

The STOP Program at CDC

Stop Transmission of Polio



Founded in 1999, the STOP Program—a **partnership between CDC, WHO, UNICEF, and Rotary International**—is a global effort to recruit, train, and deploy public health professionals from around the world for 5 ½ month assignments to strengthen local polio eradication and immunization programs.

What is the STOP Program?

The Stop Transmission of Polio (STOP) Program is part of the **Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI)**, which was launched in 1988 by the World Health Assembly.

Many countries have a shortage of skilled public health staff available to fully support polio eradication and other immunization-related efforts. WHO and UNICEF—working in conjunction with national ministries of health—request skilled, short-term consultants to support immunization programs. STOP team members are sent on 5 ½ month assignments to support these efforts. CDC provides scientific and technical expertise to GPEI, including coordinating the recruitment, training and deployment of STOP volunteers.

The work of STOP participants to prevent, detect and respond to polio cases is an important part of the global effort to achieve a polio-free world.

STOP Program: Past and Present

In the first years of the program, STOP participants worked primarily to strengthen the tracking of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP), one of the warning signs of possible polio; conduct AFP case investigation and follow-up; and support national immunization days.

The first STOP team had 25 participants, all of whom were CDC staff members. Over time, citizens from the international community have been increasingly involved in the program.

Current STOP teams are comprised largely of public health professionals from around the world, reflecting the global commitment to polio eradication. In addition, team sizes have grown substantially over the years. Currently, more than 200 participants are deployed during each of the program's two annual cycles.

Though the STOP Program's focus remains on polio activities, the role for some participants has expanded to include:

- Strengthening national immunization systems
- Reducing illness and deaths from measles
- Managing and analyzing immunization data
- Supporting the Integrated Disease Surveillance Program
- Responding to disease outbreaks and supporting other humanitarian efforts

Since STOP began, participants have:

been deployed on more than **2600 Assignments**

in more than **70 Countries**

Areas of Work

- Field Epidemiology
- Data Management
- Communication Outreach
- Immunization System Strengthening



Afghan children during a polio vaccination campaign in 2013. © M. Suba/UNICEF

STOP Participants in the field

During their assignments, STOP participants, in collaboration with local ministries of health and UN counterparts:

- Promote and conduct active AFP and other vaccine-preventable disease (VPD) surveillance.
- Participate in VPD outbreak investigations.
- Plan, monitor, and implement polio and other VPD mass vaccination campaigns, such as measles catch-up immunization campaigns.
- Develop communication and social mobilization plans to support immunization program activities.
- Support and provide capacity building for routine immunization programs and mass campaigns.
- Support and train staff on immunization data management systems.
- Plan, conduct, and support measles and rubella-related immunization activities.



Girl gets oral polio vaccine during a campaign in northern Nigeria, 2014. © AJ Williams/CDC

Life after STOP

The STOP Program facilitates the establishment of global connections among public health professionals and provides invaluable frontline field experience for team members.

After completing their assignments, STOP alumni often go on to become program managers in their countries or prominent leaders in the fields of epidemiology and global immunization.

Interested in learning more?

Visit the **STOP Website** for recruitment and other program information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/immunization/stop/index.htm>

15 Years of the STOP Program (1999 – 2014)

