

Bring on the World

Day 4 Morning session: How sportswear is made

Activity 3: Role-play – Mara’s story

Time required: 1 hour 30 mins

You will need

- Copies of **Mara’s story** and notes from Activity 2 this morning.
- Two days in the life of a Cambodian factory worker – **role-play cards**. 1 set per group of five pupils. (below)
- **List of scenes** for the role-play, 1 per group (below)

Aims

- To develop pupils’ empathy with sportswear workers.
- To examine emotions.
- To develop speaking and listening skills.

What to do

Place pupils in groups of six. Give the role-play cards to five of the members of each group and give one member the list of scenes. (This could be a gifted or talented pupil, as this pupil will act as narrator/director.) Ask pupils to introduce themselves to one another in role. Ask them to improvise and practise the role-play, working through the five different scenes. Give pupils plenty of time to explore their parts.

Ask some groups to come and perform their role plays. Use freeze-frame to stop the role-play and allow discussion and questions, such as ‘Why does Mara’s boss make her work harder?’ Use thought-tracking to ask pupils how their characters are feeling at key moments.

As a plenary, tell pupils that Mara’s experiences are very similar to those of millions of other workers making sportswear. Most factories are in poorer countries where other jobs are hard to find and where employers do not have to pay their workers so much money. Ask pupils who they think should take responsibility for improving the situation for workers like Mara.

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Worksheet: Two days in the life of a Cambodian factory worker

Role-play cards

Mara

You are a young Cambodian woman working at a clothing factory in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia.

Day 1: You say goodbye to your mother and brothers and sisters who live in a village in the country before travelling to the factory by bus.

Day 2: You are at work in the factory. Your friend Thida asks you some questions. In the afternoon, your boss has a message for you.

Thida, a friend of Mara's who also works at the clothing factory

Day 1: You are not in these scenes.

Day 2: You are new to your factory job, and ask Mara lots of questions about it. You are a young mother, with two small children. You hate leaving them, but have to earn money to feed and clothe them. The children are looked after by an elderly friend while you are at work, but there are problems with childcare if you are late home. By the end of the day your arms feel stiff and sore from all the sewing.

Mara's boss (factory floor supervisor)

You have to do what the factory manager tells you or you will lose your job. You need your job badly because you have a large family to support, and work is difficult to find.

Day 1: You are not in these scenes.

Day 2, morning: Your manager tells you that in order to meet a large order from the sportswear brand company, ALL workers must work overtime. The working day will be a minimum of 14–15 hours a day for the next week. You must dismiss any worker who refuses to work these hours and replace them with new staff. In addition, workers must have no time off, except for lunch. If anyone goes off sick, they must be fired.

Day 2, afternoon: Factory inspectors will be visiting this week. Your manager has just told you that you can offer workers extra money if they say that their working conditions are good (even though you know they are not). You must report any workers who give the wrong impression to the factory manager.

Mara's mother

Your husband died a year ago. Now you have less money to live on. Mara is your oldest daughter and you have sent her to the capital city, Phnom Penh, to earn money for the family. You miss Mara terribly, but you have no other way of getting enough money to feed and clothe the other children without her income. Mara sends between £5.40 and £10.85 per month home to you, depending on her wages at the factory. If it is only £5.40, you cannot buy all the food and clothes you need for the children.

Day 1: You say goodbye to Mara before she goes back to the factory in Phnom Penh. You are very upset to see her go. In the afternoon, you discuss your worries about money with your son.

Day 2: You are not in these scenes.

Mara's brother

You live with your mother and five brothers and sisters in a village in the Cambodian countryside. Sometimes there is not enough food for everyone. Sometimes your mother says you can only eat one meal a day. Even then, there isn't much food. You often feel hungry. You would also like to go to school, but your mother can't afford the school fees at the moment.

Day 1: You and your mother say goodbye to Mara before she goes back to the factory in Phnom Penh. In the afternoon, you discuss your worries about money and food with your mother.

Day 2: You are not in this scene.

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Worksheet: Two days in the life of a Cambodian factory worker

List of scenes

Day 1 (morning): Mara says goodbye to her family as she leaves their village in the country to return to her job in Phnom Penh at a sportswear factory. (She will travel by bus.) Her family are sad that she is leaving as it will be several weeks before they see her again – the bus fare is expensive and Mara does not have much time off work.

Day 1 (afternoon): Mara's mother and brother discuss their worries and fears about money.

Day 2 (morning): Mara is back at work in the factory, and spends some time telling Thida about what it is like to work there. However, they both get told off for talking. Then the boss tells them they must work harder ...

Day 2 (afternoon): The boss tells Mara and Thida that there are going to be some inspectors coming round ...

Day 2 (evening): Mara and Thida are tired. They have already been working for 12 hours and have another two to go because of the overtime they now have to do. Thida is worried about her children and Mara is worried about getting home safely in the dark.

NB. Not all the characters take part in all the scenes. Those characters who aren't in a scene can play other roles, e.g. other children in Mara's family or other workers in the factory.