



## FOCUS ON POLIO

### A STRONG PARTNERSHIP

UNICEF chief Ann Veneman on working with Rotary

### FACES IN THE FIELD

Meet a Rotarian who's leading volunteer efforts in India

### REACHING OUT TO INDIA'S MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

# GLOBAL OUTLOOK

## Advocating for eradication

To rid the world of polio will take money, vaccine, and relationships

For some Rotarians, the summary of achievements in fighting polio has become so familiar that it is easy to lose sight of just how remarkable those achievements have been. By every conceivable measure, the progress that has been made since Rotary announced the launch of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988 has been extraordinary.

Consider this: In 1988, polio infected 1,000 children each day; in 2007, fewer than 2,000 cases were reported for the entire year. The incidence of polio has been reduced by 99 percent, and the number of polio-infected nations has dropped from 125 to just 4 (Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan).

Anand Balachandran, interagency coordinator of the World Health Organization, says that these accomplishments would not have been possible “without Rotary’s original vision of a polio-free world, and its longstanding leadership and support.” Indeed, over the last 20 years, Rotarians have mobilized by the hundreds of thousands to help vaccinate more than two billion children. And Rotarians from clubs throughout the world have contributed US\$700 million to the cause.

Administering vaccines and raising funds are two essential and highly visible parts of the campaign.

In addition to continuing these activities, achieving the goal of eradication will require an extra push in what Balachandran calls “the vital third pillar” of any major public health victory: advocacy.

“In the remaining polio-endemic countries, it is critical that the governments at the very highest levels are fully committed to polio eradication,” he says. “They must be willing to use the entire government apparatus to conduct successful polio eradication activities and

### What is Global Outlook?

Welcome to Global Outlook, a new supplement for the Rotary World Magazine Press that spotlights Rotary’s work on the global stage. Published by Rotary International, each edition of this quarterly explores a theme in depth. Global Outlook will emphasize that Rotary is an international organization that works best when it connects people of various nationalities with a common vision. Find us online at [www.rotary.org/go](http://www.rotary.org/go).

reach and vaccinate every child.”

Recognizing the importance of advocacy to secure government support and funding, Rotary first launched a task force to work with donor governments in 1995. In the 13 years since it began, countries including the United States, Japan, and the Netherlands have given an estimated \$4.1 billion in funding specifically dedicated to polio eradication.

Although securing financial support is critical, it isn't the only job of advocacy. It is also important to make sure that governments make eradication a priority for the well-being of their people.

According to Balachandran, “advocacy by senior Rotary leaders with heads of state, by Rotarians in polio-affected countries, by Rotarians with access to major multilateral organizations, and by senior Rotarians with leaders in donor countries has been invaluable to ensure that there is political commitment for polio eradication.”

The key step that became the proverbial leap forward occurred in 2002, when polio eradication was formally included as an agenda item at the G8 summit. Balachandran says that “Rotary's leadership was critical” to that achievement, and continued advocacy by Rotary has been pivotal in keeping polio eradication on the G8 agenda. He also applauds Rotary's advocacy efforts with the U.S. government, which is the leading donor country in the cause of global polio eradication.

“In many of the polio-affected countries, there are numerous competing interests for the government, and health often receives a low priority,” Balachandran says. “In this environment, ensuring that the governments take even one single case of polio as a major risk that could threaten the entire global eradication effort is a challenge. Rotary has

been superb in supporting the governments and helping them make the right decisions.”

Today, 27 Rotarians volunteer as national advocacy advisers, and an extended group of past RI presidents and other senior leaders provides critical support. Among those Balachandran singles out for praise is Robert S. Scott, the retired physician who chairs the International PolioPlus Committee. Scott has been a central figure in advocating Rotary's polio eradication efforts, working with WHO officials and donor governments and calling on

Rotarians to support Rotary's US\$100 Million Challenge.

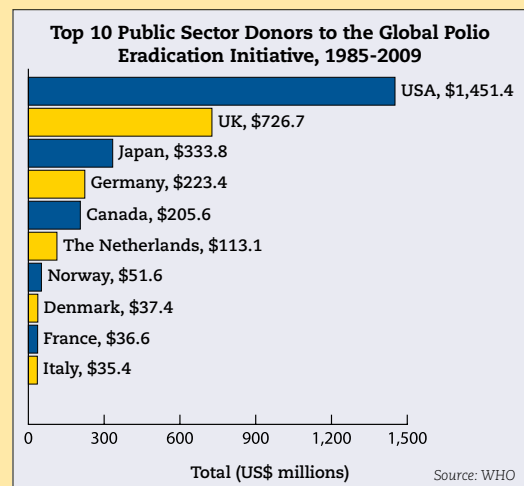
Scott cites several challenges to the advocacy effort. “With the eradication initiative going on more than 20 years now, many of the ministers in the G8 have changed and many do not even know that polio is still a problem,” he explains. “With each change of minister, we have to start all over again.”

