

## 2020-21 Polio Talking Points

### **Brief Overview**

- Polio eradication efforts have already made a major positive impact on our world.
- Since 1988, nearly 3 billion children have been immunized against polio, and nearly 19 million people are walking who would otherwise have been paralyzed.
- Rotary has contributed more than \$2.1 billion to global polio eradication efforts.
- In 2019, there were 176 cases of wild poliovirus, confined to just two countries – Pakistan & Afghanistan.
- We've made tremendous progress in the fight to end polio. In August 2020, the African region was certified as wild poliovirus-free, a significant milestone that would not have been possible without the dedication and support of countless Rotary members.
- In 2019-20, program awards, including PolioPlus Partners grants, totaled \$151.8 million.
- Through their generous partnership, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is committed to matching 2 to 1 every dollar that Rotary commits to polio eradication.
- Rotarians must maintain momentum in their focus on polio eradication and fundraising until we see the final wild poliovirus and during the certification period.
- Current news on polio eradication, including global case counts, is updated weekly at [www.endpolio.org](http://www.endpolio.org)

*\*all TRF contributions are unaudited*

### **African region wild polio-free certification**

- In August 2020, wild polio was certified as eradicated in the World Health Organization's (WHO) African region. This achievement comes four years after Nigeria – the last polio-endemic country in Africa – recorded its final case of wild poliovirus following decades of effort from Rotary members, GPEI partners, local and national leaders, and health workers throughout the African region.
- With the region's wild polio-free certification, five out of the six WHO regions are now free of wild poliovirus.

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- Over the course of the effort, 9 billion doses of oral polio vaccine have been administered in the African region, hundreds of millions of children have been immunized, and 1.8 million cases of wild poliovirus have been averted.
- Rotary and its members received significant positive coverage in top media outlets for our leadership in eradicating wild polio in the African region, with positive coverage appearing in [Reuters](#), [AFP](#), [TIME Magazine](#), [Die Welt](#), [SABC](#) and [BBC](#).
- The eradication of wild polio in the African region shows that polio eradication is achievable with dedication, partnership, and support from Rotary members, donors and governments.

### **Rotary, Polio, and COVID-19**

- In March 2020, the GPEI announced that the extensive polio infrastructure Rotary helped build would be used to support preparedness and response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Building on decades of experience stopping polio outbreaks, Rotary and our partners have a critical role to play in protecting communities from this global pandemic, just as we did with Ebola, yellow fever, and Avian flu. This truly represents the “Plus” in PolioPlus.
- While responding to COVID-19, Rotary and our GPEI partners are taking every step possible to continue protecting children and avoid a resurgence of polio.
- Many countries have begun resuming immunization campaigns, with every effort being taken to ensure that health workers remain safe and do not contribute to the spread of COVID-19.
- The most important thing that Rotary members can do to continue the fight to end polio is to sustain our commitment to polio eradication and reach our fundraising goal of \$50 million dollars this year for polio—while also supporting COVID-19 response activities.
- Districts are encouraged to consider giving District Designated Funds to PolioPlus. Donations to DDF are matched 1:1 by the World Fund, then 2:1 by the Gates Foundation for a total of a 6:1 match.
- In the midst of a pandemic, it is understandable that attention to polio eradication will be diverted, but this makes it all the more vital for Rotarians to remain strongly committed to fighting polio and not let our progress erode.

### **WHY DO WE NEED TO CONTINUE TO RAISE FUNDS FOR POLIO?**

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### **While we work towards zero wild polioviruses, it's vital that we:**

1. Continue immunizing up to 450 million children every year;
2. Fund hundreds of thousands of polio workers in up to 40 countries;
3. Continue our rigorous surveillance efforts, to ensure that the poliovirus is not circulating in areas where it was previously eliminated, and to respond to any outbreaks.
4. Continue our advocacy and awareness and fund raising activities, to keep momentum going and ensure that governments keep their attention focused on polio.

