Rabies is a neglected zoonotic disease that causes an estimated 59,000 human deaths every year, with 40% of the victims being children. Rabies affects the most vulnerable populations: most cases are found in Africa and Asia, and 80% of cases occur in rural areas. Rabies virus transmission is mainly through a bite or direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes) with saliva of an infected animal. Dogs are responsible for 99% of human cases. Eliminating rabies in dogs is therefore the key to achieving elimination of human rabies.

The economic burden of the disease is estimated at 8.6 billion USD annually. This occurs despite the availability of anti-rabies vaccines for both animals and humans, which are critical in supporting eradication efforts.

Rabies is almost 100% preventable through the administration of safe, effective and extensively available vaccines for humans and animals. However, mortalities are mainly attributed to high treatment costs or lack of access to post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). This is coupled with the majority of victims exposed to the virus being unaware of the dangers posed by the disease or lacking access to basic medical care.

Several countries have launched rabies elimination strategies, in line with the Global Strategic Plan to End Human Deaths from Dog-mediated Rabies by 2030 (Zero by 30). Despite these, implementation of these strategies has been rather slow due to limited information on rabies implications on both humans and animals, and limited commitment and resources on prevention and eradication efforts, particularly among low-income countries.
**OUR EFFORTS AND COMMITMENT**

VSF International is supporting rabies eradication efforts in its areas of intervention, and promotes a holistic approach based on One Health, integrating human, animal and environmental health. Mass vaccination of dogs coupled with population control measures, prompt dog bite management, community education and outreach, improvements in reporting, diagnosis and surveillance are among the key strategic approaches to rabies eradication adopted by the VSF International network.

By working closely with the communities, key government line ministries and counterpart agencies and institutions, we have been supporting eradication efforts in South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Algeria, Morocco, India, Cambodia, the Czech Republic and Canada.

Since 2006, we have vaccinated at least 340,800 dogs and cats and reached over 80,100 people (including school children) through awareness and sensitization messaging on rabies prevention, control and animal welfare. This is in addition to capacity building and training of 3,200 animal health and public health professionals on rabies control and animal welfare.

Rabies vaccination campaigns also represents an opportunity to support dog deworming campaigns, which have been critical in preventing the spread of zoonotic parasites such as echinococcus. This is in addition to the use of Trap, Neuter and Return strategy that has played a key role in controlling stray dog and cat populations and reducing the risk of rabies and other disease transmission.

VSF International strives to continue working with other key stakeholders and governments through the Stepwise Approach to Rabies Elimination (SARE) in supporting eradication efforts. This is in line with the global call for action against rabies to achieve zero human deaths from dog-mediated rabies by 2030. This will be done by scaling up our interventions and building up on successes of previous actions, lobbying for national and regional commitments, resource mobilization, information sharing, coordination, surveillance, mass dog vaccination campaigns, community engagement and outreach.
ORGANIZATIONS WITH RABIES PROJECTS

- VSF Czech Republic
- VSF Germany
- VSF Italy
- AVSF (France)
- VSF Sweden
- VSF Suisse
- VWB/VSF Canada
- Vets Beyond Borders Australia – VBB
- VSF Netherlands (upcoming projects)
- VSF Austria (upcoming projects)

28TH OF SEPTEMBER
WORLD RABIES DAY

CONTEXT

59,000 people die every year because of rabies

40% of them are children

99% of human cases are caused by dog bites

Rabies is preventable by vaccination

Post-exposure prophylaxis is expensive and not readily available, especially in rural areas

SINCE 2006

340,800 dogs and cats vaccinated

17,700 dogs dewormed to prevent spread of zoonotic parasitic diseases

75,600 dogs neutered to control stray dog populations

3,200 animal health and public health professionals trained in rabies control strategies

80,100 people reached in rabies awareness campaigns (including thousands of school children)
SAHARIW REFUGEE CAMPS IN ALGERIA
VSF Italy BETWEEN 2017 AND 2020
211 dogs vaccinated
24 veterinarians and para-vets trained
Development of a rabies prevention plan and awareness raising material

UGANDA
VSF Germany Ongoing campaign to vaccinate 5,000 dogs and cats
VWB/VSF Canada BETWEEN 2015 AND 2020
452 community-based animal health workers trained

KENYA
VSF Czech Republic BETWEEN 2006 AND 2013
2,000 dogs vaccinated

Rwanda
VSF Austria BETWEEN 2021 AND 2023 is starting a new project: Mission Anti-Rabies

GWANDA
VWB/VSF Canada BETWEEN 2015 AND 2020
10,741 households trained in rabies prevention strategies
575 community champions and extension workers trained
327 community-based animal health workers trained

TANZANIA
VSF Sweden
2,611 students participated in new school club program teaching about rabies since 2018
3,168 dogs vaccinated in 2020

MALAWI
VSF Sweden Annual dog population management interventions with castration, vaccination and education of children in Lilongwe

VWB/VSF Canada BETWEEN 2015 AND 2020
584 veterinary extension officers trained

RSWANDA
VSF Austria BETWEEN 2021 AND 2023 is starting a new project: Mission Anti-Rabies

SOUTH SUDAN
VSF Suisse BETWEEN 2017 AND 2019
52,400 people reached in rabies awareness campaign
1,825 stray dogs and cats vaccinated
368 key public health personnel trained on rabies risks associated with dogs and cats
183 community animal health workers trained in rabies control

VSF Suisse IN 2021
870 dogs vaccinated
793 dogs treated
822 households reached in rabies awareness campaigns

VSF Germany IN 2021
15 veterinarians and para-vets trained

VSF Germany BETWEEN 2016 AND 2021
73,000 dogs and cats vaccinated
18,000 households reached in rabies awareness campaigns

VSF NL STARTING IN AUTUMN 2021
Plan to vaccinate 80% of the dogs in the town of Mzimba North

VSF Canada BETWEEN 2015 AND 2020
70 community-based animal health workers trained

VSF Germany BETWEEN 2021 AND 2023 is starting a new project: Mission Anti-Rabies

VSF Austria BETWEEN 2021 AND 2023 is starting a new project: Mission Anti-Rabies

VSF Canada BETWEEN 2015 AND 2020
584 veterinary extension officers trained
**CAMBODIA**
*AVSF France* between 2012 and 2018
- 6,130 dogs vaccinated
- 6,697 dogs dewormed
- 2,274 households reached in rabies awareness campaigns

**NEPAL**
*VSF Austria* between 2021 and 2023
is starting a new project: **Mission Anti-Rabies**

**INDIA**
*VBB Australia* between 2006 and 2020
- 292,686 dogs vaccinated
- 74,262 dogs neutered
- Medical and surgical treatment of street animals, community awareness, animal welfare incorporated into school curriculum
- 608 animal health and public health professionals trained in rabies control strategies

**CZECH REPUBLIC**
*VSF Czech Republic* since 2010
- Between 50 and 200 dogs belonging to homeless people vaccinated and dewormed every year

**MONGOLIA**
*VSF Austria* between 2021 and 2023
is starting a new project: **Mission Anti-Rabies**

**CANADA**
*VWB/VSF Canada* between 2019 and 2021
- 737 dogs vaccinated in remote northern communities in Canada
- 233 dogs dewormed
- 159 dogs neutered

**LAOS**
*VWB/VSF Canada* between 2015 and 2020
- 70 women village vet workers trained

**CAMBODIA**
*AVSF France* between 2012 and 2018
- 6,130 dogs vaccinated
- 6,697 dogs dewormed
- 2,274 households reached in rabies awareness campaigns