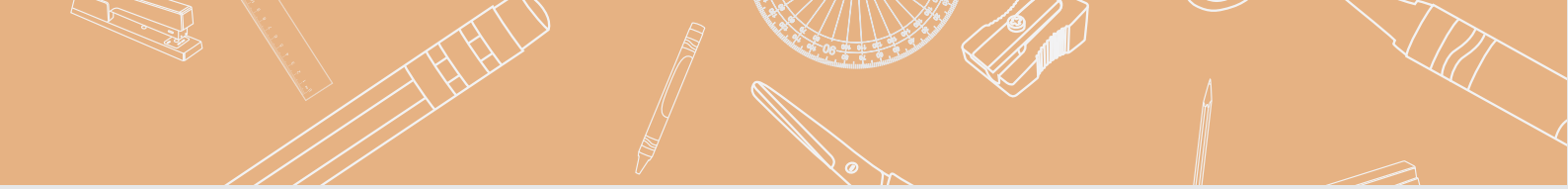




Resource guide for education and development





Cover photo: Chudomir (right) and his family live in a multifamily building that was built with help from Habitat for Humanity Bulgaria in Sofia, Bulgaria. ©Habitat for Humanity/Ezra Millstein






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Introduction



Habitat for Humanity International is pleased to present to you the Habitat for Humanity resource guide for education and development. The purpose of this educational resource is to help teachers bring current development trends and issues regarding poverty housing into their classrooms. We accomplish this by providing a diverse series of case studies, lesson outlines and resources for addressing an array of development topics. In highlighting these challenges and presenting possible solutions, we hope to help create a more internationally conscious youth who have the tools and knowledge to create change in this rapidly globalizing world.

The creation of this packet was coordinated by Habitat for Humanity Europe and Central Asia's Global Village department. The ECA Global Village department works with more than 50 international schools to create opportunities for service learning with Habitat through GV school builds. Although this is a great method for incorporating students 15 and older into Habitat's work, there has been increasing interest from the educational community in integrating Habitat's work into the classroom of students in primary and middle year programs (ages 6-14). The material presented here is best suited for students in middle year school programs (ages 10-14), but it can easily be adapted for youths of varying ages.

In creating lesson outlines, the resource acknowledges the importance of an interdisciplinary education. It can be a vital resource to international schools that use the International Baccalaureate program or similar style of education. Throughout the packet, Habitat provides opportunities for students to be critical thinkers and active learners, while promoting

advocacy and volunteerism. It is our hope that through the presentation of case studies, based on the stories from individuals and families who have experienced these development challenges firsthand, we will inspire you to become advocates for the right to safe, decent and affordable shelter for all.

Research for this packet was completed by Habitat for Humanity International Europe and Central Asia staff with the input of numerous educators within the international school community.

A special note of recognition and thanks goes out to the educators who dedicated their personal time and valuable support to developing this resource:

- **Callie Welstead:** CAS and community and service coordinator, Oeiras International School
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- **Nargiza Kydykova:** Resource development manager, Habitat for Humanity Kyrgyzstan
- **Igor Lazarevski:** Resource development specialist, Habitat for Humanity Macedonia

Habitat for Humanity International

Who we are

Of the world's more than 6.5 billion residents, more than 2.1 billion live in poverty housing. Every minute, 20 people die from conditions related to substandard housing. Habitat for Humanity International is a Christian nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating poverty housing. Habitat for Humanity believes that every man, woman and child deserves to live in a simple, decent and affordable house. For more than 30 years, the organization has helped people get out of poverty and into houses. Since its founding in 1976, Habitat has built and renovated more than 350,000 homes worldwide, affecting the lives of more than 1.75 million people in nearly 90 countries through the provision of adequate shelter.

How we work

Habitat works in partnership with all people, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity and gender, to build simple, decent and affordable houses with those who lack adequate shelter. Habitat supports vulnerable communities and groups, including single mothers, families with disabled children, and marginalized communities such as the Roma or victims of natural disasters. Homeowners are selected based on their need for housing, ability to repay a mortgage, and willingness to work in partnership.

Habitat for Humanity incorporates a diverse strategy to ensure a sustainable method of producing homes with people suffering from lack of adequate shelter. Houses are modestly sized: large enough for the homeowner's needs, but small enough to keep construction and

maintenance costs to a minimum. Habitat uses quality, locally available building materials and is committed to using materials and construction techniques that conserve natural resources and reduce long-term energy costs for homeowners. Trained staff members supervise house construction and educate the volunteers and partner families. House designs reflect the local climate and culture. The new houses help resolve such issues as overcrowding, lack of access to clean water, lack of access to sanitation, being housed in a nondurable structure, and lack of access to secure tenure. The labor of volunteers and partner families, efficient building methods, modest house sizes and a no-profit, affordable loan collectively make it affordable for low-income people around the world to purchase a Habitat for Humanity house.

Habitat is not a giveaway program. In addition to a down payment and monthly repayments, homeowners invest hundreds of hours of their own labor—referred to as sweat equity—into building their Habitat house and the houses of others.

