

# Primary Geographer

Number 71 Spring 2010



Focus on global learning





*Annual Conference and Exhibition*

# **GEOGRAPHY: THE BIG PICTURE**

**University of Derby • 8-10 April 2010**



The 2010 Geographical Association Annual Conference will focus on change in the primary curriculum, how geography is perceived through images by the wider public, the creative use of images and maps and how geographical research can contribute to global issues and debates. These primary sessions have a strong global learning dimension:

- How does Philosophy for Children support education for Global Citizenship? – workshop by Helen Griffin, South Yorkshire DEC
- Challenges of Global Learning – lecture by Hetan Shah, Chief Executive, DEA
- Mountains, Dreamlines, Dancing Dervishes and Painted Churches – lecture by Stephen Scoffham, Principal Lecturer in Education, Canterbury Christ Church University
- Bringing India Home for UK Children – workshop by Ann Hamblen, Writer in Education

Keep an eye on the conference pages of the GA website for details of all primary sessions!

For further details and online booking visit:  
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furthering the learning and teaching of geography

# To all teachers

## Would you like to write something for *Primary Geographer*?

This is an excellent opportunity to share your ideas and experiences! We are looking for teachers to write up ideas about teaching and learning in primary geography. You would be able to write to varying lengths, and your local member of the Editorial Board (see below) can help you draft your article. Articles can be 500, 750, 1000 or 1500 words, and can include photographs, pupils' work, examples of planning, explanation of activities. They don't have to be earth-shattering – we are interested in what doesn't work, and how you dealt with that, as well as what you were really pleased with, or the pupils got excited about!

Articles will appear both in the journal and online. Material appropriate for A4 downloads (e.g. activity and information sheets), additional photos and other material will appear online. The following checklist may help you structure your article:

1. A short biography: who you are, where you work and your interest in primary geography.
2. Your teaching and learning idea. What is it? When did you teach it? What went well? What would you change if you did it again? How does your idea illustrate the value of geography?
3. What did the pupils think/feel? Include pupil evaluations/pupil voices.
4. Offer advice for other teachers/schools who might be considering similar work.
5. Please include illustrations – photographs, and examples of pupils' work. Please make sure you have permission for us to reproduce the photographs. We have permission letters if you need them; e-mail Anna Grandfield (anna@geography.org.uk). If you are sending photos, we need jpeg files of at least 300dpi. If you are sending pupils' work, we need the originals, which we will of course return.
6. Finally, enjoy the opportunity to share your creativity! Celebrating primary geography is important and significant in its own right, and simply sharing classroom ideas is hugely beneficial. Readers enjoy having a window into someone else's classroom, and learning from each other is what the GA is about.

There is detailed information on preparing articles for publication at [www.geography.org.uk/download/GA\\_GIPGGuide.pdf](http://www.geography.org.uk/download/GA_GIPGGuide.pdf). If you have any questions, please contact Anna Grandfield (anna@geography.org.uk).

### Environmental policy

At regular intervals we revisit the production arrangements for our journals, ensuring the GA gets best value by putting the production work out to tender and seeking suppliers who share our mission to reduce the environmental impact of our activities.

Our journal printers, Buxton Press, have won several environmental awards, including two national awards for best Environmental Printer of the Year. This journal is printed on paper from forests certified by the Forest Stewardship Council as sustainably managed.

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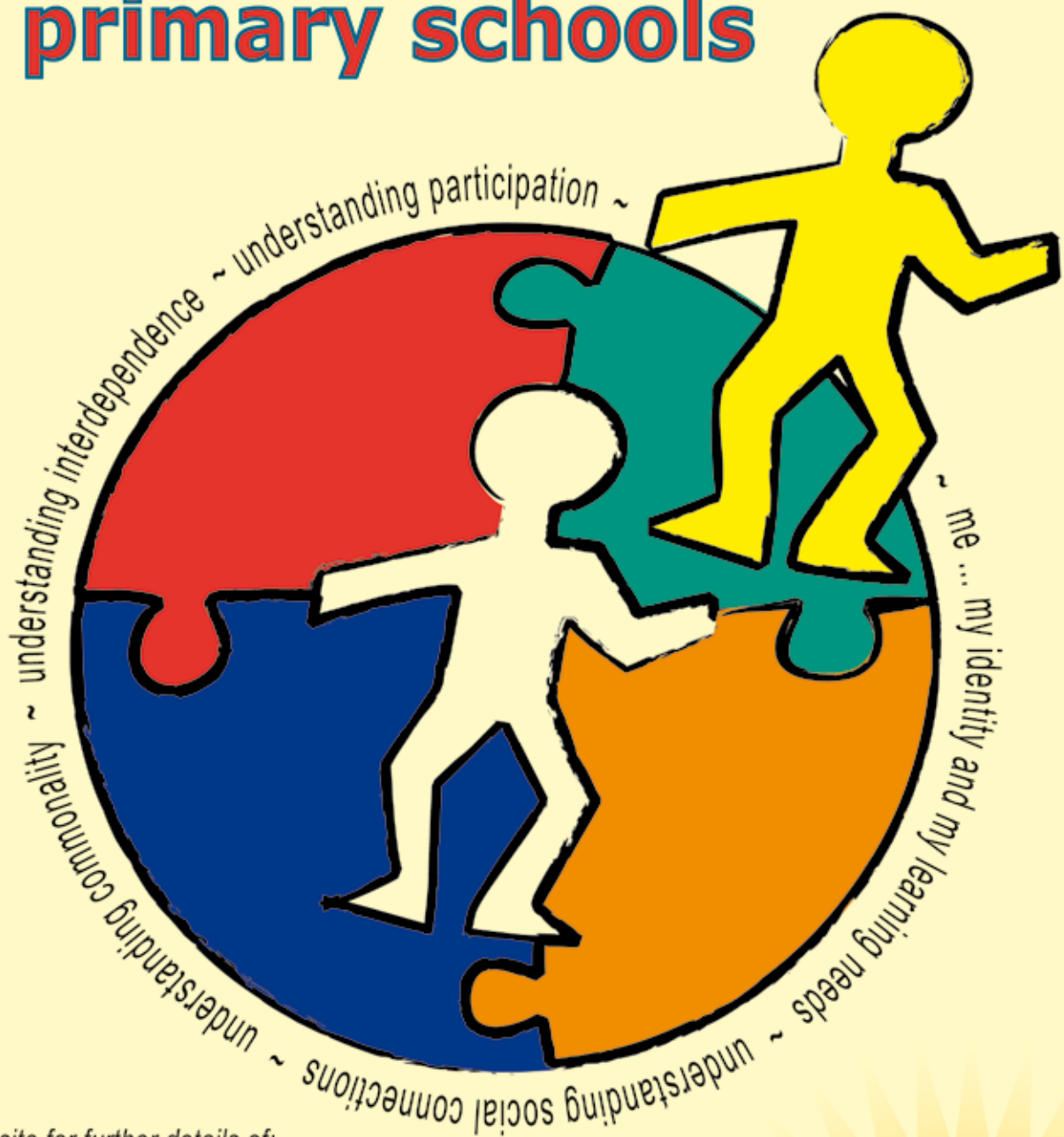
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## Forthcoming issues

- **Summer 2010:** Dr Fran Martin's issue supports teachers working with the new primary curriculum
- **Autumn 2010:** Stephen Pickering's 'Messy Geography' will focus on skills for learning and life

# Global learning in primary schools



See website for further details of:

- Teacher handbook and web support
- Conference, Tuesday 30th March 2010
- Tide~ Talk online journal
- Teacher-led curriculum innovation and resources

**TIDE~**  
global learning

[www.tidegloballearning.net](http://www.tidegloballearning.net)

*Come and see  
us at the GA  
Conference!*

# Editorial



Ben Ballin. Photo: Stanley Greenhalgh.



Margaret Mackintosh. Photo: Bryan Ledgard.

**I am delighted to have been invited to co-edit this edition of *Primary Geographer*, which focuses on Global Learning. The question of how we meet learners' needs in a global context is becoming increasingly important, as the world itself changes, and the curriculum changes with it. The global scale is an ever more visible part of all children's lives, and what happens globally is something that even the youngest children will have some ideas about.**

Before I say a little more about the focus, and the contents of this edition, I would like to thank all those who have supported me in the process of putting it together, especially my co-editor Margaret Mackintosh, whose experience and incisiveness have proved absolutely invaluable.

## The focus

The Alexander Review of Primary Education offers a challenge to us as teachers and educators. Do we allow global change to be a burden, part of a culture of 'childhood under pressure'? Or do we respond to it positively, and find ways to help our children engage constructively, as citizens and learners, with 'global and local realities as aspects of their education'? In their different ways, the articles in this edition do respond positively to this challenge, outlining ways in which geography, and geographical understanding, offer particular opportunities to do so.

At one level, learning at a global scale entails children finding about the major events which engage people all over the world. **Arthur Kelly's Start Gallery** offers some lively ideas to help explore issues around a hugely topical global event – the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. His suggestions are supported by a series of maps and a photo set online.

On the other hand, we should be wary of the assumption that the global is only 'out there', in some way disconnected from children's lives. **Jeff Serf** shares fascinating research on children's ideas about the world and how we might help them develop. This theme is thoughtfully elaborated in **Rupert Brakspear's Less is More?**

## Questions, questions

**Hetan Shah** proposes six elements of critical global thinking to take forward our teaching, and children's ideas: ways of making connections, for example, and challenging received wisdom through questioning and exploration. Online, **Kate Brown** offers practical suggestions for implementing Hetan's theory in the classroom. As a practitioner, **Claire Finkel** shares practical ideas and reflections on supporting such critical enquiry through meaningful talk.

## Getting the picture?

How we picture the world very much conditions how we engage with it, and visual literacy is therefore a strong theme throughout this issue. **Sam Bates** and **Stephen Pickering** beautifully bring to life some ideas for using pictures and story books to help children explore commonalities and differences as part of a topic on Kenya; **Wendy North's** additional

ideas for using story can be found online.

**Graeme Eyre** contributes helpful advice on finding and using photographs, while **Colin Bridge's** key stage 1 activities, with downloadable activity sheets, employ a range of graphicacy and visual literacy skills.

**Lezli Howarth's** refreshing account draws on her experiences of The Gambia and a topic on Food and Farming to help children build up a 'realistic understanding of an African country ... avoiding the extremes of "Crisis in Africa" and "Mustn't frighten the children".' Lezli's twin themes of learning from the perspectives of others, and allowing oneself to take a lead from children's ideas, are picked up again in a series of accounts (**Making connections through school partnerships**) where links between UK and overseas schools have provided a stimulus to global and geographical understanding, and where others' eyes have helped in viewing the world afresh.

## A world fit to learn in?

The sorts of opportunities outlined in this edition are what many of us are looking for, as we move towards a more thematic and creative curriculum, with opportunities to 'run with the children' and to investigate alongside them the many big ideas which shape their world.

The wonder of the young children in **Helen Martin's Forest School Diary Part 2**, and the imaginative ideas for curriculum enhancement suggested by **Steve Pratchett, Phil Rimmer** and **Nikki Fletcher**, capture some of those possibilities. We hope that you will be inspired to create many more.

## Resources to download



On the GA website you will find supplementary materials for many of the articles in this issue.

These include activity and resource sheets, maps, photo sets and some supporting information. Look out for the PC icon which appears where there are materials which you can download from [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg).

If you have ideas for articles, or comments on the journal, please contact the Chair of the Editorial Board, Steve Rawlinson: [steve.rawlinson@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:steve.rawlinson@northumbria.ac.uk).

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben Ballin".

# South Africa 2010

**Arthur J Kelly**

**The Start gallery introduces a resource linked to the focus of the issue, along with some ideas for using it in the classroom to get you started.**

The FIFA World Cup is scheduled to take place between 11 June and 11 July 2010 in South Africa. This is the nineteenth Football World Cup and the first time it has been hosted by an African nation. Thirty-one teams plus the host nation will take part. The global nature of the competition, and its widespread coverage in the media, make it an excellent vehicle for developing geographical learning and thinking.

## Where is South Africa?

### Locational thinking and vocabulary

Using globes, an atlas and a world map, ensure pupils can locate where they live.

Then challenge them to locate South Africa. Ask them to say which continent South Africa is part of. (A common misconception in primary schools is that Africa is a country, rather than a continent comprising more than 50 countries.) Which countries border South Africa? What oceans are off its coast? Pupils could record this information on a map of South Africa. (You can download maps of South Africa, Africa and the world from [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg)).

## Which nations will be represented?

### Locational thinking and thinking about geographical patterns

Encourage pupils to use the FIFA website ([www.fifa.com](http://www.fifa.com)) to discover which countries entered the 2010 World Cup (on the

homepage, click on 'countries'). Focusing on one continent at a time, help pupils to locate competing nations in an atlas and transfer this information onto the outline world map. Ask pupils what they notice about the locations of the entrant countries. Do all pupils know that there is a bias within the World Cup qualification process? Do they know that the number of places for European countries is disproportionately high compared to African and Asian countries? Ask pupils to suggest why this might be. Do they think it is fair? Is the FIFA World Cup really a 'world' cup?

### Thinking about scale and distance

Having devised a method for working out the scale, pupils can use globes to estimate the distances that different teams (and their fans) will have to travel to get to the finals in South Africa. Who has to travel the furthest? Who has to travel the shortest distance? Most teams will travel by air; how does this affect the carbon footprint of the competition? Ask pupils to try the same activity using a world map. Remind them to allow for scale distortion due to the flat map projection (which is usually Atlantic-or Europe-centric). Can pupils calculate the journey length for teams who need to fly across the Pacific?

## Where will the games take place and what are these places like?

### Thinking about places and using geographical vocabulary

There are 64 matches in the Finals and they will be held in nine host cities across South Africa. The actual World Cup Final is scheduled to take place in Johannesburg on 11 July 2010.



South Africa 2010: Who is represented? Young Tanzanian footballers. Photo: Jamie Bartlam.

## Host cities for the FIFA 2010 World Cup

Cape Town  
 Durban  
 Johannesburg  
 Manguang/Bloemfontein  
 Nelson Mandela Bay/Port Elizabeth  
 Nelspruit  
 Rustenberg  
 Tshwane/Pretoria  
 Polokwane

To support this activity, we offer two downloadable maps of South Africa ([www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg)). Map 1 shows the location of host cities with stadiums; on Map 2, the names of the cities are also given. Using Google Earth, pupils can discover the names and locations of these cities and mark them on Map 1.

The FIFA website includes a match schedule listing every venue. It also includes background information and photographs of the host cities, which give a rather touristic impression of South Africa. Pupils could discuss the purpose of this information and ask 'Who took these photographs, and why? What message was the photographer trying to convey? What photographs might another person take?' (See [www.fifa.com/worldcup/matches/index.html](http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/matches/index.html) for background information on the venues and host cities.)

