

Interrupting Transmission of Vaccine Derived Poliovirus Using Community Volunteers

Nigeria and the rest of Africa was declared free from the Wild Polio Virus Type 1 (WPV 1) on August 25, 2020. This marked a significant milestone after the Polio Eradication Initiative (PEI) was launched in 1988. Between 1988 and 2020 when WPV1 was eradicated, thousands of children were paralyzed across the world including Nigeria.

A major challenge now, is the outbreak of Circulating Vaccine Derived Polio Virus Type 2 (cVDPV2) which is threatening the gains of the PEI. Presently, Nigeria has 971 cases of cVDPV2 out of which there are 404 cases of Acute Flaccid Paralysis representing about 42% of the total cases. This relatively high percentage of paralytic cases reflects the level of threat cVDPV2 outbreak is to the Nigerian child.

CORE Group Partners Project, a USAID funded project in Northern Nigeria whose goal is to contribute to Polio Eradication by increasing Population Immunity and enhancing surveillance for Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) has contributed significantly to the outbreak response to cVDPV2 using its community volunteers who number 1,140 across 5 states in the Polio High States of Northern Nigeria. 2 of the 5 states (Borno and Yobe) are in the highly insecure Northeast region of Nigeria while 3 (Kano, Kaduna and Katsina) are in the volatile, restive Northwest region of Nigeria where Banditry, kidnapping and other forms of opportunistic crime have become common.

Through funding from USAID, CGPP volunteers vaccinated 315,965 children out of a target of 318,148 representing a very high vaccination coverage of 99.3%.