Habitat for Humanity partners with a wide range of people and organizations to make housing a reality for low-income families. Donors and volunteers act as the foundation for this organization. Hundreds of thousands of volunteers have contributed to Habitat for Humanity by raising funds, building, and advocating for the elimination of poverty housing. To date, Habitat organizations worldwide have sent out more than 6,000 teams—more than 65,000 volunteers—through the Global





Village program. The teams, which include many enthusiastic students from schools and universities, help fund and build homes with families in need.

More than just shelter

During more than three decades of building and rehabilitating homes around the world, Habitat for Humanity has demonstrated that adequate, affordable shelter provides a foundation upon which families can grow and undertake life's many tasks. Based on the understanding that simple, decent and affordable shelter includes access to adequate water, sanitation, hygiene facilities, drainage and education, Habitat has created numerous initiatives to address these issues. In line with the Millennium Development Goals (www.undp.org/mdg), Habitat for Humanity looks at shelter from a holistic perspective

and continues to reach beyond the traditional framework of just providing shelter by ensuring sustainable community development. Habitat works in partnership with other community-based organizations to enable the construction of true community infrastructure: While Habitat provides the housing component, our partners are involved in the construction of schools and health clinics, allowing easier access to both education and health care. Habitat-sponsored water and sanitation projects such as water filters in Tajikistan and eco-toilets in Kyrgyzstan have helped curb the spread of disease among both children and adults. Furthermore, Habitat offers skills training and finance classes to the members of the community it is serving.

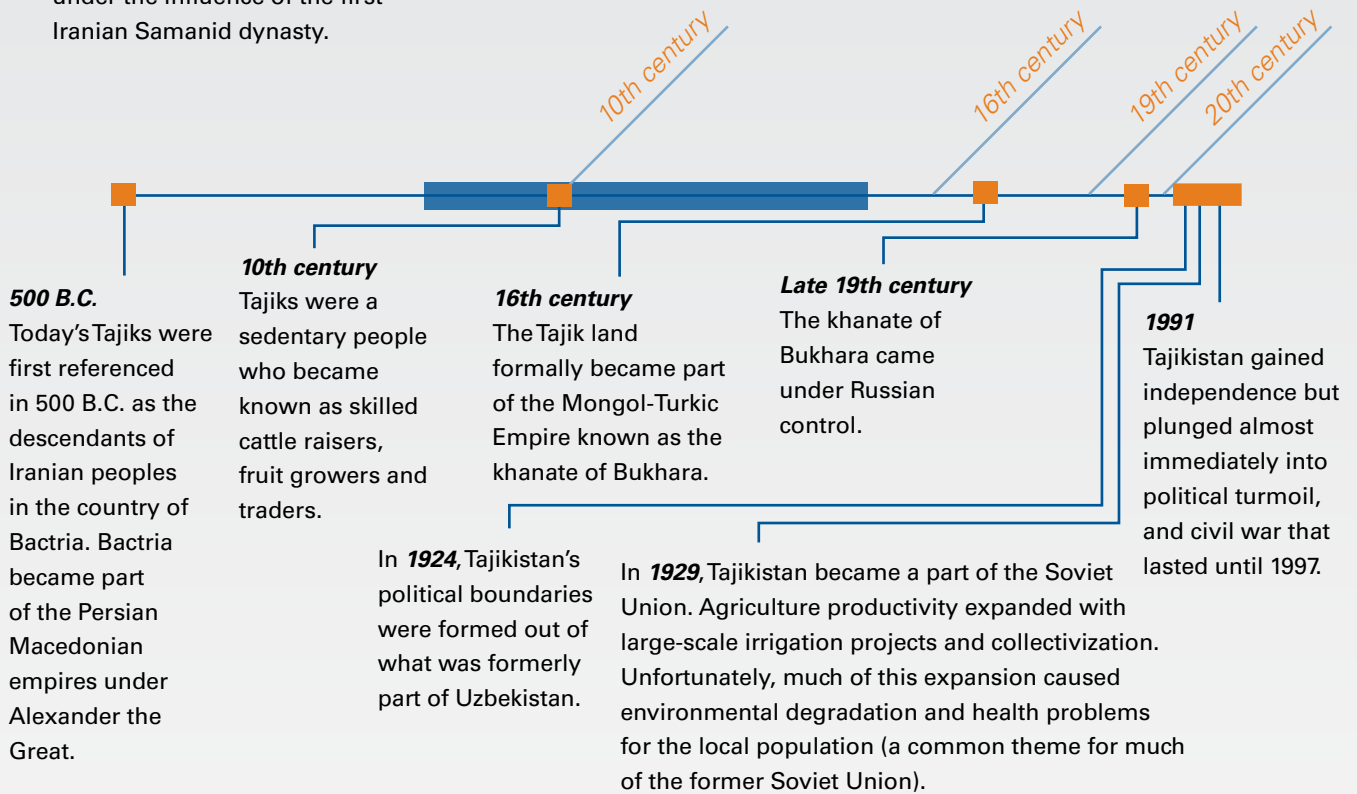
Find out more about the innovative work Habitat for Humanity International is doing to alleviate poverty at habitat.org.



