

Information for Teachers – how to use this resource, curriculum links, and background info

About this resource

These lesson plans cover elements of the Primary curriculum in England, Scotland and Wales. They use Oxfam's 'Health and Education For All' campaign as a springboard for Literacy and Numeracy, as well as Global Citizenship, Geography, and Art and Craft. They can be used individually or as a themed series. A script introducing the issues for use in class or an assembly and linked PowerPoint slides are also included.

Each activity is clearly curriculum-linked, and there are options that allow you to teach about the issues and use the activities without your pupils needing to take any action to support the Health and Education for All campaign. This is not a fundraising pack.

What's the Health and Education For All campaign all about?

There are still 72 million children who can't go to school, and every day 1,400 women die needlessly in childbirth. Oxfam is trying to do something about this. The Health and Education For All campaign is working with committed people around the world to persuade governments to provide healthcare and education free at the point of use for those who are currently missing out, and to convince rich country governments to cancel more developing country debts and provide more aid to make this possible.

As part of this, Oxfam is seeking to highlight the specific problem of women's lack of healthcare when they are pregnant and giving birth. This leads to hundreds of thousands of unnecessary deaths. In Sierra Leone, for example, children stand a one in four chance of dying at birth, and their mothers a one in 47 chance of dying in childbirth, because of a lack of medical support. Between now and September 2008, Oxfam is encouraging people to knit squares for a blanket that will be handed over to the UK government, symbolising the number of women who die in childbirth. It is hoped that there will be more than 250,000 squares, knitted together into a huge blanket, making a clear statement about the number of people who care about this pressing issue. This may all sound a bit morbid for Primary-aged children, but this teaching resource will look at the issue of 'maternal mortality' through the lens of babies being born without adequate healthcare.

The Health and Education for All campaign is determined to hold world leaders to their promises to meet eight goals for halving world poverty by 2015. The Millennium Development

Goals are explored further in these lesson plans, and one of the goals is about healthcare for women and babies.

Getting involved in the knitting

This teaching resource stands alone, without children having to learn to knit or take part in making squares for the Oxfam blanket. However, it will offer the option of children either knitting squares themselves, or involving their families and friends (who can knit) in the campaign. It is hoped that some children may wish to get involved, and there are instructions for making squares, where to send them, and by when, included in the **Sample Letter for Parents with Knitting Instructions**. This letter also explains to parents more about the campaign and how and why their children may wish to be involved.

It is a pretty tough task to teach a group of 8–11 year olds to knit! If you are yourself a keen knitter, you may wish to try this, but if not, don't worry: this resource is about much more than just knitting.

Tackling difficult subjects in the classroom

Death and illness are never easy subjects to discuss, but of course they are important parts of life on our planet. Children in your class may have experienced the death or illness of close relatives, friends or even classmates. As usual, you should use your knowledge of your pupils to help guide you in the best way to handle these sensitive issues in the classroom. This resource will focus on the health of mothers and their babies rather than dwelling on the deaths of mums in childbirth, which is the specific focus of the Oxfam blanket knitting campaign.

It is also important that you try to avoid reinforcing any gender stereotypes when talking about knitting. Children may feel that this is something only girls do – and you can help dispel this myth. There are many men who enjoy knitting and other types of crafts. You can point out, for example, that there are many men who work successfully in the fashion industry, or see these websites for more about men who knit:

<http://www.menwhoknit.com/community>
www.menknit.net

For a free Oxfam guide to tackling controversial issues in the classroom, visit:

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/teachersupport/cpd/controversial>

Further Information and Links

The Oxfam Education website is full of free activities for you to use to bring global issues into your classroom.

In particular, there is a poster set that explores the Millennium Development Goals in more detail, Change the World in Eight Steps. Download this free or order a copy here:
http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/change_the_world_in_eight_steps

You will find links to useful knitting sites within this resource.