



SERVE TO CHANGE LIVES

RGHF'S

OUR FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

A Newsletter for Rotary Leaders • A monthly feature



"We should not live for ourselves alone, but for the joy in doing good for others."

Arch Klumph, founder of The Rotary Foundation

Issue 237 - January 2022

Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

We are pleased to share with you the first issue of "Our Foundation Newsletter" for the year 2022. Every new year brings in opportunities for new initiatives. As you would have noticed, we are commencing a new format for Our Foundation Newsletter to be shared with you monthly. We are eager to get your feedback on this new style.

Since the last two years, the world has been fighting against the Corona Virus pandemic. Just when we were looking to overcome the impact, the virus has resurfaced with another wave hitting most countries and spreading rapidly. However, the one thing different that I have noticed in the behaviour of most people is "resilience." In the words of Richard Davidson: *Resilience is the maintenance of high levels of positive affect and well-being in the face of adversity. It is not that resilient individuals never experience negative effect, but rather that the negative effect does not persist.*

We Rotarians not only always carry a positive outlook, but we try our best to spread the optimism around and help others in need. In this year of 2022, let us continue "Doing Good in the World" and keep contributing to The Rotary Foundation.

Rotary Regards,



Jeetendra Sharma
Editor-in-Chief
RGHF's Our Foundation Newsletter

Trustee Chair's Message

January 2022

We all came into Rotary because we wanted to join with others in service and make a difference. Similarly, when Rotary teams up with like-minded organizations to work toward our shared goals, there is nothing that we can't accomplish. Partnerships amplify our impact.

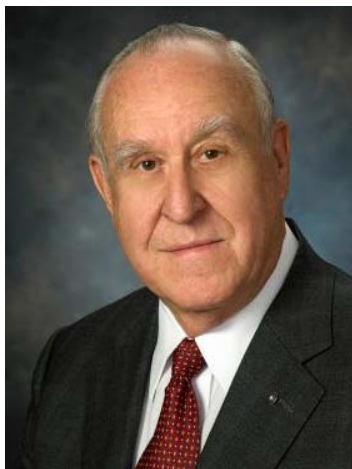
Leading through partnerships is nothing new for Rotary: We helped spearhead the formation of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Later, when the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation joined the cause, we gained a long-term fundraising and technical partner in the fight against polio. Through our partnership and the 2-to-1 fundraising match agreement with the Gates Foundation, Rotary generates \$150 million annually to end polio. We are proud that they are a part of the effort to end this disease.

Many people may not know that our work with the Gates Foundation and our other partners doesn't end with polio but includes other disease-prevention efforts. The Rotary Foundation has joined with the Gates Foundation and World Vision U.S. to co-fund a Rotary member-led program to help eliminate malaria in Zambia. Based on past partnership and future collaboration around this effort, each co-funder is contributing \$2 million for the Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia program, the first recipient of The Rotary Foundation's Programs of Scale grant.

This level of impact can also be seen in collaborations across our other areas of focus. Rotary partners with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on major initiatives at a national scale. The Rotary-USAID WASH partnership has helped communities and governments in countries such as Uganda and Ghana provide safe water, sanitation, and hygiene, impacting hundreds of thousands of lives. We are also teaming up with USAID to help fight COVID-19 and its long-term financial and social impact in Italy. Meanwhile, the Hearts of Europe program, which is funded jointly by USAID and Rotary, assists communities in Eastern Europe through global grants.

Proving our value as a trusted partner often spurs multiple mutual projects. Through the Power of Nutrition initiative, we are partnering with our polio eradication partner UNICEF and the Eleanor Crook Foundation to tackle undernutrition during early childhood.

The Rotary Foundation is far too great to keep to ourselves. Let's make sure to let the Foundation's light shine bright. In doing so, we will find new partners, gain new supporters, and increase the good we're all doing in the world.



John F. Germ

2021 – the year that set the stage for a polio-free world

2021 may go down in history as the turning point in the global effort to eradicate polio.