Like the marathon runner who knows that the last 100 meters of a race are the toughest, Scott understands that eradicating the final 1 percent of polio is the hardest

## Behind the numbers

By the time the world is certified polio free, Rotary's contributions to the global polio eradication effort will exceed US\$850 million, a significant contribution (see pie chart). “The funds contributed by Rotary and other private-sector organizations are about 15 percent of the total,” explains International PolioPlus Committee Chair Robert Scott. The bigger part – more than two-thirds, in fact – comes from the world's nations.

This underscores the critical role of advocacy and recognition of the support of governments. One example is German Chancellor Angela Merkel, an honorary member of the Rotary Club of Hansestadt Stralsund in Berlin, who has consistently reminded fellow G8 leaders during summit meetings to provide their share to polio eradication. To further promote the importance of polio eradication among German government officials, the German Federal Ministry



for Economic Cooperation and Development held an exhibit called “Polio: The Last Chapter” by photographer Jean-Marc Giboux.

One of the ways Rotary recognizes political and financial leadership is through its Polio Eradication Champion Award, which was presented to Merkel in May at the same time as the photo exhibit.

**Matthias Schütt**

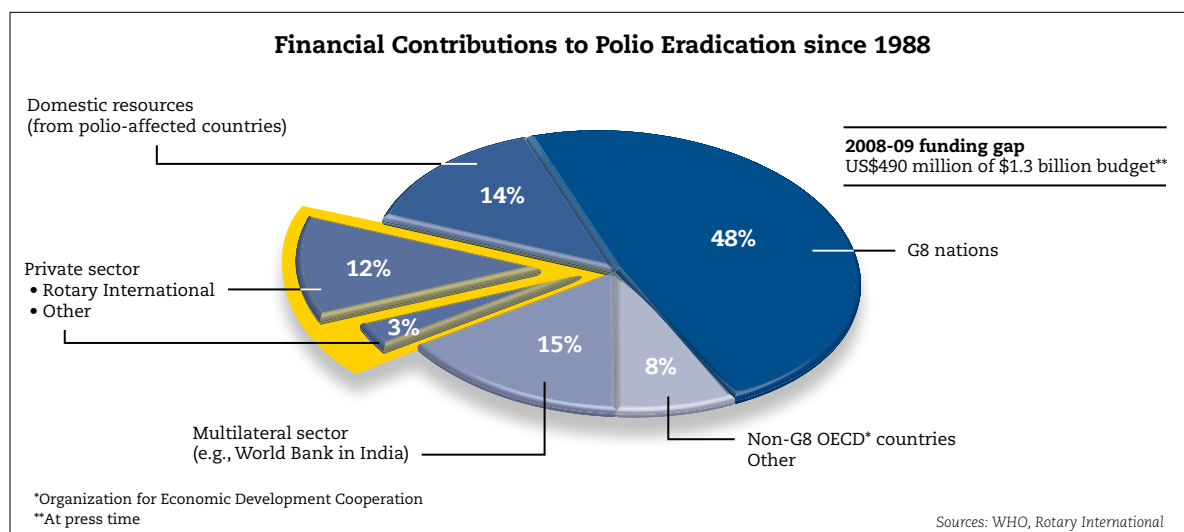
part of the campaign. He appreciates the irony that the more the polio eradication initiative succeeds, the more difficult it is to maintain a strong focus. “Undoubtedly, it is harder,” he says. “When there are fewer than 2,000 cases per year as compared to 1,000 per day when we started – and with the pandemic of AIDS, mounting malaria cases, tuberculosis on the rise again, and of course, all the diseases associated with contaminated water – it is very

Donor countries also want to see strong, visible commitment to polio eradication in countries they are supporting. Busuyi Onabolu, a member of the African Regional PolioPlus Committee and chair of the Nigeria PolioPlus Committee who works with the public health sector in Nigeria, has a view from the final battleground in the eradication campaign.

