State ALH. Sambo Idris Sambo (Sarkin Maska)



Malam Nasir Adam honored as the Overall Best Field Worker in Kano



Sir Emeka Offor Foundation award to Osun State as Best Performing Immunization State.



Award of Excellence to Ondo State for outstanding performance in Cold Chain System Maintenance.



Award of Excellence to Yusuf Umar Sauwa Disease Surveillance and Notification Officer Kebbi State

Workers Awards



Award of Excellence to Edo State for outstanding performance in Surveillance and Supplemental Immunization Activities.



Rotary International Award presented to the representative of Emir of Argungu Alhaji Samaila Muhammed Mera by the NNPPC Team



Yusuf Mohammed Shanu honored as the Overall Best Field Worker in Kaduna State.



Amina Suleiman Kyari bestowed with the prestigious Overall Best Field Worker award in Borno State



Award of Excellence presented to Francisca Adebola duly represented by Alabi Abiola Moshood for best performing State Immunization Officer



Award of Excellence to Dr. Mrs Nusrat Elelu Executive Secretary Kwara State Primary Healthcare Development Agency



Cross section of some guests at the event.



Distribution of Wheelchairs to Polio Survivors



PRIP Jonathan babatunde Majiyagbe SAN OFR

In Memoriam: Jonathan Babatunde Majiyagbe

silk and conferred with the highest rank in his profession as a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN). He was a member of the Body of Benchers, a Past Vice President of the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), a member of the International Bar Association and the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, a former member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of Nigeria law and a former member of the Judicial Service Committee in Kano State.

The question of what constitutes a good death is one that has been asked for a thousand years and one which continues to be asked today. In trying to answer that question, the Bard of Avon himself once wrote 'When beggars die, there are no comets seen; the heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes. Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste of death but once.' It may be deduced from him that the death of one who has attained nobility should be considered higher than the death of mere men. To William Shakespeare, the heavens themselves rise to acknowledge the passing of great men. That, for him represented a good death.

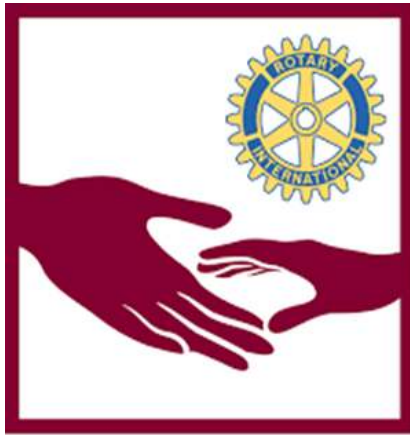
On 27 May 2023, the heavens rose as one to acknowledge one of the greatest Rotarians of his generation, our beloved and highly revered Past President of Rotary International Jonathan B. Majiyagbe from mortality to immortality.

Jonathan Babatunde Majiyagbe obtained his degree in Law from the University of London and was a member of the Bar of England and Wales as well as a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria. He was elevated to

A passionate lover of humanity and a firm believer in service to humanity, he joined Rotary International in 1967 and has served in many capacities including as District Governor, Discussion leader, Committee Member and Chairman of the International Assembly, an aide to the President and Director of Rotary International. He is also a past Chairman of the Africa Regional PolioPlus Committee, a member and advisor to the Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee as well as serving on the African Affairs Committee of Rotary International. He was a past member of the Rotary Club of Kano and a member of the Rotary Club of Abuja Metro.

In 2003, Jonathan Babatunde Majiyagbe made history by becoming the first African to be made Rotary International President, overseeing the running of the affairs of the largest service organization in the world with over 1.2 million members at the time. He would later also serve as the Chair of its Board of Trustees in 2008. He was also a Major donor to our organization.

In his year as Rotary International President, he led under the theme "Lend a Hand" calling for the alleviation of suffering and poverty across the world.



Lend a Hand

He believed that 'As Rotarians, we must open our eyes to see those around us who cannot afford shelter, healthcare, food, and other essentials and we must address these problems with compassion and pragmatism.' He famously instructed that on the logo for his Presidential theme, the two hands featured in the design be on the same level depicting that both the giver and receiver are of equal standing and dignity.