Download images of Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban from [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg). These images were selected to accompany this article with these key purposes in mind:

- images of modern urban areas offer an alternative to the more familiar rural and traditional images seen by children on television and in other media
- the images highlight the diversity of South Africa which then stands as a microcosm of the diversity of Africa as a whole.



Central Cape Town. Photo: Angus Willson/Tide~ global learning study visit.



Green Point stadium under construction in Cape Town. Photo: Angus Willson/Tide~ global learning study visit.

Supplement these images by searching online at sites such as Google Images and Google Earth (use zoom functions for detail). The images can be used to support teaching and learning in a variety of ways. Pupils can:

- provide key words (e.g. mountain, offices, modern, traditional, sunny) to label the photographs (mini 'post it' notes are a great way of doing this); pupils can provide their own descriptive vocabulary
- contribute adjectives to their key words to make the descriptions more powerful. If pupils work in groups they can mix up the descriptive labels and photographs and challenge other groups to correctly match the labels and images
- construct 'and' and 'but' sentences for their photographs, making comparisons to where they live. For example, 'this place is near mountains but it is very flat where I live' or 'this place has tall buildings and there are tall buildings where I live too'.

Lots of other ideas for using images can be found in Graeme Eyre's article 'Photos in global learning' (on pages 20–21 of this issue) and a PDF download on using images with primary school pupils can be found on the GA website ([www.geography.org.uk](http://www.geography.org.uk)): go to 'A different view' and click on 'Using images with primary children'.

These are only a few starter ideas. Lots of geographical learning could also take place through an examination of South African tourist brochures ('How could I get there?' 'How much would it cost my family?' 'What would I like to see?'); students can compare the images in tourist brochures with alternative perspectives. Weather is another topic worthy of study: 'What is the weather in South Africa like in June and July when the World Cup Final takes place?' 'Might it favour the England team?'

Whatever the weather, I can't wait until the tournament starts ...

Arthur Kelly is Associate Director PGCE Primary Geography Curriculum Leader at Liverpool Hope University and a Primary Geography Champion.



At [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg) you will find the following resources to support this project:

- maps of the world, Africa and South Africa
- a gallery of images of some of the FIFA World Cup 2010 host cities.



As well as maps and images designed specifically to support this article, you can download

a PDF of advice on using images with primary school pupils at: [www.geography.org.uk/download/GA\\_ADVUsingImages.pdf](http://www.geography.org.uk/download/GA_ADVUsingImages.pdf)

The FIFA web site is [www.fifa.com](http://www.fifa.com).

# Small and Mighty: Children's ideas about global learning

*Jeff Serf*

Jeff Serf used the television advertisement for Persil's 'Small and Mighty' detergent as a stimulus to prompt young pupils to talk about the world they live in and how it could be improved. Here he describes the discussions that resulted from his research, with some examples; the full version of his discussions with the children can be downloaded from [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg).

Five groups of 50 year 6 pupils, from a range of rural and urban schools, watched a 30-second television advertisement for Persil's 'Small and Mighty' detergent. The advertisement, incorporating images of a child's pop-up book and with a child speaking the commentary, claimed that by using this concentrated detergent you would only use 'half' the resources, i.e. water, packaging and lorries. The advertisement concluded with the phrase, 'Every child has a right to a nicer world' (see [www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIISU0rnqVE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIISU0rnqVE)).

#### Children:

- enjoy and value diversity
- develop a sense of positive personal identity
- express feelings and values.

#### Children understand:

- social connections
- commonality
- interdependence
- participation.

Source: Global learning in primary schools, Tide~ global learning, 2008.

Figure 1: Global learning core ideas. A more detailed version can be downloaded from [www.geography.org.uk/lpg](http://www.geography.org.uk/lpg).



Photo: Margaret Mackintosh.

The global learning core ideas in Figure 1 provided a framework for discussion between pupils that was intended to elicit, among other things, their:

- understanding of relationships between the natural, built and economic environments
- knowledge of the links between their own lives and locality and the lives and localities of others
- ability to express their own views and respect the views of their peers.

The pupils were also challenged to empathise with others by considering what would make 'their world, and not just yours, a nicer world'.

The discussion that occurred in each group was unique, covering topics, issues and ideas that originated from individual children's comments. However, analysis also revealed themes that were common to all five discussions. A full copy of the

discussions between the researcher and the children can be downloaded at [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg).

### Theme 1: Children's knowledge and understanding of environmental issues

Each group demonstrated considerable knowledge of environmental issues, although there was some confusion. Most of the children followed the logic of the argument presented in the advertisement. The response 'It's (the advertisement) saying that it's half the lorries, so when it was a big pack they had to use more and more lorries, but when they made it a smaller pack they only use half the lorries' was fairly typical. However, the pupils' initial responses usually developed into a more demonstrable awareness of the



I think it's partly true ... if you reduce the amount of lorries and packaging and things, you will help save the planet, but partly not because packaging will still increase global warming, if you recycle it, it will probably make as much ... but if you don't recycle at all and you're really lazy and just throw it away on the street then it will still increase global warming so it's you that has to help.

No ... if you buy Persil, I think it is true, but say if there was ten different things ... that would be just like taking one of them, but there's still nine things left.



## Theme 2: The children's imaginings about the views of others

The children found it relatively easy to suggest what would make their world a 'nicer place'. They were then given a more difficult task: 'What would make it a nicer place for other children, in different parts of England and beyond?'

In the group discussions that followed, the pupils displayed an awareness of the global implications of climate change and an appreciation that others might have different opinions from them (see Figure 2). One pupil's response showed an awareness of justice, dignity, rights and responsibilities, while other responses showed an awareness of the commonality of human experiences beyond that of climate change. Some pupils demonstrated an awareness of disparities between people's living conditions and their perceptions of a range of countries and continents. Not all the children's perceptions were negative, despite showing the influence of television.

## Theme 3: The children's suggestions for satisfying the principle that 'Every child deserves a nicer world'

To conclude each discussion, the children were given a short written task: 'If you were the Prime Minister for one day, what three things would you do to make it a "nicer world"?'. Many children were in favour of banning families from having two cars; they would only allow non-polluting vehicles to be made and sold; and they would increase the minimum age for holding a driving

'So it's not just about buying Persil then?' Photo: Shaun Flannery.

complexity of environmental issues and the consequence of actions, such as the consequences of our actions in England for the lives of people elsewhere.

In further discussions the children recognised that there are some difficult decisions involved and that there are no simple, quick-fix answers.

The children demonstrated their understanding that people's actions impact on the environment, causing it to change over time. They showed sufficient environmental knowledge about sustainability to appreciate that if fewer materials are consumed then the planet should benefit. However, some children did not appreciate that what made this product special or different, according to the advertisement, was its 'concentrated power'. They thought that a smaller box

would simply mean having to buy more boxes for the same amount of washing. Another common misunderstanding was the confusion over such concepts as 'global warming' and 'the ozone layer'.

All of the children appeared to appreciate the inter-connectedness of environmental problems; the most frequently cited being the reduction in oxygen levels and fauna habitats resulting from woodland removal. A relatively small number of pupils could identify and talk about the conflicts involved in efforts to resolve complex environmental issues, while some pupils were clearly beginning to appreciate the complexity of people's actions and were able to evaluate those actions in terms of potential environmental consequences (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: 'What might other children suggest as contributing to a nicer world?' Photo: Shaun Flannery.

I think it (what other children would suggest as contributing to a nicer world) would probably be the same because global warming is obviously a global thing and all children are affected by it all round the world meaning the ice caps are melting and making floods and animals being endangered lots of people like animals all around the world so basically global warming affects everyone.

I think lots of people from different parts of the world are more worried about ... like in Africa, if you had about just enough money. I mean if you lived in Zimbabwe at the moment you wouldn't be half as worried about global warming than about yourself whether the next day you were suddenly going to be executed.

I think the whole world will be concerned about global warming, but then, like, different continents will have different particular worries like here it might be knife crime and graffiti, but in Africa it would be like HIV and drought and not having enough food and things that they should have and poverty.

In India, there's poverty and they're probably worried about disease and if they're still going to be living.





Washing day in the Gambia. Photo: Margaret Mackintosh.



Figure 4: Children's suggestions for improving local and distant communities. Photo: Shaun Flannery.

licence. Others said that they would seek ways to increase the recycling of materials by offering cash incentives; increase the preservation of woodlands; and restrict building in rural areas. The child-Prime Ministers would prohibit the hunting of a wide range of mammals and endangered species and increase the size and number of conservation areas. There was, therefore, further evidence of the children's knowledge and understanding (and in some cases misunderstanding) of sustainable development and conservation.

The children had many ideas for improving their local communities. There was strong support for the severe restriction, and in some case the total banning, of smoking, as there was for

punishing graffiti artists or illegal drug dealers. Honesty would be rewarded by cash or holidays.

Many of the children saw community cohesion and human relationships as important aspects of a 'nicer world' (see Figure 4). When considering what could be done to make a 'nicer world' for more distant communities, many of the children stated that their suggestions to address climate change would also impact on other countries. However, the children put forward other ideas to influence distant communities more directly, most commonly the direct transfer of wealth from richer to less-rich communities. A significant number of child-Prime Ministers would seek peaceful conflict resolution

as a means of benefiting all communities, including their own.

## Conclusions

The children I met were responsible young citizens, well placed to make a positive contribution to their society – whether their immediate, or their global, society. Further, they have been fairly well served by receiving an education, both in and outside school, in which they have learnt about the impact of their actions on the planet and understand the importance of developing a future that is sustainable. The children were clearly able to listen, discuss and express their own ideas; they all enjoyed talking about their world and showed real concern for their own futures, for other people's futures and for the planet. While there is clear evidence of their confusion over the 'cause and effect' of some environmental issues, the pupils displayed an awareness of several significant issues and were not short of ideas or commitment.

The children's ideas and understanding about the world in which they live, including their conceptions and misconceptions, should prompt us to consider further how and what they learn about the world.

Jeff Serf is Associate Dean of the School of Education, at the University of Wolverhampton.



### Web box

You can download a full version of the children's comments, and a full version of the global learning core ideas, from [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg).

The 'Small and Mighty' Persil advertisement can be seen on [www.youtube.com/watch?v=plISU0rnqVE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plISU0rnqVE).

# Less is More?

**Rupert Brakspear**

**This Worcestershire curriculum development pilot project challenged the economic, social and political assumption that more = more; that only growth and development can improve quality of life. Here, Rupert Brakspear shows how children benefited from asking if 'Less is More?'**

Although in some countries growth and development are essential to lift people out of poverty, in many other places, including the UK, our 'quality of life' is sustained at the expense of the environment; and many of the goods we consume are made or grown by people in other places who work for a pittance.

The New Economics Foundation (NEF) asks the question: 'Does being richer necessarily make us happier?' (see Figure 1) and questions whether we are justified in compromising the planet's ecological integrity in order to sustain unsustainable economic systems. Think, for example, of the Brazilian government's current drive to increase beef and leather exports through further deforestation (see [www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/slaughtering-the-amazon](http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/slaughtering-the-amazon)).

## The NEF Happy Planet Index:

- explores links between the levels of well-being (measured in terms of happiness and life expectancy) and the carbon footprint of various European countries
- the UK is ranked 21 out of 30 countries for the level of human well-being it delivers.  
[www.happyplanetindex.org](http://www.happyplanetindex.org)

Figure 1.

As teachers of geography, or historical, geographical and social understanding, we are accustomed to exploring the big ideas that shape the world: climate change, rainforest habitat destruction, poverty etc. Until recently, all these themes were regularly covered, mostly separately, in lessons shown as geography in school timetables.

Learning about sustainable development involves taking a joined-up view of the world (see Figure 2). In addition to existing curriculum opportunities, for example the Cross-

Curricular Dimension on Sustainable Development, there are clear opportunities for schools to make significant links to the DCSF Sustainable Schools framework, with its focus on taking whole-school approaches across 'curriculum, campus and community' from eight possible starting points or doorways (see [www.teachernet/sustainableschools](http://www.teachernet/sustainableschools)).

## Less is More?

The Learning for Sustainability team at Worcestershire County Council worked with schools on 'Less is More?' – a cross-curricular project that emphasised geography, design and technology, science and PSHE. The team's sub-agenda was to develop an enquiry-led approach to learning; critical thinking as a key skill for empowering learners in their exploration of choices; and decision-making skills to build confidence for living in a rapidly changing world! Together, the team and participating schools explored how ideas and practical applications find their way into whole-school approaches linked to curriculum development where they can have profound and dynamic impact!

The 'Less is More?' project was kick-started by an introductory day, attended by representatives of 20 schools and some undergraduates, which was followed by a series of twilight sessions.

Different schools explored the 'Less is More?' theme in very different ways, including:

- the implementation of a whole-school, whole-term, 'Less is More?' theme
- staff meetings where the 'Less is More?' theme informed curriculum development
- the 'Less is More?' theme informing curriculum planning and delivery, for example, a 'sustainable Christmas project' in design and technology and a water project in geography
- linking cross-curricular class projects, for example, linking a school garden project with a focus on a local park
- co-operation between a cluster of five schools to hold a 'Less is More?' eco-week.

## Case study 1: Honeybourne First School

Elaine Huntingdon, Headteacher of a small school with less than 100 pupils, attended the introductory day and then adopted the 'Less is More?' theme as a school focus for the spring term.

With the support of the Worcestershire Learning for Sustainability Officer, the theme was launched in Elaine's school with a drama story 'The king and the draughty castle'.

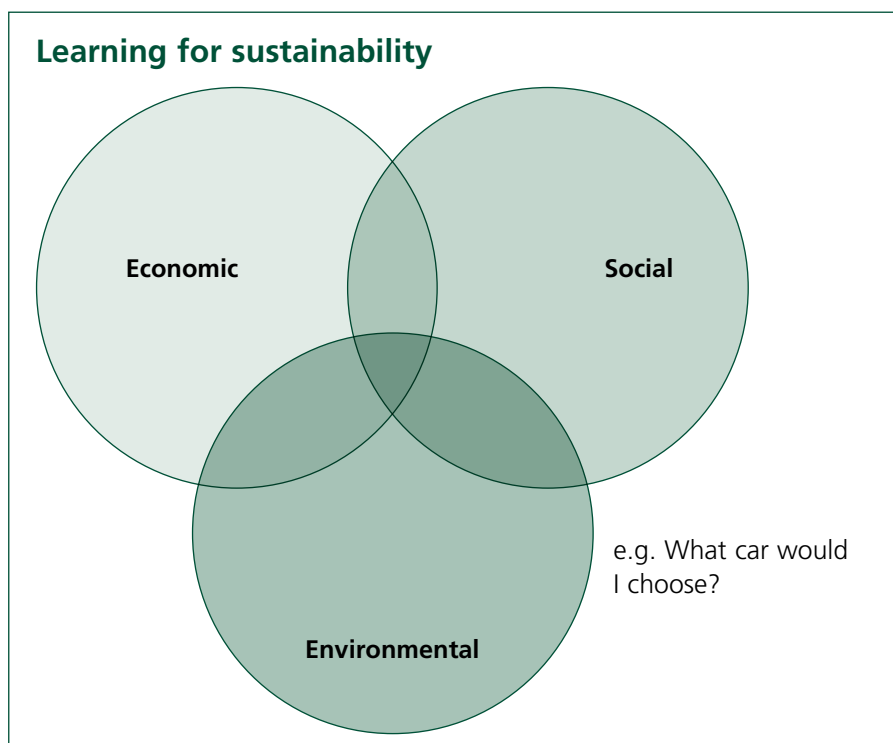


Figure 2: Recognising different perspectives in decision making.

