

**Erika Gehrig (Switzerland), Member of the Board of the Association of the Swiss Interest Group for Post Polio Syndrome; Member of the Board of the European Post Polio Union; and, polio survivor**

Hello, my name is Erika Gehrig, and I am a polio survivor.

I know first hand the effects of polio. It is a painful disease. It limits mobility. It makes every day things challenging to accomplish.

Nobody wants to be affected by diseases such as polio. But I am one of the fortunate ones, because here in Switzerland – where I live, where I contracted the disease so many years ago – the public health infrastructure is such that I am able to receive the support that I needed.

Support to help alleviate the physical symptoms of the disease. To minimize the pain associated with it, to maximize mobility, whether through physiotherapy, prosthetic aids or even corrective surgery.

And the support that helped ensure that the disease did not rob me of my dreams in leading a fulfilling life. I was able to receive the education I wanted, to pursue a career. To start a family together with my wonderful husband Klaus and lead a productive and satisfying life.

Unfortunately, in those rare places of the world where this virus continues to affect children, such support and infrastructure is not available. And children affected by the disease – and their families – are forced to suffer. Needlessly. Without help to alleviate their physical or their social symptoms.

As a polio survivor myself, I cannot accept this. I cannot accept that people who are born in countries such as Switzerland are allowed to have such support, when children in other areas are not allowed to have it, simply because they happen to be born in areas without the necessary public health infrastructure.

We cannot simply abandon these children.

And that is what the Polio Survivors Fund is all about.

That is why I support this Fund.

That is why I ‘Eradicare’!

Please join our community of ‘Eradicars’. Together, we can make a real difference in children’s lives.

Thank you.