Case study 1:

Access to clean water in Tajikistan

Between the seventh century and the 15th century, the Tajiks came under the influence of the first Iranian Samanid dynasty.



The Republic of Tajikistan is a landlocked and mountainous country in Central Asia. It shares political boundaries with four other countries: Kyrgyzstan to the north, China to the east, Afghanistan to the south and Uzbekistan to the west. Urbanization is slow, with the majority of the population living in a rural setting. The country's economy is based heavily on agriculture and remittances (money sent home from migrant workers). Tajikistan gained independence in 1991 but plunged almost immediately into political turmoil and civil war that lasted until 1997. Tajikistan remains the poorest and most economically fragile of the former Soviet Republics. More than half of its population lives on less than US\$2.15 a day.

Water and health

More than 3 million people in Tajikistan lack access to clean and safe water. The majority of these people live in rural areas and rely on unprotected water sources, such as rivers

and lakes. More than 50 percent of the Tajik population contracts one or more waterborne or water-related illness annually. This leads to high infant mortality, lowered work productivity and higher absence rates at school. In addition, women and children must spend considerable time collecting water.

Quick facts

- Capital: Dushanbe
- Population: 7.4 million
- Median age: 22.2 years
- Population growth rate: 1.85%
- Infant mortality: 39.78 per 1,000 live births
- Literacy rate: 99.5%
- Life expectancy: 65.68 years
- GDP per capita (PPP): US\$1,900
- Population below poverty line: 60%

Courtesy of CIA World Factbook

Agriculture is one of the largest economic activities in Tajikistan. It is not only a large consumer of water, but also is responsible for high pollution levels in many water sources. Fertilizers, pesticides and livestock contaminate the rivers, irrigation canals and ponds that people use for drinking. There is a lack of government funding, policy and enforcement of existing regulations pertaining to the provision of clean drinking water. Much of the current water delivery infrastructure is in a dilapidated state and is responsible for water loss and contamination. A combination of climate change and poor water management throughout the region has led to the demise of the Aral Sea, and the way of life it has sustained for centuries.

Poverty housing

Because of the civil war and ensuing economic collapse, practically all house building came to a halt. Many unfinished homes are scattered across Tajikistan, while existing housing deteriorates because of neglect. Families live in houses made of raw brick or clay with dirt floors. Their homes are not only decaying and unsanitary but also were not built to withstand earthquakes in a region prone to such disasters. In cities, several generations live together in tiny apartments where heating and sanitation are often absent and water must be drawn from communal wells. Housing problems are complicated by frequent disasters such as earthquakes and mudslides.

Natural disasters and climate change

Tajikistan is prone to many natural disasters, including earthquakes, floods, droughts and landslides. Unfortunately, an ailing infrastructure, weak governance, poverty and substandard housing make it difficult for Tajikistan to mitigate these events. When a disaster hits, it usually has a devastating and long-lasting effect on the community. Environmental degradation and poor environmental management throughout Tajikistan have amplified the effects of natural disasters. Climate change is causing some of the thousands of glaciers in Tajikistan to recede at an alarming rate. Glacial runoff is a major

contributor to spring and summer flooding throughout the region.

Additional resources:

Tajikistan (An overview of the country and Habitat for Humanity's work to improve living conditions and water sanitation) – PowerPoint presentation on CD



Water for life – PowerPoint presentation on CD



Key words and definitions:

Landlocked: A country that is entirely surrounded by land.

Urbanization: The mass movement of people toward urban areas (cities), or the fast development of an urban area.

Waterborne: Something that is waterborne is carried via water. A waterborne disease is one that is spread through contaminated water.

Infrastructure: The systems that are in operation in a country to help it run successfully. For example, water supplies, sewage systems and public transport.

Contamination: The process whereby something becomes contaminated or unclean.

Climate change: The alteration of natural climatic patterns. It is accepted that human activity is speeding up climate change.

The BioSand water filter: Problem, goal and solution

The problem

Only 58 percent of the 7 million people of Tajikistan have access to clean, safe water. In the post-Soviet period, the quality of water supply, sanitation and housing services in Tajikistan has deteriorated because of the lack of government funding.

Rural communities of Tajikistan suffer from extremely basic infrastructure problems. Drinking water is drawn from contaminated irrigation canals and ditches. In winter, when canals dry out, people use water from open ponds shared with livestock. The lack of water in most cases also limits good hygiene practices, causing communicable and skin diseases.

The goal

To improve the health of 1,000 families in three districts in Tajikistan by providing access to safe drinking water and promoting healthful hygiene practices.

The solution

The BioSand water filter is inexpensive and sustainable and requires no chemicals or electric power. It is low-tech and can be produced by local people using locally available materials, eliminating more than 90 percent of waterborne diseases and parasites and producing up to 60 liters of clean, safe water per hour—this is sufficient for 18 people. With regular maintenance and servicing, the system will last for up to 20 years.

The BioSand water filter consists of a concrete container filled with graded sand and gravel, topped with a diffuser and biolayer. As water passes through the various layers, foreign particles and organisms are filtered out. The innovative biolayer is formed in the first layer of sand. The microorganisms that make up the biolayer consume bacteria, increasing the effectiveness of the filter.