PRIP Majiyagbe with Mike McGovern and NNPPC Executive Committee Members

Speaking of his passing, his longtime friend and associate Dr Tunji Funsho who is also a Past District Governor of Rotary International had this to say 'he was an epitome of integrity and imbued with extraordinary intellect, I will miss the warmth of his presence and drinking from his deep well of wisdom.'

Also Speaking of his passing former Rotary International President and longtime friend and associate, Mark Daniel Maloney said 'he was a man of faith who kept service and charity close to his heart.' He was committed to and led Rotary's fight against polio in Africa and celebrated the achievement of the regional elimination of wild polio in Africa enthusiastically.

A man of faith, he is a former Chancellor of the Anglican Diocese of Kano. In 2008, he was awarded one of the highest honors in Nigeria, an order of merit the Order of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (OFR).



PRIP Majiyagbe supporting Emir Ado Bayero to vaccinate a child against Polio

Going back to the subject of good deaths medical scientists qualify a good death as having certain parameters including having an understanding that death is coming, having relief from suffering and pain, having control over where it happens, and approaching it with privacy and dignity. I believe that our icon Jonathan Babatunde Majiyagbe lived a rich and full life that is worthy of emulation and died a good and dignified death after having fulfilled his mission on earth. Our loss as a family in Rotary and in particular, the NNPPC is heaven's gain. He will be missed but his good name will never, ever be forgotten.

Rotary Honours Field Workers

The Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee of Rotary International recently celebrated polio field workers and conferred a posthumous award on the late Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero for his significant contribution to the success of polio eradication in Nigeria.



Similarly, the committee also honoured other traditional rulers as well as religious and community leaders for the important roles they played in the fight against polio in their respective states.

The awardees were honoured during the 2023 National Polio Field Workers' Award Ceremony held at the Tahir Guest Palace, Kano.

Speaking at the occasion, the Rotary International President, Jennifer Jones, said the idea behind organising the National Polio Field Workers' Award was to celebrate and reward those field workers who distinguished themselves in the fight against polio in Nigeria.

President Jones, who was represented at the occasion by Ijeoma Pearl Okoro, Past District Governor and Rotary Foundation's Endowment & Major Gifts Adviser for Africa, said the program was aimed at appreciating the ordinary people at the frontline of the struggle to eradicate polio.

“The program is designed to reward those who go the extra mile, those who do just a little more than is required, and those who have shown the ability to be creative and think outside the box with innovative strategies which improve the richness of our program,” she said.

The Rotary International President lauded the organisers of the program and called on polio eradication partners to continue to support the Rotary Foundation to sustain the program with a view to boosting the morale of field workers.

In his remark, the chairman, NNPPC, Past District Governor Joshua Hassan, said even though it's impossible to reward those who have made significant contributions to the success of polio eradication in Nigeria, the event attempts to motivate and encourage everyone who is willing to put just that little extra into getting the job done.



He said the current target according to Global Partnership for Polio Eradication, is to stop all transmission of polio by the year 2026 adding 'To do this, we will need more of your support in the field.'

He explained that the selection of the awardees was done by those involved in the process starting from the ward level to the local government level and then the state level and involved all the partners for each of the three categories of awardees.

The Chairman NNPPC added that while Nigeria had been certified polio-free, the recommendation from the Expert Review Committee was that there was a need for sustained effort from the government and partners to continue funding support for in-between-round activities, including a partnership with and engagement with security forces to reach security-compromised areas across the country.

Among the traditional rulers that were honoured at the occasion include the District Head of Funtua and Sarkin Maska, Alhaji Sambo Idris Sambo and District Head of Damboa in Borno State, Alhaji Zanna Lawan Maina. Others were the District Head of Kaltungo in Gombe state, Ephron Sokka Abubakar as well as Ward and Village Heads.

The event also featured the presentation of certificates and wheelchairs to a number of polio survivors.



There were three awardees each from Borno, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, and Sokoto States while a posthumous award was given to the late Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero.

A special recognition award was given to Ayuba Burki Gufwan, a lawyer and polio survivor, who runs the Beautiful Gate Foundation which through its programme Wheelchairs for Nigeria has built and given away more than 14,000 wheelchairs across the country.



