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Subject: vaccination as a mediator of Peace

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<http://www.unicef.org/sowc96/14zones.htm>

http://www.paho.org/english/dd/pin/Number22_article2d.htm

Please see above in the link few of examples in which vaccination was used to cease the fight and (at least) temporary introduction of peace.

UNICEF, too, has since 1946 frequently used its focus on children as a means of working on both sides in civil wars—as it did in the 1960s in Biafra, and later in the 1970s in what was then Kampuchea. However, it was not until the 1980s that the idea emerged of children as a 'conflict-free zone'—that children should be protected from harm and provided with the essential services to ensure their survival and well-being. That concept was first formulated in 1983 by Nils Thedin of Sweden in a proposal to UNICEF.

If ever an idea seemed quixotic, this was it. To expect the perpetrators of some of the most sadistic actions to stop and think about children initially made little sense. Until it was tried. Since Nils Thedin's proposal, a half-dozen corridors of peace, days of tranquillity, bubbles of peace—different names for the same phenomenon—have actually been negotiated in the midst of a number of bloody conflicts.

The first occasion was in El Salvador in 1985. After much negotiation with the Government and the rebels, there was finally agreement that the carnage should stop for three 'days of tranquillity'.

On three days in consecutive months, the Salvadorian conflict gave way to a campaign in which as many as 20,000 health workers immunized 250,000 small children against polio, measles, diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough. This process was repeated every year until the end of the war six years later.

Similar principles have been applied in other disputes. In 1986, in the war between the Ugandan Government and the National Resistance Army, the warring parties agreed to allow vaccines, personnel and equipment to travel along a corridor of peace. A few months later in Lebanon, in March 1987, hostilities were suspended for three days to permit all young children to be vaccinated. Two years later in Afghanistan, in 1988-1989, vaccination teams operated in both government- and mujahidin-controlled territories and in some areas raised vaccination levels above 80 per cent.

Probably the most sustained example of humanitarian aid working on both sides of a conflict has been in the Sudan. The Sudan for years had been racked by civil war, but during 1988 this had been compounded by a disastrous drought causing the loss of 250,000 lives and displacing nearly 3 million people. By January 1989, it was clear that a similar tragedy lay in store for the following year. The Secretary-General asked UNICEF Executive Director James P. Grant to meet with the warring parties—and Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) was the result. Through OLS the relief agencies negotiated both with the Government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which agreed to allow eight 'corridors' of relief to be created.

In some countries, civil unrest threatened to undermine the efforts. Immunization workers feared for their lives in El Salvador and in Peru. De Quadros called on UNICEF, the Red Cross, and even the Catholic Church to intervene. He also took the bold step of appealing directly to the warring parties. The result in El Salvador was an agreement to hold "days of tranquility" so that NIDs could go on as scheduled.

"We organized three days of tranquility each year, and we vaccinated nearly every child in El Salvador," says de Quadros. "We had to negotiate with both government and guerrilla forces, and that was only possible because the goal of vaccinating children was such a noble cause."

In Peru, negotiating with the ruthless Shining Path guerrilla movement proved unsuccessful. Undeterred, de Quadros and his cadres organized a series of mop-up campaigns to help limit poliovirus transmission to just a few areas. They also engaged the media, using press conferences to appeal to everyone—including the guerrillas—to cooperate with the vaccination efforts. A few months later, when key guerrilla leaders were captured by government forces, de Quadros' team recognized several as having directly assisted the mop-up campaign.

By 1991, Peru had reported the last confirmed case of wild polio, and in 1994, an international commission officially declared the disease eradicated from the Americas region. In 1988, the World Health Assembly announced the goal of global polio eradication by the year 2000. The target date was later changed to 2008, and despite a number of recent setbacks, global polio eradication is considered achievable within the next few years

I will also send you more recent similar examples in Afghanistan etc.

Please let me know if this is enough or you need more

Boris