



World Health Organization

Nigeria

Polio Eradication Program



The Big Actions

A publication that covers the contributions, milestones and bottlenecks of WHO in the fight against Polio in Nigeria.

February 2026

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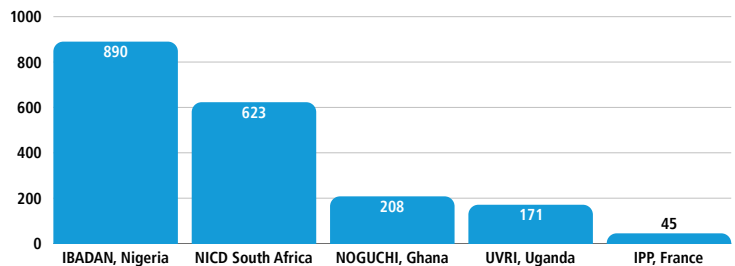


WHO Global Polio Laboratory Network, fully accredits Nigeria for genomic sequencing

Based on the strong performance demonstrated in Quality Control processes, initial training and parallel testing, the Polio laboratory at Ibadan is hereby authorized, effective January 1, 2026, to release sequencing results directly to the program.

Dr Anfumbom Kfutwah (Jude)
Regional Polio laboratory and ES coordinator

Polio virus sequencing workload in Africa 2025



Community Touch

- >545,000** supervision visits to Health Facilities conducted by WHO Field Volunteers in 2025.
- >237,000** Active Case Search conducted by WHO Officers in 2025.
- >146,000** Community Information on Polio submitted by community informants.

Surveillance

- 15k+** AFP cases reported in 2025 by surveillance actors.
- 3034** Insecure settlements visited by WHO Officers to search for Polio cases.

Vaccination

- 39M CHILDREN UNDER 5** were vaccinated in each of the four rounds of the Polio Campaign in 2025

Impact

- 31%** reduction of Polio cases has been recorded between 2024/2025.

Data Source: 2024-2025 Nigeria Polio Statistics 2026 Wk04

WHO Remains committed



The WHO Representative and PEP Team Lead at The Beggars Camp, Makoko, Lagos Nigeria

In 2025, the World Health Organization (WHO) reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the Government of Nigeria in interrupting all forms of polio transmission. As one of the priority countries in the global effort to stop circulating variant poliovirus type 2 (cVPV2), WHO Nigeria intensified community-centered strategies to overcome barriers affecting outbreak interruption—particularly among populations affected by insecurity, those in riverine and hard-to-reach areas, urban slums, migrant communities, internally displaced persons, and groups facing multi-dimensional social vulnerabilities.



Christiana Oyeyiola, LGAF, Lagos, leading the WHO Representative and the PEP Team Lead through the corridors of Makoko Communities in Lagos.

With the dedication of more than **4,000 surge personnel**, WHO and its partners implemented innovative approaches that enabled the successful delivery of **four rounds of polio vaccination campaigns**, reaching over 39 million children under five with polio and other routine immunization antigens.

In addition, WHO strengthened surveillance efforts through **over 300,000 settlement visits each quarter**, working closely with **more than 96,000 trained community informants** to enhance the early detection of potential polio cases. These sustained efforts contributed to a **31% reduction in polio cases in 2025**.

As Nigeria accelerates its push to interrupt cVPV2 transmission in 2026, **continued donor investment is essential to sustain vaccination outreach, strengthen surveillance, and protect every child—no matter where they live—from polio.**

Reaching those left behind the lines of insecurity and geographic isolation: Katsina and Kebbi

In the security-strained regions of Northwest Nigeria, the WHO is placing the human journey at the center of its mission. Guided by the leadership of Dr. Adamu Abdulnasir Hamza in Katsina and Dr. Bala Nasiru Zurmi in Kebbi, the organization reimagined Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) sites and transit routes as vital sanctuaries for immunization. In Katsina, where 80% of families originate from high-risk zones, this compassionate strategy reached nearly 90,000 children. Most profoundly, 40% of these were "zero-dose" children—little ones who had never been reached with vaccination.

In the isolated corners of Kebbi state, WHO leveraged deep community trust to navigate insecure areas. By entering 101 unreachable settlements, teams brought life-saving care to over 25,000 children, including 12,000 living in the heart of instability. These numbers represent more than just data; they are a testament to a generation of children given a chance at a healthy future.