### The king and the draughty castle

This story was conceived and written by project group members. It is a simple tale of a beautiful kingdom whose forests are ransacked for fuel to heat its big old castle. The environmental degradation continues until the local people decide enough is enough!

At intervals the story can be paused for dramatic effect so that:

- 'photographs' of scenes can be built up (with the children)
- 'thought bubbles' can be added to these scenes on large sheets of paper, or
- key players can be 'hot seated'.

The story was kept open-ended to encourage children's thinking and imagination.



Finishing touches – the boys' castle. Photo: Elaine Huntingdon.

The following two days were for pupils' critical and creative thinking, inspired by the WWF Reaching Out project. There was lots of designing and making in the school as classes from reception to year 5 explored how a building could leak both heat and cold and how the ideas described in the story related to big ideas outside the classroom. One year 5 boy commented, unprompted, 'That wasn't a story about a king, that was about climate change!'

Elaine reflected, 'This is not really a project, it's a way of doing things ... that will not go away ... I've never seen year 5 so switched on to discussion and listening to each other's ideas ... Once they got started it was hard to stop them!'



How do we stop the castle leaking heat? Insulating cups of tea. Photo: Elaine Huntingdon.

### Activity to generate critical thinking about the global dimension

Give each group of 4–5 children a challenging photograph in the centre of large piece of paper. The children answer the following questions, annotating their responses in different coloured pens (one colour for each question):

- What can you see in the picture? (ask for key words/details)
- What is the picture about? (ask for issues, concerns, good and bad)
- What has the picture, or what it is about, got to do with the way we live our lives? Make links! What can we do about this?

Group feedback is facilitated by the different colour annotation; a list of action points can then go to other classes or the School Council or to the Eco Committee for consideration.



Happy with the finished product! Photo: Elaine Huntingdon.

A key link emerged between the project thinking and Bloom's Taxonomy (see [http://projects.coe.uga.edu/epltt/index.php?title=Bloom's\\_Taxonomy](http://projects.coe.uga.edu/epltt/index.php?title=Bloom's_Taxonomy)). Bloom's most widely referenced work, on the cognitive domain, emphasises higher order thinking rather than the transference of facts. The structures he identifies can be viewed as a hierarchy (see Figure 3) to show progressive contextualisation of material, providing opportunities for children to analyse and synthesise their knowledge, leading to evaluation and creative stages where they can generate ideas and responses, etc.

## Case study 2: Cherry Orchard Primary School

A persuasive writing project for year 4s explored the use of emotive language in combination with asking a question. Many of the children chose a theme related to environmental issues. The class had already considered 'Less is More?' during the year. For example, when looking at the Indian village Chembakolli, the children were asked to relate 'Less is More?' to their posters. The teacher reflected, 'I liked the fact that the children had free choice on the subject matter, and this has shown me our future is something they do care about!'

'Less is More?' statements from Cherry Orchard Primary School

- More pollution – Less turtles
- Less hunting – More sharks/whales
- Less furniture and money spent in the shop in Chembakolli, less waste, packaging, strip lights, carrier bags
- Less conversation with shopkeepers in supermarkets – More relaxed in Chembakolli shop
- Less habitats – More danger (of extinctions)
- Less heat – More time for planet earth
- Less rubbish means a better future

Comments from teachers in the group's twilight sessions:

- 'A sense that dealing with real global issues makes the kids feel more grown-up.'
- 'Children were driving the agenda, raising the ideas about what they wanted to know and finding out what they could do.'
- 'To start with children are shocked when teachers don't have the answers, but after a while they found it invigorating when they had to find the answers for themselves.'

## Conclusion

Globally, our consumption is unsustainable. What outcomes will we experience collectively? Being able to think critically



Team work. Photo: Elaine Huntingdon.

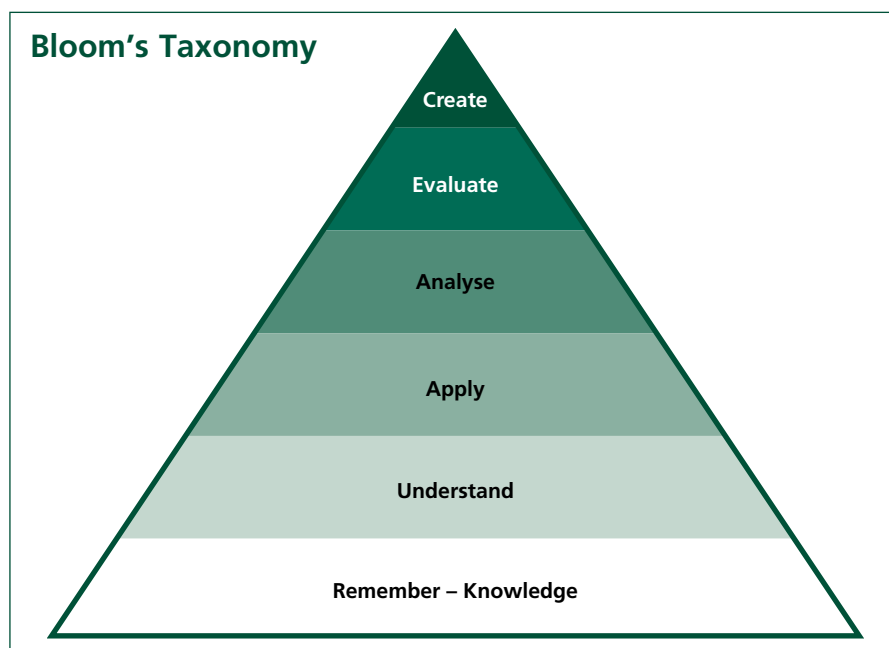


Figure 3: Bloom's Taxonomy.

and creatively about our changing social, economic and natural environment will benefit today's children. Beyond this they need opportunities to think creatively about possible solutions. Schools have a key role to play here, and geography co-ordinators can help make the links: between the global dimension and the children's own lives, and between subject areas and whole-school approaches to sustainability.

## References:

- [www.dea.org.uk](http://www.dea.org.uk)  
 Capewell, I. (ed.) (2007) *The Sustainability Handbook for Design & Technology Teachers: Design with Sustainability in Mind*. Rugby: Practical Action/Centre for Alternative Technology, ISBN 978-1-85339-670-0.  
 Vare, P. and Scott, W. (2008) *DEA Thinkpiece Education for Sustainable Development: Two sides and an edge*. Downloadable from [www.dea.org.uk/resources/item.asp?d=884](http://www.dea.org.uk/resources/item.asp?d=884).

## Acknowledgements:

With thanks to teachers and partners in the 'Less is More?' project.

*Rupert Brakspear is Learning for Sustainability Officer at Worcestershire County Council. He was a primary school teacher, play development officer and environmental educator in Newcastle upon Tyne and Belfast before moving to Worcestershire in 2004.*



These are the web links referred to in this article:  
[www.happyplanetindex.org](http://www.happyplanetindex.org)  
[www.teachernet/sustainableschools](http://www.teachernet/sustainableschools)  
[www.greenpeace.org/international/pressreports/slaughtering-the-amazon](http://www.greenpeace.org/international/pressreports/slaughtering-the-amazon)  
[http://projects.coe.uga.edu/epltt/index.php?title=Bloom's\\_Taxonomy](http://projects.coe.uga.edu/epltt/index.php?title=Bloom's_Taxonomy)

# Critical thinking in the context of global learning

**Hetan Shah**

Hetan Shah, Chief Executive of the DEA, uses the term 'global learning' to describe education that puts learning into a global context. This means developing critical and creative thinking about how we can create a more just and sustainable world. The term 'critical thinking', and associated notions of 'critical pedagogy', are much contested. In this article, Hetan examines these contested areas and proposes six elements of critical global thinking.

DEA is an education charity that promotes global learning. At DEA we work to ensure that people in the United Kingdom learn about global issues, such as poverty and climate change, and develop an open-minded, global outlook.



*We need to understand the relationship between consumption and the environment.  
Photo: Bryan Ledgard.*

## Making connections within and between systems

The 17th century philosopher René Descartes, a dominant influence on Western thinking, believed that the best way to understand something was to break it down into its component parts. This powerful thinking process paved the way for most of our scientific advances, such as the discovery of the atom.

But understanding the constituent parts of a given system is not enough; it is vitally important to understand how they are connected. For example, the British Financial Services Authority has admitted that their failure to fully explore how individual risks can compound with each other meant that they underestimated the overall risks present in the UK's financial system. This played an important role in the recent economic crisis.

Issues such as climate change require us to think systemically. For example, we need to understand the relationship between our consumption and the environment. We tend to see economics and the environment as separate areas of concern, but as WWF

research shows, if everybody consumed at the rate of the UK, we would need three planets to support us.

We can only really start to understand global challenges and issues when we make connections within and between systems.

## Awareness of how much is contested

Global learning's major concepts are contested. Abstract nouns such as 'sustainability', 'global citizenship' and 'development' are not the names of real, clearly defined objects. What is 'sustainability'? Is it mainly environmental, or is it also about social justice? What makes someone a global citizen? Is this a useful concept? What does being a 'developed country' mean? There is no consensus.

In describing why he would not want his children to be educated for sustainable development, Jickling (1992) warns against conditioning young people 'to believe that

"sustainable development" constitutes a constellation of correct environmental views'. Instead, he argues, we should debate, evaluate and judge for ourselves the relative merits of contested positions.

## Responding to complexity and change

Since the world is complex and changing, individuals need to constantly question and update their own models of the world. Some teachers use a model rooted in 1950s dependency theory that distinguishes sharply between poor and rich countries. But where does China fit in? How do we rationalise the fact that India's middle class now stands at 100 million people (possibly larger than the middle class of the whole of Europe)? What do we make of the statistic that 1 in 3 UK children live in relative poverty? Newer development models are needed, models that locate deprivation and wealth within as well as across nations.

Everybody is now 'for' sustainability: debate must move to the next level. Critical global thinkers need to explore the very real trade-offs needed to create a fairer and more sustainable world. How would higher energy prices impact on the very poorest in society? What does 'local food' mean in the context of poorer countries' trade? Like the questions, the answers will be complex.

## Understanding the significance of power relationships

Global learning, like all education, has ideological and political underpinnings, shaped by patterns of power distribution. Following the Freirean tradition, critical reflection on the way in which reality is shaped can be instrumental in moving individuals to change their reality. This link between awareness and action is not transparent, but viewing the world through a political lens is nonetheless revealing: it can help us move from a benevolent charitable view of other countries to engaging with the structural issues that shape global challenges and influence the ways we see them.

Global learning is more than a set of agendas about individual change and moral refrains ('be responsible; give to charity; feel bad when you fly'). A systemic analysis recognises that change is political and that we need an analysis of the roles of all the different actors – government, business, NGOs and individuals. A systemic analysis also seeks to understand the incentives within the system. Why do people act as they do? What systemic changes will help change behaviour? For example, moral exhortation and charitable



Photo: Shaun Flannery.

giving may have a relatively insignificant effect on international poverty in comparison to changes in UK tariffs policy, or consumers' behaviour.

The political nature of global learning also means that critical global learners need to be circumspect: recognise that NGOs, government, business and academics have their own agendas, and consider: Who has power? Who is voiceless? Who benefits?

## Self-reflectiveness

The global is not 'somewhere out there' – we are part of it. We are key contributors, collectively and individually, to the problems of environmental sustainability and climate change. Critical global thinking means situating ourselves in the global: this involves making connections between the global and the local, between global processes and systems and ourselves as individuals. Similarly, with relative poverty in the UK, we need to consider our own 'development trajectory' as much as that of other nations.

Self-reflection means exploring our deeper prejudices and stereotypes about poorer countries. When children are asked to draw 'What is in Africa?' very poor communities and mud huts usually predominate. There is little recognition of the variety of life and living conditions in this huge continent, or an understanding that poverty in Africa is not universal. Critical global thinking means challenging ourselves to remain open-minded and aware that change for a fairer and more sustainable world may well involve changing ourselves.

## Values literacy

All societies have understandings about what constitutes a good life which go to the heart of our values. Global learning needs to grapple with this, going deeper than learning outcomes predicated on knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Increased material affluence has not necessarily made us happier. The UK economy has trebled in size over the last 50 years but happiness indicators have remained relatively flat, suggesting that we adapt quickly to material gains (Layard 2005). Lottery winners experience a surge of happiness and then return to their previous levels of well-being. There are, of course, more societal goals than well-being; values such as freedom, or participation. Young people should be given the space to explore their values: where they come from, and where they might clash. How do their environmental values sit with their desire to fly and travel? There may be no easy answers, but critical thinking requires us to begin by identifying the contradictions in our values and challenging them.

So often statements about values are made as though they are statements of fact. In becoming more conversant with their own values, critical global thinkers may be better able to identify the values implicit in what they see, hear and read.

## References

- Jickling, B. (1992) 'Why I don't want my children educated for sustainable development', *Journal of Environmental Education*, 23 (4), pp.5–8.
- Layard, R. (2005) *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science*. London: Penguin Books.



Hetan Shah is the Chief Executive of DEA (hetan.shah@dea.org.uk). Hetan is presenting a lecture on Friday 9 April at the GA's Annual Conference in Derby on the 'The challenges of global learning' – see [www.geography.org.uk/download/GA\\_Conf10FullProgB.pdf](http://www.geography.org.uk/download/GA_Conf10FullProgB.pdf) for more information.



Kate Brown, the Schools Programme Manager at DEA, offers some pragmatic suggestions for how critical thinking can be applied in the classroom – you can download them from [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg).

The DEA's website is [www.dea.org.uk](http://www.dea.org.uk). The DEA also manage [www.globaldimension.org.uk](http://www.globaldimension.org.uk), a guide to books, films, posters and web resources which support global, intercultural and environmental understanding for all age groups and subjects.



# Talking global geography: development issues

Claire Finkel

Claire Finkel describes and reflects on the experiences of a group of key stage 2 teachers who got together at the Tide~ global learning Centre in Birmingham to develop ways of using talk to explore and develop children's understanding of development. The group explored strategies that key stage 2 teachers could use to:

- support pupils' understanding of the 'big idea' of development
- develop purposeful talk as a way of understanding concepts and ideas
- try out the draft programmes of learning for historical, geographical and social understanding.

