

Millennium Development Goals: introduced with case studies from Sierra Leone

Age Range

KS 2, 3 & 4



Introduction

This assembly explores the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and explains how they aim to reduce poverty and suffering. Case studies from Sierra Leone are used to contextualize each MDG to give pupils an understanding of the changes that can be made. See script below.

Timing

The assembly should take approximately 15 minutes (longer with learner participation).

Preparation

Below is a script that can be followed and adapted to suit. There are twenty-one PowerPoint slides. These can be copied onto OHP transparencies if preferred.

Assembly Follow Up

To help pupils continue their journey of engaging with the MDGs, teachers can find more resources on Oxfam's education website.

http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/change_the_world_in_eight_steps/index.htm

Each MDG is explored with an activity and poster resource.

Information and indices are taken from:

Global Humanitarian Forum 2009

Tower Hamlets: Children, Schools and Families Financial Data Collection

UNESCO: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001911/191186e.pdf>

World Bank: http://www.worldbank.org/mdgs/child_mortality.html

UNICEF: <http://www.unicef.org/mdg/maternal.html>

United Nations: http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG_FS_6_EN.pdf

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202010%20En%20r15%20low%20res%2020100615%20-.pdf#page=42>

http://www.undp.org/africa/documents/mdg/sierraleone_september2010.pdf

World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/hdp/poverty/en/>

Assembly Script

Slide 1:

When we think about development and reducing poverty in the 21st century we're thinking about what are called the Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs. This presentation introduces the MDGs and follows some of Oxfam's work.



Slide 2:

The aim of this presentation is to understand what the Millennium Development Goals are and how they work towards reducing poverty.

You will follow the journey of an Oxfam staff member in Sierra Leone exploring progress that has been made to reduce poverty and suffering.

Slide 3:

These statistics give an insight to the scale, size and dimensions of world poverty.

What kind of world do we live in?

- 1.2bn people in extreme poverty (1 in 6 of the world's population) – measured by the \$1.25/day yardstick
- 67m children not in primary education
- In 2006 9.7m children died before the age of 5 years – mainly from preventable causes
- 1 in 22 mothers in Sub-Saharan Africa die during pregnancy or childbirth
- 4bn people are vulnerable to the impact of climate change – 98% of them live in LEDCs
- 33.4m people live with HIV/AIDS – 2.1m are children

Slide 4:

Some people say being poor is the result of a person's laziness, or of bad luck, or that 'the poor are always with us'

However this is not true.

As Nelson Mandela reminded us poverty is man-made:

'the result of human actions like unfair trade, social injustice, climate change, weak governments, the debt and financial crises and conflict'.

And something that is man-made can be fixed by human actions too.

This is where the Millennium Development Goals come in.

Slide 5:

The MDGs aim to greatly reduce world poverty.

They are 8 international development goals agreed by all 192 countries of the United Nations in 2000.

The MDGs set targets for each of the 8 goals and 2015 is the date these goals aim to be met.

Let's look at the 8 goals one by one.

Slides 6-7:

Read through the goals.

Later in the presentation are examples of development projects taking place; you'll see that each project is linked to one of the MDGs.

Slide 8:

We are already two thirds through the 15 years we've set ourselves to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. There are only four years left.

John McLaverty from Oxfam visited Sierra Leone to see how well we're doing.

Slide 9:

It's about the size of Wales and 6 hours away by direct flight from London.

Sierra Leone suffered a destructive civil war between 1991 and 2002. It is now a peaceful and democratic country. However it is also one of the poorest countries in the world.

footnote – Sierra Leone's GDP per capita for 2010 in PPP is US\$807 – 176th out of 183 countries listed (IMF) The value of using US\$PPP instead of US\$ nominal is debatable, particularly if large sections of the population consume imports. Whichever measure is used Sierra Leone is one of the world's 8 poorest countries. Think about this – the average GDP is less than US\$1 per day per person.

Slide 10:

MDG 1 – End poverty and hunger

John visited a village in eastern Sierra Leone. This is what he said:

Shorter and more unpredictable rains are making farming difficult. Less rain means some crops can't grow as well and sometimes certain crops don't grow at all. When rains are unpredictable farmers don't know when is best to plant their seeds. This can cause hunger.

Traditionally people have depended on growing rice. Farmers from different communities have come together here to practice improved farming techniques:

- They have learnt about many different crops to use as alternatives to rice
- They have learnt about business and selling goods

They will return to their villages and put what they learn into practice. This will help make small farmers more productive and less vulnerable to changing rain patterns.

This is Watta Joseph, the chairlady of the group, examining her new aubergine crop.

Slide 11:
MDG2 – Universal Education

John visited Pamaronkor School to find out about the progress made in education. This is what he found:

This is a Year 6 class at a Primary School in a slum area of Eastern Freetown. The school has 1,000 students studying in 2 shifts, where half the school attends in the morning, and half in the afternoon. There are between 60 and 70 students in each class which makes the classrooms very cramped. The whole school shares 2 overflowing toilets.

Free primary education was introduced in Sierra Leone in 2003 and enrolment (the number of children on the register) has increased.

However, in 2008 only 13% of children passed primary school exams. Things that stop children going to school are a lack of school resources, hidden costs (eg: uniform) for parents and children working (child labour).

These are big challenges in achieving MDG2 in the country.

Slide 12:
MDG3 – Gender Equality

PACER is an Oxfam project, which stands for Promoting a Culture of Equal Representation. It supports women aspiring to be elected to public office.