CMAM Site supervision by Katsina SC, Adamu Abdulnasir Hamza

National Impact 2025

Children vaccinated: 7,832,786
Insecure settlements visited: 54,000

Nigeria Polio Campaign
Update 2025



WHO Field Volunteer, Bishir Mohammed Hassan, in Wagini Ward, Batsari LGA, Katsina state, during vaccination exercise

Restoring Hope Beyond the Frontlines: WHO Katsina's Mission to Protect the "Invisible" Children of Displacement

The WHO Katsina team has turned internally displaced persons (IDP) camps into vital frontlines for health equity in the face of persistent security challenges by strategically leveraging existing government structures to reach families fleeing conflict-prone areas. This focused operation spanned 6 LGAs and 23 wards, with teams navigating more than 100 settlements to reach children who had been previously cut off from the health system by instability.

Out of 2,266 children vaccinated, 1061 were identified as zero-dose cases. This intervention underscores a profound commitment to the principle that no child's health should be a casualty of conflict.

"If the Children are Here, We Must Come Too": Navigating the Tide to Protect 1.4 Million Children in Nigeria's Deepest Creeks

In Nigeria's riverine frontiers where over 70% of settlements are water-accessible only, WHO bridged the gap by funding boat hires and logistics to bypass high transport costs and fragile cold chains. In Bayelsa, this empowered teams to reach 89 of 105 wards and 19,000 households, while in Makoko, WHO-led micro-planning mapped canoe routes for 82 teams to reach floating homes. This ensured that geography was no longer a barrier to life-saving care.

The impact was definitive: 36 true AFP cases were verified, maintaining surveillance coverage above 90%, with a total of 1,480,627 children vaccinated across 6,734 riverine settlements during the 2025 campaigns. From the 43,436 children protected in Makoko, to the millions across the delta, WHO's support validated Bayelsa State Epidemiologist, Dr. Biobelu Abaye's belief that the "surveillance net is still strong." As WHO Field Volunteer Mr. Gwonon puts it, "If the children are here, then we must come here too."



Dr. Kennedy Adejoh and Mr. Gwonon during the vaccination exercise in riverine settlements, Makoko, Lagos, 2025

National Impact 2025

Children vaccinated: 1,480,627
Insecure settlements visited: 6,734

Nigeria Polio Campaign
Update 2025



North-West Nigeria Boosts Polio Eradication with Strategic Inter-State Border Vaccination Campaign

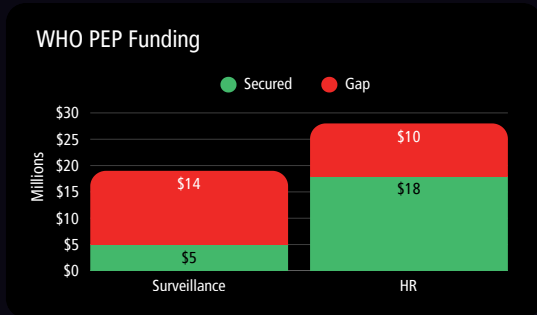
Zamfara - Sokoto - Kebbi- Katsina Border Vaccination

Nov/Dec 2025

In a strategic response to the North-West Zone’s 74% contribution to Nigeria’s confirmed cVPV2 cases in 2025, a **specialized inter-state border vaccination campaign successfully reached 84% of 378 targeted high-risk settlements**. Conducted between November and December 2025 across 38 LGAs and 110 wards in Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara. The three-round initiative utilized a house-to-house strategy to administer nOPV2 and routine antigens. The operation achieved a 30% reduction in "zero-contact" settlements—communities previously missed by all immunization activities—and ensured that 44% of the planned areas received all three scheduled visits.

The impact of the intervention was highlighted by the vaccination of 3,423 "zero-dose" children who had never before received any immunization. Furthermore, the campaign strengthened critical surveillance by identifying 23 suspected cases of Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP), eight of which were verified as true cases. Despite persistent challenges such as insecurity and community displacements, the program successfully closed significant immunity gaps in these "silent" border zones by leveraging community gatekeepers and cross-border coordination.

