



End Polio Now



June 2023

Dear District PolioPlus Subcommittee Chair 2022-23

Rotary Year 2022-23 is heading to its end, and I would like to thank you for your great cooperation. Rotary International President Jennifer Jones right from the start of her Presidential Year encouraged all Rotarians to support End Polio Now which is very close to her heart.

During 2022 we saw a total of 30 cases of wild polio. Through **2023 to date, we have seen a total of 5 cases: 1 in Pakistan and 4 cases in Afghanistan.**

The job to eradicate polio is by no way at the very end yet but as **you can read in the reports** beneath people around the world do their best to help us to come to the stage where we can celebrate a Polio Free World.

Africa's largest polio vaccination drive since 2020 targets 21 million children. It is kicked off in three West and Central African countries. The exercise began in Cameroon, Chad and Niger and has since been extended to Central African Republic. This is in response to detections of cVDPV2 in the countries. The multi-country initiative comprises synchronized vaccinations and joint plans in border communities to halt polio transmission. This will ensure that a large cohort of children across the four countries receive the vaccine at the same time to enhance polio immunity in a broad geographic area. The Lake Chad basin region is home to one of the highest proportions of so-called "zero dose" children globally, who are either unvaccinated or under-vaccinated. All the four countries have made huge efforts to bolster polio detection, curb the spread of the virus and protect children from the risk of infection and lifelong paralysis. Door-to-door implementation has eased the burden on parents to transport their children to health facilities for vaccination. Health workers, with support from WHO, are now also administering vaccines in homes, as well as at religious centres, markets, and schools. In the wake of the ongoing outbreaks of circulating poliovirus, countries have also stepped up surveillance to detect cases. The use of geographic information systems tools is also accelerating the response to alerts of potential polio cases, helping curb the spread of the virus.

***Afghanistan** continues to face significant challenges. The confirmation of the fourth polio case in Nangarhar is a reminder of the persistent threat that polio poses to children in the region. But, by leveraging the expertise and collaboration of national and international stakeholders, its' targeted actions will contain the spread of the disease.*

*In **Pakistan**, significant progress has been achieved in reducing the number of cases but the challenges of vaccine hesitancy, limited access to remote areas, and security concerns persist. (All cases reported from Pakistan since 2022, including the only one reported this year in March, have been from the endemic southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region, while most of the country has remained polio-free for over two years.) Focusing on innovative approaches, community*



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engagement, and the root causes of vaccine hesitancy, will help reinforce the polio eradication program and ensure the well-being of its' children.

*In **Democratic Republic Congo (DRC)**, the cVDPV2 cases this year to date is 35 (in 2022 a total of 363) and with the latest date of onset of polio 5 March. The first large-scale campaign using nOPV2 has been launched. This is the first time the DRC will conduct such a large-scale campaign. Starting on 1 June, more than 17 million children under the age of five are being targeted in a three-day drive covering 20 provinces. (Previous rounds in 2022 and earlier this year were limited to a maximum of two provinces each.) WHO's Polio Eradication Programme in the African region has established geographic information systems and other innovative tools that enable teams to quickly map areas in which health facilities are located, to locate houses in which eligible children live (especially zero-dose children), and to track the movements of vaccination teams during polio outbreak responses to reach every child. The GPEI coordinator in the DRC, confirms that monitoring activities will use new technologies providing software and standards for field electronic data collection. Teams on the ground will be able to share near real-time geolocation points where vaccination posts can be set up, how many health centres have been visited, the quality of markings on houses visited by vaccinators, as well as the quality of finger markers used to identify children who have been vaccinated. The tool also enables teams to locate children who have missed their vaccination.*

As you can see a lot is going on and of course it costs to reach every child – so every dollar you and your club and district donate to Polio Fund counts. I have attached an **update by today of cash and DDF given by each district**. At our zoom in May we said we should try to reach a donation from Zone 18 by 1 million dollars through match from Gates Foundation. DDF donations will first be matched by 80% from World Fund. We get closer as we are now at 840.000 – so every extra cash and DFF counts. Districts who have not yet given DDF and have planned to do so please send your donation as soon as possible so it can be registered for this Rotary Year.

There are still many districts who have not yet reported the **District PolioPlus Chair for year 2023-24**. To be able to have contact with your district **can I please ask all of you to send me a mail telling me if you continue or if not, who is your successor as PolioPlus Subcommittee Chair for the coming year?**

If you end your position, I would like to thank you once more for what you have done for your district and Polio, and I am sure you will inform your successor well. If you continue your roll, I look forward to work with you in the coming Rotary year.

I wish you a nice summer with time to relax and enjoy your family.

Warm regards from Anette

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