When I first joined the group I was concerned that my chosen unit of work was not a traditional 'geography' unit and might not be appropriate – I was covering 'The Victorians'! However, during the first project meeting I discovered that I wasn't the only one – Deborah Clarke of Lodge Primary School was covering 'People who changed the world' – a unit usually covered in the citizenship curriculum.

We discussed possible projects relating to our units that would also allow us to concentrate on talk, geography and an understanding of development. In a sense, we were aiming to arrive at an understanding of a key geographical

concept by means of history and citizenship. Rather than starting with all the relevant facts, we decided to come up with some creative ways to introduce our projects. The focus on talk encouraged a child-centred approach and we developed starting points that engaged our pupils from the beginning by discussing images, ideas and their thinking ...

## Case study 1: Lodge Primary School, Sandwell

The year 5 unit for the term was 'People who changed the world'. In this multi-cultural school the concept of cultural diversity is currently being developed

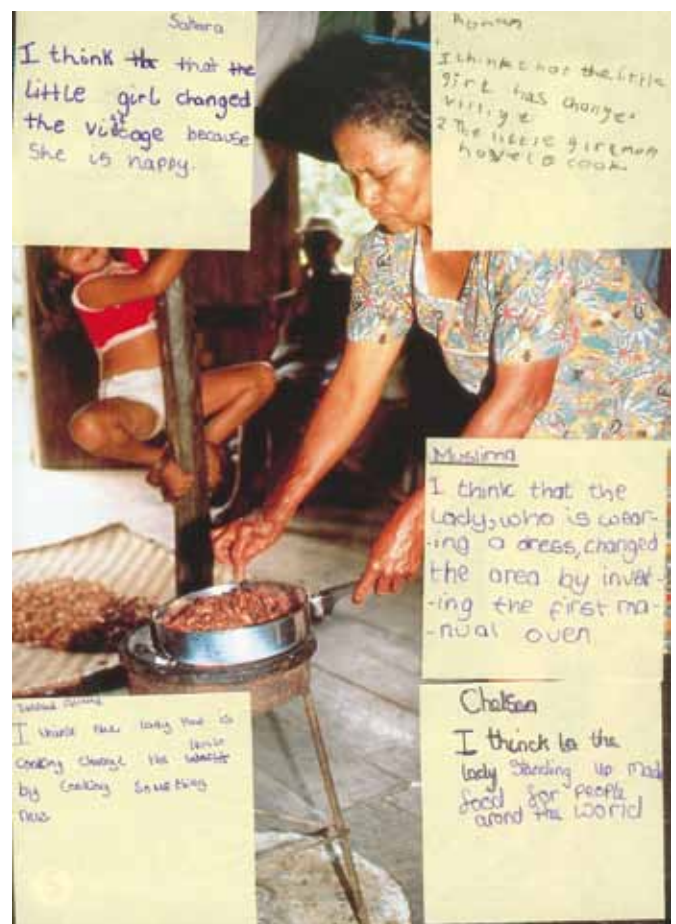
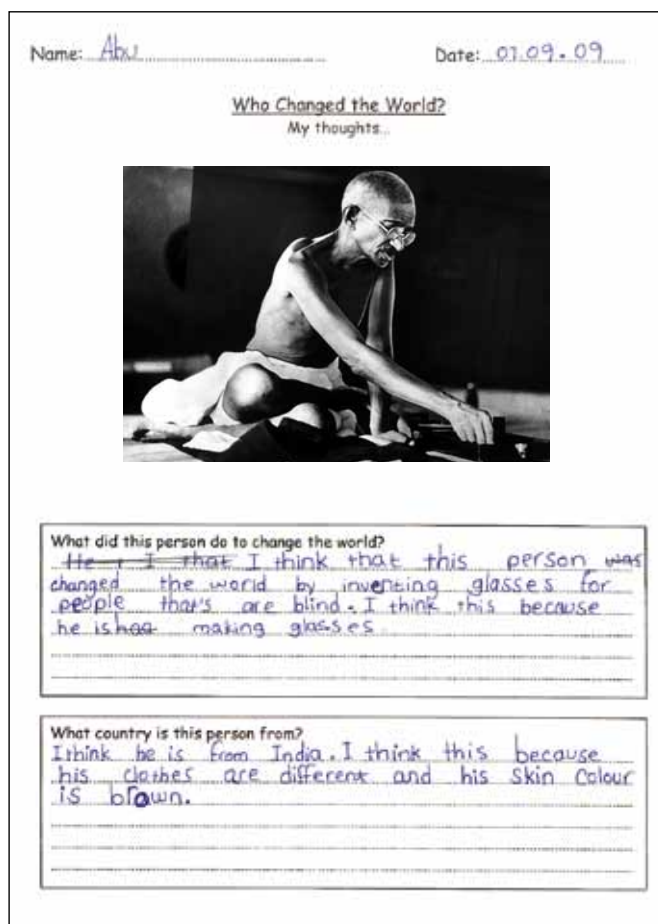


Figure 1: People who changed the world: Ghandi. Photo: © Getty Images (Hulton Archive).

Figure 2: Changes people make in distant places.



within a 'creative curriculum.' Deborah gave pupils a selection of pictures of well-known people and asked them to discuss who they thought these people might be and how they might have changed the world (see Figure 1). Interesting conversations ensued, and Deborah really gained an insight into the basis of the children's assumptions. For this class of mostly Bangladeshi heritage children, the main signifier of a person's nationality seemed to be skin colour.

The children went on to discuss pictures of different places around the world. Using their prior knowledge and clues in the images, they suggested where the places might be. Then they matched their suggestions to six countries, and offered reasons for their choices (for example, because they could see the architecture in an image of China and green landscapes in a picture of England).

The class then looked at a range of images of small groups of people in different settings around the world. They talked about what changes the key people in the pictures might have made; this prompted particularly rich, emotive responses (see Figure 2). Finally, the children looked at changes that had occurred in their local area, and who might be responsible for these (see Figure 3).

Rather than 'teaching' this class about development in certain parts of the world and the people who had brought about developmental change, Deborah encouraged pupils to reflect upon the relationship between their talk and their increasing level of understanding of the images, showing pupils the purpose of their talk.

Deborah also guided pupils by modelling the appropriate use of language to help them structure their talk effectively.

The pupils were able to make links between the geographically diverse images they had seen and discussed, and the positive and negative changes they had identified in their local area. Their earlier talk also enabled them to identify



Figure 3: Changes people make in the local area: good and bad.

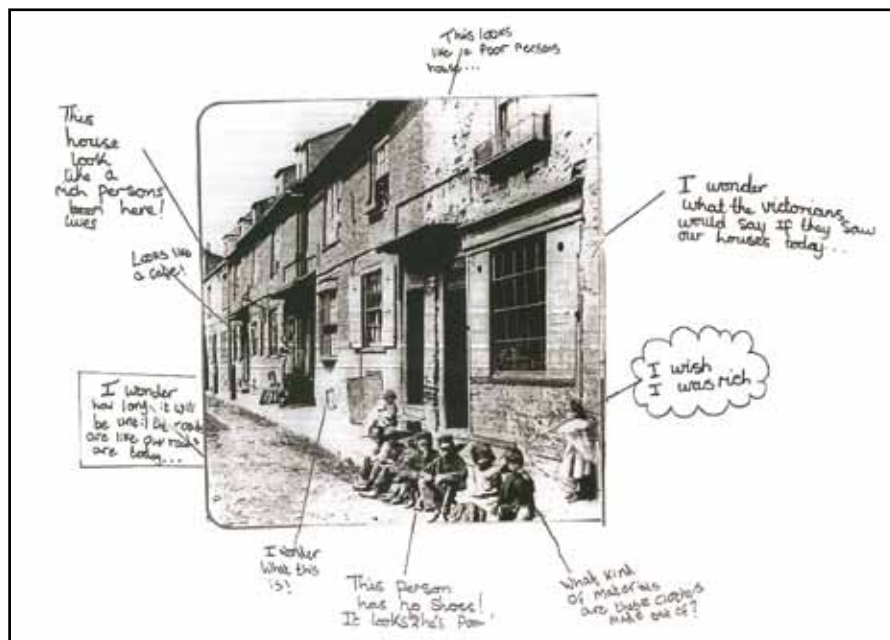


Figure 4: Victorian Birmingham: comments, questions, thoughts.

key people who were responsible for the changes in their locality.

## Case study 2: Brookvale Primary School, Birmingham

The unit of study I had chosen to work on with my year 6 class was 'The Victorians'. Rather than 'talk at' the class, I handed the conversation over to them. They looked at a variety of photographs of Birmingham in the Victorian era, and commented on what they could see in each. They used their imaginations to add speech and thought bubbles that illustrated what people, and inanimate objects such as buildings (see Figure 4), might have been saying or thinking.

This approach really engaged the pupils: they discussed the historical images – what changes they could see to the city, what it would have been like to live there in the past and what it might have been like to be a building in Victorian Birmingham. Their excitement rose as they noticed more things in the images, and as they gave their opinions and justified them.

This activity grounded the unit firmly in the development of a particular place: how development happens, and how we can identify the changes that have taken place. 'The Victorians' had become much more exciting than 'name the dates'! Indeed, it was hard to tell where the history finished and the geography began.

## Some reflections – talk and the curriculum

Feedback from all the teachers involved in the project has been enlightening. Despite working in different schools and on different 'topics', our conversations have tended towards the same conclusions – leading learning through children's talk in this way has helped us:

- listen to our pupils
- gauge their current levels of understanding
- engage them in the topic
- ensure a more creative teaching approach.

It also seems to us to offer a more inclusive way of approaching a topic. Children who might be classed as 'lower' or 'middle' ability seemed to engage fully in these lessons, exploring ideas and discussing images with ease, whereas 'higher' ability children seemed to look for 'right' or 'wrong' answers, and often needed support structures for talk, and examples of sentences openers or answers.

## Geography's place in the revised curriculum

This experience taught us that it is almost impossible to teach any topic without an element of geographical understanding. Children need to gain a sense of place: a sense of where they have come from, where others have come from, and what it might be like somewhere else. They need to know what they think and feel about other places and what they can learn from other places.

Our group will be meeting again soon; to take these ideas and approaches further, and we hope to have more to share in the future.

## Acknowledgements:

With thanks to the Talking Global Geography group: Deborah Clarke, Carol Phillips, Andrew Simons, Stephen Pickering and Ben Ballin.

*Claire Finkel teaches year 6 and is Literacy/KS2 Leader at Brookvale Primary School, Birmingham. She is a trustee of Tide-global learning.*

# Mama Panya's Pancakes

**Sam Bates and Stephen Pickering**

**Children's stories often present a beautiful picture of Africa: happy children living in harmony amongst the animals; adventures across breathtaking landscapes; family life and an atmosphere of innocence. Key stage 1 teacher Sam Bates, assisted by Stephen Pickering, shows that this is a perfect way to introduce a topic that investigates life in Kenya – where story-telling is an old tradition and part of every Kenyan's education.**

I started confidently, reading Mama Panya's Pancakes to my year 2 class, showing the pictures and describing a boy and his mother visiting a village to buy ingredients to make a pancake. But I was stopped short by one of the children:

'The story isn't true because they can't eat pancakes in Africa.'

Not even, 'don't eat pancakes,' but 'can't!' It wasn't the mistake that concerned me; after all, one of our jobs as teachers is to help pupils to correct mistakes. It was the certainty of his conviction.

There are pitfalls with stories. Their name suggests fiction. Why should we expect children to be able to distinguish

fact from fiction in a story, particularly when the warm, lively, description of Kenya that they hear in class is so different from the dependent and poverty-stricken picture of Africa so prevalent in the media?

This boy was not alone in thinking pancakes could not be a source of food in Kenya, and a subsequent class debate resulted in a split jury. Some children saw the story for what it was: a tale of Kenyan landscape, culture and family values. Some children thought it was 'just a story ... like Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. So why could some of these children recognise the moral messages in Goldilocks and the Three Bears, but not see the valuable life lessons in the story of Mama Panya's Pancakes? I wondered if children get confused about what constitutes 'truth' and 'fiction' when they encounter stories that seem to be real and yet are beyond their own experience.

## Drawing the story

I wanted to investigate this further, so in our next lesson I asked the children to close their eyes and think about the story of Mama Panya's Pancakes without speaking to anyone else. Then I asked them to draw what they remembered about the story, encouraging them to work independently and to add labels or sentences to their pictures if they wished.

In the resulting drawings the majority of the boys showed bright sunshine and an open fire with the pancake cooking (almost recognisable as an idyllic Boy Scouts' camping trip). Most girls concentrated on Mama Panya in beautiful, colourful clothes that reflected Kenyan culture, ethnicity and climate.

I had originally planned to move onto other cultural stories, but after seeing the pupils' drawings, I felt that we needed to keep working with this story until the children were able to recognise more complex cultural images, beyond the familiar stereotypes they knew. Knowing

how much my class loved drama (of any kind), I decided on a 'show and tell' session. The children showed their pictures off proudly and could confidently describe what they had drawn, what they thought about the story, and what they now thought about Kenya. One girl showed her picture of Mama Panya and described how she had 'knotted' Mama Panya's hair and put her in her summer clothes because it was hot in Kenya. She went on to say that:

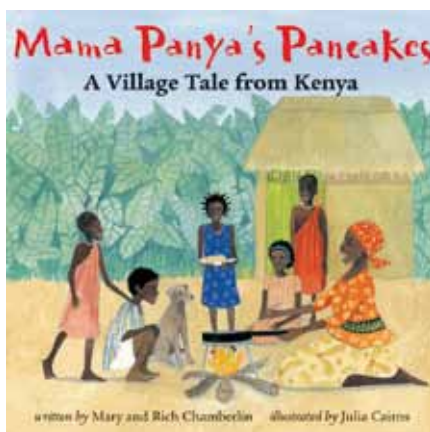
'I didn't think they made their food...I thought they were really poor!'

Here, the pupil talks about what she used to think, demonstrating her awareness that her thinking had changed. She had learnt to think more deeply about her preconceptions after reading and discussing this story in class. The careful use of stories can help students to move beyond stereotypical thinking. However, it was clear that there were still some pupils in my class who were not convinced!

## Going shopping

During our discussion, some children found it hard to develop a positive view of Kenya and continued to focus on differences between their own lives and the life depicted in the story. We discussed Mama Panya's journey to the market to buy the ingredients for the pancakes. Pupils shared their own experiences of shopping for food with their parents. They talked about the foods described in the story – flour, bananas and spices – because these were things the children were used to. At last, they were developing a sense of commonality, rather than a perception of difference. It took a great deal of exploring, but I felt that they had begun to accept an alternative view of places in Africa, a view that was based on normal life rather than extreme circumstances.