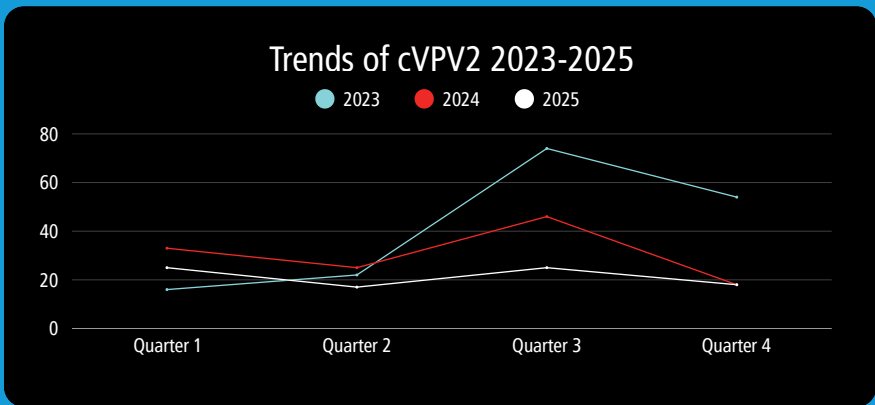
"If you fund one thing, fund surveillance."
 - Dr. Bello Inuwa Mohammed
 Jigawa State Coordinator



- Areas affected**
- Frequency of visit to priority surveillance sites.
 - Frequency of engagements with communities.
 - Frequency of data review and capacity building.
 - Surge personnel in priority areas

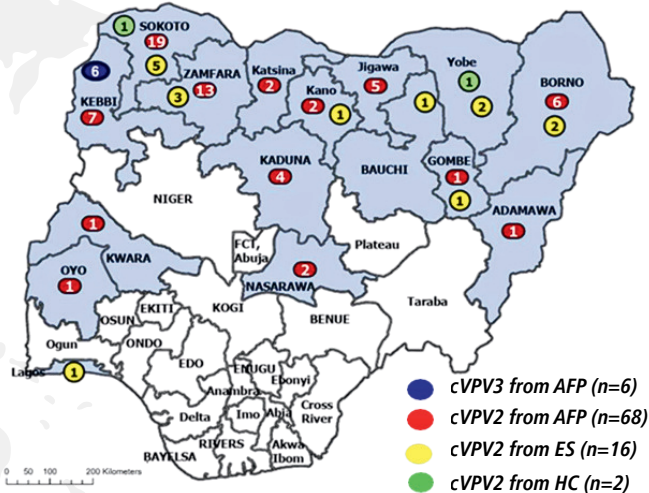
Polio Updates

Data as at 21st Jan. 2026



cVPV2	2023	2024	2025
Cases Reported	166	122 ⬇️	85 ⬇️
# of states with reported cases	15	15 —	16 ⬆️
# of LGAs with reported cases	67	70 ⬆️	58 ⬇️
# of Wards with reported cases	106	97 ⬇️	94 ⬇️

cVPV2 and cVPV3 isolated in 2025



Data Source: 2024-2025 Nigeria Polio Statistics 2026 Wk04

Other articles



Nigeria's national Polio Laboratories Unite to Bolster Eradication Efforts

The first ever NPL Annual Retreat, 2025

IBADAN/MAIDUGURI — In a landmark event for Nigeria's public health sector, staff from the nation's two National Polio Laboratories (NPLs) convened for a three-day intensive retreat from November 21 to 23, 2025. This meeting marked the first time in history that personnel from both facilities gathered to synchronize efforts, share best practices, and refine their role in the global mission to eradicate poliovirus.



Walking the Extra Mile to Protect the Unseen Child

WHO Sokoto contributes its quota

WHO Sokoto State Office under the leadership of Dr. Mohammad Yusuf Arungunu, conducted an immunization audit on September 8th and 9th in the Rabah and Tambuwal local government areas, Sokoto state. This initiative focused on protecting vulnerable children in affected settlements like Gwaddodi and Danmadi by identifying gaps in service delivery and ensuring every child received life-saving vaccines.



Beyond Security Barriers: 154,508 High-Value Children Vaccinated Along the Zamfara-Katsina State Borders

The commitment remains the same

In the "Axis of Intractable Transmission," states where conflict and difficult terrain have created a sanctuary for the poliovirus, a breakthrough strategy is shifting the narrative. By collapsing borders and operating as a unified front, the governments of Katsina and Zamfara states, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), have vaccinated 154,508 children.



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IBADAN & MAIDUGURI — In a landmark event for Nigeria's public health sector, staff from the nation's two National Polio Laboratories (NPLs) convened for a three-day intensive retreat from November 21 to 23, 2025. This meeting marked the first time in history that personnel from both facilities gathered to synchronize efforts, share best practices, and refine their role in the global mission to eradicate poliovirus.

