

Big Issues for the G8

Activity 2.1: The Millennium Development Goals

You will need:

Sets of the MDG cards (printed below) – one set per group of three/four pupils.

Aims:

To develop an understanding of the MDGs

What to do:

Explain that all governments of rich and poor countries have agreed to share responsibility for ensuring that these goals are met by 2015. For rich countries – and especially the G8 countries – this means providing more and better aid to poor countries to help them cover the costs of ensuring that people get access to education and health care.

Ask pupils to work in groups of three or four, and give each group a set of 8 cards featuring each of the Millennium Development Goals (below). Ask them to arrange the cards according to how important they think each goal is.

reduce poverty
educate every child
provide equal chances for girls and women
reduce the number of babies and children who die
ensure safe and healthy motherhood
fight infectious diseases
clean up the environment
share responsibility for making the world a better place

Put two groups together and ask them to compare their results. They should explain to each other how they arrived at their decisions.

In a plenary discussion ask the pupils:

- Which MDGs did they consider most important and why?
- Who did they have in mind when they made their decisions?
- Do they think everyone, everywhere would agree with their conclusions?
- Why? Or why not?

You could tell them that specialists think that all the goals are of equal importance, as none of them can be achieved without the others. Furthermore, the first seven goals depend on the eighth goal (to build a global partnership for development through fairer trade, more aid and debt relief).

You may like to ask pupils to draw connections between each of these goals in order to demonstrate how they are all inter-related.

Activity 2.2: What is health care?

You will need:

Whiteboard

Aim:

To understand their own access to health care.

What to do:

Ask the children what happens when they get sick. Ask one of the children to recount an experience of going to the doctors and/or to the hospital.

Ask these questions:

- Where they given any medicine – a prescription?
- Did they have to pay to go to the doctors?
- Did they have to pay for any medicine?

Explain that not all of the world's population has good access to health care. In some cases there are not good medical facilities available because the government cannot afford to provide enough of them. And where health care and medicines are available, these are sometimes too expensive for most people to be able to afford.

Activity 2.4: What do babies need to be healthy?

Aims:

- To get pupils to reflect on the needs of babies (before they think about babies indifferent countries).
- To inform pupils about the under-five mortality rate and the reasons for it.
- To show them that this is preventable.

You will need:

- MDG Poster Goal 4 displayed (optional) – available at: http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/change_the_world_in_eight_steps/?37 (click Goal 4: Reduce child and maternal deaths - poster)
- Paper and materials for making posters

What to do:

In pairs, ask pupils to think of and list the many ways in which we care for babies. They should think about all the things that babies need. Check that between them, they have covered the following and understand why they are important:

- Injections to protect against illnesses
- Clean water
- Doctors and hospitals nearby
- Breast milk
- Toys to play with
- Warmth
- Mothers who have been to school
- More midwives and birth attendants

Ask pupils: What would happen if babies did not have those things?

Tell them that in many countries, babies and young children do not have what they need, and that consequently many children die. Give them some of all of the following statistics:

- More than 10 million children under the age of five die each year.
- In developing countries, one out of every 12 children dies before the age of five.
- In the UK, only one child in every 166 dies before the age of five.

Project the image (on the next page) of Assaguid Ag Iddayahagh, holding his baby son Ashafek, onto your board, and read the accompanying account.

Ask pupils what they think would be needed to prevent these deaths. After they have given some suggestions, tell them that some very basic things would save a lot of lives. If all these children had good food and clean water, many deaths could be prevented. If they had good medical treatment and vaccinations even more deaths could be prevented.

Remind pupils that the aim of the fourth UN Millennium Development Goal is to reduce the number of babies and young children who die. You could ask pupils to make posters showing some of the statistics and some of the solutions to this problem.



A child's life in Burkina Faso

This picture shows proud father, Assaguid Ag Iddayahagh, holding his baby son, Ashafek. Assaguid is a herder and farmer from the remote village of Zigberi in Burkina Faso, near the Sahara desert. He has high hopes for his son.

Nearly 20 per cent of Burkinabé children die before the age of five. Burkina Faso is the fourth-poorest country in the world according to the United Nations, and 72 per cent of people live on less than two dollars a day. Young children's chances of survival are threatened by food shortages and a lack of basic sanitation, as well as by illnesses such as diarrhoea, measles and malaria. These causes of death are preventable; however, with only five doctors for every 1,000 people, there is not enough basic healthcare, and many people cannot afford what care there is. Medicines, too, are unaffordable when people have to pay for food, education and all the other necessities of life. The government spends ten per cent of its budget on healthcare, but more is needed if lives are to be saved. A senior government figure recently said 'For a long time ... we were made to believe that you had to develop the economy before the healthcare system. But without health, people can't prosper.'

