

# HOMES AROUND THE WORLD

## A 'STORYWORLDS' PROJECT

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The sessions outlined here use multi-cultural storybooks to introduce 1st and 2nd class pupils to the many different types of homes around the world. 'Homes' was chosen as a theme because homes are a need that all people have in common. This project allows children to explore a wide variety of homes and to examine the influence of climate, family and culture on types of home. Upon completion of the project, children will have learned to recognise global similarities but also to value differences.

The sessions outlined here could be used as a template for projects on similar themes, such as food, clothes, transport, etc. There are many imaginative and sensitive children's books that touch on common needs in diverse landscapes and cultures.

The project supports the curriculum for 1st and 2nd classes. It is cross-curricular in design, with particular relevance to the 'Human Environments' strand of Geography. See Section IV for details of curricular links.

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# I. AIMS OF THIS SESSION

The project will foster the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes:

**Knowledge** To recognise the variety of homes in different environments and cultures

**Skills** To work co-operatively and to learn from each other

**Attitudes** To develop an appreciation of diversity at local and global levels

# II. SESSION OUTLINE

This project uses multi-cultural storybooks to introduce 1st and 2nd class pupils to the many different types of homes around the world. 'Homes' was chosen as a theme because homes are a need that all people have in common. This project allows children to explore a wide variety of homes and to examine the influence of climate, family and culture on types of home. Upon completion of the project, children will have learned to recognise global similarities but also to value differences.

The project runs in 8-hour-long sessions (weekly), with an introductory session, 5 storybook sessions, and 2 final sessions during which a 'dream house' is constructed. The 5 storybook sessions use storybooks to open up a window into another part of the world, offering insights into a variety of landscapes and cultures, and helping children to form positive images of life in other countries. In each session, sharing the storybook is followed by an activity. These activities employ a range of participatory and creative methodologies to address the following questions:

- Where is this place?
- What does it look like?
- What do the houses look like?
- Why do the houses look like this?
- What are the houses made of?
- Who are the people who live in this house?
- How are they related to each other?
- What would it feel like to live in this place?
- What are some of the things that are important to the people

who live there?

- What links does this place have with other places?
- Why is this place special?

(Questions based on *Teaching About Localities*, p. 16)

## III. ACTIVITIES

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### SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION

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*Materials needed:*

- Flipchart and paper
- Photos of homes pasted onto card, one for each child. We used photos scanned from *Around the World: Homes* (see Section IV)
- A4-size black and white drawings of homes, one for each child. We used photocopies from *Traditional Houses from Around the World*.

#### 1. Brainstorm: What is a home?

The children are asked what they think of when we say the word 'home'. The responses can be written on a flipchart, using 3 sheets with the following headings:

- Home is...
- There are many different kinds of homes, for example...
- People live in different kinds of homes because...

These responses will be revisited at the end of the project.

(This activity is from ScotDec's Homes, p.6)

#### 2. Discussion with photo cards: Different kinds of homes.

- Each child is given a photo card of a home.
- The class discusses the components of a home (doors, windows, roof, etc), different homes for cold/hot/wet/dry places, different building materials, homes for few or many people, homes that move, special homes, etc.
- Children raise their hands if they feel that their photo is relevant to the characteristic or feature that is being discussed, and share their thoughts with the class.

### **3. Game: Whose Home is It?**

- Each child is given a photocopied sheet with a drawing of a home.
- He/she studies it without showing it to the other children.
- Ask the children to put their sheets face down on a table.
- Mix the sheets up and then turn them over, face up.
- Children are asked in turn to describe 'their' home.
- The rest of the class guesses which one it is.

(This activity is taken from ScotDec's *Homes*, p.7)

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## **SESSION 2: THE VILLAGE OF ROUND AND SQUARE HOUSES (CAMEROON)**

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### *Materials needed:*

- The book *Village of Round and Square Houses* (see Section IV).
- Simple percussion instruments if available.

