



BEYOND POLIO

For over 25 years, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) has mobilized and trained millions of volunteers and health workers; reached remote and underserved households; mapped and brought health interventions to chronically neglected communities; and established standardized, real-time global surveillance and response capacity.

The knowledge, skills and infrastructure built to end polio are already helping to make dramatic progress on improving children's health – not only reducing the number of children paralyzed by polio by over 99%, but also decreasing the number dying from other preventable diseases in countries with strong polio infrastructure.¹



Expanding the Reach of Health Services

Frontline polio workers aim to reach every child with vaccines and deliver other critical health interventions to children who would otherwise be missed.

Health workers trained through the polio program in **India** have identified and integrated unimmunized children into routine immunization in more than 400,000 high-risk polio sites, tripling vaccination coverage in Bihar state from 31% in 2002-04 to over 80% in 2012-13.²

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, measles vaccination campaigns have been integrated into polio immunization efforts, helping to increase measles immunization coverage in the country from 71.3% in 2014 to 95% in 2015.³

Globally, 1.3 billion vitamin A supplements have been distributed during anti-polio campaigns, helping to prevent more than 1.5 million deaths globally and delivering an economic benefit of \$17 billion.⁴



Improving Disease Surveillance

Surveillance networks that serve to find every last poliovirus also help countries better map and monitor the presence of other diseases and respond quickly to outbreaks.

In **Nigeria**, the strong coordination of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) model and surveillance infrastructure created by the polio program were utilized to detect, track and stop the 2014 Ebola outbreak before it could establish a foothold.⁵

In **Nepal**, the surveillance network established for polio is being used for other devastating diseases, such as Japanese encephalitis and neonatal tetanus. Following the 2015 earthquakes in the region, polio workers trained in surveillance helped the country to be on the alert for any disease outbreaks, as well as to implement vaccination campaigns for measles and rubella in affected areas.⁶



Building Health Worker Capacity

Millions of vaccinators, tens of thousands of community mobilizers, and thousands of skilled technical staff trained through the polio program are now also helping to prevent and treat other diseases.

Polio teams in the ten countries with most significant polio assets already spend an average of 54% of their time supporting routine immunization and other health interventions, including nutrition and malaria prevention.⁷

In **South Sudan**, in addition to polio immunization activities, polio workers spend time on other health services, such as detecting and addressing cholera, measles and meningitis outbreaks.⁸

In **Kenya**, polio surveillance officers not only ask health workers, traditional healers and teachers about their knowledge of polio, but also strengthen their knowledge of other diseases like measles and neonatal tetanus to ensure that each case of disease is reported.⁹

Planning for the end of polio

Polio eradication will be one of the greatest public health victories of our lifetime. We need to plan now to ensure that the world will stay polio-free and that the lessons, resources and infrastructure, which are already benefitting children beyond this one disease, continue to help children for generations to come.

To make the most of this opportunity, it is crucial that governments, civil society, Ministries of Health, and donors transition some of the polio infrastructure to sustain a polio-free world and to help meet other health needs, particularly in places with weak health infrastructure. By identifying the overlap between what the polio program has to offer and country-level priorities for strengthening health systems, we can make a lasting difference to health beyond polio. We can strengthen the foundations of health by reusing the building blocks of polio eradication.

By beginning to plan now, we can keep the world polio-free and ensure that the investments made in ending polio have a broad and lasting impact on children's health and development, long after polio is gone.



1 <http://www.polioeradication.org/Polioandprevention/Historyofpolio.aspx>

2 http://www.who.int/immunization/diseases/poliomyelitis/inactivated_polio_vaccine/case_study_india.pdf?ua=1

3 DRC Country Snapshot

4 <http://www.euractiv.com/section/development-policy/opinion/the-eu-can-choose-to-defeat-polio/>

5 <http://blogs.worldbank.org/health/nigeria-s-seven-lessons-polio-and-ebola-response>

6 <http://www.polioeradication.org/mediaroom/newsstories/Polio-Staff-Support-Nepal-Earthquake-Response/tabid/526/news/1232/Default.aspx>

7 RESULTS: Putting Immunisation at the Heart of Health Systems – Polio: A Case Study

8 <http://www.results.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/One%20Last%20Push.pdf>

9 <http://www.vaccineswork.org/post/131738180012/disease-detectives-finding-every-last-virus-to>