All the beneficiary families are trained and provided with a manual about the use and maintenance of water filters.

“The water from the filter is as clean as glass, and it is very pleasant to drink, especially in the hot Kumsangir summers, because the filter keeps it cool. The reservoir that Habitat built in our village is very convenient to use because it has a special mechanism which pumps out water, and you don’t have to bend and hurt your back to get water.”

—Oluftha Kabutova





Zulkada's story

Assalom u aleykum!

This is how we greet people in Tajikistan. My name is Zulkada, and I am an 11-year-old girl living in southern Tajikistan. Just over 1½ years ago, my family received a water filter from Habitat for Humanity. I would like to tell you a little bit about myself, my family, and how our lives have been changed by having access to clean water.

I have grown up here in the small village of Kumsangir in southern Tajikistan with my mother, father, and seven brothers and sisters. Another one of my brothers lives nearby with his wife and two children. I am the youngest of all my brothers and sisters. My father is a teacher at the

local high school, and my mother takes care of the household duties. I am currently in school but also help with household chores and sometimes have to go tend to the cotton fields.

One of my most important responsibilities is collecting water for the family. Life was much different before Habitat for Humanity built a water reservoir in the village and provided us with a water filter. My sisters and I spent three or four hours each day collecting water from irrigation canals and ponds that were one kilometer away from the house. I had to carry the water in large buckets that were extremely heavy. We would

TAJIKISTAN



have to wake up very early in the morning to do this. I would be so tired the rest of the day, and many times I was late for school.

The water we collected was not very clean. We usually had to let the water sit for a while to let the dirt particles settle before we could boil it. During the rainy season, the water was especially dirty and muddy. It would sometimes take days before the dirt would settle and we could boil the water. My mom was always worried about us getting typhoid, so we had to be sure to boil the water for a long time. Luckily, I usually didn't have stomach illnesses too often, but I had constant skin problems from using the dirty water to wash with. Unfortunately, my father got ill many times from drinking the water. It made it difficult for him to go teach at the local school. He is older, and it would take him a long time to feel better after getting sick. It was very scary for me. At school, I noticed that many of the other children would get sick from drinking the water from the canals and ponds. Some of them missed school. They would tell me they were not doing well in school. Being sick caused them to fail exams and turn in their homework late.

Habitat for Humanity came to our village 1½ years ago and offered to help us get a water filter and construct a water reservoir in our village. I was so excited when they delivered our very own water filter. I even got to try it out first! The water looked so clean, and it was very tasty. I am still responsible for gathering water for the family, but the task now takes less than an hour. It is only a few minutes' walk to the reservoir where I collect the water. Next, I pour the water into the filter, and in minutes we have crystal clear, clean water. Just to be extra safe, our family still

boils the water. Besides drinking safe water, our food tastes much better, and my clothes are much cleaner. I don't have skin problems any longer, and my father does not get stomach illnesses.

Representatives from the government come to our village regularly to check the water filter and suggest cleaning when it gets dirty. A trainer from Habitat taught us about filter maintenance and cleaning. He said if we take care of the filter, it will produce clean, safe water for a very long time, up to 20 years!

I love school, and being healthy allows me to attend all my classes. I am doing very well in my classes. My favorite subject is literature, and I hope one day to become a journalist. Our teachers now stress the importance of hygiene and being sure to wash our hands with soap after using the bathroom and before eating meals. I feel very lucky to be able to drink clean water, but it is sad because I still see classmates who get stomach illnesses because they do not have access to safe water. Hopefully, one day they too will be able to get a water filter.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my story and hear how a simple water filter has had such a big impact on our life here in Tajikistan. We, of course, are very thankful to Habitat for Humanity and their supporters for making clean water a reality for us. You now know a little bit about me and my life. I hope it has inspired you to think more carefully about access to clean water. I would be very interested in hearing your feedback or answering any questions for you. Of course I always like to meet new people and learn about different parts of the world. I would especially like to learn more about European literature, poets and writers. So please share your story with me!

Clean water lesson plans

The geography of water

Students will learn about the distribution and value of water. Furthermore, they will discover the importance of water resource management in a global community.

Primary years program, ages 7-11

Subject focus: Social studies, art and language

Themes: Discuss how the global community shares water resources and their access to clean drinking water. Learn about the different uses of water, and the various sources of water and their sustainability. Gain knowledge of the relationship between water scarcity and conflict.

Focus questions:

1. Where does your water come from?
2. How does not having safe water affect your community?
3. How does your family use water?
4. How is your access to clean water different from that of a child living in Tajikistan?
5. What are steps you can take so you don't waste water?

Water and your health

This lesson will explore the issues that surround unclean drinking water and its impact on one's health.

Middle years program, ages 11-12

Subjects: Humanities, geography and language

Themes: Discuss the effects of drinking unclean water and associated preventable diseases. Familiarize oneself with the effects of contaminated drinking water on communities and what is being done to provide safe drinking water to these communities. Introduce the geography of waterborne illnesses.

