Thank you for joining us for Spotlight. I’m Liz Waid. And I’m Joshua Leo. Spotlight uses a special English method of broadcasting. It is easier for people to understand, no matter where in the world they live. It was 1994. The place was Afghanistan. People were fighting in a terrible war. In November, each fighting side agreed to stop fighting for one week. For seven days there would be peace. Both sides had agreed to peace because each side had the same important goal. They wanted health workers to give Afghani children vaccines. Vaccines are medicines that prevent terrible diseases, such as polio. Health workers freely gave the vaccines to the people who needed them most - mothers and children. For seven days there was peace in warring Afghanistan. Health workers vaccinated hundreds of thousands of mothers and children. People across the country learned about vaccines and health care. Doctors and health care workers of the country learned new important skills. Medical centres received new medical equipment. The vaccination effort succeeded. And peace continued for two months. Can giving vaccines help a country find peace, even in the middle of a conflict? Some people believe it can. Today’s Spotlight is on Mass Vaccination Campaigns and Days of Tranquillity. You may have heard other Spotlight programs about vaccines. If a person gets a vaccine, he can avoid getting a particular sickness. Vaccines help the body to create immunity to harmful viruses and bacteria. The harmful viruses and bacteria do not infect vaccinated people. In the past, vaccines have helped to stop horrible diseases like smallpox. And many experts believe that vaccines will soon stop polio. But conflicts around the world make it more difficult to stop these diseases. Health workers are not safe travelling through war areas. Governments invest in weapons and services needed for war. So, there is no extra money to buy and provide vaccines. Many resources of a country in conflict are wasted because of war. And many people suffer because of it. Health groups must be able to avoid the dangers of conflict while they take vaccines to the people. One answer to this problem is a Mass Immunization Campaign. ‘Immunization’ is another word for vaccination. And a mass campaign is a big plan to help thousands of people. Mass Immunization Campaigns, or MIC’s, sometimes have other names. For example, people call them ‘National Immunization Days’. However, it is difficult to organize a Mass Immunization Campaign in a war area. So, health officials and governments organize special days of peace. These also have different names. They are often called ‘Corridors of Peace’, or ‘Days of Tranquillity’. Whatever name we use, they all have the same purpose. They aim to stop fighting and give out vaccines. During an MIC, governments, international health groups, and other concerned people organize temporary breaks in fighting. They persuade each fighting side to stop fighting for a short time. Usually these times of peace last for a few days. Health workers use these days of peace to bring vaccines to children, and sometimes to mothers. These are the people who need vaccines the most. Organizers of the MIC’s clearly explain that they plan to vaccinate people from all communities. They explain that they will be fair. They will not help one fighting side more than the other. Fighting sides must agree that health workers will be able to travel safely through the country. They must also agree that local people will be able to travel safely to the schools, hospitals, health centres and community centres to get the vaccines. Each fighting side must be fully devoted to the cause. They must agree on peace, even if it is for only a short time. They must agree to work together. After all sides have agreed to peace, they must now spread the message to the people who need the vaccines. People need to know where, when and how to get the vaccines. They must know that getting the vaccine is important. Many groups and individuals devote time and money to spreading the message of an MIC. Communication is one of the most important goals of an MIC. The World Health Organization may produce large posters and information papers in local languages. This informational literature tells people when, where, how, and why to get the vaccines. Radio and television programs also give information about the vaccinations. Even religious leaders often encourage their people to be vaccinated. Then, MICs need a way to provide the vaccines to the people. Governments, organizations and people provide money to pay for vaccines. Some health workers give their time to train more health workers inside the country. Health workers go to as many places as they can to vaccinate people. Sometimes even the military forces of both sides get involved in a helpful way. Militaries can provide airplanes to fly vaccines to far-away areas. Usually MIC’s succeed very well! They have many good effects. The MICs build community. But they also help to keep people healthy. When people are healthy, they can work. This helps to reduce poverty. This helps areas develop. When people are healthy they have hope for a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities. MIC’s also encourage longer peace in areas of conflict. Usually people on different sides of a conflict do not communicate with each other. But MIC’s depend on communication. MIC’s show people that communication between fighting sides is possible. Organizers believe that when fighting sides experience peace one time, they will probably want to experience it again! People begin to demand peace from their governments. They begin to resist any other people or governments that encourage war. MIC’s in areas of conflict help to make a country a stronger community in itself, and in the world. Warring sides may have different ideas. But many still know that helping children makes a country stronger. A good future depends on healthy children and adults. Babita Bisht is a peace-building expert. She works for UNICEF. She explains how Days of Tranquillity and Mass Immunization Campaigns can influence a country. “Immunization is a very important bridge for peace. In situations of continuing conflict and unrest, there is a great amount of mistrust and hostility between different groups and community members. Immunization prepares the whole process of people helping each other. They go door to door, street to street, village to village. That really helps bring communities together. That really helps pass different messages. That really acts like a bridge between communities.” The writer and producer of this program was Liz Waid. The voices you heard were from United States. All quotes were adapted and voiced by Spotlight. You can find our programs on the internet at www.radioenglish.net. This program is called ‘Immunizations Making Peace’. We hope you can join us again for the next Spotlight program. Goodbye.