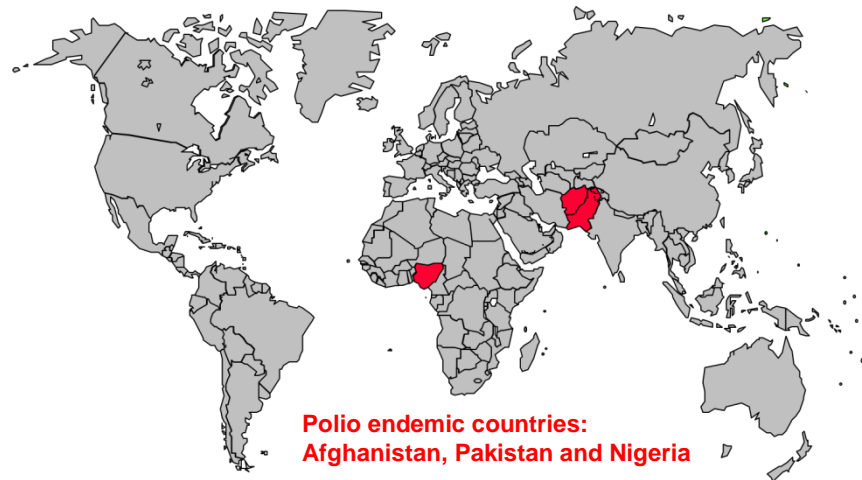


Global Polio Situation



Progress in the Global Program to Eradicate Polio

- Polio is a devastating, infectious disease which can cause painful paralysis, trapping the world's poorest people further into grinding poverty. It is preventable through immunisation, but is not curable.
- Fortunately, eradication efforts have led to more than a 99% decrease in cases since the launch of the GPEI in 1988 and saved 16 million people from paralysis.
- Fewer children were paralysed by polio in 2016 than any other year in history, with the virus limited to a few areas of just three countries – Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria. And within those countries, the virus is paralysing fewer children than ever before.
- Only wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) is still causing cases of paralysis. Type 2 (WPV2) was declared eradicated in September 2015. Type 3 (WPV3) has not been seen since November 2012. Eradicating one of the three strains of polio is proof that a polio-free world is achievable.
- While polio exists anywhere in our globalised world, it is a threat to children everywhere and efforts must continue to immunise more than 450 million children in some 60 at-risk countries;

The Role of Rotary International

Since 1985, Rotary International, a global association of more than 33,000 Rotary clubs, with a membership of over 1.2 million business and professional leaders in nearly 170 countries, has been committed to battling this crippling disease. In Great Britain and Ireland today there are more than 1,800 Rotary clubs with over 50,000 members. All Rotary clubs work to promote humanitarian service, high ethical standards in all vocations, and international understanding. Rotary International stands hand-in-hand with governments around the world to fight polio through local volunteer support of National Immunisation Days, raising awareness about polio eradication, and providing financial support for the initiative.

Rotary International has contributed more than US\$1.7 billion to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, including more than US\$38.7 million contributed by Rotarians in Great Britain and Ireland. This represents the largest contribution by an international service organisation to a public health initiative ever. These funds have been allocated for polio vaccine, operational costs, laboratory surveillance, cold chain, training and social mobilisation in 122 countries. More importantly, tens of thousands of Rotarians have been mobilised to work together with their national ministries of health, UNICEF and WHO, and with health providers at the grassroots level in thousands of communities.

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The Role of the British Government

The UK has been at the forefront of fighting global health threats, including polio and is the second largest public sector donor to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. The UK is leading the last global push to eliminate polio around the world for good, with its most recent commitment of £100 million in support that will immunise 45 million children against the disease each year until 2020. Britain is also a leader in encouraging peers to provide the political and financial commitment needed to achieve the goal of a polio free world.

Benefits of Polio Eradication

Since 1985, more than two billion children have received the oral polio vaccine. Thousands of public health workers have been trained to investigate cases of acute flaccid paralysis and manage massive immunisation programs. Cold chain, transport and communications systems for immunisation have been strengthened because of the polio eradication initiative.

Polio eradication is helping countries to develop public health and disease surveillance systems useful in the control of other vaccine-preventable infectious diseases. The disease surveillance system--the network of 146 laboratories and trained personnel established during the Polio Eradication Initiative--is now being used to track measles, rubella, yellow fever, meningitis, and other deadly infectious diseases. The AFP surveillance system and global laboratory network that supports it will continue to support the surveillance of other diseases long after polio has been eradicated.

NIDs for polio have been used as an opportunity to provide other essential health services such as the distribution of treated bed nets to protect against malaria, administration of other vaccines, and distribution of essential vitamin A, which, like polio, is administered orally; an intervention which has saved the lives of at least 1.25 million children since 1998.

A study published in the November 2010 issue of the journal *Vaccine* estimates that the global polio eradication initiative could provide net benefits of at least \$40-50 billion if transmission of wild polio viruses is stopped within the next five years.

Polio eradication is a cost-effective public health investment, as its benefits accrue forever. Given that polio is an epidemic prone disease, studies have noted that not stopping poliovirus transmission quickly could once again result in an estimated 200,000 cases annually within the next ten years if the world fails to capitalise on the more than \$14 billion already invested in eradication.

Our Legacy

In 1985, Rotary made the historic decision to immunise all the world's children against polio. The world is nearly polio free. With the continued leadership of The United Kingdom, other donor governments including those of polio-affected countries, civil society, and UN agencies, we will achieve final victory over polio.

Polio has no place in the 21st Century. The world is closer than it ever has been to eradicating polio for good, but even a few cases of polio in the world means children everywhere are at risk. We can make history and help break the relentless cycle of poverty for millions more children so they can live healthier lives, go to school and later on, get a job. Visit www.endpolio.org to learn more.