### **WHAT IS OUR STRATEGY TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM IN FUNDRAISING?**

- Until we see the last poliovirus, it's vital that we continue immunizing every single child, and we can only do that with the support of every one of our 1.2 million members.
- We must keep polio eradication in the spotlight in our clubs and communities, so that more people join us in our historic effort to end polio.
- To be specific, encourage clubs to set a minimum goal this year of US\$1,500 for PolioPlus.
- Encourage each district to contribute 20 percent of its available District Designated Funds (DDF) to PolioPlus.
- Encourage your clubs to hold unique and fun live or virtual fundraisers, similar to the Pedal for Polio virtual cycling event in Canada, or [Purple4Polio](#) awareness and fundraising activities in Great Britain and Ireland. Challenge them to beat our record of 5900+ events in 136 countries on World Polio Day.
- And encourage them to build on our momentum in raising funds for polio over the last year.
- We must continue to advocate for government funding and political commitment.
- (When meeting with government officials, remind them that global polio eradication is Rotary's top priority and Rotarians would appreciate their personal support and the support of their government for this issue.)

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- We can't get frustrated or slow our efforts. Instead, we need to double down on the promise we made over 35 years ago: to ensure that no child ever has to suffer the paralyzing effects of polio.
- It is crucial that we remain optimistic about the future and continue raising the funds and awareness necessary to support an end to this disease.
- Ultimately, the fact that all the work that has gone into the polio eradication effort is already helping the fight against COVID-19 is proof of the value of this investment in global health. By committing to eradicate polio, we are committing to better public health and an enhanced preparedness for future infectious disease outbreaks.

### **WORLD POLIO DAY (24 October 2020)**

- World Polio Day is a time for Rotarians from all over the world to come together, recognize our progress in our fight to end polio, and talk about the action we need to take in order to end polio for good.
- This is a great opportunity for clubs to host their own events (virtual or otherwise) on World Polio Day.
- Go to [endpolio.org/world-polio-day](https://endpolio.org/world-polio-day) for ideas on events and resources (in addition to registering your event on [endpolio.org/register-your-event](https://endpolio.org/register-your-event)).
- It is crucial that we remain optimistic about the future and continue raising the funds and awareness necessary to support the end of this disease. World Polio Day is an important opportunity for the world to hear Rotary's rallying cry to End Polio Now.

### **CLUB/DISTRICT WORLD POLIO DAY EVENTS:**

- Starting on 24 October our 2020 Online Global Update will be available for streaming on the Rotary International Facebook page and EndPolio.org in multiple languages.
- Visit the World Polio Day page on EndPolio.org for more information.
- We want to see as many Rotary clubs as possible holding World Polio Day events around the world. Let us know how your club is recognizing World Polio Day, and register your event at: <https://www.endpolio.org/register-your-event>

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- Clubs, members, and districts that register their World Polio Event on EndPolio.org by 15 October will receive early access to the Online Global Update via email and will be able to download the program a week before World Polio Day.

### **Need some ideas for your World Polio Day event?**

- Organize a viewing party for friends and club members to watch the Online Global Update.
- Dedicate a club meeting to World Polio Day and update your website with the event details.
- Create a fundraising event. Every \$1 raised is matched 2-to-1 by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Remember, additional resources, including a toolkit, are available at [endpolio.org/resource-center](http://endpolio.org/resource-center)

### **ENSURING ROTARY IS RECOGNIZED FOR ITS ROLE IN POLIO ERADICATION**

- When the world is about to be certified polio-free, there will be no shortage of willing parties ready to step forward to take a bow.
- Rotary must be proactive in ensuring that we get the credit for the extraordinary role we have played in this historic achievement.
- Recognition for our work to eradicate polio will raise Rotary's public image and better position us for stronger partnerships, increased membership, and future success.
- At the same time, Rotary is--and must remain--quick to acknowledge that we could not be where we are today in the fight against polio without our Global Polio Eradication Initiative partners.