

# Saving Children's Lives resource pack

## 2 Ideas for assembly time

This resource pack has been produced by Save the Children and Teach First. It will help your pupils learn about, and campaign for, the world's poorest and most vulnerable children.

The pack has four components:

- 1 What's it all about and what's in this resource pack?
- 2 Ideas for assembly time
- 3 English activities (lessons 1–4)
- 4 Citizenship activities (lessons 1–6)

MILLIONS OF CHILDREN are desperate for change

WE'RE working flat out to turn things around

YOU'RE part of the solution

We Save the Children  Will you?

# Ideas for assembly time

The following information can be used to create an assembly that informs pupils about the issues and about Save the Children's campaign to prevent children dying from preventable and curable diseases.

Pupils could be encouraged to visit Save the Children's youth campaigning pages to find out more: [www.savethechildren.org.uk/yellforyouth](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/yellforyouth)

Your assembly could include one or more of the following elements:

- an introduction to child health issues and saving children's lives, using the information below
- presentation of case studies
- details of what Save the Children is doing to help
- facts and figures about child health
- questions about health and healthcare, for an interactive assembly.

## Saving children's lives

Every year around the world, nearly ten million children die before they reach the age of five. That's a coach load of children every three minutes.

In 2000, world governments committed themselves to reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – eight targets for poverty reduction and development. MDG 4 calls for a reduction of the under-five mortality rate by two-thirds by 2015.

To understand why such high levels of child mortality persist in the 21st century, we can look at three separate, but related, factors:

1. Many children in the world's poorest countries do not have access to the proven ways of preventing or treating major killer diseases, such as pneumonia, measles, diarrhoea, malaria, HIV and AIDS, and serious conditions affecting newborn babies.
2. Millions of the world's poorest children remain highly exposed or vulnerable to infection, and are much more likely to die than their richer peers. Children from poor families face weak and

inequitable health systems, malnutrition, a lack of clean water and poor sanitation – despite the fact that there are ways to combat all these problems.

3. Poverty, inequality and discrimination are some of the structural causes of child mortality. Bad governance, violent conflict and worsening environmental trends, like climate change, are additional underlying causes that profoundly affect children's survival.

Save the Children is working to achieve MDG 4 by:

- setting up feeding centres and making cash payments to families so they can buy food
- improving breastfeeding rates by promoting the benefits of breastfeeding to mothers, health workers and communities
- influencing national governments and international donors, such as the UK government, the European Commission, the World Bank and the UN's World Food Programme
- building healthcare systems for the long term by providing advice to health managers, training health workers, providing equipment and transport, and building health facilities

- providing emergency health services and helping to rebuild health infrastructures in war-torn countries like Angola and Liberia
- helping to develop free healthcare for the poorest communities
- producing literature for adolescents and young adults about sexual health and how to protect themselves from HIV and AIDS.

## Case studies

### Bahati

Bahati's family was displaced from their village by conflict. They lost their land, which meant they could no longer afford to feed their children. Bahati, five, developed severe malnutrition as a result. He received treatment at the Kibabi Therapeutic Feeding Centre for three weeks after his family sought help there. The centre was set up and is jointly run by Save the Children and the Democratic Republic of Congo's Ministry of Health.

Bahati has since been discharged from the centre and is now healthy again. His family has been able to improve their diet and develop new ways to earn an

income after receiving food, tools and rabbits from the Therapeutic Feeding Centre.

Here's Bahati's story, as told by his grandmother, Claudine (60):

"We had to leave our village and our land five months ago because of the war. Bahati is my grandson, and we live with his mother and his five brothers.

"We've gone for days without food, just giving the children whatever we could find. To get money we worked for other people on their land. That way we could make 300 francs [about 30p] a day, and we were so busy finding work that we didn't have time to take care of the children. We just left them at home, sometimes for a whole day without food. They ate whenever we'd made some money and could buy food.

"Bahati started becoming weak and ill two months ago – he refused to eat and had a fever. A neighbour advised us to carry him to the nutrition centre, and since we live nearby it wasn't difficult to get there. He was admitted for three weeks and we were told he had malnutrition. He received drugs and milk, and quickly recovered to become the healthy boy he was before. He's back at home now and feeling well. I'm lucky to see him playing just like before."