It clearly takes more than a few lessons for children to reassess pre-learned notions of distant places. I've drawn these key teaching points from this experience:



*Mama Panya's Pancakes. Cover reproduced by courtesy of Barefoot Books. Illustration © Julia Cairns.*



Maasai girl cooking pancakes in a hut in the Serengeti, Tanzania. Photo: Monisha Chowdhary (FlickrUser: kenyatanzania2008).

Firstly, focusing on similarities between different cultures provides a foundation from which children can develop their thinking. As soon as my year 2 pupils had the opportunity to talk about the food that they eat and like as 'African food' they seemed better able to accept other 'new ideas' about life in Kenya: shopping, spending money, and other simple things that they could relate to their own lives. I would have loved the opportunity to make 'Kenyan style' pancakes with the children, using ingredients from their kitchen cupboards at home!

Secondly, as teachers we tend to use pictures as an aid to learning through words, but the children's drawings replicated the pictures in *Mama Panya's Pancakes* more closely than either the text or their own preconceived ideas. I think it is easy to underestimate the power of illustrations in learning about distant places certainly deserves more investigation.

Thirdly, in challenging children's pre-conceived ideas of a distant place we must avoid simply replacing them with a different, idealised stereotype. For instance, most stories set in African countries tend to portray rural life, but the African experience encompasses large

modern cities too. Equally, dramatic media coverage of hunger, war or disease can seem at odds with the story they have been reading at school, and can shatter their developing understanding. Our job as teachers is to help them understand that quite different aspects of distant places can be equally valid. Children incorporate new ideas into pre-existing ones, and over time develop a deeper and more complex understanding of a distant place.

### Seeing the link

Using stories that deal with familiar objects or routines helps children see links between their own lives and the lives of others in distant places; they are better placed to investigate things that are different from their own experiences. The learning is multi-dimensional and the pupils are better able to cope with complexity.

If children are old enough to have developed an idea of a distant place, then I believe they are old enough to have that idea challenged. We can ask our pupils to think again about a place, to investigate further, and to develop a deeper, more complex understanding of place, one that addresses the commonality between people and places and not just the differences.

### References

Chamberlin, M. and Chamberlin, R. (2006) *Mama Panya's Pancakes: A Village Tale from Kenya*. Cambridge, MA: Barefoot Books.

*Sam Bates is a key stage 1 teacher at Haselor School, Warwickshire. Stephen Pickering is Senior Lecturer in Primary Education at the University of Worcester. They are both GA Primary Geography Champions and part of the Worcestershire Primary Geography Support Group.*



Wendy North, the Primary Curriculum Development Leader at the GA, has devised a prompt sheet of



geographical activities that use picture books such as *Mama Panya's Pancakes*. Download it at [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg).

# Photos in global learning

**Graeme Eyre**

**Graeme Eyre, working with members of the Essex primary network, draws on his experience as a teacher and a Primary Geography Champion in Essex to offer advice about sourcing and using photographs to enhance global learning, and points out some pitfalls of using images.**

Photographs are an essential tool for global learning. They:

- bring distant places into the classroom
- allow children to visualize something that is remote, and hard to conceptualise
- offer an excellent stimulus for questioning and enquiry.

I use two main photo formats in the classroom: large images, displayed on the projector or IWB for the whole class, and A4 laminated images as a focus for individual or small group work. Displaying large images can stimulate a whole-class discussion or question and answer session. Giving pupils their own picture to look at, independently or in groups, allows them to become 'experts' on their image. They enjoy having their own photograph: they can get close up and see detail that may be missed when images are displayed on the IWB or large screen. This individual activity can feed into a whole-class activity in which the pupil/s with the image act as the 'expert' on that image.

## Sourcing photographs

I source images for use in the classroom in three main ways:

- photographs I have taken myself
- photographs from commercially produced photopacks
- downloads from the internet.

The first option is the best: children benefit from your first-hand description as you set the scene for where the photograph was taken. Children like seeing pictures of you at that place as well. My pupils' favourite image is a picture of me standing in front of Niagara Falls at age 13!

Photopacks provide a ready-made source of high-quality photographs, usually on robust card and often laminated. However, they are not cheap and don't always suit your particular purpose.

By far the most widely used source of images is the internet. However, you may find yourself unintentionally infringing copyright. Another problem with using photos downloaded from the internet is that many of them are low-resolution images that result in poor quality, fuzzy



*Graeme Eyre at Niagara Falls, aged 13 years. Photo: Robin Eyre.*

Website and address	Additional information
Flickr ( <a href="http://www.flickr.com">www.flickr.com</a> )	My favourite source of images. Ensure you use 'Advanced Search' to select images licensed under the Creative Commons Licence.
Geography Photos ( <a href="http://www.geographyphotos.com">www.geographyphotos.com</a> )	A wide range of images taken by Ian Murray, a former geography teacher. High quality images for use in the classroom, free with a small watermark, or under £1 each without a watermark.
The Geographical Association ( <a href="http://www.geography.org.uk">www.geography.org.uk</a> ). Go to the GA homepage, login and select 'Resources', then 'Photo Gallery'	Free to GA members. There are 15 galleries of high-quality images, submitted by GA members, for download and use in the classroom.
<a href="http://www.geography.org.uk/resources/adifferentview">www.geography.org.uk/resources/adifferentview</a>	Download high-quality images from the GA manifesto <i>A different view</i> , plus classroom activities based on using the images.
Holiday photographs taken by yourself and your colleagues	Using personal photographs (particularly if you or your colleagues are in them) brings a personal dimension to the pictures, which engages children.

*Figure 1: Sources of images for use in the classroom.*

pictures. There are a number of sources of high-quality copyright-free images that can be used in the classroom: a list is provided in Figure 1. The one I use most often is Flickr (Yahoo's online photo-sharing service), which has thousands of high-quality images. However not all photographs can be downloaded as high-resolution images, and they may not be licensed for use in the classroom. For this use you need to find images that have a Creative Commons Licence (this can be found in Flickr's 'Advanced Search' option). I find that the best way to search Flickr is by using a third-party site (such as [www.compfight.com](http://www.compfight.com)), which has a better search interface to locate images covered by the Creative Commons Licence.

## Using photographs

Photographs are often a useful way into a topic and can help pupils engage with a distant locality, especially when they are used in conjunction with sensitive questions.

For example, you could use the image of Sange Ceesay's bedroom in this way. Start by identifying the room of the house and then move the questions out to focus on a larger scale.

- Where do you think this image was taken? (Can pupils name the room, building, location and country?)
- Why do you think that? (Can they find evidence in the image to support their answers?)



Sange Ceesay's bedroom in Mandinari village, The Gambia.  
Photo: Margaret Mackintosh.

A classroom in Tanje Lower Basic School, The Gambia.  
Photo: Margaret Mackintosh.



Selective cropping	Give pupils just half, or a quarter, of an image and ask them to draw in the rest of the picture. Afterwards discuss why they drew what they did and show them the real image.
Behind the lens	What is behind the photographer? Discuss what is going on behind the photographer's back in the picture.
A day in the life	Ask pupils to create a story or play about the life of one of the people in the photographs. This is particularly effective if you have a series of pictures featuring the same person.
Grouping or matching	Provide pupils with a set of photographs taken in different places and ask them to group them.
Captioning photographs	Ask pupils to write a caption for the photograph or create a dialogue between the people depicted in the photograph.
Ordering	Have pupils arrange a set of photographs in chronological order and justify their choices.

to pupils' self-esteem and their family heritage (Law, 1996).

It is also important to ensure pupils understand that distant places are not all the same: the developing world is not a homogeneous region inhabited by poor people. Choose images that accurately reflect the differences. For example, when talking about wildlife reserves in East Africa use a named example and an up-to-date photograph. I find it useful to mark our topic country on my classroom world map with a blu-tacked star, and I have a country map readily accessible to display on my interactive whiteboard so that I can show the location of a particular photograph.

## Conclusion

Photographic images are powerful tools for teaching geography and for helping children to explore distant places; however they must be used with caution. Before using a photograph, it is essential to critically evaluate the image as an appropriate teaching resource and ensure that, as a source of information, it is fit for purpose.

## References

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- Martin, F. (2006) *Teaching Geography in Primary Schools*. Cambridge: Chris Kington Publishing.
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Graeme Eyre is a teacher at the Anglo European School, Ingatestone, Essex, and is a Primary Geography Champion.

Figure 2: Ideas for using photographs for global learning.

- What is the same in this person's room as in your house?
- What time of year was the image taken?
- What is the weather like?
- What would you like to know about this photo?
- What questions would you like to ask Sange Ceesay?

This leads to story-writing about Sange, based on just one or two images.

If it is appropriate for your pupils and the chosen image, you could develop questioning further by asking:

- Who took the picture?
- Why was it taken?
- What message(s) does it give?

This introduces pupils to the concept that all images are taken for a reason.

Pupils readily 'spot the difference' in pictures of distant places, but one of the keys to global learning is to understand the similarities. Encourage pupils to relate everyday life pictures to their own lives. For example, children may see a schoolroom

scene, such as the one above, and recognise that:

- the children are wearing uniforms
- they are working in English
- they are doing similar lessons.

Focusing on what people are doing or using helps to identify similarities. Figure 2 provides a variety of other activities for using photographs for global learning.

## Pitfalls of using photographs

Even young pupils can come into the classroom with stereotypical ideas: a 'Comic Relief' view or generally negative views about distant places (Wood, 2006). Photographs should be used carefully to counter, not reinforce, any misconceptions, and to challenge any negative opinions that pupils might already hold about distant places. It is, however, important to find a balance: for example, pupils need to understand that while poverty is a global issue that cannot be ignored, it is only one aspect of life in any country. Be sensitive

# Food and farming: Home and away

**Lezli Howarth**

Our 'Comic Relief' generation of children can't help having preconceptions about Africa as a continent. They have watched Live 8 and seen the heart-rending charity advertisements. Here, Lezli Howarth asks how she can use her own experiences of The Gambia to help children come to a realistic understanding of an African country – avoiding the extremes of 'Crisis in Africa' and 'Mustn't frighten the children', but letting the children grow their own opinions of somewhere far away.

## Away: Planning a series of lessons about The Gambia

It's a year 5 planning meeting with the teachers. This project will culminate in a trip to Acton Scott (see below) and a meeting with Tanje Museum workers who are visiting the UK. What do the children need to find out, be able to talk about, and express opinions about, beforehand?

The Acton Scott estate provides the location for The Historic Working Farm, founded by Thomas Acton more than a generation ago to preserve traditional rural skills that might otherwise be lost to modern day practices. Today, it is managed by Shropshire County Council Museum Service and it has featured in BBC Television's 'Victorian Farm', filmed at Acton Scott. (See [www.actonscott.com](http://www.actonscott.com))

Tanje is a village near the Gambian coast, south of the capital Banjul, which has a heritage museum that is like a traditional Mandinka village. (See [www.tanjevillagemuseum.com](http://www.tanjevillagemuseum.com))

This work has to be real for the children. Firstly, we work on the facts and figures, ensuring that pupils have opportunities to use resources in the classroom, in school and in the community to undertake the research. We do the 'capes and bays' geography – scale, proportion, place – and learn what we can from maps and atlases. We learn about the river and its importance.



*Acton Scott Historic Working Farm's Yard. Photo: Acton Scott Estate.*

The work then branches out to literacy – we compare Gambian poetry and traditional tales with our familiar (British) myths and legends. We look at the morals behind the stories; they become personal to us.

As I walk into classrooms, I am bombarded with questions about Tanje and The Gambia, about the people and the environment. By chance, in our Nursery, we have a 14 year-old work experience pupil from Serrekunda, a big urban sprawl a few miles north of Tanje. She has seen our Gambian art display and wants to be involved, and to talk about her country.

I arrange for the student to visit the year 5 classes and she answers all those personal experience questions that I can't. The children ask what clothes she wears to go out in and she pulls her best outfit from her bag and models it for them. The children are hooked; they do research in class and at home.

Behind the learning in those year 5 classrooms there is a frenzy of planning. This project is not just about the classroom work, it is about investigating place and links and about trying ideas that will benefit other children, other schools, other places.

Our project planning group meets up to discuss 'The day at Acton'. It has to be meaningful, and show links between traditional farming methods here and in The Gambia. It has to throw up questions

on sustainability, climate, food, energy, and water ... but how?

Using the expertise in this group of secondary school teachers, curators, demonstrators, educators, members of BEN (Black Environmental Network), we mind-map and produce a huge spiderweb of rough ideas. Then we whittle this down to a group of ideas that hits all the targets and seems worth trying out on our guinea pig year 5 classes. Frantic e-mails, advice and notes fly around an ever-expanding group. (What did we do before e-mail?) We think we are ready, but can we fit it all in?

## Home: A visit to Acton Scott

The children have known about this trip for months and are so excited. We split them into five groups, each with an adult from school and an educator from Acton Scott – it's all hands on deck. The groups each have a different activity for the morning and the afternoon: bodging, blacksmithing, farmyard and animals, garden, kitchen and bread-making activities. We need to try out as many ideas as possible, to see which work and which can be offered to other schools 'doing' this day.

Sarah, the Education Officer at the Shropshire Museums Service, has a mini note-pad and pencil for each pupil. They are soon scribbling and sketching away. Each child also has a collection bag, for



*Drawing water from a well at Mandinari Women's Garden in The Gambia. Photo: Margaret Mackintosh.*



*Women transplanting lettuces at Sukuta, in The Gambia. Photo: Margaret Mackintosh.*

any bits and pieces they pick up. There is a backpack with resources and questions for the children to answer. The questions act as a catalyst and the children are quickly making links between the work they have done in class and what is happening in front of them.

The day is hard work. The children have transferred so many skills, and have used reasoning and thinking skills way beyond what we expected of them. They are exhausted and exhilarated. No one wants to leave.

The work continues back in the classrooms; the year 5 children start to look in more depth at the issues raised by the visit and the environmental impact of unsustainable methods of farming, energy and water use.

## Away: Visitors from The Gambia

Then the year 5s have a visit from Ousman, Allasana and Lamin, guides from Tanje Village Museum. The children are amazing: their questions show how much they have

gained from this experience. The workers from Tanje are fantastic, taking the floor in a class of year 5s like seasoned teachers. They answer the children's questions, and their answers create more questions. It makes me so proud to have been a small part of the children's learning journey.

This journey has changed the way I teach. I always thought of myself as techno-savvy and would murmur 'I found a great IWB resource for teaching such and such', but really the technology isn't the be all and end all, it is just tools. A few well-chosen props and a teacher- or child-led performance can enthral the children far more than a flash animation on an interactive whiteboard. Less is quite often a lot more.

