

Rebuilding Afghanistan

Eliminating Polio

Initiative

The United States and other donors worked with the Afghanistan Ministry of Health in May 2002 to vaccinate approximately six million children under the age of five with the oral polio vaccine. Tens of thousands of health workers were dispatched across the country by plane, car, and on foot to reach children living in rural homes and villages. The involvement of female vaccinators, announcements by the mullahs, effective vaccination at the refugee crossing points, and hundreds of supervisors and monitors have helped assure high vaccination coverage. USAID coordinated this effort with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and nongovernmental organizations. USAID provides financial support for polio eradication in Afghanistan through WHO.



Photo by Alejandro Chicheri

Polio is disappearing from Afghanistan.

Results

Polio is disappearing from Afghanistan due to the remarkable success of the national immunization days organized by the Afghan government in collaboration with USAID and other donors. In 2001, there were 11 cases of polio. Only one case was confirmed by late 2002.

Website: www.usaid.gov/afghanistan

Press Office: 202-712-4320

Challenge

Afghanistan is one of only 10 countries in the world that reported cases of wild poliovirus in 2001. Since the global polio eradication initiative began in 1988, the number of countries with new polio cases has decreased from 125 to 10. There has been a 99 percent reduction in the number of cases worldwide with fewer than 500 in 2001. The final stages of eradication are the most difficult. Children must receive their routine immunizations and continue to participate in all extra rounds of polio immunization to eliminate the remaining instances of the virus.

Success Story

USAID

United States Agency for International Development