Focus questions:

1. What are some common waterborne diseases?
2. What can be done to prevent the spread of waterborne diseases?
3. How do water-related illnesses affect the daily lives of children?

Gender and water

Students will analyze gender roles in different societies and learn how the empowerment of women can act as a catalyst for the alleviation of poverty.

Middle years program, ages 11-15

Subjects: Humanities, language

Themes: Learn about the daily lives of women in developing countries. Discuss differing gender roles in developed and developing countries. Make a connection between women's rights and the vicious cycle of poverty.

Focus questions:

1. Why are women usually responsible for water collection and preparation?
2. How do gender roles differ in your community compared with that of rural Tajikistan?
3. What gender-based stereotypes exist in your community?

Classroom activities: A guide for teachers

Water watch

7-11 years

Words and pictures (understanding the concepts)

Equipment: Scissors and pins. Cut out the words and pictures in Appendix 1.5: Additional resources for classroom activities.

1. Before the presentation, place the images up on a whiteboard or piece of paper and ask the students to write as many questions as possible around the photographs. After the presentation, divide the students into groups and get them to answer all the questions around the images. At the end, ask the students to discuss their answers and re-answer the questions as a class.
2. Put the pictures up on a wall and hand the words below out to the students. Ask the students to contemplate the word they have been given and then place it next to the picture that they think it best relates to. After all the words have been placed next to an image, ask the students to explain their words and the reasons behind placing them.
3. Organize the class into pairs and provide each pair with a photograph. Ask them to create a caption for the image. After all the pairs have finished, discuss what each caption means and why it was chosen.
4. A further activity could include joining some of the words from Appendix 1.5 together and discussing the new ideas that they create. Where would they fit in the pictures?

Create a Habitat for Humanity collage

Equipment: Paper, glue, scissors, paint and pens. After the presentations and story, ask the students to create a collaborative collage depicting what water means to them. How is it used? How important is it in their society? How does this differ from the use of water in Tajikistan?





Water and your health

11-12 years

Responding to Zulkada's story

Ask the students to create their own piece of written work incorporating the answers to these questions:

1. How would spending three to four hours of your day collecting water affect your daily schedule?
2. Why is it predominately a woman's responsibility to collect water?
3. What are some common waterborne diseases?
4. What part of the population is especially at risk from waterborne diseases?
5. Why is community participation important in a water and sanitation project such as this?

Creative writing exercise

Equipment: A copy of Zulkada's story.

Ask the students to create some bullet points in response to the story of Zulkada.

1. How has Zulkada's life changed since Habitat for Humanity delivered the water filter?
2. How has it affected the people in her family or community?

3. How do the students and their families use water, and how does this differ from the way water is used in Tajikistan?
4. How is water usage similar now that the community in Tajikistan has a water filter?

Using the bullet points, the students could write a short story as if they lived in a village in Tajikistan before they had a water pump. What would be the day-to-day challenges? What would the students be expected to do? (For younger children, it may help to ask them to draw a picture of themselves in a village in Tajikistan. This may help them to imagine where they could fit into life in Tajikistan.)

Gender and water

11-15 years

Discussion topics and persuasive writing exercise

Equipment: www.girleffect.org/question

Divide the class into groups to discuss the importance of women's rights in helping to break the poverty cycle.

1. Why is it important that Zulkada stays well enough to go to school?



2. What are the long-term benefits of a girl being able to attend a school?
3. How does having clean drinking water and a safe home help combat the girl effect?
4. Who could benefit from the promotion of women's rights?
5. What are the main aspects of the poverty cycle, and how could they be changed by promoting women's rights?

After the discussion, the groups could prepare some marketing material for the promotion of women's rights. This could be text for a newspaper/magazine or leaflet.

The science behind BioSand filters

7–15 years

Equipment: One large plastic drinking bottle, a saw and a drill. You will also require a sample of each of the elements contained in a BioSand water filter: gravel or rock and sand, one clear glass beaker, a pencil and some paper.

1. Saw or cut the bottom off of the plastic bottle. After you have done this, drill a small hole into the lid of the bottle.

2. Put the lid on the top of the bottle, and invert the bottle.
3. Fill the bottle with the sand, gravel or rock.
4. Create a mixture of visibly dirty water, and slowly pour it into the bottle.
5. Collect the water in a clear glass beaker as it trickles out of the lid of the bottle.
6. Use the pen and paper to draw a clear letter or symbol. Once you have collected all the water from the bottle, put the beaker on top of the paper.
7. Observing how clearly you can see the symbol through the filtered water shows you the filtering properties of your chosen material.
8. Combine the materials in the bottle, and see how the results differ.

Many more Habitat for Humanity games and activities can be found at habitat.org/youthprograms/ages_9_13/ages_9_13_default.aspx.

Fundraising ideas

Host a Habitat for Humanity fundraising party

A good way of raising funds is to set a target amount of money that you wish to gain. For example, one BioSand filter costs \$85; this may be a good target. If you set a water filter as your target, you could host a water-themed party or base it around the culture of Tajikistan. This allows people to really get involved and become enthusiastic before the fun has even begun.

