

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 on assignments to strengthen local immunization systems.

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 support polio eradication and other immunization and surveillance efforts. In many of those countries, WHO and UNICEF—in conjunction with national ministries of health—request skilled, short-term consultants recruited by the STOP Program to support immunization programs and vaccine-preventable disease surveillance. STOP team members are deployed to support these programs for a maximum of two 11-month assignments.

STOP participants play a critical role in global efforts to eradicate polio and eliminate other vaccine preventable diseases.

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 investigations and follow-up; and support national polio vaccination campaigns.

The first STOP team had 25 participants, all of whom were CDC staff members. Over time, the STOP Program has modified its recruitment strategy to recruit international public health professionals with valuable experience working in their own countries and abroad.

In addition, team sizes have grown substantially over the years. Now more than 240 participants are deployed during each annual cycle of the program.

Though the STOP Program continues to focus on polio eradication, its scope has expanded to include strengthening surveillance for all vaccine preventable diseases and improving immunization systems as a whole. Key areas of work include:

- Strengthening routine immunization systems and supplementary immunization activities
- Building local capacity for VPD surveillance
- Improving reporting, analysis, and use of immunization and surveillance data
- Boosting communications and advocacy to improve immunization uptake
- Responding to disease outbreaks

Since STOP began **2,108** participants have:

deployed on more than **4,399 Assignments**

in more than **77 Countries**

Areas of Work

- Field Epidemiology
- Communications
- Data Management
- Immunization System Strengthening



STOP participant in Liberia checking a child's health card and vaccination status. © WM Workie/STOP

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 and analysis
- Plan, conduct, and support measles and rubella-related immunization activities



Smiling children and STOP participant in Syria after successful vaccination campaign. © AF Inam /STOP

Benefits of STOP Participation

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 global immunization field. Many alumni secure positions with WHO, UNICEF, ministries of Health, and international NGOs.

Interested in learning more?

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

www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/immunization/stop/index.htm

or

A.J. Williams at AWilliams1@cdc.gov; +1 404 639 1343 for more information

19 Years of the STOP Program (1999 – 2018)