## Home: Keeping in touch

Well, we started a rapport with the Tanje school. Our children wrote back to the Gambian students, answering their questions. They described their Acton Scott visit, about meeting the workers from Tanje Museum, about the questions

they had asked them. We sent the letters to the museum, and the staff there took them to the school, thus maintaining our three-way link. We are working on making our link sustainable and equal. We want our children to see both commonality and difference, just as they do in their own classroom.

My own experience in The Gambia keeps popping up. How can I use that? How can I give my lessons high impact on low resources? How would I teach that effectively to EAL children? How can I pass on what I have done and affect others? How can I spread the word? The journey from Tanje is nowhere near its end.

You can read about Lezli's experiences as she teaches class 6A at Tanje Lower Basic School in The Gambia in 'Making connections through school partnerships' on page 26.

The Development Compass Rose offers a framework for children's questions about sustainable farming: natural, social, economic, who decides? You can download the Development Compass Rose from [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg) (see below).

## Acknowledgements

With thanks to Sarah Griffiths of the Shropshire Museums Service.

*Lezli Howarth is a year 1 teacher and Humanities Curriculum Leader at Chandos Primary School in Birmingham and a Geography Champion. This work grew out of her 2007 Tide~ study visit to The Gambia, and a return visit in 2008 with Shropshire Museums Service. You can read about her Gambian experiences in 'Making connections through school partnerships' on pages 26-28.*



The Development Compass Rose from the Food and Farming materials developed at Acton Scott can be downloaded from [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg).

To find out more about the Acton Scott Working Farm go to [www.actonscott.com](http://www.actonscott.com).

The Tanje Village Museum in The Gambia also has a website: [www.tanjevillagemuseum.com](http://www.tanjevillagemuseum.com).

You can download a gallery of Gambian farming images with captions from [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg).



© Tide~ global learning.

# Action Geography 9:

## So near and yet so far

**Colin Bridge**

**Colin Bridge explores some practical ways, supported by activities, to involve younger primary children in global learning. The two activities opposite are supported by online activity sheets. There are also two more activities and supporting sheets online.**

Global learning for the very young is not always easy. Very young children are wrapped up in a world of immediate experience and close contacts with a relatively small circle of familiar people. Thinking globally often shifts the focus to distant and unfamiliar landscapes and climates, different lifestyles and a reliance on secondary sources of photos and film. But even this distinction is too simplistic: many children around the world enjoy a quality of life similar to that experienced by most children in the United Kingdom.

Attempts to square this circle go back decades. I remember an advisor on an INSET course listing the difficulties inherent in global learning for the younger primary years:

1. a tendency to emphasise differences
2. it is hard to compare a small community in the UK with a whole country, region or even continent
3. teachers may have no experience of the distant places being discussed
4. the resources may be biased or dated
5. the teacher's view of a place may be partial or dated
6. television mixes reality and fiction in a seamless montage which clouds understanding of the real issues.

The advisor's conclusion was to simply leave distant places to the secondary school. Things have moved on: the very term 'global learning' has a more positive ring than 'distant places', and even in the 1980s there was a strong movement for world studies based on making global connections. Fisher and Hicks' (1985) objectives for global learning can be summarised as:

- knowledge; ourselves and others, rich and poor, peace and conflict, the environment, the world tomorrow (change)
- attitudes; the qualities of being human(dignity), curiosity, appreciation of other cultures, empathy, justice and fairness
- skills; enquiry, communication skills, grasping key ideas, critical and open thinking, responsibility and action (political skills).

But they also highlighted these pitfalls:

1. the 'tourist's-eye view' – everything is exotic, quaint and curious
2. the 'packet-of-tea' approach – happy workers provide commodities for us happy consumers
3. the 'pathological view' – everything is starvation, floods and disaster
4. the 'pat on the head' approach – 'they are a bit behind 'us' but technology will cure all
5. the 'act of God' view – the place dictates the lifestyle and people have to put up with it.

So there are objectives and pitfalls, but how do we arrive at classroom strategies and develop tomorrow's lesson?

Over the years I have devised a developmental sequence of learning that has helped me focus on strategies for environmental and spatial learning. Based on a child's growing awareness of the world in the first few months of life, it becomes a sequence each of us will employ in any new spatial situation. The sequence runs from basic awareness, to attachment, through action to innovation.

Each quality is achieved through an application of intellectual skills, the first two being the most useful for the current discussion. Thus 'awareness' involves, among other things:

- naming
- labelling
- describing
- recalling

- detailing parts of wholes
- awareness of purpose.

'Attachment' develops through:

- comparing
- associating
- awareness of sequence
- relating to place
- responsive feelings
- identifying with
- a sense of value.

These prompt ideas might contribute to a programme of global understanding. The Action Geography activities opposite, and the downloadable activities and resources, offer some suggestions which can be broken down into a sequence of activities suitable for the age and experience of different groups. Two activities involve naming and description, and two are based on sequencing and responding to people and places. The activity sheets can be downloaded from [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg).

### References

Fisher, S. and Hicks, D. (1985) *World Studies 8-13: a Teacher's Handbook*. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd.

You may also find this reference useful: [www.tidac.org/Publications/support/Primary%20handbook/GI%20Talk%20photos.html](http://www.tidac.org/Publications/support/Primary%20handbook/GI%20Talk%20photos.html).

*Colin Bridge is a teacher, walker and environmentalist. He is co-author of the Collins Primary Geography scheme, Worldwatch.*



Four activities and supporting resources accompany this article.

Activities 1 and 2 are given opposite; you can download two more activities, plus the resource sheets for all four, from [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg); click on 'Spring 2010'.



## Activity 1: Can birds live anywhere?

### Objective

To help pupils recognise a range of environments, leading on to world map recognition

### Preparation

Older pupils may use this as an activity sheet. With young children it is much better undertaken as a class activity. The basic idea is to cut out the bird pictures and sort them into three sets, 'By the sea', 'By a river' and 'In trees and country'.

### Introduction

Make sure the pupils can recognise the birds, at least by their generic names, such as seagull, duck and parrot. Talk about the three environments. If time allows, and working in groups, produce large classroom background paintings showing the three habitats.



Can birds live anywhere? Photo: Margaret Mackintosh.

### The lesson



The children should choose a bird and make their own drawing of it or colour prepared drawings (enlargements of the illustrations on the PDF downloads). You or the pupils read the information bubbles and the group decides in which environment to stick their chosen bird. Some children may disagree and have reasons for, say, putting their gull in the countryside rather than by the sea.

### Development

The children may already have discussed the fact that not all the birds live in the UK. Sort the birds again, this time into birds that live in the UK and those that live in distant places. Focus on the penguin, ostrich and macaw. Use books and the internet to find out more, then introduce a world map and decide on the continent where each bird might live.

## Activity 2: What's happening here?

### Objective

Looking at people in different environments and imagining 'stories', and 'before' and 'after' situations; making associations and relating to place

### Preparation



Show the class some photographs of familiar scenes (if possible, of happenings around the school). Discuss what went on before and after each shot was taken. Also look at a picture or photograph of an interesting scene and use a class discussion to work out a story around it.

### The lesson

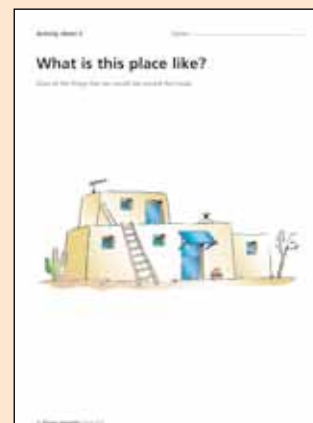
Use the photograph of the three girls in a shop as the basis for a discussion on where it might be,

what might have happened before and after, and how the girls might spend the rest of the day. The real story is of a visitor on holiday in Turkey buying some Turkish Delight to take home.

The lady shopkeeper was in the back making the sweets, so her three young daughters came out to help the customer. With much giggling, they donned gloves and found the boxes and tongs for handling the Turkish Delight. A selection was made and a box filled. However, it split. The girls went off to find Sellotape. Eventually, their mother came out full of apologies for the protracted service and the excitement of her daughters. The sweets were paid for but the girls were reluctant to hand the money to their mother. They insisted they had earned it! It had been a happy occasion and everyone had made friends: a photograph captured the moment.

### Development

Children might bring in their own holiday photos of story situations.



# Making connections through school partnerships

**Ben Ballin**

**Ben Ballin describes two case studies where successful international partnerships have enhanced work on global learning and geographical understanding. There are also examples of teachers making use of perceptions of the UK held by children in other countries.**

School partnerships can help children make real connections to other places and people: well managed, they enhance children's understanding of big global ideas. Such partnerships need not always be international; indeed, international links can sometimes reinforce, rather than challenge, stereotypes. As teachers, we need to clarify our own thinking about such partnerships if they are to be successful vehicles for learning. Moreover, global learning can also be effectively stimulated by partnerships with contrasting communities at home.

Here we offer two case studies of successful international partnerships: Harry Gosling Primary in Tower Hamlets and Argyle Primary in King's Cross.

How do children in other countries perceive the UK? Lezli Howarth, from a Birmingham inner city school, looks at Gambian students' perceptions of the UK, and compares the results to those of a similar activity undertaken in the UK. Julie Willats, from a Kent preparatory school, uses children's images of England to introduce a year 5 topic on Kenya.

## Harry Gosling Primary, Tower Hamlets

This inner city primary has enhanced its work on inter-cultural understanding and communications skills through a partnership with a school in India. Based in a tightly-knit Muslim community, where most families do not speak English at home, Harry Gosling Primary has a 99% Bangladeshi heritage intake. A school priority is to prepare its children for life beyond the local community, and for engagement with a contemporary global society. Year 6 joint-curriculum projects with a partner school in Hyderabad, India, include exploring such topics as 'the life of John Lennon', and 'mountains around the world'.

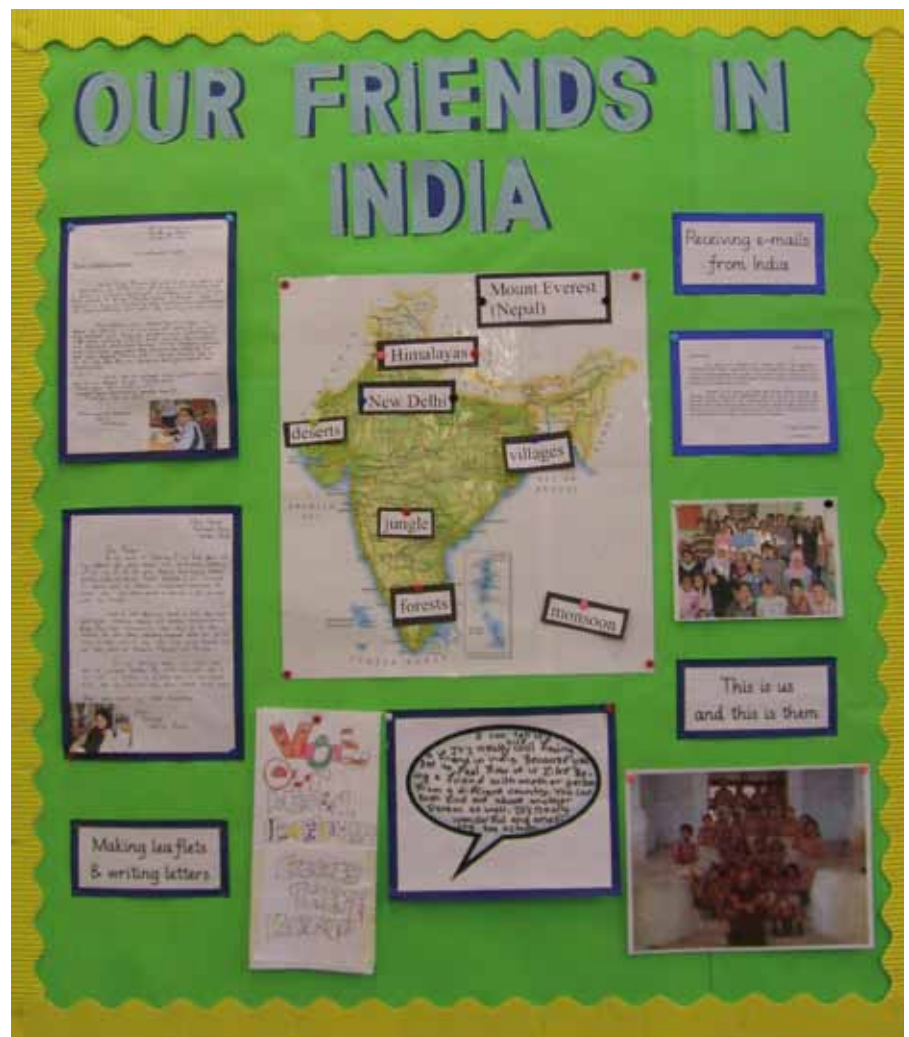
Children create an end product, such as a written biography, to share with their

partner schools. Child-led Skype interviews make this process more manageable. In groups, the UK pupils prepare questions for their partners in India on the shared topic.

Clare Lewis, leading this work in the school, says: 'Pranava School asked us about John Lennon, and we asked them about Subba Lakshmi, a Hindi classical singer ... the children asked questions about mountains and landscape in each other's local areas and prepared detailed answers ... Despite minor hitches, the impact was incredible. Initially timid, children were soon questioning off-the-cuff and the questions kept flowing.'

Clare describes the benefits of this shared work: 'The children were far more concerned about their work, often asking their friends if it was interesting enough. It inspired them to be creative and finish their work in time to be sent abroad. As for communication skills, we were astounded. Speaking in front of others was especially intimidating for our children, and many of the girls were reluctant to get involved: it's amazing how caught up in the moment they became during our Skype interviews, and all inhibitions were soon forgotten.'

*With thanks to Clare Lewis, Harry Gosling Primary School, Tower Hamlets*



*Pupils' work at Harry Gosling Primary School. Photo: Clare Lewis.*

## Argyle Primary, London

Argyle Primary, not far from King's Cross Station in London, has been widely praised for its work with the local community, encouraging parental involvement and developing the school grounds as a focus for ESD and global citizenship. A high-profile partnership with Sierra Leone is part of a complex whole school response to a highly diverse local community, which includes many refugees. Using the partnership to develop children's communications skills is a priority. The link has given the pupils an opportunity to learn about topics in a real context; from world rivers surveyed at a local level in both London and Sierra Leone, to different methods of farming around the world. Having visited each others' countries, the teachers gathered photographic resources for use in lessons.

The children can use their geographical knowledge to challenge current farming methods (for example factory farming in the UK), and take part in global discussions about the environment considering rivers and pollution. The partnership has helped bring locality study investigations to life, including finding out about basic needs such as water and health. This has led on to an exploration of these issues from a citizenship perspective. Children have also had the opportunity to speak at the Houses of Parliament about what they have learned from this partnership.

'When I went to Parliament I felt a bit scared about if I made a mistake. In Parliament I talked about the rights and responsibilities and the health care in Sierra Leone.' – Year 3 child, Argyle Primary School.

