



ROTARY
DISTRICT 1130



PolioPlus

A programme of The Rotary Foundation that Supports global polio eradication efforts in Polio endemic countries by conducting National Immunisation Days, monitoring poliovirus Transmission and other activities

January 2006

POLIO NEWS IN BRIEF

STAGE SET FOR POLIO-FREE WORLD

Despite recent high-profile polio outbreaks in previously polio-free countries such as Indonesia, Yemen, and Somalia, the stage is set for a polio-free world.

The recently introduced monovalent oral polio vaccine which accelerates protection to specific virus types appears to have stopped transmission in Egypt and areas of India. The alarming epidemic which swept across west and central Africa since mid-2003 now appears to have been stopped with no new cases reported outside endemic Nigeria and Niger since June, although it now appears that in Nigeria at least a further twelve months may be necessary to finish the job.

But it is still important to reach at 2-5 million children under the age of five years, especially infants.

Your Club contributions are still desperately needed to ensure high quality coverage, house-to-house immunisations.

POLIO INFRASTRUCTURE HELPS RESPOND TO NATURAL DISASTER

It is interesting to note that the extensive polio eradication network at country-level frequently helps in providing immediate support to natural disasters such as the recent Pakistan earthquake and the Southeast Asia tsunami in December 2004.

The global polio eradication network is equipped in many countries with both international and national professional staff and transport and communication capacity, allowing for immediate support to emergency response activities.

The polio network has provided rapid assessment and early logistical and operational support. With local knowledge of communities, health systems and government structures, the polio network's technical capacity in disease surveillance and planning of large scale operations often helps at the forefront of international and national relief efforts.

For example, following the devastating earthquake that hit Pakistan on 8 October 2005, the polio eradication infrastructure at the country level responded immediately to provide vital relief support.

Among the first relief-workers on the scene, more than 50 polio eradication epidemiologists and surveillance officers arrived in the worst-affected areas the very next day after the earthquake

The polio eradication staff provided emergency rescue and first aid work, setting up treatment camps and transporting patients. The polio staff also planned and helped implement large-scale immunisation campaigns, vaccinating children in the worst-hit areas against measles, tetanus, polio, as well as provision of Vitamin A supplements.

Similarly, the polio network in India immediately sprang into relief action after the tsunami ravaged parts of Southeast Asia in December 2004, deploying more than 20 staff members to the worst-hit areas of southern India.

The polio team provided local support from 31 December to 9 January, and came equipped with vehicles and medicines, including oral rehydration salts and co-trimoxazole paediatric tablets to help prevent deaths due to pneumonia.

**BILL AND BELINDA GATES
PROVIDE ANOTHER \$25M**

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has provided a critical US\$25 million grant, enabling a series of large-scale immunisation campaigns throughout eight countries in the Horn of Africa between September and December 2005.

With polio outbreaks currently affecting Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen, the campaigns will reach more than 34 million children with multiple doses of polio vaccine and boost population immunity throughout the region.

Our District Rotary Foundation emphasises that now, more than ever, we Rotarians of District 1130 must continue to work that much harder to stop polio forever. It is the clubs' contributions that help to ensure that the necessary financial resources are available.

Has your club made its contribution for this Rotary Year 2005/06. Please check.

Contributions should be forwarded to:

RFUK
c/o Suresh Gupta
11 Middle Row
London W10 5AT.