Vaccination team crossing river in West Garo Hills of Meghalaya. ©WHO

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, continued wild polio transmission in the remaining endemic countries and spreading outbreaks of circulating vaccine-derived polioviruses type 2 (cVDPV2), this year began with many challenges facing polio eradication efforts. But amid this new reality, countries and partners of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) intensified their efforts to protect children from lifelong paralysis.

In June, the GPEI launched the new [GPEI Strategy 2022-2026](#), which lays out the roadmap to achieving a lasting world free of all forms of polioviruses through stronger community engagement, a renewed focus on gender equity and the rollout of new tools and technologies. These new tools include the [novel oral polio vaccine type 2](#) (nOPV2), which began deployment under Emergency Use Listing (EUL) as part of the GPEI's broader polio vaccine repository to curb cVDPV2 transmission. In August, the WHO African Region [celebrated one year since it was certified wild polio-free](#), and countries recommitted to strong cVDPV2 outbreak response across the continent with the support of the GPEI.

Further critical progress took place in Afghanistan – one of two final countries endemic for wild poliovirus, along with Pakistan. For the [first time in more than three years](#), nationwide polio immunization campaigns resumed across Afghanistan reaching 8.5 million children, including 2.4 million children who were previously inaccessible.

At the same time, polio programme health workers at the forefront [continued to support](#) global COVID-19 response efforts by delivering vaccines, mobilizing communities, and countering misinformation among other activities. The use of GPEI infrastructure for health emergency response has provided critical lessons for integrating polio resources into broader health systems as more countries work towards transition and the post-certification period.



Containment area monitoring in India. ©WHO

Following dire predictions issued at the end of 2020, the polio programme once again proved its ability to adapt to programmatic, epidemiological and political developments. Entering 2022, there is much cause for cautious optimism – wild poliovirus transmission has slowed drastically, and cases of cVDPV2 have also declined compared to last year.

Importantly, commitment to achieving a lasting polio-free world is evident at all levels: by core GPEI partners, including among the Polio Oversight Board, which travelled to Pakistan twice in 2021; by health workers, communities and parents; and by country leaders worldwide who helped champion this year's milestones. With the new strategy, new tools and adapted approaches, the stage is set to achieve lasting success.

To stop all forms of polio for good, the GPEI aims to capitalize on the positive epidemiological situation leading into 2022. A key opportunity to kick-start the year will be the [WHO Executive Board meeting](#) in January, where Member States plan to discuss building on the successes of this past year by fully implementing and financing the programme's new strategy. Rotary and other key global GPEI partners are planning a renewed and intensified outreach across the broader international development community to secure the necessary financial resources to achieve success. Polio immunization campaigns will also continue in full force in both endemic and outbreak countries.

Twelve months ago, the programme was in a much different place, as WHO and UNICEF launched an [Emergency Call to Action](#) to draw attention to the need for renewed commitment. A year later, thanks to a strengthened and unified response, the GPEI is meeting the moment and is more committed than ever to end all forms of poliovirus, once and for all.

Source: www.polioeradication.org

Polio worker nominated for Presidential honour in Pakistan

Soni Farhan's work to eradicate polio has been as healing for her as it has been for the children she's determined to help.



Polio worker Soni Farhan has been selected for a Presidential Pride of Performance award, which honours individuals who are extraordinary in their field of work. © Syed Mehdi Bukhari/WHO
Contracting the infectious virus at 11 months of age, few believed Soni would ever be able to work. Today, she's a nominee for one of Pakistan's most prestigious awards.

Soni started out in the programme in 1999, initially as a vaccinator. Now a mother of three children, these days, Soni works with the programme as a social mobilizer. Her role includes dispelling people's misconceptions about the vaccine and engaging with parents about the importance of vaccinating their children.

When Soni received a notification from the Government of Pakistan that she had been selected for a Presidential Pride of Performance award, which honours individuals who are extraordinary in their field of work, she didn't quite know how she felt. "I'm not really interested in accolades, but my son and my husband were very excited" she said.

Soni says her work with the polio eradication programme has given her life meaning and purpose. "People would look at my leg and say, 'How will she work?! She can't work. But when I started working, then everyone could see, 'yes, yes she can','" she says.

"The polio programme has given me so much confidence. After I started working in polio, I had the confidence of meeting new people. Meeting family, going to weddings, all of it became easier. Before that, I had no confidence to even step out of the house," she continues.