### **1. The story from the book is read aloud.**

### **2. Questions (see Section II) are discussed.**

### **3. Drama activity:**

Pupils act out the 'story within the story' about the eruption of the volcano and how the people came to live in the round and square houses.

- The class can discuss what movements and sound effects would be most effective to depict the eruption of 'Old Naka.' If you have some simple instruments, decide how you will use them.
- Arrange 2 sets of chairs, one in the shape of a circle and one in the shape of a square. These will represent the round and square houses to which the men and women are sent during the story.
- Then divide pupils into 3 groups, representing men, women and children. The pupils can work as groups to create a simple mime to depict their village tasks as outlined in the story: the men 'planting yams and corn in the new, rich soil,' the women 'talking and laughing, preparing food for everyone,' and the children 'making a game of clearing the fields of small, grey stones.'
- When you are ready, act out the 'story within the story' beginning with 'In the days of long, long ago...', with the teacher taking the role of Gran'ma (storyteller).

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## **SESSION 3: SHOMPA LIVES IN INDIA (INDIA)**

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### *Materials needed:*

- The book *Shompa Lives in India* (see Section IV) in Big Book format.
- Teachers' Guide to *Shompa*.
- A4 photocopies of the map of Shompa's town (Teachers' Guide, p. 7–8), one for each pupil.
- Two large scale maps of Shompa's town, similar to the one on p. 18–19 in the Big Book. (You will have to photocopy the map in sections and then tape the sheets together, or you can bring it to a professional photocopying shop). It doesn't matter if the maps are a bit smaller or bigger than the map in the Big Book, but your 2 maps **must** be identical in size.
- One copy of the large map needs to be cut into 20–30 squares (depending on class size) of equal size. Leave the other large copy intact.
- Crayons or markers.

### **1. The story from the book is read aloud.**

### **2. Questions (see Section II) are discussed.**

### **3. Mapping activity A:**

- Give each child a photocopied map of Shompa's town.
- Ask them to locate various features mentioned in the story, such as Shompa's house, Shompa's school, SKVIS, etc. After finding a few features, ask the children about other places from the story they would like to locate on the map, and help them to do so.
- Using markers, chart a few simple routes that Shompa might take, for example, from home to school, from home to the water pump, etc.

(This activity is taken from the Teachers' Guide to *Shompa*, p.6)

### **Mapping activity B:**

- Display the large scale (intact) map in the front of the classroom.
- Give each child one square from the cut-up map.
- Each child colours in his/her square.
- When the square is coloured in, the child brings it up to the large map, locates where it should go, and (once the correct location is confirmed) glues it into place.
- The end result is a really colourful 'patchwork' map.

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## **SESSION 4: CARAVAN (AFGHANISTAN)**

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*Materials needed:*

- The book *Caravan* (see Section IV).
- Photos and captions from ScotDec's *Homes* (see Section IV), photos G–M, captions sheet K–L.
- Instructions for making yurt model, sheets I (iii & iv) from ScotDec's *Homes*.
- Photocopied sheets I (i & ii) from ScotDec's *Homes*, one for each child.

**1. The story from the book is read aloud.**

**2. Questions (see above) are discussed.**

**3. Photo work: Life in a Yurt**

- Pupils divide into 7 groups.
- Each group is given a photograph showing a family putting up and living in a yurt. Groups are given time to examine and discuss their photos amongst themselves.
- The teacher reads out a caption. The groups put up their hands if they think that the caption being read matches their photo. As a 'match' is established for each caption/photo, the groups can make further comments to the class about aspects of their photo.

**4. Construction: Yurt model**

Pupils assemble and decorate a simple cut-out yurt model, using 2 photocopied sheets, scissors, glue and crayons.

(Both activities are taken from ScotDec's *Homes*)

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## **SESSION 5: GREGORY COOL (TOBAGO)**

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*Materials needed:*

- The book *Gregory Cool* (see Section IV).
- An empty suitcase or travel bag.