Other activity suggestions:

- Research online and see if you can find some traditional Tajik recipes to cook for the party. Here are some websites with recipes:
 - www.food.com/recipe/tajik-non-flat-bread-with-shallots-257107
 - www.tajikistanians.zoomshare.com/3.html
 - lifestyle.iloveindia.com/lounge/tajik-cuisine-10020.html
 Along with Tajik cuisine, you could research traditional Tajikistan music.
- Design some publicity material and merchandise: Create leaflets, posters and tickets to drum up support for your event or party. You could also create T-shirts and badges to sell during the event to help promote Habitat in addition to raising money.
- Hold a water race or walk: Fill up some buckets or containers with water and race with them. The winner could be the person with the fastest time and the most water left in the container. Alternatively, you could hold a walk or relay to the nearest river. If it is quite a far race or walk, you could even ask for sponsorship.
- Host a debate or public speaking contest at the party. Plan a debate in the classroom as you learn about the BioSand filter project in Tajikistan. Discuss the importance of water sanitation and water usage around the world, and invite people to watch or join in. This would be a really good way to introduce everyone to the cause behind the party and to help them to fully understand exactly what they are supporting.
- Create a miniature bio filter: This is a really good activity for a science class. It demonstrates how a filter is made and works, and it really encourages people to support the project. You can place the filter in your school lobby and encourage students to use the purified water and leave a symbolic donation that would go toward purchasing water filters in Tajikistan.





Case study 2:

The housing need in Kyrgyzstan



The Kyrgyz Republic, more commonly referred to as Kyrgyzstan, is a country with a proud nomadic tradition. It became an independent state after the collapse of the USSR in 1991. It is a landlocked country that shares political borders with Kazakhstan to the north, China to the south, Uzbekistan to the west and Tajikistan to the southwest. The country is almost entirely mountainous, dominated primarily by the Tien Shahn mountain range. The capital of Kyrgyzstan is Bishkek, in the north of the country.

Above is the Kyrgyz Republic flag. The red field represents bravery and courage, and the yellow sun symbolizes peace and wealth. The sun has 40 rays, which represent the 40 tribes of Kyrgyz. The center of the sun depicts the lines that can be seen on the crown of a traditional *yurt* or *tunduk*. This is a reference to the nomadic traditions of the Kyrgyz people.

The main agricultural products of Kyrgyzstan are cotton, meat, wool and tobacco. Only tobacco and cotton are exported to other countries in large quantities. The country also produces a large amount of hydroelectric power, which it sells to some of its neighbors. It is also an exporter of gold, mercury and natural gas.

Quick facts

- Capital: Bishkek
- Population: 5.4 million (July 2010)
- Median age: 24.7 years
- Population growth rate: 1.396% (2010)
- Infant mortality: 31.26 deaths/1,000 live births
- Literacy rate: 98.7% (1999)
- Life expectancy: 69.43 years (2010)
- GDP per capita (PPP): \$2,200
- Population below poverty line: 40% (2004)

Courtesy of CIA World Factbook

The recent history of Kyrgyzstan

1876: Kyrgyzstan became part of the Russian empire.

1920 to 1930: The Soviet Union instigated a series of land reforms that converted a lot of agricultural land into large state-owned farms. This changed the way people in Kyrgyzstan lived and worked, changing their nomadic lifestyle. In 1920, many people began to settle in accordance with the new land regulations, and there were significant improvements in literacy and education.

1990: There were many clashes between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz over land and housing in and around the city of Osh. A state of emergency was declared as hundreds of people died as a result of the disputes. In 1991, Kyrgyzstan adopted its current name, The Kyrgyz Republic, and declared independence.

1992: The Kyrgyz Republic joined the United Nations, and in 1998 it became the first country of the former Soviet Republic to join the World Trade Organization.

2000: Two rounds of elections had to be held, as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe declared that the first elections were not free and fair and were consequently invalid. The state-controlled media did not report fairly on all the competitors in the election race, and independent media sources that reported on any of the members of the opposition had enormous pressure put on them by the state. The next election was also deemed unfair by many external observers.

2010: There were reports of mass killings and attacks by Kyrgyz mobs on Uzbeks living in Osh and Jalal-Abad in southern Kyrgyzstan. Hundreds of people were killed and thousands of others were harmed in the attacks. Many Uzbek people tried to flee across the border to Uzbekistan for safety.

Living conditions in Kyrgyzstan

The population of Kyrgyzstan is 5,431,747, of which only 36 percent live in urbanized areas. Currently, more than 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and this means that more than 2 million people don't have access to the basic necessities of life such as food, shelter or safe drinking water. After the independence of the Kyrgyz Republic and the fall of the USSR, life became even harder in Kyrgyzstan. The government had to cut most of its social and welfare benefits, leaving many families with much less money for their basic needs, such as housing. This means that many families who had

accommodation could not afford to maintain it, and those who were trying to build their own homes could not afford to finish them. As a result, houses all across Kyrgyzstan are falling into serious disrepair, with many families struggling to find a safe place to live. Many areas now lack access to water and sewerage systems, particularly in rural areas. Another common problem created after the fall of the USSR is the experience of several different generations living in one or two rooms. As many as 10 family members crowd into tiny apartments in the capital, Bishkek, leading to unsafe and impractical living conditions.