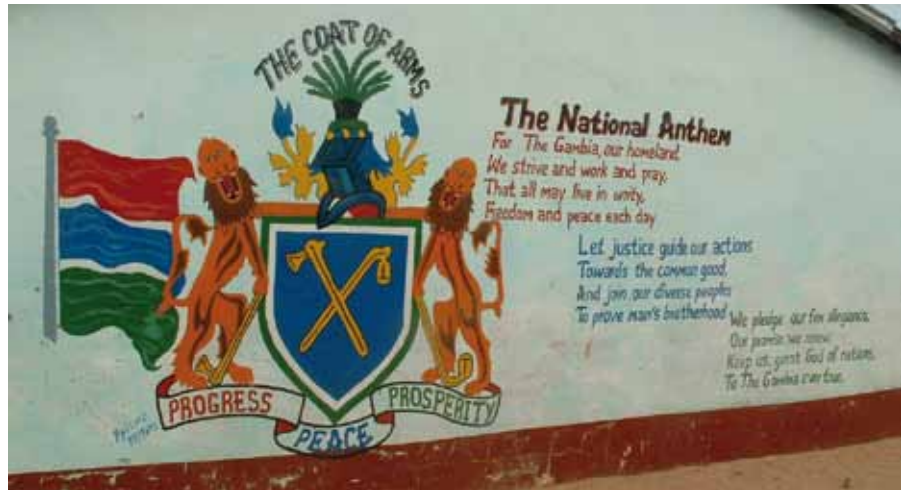
Argyle Primary featured in *Primary Geographer* (Autumn 2009) in 'Cultivating a car park'. The school website is [www.argyle.camden.sch.uk](http://www.argyle.camden.sch.uk); the school is also featured on [www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolinfocus/argyleprimaryschool](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolinfocus/argyleprimaryschool).

With thanks to Laura Wynne and Susie Price, Argyle Primary School.

## Chandos Primary School, Birmingham

Lezli Howarth has been supporting work on global sustainability themes at Chandos Primary School, an inner city Birmingham school with an exceptionally diverse catchment (over 30 home languages are spoken). Her project on global dimensions in the curriculum has included two study visits to The Gambia, with Shropshire Museums Service and Tide~ global learning. Lezli's account is based on a lesson in Tanje, in The Gambia, where students shared their perceptions of, and questions about, life in the UK. She goes on to compare their responses to those of UK children's questions.

'Why am I here?' I asked myself as I stood in front of 60 pupils at Tanje Lower Basic in The Gambia. A year after my first



Tanje Lower Basic School. Photo: Margaret Mackintosh.

study visit, I was back in the same village ... but this time I was not observing and taking notes, but doing.

To start things off, and to help the children from my school and the Tanje students recognise what they had in common, we needed an exchange of ideas, of interests, to work together and share what they were learning about each other: in short, a shared experience.

And so this is why I was here. The class was 6A, the final year of Lower Basic. I had with me some very able classroom assistants – Abdoulie Bayo, the owner of the local museum, and Ousman, the museum's Head Guide.

I stood nervously, with bright pink post-it's in hand, as Mr Jammeh organised his class. I told the students who I was and where I was from. Then I asked them to write on a post-it note one thing they knew about the UK. A quick glance showed that their responses fell into three categories:

- information about football teams
- pictures of UK housing
- charitable contributions to their school.

I hadn't really given much thought to how the students would respond: what they would know, and where their knowledge could come from. I knew so little about the Gambian education system, beyond what language the children were taught in and the subjects they were taught, that I had no preconceptions.

The football statements didn't surprise me: football has both a big following and many players in this small country, and Gambian graffiti features many UK football teams (Arsenal and Manchester United being favourites). Also, the opening gambit in many conversations I'd had was 'Who do you support?'

The houses were more surprising: all the students drew rows of terraced houses. I thought this probably indicated a shared experience; somewhere, this class had seen terraced houses in an English town or city.



Playground shade under the mango tree. Photo: Margaret Mackintosh.

The final category comprised lists of things in their classroom that had been given by the UK: tables, chairs, books, pencils. The students clearly associated the UK with charitable donations.

Next, I showed the Tanje students UK and world maps. I pointed out Birmingham, its location in the UK, and the location of the UK relative to The Gambia. I showed them photographs of my school – everyday things like assemblies, playtimes, grey skies full of rain; the caretaker's cat on a bench; the painted sunflower that is the Chandos school logo. I showed them pictures of the Chandos year 5 classrooms and then introduced them to the fact files prepared by Chandos year 5 pupils.

Before I left the UK, the year 5 pupils wrote about the subjects they liked at school, what they did in a typical day, how and what they played. I gave these fact files to the Tanje students to read. I had hoped for comments, but I think the presence of a stranger in their classroom made them reticent; so I drew their attention back to the world map and its scattering of red dots. Each dot represented a country of birth of a child or its parents for both year 5 classes at Chandos. The dots stretched from the West Indies to Bangladesh, and from Sweden to The Gambia.

Now, as I walked around the class, the students did start to ask questions: 'Why are so many countries in one class?' 'Are any of the children Muslim?' 'Why aren't the children all like you?' I gave the children blank fact file sheets to fill in. As in any classroom, some took longer to complete it than others, so to wrap up the lesson I gave all the children a yellow post-it note, and asked them to write down a question they would like answering about the UK.

When I undertook the same exercise in the UK, the Chandos children's questions were based on personal experience and about things that were important to them: 'What sort of clothes do you wear outside school?' 'What religion do you follow?' 'What lessons are you taught?' 'Do you play football?' 'What languages do you speak?'

The Tanje students' questions were very different. 'What is the population of the UK?' 'How many villages does it have?' 'How many people does Old Trafford hold?' 'How many schools are there?' They seemed to want facts and figures, not experiences and emotions. The contrast was interesting, and something I would like to investigate further. Maybe it was due to a language barrier? Or differences between education systems? Or maybe it was what they imagined I expected of them.

The lesson over, I felt drained, in a good way, in an I-learned-as-much-as-the-children way. It left me with a lot to think about.

*With thanks to Lezli Howarth, Chandos Primary School. Lezli has also written about the Food and Farming work at Acton Scott Museum in this edition of Primary Geographer.*

### Solefield School, Sevenoaks, Kent

Julie Willats is a secondary school trained geographer working in a small preparatory school in Kent. She describes using children's images of England to introduce a year 5 topic on Kenya.

'Big kids and little kids are very different to teach, but the basic principles remain the same; inspire, engage and excite children of any age and you'll have them champing at the bit to learn more.'

Sevenoaks is an affluent area, and while many of the boys in the school

are 'well travelled', Julie felt that 'when it comes to knowing and understanding differences between cultures they remain naive in their opinions.' The point of this activity was to make the pupils aware for themselves of stereotyping and prejudice.

I showed the children a slide with a variety of sentences on it (see Figure 1) and asked them to write down which country they thought was being described. They discussed this in pairs for ten minutes; then we discussed the results. A range of countries were reported back, each with justifications.'

I then revealed that all of the statements were descriptions of Britain by children of similar ages to them, from different countries around the world. The children were outraged at this point! Each statement was examined, to try and understand why others might have that idea or opinion of Britain. Most of the statements were not a true reflection of Britain at all, but as we discussed the statements the children came to understand the origins of these opinions.'

For example:

*'Why might they think that our policemen wear a red and black uniform?'*

*After discussion: 'Because of the Queen's guards – images from postcards'*

*'Why might they think that we eat frogs and snakes?'*

*After discussion: 'Because we are close to France and they eat funny food!'*

The class then offered their opinions about Kenya. Unsurprisingly, their views were quite stereotypical. With a gentle reminder about the lessons from the first exercise, they explored the idea of keeping an open mind, finding out about a country and exploring the world around them for themselves, rather than relying on other people's opinions. The children loved the work, and it set them up perfectly for an open-minded look at another country.

*With thanks to Julie Willats, Solefield School, Sevenoaks, Kent.*

### Further reading

*Global learning and school partnerships – thinking it through.* Jackie Zammit: [www.tidec.org/Tidetalk/articles/GL%20and%20Sch%20part.html](http://www.tidec.org/Tidetalk/articles/GL%20and%20Sch%20part.html).

*Just Linking.* Leeds DEC, 2007.

Richardson, S. 'X-changing ideas' (a KS2 e-linking project on climate change, for schools in the UK) *Primary Geographer*, 67, Autumn 2008, pp. 20–21.

Baskerville, S. 'A world within our own'. *Primary Geographer*, 58, Autumn 2005, p. 17.

*Ben Ballin is based at Tide~ global learning and is a member of the Primary Geographer Editorial Board.*

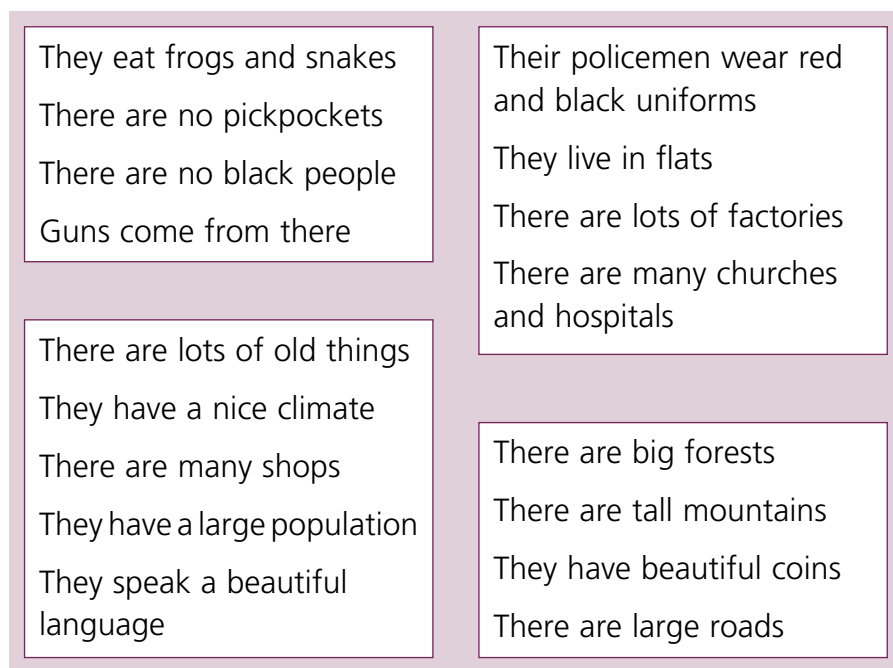


Figure 1: Descriptions of a country.

# More ideas for enhancing global geography

## 1: Ti Rakau: Maori stick games

Steve Pratchett



Playing the Maori sticks game.  
Photo: Steve Pratchett.

**Children should: 'learn about the games, sport and dance of diverse cultures and traditions and work together as a team' (DfES, 2005). Steve Pratchett describes an opportunity for achieving this within a geographical topic.**

As part of their geographical study into the indigenous cultures of New Zealand, my year 6 pupils researched Maori stick games and music. This work, which coincided with the New Zealand All Blacks' rugby tour of the UK, may inspire you to incorporate games, sport and dance, as well as teamwork, into your geography teaching about cultures and traditions in distant places. You could take inspiration from a sporting event like the World Cup.

### Teaching the stick games

As an introduction, we watched a video 'Te Amokura' (produced by the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute) which features the short stick game 'Tititorea' and other Maori action songs. I demonstrated some basic throwing and catching techniques and the children practised them in pairs (using rolled up newspapers to avoid injuries). Later, we introduced wooden sticks, which give a richer and more pronounced sound when beaten rhythmically together and on the floor. With some practice, the children were creating and inventing their own throws, catches and rhythms, which they combined into sequences to perform to the class. Work in pairs progressed to working in groups of four and then finally the whole class worked together on a performance, which was presented to parents. Instructions for playing the Maori stick games and the song music can be found at [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg).

### Combining other subjects Geography

The pupils learned about Maori culture and traditions within a study of environments in New Zealand that are special to Maoris.

### Physical Education

The stick dances improved the children's throwing and catching skills and their

hand-eye co-ordination. Catching and throwing at the same time also develops children's peripheral vision since their eyes cannot simultaneously focus on the sticks leaving their hands and the sticks coming towards them.

### Music

As they explored recorded Maori music, the children improvised and developed rhythms to perform. The stick games were accompanied by chanting/singing. The Maori songs typically played with the beat (syncopating or displacing the accents in the music) to coincide with the banging and stamping of the sticks.

As the photograph shows, the Maori stick dance developed teamwork and concentration. But it added extra enjoyment and a greater sense of achievement to a fascinating cross-curricular topic with geography at its core.

### Acknowledgement

Thanks to Class 6 and Andrea Bradshaw, Deputy Head at Bere Alston Primary School.

### References

DfES (2005) *Developing the global dimension in the school curriculum*. London: DfES (Ref: 1409-2005DOC-EN)

Steve Pratchett is Senior Lecturer in Geography and Art & Design at the University College of St Mark & St John, Plymouth.

## 2: Connecting people and places

Phil Rimmer and Nikki Fletcher

**On the GA website you can read the details of how we used story, discussion (using potatoes as a stimulus), potato painting, looking at distant places through drawing, and playing physical education games. There are plenty of useful web links too, go to [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg).**

Our aim was to find a way of introducing the global at a scale which children would find engaging and enjoyable. In a geographical context, we used 'connecting people and places around the world' as a verbal mediator and included notions of global citizenship, cultural diversity and sustainability. In two afternoon workshops, with 28 year 4 pupils, we promoted the



Looking at distant places.

Photo: Phil Rimmer and Nikki Fletcher.

idea of the global dimension through geographical enquiry involving creative artwork, music and physical education.

Phil Rimmer and Nikki Fletcher are Geography and Education Studies students at Bishop Grosseteste University College, Lincoln.



For details of how to play Maori stick games and the music go to [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg).

Phil and Nikki's full article can also be found at [www.geography.org.uk/pg](http://www.geography.org.uk/pg).

The London Maori Club, Ngati Ranana, is a good source of information about Maori culture. Their website is [www.ngatiranana.co.uk](http://www.ngatiranana.co.uk).



# Forest School Diary Part 2

*Helen Martin*

*Hot chocolate. All photos: Helen Martin.*

**Helen Martin embarks on the second stage of her Forest School training, having already completed a week of training in Seven Sisters Country Park in March 2009. This led to the organisation and start of six amazing sessions with her year 3 children last summer. What next?**

## **Training ...**

As if I wasn't nervous enough, to be helpfully told (by a parent while I was on playground duty) that I would 'get insects in my ears', certainly made the prospect of sleeping in a homemade shelter in the woods more exciting. 'Wear a hat!' was the excellent and honest advice, which of course I was happy to follow.