### **1. The story from the book is read aloud.**

### **2. Questions (see above) are discussed.**

### **3. Imaginative Game: Going to Tobago**

The children start by reflecting on the story and discussing if they think that Gregory was prepared for life in the Caribbean. Was life there how he imagined it would be? Do you think that he brought the ‘right’ things with him in his suitcase?

Pupils can then pretend that they are moving to the Caribbean – what things will they bring for their new home there? Each child provides one suggestion. Then the class can play a simple memory game, for example, one child tries to remember 5 things mentioned and who mentioned each one.

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## **SESSION 6: WINDOW (AUSTRALIA)**

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*Materials needed:*

- The book *Window* (see Section IV). (*Window* is available in both Big Book and in standard-size formats. The Big Book is wonderful for sharing with the class, but the photocopied sheets need to be made from the standard size version. Therefore, in an ideal situation, both versions would be available. It is worth checking the local library to see if they might have copies in either or both formats).
- Double-page spreads from the book, photocopied with an empty ‘speech bubble’ superimposed on the page, one for each child.
- Plain A4 sheets with a window frame border, one for each child.
- Pencils, crayons, markers (or collage materials if you want to do an additional session).

### **1. The story from the book is ‘read’ aloud.**

This is different from other sessions in that there is no written text in *Window*. Instead, each double-page spread contains a photograph of an intricately detailed collage, showing how the view from one window

changes over the course of 20 years. Children can spot the subtle and not-so-subtle differences between the collages.

**2. Questions (see above) are discussed.**

**3. Speech/Thought Bubbles**

Each child is given a photocopied sheet of a different double-page spread of the book, with an empty speech/thought 'bubble' superimposed on the page. (If there is a large class, there will be duplication but this leads to even more interesting feedback). The children write in (they may need help with spelling) what they think the character is thinking or saying in this scene. The teacher then returns to the book, and on each page asks the appropriate child or children to share their speech or thought bubble and to explain why they wrote what they did.

(The speech bubble concept is taken from *Start with a Story*, p. 20)

**4. Window into the Future**

Pupils are asked to imagine it is 2024. What will the view from the front window of the house they are living in now look like? Ask the children to draw this view. Some children might prefer to draw the view from a house belonging to a grandparent or special friend rather than his/her own house.

This activity is open-ended and could easily take up a session on its own. If time and resources allow, it would be very interesting to do this view in the form of collage, inspired by the collages in *Window*.

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## **SESSIONS 7 AND 8: DREAM HOUSE**

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*Materials needed:*

- One shoebox for each child.
- Recycled materials suitable for the interior and exterior of the shoebox houses. It is preferable to tell the children a few weeks in advance about the dream houses, so that they can start collecting their own materials.
- Scissors, glue, paint.

### **SESSION 7:**

#### **1. ‘What is a Home?’ Revisited**

The children look back on their flipchart sheets from session 1. New ideas are added and discussed.

#### **2. Review of Storybooks**

The children look back on the 5 storybooks used in the project, and discuss the many different aspects of homes that were explored in them.

#### **3. Dream House**

The children discuss the idea of a dream house. Can they remember any dreams about houses? What might a dream house look like? What would it be made of?

#### **4. Materials**

The materials collected by children are examined. The properties and characteristics of their materials can be discussed, and compared to the properties of materials used in constructing real houses. The children can discuss how they plan to construct their own dream houses.

## **SESSION 8:**

In this final session, the dream houses are built. Some children may want to join up boxes to produce blocks of flats, terraced houses, etc., and others may want to make village formations.

If time and space permit, some 'landscaping' can be done to connect all of the individual boxes. The dream houses can be displayed along with the storybooks and materials produced in other sessions, for example, the patchwork map and the yurt models.

At the end of the session, each child can write down responses under the following headings:

- Some of the things I used to make my dream house are...
- My dream house is like some of the homes we studied because...
- My dream house is special because...

