



Dear polio eradication supporter,

To celebrate International Women’s Day and Women’s History Month, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) is recognizing the incredible contributions of women around the world working tirelessly to end polio once and for all. From spearheading vaccine development in labs to leading community immunization campaigns and [championing gender equity](#), women are driving progress in every aspect of polio eradication. On the path to a world free of polio, the programme is committed to empowering women and prioritizing gender equity at all levels from advocacy to vaccine delivery.

**Spanish Foreign Minister calls for gender equity**

During a recent visit to Chad, GPEI Gender Champion Arancha González Laya (Foreign Minister, Spain) met with women health workers who are central to the polio programme’s success. Read Minister González’s



©WHO Chad

reflections on the importance of empowering women to take leadership roles within the health workforce, shared on International Women’s Day. [\[More\]](#)

**Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari named New Gender Champion**

As the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Director, Dr Al-Mandhari oversees the programme’s work in the world’s last endemic countries, aiding the crucial efforts of women health workers delivering vaccines in the most difficult contexts.

Read his own words on the importance of supporting women and girls in all dimensions of the programme as the newest GPEI Gender Champion. [\[More\]](#)



©WHO

**POLIO IN NUMBERS**

**Wild Poliovirus in 2021 (2020)\***

**Global Total: 2 (34)**

**Circulating Vaccine Derived Poliovirus in 2021 (2020)\***

**Global Total: 43 (65)**

\*Data as of 30 March 2021. Numbers in brackets represent data at this time in 2020.

**Breakdown by country**  
[Polio this week](#)

**POLIO IN THE NEWS**

[Forbes](#): Women Vaccinators Are Saving Children From Polio In Pakistan

[GPEI](#): Women Leaders in Polio Eradication: Heather Monnet

[WHO EMRO](#): Regional Subcommittee on Polio Eradication and Outbreaks holds inaugural meeting

## Building trust and delivering vaccines in Afghanistan



©UNICEF Afghanistan

Health workers work hard to limit vaccine refusals, sitting down with families and explaining why polio vaccination is vital to protecting their children. Join Hira, a UNICEF consultant in Kandahar, for a cup of tea and a passionate conversation on preventing paralysis with a hesitant grandmother. [\[More\]](#)

## DONOR UPDATES

The **United Arab Emirates' Pakistan Assistance Program** disbursed US\$ 5.5 million for campaign activities in the highest risk districts of Pakistan in the first half of 2021.

**Germany's** Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development has provided €35 million to WHO and UNICEF for global polio eradication activities.

**Canada** has provided Can\$ 100 million to WHO and Can\$ 50 million to UNICEF for global polio eradication activities. This is part of the Can\$ 190 million pledge to the GPEI announced in 2020 activities.

UNICEF is grateful to **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** for their contribution of US\$ 7.5 million to support staff salaries.

## Photo of the Month



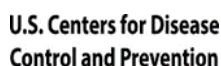
Aranca González Laya, GPEI Gender Champion and Spanish Foreign Minister, administers the polio vaccine to baby Therese. ©WHO/Chad



@WHO



@EndPolioNow



@CDCGlobal



@UNICEF



@GatesFoundation



@Gavi