

## **Rotary International Report to the IMB October 2012**

Since the last IMB meeting, Rotary has taken several steps to expand its advocacy efforts in key donor and polio affected countries. The Trustees of The Rotary Foundation have allocated significant additional financial resources to support these activities. The report below highlights of some of the activities within the plan.

Components of the increased advocacy plan include:

- Travel, briefing and events in the US, Canada, UK, Germany, Brazil and other countries as identified
- National staff support in Chad and Democratic Republic of Congo
- Speaker expenses for polio survivors and others who can effectively represent PolioPlus and global polio eradication
- Advocacy training and toolkits
- Engagement of a global advocacy consulting firm
- Engagement of a firm to advise on corporate outreach
- Expansion of Rotary infrastructure in Pakistan and Nigeria
- Additional staff support at Rotary International headquarters

### Polio Endemic and Re-established Transmission Countries

A Rotary consultant traveled to Pakistan and Nigeria to develop with local Rotary leadership a plan to build the Rotary infrastructure in these two countries similar to that in India that has been successful in engaging the broader Rotary membership and advocating with government officials at all levels. A project manager has been hired in Pakistan who is in the process of implementing the plan. The plan for Nigeria has just been drafted and implementation will begin shortly.

Also in Nigeria, Past Rotary International President Jonathan Majiyagbe convened a meeting of past Rotary leaders in the country and requested their personal involvement in monitoring the remaining IPDs for this calendar year.

The Chair of Rotary's National PolioPlus Committee in DRC has hired a project manager to support the committee's efforts and discussions are underway to do the same in Chad.

### Resource Mobilization and Advocacy Training

Approximately 50 Rotary leaders from a dozen countries met in August at Rotary International headquarters for a two-day seminar to devise strategies on how to persuade the international community to commit the resources required achieving the certification of the eradication of polio. Meeting participants included a cross section of Rotarians engaged in polio eradication efforts including End Polio Now Zone Coordinators (EPNZCs), National PolioPlus Committee Chairs (NPPCCs), Regional PolioPlus Committee members, International PolioPlus Committee Members, National Advocacy Advisors (NAAs) and Rotary Public Image Coordinators (RPICs).

Countries represented included Rotary leaders from the polio affected and at risk countries including Pakistan, Nigeria, Benin, and Democratic Republic of Congo as well as participants from donor countries including Brazil, Canada, Japan, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

The seminar focused on the need for every Rotarian to work to raise awareness and funds among Rotarians, the public, governments and the private sector in order to End Polio Now.

The participants received updates on the status of global polio eradication efforts, the financial needs of the program and outlook for Rotary's continued participation in meeting those needs, and the new communications tools available to achieve advocacy goals. In particular, participants received a demonstration of the new [endpolionow.org](http://endpolionow.org) website, which includes informational resources for Rotarians and an online petition that can be activated for key meetings and milestones.

The seminar and global participation attracted local media attention. Pakistan National PolioPlus Committee Chair Aziz Memon was interviewed on Chicago Public Radio and an article published in the *Chicago Tribune* Health Section also referred to the meeting.

### Communications and Advocacy

In August, Rotary launched a new website, [www.endpolionow.org](http://www.endpolionow.org). This is an interactive polio-specific microsite aimed at the general public and is now available in eight languages, to better engage a global constituency on the issue.

Since the site launched, it has received 65,000 visits. The website saw a spike in visits in the lead up to the UN General Assembly special event on polio, receiving more than 2,200 visits on each day.

Rotary launched an online petition in support of polio eradication in late August, which received nearly 7,000 signatures. These signatures were presented during the UNGA special event.

The website was featured in an article in the *Chicago Sun-Times* on Saturday, 22 September.

In addition, a webinar was held in September to provide information about the new polio communications plan and how it supports expanded advocacy. Rotary NAAs, NPPCCs, RPICs, and EPNZCs were invited to participate. The link between communication and advocacy and the need for coordination among these key Rotary positions was emphasized to effectively guide the active engagement of Rotary clubs and districts. The new tools available to support this effort and key opportunities during the coming year were also discussed. NAAs from France, the Netherlands, Malaysia, Portugal, Russia and Spain participated in the webinar.

On World Polio Day (Oct. 24), Rotary International invites one and all to get online and participate in the World's Biggest Commercial, promoting the global effort to eradicate this crippling childhood disease.

The innovative, interactive campaign gives everyone a chance to join Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Bill Gates, Jackie Chan, Amanda Peet and other world figures and celebrities already participating in Rotary's "This Close" campaign (as in, "this close" to ending polio) in raising awareness and support for polio eradication.

Participants can upload photos of themselves to Rotary's polio eradication website, [endpolionow.org](http://endpolionow.org), to be edited into the constantly expanding promotional spot. Participants will receive an email with a direct link to their image and comment within the commercial.

Also on World Polio Day, Rotary will make available for purchase "End Polio Now," an eclectic album of songs performed by its celebrity polio eradication ambassadors from the music industry, including polio survivors Itzhak Perlman (classical violin); Donovan (folk rock); and Staff Benda Bilili (Congolese soukous). The album will be available via iTunes and at [shop.rotary.org](http://shop.rotary.org)

### Summary

Rotary looks forward to reporting on the outcomes of these new initiatives at the next IMB meeting.