

# GLOBAL STRATEGIES VACCINATIONS

## SECONDARY LEVEL

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**MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL #4:** Reduce child mortality

### Activity Snapshot:

Students will analyze a case study of a successful World Health Organization vaccination campaign. They will develop an understanding of why this campaign was effective and discuss reasons why it is still incomplete.

### Rationale:

Child mortality in the developing world is a big concern. Every year, more than 10 million children die before the age of five from causes that are easily prevented in the developed world.

Of the 130 million children born in a year, two to three million will die from diseases that could have been prevented with a simple vaccine. These children lack access to vaccinations against the preventable diseases and illnesses that are killing children by the millions.

### Objectives:

- Students will understand the importance of vaccinations as a way to prevent disease.
- Students will explore a vaccination case study to understand global vaccination as a form of development
- Students will apply their new understanding of vaccination programs to a current child health issue affecting the developing world.

### Materials:

Handout/worksheet S8: The Global Polio Eradication Initiative – Student Case Study

### Steps:

1. As part of a large group discussion, assess student knowledge about vaccinations. Begin by asking students to share their own experience of immunization as young children. Do they know what they were vaccinated for and why?
2. Introduce polio. Describe the disease and discuss the North American polio epidemic of the mid-twentieth century. Ask students if any of their grandparents or older relatives suffered from polio, or knew anyone who did.
3. Draw the link between the eradication of polio in North America and the immunization which children still undergo in North America today (i.e., is this disease no longer a threat as a result of vaccinations?)
4. Discuss the availability of vaccinations in other parts of the worlds. Share the stats in the “Rationale” section of this lesson plan. Introduce the role of the World Health Organization’s vaccination campaigns.
5. Distribute the handout/worksheet S8: The Global Polio Eradication Initiative – Student Case Study.
6. Students will work individually with the handout to answer the two “Analysis Questions” at the bottom of the document. Allow students 30 minutes to complete this part of the activity.
7. When students have completed the handout questions, come together as a large group. Through a

group discussion, record answers on the board or chart paper.

**Transition:**

8. Divide the class into small group of three to four. Each group will identify two changes to the polio campaign that would make it more effective. They will write their changes in the form of a resolution and present it to the class.

Example resolution: The WHO will add an education component to the campaign to help dispel rumours of vaccination contamination.

9. Each group will present their resolutions to the class.

**Closure:**

Facilitate a group discussion that addresses common themes which arose during the resolution presentations.

**Assessment suggestions:**

- Student participation during discussions and small group work
- Worksheets can be collected and assess analysis questions

**Handout/worksheet S8**

# THE GLOBAL POLIO ERADICATION INITIATIVE — STUDENT CASE STUDY

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In 1988, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced a plan to eradicate polio by 2005 through a widespread international vaccination program. The \$4.6 billion program was extremely successful, with polio cases reduced by 99.8 per cent by the 2005 target.

**How did/does it work?**

The WHO initiative functioned in four main ways:

1. National Immunization Days in countries where the disease is a major problem. WHO workers set up a series of days when a given nation's children were vaccinated.
2. Routine immunization of young children: all children are vaccinated when they reach a certain age.
3. Surveillance of new cases: new cases are investigated and/or identified when acute flaccid paralysis—the major symptom of polio—is reported.
4. “Mop-up” campaigns: the WHO enters areas where the disease continues to spread and conducts vaccinations.

**Current Program Status:**

In order for a disease to be completely eradicated, it must be 100 per cent eliminated, which means that the polio initiative is still incomplete. Polio remains a problem in a few select countries because of resistance to vaccinations:

- Nigeria, 2003. The State of Kano suspends the campaign to investigate allegations that the vaccination needles were infected with HIV and anti-fertility drugs; part of a western plot to control the West African population.
- Pakistan, 2007. Clerics use loudspeakers, radio stations and word of mouth to spread a rumour that the WHO polio vaccine sterilizes children. An estimated 24,000 children do not receive the vaccine because their parents refuse. WHO health workers are targeted with violence.
- In addition to Nigeria and Pakistan, polio is still a problem in India and Afghanistan.

**Projections:**

When a disease is not entirely eradicated, those who are infected with it can continue to spread the disease to others. The rate of infection will grow, rather than decrease. The WHO must find a way to gain the confidence of parents in these regions in order to complete the campaign.

Despite this roadblock, the polio vaccination program has been extremely successful and is likely to eventually eradicate the disease entirely.

**For more information:**

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative: <http://www.polio.info/polio-eradication/front/index.jsp?&siteCode=POLIO&lang=EN&codeRubrique=9>

**Analysis Questions:**

1. Identify three reasons why the campaign was effective
2. Identify three reasons why the campaign is still incomplete