According to Onabolu, at the national level, Nigeria strongly sup-

ministerial level, changes in local government officials from one year to the next make Onabolu’s efforts in Nigeria more difficult. “We had a slowdown in momentum last year,” he says, “and that was a wake-up call. We are intensifying our advocacy campaigns this year.”

Onabolu’s day-to-day advocacy work involves frequent travel and meetings with government officials at all levels. “It seems I am in meetings all the time, but I am rarely



difficult to explain to the financial and health ministers the continued need for large funds to finally eradicate polio.”

Despite his unshakable optimism (“Polio eradication is realistic and will happen”), Scott does express disappointment with some of the G8 countries, which he says have not yet fulfilled the financial support they promised at the Gleneagles summit in 2005. “I have believed for many years that our chief stumbling block is lack of adequate financial backing. This is still the case and is now aggravated by the decreased support of the G8 group. I encourage every Rotarian to keep the faith as I and others try to keep the pressure on the donor governments.”

ports the polio eradication effort. But local governments, of which there are hundreds, do not see polio eradication as their program. “They see it as a program being done by foreign organizations,” he says. “We are trying very hard to get them to change that posture.”

Even nationally, however, advocacy is a challenge, he says, because “we are competing with other health needs, such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. The government must fund those as well. Our responsibility is that we keep polio on the front burner. We position it as one of the necessary pieces to strengthen the entire health sector.”

Just as the turnover of personnel can pose problems at the G8

able to attend my own Rotary club meetings,” he says.

He insists that what might seem to some a thankless task is not. “I have seen the joy in the faces of people when they are immunizing people,” he says. “Thanks to the polio eradication program, one appreciates people a lot more. I am grateful to this program for giving me a richer life.”

*Paul Engleman*

### More online

Find Web extras on this article, including interviews with the WHO’s Anand Balachandran and IPPC Chair Robert Scott, at [www.rotary.org/go](http://www.rotary.org/go).

# Rotary and UNICEF: 'A strong partnership'

UNICEF director is confident that polio eradication is on track



**Ann Veneman at the 2008 RI Convention in Los Angeles.**

Since former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed her as executive director of UNICEF in January 2005, Ann Veneman has emerged as a devoted proponent of children's welfare. Her vision to apply "sound science" to expand an integrated system of delivering health care, nutrition, clean water, education, and protection to children has resulted in stronger partnerships at every level, between governments, nonprofits, other UN agencies, international financial institutions, and the private sector. One measure of success on Veneman's watch: deaths of young children worldwide have fallen to a record low of 9.7 million a year. Key UNICEF goals for 2009 include intensified efforts to fight polio outbreaks and to secure the survival of children in war zones. Last November, *The Rotarian's* Editor in Chief Vince Aversano met with Veneman at UNICEF's offices in New York.

**The Rotarian:** Before coming to UNICEF, what did you know about Rotary?

**Ann Veneman:** My grandfather was a Rotarian, so I knew about Rotary as a child. And many times I have spoken to Rotary groups.

**TR:** How would you describe Rotary International's key strengths as a service partner with UNICEF?

**AV:** Rotary has been a very strong partner of UNICEF since 1985, especially in the area of polio eradication, where we've had tremendous results working closely together. Rotary has always been a very strong service organization, for local communities and the world. With Rotary's help, we're very close to accomplishing the goal of eradicating polio worldwide.

**TR:** What are the latest projections for that?

**AV:** Since the polio eradication program began, we've vaccinated several billion children. So it's one of the largest public health endeavors ever attempted. We don't like to give a fixed date for total eradication.

But we've set milestones for 2008 and so far [as of November 2007] we're on track. We hope that within a couple of years, we can eradicate polio globally.

**TR:** The problem of new outbreaks is a concern. How does UNICEF and its partners plan to finish the job?

**AV:** There are now only four polio-endemic countries: Nigeria, India, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. But we have a tremendous window of opportunity over the next couple of years to deliver the final blow.

**TR:** What can you tell us about the eradication efforts in those countries?

**AV:** In Afghanistan and Pakistan, the largest constraint now is security, because most new cases are in insecure regions. In India and Nigeria, the main issue is getting to missed children and children with repeated doses of polio vaccine. We have great opportunities now, though – we've introduced a new vaccine called monovalent polio vaccine, which is far more efficient at protecting children and boosting their immunity

than previous vaccines. Another major innovation has been combining polio campaigns with other services. For example, in Nigeria, we've combined polio and measles campaigns with distribution of bed nets and other valued commodities that improve the health of children and women in those countries.