Soni recalls how hesitant her father was when she first told him she wanted to join the programme. "He was concerned I won't be able to manage because of my health, but he understood very soon that this was something I just *had* to do. He told my mother 'let her do it!'"

During her early training as a vaccinator, Soni recalls the words of one of her trainers – 'If you can save one child from polio, then you would have served the purpose of your life'. "I knew, then, this was it," she says. "This is what I had to do."

The year Soni was diagnosed with polio – 1984 – nearly 200 other children in her neighbourhood of Liaquatabad in Karachi were also diagnosed with the virus. At the time, there were no door-to-door campaigns and children could only be vaccinated at health centres.

Today, Pakistan and Afghanistan are the last two countries in the world where wild poliovirus is endemic. In 2021, only one child was paralyzed by the virus in Pakistan and four in neighbouring Afghanistan. In 2020, a total of 84 cases were reported in Pakistan and 56 in Afghanistan.

The eldest of six siblings, Soni came from a very conservative family, where her grandmother would not let children leave the house. "In our family, all the children were born at home because the women were not allowed to leave the house, and so I was never taken to a health centre for vaccination."

"My father always lived with the regret of not vaccinating his daughter," she says. "Often parents make these decisions, and it is the child who has to suffer for all their life."

Both Soni's parents tried everything they could to heal her condition – visiting different doctors, acupuncture specialists, and anyone they could find who might offer any assurances. She also went through a very extensive operation, with steel bolts put in her leg resulting in excruciating pain that lasted for months.

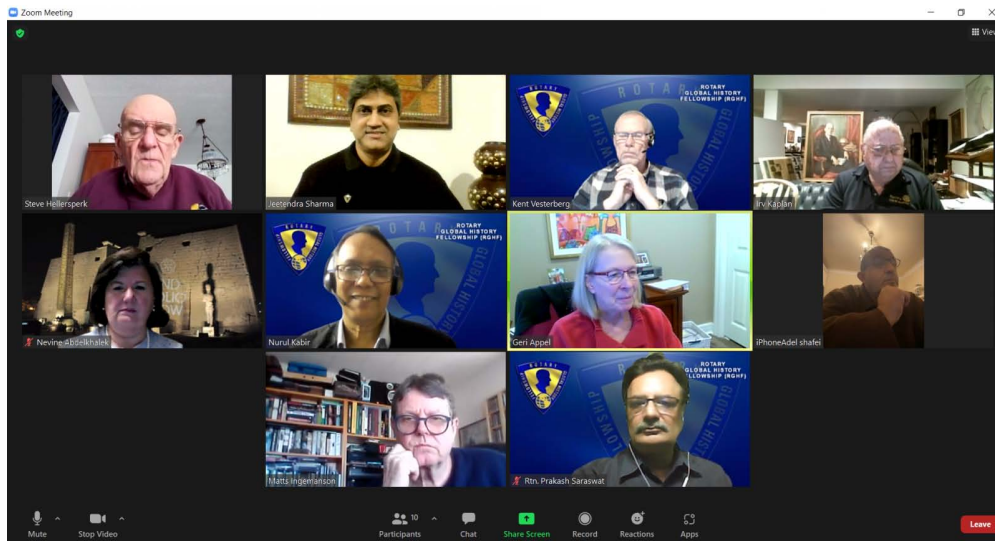
"No matter what you do, whatever you try, there is no cure for polio," she says. "I wanted to study sciences, and my teacher didn't allow me to because she would say how will you stand in labs all day. I would go to college and one of the women in the bus would see me and say 'Look at her, such a beautiful girl and look at what happened to her foot!'"

Soni says that when she is working on campaigns and some people see her, they immediately want to vaccinate their children, while others question why she is telling them to vaccinate while having polio herself.

"To them I say, I am here because I know exactly how hard it is if you are not vaccinated."

Source: www.polioeradication.org

RGHF BOD Meeting



Meeting of the RGHF Board of Directors was held virtually on January 15, 2022. There were good deliberations and some good initiatives have been discussed. Details will be shared soon.

Our Foundation Newsletter



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