# IV. FURTHER INFORMATION

## CURRICULAR LINKS FOR 1ST AND 2ND CLASSES

This project is cross-curricular in its design, with particular relevance to the following areas:

### Geography

This project addresses the aims of the geography curriculum:

- to develop knowledge and understanding of local, regional and wider environments and their interrelationships.
- to encourage an understanding and appreciation of the variety of natural and human conditions on the Earth.
- to develop empathy with people from diverse environments and an understanding of human interdependence.
- to encourage the development of a sense of place and spatial awareness.

In the 'Human environments' strand, the strand unit 'Living in the local community' focuses on homes and shelter, aiming to enable a child to:

- recognise that people live in a variety of homes.
- describe his/her home, its location and surroundings.
- record some of the features of a home, using simple drawings, displays and models.
- investigate materials used to construct homes and identify materials of local origin.
- discuss and record simple journeys to and from homes.
- develop an awareness and appreciation of different types of homes in the locality and in other areas.
- develop an awareness of homelessness.

Also in the 'Human environments' strand, the strand unit 'People and places in other areas' aims to enable the child to become familiar with some aspects of the lives of people in other areas by exploring:

- peoples and communities.
- needs of people for food, shelter and clothes.
- environments in which people live.
- adapting to environments.
- use of local building materials.

The methodologies used in the activities contribute to the skills and concepts development set out for the geography curriculum:

- A sense of place and space.
- Maps, globes and graphical skills.
- Geographical investigation skills.

## **English**

Multi-cultural children's literature forms the base upon which the project is built, as each session begins with a book set in a different country. The books are read aloud and discussed, providing a stimulating and accessible introduction to each week's theme. This work is relevant to the English strand 'Emotional and imaginative development through language', enabling a child to:

- respond to characters and events in a story.
- explore different attitudes and feelings by imagining what it would be like to be certain characters.

## **SPHE**

The project addresses one of the stated aims of the SPHE curriculum, 'to enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity.' The project focuses on the concepts explored in the 'Myself and the wider world' strand, especially:

- to develop an awareness of people in other places.
- to be aware of and appreciate the diversity of cultures and peoples in the local community.

The methodologies used in the project are similar to the ones advocated for the delivery of the SPHE curriculum, including co-operative games, exploring photographs and drama activities.

## **History**

As the stories are set in different countries and cultures, the project is relevant to the 'Story' strand of the history curriculum, in enabling a child to:

- become aware of the lives of women, men and children from different social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds.
- listen to, discuss, retell and record a range of myths and legends from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

## Science

The project addresses the strand 'Materials', strand unit 'Properties and characteristics of materials' through the investigation of the various materials used in constructing houses.

## Art

The 'dream house' affords opportunities to explore the 'construction', 'fabric and fibre' and 'paint and colour' strands of the art curriculum.

## Other areas

The project could be expanded to include work in Music (songs about homes), Drama (exploring and making drama about homes), Maths (calculating dimensions of houses, building to scale) and Religious Education (homes in the Bible, homes as symbols in religions).

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## More storybooks that can be used to explore the theme of 'homes'

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to thank Beni Oburu of Cultural Links in Fermoy. Beni co-facilitated the sessions in a way that really inspired the children, and also brought many ideas and much enthusiasm to the project. Cultural Links plans to produce a companion 'Storyworlds' project, and the WDC and Cultural Links will work in partnership to further develop the 'Storyworlds' concept.

I also wish to thank Elaine Archer for all of her valuable help, especially with the 'dream house'. I thank Hazel Baylor for her kindness and encouragement.

I also thank Sonja Coulter and her 1st and 2nd class pupils at Christ Church N.S., Waterford and Ms. Dearbhail Ivin and her 1st, 2nd and 3rd class pupils at Educate Together N.S., Waterford for piloting the project. Ms. Coulter and Ms. Ivin were unfailingly supportive and their pupils worked so well together throughout the project.

This project was funded by the Development Education Unit of Development Co-operation Ireland

All resources used in the project are available on loan from the Waterford One World Centre.