



Dear polio eradication supporter,

On 8 March, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) celebrated International Women’s Day, thanking the women around the world who are committed to creating a polio-free future! Women at all levels of the polio program play a critical role in eradication, from [leading innovation in polio labs](#) around the world to [visiting homes and border crossings](#) to vaccinate children in Pakistan. We wouldn’t be this close to eradication without them, and the GPEI remains committed to [empowering those](#) who are paving the way towards a healthier future for all. As we look ahead to April, join in celebrating [World Health Day](#) and WHO’s 75-year Anniversary on 7 April, as well as World Immunization Week from 24-30 April, where the GPEI will highlight the importance of polio vaccination and broader immunization efforts in delivering a healthier world for our children.

Amplifying the voices of female frontline workers



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In Pakistan, the female frontline workers working in areas at the highest risk for polio transmission are taking the lead. Through a first-of-its-kind effort to systematically listen to underrepresented women on the

frontlines of the eradication effort, women finally have the opportunity to share their experiences, develop co-designed solutions to end polio in Pakistan, and begin to identify what comes next for them post-eradication. Read more to learn about this innovative women-led initiative. [\[More\]](#)

A new GPEI gender champion

Rotary International President Jennifer Jones spoke with Rotarians at the United Kingdom’s (UK) House of Commons to inspire confidence that polio eradication is within reach. She talked about her inspiring visit to Pakistan last year, and about her pride in the women vaccinators who are committed to ensuring every child remains safe from polio. The meeting also saw the exciting announcement of [Andrew Mitchell MP \(Minister of State, UK\) as the newest GPEI Gender Champion](#). He echoed Jones’s sentiment that women are critical in the fight to end polio, voicing the continued support of his country for the GPEI’s mission. [\[More\]](#)

POLIO IN NUMBERS

Wild Poliovirus in 2023 (2022)*

Global Total: 1 (1)

Circulating Vaccine Derived Poliovirus in 2023 (2022)*

Global Total: 31 (29)

*Data as of 29 Mars 2023. Numbers in brackets represent data at this time in 2022.

Breakdown by country
[Polio this week](#)



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Women leading the way in lab innovation



Dr Amira Zaghoul ©WHO/Pakistan

Women play integral roles at all levels of the polio program—including in the lab, where they are driving the innovations to help shape solutions in polio eradication efforts. In Oman, [Dr Hanan Al Kindi](#) is the head of nine polio and measles laboratory departments that test samples from Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. However, her work has also taken her outside of the lab, where her incredible negotiation and communication skills have solved challenges like freeing samples stuck at border crossings. Read on for more about Dr. Al Kindi and three other inspiring women lab leaders from across the Eastern Mediterranean Region. [\[More\]](#)

POLIO IN THE NEWS

[GPEI](#): Two years since rollout of novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2): How's it all working out? (30 March 2023)

[Science](#): Polio cases in Africa linked to new oral vaccine. (Leslie Roberts, 20 March 2023)

[PLOS Global Health](#): Why is Polio Making A "Comeback" And What Can We Do About It? (Dr. Ananda Bandyopadhyay, 17 March 2023)

[Reuters](#): Taliban health ministry launches annual polio vaccination drive. (Charlotte Greenfield, Mohammad Yunus Yawar, 13 March 2023)

[WHO EMRO](#): For Yemen's children, the path to a polio diagnosis starts with a remarkable road trip. (6 March 2023)

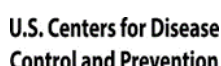
DONOR UPDATES

UNICEF would like to thank Health Service Executive (HSE), **Ireland**, for their contribution of €56 397; we are delighted that HSE has joined UNICEF and GPEI in our shared goal to eradicate polio.

UNICEF thanks His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed and the **United Arab Emirates** for its generous US\$ 12 million contribution to support social and behavior change initiatives and the delivery of polio vaccines to protect millions of hard-to-reach children in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and over 20 countries affected by polio outbreaks around the world.

WHO would like to thank the Government of the **United Arab Emirates** for its contribution worth US\$ 7 676 845 to the UAE Pakistan Assistance Programme and for its extraordinary support to the polio eradication at the highest political levels.

WHO is extremely grateful to the Government of **Monaco** for its €400 000 contribution for the 2023-2026 period and for its longstanding commitment to deliver a polio-free world.



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Photo of the Month



Dr Hanan Al Kindi test samples in the lab for polioviruses. ©WHO/Pakistan