Megan Ashcraft - Cameroon

My name is Megan Ashcraft, and I am the President of the Rotaract Club at Utah Valley University. The country I have chosen to research is Cameroon.

Cameroon has been working to eradicate polio for more than thirty years. In 1996, all fifty-two member states of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) met in Yaoundé, Cameroon, to sign and adopt the 'Yaoundé Declaration', a commitment to eradicating polio. Cameroon's last wild polio case was found on July 9th 2014, and they have been certified wild polio-free since 2020.

Cameroon's geography, however, makes maintaining this status difficult. Cameroon borders six other countries, many of which struggle with vaccine-based polio outbreaks, which often spread across the border. There are also mountain communities and nomadic tribes who are difficult to reach and are often overlooked during vaccine campaigns.

In partnership with Cameroon's government, the WHO African Region has helped Cameroon further its polio eradication efforts by adopting a 2017-2021 Transition Plan of the Polio Eradication Programme, revised in 2022-2023. UNICEF has also led campaigns to the nomadic tribes of the Moutourwa(Moo-tour-wa) Region, and local efforts have been made for the hard-to-access groups of the Eyumojock(Ay-yoo-mo-jock) Region.

Though Cameroon has seen success in their efforts to eradicate polio, they still face challenges, including vaccine based outbreaks, insufficient resources, and an unstable political climate. Vaccination rates have decreased due to less frequent primary care visits during the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the strife caused by the ongoing Anglophone crisis. Despite these struggles, Cameroon and its neighbors have not given up the fight. In April 2025, the Ministers of Health from Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria launched a regional vaccination campaign, in partnership with the WHO, UNICEF, Rotary International, and other organizations, hoping to reach 83 million children under 5. No matter the challenges, we must continue to work together to end polio. Eradication is possible; we can and must build a better future.