

Mothers for baby skull caps

The mothers of Hodari Junior Club have been meeting for tea at a local cafe, once a month, every month for the last five years. 'Their meets are book club meets, but in these same five years, they've also dared to venture on a number of interesting projects.

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Their most recent project has been one of crocheting (the process of creating textiles by using a crochet

hook to interlock loops of yarn, thread, or strands of other materials. The name is derived from the French term *crochet*, meaning 'small hook').

And what have they been crocheting? Tiny little mavins or skull caps. Out of every 1,000 infants that are born in Kenya, about 35 of them will not survive their first year. Speaking to one of the mothers behind the project she pointed out that a good percentage of these deaths was due to heat loss from the tiny heads of the infants.

Solution? The donations of little mavins. Cecilia is one of the mothers who got involved in this project. "I set myself the target of crocheting 500 of these mavins." And after almost a year of crocheting in her free time, she has less than 20 to go.

And with a very slight change to the design of the skull caps, they could also be used as "prosthetic breasts -

for breast cancer survivors who have undergone mastectomy", explained another of the mothers.

Explaining the project to the mothers, Anne - one of the mums present - mentioned that "The skull caps would ...be donated to the county hospital pre-term and newborn units".

Statistics show that newborns and pre-term babies lose up to 40% of their body heat through their heads. The majority of the new Kenyan mothers are not aware of this or cannot afford to do anything about it and so their babies are exposed to risks associated with heat loss...

So the health professionals are raising awareness on this, but there is a shortage of hats, mainly due to the small [head] sizes and also because the knitting and crochet culture is slowly dying out. And this is where we come in.

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