[Rotarian Ayuba Burki Gufwan CEO Beautiful Gate Foundation](#)

There was also a special musical performance by Sani Danja who is a Rotary Celebrity Polio Ambassador.

In Zamfara, a polio survivor leverages experience to mobilize support for vaccination against the virus



Ibrahim Mohammed, residing in Gusau, the capital of Zamfara State, northwestern Nigeria was 12 when he contracted the poliovirus.

As a direct consequence, he developed a disability that paralyzed his left leg, affecting his mobility. He now uses crutches to aid his movement.

Ibrahim could not recount the reasons why he did not receive the recommended routine immunization, especially the vaccines against polio, that would have prevented the disease he suffers now.

"Growing up, I remember receiving only one vaccine and it was at school. I cannot recall my parents taking me for any immunization exercise. I believe that was why I was susceptible to contracting polio.

When the pain started, my parents took me to many hospitals, unfortunately, there was nothing that could be done," he recalls.

Ibrahim, now 38 years is glad to be alive and does not wish for any child to be in a similar situation as his.

With Nigeria still facing challenges in its polio eradication campaign, Ibrahim, in the past 11 years, has been leveraging his polio survival experience to serve as a community mobilizer for polio campaigns and routine immunization in Gusau the capital of Zamfara State.

He uses his personal history with polio to actively advocate for parents on the importance of immunization but Ibrahim does not always succeed. Sometimes, his effort in raising awareness of the importance of vaccination to parents fall on deaf ears.

In spite of this he continues to contribute to polio campaigns in his state even up to the most recent one which aimed at vaccinating over 7 million children against the virus in different parts of the country.



The vaccination exercise was in response to four cases of circulating poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) reported in 2023, two of which were reported in Zamfara and Sokoto, in the northern part of the country.

Nigeria was declared wild poliovirus free in 2020. However, circulating variant Poliovirus type 2 (cVPV2) transmission continues.

To contain the transmission of cVPV2 by ensuring all children are protected from the virus, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and other partners including Rotary International are supporting the Federal and State governments through the National Primary Healthcare Development Agency (NPHCDA) to vaccinate over 7 million children ages 0 to 59 months with one million of these in Zamfara State.

With funding support from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, WHO, Rotary and other partners are supporting NPHCDA to pioneer the use of novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2) and fractional doses of the inactivated poliovirus vaccine (fIPV), in some states including Zamfara state.

Ibrahim supports that an extensive vaccination exercise is important to stopping transmission of the virus and is glad to educate residents about the need to eradicate all forms of polio in the state.

He is working with a team of vaccinators in ensuring all eligible children in the allocated catchment area in his LGA receive the vaccine.

Leveraging his experience as a mobilizer during the wild poliovirus eradication campaigns, he goes from house to house to convince parents to vaccinate their children against polio because he does not want any child in Gusau to be paralyzed by polio like him.

Ibrahim sometimes feels sad because his paralysis deters him from doing many things, and does not want anyone to experience it.

"Many times my story makes the parents understand the consequences of their children not getting vaccinated. No parent wants their children paralyzed.

But some parents are still not convinced and refused to allow their children to receive vaccination. They won't accept the polio vaccine saying it will have a harmful effect on their children.

The level of awareness and reception from the community on immunization matters is now better compared to some years back when the parents usually abuse us, stone us or chase us away with sticks," he says.

Under the Extended National Immunization Programme, oral polio vaccine and inactivated polio vaccine are provided to children across the country as part of routine immunization.

Ibrahim is however optimistic that Nigeria can eradicate the Circulating Variant Poliovirus type 2 (cVPDP2), in the way it eradicated the wild poliovirus.

Source: WHO

State Field Workers Award



HRH Engr. Saleh Muhammad Umar, OON (MAI Katungo) with Gombe State Awardees



Kastina State awardees with some representatives of partner agencies



Cross section of Kano State awardees and some partners



Cross section of Kaduna State awardees

Advocacy Visits



Advocacy visit to the Theatre Commander and Borno Team lead by the E.D SPHCDA and NNPPC



Advocacy visit to Emir Of Kano HRH Alhaji Aminu Ado Bayero, CFR by NNPPC and Partners



Presentation of Aprons to the Director and SIO Zamfara State Primary Health Care Board.

POLIO STOP



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