



The polio vaccine did not reach these good-humored Indian children in time. This photo and the others by Sebastião Salgado on these pages document polio's modern legacy and pending eradication. The work appears here courtesy of Salgado and PixelPress, curator of *The End of Polio* international traveling exhibition, which Pitt is bringing to the Carnegie Museum of Natural History this March 5; the exhibition will run through May 15. To build awareness about the polio eradication effort, PixelPress has published *The End of Polio*, which features Salgado's work and has been released in both hard- and soft-cover editions. For more information, or to donate to the eradication effort, see [www.endofpolio.org](http://www.endofpolio.org).

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SEBASTIÃO SALGADO | PHOTOGRAPHY

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# THE END OF POLIO

When the guerrillas arrived, brandishing weapons, the immunization volunteers in Somalia did not flinch. Two of their colleagues from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative had already been taken hostage by a similar band. Yet this time, the mission came with armed guards. A firefight ensued, but even as bullets were flying, the volunteers proceeded with the task at hand: to completely wipe polio from the face of the earth.

Fifty years ago, on April 12, 1955, news that the polio vaccine developed at the University of Pittsburgh was “safe, effective, and potent” electrified the world. In 1988, an international campaign began to eradicate the poliovirus everywhere, as had been done with smallpox. Volunteers traveled by canoe on unmarked rivers, climbed untracked mountains, traversed deserts, and survived deadly gunfire. In 2001 and 2002, at least 500 million children under 5 were immunized each year thanks to worldwide efforts. Today, stubborn polio pockets remain only on the Indian subcontinent and Africa. The photographs on these pages (which will be exhibited at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History beginning March 5) document the Eradication Initiative’s heroic work. Brazilian photojournalist Sebastião Salgado traveled with the health workers, recording how a scourge is wiped out, one child at a time. The photos also capture polio’s prevaccine legacy, in twisted limbs and damaged lives.

The drive to protect every child in the world goes on. World Health Organization (WHO) officials hope the disease will be eradicated this year.





**INDIA** Yoga stretches damaged limbs and improves mobility for children with polio (shown above). Their state, Uttar Pradesh, has been hit hard. Of 2,000 new cases worldwide in 2000, two-thirds were from there. Muslim areas were particularly afflicted. Vaccination teams now include at least one woman to ensure access to all members of each family. Young people (shown right) learn vocational skills, attend schools, and practice music at New Delhi's Amar Jyoti Rehabilitation & Research Centre. Although India has a burgeoning pharmaceutical industry, most of its polio vaccine must be imported.







**CONGO** A vaccine volunteer (above) on National Immunization Day summons river traffic ashore. Canoes will not be permitted to proceed until all children aboard under 5 have been vaccinated.

**PAKISTAN** What became known as the "Salk vaccine" utilized a killed virus and required three injections. The Salk vaccine is now routinely included in U.S. childhood immunizations. An orally administered live-virus vaccine, effective in areas where sanitary conditions are poor, is used by WHO and others. (Otherwise, the polio virus might be transmitted through fecal matter.) Here, families in the Thar Desert wait as a volunteer administers "just two drops."





PHOTO NOT AVAILABLE



**SUDAN** A cattle-raising community (upper photo, this page) marches forward to welcome volunteers. Below, a child opens wide for the prescribed drops. Sudan reported no new polio cases in 2001, a landmark year. Then last May, a Darfur child was found paralyzed by the virus. The virus had migrated from Nigeria, where eradication efforts had been interrupted by a rumor the vaccine was a ploy of the West to make Muslim women infertile. Epidemiologists warned Africa was on the brink of another epidemic—but the vaccine campaign has now made up for lost time.

**SOMALIA** Armed men (opposite page, above) stand guard as a girl receives her dose of lifelong immunity. Below, vaccine teams use singers to attract villagers.



**WHERE IT BEGAN** Pitt will celebrate the Salk vaccine's golden anniversary April 10–12 with a series of commemorative events, in addition to the Salgado exhibition. A community celebration April 10 in the Commons Room will bring together Salk family members, pioneers from the pilot project and national trials, and prevaccine polio patients. A two-day symposium, “The History and Future of Vaccine Development,” will feature international health experts, among them Julius Youngner, Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus and a key member of the Pitt research team that created the Salk vaccine.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
[www.polio.pitt.edu](http://www.polio.pitt.edu)