

Blanket Knitting Campaign – Class or Assembly Script

Introduction

This script outlines the issue of maternal healthcare and introduces children to the blanket knitting campaign being run by Oxfam. There are three alternative endings depending on whether you want the children to take part in the knitting campaign or not.

You will probably want to read this through to familiarise yourself with it before reading it to your school or class. You may also wish to adapt it to suit your needs.

There is a PowerPoint slideshow that goes alongside this script with some photos, but it works without it. There are instructions for when to change slides, in **[brackets]** below.

Timing

5 to 10 minutes (depending on whether you get many responses from the children)

Script

[Slide 1: Image of a hospital in the UK]

Today we're going to think about what life is like in different parts of the world. In this country, if you get poorly you can go and see a doctor nearby and get some medicine, or if you're really poorly, you can go into a hospital and be looked after by well-trained doctors and nurses. In other countries, when people become ill they sometimes can't get the help that you can get. This may be because there are no hospitals nearby, or because they can't afford to pay for medicines, or because there are not enough trained doctors and nurses to help them.

These countries are called 'developing countries' – *does anyone know what that means?* They're called developing countries because they are developing. These countries are often poorer than this country and so they can't always afford to provide the hospitals, doctors, nurses and medicines for everyone like we have in this country.

In developing countries there are richer people who *can* afford help when they are ill. But not everyone can afford this help. And this means that people get ill and sometimes die. If they

had a bit more money or lived in a richer country they could get treatment for their illness, and probably get well again. Many people around the world think this is unfair.

[Slide 2: Image of a mother and child in Cambodia]

One of the most important times to be healthy is when mums are having babies. In this country, mums are looked after carefully when they are pregnant, and when they give birth they have doctors and nurses, and clean hospitals, and special equipment to make sure they stand the best possible chance of staying well and having a really healthy baby. In developing countries, this isn't always possible. In fact, about half a million mums become ill or die each year because they don't have help when they are giving birth. *That's a lot of mums isn't it?*

There's an organisation called Oxfam that is trying to do something to help these mums and their babies. People all over the world are working together to try and make sure that poorer countries have better hospitals and more doctors and nurses and medicines. They are working on a 'campaign' together – *do you know what a campaign is?*

[Slide 3: Image of a girl signing a petition]

A campaign is when people work together to try and change something about the world. They can do it in lots of ways. For example, sometimes they will put their name on a petition to show that they want something to change. *Has anyone here ever signed a petition? What was it about?* People sometimes do strange things to try and bring other people's attention to what they want to change. It could be something like wearing a silly red nose for Comic Relief, or dressing up as a polar bear to make people think about how the weather is changing because of global warming, or dressing up as doctors and nurses to make people think about the lack of healthcare in developing countries.

[Slide 4: Image of a knitted blanket]

Well, to help persuade powerful people to help keep mums healthy, Oxfam is asking people to help make a big knitted blanket. You might not think a blanket can help change the world! But people all over the UK are knitting squares that will all be sewn together to make a huge blanket, and then it will be taken to an important meeting in September to show how many people care about the health of mums around the world. The blanket idea came from baby blankets that children often have on their cots, but it won't actually be used for babies. It may sound strange, but, like signing your name on a petition, if people make lots of knitted squares it will show that lots of people care about mums in developing countries. And it will look great when it's finished, so hopefully newspapers will want to take pictures of it to show their readers. This will tell lots more people all about the problems mums have in other countries, and hopefully they will help too.

[Slide 5: Image of boys knitting]**[If you're planning to do this as an in-school or whole-school activity, read this part]**

If you want to help then you can. *Hands up if you know how to knit? Has anyone got a dad or a grandpa who knits?* Lots of men do knit – it's not just something that women do!

I think we should all help to make this blanket really big, and show that we want to help mums stay healthy all over the world. I'm going to learn to knit myself...! Your class teachers will tell you all about making the squares needed for the blanket. Let's see how many squares the school can add. And maybe your families might want to help too! If everyone in this room did just one square that would be [insert number of pupils here] squares, which would be great. Good luck knitting!!

[If you want pupils to be able to take part at home, read this part]

If you want to help then you can. *Hands up if you know how to knit?* If you already know how to knit then you might want to knit a square for the blanket yourself, and if you don't you could find someone – maybe your Mum, Dad, Granny or Grandpa – to teach you or help you. *Has anyone got a dad or a grandpa who knits?* Lots of men and boys do knit – it's not just something that women and girls do!

So, if you want to help, I've got more information I can give anyone who's keen to get involved – teachers too! Remember, if you don't know how to knit, why not ask an adult to help you learn? Good luck to any knitters out there!!

[If you just want to tell children about healthcare and not have them get involved in the campaign, read this part]

So, for the next few weeks think about all the people around the country busy knitting squares for the blanket to show they care about the health of mums everywhere. I wonder how big the blanket will be when it's finished? Let's hope that the big blanket helps to persuade rich countries to help keep mums healthy.