**TR:** World Health Organization Director-General Margaret Chan has said that there is insufficient funding to complete the job worldwide. How have the partners addressed this problem in 2008?

**AV:** One of the most significant things recently announced is that the Gates Foundation and Rotary will each allocate \$100 million toward the polio eradication effort.

**TR:** When you first took the reins at UNICEF, what was your vision for an improved UNICEF organization?

**AV:** I've focused on what's called the Millennium Development Goals – goals mostly about women and children like increasing primary education; decreasing child and maternal mortality; eliminating

HIV or decreasing HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis; and ensuring people have clean water and adequate nutrition. Our objective is to make sure countries continue to progress in these areas so we can create a better world for children.

**TR:** How is UNICEF progressing on these goals?

**AV:** There's reason to be hopeful.

In 2007, for the first time, child mortality dropped below 10 million annually. When you compare this to 1960, it's a 60 percent drop. That was accomplished by addressing the health of women and children with community-based, integrated approaches to get them immunizations, bed nets, oral rehydration therapy for diarrheal diseases, vitamin A supplementation – the whole

range of interventions. It's possible to prevent these nearly 10 million deaths every year if children have the right kind of interventions and health care.

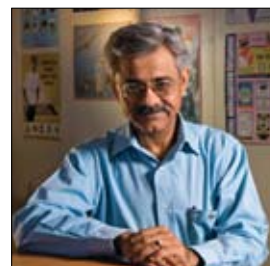
### More online

See video excerpts from the interview with Ann Veneman at [www.rotary.org/go](http://www.rotary.org/go).

## Faces in the field

# Deepak Kapur

Meet the chair of the India PolioPlus Committee



Deepak Kapur is a bundle of youthful energy. For more than two decades, he has devoted much of his passion to Rotary. Following his father, his uncle, and his grandfather, who were all Rotarians, Kapur joined the Rotary Club of Delhi South, India, in 1980, and has served Rotary International in many capacities, including district governor. Since 2001, he has worked tirelessly as the chair of RI's India PolioPlus Committee.

"It is astonishing that more than eight years later, I and the Rotarians of my country and the rest of the

world would still be battling this terrible disease," he says solemnly. But he adds: "The good news is that we are 99 percent there."

There is reason for optimism: Polio is striking fewer people, and in fewer places. In India, type 2 polio was eradicated in 1999. As of August of this year, only one polio case (of the dangerous and rapidly spreading type 1) has been reported in Uttar Pradesh, one of the most plagued areas. The number of cases in India generally has been cut from tens of thousands to a few hundred, and most of those are the more easily contained type 3. Kapur, however, will not rest until the number of cases is zero.

The Indian government has supported the initiative led by Rotary International and spearheading partners UNICEF, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization as funding has come from Rotarians worldwide. "Money

is important," says Kapur, "but it's the volunteers from the United States, India, and the rest of the world who astonish me. These people give their time and their love to save these children. One of the most impoverished and difficult to reach polio-stricken areas in India is Bihar. Tens of thousands of volunteers made it possible to have a National Immunization Day in India, including Bihar. Throughout the country, all children under five – approximately 179 million – were immunized, and 209 million homes were contacted in door-to-door visits."

Many other positive steps have been taken beyond these efforts. In recent years, WHO and surveillance laboratories have cut polio case confirmation times in half for faster, more strategic response throughout India. The work of Rotary's Ulema Committee (see related article) has been effective in countering rumors, myths, and superstitions about the



**Deepak Kapur surveys a map of polio cases in Bihar with health experts.**

vaccine, including fear of injections in some communities. Multiple doses of vaccine – sometimes as many as a dozen – are administered to children through age five. Unfortunately, poor sanitation, tainted water systems, malnutrition, high birth rates, and other poverty-driven problems continue to make polio eradication more difficult.

“One of the things that drives me and makes me work harder every day, is that unlike with AIDS or cancer, we can eliminate polio,” states Kapur. “This is what really motivates me. I feel that no child should suffer from a disease that can be eradicated.” And he adds: “We are very close to winning the battle. We cannot let up now. If we do, polio

will come back as strongly as it has in the past. No child anywhere in the world will be safe.”

*Digby Diehl*



### More online

View a slideshow on Deepak Kapur and polio eradication efforts in India and Nepal at [www.rotary.org/go](http://www.rotary.org/go).