Oxfam believes that rich countries must give more aid so that children such as Ashafek can survive and live full and healthy lives.

Activity 2.5: Thinking about school

You will need:

Some space to do this activity – you could clear a space in the classroom, or use the games hall or a space outside.

Aim:

To explore attitudes towards school and education.

What to do:

Mark one side of the room as 'Agree' and the opposite side as 'Disagree'.

Read out the statements below (or use your own statements) and ask pupils to place themselves along an imaginary line between the two sides of the room, depending on how much they agree or disagree with each statement.

- Everyone should be able to go to school.
- Teachers should not raise their voices.
- Pupils should not have to go to lessons on time.
- Everyone should be able to talk in class whenever they like.
- Pupils should be allowed to wear whatever they like at school.

Encourage pupils to talk to each other about why they chose their particular position.

Encourage pupils to suggest other statements to use.

Activity 2.6: Why is school important?

You will need:

- The School in Mali photograph displayed
- A copy of '*School in Mali*' to refer to

Aims:

- To explore attitudes to school and the benefits that we get from it.
- To explore the consequences of not going to school

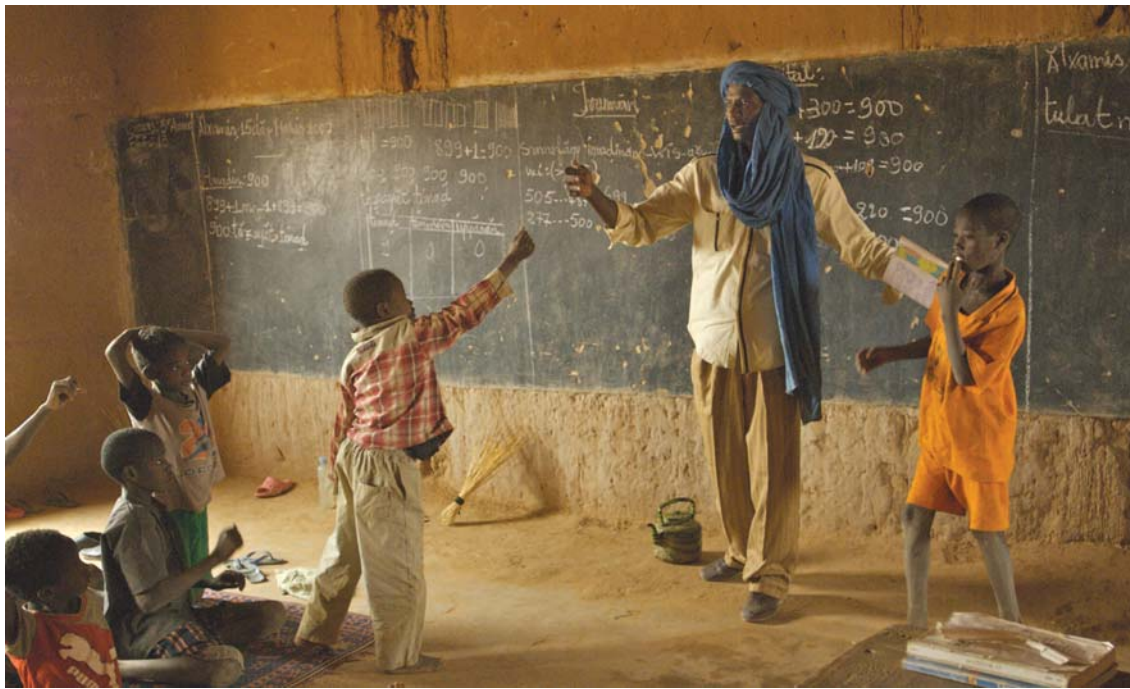
What to do:

Read *School in Mali* to the class (or read it together as a class), and ask them to think about why education is so important to his village.

Ask pupils to buzz in pairs the reasons why education is important to them, then to exchange their ideas in groups of four. Ask the groups to feed their ideas back to the whole class.

Get the whole class to choose the nine most important reasons why education is important. List them on the board.

Ask pupils to work in groups of four and to select the reasons they think are most important. Ask the groups to explain why they made their decisions. Discuss some of the issues that arose.



School in Mali

Aboucrine Ag Tadima is a teacher in the remote village of Intadeyni on the fringes of the Sahara desert in Mali. In this picture he is teaching basic health education to his class. There are about 250 pupils at the school, which was built 20 years ago; before that, children stayed at home and helped with the housework and animals (goats and camels). The community lived a traditional pastoralist lifestyle, with the men taking the animals to find water and vegetation wherever they could in the dry conditions. The women did domestic work and grew a little food in the wet season.

