

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a global leader in polio eradication, having **supported the delivery of 281 million vaccines to protect the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach children in Pakistan**, and supported polio outbreak vaccination efforts in Afghanistan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan. Since 2011, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, has pledged **US\$ 167 million** towards polio eradication activities through the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) and the UAE Pakistan Assistance Program.

Overall Impact of the UAE contribution to GPEI (2011 - 2017)

2011-2012 Afghanistan/Pakistan outbreak

In 2011, Afghanistan and Pakistan suffered an unexpected and significant rise in cases, underlining their position as the last reservoir of wild poliovirus type 3 in Asia. The UAE provided critical support for campaigns in high-risk districts, **immunizing more than 7.5 million children**. Following repeated immunization campaigns, no wild poliovirus type 3 has been detected in the region since 18 April 2012 and globally since 10 November 2012.

2013-2014 Horn of Africa outbreak

Countries in the Horn of Africa region experienced an explosive outbreak in 2013-2014. **A coordinated outbreak response was launched to reach over 160 million children across eight countries**. With crucial support from the UAE, **25 million children were immunized in Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia, helping to stop the outbreak**. The region has remained polio-free since 11 August 2014.

2014-2017 Pakistan

In 2014, the vast majority of cases occurred in conflict affected areas along the Afghanistan border. Thanks to UAE support, Pakistan continues to inch closer towards interrupting transmission:

- **97% reduction in the number of polio cases** nationally (from 306 children paralyzed in 2014 to 8 in 2017)
- **62% decrease in refusal rate** through social mobilization activities
- **A significant reduction in the number of children missed by polio immunization:** from 25% in 2014 to only 6% in 2017
- Skilled and committed frontline health workers **vaccinated more than 13 million children under five** repeatedly in 29 supplementary immunization activities



Community Based Vaccinators administer polio vaccinations in Pakistan, Credit: WHO/J. Swan

UAE funding also contributed to:

Community Trust in Pakistan

The UAE's support to the Communication Network (COMNet) has resulted in decreased levels of refusals and an increase in community demand for polio vaccination. Social mobilizers trained in interpersonal communication skills have led localized community engagement strategies that support repeated vaccination as a social norm, raise the risk perception of the effects of polio, underline vaccine safety and efficacy, and explain the reasons for repeated immunization campaigns. **Pakistan has one of the highest vaccine acceptance rates in the world. Nationally, fewer than 0.13% of parents refuse polio vaccination for their children.** This is coupled with improved perceptions of vaccinator performance and greater trust in local health organizations in highest-risk areas.

Community Based Vaccinators (CBV)

Community Based Vaccinators in core reservoirs and high-risk districts of Pakistan, also funded by the UAE, has been a key pillar in reducing the number of children missed during campaigns. In UAE-supported districts, more than 5,000 locally recruited, motivated, full-time, community-based vaccinators have helped to identify and reach all children under the age of five, particularly infant children inside compounds who male vaccinators cannot access. Their commitment is consistently delivering the highest immunization coverage figures in the country's history, leading to raised immunity levels and a significant reduction in the number of children contracting polio.

Impact of the UAE Pakistan Assistance Program

In 2017 alone, thanks to UAE funding to GPEI through its Pakistan Assistance Program, **almost 13 million children** were repeatedly vaccinated during polio immunization campaigns in 2017 in the 66 highest-risk districts in four Pakistani priority provinces: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Baluchistan, and Sindh.

This funding, combined with the direct UAE-PAP funding to Pakistan, resulted in:

- More than 96.23 million doses of polio vaccine delivered to children under five in the 66 highest-risk districts supported by UAE-PAP
- 98% reduction in the number of children paralyzed in the four high-risk provinces listed above: from 254 in 2014 to 6 in 2017
- 63% decrease in the average number of missed children in the four high-risk provinces listed above: from 27% in 2014 to 10% in 2017
- FATA recorded no new polio cases in 2017

Thanks to global donors, including the UAE

- 2.5 billion children have been immunized and protected from this crippling disease since 2000
- 16 million children are walking today who would otherwise be paralyzed, saving more than US\$27 billion in associated healthcare costs
- In 2017, there were fewer than 30 cases globally, compared with more than 350,000 cases a year 30 years ago
- The polio program provided a platform to distribute other health interventions, such as 1.3 billion doses of Vitamin A, contributing to saving some 1.5 million lives



Donors, including UAE Ambassador to the United States Yousef Al Otaiba, line up on stage to announce their commitment of \$1.2 billion to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative at the "Drop to Zero" polio plenary session at the 2017 Rotary International Convention in Atlanta, Georgia.

The UAE as a leading donor:

- In 2011, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced US\$100 million towards delivering life-saving vaccinations, including US\$34 million for polio immunization campaigns in Pakistan and Afghanistan in 2011-2012.
- In April 2013, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan hosted the Global Vaccine Summit, which secured more than US\$4 billion in pledges for the GPEI. His Highness also announced his continued support to the global effort, pledging US\$120 million for 2013-2017. This pledge helps support the UAE Pakistan Assistance Program to conduct polio vaccination campaigns as well as the GPEI.
- In June 2017, Mr Bill Gates announced a new personal contribution from His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed of US\$ 30 million to support global efforts to eradicate polio. This pledge is part of the UAE's continued collaboration with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to provide humanitarian assistance and healthcare to millions of people around the globe.

The UAE as an advocate:

- In 2014, the UAE worked with Image Nation to produce a documentary about polio eradication in Pakistan, which served as an important global advocacy tool. The film was spotlighted in June 2015 at a polio-focused majlis organized by the Crown Prince Court.
- To mark World Polio Day in 2015, the UAE Embassy in Washington, DC co-sponsored a reception entitled *A Conversation on the International Effort to Eradicate Polio*, which recognized progress in global eradication efforts through a panel discussion and showcasing of clips from *Every Last Child*.
- In December 2015, the UAE and the Gates Foundation co-hosted the Heroes of Polio Eradication Awards which shed light on five individuals who work tirelessly to stop polio in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria.
- In November 2017, the Reaching the Last Mile global health forum was held in partnership with the Gates Foundation and The Carter Center to catalyze action to reach the last mile in ending diseases.