When teaching *HLTH 405, Global Public Health*, I aspire to foster a sense of connectedness with others around the world who are engaged in the fight for health equity. One project I created toward this end revolves around **World Polio Day**, celebrated on October 24 each year. World Polio Day is an international opportunity to highlight the progress made against polio in many countries, and the tackle the challenge that remains to eliminate polio from the last two countries in the world, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and eradicate polio globally. Students are three given broad goals to accomplish as a group project. They develop their own SMART objectives to achieve each goal:

1. Provide education about World Polio Day in one 200-level HLTH class.
2. Increase awareness about World Polio Day among campus community members.
3. Raise money for the End Polio Fund (in which donations are tripled by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation).

Students divide the tasks among themselves, with the only common requirement being that everyone participate in the fundraising event on October 24. Students are responsible for creating their own communication channels and coordinating with each other outside of class. I obtain regular updates from the students but try to let them resolve the many issues involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating multiple activities while working in assigned groups.

After the conclusion of their World Polio Day activities, the students write a reflection about their experiences, thoughts, and emotions. I ask them to consider what it means to be part of making history to eradicate the second disease in human history (after smallpox). The fight to eradicate polio globally has been going on for over twenty years. Tremendous progress has been made, but we are still short of our goal of eradication. Students consider the nature of “success” and “failure” in global public health. Is every child saved a win? Or should we focus on the bigger goal? How do we handle the intellectual and emotional knowledge that we are repeatedly failing to achieve multiple global health targets? What do we have to do to persevere in the face of repeated failures? Do they have the resilience and grit to do that kind of work? Can they focus on the small wins to find the will to continue the fight?

The students indicated it was meaningful to them to participate in a worldwide event. They reflected on their accomplishments and opportunities for growth. The students:

1. Developed and implemented a World Polio Day presentation in *HLTH 270, Health Systems and Consumers.*
2. Created and shared a World Polio Day infographic, brochure, and social media post with students and student organizations that had social media accounts.
3. Planned and implemented a fundraiser that generated enough money (with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation match) to buy:

* 450 vaccine carriers to keep the vaccines cool and effective.
* 150 high-visibility vests for health workers administering vaccines.
* 600 purple markers for marking pinkies to show they’ve been immunized.