## Global Digest

### Fundraising to match the challenge

When Rotary International and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced a funding partnership to help eradicate polio, Rotarians and friends of Rotary began to plan innovative ways to raise Rotary's matching funds – and promote awareness



about our top goal at the same time. From silent auctions sponsored by local clubs to generous single commitments of \$1 million or more, Rotarians from around the world are working toward their goal of raising \$100 million by December 2010, to match the contribution by the Gates Foundation.

#### Scots swing for success

The Scottish are passionate about golf, a game they invented. Rotarians are passionate about eradicating polio. So it's only natural that Rotarians from Scotland find a way to combine the two – and make a memorable event of it.

On 22 June, Rotarians in District 1230 hosted a golf fundraiser benefiting Rotary's \$100 Million Challenge at Dundonald Links in Ayrshire.

Some 170 members from most of the district's 56 clubs and their guests made attempts at several Guinness world records, but from the tee off at 07:30, torrential rain and high winds – which lasted most of the day – thwarted the would-be record setters.

Still, the event was a success in a more important way, raising US\$8,000. This, added to funds raised in other events, brought the district's contribution to \$53,000 at press time.

“The record which everyone wants to break, of course, is to drive polio from the planet, something Rotary will achieve – believe it,” says Bob Tomlinson, RI's Public Image Resource Group area coordinator for Europe.

“This event raised the profile of Rotary and the polio eradication campaign throughout Scotland, while making a major contribution to the Gates Foundation's challenge,” says Past District Governor Andrew Hughes.

The event also drew good media coverage. Golf legend Jack Nicklaus, a polio survivor, helped Scottish Rotarians promote the event, and national newspapers covered it. “We were able to highlight polio again in a country that had virtually forgotten about the disease,” says Alex T. Blair, event secretary.

### Visit Rotary.org

The official Web site of Rotary International offers the most up-to-date news about Rotary's polio eradication efforts, as well as videos, historical features, tips, downloads, products for purchase, and more. Visitors can even sign up to have weekly news updates from RI delivered to their e-mail. With material in English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish, [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org) offers valuable tools for all Rotarians.

## Polio survivor bikes across Canada

For six months, 28-year-old polio survivor Ramesh Ferris put his ideals into action during his 7,200-kilometer (4,474-mile) Cycle to Walk bicycle ride across Canada in support of polio eradication.

Ferris contracted polio as an infant in Tamil Nadu, India. Unable to care for her son, Ferris' birth mother put him up for international adoption. Ramesh then spent two years in a Canadian orphanage before being taken in by a family in Whitehorse, Yukon. After numerous surgeries and physical rehabilitation, Ferris first walked at age four with the aid of crutches.

Growing up in northwestern Canada, Ferris had little contact with other polio survivors. Then in 2002,



Courtesy of Ramesh Ferris Cycle to Walk Society

### Ramesh Ferris on the road against polio.

he returned to India, where he saw others who suffered from the disease, but didn't have access to the type of surgery and rehabilitation that had helped him. This experience became the inspiration for his 2008 cross-country trek, which began on 12 April (the anniversary of the Salk polio vaccine release). Ferris rode a 27-speed hand cycle from Victoria, British Columbia, to Cape Spear, Newfoundland. At press time, he was scheduled to complete his journey in October, with sponsorship in part from several Canadian clubs.

Along the route, Ferris visited numerous schools, Rotary and other service clubs, health care providers, and government offices. Though not a Rotarian, Ferris kept Rotary's top goal close to his heart during his six-month journey.

"Cycle to Walk is my way to prevent polio and give other polio survivors a chance to reach their full potential," says Ferris.

Ferris had raised US\$268,300 at press time. Seventy-five percent of the final proceeds will go to PolioPlus to immunize children in polio-endemic and at-risk countries and 20 percent to a fund that will help aid rehabilitation of polio survivors. The remaining 5 percent will help educate Canadians about polio and advocate their continued immunization.

# Global Resources

Rotary International offers many resources for members on polio eradication for use in clubs and your community. To order any product, visit [shop.rotary.org](http://shop.rotary.org) and search by product number (prices in US\$).