The people in the village wanted the opportunities that education could bring them and their children, so they built a school and persuaded the government to send them a teacher. Aboucrine says that people in Intadeyni value education, not just because it brings them better employment opportunities, but also because it has benefits for the whole family: better awareness of health issues, business skills, self-confidence and independence.

However, Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world, and teachers' pay is low. The government cannot afford to send its teachers for extra training, or even to pay for enough books, blackboards, desks and all the other things that are needed to keep the school running.

Aboucrine says 'The parents tell me that I am a good role model for the children – to see someone from their own community get a good education and do well. That makes me very happy.'

Activity 2.7: Why can't some children go to school?

You will need:

A photocopy of 'Why they can't go to school' (on the next page) for each group of pupils

Aim:

To explore reasons why children cannot go to school

What to do:

Ask the class what they understand as a 'right'.

Explain to them that free education is a right under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (see <http://www.unicef.org/crc>). Explain that this means that everyone should be entitled to education, no matter where they live, and no matter who they are. Why do they think everyone should have this as a right?

Refer back to *School in Mali* and remind them why children in the village of Intadeyni used not to be able to go to school. Explain that currently over 72 million children worldwide cannot go to school. Can they think of any reasons why children are not able to go to school? You may also want to get pupils to consider reasons that stop children in the UK from attending school.

In groups, ask pupils to use the sheet 'Why I can't go to school' (page 4) to note down a list of reasons why so many children miss out on their education.

Ask pupils as a class to think about what could help to make a difference and who has the power to change things.

Why they can't go to school

I'm not sure that I will be going back to school next term. There was no rain, and my father's crops have failed. I might have to go out to work to earn money for my family.

I have four brothers and sisters. My parents can only afford to send two of us to school. My two brothers go. My sisters and I stay at home.

There are 60 children in the class that I teach. There just aren't enough teachers.

My parents didn't go to school. They can't read or write. They want me to go to school so I can get a good job. But they can't afford the school fees that we have to pay.

I have to go to the hand pump to collect water twice a day for my family. The water pump is two kilometres away, and often I have to wait in a queue before it is my turn. I do this before I go to school in the morning, so I am often late and miss a lot of my lessons. It is hard work having to collect water after school and still trying to find time for homework.

There is no school in my village. The next village has a school, but it is five miles away. That is too far to walk each day.

My father died when I was seven years old. He owned a small farm, which brought in all our money. When my father died, I had to leave school to help in the house and look after my brother and sisters so my mother could work on the farm.

I am a coffee grower. I was getting hardly any money for my crop, so I couldn't send my children to school. Now I sell my coffee to a Fair Trade company and am guaranteed a good price. At last I can afford to send at least two of my children to school now.

We need money for school uniforms, shoes, books, pens and school bags. I don't think my father will be able to pay for all these things!

Activity 2.8: Mary's story

You will need:

- Maya's story
- MDG Poster 3 displayed (optional) – available at: http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/change_the_world_in_eight_steps/?37 (click Goal 3: Equal chances for girls and women - poster)

Aims:

- To explore some of the reasons why girls can't go to school.
- To explore some of the reasons why it is important for girls to be able to go to school.

What to do:

Ask pupils to look very carefully at the photograph and then describe what they see in detail.

Read the case study, Mary's story – Liberia, to them, explaining any difficult words. Read it to them again, and ask them the following questions:

- What special challenges do girls who want to go to school face in Liberia?
- What benefits will Mary and her family gain if she finishes primary and perhaps econdary education?



Mary's story – Liberia

In this picture, five-year-old Mary Kolleh is being taught the alphabet by Ophelia M G Williams, at Yawerlee Elementary School in Liberia.

Liberia is recovering from more than ten years of civil war, which has left many people desperately poor. In 2006 its new president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, became Africa's first elected female leader. In order to help rebuild the nation her government is particularly encouraging girls to go to school.

However, girls face special challenges. They often have to work to support their families. They also often have to leave school at a young age because of early marriage, teenage pregnancies and a bias in favour of boys.

If Mary has the chance to finish her primary education, and even go to secondary school, she, her family and her community will benefit greatly. She will earn more money and other people will listen to her views. Her children will be more likely to be healthy; and she will be likely to live longer and to survive childbirth.

Put simply, educating girls is essential to overcoming poverty and helping girls and women to be equal with boys and men.

The Liberian government was able to abolish school fees for primary schools in 2007 because rich countries cancelled some of their debts. However, more funding is needed so that children like Mary can achieve their potential.