

CORE GROUP POLIO PROJECT (CGPP)

The CORE Group Polio Project is a multi-country, multi-partner initiative providing financial support and on-the-ground technical guidance and support to strengthen host country efforts to eradicate polio. A U.S. secretariat serves as a global partnership liaison and provides overall technical assistance and financial management in each country to maximize and harmonize resources and coordinate collaboration among partners. CORE Group members form and staff an in-country secretariat- a small team of neutral, technical advisors, independent from any one implementing partner. The Secretariat team facilitates communication, coordination, and transparent decision-making among all partners-unifying the community-level expertise of INGOs and local NGOs with the international knowledge and strategies of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) partners.

CGPP SOUTH SUDAN SECRETARIAT

Our presence

The CORE Group Polio Project Secretariat began working in South Sudan in November 2010 and is hosted by World Vision South Sudan. For more than six years, we have worked in hard-to-reach and conflict-prone areas of South Sudan to implement activities aimed at contributing to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. In the first phase of the project, we implemented activities targeting children under the age of five and pregnant mothers through routine immunization. The project also supported polio supplementary immunization activities and community-based surveillance mostly on the Southern borders of South Sudan.

In the second and third phase of the project's implementation, CORE Group supported robust community based surveillance in 35 districts/counties in the states of Jonglei, Upper Nile, Unity and Eastern Equatoria State.

In addition, CORE Group implemented a nationwide polio independent campaign monitoring to strengthen the quality of polio campaigns in the country and cross border activities between Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo.

CORE Group has built relationships with the Ministry of Health, WHO and UNICEF at the county, state and national levels through ongoing collaboration and support.

Our approach

CORE Group South Sudan actively advocated for the involvement of the communities through community based initiatives in routine immunization, social mobilization and surveillance to contribute to reduction in child morbidity and mortality with a goal of polio eradication.

CORE Group has worked from the community to the national level to build strong community based systems. At the community level, CORE Group South Sudan supported community based acute flaccid paralysis surveillance through a network of community informants and supported both facility and community-based routine immunization and logistical support during polio campaigns in the hardest to reach areas in South Sudan. We also built and strengthened the capacities of the communities to demand and utilize the available immunization services by promoting behavior change and communication strategies.

CORE Group has also worked with local and international partners in South Sudan to increase the reach and widen the scope of the project to reach the most vulnerable children and women. CORE Group provided technical support to strengthen the capacities of the partners and their staff through institutional trainings, mentorship, on-the-job training and supportive supervision.

Our partners in South Sudan

CGPP-South Sudan Secretariat partners with three national NGOs: Bio Aid, Support for Peace and Educational Development Program (SPEDP) and Universal Network for Knowledge and Empowerment Agency (UNKEA).

Our current activities

Community-Based Acute Flaccid Paralysis Surveillance Project

Through funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, CGPP- South Sudan has established one of the biggest community-based systems in the country to improve the sensitivity of surveillance in the conflict affected states and hard-to-reach areas in Jonglei, Upper Nile, Unity and Kapoeta East in Eastern Equatoria State. The project worked through a network of community informants whose jobs are to timely report suspected acute flaccid paralysis cases and create awareness among the communities. The community informants are respected individuals from the community and include chiefs, headmen, church leaders, traditional birth attendants, teachers, local clinic owners, traditional healers, youth and women leaders. This project targeted over two million children under the age of 15 years.

CGPP-South Sudan is proud to have:

- Recruited and trained 35 County Supervisors
- Recruited and trained 202 Payam Assistants
- Identified and trained 3,237 community informants
- Improved sensitivity of acute flaccid paralysis surveillance in the states of Upper Nile, Jonglei, Unity and Kapoeta East county in Eastern Equatoria State.

Polio Independent Campaign Monitoring Project

CGPP-South Sudan conducts independent post-polio campaign monitoring by targeting three million children under the age of five across the entire country each year. The project began in 2014 and is funded by USAID. CGPP and its partners train and deploy central supervisors to each state who in turn recruit teachers from each county to carry out household data collection once house-to-house vaccination is completed. The MOH, WHO and UNICEF utilize these results to inform subsequent rounds of polio campaigns and direct communication plans. Through this effort, CGPP-South Sudan was able to:

- Train and deploy 20 central supervisors each polio campaign round
- Train and deploy over 200 data collectors as independent monitors to collect data from the households on the status of the campaign in each round of the polio campaigns
- Reach over 10,000 households during each polio campaign round

Cross border initiatives

South Sudan and the Horn of Africa experienced a series of wild poliovirus outbreaks in 2008 and 2009 and again in 2013 and 2014. Somalia was the epicenter of these outbreaks with the wild polio virus spreading to Kenya and Ethiopia. The eruption of violent conflict in the three former States of Upper Nile, Jonglei and Unity in December 2013 further increased the risk in South Sudan of the re-emergence of wild poliovirus outbreak due to potential importation from neighbouring countries and the increase in the pool of unvaccinated children resulting from mass displacement, destruction of health infrastructures and lack of immunization.

In April 2014, the Core Group Polio Project partnership established the first Special Vaccination Posts (SVPs) in South Sudan; both international permanent vaccination posts and interstate vaccinations posts were created to vaccinate children under 15 years with one dose of oral polio vaccine. The interstate SVP targeted children crossing from states severely affected by the conflict to relatively less affected states. The international SVPs were established in the busy routes along the international borders of South Sudan with Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, DRC and Sudan to vaccinate children fleeing from South Sudan.

To strengthen collaboration and coordination between neighboring countries, CGPP initiated local cross border collaboration meetings with Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo to share information on surveillance, routine immunization and polio supplementary immunization as a measure to strengthen polio eradication efforts in the region. CGPP-South Sudan succeed in the following:

- The establishment of four cross border health committees in Kapoeta, Magwi, Kajo-keji and Morobo counties.
- The establishment of 15 permanent special vaccination posts along border points.
- The vaccination of 81,862 children 0-15 years with 1,514 of the children vaccinated being zero dose between 2015-2016.
- Conducted over 15 cross border meetings with neighboring countries to strengthen collaboration and coordination among countries.

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