## Rotary's US\$100 Million Challenge DVD

This 12-minute DVD offers an inspirational overview of Rotary's continuing efforts to eradicate polio and of Rotary's US\$100 Million Challenge, the three-year fundraising initiative inspired by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's \$100 million challenge grant. The DVD offers ideas on how Rotary clubs can raise funds for the challenge. **(985; \$15)**



## Humanity in Motion IV CD set

With an emphasis on Rotary's critical role in polio eradication, this latest set of resource materials for Rotary's global public image campaign helps Rotarians bring the basic messages of Rotary to their communities. Public service announcements for television, radio, print, and billboards can be placed with local media outlets. Rotarians can adapt materials to incorporate regional and cultural concerns. The free, four-disc *Humanity in Motion IV* set is available in English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish. **(612; Free)**



## RVM 2.2 DVD

This issue of *RVM: The Rotarian Video Magazine* features three videos shot on location during National Immunization Days in India in 2007, spotlighting Rotary's on-the-ground efforts to rid the region of polio. "The Last Hurdle: Polio in India" includes interviews with Deepak Kapur and other Indian Rotarian volunteers. Many Rotarians have worked with cable access television stations in their communities to place RVM pieces on the air. RVM 2.2 is available in English, with subtitles in French, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish. **(506-06; \$15)**



## In India, a breakthrough with the Muslim community

Advocating the cause of polio eradication isn't just the stuff of G8 summits. The recent success of Indian Rotarians who've formed new working relationships with local Muslim religious leaders is a case in point.

Last year, the state of Uttar Pradesh accounted not only for nearly 40 percent of India's 874 polio cases but for more than a quarter of cases worldwide. However, if current trends continue, India's most populous state will no longer qualify as the "poliovirus capital of the world," as some health experts have called it.

Eighty percent of Uttar Pradesh's 339 polio cases occurred in the Muslim community in 2007. But a Rotary-led initiative has helped drop that rate. At press time, only 30 percent of the state's total 20 polio cases came from Muslim areas during the first three months of 2008.

Overseeing the state's effort to end polio is the Ulema Committee for Polio Eradication, established by Rotary International in 2007. (Ulemas are leading Muslim experts in Islamic law.) Nearly 200 Muslim clerics and school representatives at the July 2007 organizational meeting in Lucknow received

a booklet published by the India PolioPlus Committee, which links polio immunization to the duties of parents as explained in the Quran. The booklet also lists contact information for the 10 Ulema Committee members, who are available to clear up any misconceptions about the polio vaccine.

Since that meeting, committee members have visited districts in Uttar Pradesh that reported large numbers of polio cases and have convinced parents that the polio vaccine was safe and not contrary to Islam.

"We want to spread the message of good health through the ulemas, who are much revered in the Muslim community," said RI Director Ashok Mahajan, chair of the committee.

"Misconceptions and rumors that were widespread in the community against polio [immunization] have almost been removed, due to the efforts of the Ulema Committee, and we will continue with our efforts until polio is eradicated," said committee member Maulana Khalid Rashid Firangi Mahali, president of the Ulema Council of India. "Our religion is not against immunization. Even the Saudi Arabian government has issued a directive that pilgrims visiting Mecca and Medina along with their children should carry polio vaccination certificates."

In February, The Rotary Foundation awarded US\$5.65 million to the World Health Organization and UNICEF for social mobilization activities and operational support focused on more than 4,300 high-risk communities in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.



**Rotarian Ajay Saxena, a Ulema Committee member, confirms immunization of children in a rural Muslim community outside Lucknow.**

## What's next

In February, *Global Outlook* will focus on Rotary's efforts to fight illiteracy through concentrated language encounter, a methodology developed and implemented by Rotarians around the world.

### Send us your stories

How is your club or district contributing to RI President Dong Kurn Lee's goal to reduce childhood mortality? What other stories would you like to see featured in *Global Outlook*? Write to us at [global.outlook@rotary.org](mailto:global.outlook@rotary.org).

### Contributors to this issue

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### Global Outlook: A Rotary World Magazine Press Supplement

is published quarterly by Rotary International. Copyright © 2008. Joseph Derr, managing editor; Barbara Nellis, features editor; Avery Mamon, designer. Articles: Jennifer Atkin and Dan Nixon. Photos by Alyce Henson/Rotary Images unless otherwise noted. Editorial Advisory Panel: Robert J. Aitken (*Rotary Down Under*), T.K. Balakrishnan (*Rotary News/Rotary Samachar*), Carlos Henrique de Carvalho Fróes (*Brasil Rotário*), Andrea Pernice (*Rotary*), and Matthias Schütt (*Rotary Magazin*).