Nigeria holds a unique position in the **World Health Organization's African Region (AFRO)** lab network as the only country maintaining two distinct national polio laboratories: the Ibadan NPL, established in 1993, and the Maiduguri NPL, founded in 1999.

A Unified Front for Eradication

The retreat brought together a high-level assembly of experts, including laboratory staff, members of the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) Surveillance Working Group (SWG), the Incident Manager (IM), and the Chairman of the National Certification Committee (NCC).

The primary objective was to reinforce the laboratories' critical mandate: providing the vital virological information necessary to target resources effectively. In a country where the virus has been endemic, the NPLs serve as the "eyes" of the program, delivering timely and accurate data that guides immunization activities and contain potential virus spread.



Focusing on Quality and Excellence

Recognizing that the success of the eradication program hinges on the reliability of lab results, the retreat placed a heavy emphasis on the Quality Management System (QMS). Key areas of deliberation included:

Operational Standards: In-depth discussions on document and record control, quality indicators, and strategies for continual improvement.

Audit Compliance: A comprehensive review of the implementation status of the most recent WHO AFRO Audit.

Future Planning: The review of current Lab QMS protocols and the collaborative development of a robust Quality Improvement work-plan.

Innovation: The sharing of institutional best practices and the identification of potential research areas to further the science of polio surveillance.

Potential research areas were also mapped out, with a focus on:

Advancing Polio Surveillance: Exploring new methodologies to detect the virus in hard-to-reach populations.

Virological Trends: Analyzing genetic data to better understand the movement of the virus across Nigeria's borders

Deliverables

This covered motivated staff, updated knowledge on PEP and the role of the Lab in achieving the eradication, Expanded Network, Lessons from shared experiences and Developed QMS improvement workplan for each of the Labs.

The ultimate goal is ensuring that every drop of vaccine and every dollar of resource is deployed exactly where the science says it is needed most.

Strategic Impact

By aligning the operations of the Ibadan and Maiduguri facilities, Nigeria aims to sharpen its response to poliovirus circulation. The insights gained during these three days are expected to lead to more focused immunization campaigns, ensuring that resources reach the areas where they are most needed to achieve a polio-free future.



Walking the Extra Mile to Protect the Unseen Child

WHO Sokoto contributes its quota

September 2025

The World Health Organization (WHO) Sokoto State Office, under the leadership of **Dr. Mohammad Yusuf Arungu**, conducted an immunization audit on September 8th and 9th in the Rabah and Tambuwal local government areas, Sokoto state. This initiative focused on protecting vulnerable children in affected settlements like Gwaddodi and Danmadi by identifying gaps in service delivery and ensuring every child received life-saving vaccines. The WHO played a central role by deploying a dedicated workforce, including field volunteers and facilitators, who worked directly with families through "Operation Show Me Your Child Health Card" to verify and boost immunity, particularly through IPV and nOPV2 vaccinations.

The impact of this audit was substantial, with a total of **1,188 children in Rabah and 2,403 in Tambuwal receiving the nOPV2 vaccine through house-to-house efforts**, with **approximately 62% of identified children in Gwaddodi and 64% in Danmadi being zero-dose, bringing hope where it seems lost**. Beyond direct medical intervention, the WHO strengthened the local health system by building the capacity of field volunteers and providing essential health education to parents and traditional birth attendants. This mission underscores the WHO's commitment to reaching every child, even when faced with significant hurdles such as local insecurity and difficult geographic access.



One of the WHO LGAFs supervising a team and cross-checking their tally sheet during Immunization audit exercise in Danmadi village, Tambuwal LGA



Distributing pluses to children after vaccination by one of the teams in Danmadi village, Tambuwal LGA, during Immunization audit exercise



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The commitment remains the same

Nov/Dec2025

In the "Axis of Intractable Transmission," states where conflict and difficult terrain have created a sanctuary for the poliovirus, a breakthrough strategy is shifting the narrative. By collapsing borders and operating as a unified front, the governments of Katsina and Zamfara states, in collaboration with the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, have vaccinated **154,508 children**. This task was achieved through three intensive cycles of Targeted Special Interventions (TSI), penetrating **48 high-risk settlements** along the interstate border.