John visited the PACER project to find out about achievements in gender equality – ensuring women have the same opportunities as men and they are not discriminated against. In the

past girls and women have been treated unfairly and not given the same rights as men. This can make it harder for women to carry out normal tasks.

This is what John found:

PACER's belief is that having more women involved in parliament and local government will directly lead to a positive change in the lives of poor men and women.

The photo shows Haja on the right, elected the local council of her area in 2008. She is now in charge of the council's finance committee. Haja told me about the barriers facing women – first girls fall behind in school and this leads to adult women not having the confidence to speak up in public. Six women supported and trained by Oxfam are now part of Koinadugu Council.

Throughout the country, 14.5% of the places in the Sierra Leone parliament are held by women – the national target is 30%.

Slide 13: **MDG4 – Child Health**

What John said about child health:

In the past Sierra Leone had among the largest number of child deaths in the world. To make this better, Sierra Leone made health care free for children under 5.

This plan was partly paid for by the UK government. An important part of Oxfam's work is to persuade the UK government to continue supporting free health care in poor countries like Sierra Leone.

What may seem like a small cost to us in the UK can be too much for people to afford in Sierra Leone. One Mum I spoke with told me her market business made £4.70 on a good day. This money had to support the whole family and buy new stock to sell the next day. So a hospital bill for £1.60 for her baby's medicine was very expensive.

Since health care was made free the number of children being brought to hospital has increased. In the photo above a nurse gives 6-month-old Zainab a vaccination so she doesn't catch dangerous diseases.

Slide 14: **MDG5 – Maternal Health**

What John said about meeting new Mothers:

In the past, Sierra Leone had one of the highest numbers of deaths of mothers giving birth in the world, so having a baby was very dangerous. To make this better, free health care for pregnant mothers was introduced in 2010.

This is Zainab and she's just given birth to her son Hasan at hospital the day before. She told me that until recently she'd have had to pay £6.25 to have her baby in hospital. This would have been too much for her to afford. The fact that giving birth is now free persuaded her to come to hospital.

Women who can't have their babies in hospital because of they don't have enough money usually give birth with the help of a traditional birth attendant (or TBA). This is a risky process. In Zainab's case her skin tore while giving birth, causing bleeding. It was quickly treated by the doctor and you can see she's healthy and happy. However, if Zainab was not in hospital the bleeding may not have been stopped which would have placed her life at risk.

Slide 15:**MDG6 – Combat Diseases**

What John found about combating diseases:

Malaria is spread through mosquitoes carrying the malaria parasite and is transmitted when mosquitoes bite humans. Malaria makes people very ill and can cause people to die. In the hospitals John visited he was told malaria was one of the main reasons for children being brought to hospital, particularly during the rainy season.

The two main strategies for reducing infections and deaths from malaria are:

- providing insecticide (a chemical that repels mosquitos) treated nets for people to sleep under (mosquitoes mostly come out at night)
- providing medicine to treat those who've caught the disease

Children under five with malaria benefit from free health care .The number of people sleeping under nets has risen from 5% in 2005 to 26% in 2008.

Slide 16:**MDG 7 – Environmental Sustainability**

John's visit to an Oxfam water facility project:

In 2008 only half of the people in Sierra Leone had access to clean water. Not many people had a toilet in their area. Drinking water from the wrong places is a massive cause of sickness, particularly diarrhea. To make this better, Oxfam is working with people to provide water pumps and toilets for more people to use.

When the taps and toilets are built Oxfam works with council and community members in Sierra Leone to make sure the new facilities are properly looked after so that they can last a long time.

This photo shows a new water pump recently built by Oxfam in eastern Sierra Leone.

Slide 17:

So far we've looked at the MDGs one-by-one.
But this isn't how they work in real life.

Maybe there's someone here who has malaria, someone else who's pregnant, a child who can't read, a victim of domestic violence, a farmer who's crop has failed because of late rains, a woman who takes water from a polluted stream and so on. Maybe people who can't read are also ill and their crop has failed and so on.

So the MDGs are all joined together because people experience life in a joined up way.

Slide 18:

All the countries in the world share responsibility for paying for the MDGs and ensuring they are met.

Poor countries are required to set aside enough money from their budgets to ensure they can pay for basic services for their people.

However many poor countries can collect only a small amount of tax from their citizens. This means that, for example, the whole education budget of Mali in West Africa is only £300m. By comparison the education budget for just one London borough (Tower Hamlets) is a little more than £300m.

Therefore rich countries have pledged to make up the gap by providing overseas development aid. As long ago as 1970 rich countries pledged to provide 0.7% of their GDPs as aid. So far only a few have achieved this and the UK is not one of them.

So there are funding gaps. Getting every child into school would cost the world an extra \$9bn per year, which is not yet on the table. This looks like a lot of money, but it's small change compared with the \$68 trillion used to bail out the banks.

Slides 19-20:

This has led campaigners, many economists and some governments to suggest new ways of raising the money needed to meet the MDGs.

A Financial Transaction Tax, popularly called the Robin Hood Tax, would make a very small tax charge of 0.05% on international financial transactions made by the banks and financial institutions. It is estimated that this could raise hundreds of billions of pounds every year that could be used to pay for the effects of climate change, the MDGs and cuts in public services in the rich countries.

Oxfam has joined 50 other organisations to ask for the Robin Hood Tax to be introduced.

Slide 21 –24:

Ordinary citizens, including school students like yourselves, have an incredibly important role to play in making sure the MDGs are met. People all over the world are working together to ensure these changes happen. Oxfam would like you to stay in the loop, get active and play your part in the longer term.

You could campaign with a politician, fundraise, or form a Youth Action Group. Oxfam wants you to get involved!