Bahati, five, feeding rabbits at home, near Kibabi, Democratic Republic of Congo. The rabbits are from the Save the Children-supported therapeutic feeding centre, where Bahati was treated for severe malnutrition. At the centre, all mothers are given training on how to take care of rabbits, and take two home.



Anita, 16 (right) outside the Save the Children baby care centre she runs in Rajasthan, India. Save the Children also trains women living in villages to persuade their peers to use the public healthcare system, as public take-up of government services is often minimal. The healthcare system provides free health check-ups and vaccinations during and after pregnancy, as well as contraception, and treatment for diseases such as malaria, typhoid and pneumonia.

## Anita

Anita, 16, works in Masoodpura village in Rajasthan, India, with Save the Children in a baby care centre we've set up. She takes care of children under five and also gives mothers advice on how to look after their children – eg, keeping them clean and healthy. Anita thinks the main reason people come to the centre is the food (and nutritional supplements) that children receive there.

Here's Anita's story:

"The baby care centre is in my home. Our house is large, and we have the space to run it on the first floor. It opens from about 10 to 12 in the morning.

"The main draw of the centre, I think, is the food we serve here. Families are poor, and it's good if their children can get something nutritious to eat. We choose local foods and vary them with the season so that the children do not get bored.

"I tell the mothers to keep their children clean, bathe them, clean their teeth and comb their hair. Sometimes I cut their nails for them at the centre. We also sing songs, dance and play. The children like it."

## Save the Children's campaign

**CAMPAIGNING** is about creating and mobilising public pressure to make changes in policy, practice or behaviour that will benefit everyone – for example, making education available for all children. Campaigning is done through lobbying, networking and people joining together to take action.

**ADVOCACY** means influencing the people who have decision-making power to bring about changes – such as people working in governments and organisations like the UN.

Two examples of Save the Children's campaigning activities are:

- **Knitting hats** (this campaign ends on 21 October 2008)

A newborn baby can't regulate its own body temperature. It loses vital body heat through its head, which makes it more prone to pneumonia – a disease that kills around two million children every year.

When you knit a hat and send it to us at Save the Children, we'll send your hat to mothers and babies in developing countries who desperately need your help. Your hat can help to save a baby's life.

But these babies need more than just hats – they need you to speak up for them. We're asking everyone who knits a hat to pin a short message to it. Tell politicians that 'enough is enough'. If they don't act now, millions of children will continue to die needlessly every year.

([www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/5072.htm](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/5072.htm))

- **Fifth birthday cards**

Reaching the age of five is a milestone in some developing countries. Ten million children under the age of five die every year. Children and adults are signing and writing messages in birthday cards, which will then be sent to the Prime Minister to tell him how you feel about this issue.

([www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/50\\_74.htm#card](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/50_74.htm#card))

## Individuals can make a difference

Individual voices can make a massive difference. Over 11,000 birthday cards have already been filled out and hundreds of thousands of hats knitted with a message to the Prime Minister attached.

The more voices heard, the more likely we are to achieve our goals.

More information about the Save the Children campaign can be found at: [www.savethechildren.org.uk](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk)

## Facts and figures

- Ten million children die before the age of five each year.
- Four million babies die within the first 28 days of life.
- Three million babies live less than a week.
- Two million babies die on their first day of life.
- 99% of child deaths occur in developing countries.
- The Millennium Development Goals were set in 2000. The aim of MDG 4 is to cut child mortality rates by two-thirds by 2015.
- An insecticide-treated mosquito net can protect children at risk from malaria. One net costs only £5 – five nets cost £21.
- Micronutrient peanut butter to feed malnourished children costs just £1.50 for a day's supply, £7 for a week and £26 for a month.
- A vaccination can protect children from childhood diseases. It only costs £5 to vaccinate one child.
- A water filter can help provide clean water for children and their families. It costs just £5.

## Questions about child health for an interactive assembly

- What factors do you think affect child health around the world?
- Why might climate change affect children's health?
- Should people have free healthcare?
- What part does poverty play in not having access to healthcare?
- Why is education important for good health?