How Habitat for Humanity is helping

The Habitat Kyrgyzstan Foundation was established in 1999. From the beginning, Habitat has struggled to keep housing affordable amid rising material costs and rent prices. As a result, the foundation has begun experimenting with different methods of improving living conditions while keeping costs at a minimum. There are three main programs in operation: the refurbishment of old apartment blocks, the completion of half-built houses and the building of new homes. The refurbishment project has been used to salvage some of the old Soviet-style apartment blocks that have been poorly maintained since the collapse of the USSR. Refurbishment includes updating or installing new sewerage systems to improve sanitation; installing heating systems to make the harsh winters tolerable, and installing new windows or doors to make the houses more energy efficient. Habitat also has replaced roofs on entire apartment blocks and updated the plaster and paint work inside the buildings. When a family member has a disability requiring adjustments to the house, Habitat has made the improvements. This includes widening doorways so that a person in a wheelchair can access or leave the house, and securing windows in the bedrooms of children with autism to prevent them from coming to any harm.

The completion of half-built houses is a more practical solution to many families in Kyrgyzstan than building an entirely new unit. Some families began building their homes more than 20 years ago but could not afford to continue after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As a result, there are many incomplete houses scattered across Kyrgyzstan. Habitat and volunteers have helped families complete their homes by installing heating, ceilings, floors and sometimes internal walls. They also add extensions for families who have outgrown their accommodation.

The innovative design of new houses that have been built near Bishkek has won several awards. The cane reed house, heralded for its 19th century technology and 21st century solution, was awarded the World Bank Award at the World Bank Development Market Place Awards in 2006. The houses are built out of local materials, reducing costs of transportation and ensuring a plentiful supply. They are also seismically sound and highly insulated for maximum warmth.

All of the above options have provided hundreds of families in Kyrgyzstan with safe, decent and affordable housing.



Key words and definitions:

Landlocked: A country that is entirely surrounded by land.

Nomadic: A person or group of people with no fixed home, who move in accordance with the seasons. In Kyrgyzstan, nomadic people traversed the country in search of grazing land for their livestock.

Yurt (tunduk): A circular tent made out of wood and felt or animal skins. It was used as a transportable home by the nomadic people of Central Asia.

Urbanized: The fast development of an urban area or the mass migration of people to a city.

Poverty line: A poverty line is determined by the minimum income that is required to achieve an adequate standard of living. The line varies depending upon location and living costs in that area.

Seismic: Something that is caused by or subject to earthquakes or earth tremors.

**Additional resources:**

Housing solutions in Kyrgyzstan
– PowerPoint on CD

Kyrgyzstan (an overview of the country and a brief history of living conditions)
– PowerPoint on CD



KYRGYZSTAN

Cane reed housing: Problem, goal and solution

The problem

In Kyrgyzstan, 2.5 million people live below the poverty line. Seventy percent of the population are homeless or living in substandard accommodation. Many families have moved toward large cities such as Bishkek and are living in unsafe, informal settlements. It is common for families with as many as 10 members to be crowded into a one-bedroom studio apartment or temporary house. Many of these settlements have no access to clean water, sewage systems or heating.

The goal

To reduce the number of people living in unsafe, overcrowded accommodation and increase the number of sustainable, environmentally friendly houses that have access to clean water, sewage systems and heating.

The solution

Several solutions have been created to improve the living conditions of thousands of families in Kyrgyzstan. The most successful has been the development of the cane reed house. The cane reed house is made of local material, saving money on construction. The houses are built using sweat equity, meaning that all homeowners have to contribute a certain amount of hours to building their house and their neighbor's houses. This is combined with the use of Global Village volunteers to ensure minimum labor costs. The average amount of sweat-equity hours is 500. The houses are an ideal solution to the crisis in Kyrgyzstan, not only for the low construction cost but also because of several features that make the house seismically sound and environmentally friendly. The houses are made seismically sound by inserting mulberry branches into the structure, and they have under-floor heating, which reduces energy costs by about 75 percent. They are properly insulated by the combination of cane reed and clay walls and secure windows, reducing the amount of heat lost in the winter. The clay is also highly effective for keeping the house cool during the hot summers.





The story of the Niyazbek family

My name is Imanaliev Niyazbek, and I am 30 years old. I live in a Habitat for Humanity house with my wife, Edisa, and our three children: Edinay, who is 4; Kanyshay, who is 3; and Daniel, who is only 7 months old. I would like to tell you about how much our lives have changed since we got our own home three years ago.

Before we discovered Habitat for Humanity, my wife and I lived in a garage with Edinay. The garage was part of a large 24-hour car park. After we moved into the garage, we tried to make it look like a home rather than a place to put your car. But it was very difficult, as the garage was very cold during the harsh winters and the walls were constantly damp and freezing to touch. We

were always worried that Edinay would become ill during the winter months. The “house” consisted of two rooms. The first room was our hall, kitchen, dining room and living room. The second was our bedroom.

