

World Polio Day Observation at Utah Valley University

On October 23, 2025, the Utah Valley University Rotaractors observed World Polio Day, by hosting Mr. Oliver Rosenbauer, the communications officer of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is under the umbrella of the World Health Organization (WHO) and since 1988 has fought to eradicate polio. His purpose was summarized by his autograph on our posters announcing the event, saying, “Here’s to a world without Polio!”



Group Photo of Participants at World Polio Day

Mr. Rosenbauer painted a picture of the challenges and solutions to eradicating polio, which was the leading cause of disability before the vaccine was introduced in the 1950's. Since then, the disease has been reduced by 99% and medical surveillance to prevent the virus from spreading has been improved. Of 12 genetic strains of the virus, only one remains. However, outbreaks and reinfections are still common. Mr. Rosenbauer highlighted the two countries where the virus has not been eradicated: Pakistan and Afghanistan. In these countries there are vaccine gaps and political challenges to tracking the virus. Because the

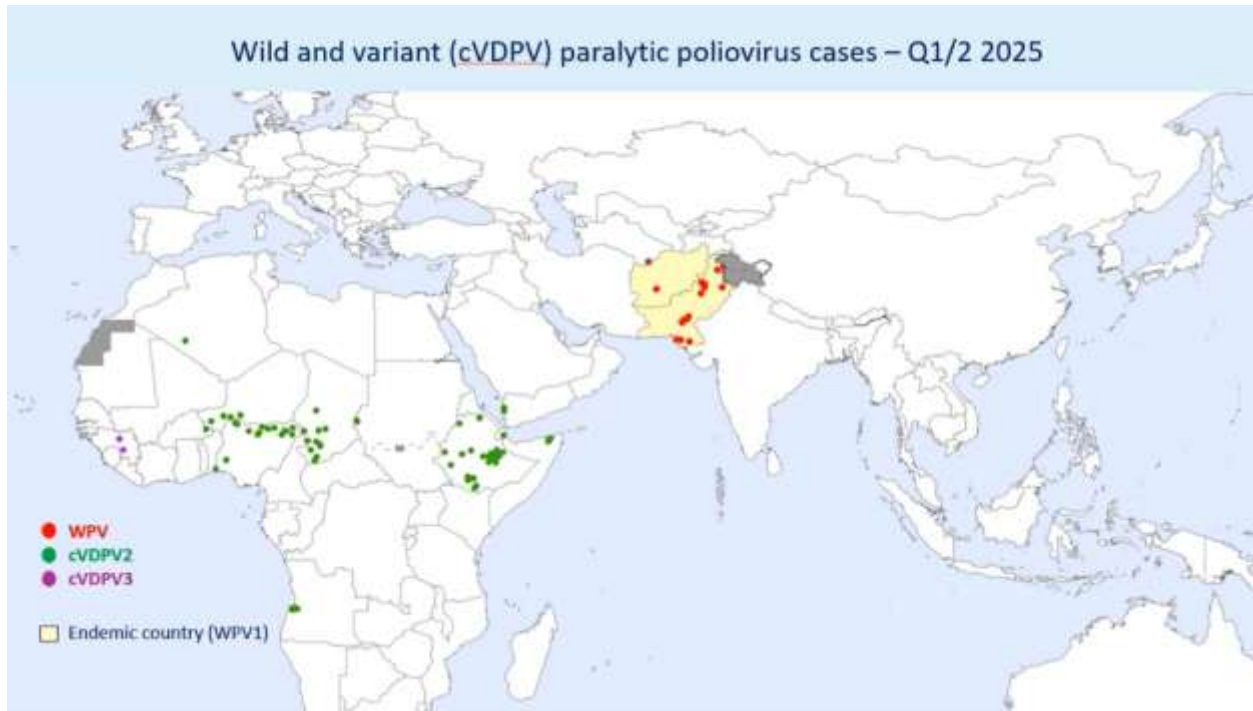
virus is not yet eradicated, we have seen outbreaks last year in Gaza, last month in Papua New Guinea and last week in Laos.

Despite this, the WHO works to make the vaccine available, even in remote areas and war zones. Epidemiologists at Global Polio Eradication Initiative work to track the viruses movements to prevent more outbreaks and reinfections. They are determined to overcome political and geographical obstacles to the eradication of polio.



Students and Faculty were able to meet with Mr. Rosenbauer over Zoom

The event was organized, in large part, by UVU's Rotaract, Utah International Mountain Forum and the Foreign Affairs club, student managed organizations. Through this our students were able to get experience interfacing with a major NGO and organizing to increase awareness. Through events like this, UVU hopes to continue to produce entry level diplomats with leadership and organizational experience.



A map from Mr. Rosenbauer's presentation showing current cases in Africa and Asia

Mr. Rosenbauer quotes a warning from Harvard University that indicated that if polio is not eradicated, we could have 200,000 cases a year for 10 years. This has given me motivation to continue my studies in Dari and Pashto. The Central Asian Politics class, taught by Dr. Abdrisaev, has highlighted the poverty and security concerns in Afghanistan and this information is in line with the information presented by Mr. Rosenbauer. I am confident that with my experience with student engaged learning, my language skills and the curriculum taught at UVU, I can be equipped to help manage global security issues.



Both students and faculty were involved in organizing this event

First and foremost, I would like to thank Mr. Rosenbauer for his remarks and his time

May we have a world free of Polio.

Also, thank you to our students clubs, including the UVU Rotaract and the Foreign Affairs club.

Thank you to the UVU faculty for their help in organizing this event, especially Dr. Janet Colvin, Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev, and Jay DeSart.

Thank you to the Orem Lindon rotary for all the opportunities given to us for service experience.

Thank you to Kathy Ambrose of Hope for Orem and we wish you the best of luck in helping Utahns to fight through mental illness.

Let us all continue to improve our world.

Alexander Woltjen, Utah Valley University Student