The mission's success rested on the engagement of local resident vaccinators. This strategy helped to build trust with community members and lowered the risks of attacks on vaccination team members and ensured the teams could move where outsiders could not. Despite unpredictable security situation and the difficult terrain, the teams delivered life-saving vaccines while simultaneously intensifying surveillance. Their vigilance resulted in the reporting of three AFP cases that would have otherwise gone undetected in the shadows of the border.



FV supporting border vaccination at Yandu, Bukkuyum LGA, Zamfara State

For years, border settlements in Batsari, DanMusa, Faskari, Kankara, Sabuwa, and Safana LGAs have remained reservoirs for the virus due to restricted access because of insecurity. To bridge the gap, the TSI was designed to surmount the borders and prioritize the child. *"There are settlements we cannot reach from the Katsina side, but the Zamfara team can access easily, and vice versa,"* explains Dr. Abdulnasir Adamu, WHO State Coordinator. By allowing teams to operate from either side, the strategy bypassed security barriers to vaccinate **166 zero-dose children** with nOPV2 drops, while providing **3,286 children** with IPV and **2,301** with **Penta vaccines**.

As these cycles conclude, the lesson for the future is clear: collaboration and integration are the key to eradication. Dr. Kabir, Incident Manager of the Katsina State EOC, emphasized that the blend of resident-led teams, cross-border coordination and the integration of health services are critical to the success of the polio program. To ensure the poliovirus is effectively contained, the recommendation is to sustain these "collapsed border" strategy ensuring that no matter which side of the line a child lives on, they are reached with life-saving vaccines.



Field Volunteer with a team vaccinating in one of the security compromised border settlements in Wagini ward of Batsari LGA, Katsina State.



"The time has come for us to end polio once and for all. Every unvaccinated child is a risk to all children in our communities. We must strengthen newborn and defaulter tracking systems to ensure every child receives the necessary vaccines." - *Alhaji Sama'ila Muhammad Mera, NTLC Chairman on primary health care, Kebbi State*



Field Viewpoint



Dr. Jalal-Eddeen Saleh
North-East, Zonal Coordinator

"With a detection of at least 2,790 AFP cases where 40% were from security-compromised and border areas in the Northeast Zone in 2025, the WHO has revitalized systems across high-risk LGAs, transforming "inaccessible" areas into zones of protection, ensuring that no child was forgotten."



Dr. Asma'i Zeenat Kabir
North-Central, Zonal Coordinator

"To ensure no child is left behind in the North-Central Zone in Nigeria, WHO teams in Nasarawa and Kwara States, vaccinated 595 children in Nasarawa LGA, and 2,472 children in Kaiama LGA in Kwara state, bringing a total of 33 previously unreachable zero-dose children in both states into the safety of the health system."



Dr. Adamu Haruna Ismaila
North-West, Zonal Coordinator

"In the North-West zone in 2025, over 6,000 under-five children were vaccinated in security-compromised areas in Sokoto and 82,500 in Kano, a 90% reduction in cVDPV2 cases (from 29 in 2024 to 3 in 2025) was recorded in Kano, reaching over 1,051 previously missed settlements. Kebbi state vaccinated over 25,000 children and expanded IPV access in underserved settlements."



Dr. Kolude Olufunmilola O.
South-South, Zonal Coordinator

"In 2025, WHO demonstrated a relentless commitment to protecting children across the South-South Zone, where 52% of LGAs are riverine. Navigating these complex terrains, WHO officers conducted active case searches and verified reports by boat in remote settlements like Ogbia and Ekeromor in Bayelsa state. This frontline grit resulted in 1,723 reported Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) cases, with the zone achieving a remarkable 99% stool adequacy."



Dr. Isiaka Ayodeji Hassan
South-West, Zonal Coordinator

"In 2025, WHO spearheaded a comprehensive health transformation across the Southwest Zone, approaching monitoring and surveillance from a different perspective. The impact of WHO's rigorous monitoring was profound, with 99% of notified cases verified and field volunteers conducting 47,372 e-checklist supervisions, leading to a reduction in data quality issues in Lagos health facilities from 45% to 25%."



Dr. Igboekwu Chukwumuanya
South-East, Zonal Coordinator

"For the first time in 2025, the Southeast Zone of Nigeria, recorded zero cases of cVDPV2 after a two-year cycle of persistent cVDPV2 outbreaks since 2019. The WHO-led "Super Sunday" initiative was pivotal, reaching 2.48 million children (40% of the total target) in a single day, converting ₦1.987 billion in funding into a protective shield for 6 million children under five."