In September 2009, I re-joined the same group of educators for the next stage of my Level 3 Forest School Leader training, run by Sussex Wildlife Trust. This time the talk in the fire circle was about our successes and experiences since the first training session earlier in the year (see Helen's article in *Primary Geographer*, Autumn 2009). Youth groups, private schools, nurseries, and primary schools

had all benefitted from the Forest School initiative: so many of our group of trainees had, like me, changed the ethos of their institutions, since training began. Our chatter was helped along by whittling spoons, a seemingly easy (but really difficult) task. Felling a sycamore sapling with a bend in its trunk was the easy bit! The truly brilliant part of Forest Schooling is that whether you are an adult, teenager or child, you all use the expertise of each member of the group to benefit the whole. Luckily in my group there were a lot of talented individuals able to offer me help when my fingers ached!

A day of calm spoon whittling, with sausages over the fire and talk about our own professional situations, was a gentle start to the course, concluded by a night at Alfriston Youth Hostel. The next day we moved to the Forestry Commission's Abbots Wood, near Hailsham Forestry Commission woodland. We walked through this beautiful and popular woodland, a mix of silver birch, oak and chestnut with no paths or clearings, and then we stopped. This was the place we were to make our camp – but there was

a lot of work to be done. We felled a few of the larger silver birch, and then began to clear the scrub. Once we had made a clearing of sorts, we considered where to put our shelters. A lot of trying out of flat ground ensued, and we came to an important decision: we would make one large shelter for us all to sleep in, rather than individual shelters. A good choice, especially as the group works so well as a team. Everyone began their task: some felled larger trees to make the stronger uprights of the shelter; some gathered brush to cover it; some felled more trees to widen the clearing; some made the fire circle and then prepared lunch; others constructed the shelter itself. The feeling of achievement was immense when we finally lay down within the almost-finished shelter some hours later.

Then we all began the worst job; we needed to collect leaf litter to make the shelter more weatherproof. Scrambling on our hands and knees in the forest to collect enough to make a 50cm deep cover of leaf litter all over a shelter big enough for 10 people was a mighty task. But we did manage it (although the



Firelighting.



Breakfast in the forest.



Graffham Forest School.

coverage was a lot less than 50cm deep!) With our fingers crossed against rain, and a tarpaulin on hand, we sat down to a meal of venison and potatoes cooked in a ground oven. As night fell, a sense of trepidation took hold: we remembered the warning about insects in the ears. Beyond the gated Forestry Commission car park, the rest of the world were retiring to warm beds while our rather tired group prepared to pass the night in their self-built shelter. After listening to the owls, watching the birds adapt to the altered pattern of their woodland with our newly created clearing, star-gazing and fire-gazing, we finally settled down in our shelter, ready to sleep (with our hats on!) at about 3.30am!

### ... into practice

Returning to school with the experience fresh in my mind, I embarked on my next adventure: taking a year 1 class to our local woodland. We began the Forest School experience for the year 1 class differently to the previous group of year 3 pupils: we practised making and using the fire circle and other activities in the school grounds first. Then, taking the children into the woodlands was fantastic, with moments of excitement, wonder and joy from the smiling faces of adults and children. All the pupils made their own tiny fire, using fire steels to start them. They

gathered silver birch bark from the forest floor as a base for their fire and then they used dry sticks and some very useful straw, along with cotton wool and Vaseline, to keep their fire alight. Leaning over the child, showing them rather than telling them, is an integral part of the ethos of the Forest School – alongside providing each pupil with the feeling of success (hence the cotton wool and straw). The looks on their faces as these 5 year-olds managed their own little fires and watched them until they went out, was truly brilliant and worth all of the preparation and organisation.

Year 1 pupils are skilled at making their own choices and working independently, so the forest is the ideal place to extend this skill. The children were desperate to explore their surroundings. They made elf houses, watched for brown trout in the stream and found an animal skull. We have two more sessions in the forest and each will be preceded by a practice session at school. Next week we will build a large fire and make our own hot chocolate, before creating our own champagne potions from things we find in the forest.

### What next?

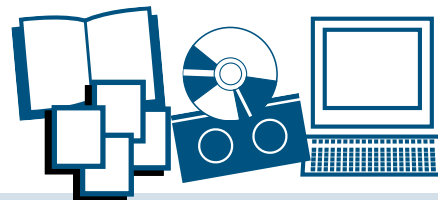
At the beginning of this term, I led a woodlands-based INSET day with teaching staff. Twenty teachers across the Nursery,

Infant and Junior Schools are now familiar with, and enthusiastic about, the experiences we can provide for children through Forest School. As geographers, the pupils are expanding their love of adventure and exploration, their curiosity and their belief that they can make a difference to a place that they care about. The adventure definitely continues ... my plan is to enable all 100 children in my Federation to participate in a Forest School experience before the end of this academic year. A challenge, but our capacity to succeed will be strengthened by my excellent Assistant Head, who starts her Forest School training later this month. Just think ... how much motivation, skill and love of their woodlands those 5-year-olds will have if they participate in a Forest School experience every year until they are in year 6! I can't wait!

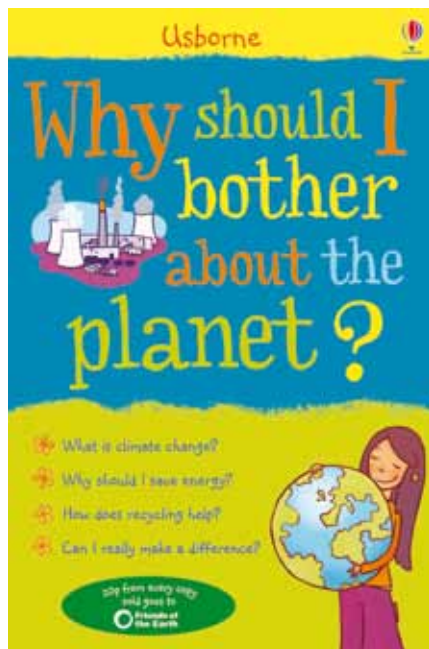
If you want to find out more about Forest School, come to my Lecture at the GA Conference in Derby (for details see [www.geography.org.uk/download/GA\\_ConfFullProfB.pdf](http://www.geography.org.uk/download/GA_ConfFullProfB.pdf))

*Helen Martin is the Headteacher of Lavington Park Federation of Graffham Infant and Duncton CE Junior Schools, West Sussex, a Geography Champion and Chair of the GA Early Years and Primary Phase Committee.*

# Reviews



Pupils/KS2/Book



## Why should I bother about the planet?

Sue Meredith, with illustrations by Sara Rojo

London: Usborne, 2008, 48pp, Pb: £6.99, ISBN 978-0-7460-8917-0

This explanation of the environmental problems facing our planet, what has gone wrong and what needs to be done about it, will help older primary and younger secondary pupils to a better understanding of environmental problems. It includes an introduction to the energy crisis, pollution, food and food miles, wildlife in danger, disappearing forests and carbon footprints. There are lots of practical ideas for how pupils can 'go green' and support for teachers in engaging pupils about possible futures for our planet.

The language is appropriate for key stage 2, the illustrations are interesting and there is a useful glossary. The book is robust and appropriately priced, with 20p from every copy sold going to Friends of the Earth.

A good classroom or library reference to get pupils started before carrying out independent research and developing their own responses to environmental issues, it is also a useful addition to primary ESD resources.

Paul Baker, Oxfordshire Primary Geography Champion, GA Membership Promotions

Teachers & pupils/KS2 & 3/ Photopack



## Mountains and Volcanoes Photopack

Coalville: Wildgoose Education Ltd, 30 A4 photocards plus booklet containing notes, activities and maps £29.95+VAT

This good range of photos would allow pupils to judge scale. Some photos show human impact on mountains, supporting discussions about tourism, etc. The pictures are particularly relevant for promoting visual literacy and engaging children who have difficulty accessing written information. Most photos are good quality.

The notes about different environments, mountains and volcanoes are useful background for teachers, but the language is also accessible to upper KS2 or lower KS3 pupils. There are detailed notes on all of the pictures to provide location and background information. There is a page of pupil activities, maps of the UK and the world and a map showing plate boundaries and volcanoes.

The strong points of this resource are that it links to key questions in the relevant QCA geography units and enables you to find the appropriate information fast. Its weaknesses are that the activity ideas are undifferentiated and mostly confined to mapping, and the pack makes no cross-curricular links. The outline map of the UK and some of the pictures are slightly blurred, out of focus or dark. Some of the maps are readily available on the internet, and pictures of similar quality could easily be downloaded and laminated. The pack would undoubtedly save busy teachers research time, but having taught this unit recently I found nothing new or not readily available, with a little research, on the internet.

Elayne Higgins, Primary Geography Champion, Lower Heath C of E Primary School, Shropshire

Teacher/KS2/CD



## The Chembakolli Story

Jo Price

London: ActionAid, 2008, 40pp, £9.99, ISBN 978-1-905694-06-8

Suitable for use in key stage 2, alongside the QCA Scheme of Work Unit 10 'A Village in India', this beautifully narrated audio CD in six parts is accompanied by a 40-page story book with black and white illustrations and classroom timeline poster.

The story of the village of Chembakolli over the past 20 years is told through dialogue between 11 year-old Bommi and her grandfather, Marigan, a village elder. Their story is accompanied by authentic sounds and music.

The colourful timeline poster with contemporary illustrations summarises the events and provides a starting point for discussion. Six sets of suggested activities, one for each part of the story, offer pre- and post-listening questions and cross-curricular ideas that support PSHE, citizenship, art, design and technology, music, history and science.

Ideal for use in guided reading/ listening sessions, but would best be used in conjunction with other Chembakolli resources.

Lindsay West, Primary Geography Champion, Sarum St Paul's Primary School, Salisbury

Pupils/KS2 & KS3/Book



## Who Will Save Us?

Rebecca Morch

Newton Abbott: Rebecca Morch Publishing Ltd, 2007, 48pp, Pb: £5.99, ISBN 978-0-9556550-0-5

Children will enjoy this heartfelt, engaging story about the effects of climate change on Antarctic penguins. Climate change and the threats to our planet – from 'the greenhouse effect' to causes, effects and potential solutions – are dealt with in an empowering way and the ending is positive and upbeat.

The book is well presented, and numerous illustrations and picture words mean younger readers and those with special educational needs can follow the story. The language seems to me more appropriate for younger readers, although the book has been used successfully by secondary teachers.

The 'Take Positive Action' section gives contact details of useful organisations, so it can be used for independent enquiry. Well priced (£3.49 each if you buy 30 copies) and produced using FSC 50% recycled paper, vegetable based inks and biodegradable laminate on the cover, it is an excellent classroom or library resource and a positive addition to education for sustainable development.

Paul Baker, Oxfordshire Primary Geography Champion, GA Membership Promotions





**[www.globaldimension.org.uk](http://www.globaldimension.org.uk)**

This DEA-managed site is probably the most useful global learning portal for primary geography resources. It includes a search facility for printed and online resources, as well as links to local support (for example Development Education Centres).



**[www.newburypark.redbridge.sch.uk/langofmonth](http://www.newburypark.redbridge.sch.uk/langofmonth)**

Newbury Park Primary, in Redbridge, London, is one of a growing number of schools who have put international work at the heart of their activities. Its website includes a really excellent online facility for learning some basics from languages around the world, supported by some good fundamental geographical information. It is well worth a look.

**[www.myredtractor.co.uk](http://www.myredtractor.co.uk)**

This site is useful for making links between Citizenship and the Sustainable Doorway of Food and Drink. It can be used with children. A follow-on homework could be to look out for the Red Tractor Logo in a supermarket.

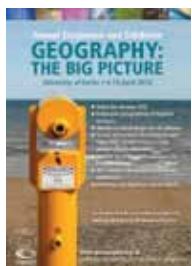
**[www.suschool.org.uk](http://www.suschool.org.uk)**

This is also a useful website for teaching sustainability. It includes a wealth of facts and positive examples of acting sustainably that provide good case studies.

You should have received your new GA publications catalogues in your *GA Magazine*. There are lots of new publications to support you in your teaching. Look out for the new primary toolkit series *Geography Plus* and the *Images of India* CD and *India map*.

This section is to help you find your way, among all the good stuff 'out there', to current events and resources in the world of primary geography.

**Events**



**GA Annual Conference 2010**  
See inside front cover for primary-focused sessions at the GA Annual Conference.

**Quality Geography Conferences for KS1, KS2 and KS3**

*London: Tuesday 2 March 2010*  
*Sheffield: Tuesday 9 March 2010*  
Leszek Iwaskow, Ofsted's National Adviser for Geography, will open these conferences with his view on quality geography that challenges and supports student learning. Quality geography aims for both excellence and enjoyment. These conferences provide the opportunity to discuss and develop what we mean by 'quality geography' in both the primary and secondary phases.

Further information and online booking is available at [www.geography.org.uk/qgconferences](http://www.geography.org.uk/qgconferences).

**Ideas into action – Global learning in the primary curriculum**

*Tuesday 30 March 2010, Birmingham*  
This one-day conference highlights recent innovative practices from primary schools in response to developments in the curriculum, and raises questions about how we can most effectively meet learners' needs in a changing global context. Details at [www.tidegloballearning.net](http://www.tidegloballearning.net).

**Sustainable schools conference**  
*Wednesday 27 May at Froebel College, Roehampton University, London*

The day includes keynotes from Gyles Morris, Director of Naturesbase and a primary geography tutor at the London Institute of Education, and John Cook who leads the primary geography education department at the Institute of Education. There are four workshops including one by members of staff and the children of Ashley C of E Primary School which has won some top awards for sustainability. More details from [n.odriscoll@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:n.odriscoll@roehampton.ac.uk).

**Primary National Conference**

*London: Tuesday 8 June 2010*  
*Manchester: Tuesday 15 June 2010*  
Would you like the opportunity to think creatively about the geography and history that you teach and how this can support learning across the wider curriculum? Are you enthusiastic about developing primary geography and history and keen to be part of a growing initiative that wants to inspire all young people? If so, then this one-day conference, jointly presented by the GA and the HA, is for you.

Further details and online booking available at [www.geography.org.uk/primaryconference](http://www.geography.org.uk/primaryconference).

**Websites**



**<http://geographychampions.ning.com>**

A dedicated professional networking site where you can share news and resources, read about and post events, link up with like-minded teachers and find out who your local Geography Champion is. Among other things, the Champions are offering free twilight CPD sessions.

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## Storylink: Kochi

Iain Dryden and Ralph Hare

Price £22.99 (GA members), £32.99 (non-members)

ISBN 978-1-903448-69-4

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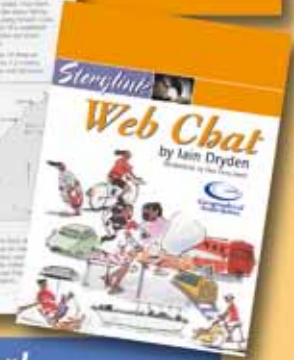
On the Road

Storylink *Resource Sheet 6*



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