There was no running water or proper heating in the garage. To keep warm in the winter, we had to use a small electric stove, but it never really warmed the room up. If we needed to use the bathroom, we had to walk across the busy car park and use the public toilets. It was dangerous for us to cross the car park, as it was constantly busy, all day and night seven days a week. The noise was relentless, and there was always a strong smell of car fuel and exhaust fumes. This was

really bad for my health and Edisa's, but it must have been terrible for Edinay, who was only a baby at the time.

It was just a dreadful place to live and an awful place to try to raise a family. It was noisy, overcrowded, dangerous and quite expensive. The rent was \$50 a month. One day, Edisa discovered an advertisement in the local paper: Habitat for Humanity was advertising for families to apply for new homes in Kyrgyzstan. The houses were going to be built very close to where we lived. The rent would be only \$40 a month, and after 15 years we could own it. We were so excited, Edisa took Edinay straight down to the Habitat office and waited in a queue of hundreds of families applying for a new home. We filled out the application form, but we didn't dare believe that we would be lucky enough to be chosen.

Now our lives have changed so much. Since we moved into our very own cane reed house, our health has improved immensely, we are no longer freezing cold during the winter, and the air is always fresh and clean. The rooms are warm and

bright. We have a kitchen, a bathroom, a living room and two bedrooms. We even have our own garden. We enjoy having proper heating: The children love to play on the floor now, because the under-floor heating keeps it really warm. Edisa and I enjoy watching them play and not having to worry about them catching a cold or getting ill. Everything in our lives just seems so much easier now that we have our own home. We have also saved so much money on rent and heating that we have bought our first car.

The most wonderful aspect is knowing that my children will grow up healthier and better educated because of this safe home. We live in the "Habitat settlement" district, and our small Habitat neighborhood will have new generations born and raised here. We will tell them about Habitat and how much they have helped us. They can tell the story to their children, and the memory of Habitat for Humanity will live on. Because of Habitat, my family's lives are better, we now have three happy and healthy children, and we feel very positive about the future.



KYRGYZSTAN

Safe housing lesson plans

A house or a home

Students will learn what it means to have a home, and understand the social effects of homelessness. They will also gain an understanding of houses in different cultures.

Primary years program, ages 7-11

Subject focus: Social studies and art

Themes: The types of houses around the world, the differences between a house and a home, and the social benefits of having a house.

Focus questions:

1. How many children in the world are homeless?
2. How will this affect their lives/future?
3. What do you consider a house to be? How does this differ from other people or countries' conceptions of a house?
4. What are the basic requirements of a home?
5. In what way does your life differ from that of a homeless child?

Responsibility and the environment

Students will explore the current environmental issues in the world and the importance of awareness, responsibility and action.

Middle years program, ages 12-14

Subject focus: Humanities and science

Themes: Awareness of key environmental issues such as global warming. Responsibility: Do we have an obligation to protect the environment? Does this apply both locally and globally?

Action: How can individuals help to protect the environment? Discover what a finite resource is, and explore alternative energy sources.

Focus questions:

1. What is global warming, and how is it affecting our global environment?
2. What appliances do we use every day, and where does the electricity to power them come from?
3. What alternatives are there to burning fossil fuels?
4. How can international development be used to help both people and the environment?
5. What are the links between the history, politics and social issues of a country, and how do they affect the environment?
6. Discuss the importance of using local materials for construction. How does this help the environment?



Innovation and design

Students will begin to understand how innovative design can be used to change society, particularly in reference to global warming.

Middle years program, ages 12-14

Subject focus: Arts, technology and science

Themes: Investigate what innovative designs have been created to improve society. Learn how to investigate, plan and design a house to fulfill specific requirements. Understand the importance of environmental sustainability in design, how materials and costs can affect design and the importance of teamwork.

Focus questions:

1. What are the most important features of a house that should be incorporated in a design plan?
2. What particular features could be added to a house to reduce the amount of finite resources used to power heating/electrical appliances?
3. How would a house design have to be adapted to suit other climates?

Classroom activities: A guide for teachers

A house, not a home

7-11 years

Exploring the concept of a house

Equipment: Large sheet of paper, coloring pens, paint or collage materials

Ask the students to create a large-scale drawing of their house. They could draw or list some of the most important items in their house and where their favorite room is.

After they have finished drawing, show them some images of different houses from around the world (see Appendix 2.4). Ask the students to list what is different about these houses.

Pair up students and ask them to create a second drawing of their ideal house, incorporating some features of their own houses and some features of the houses in the photographs.

House drawing game

Equipment: 1 sheet of paper and a pen

Ask the students to sit in a circle or around one table. Pass the piece of paper to one student and ask him or her to very quickly draw the first part of a house. Get that student to pass the paper to the next person. The second student has to draw an addition to the house. Ask the students to continue passing the drawing around, adding bits to the house until everyone has drawn on the paper twice. Hold the drawing up, and get the students to discuss the house they have created. Would they like to live in a house like that? What are the most interesting aspects of it? What else could be added?



Learning the difference between a shelter and a home

Equipment: A copy of the Niyazbek story, pen and paper

Ask the students to answer the following questions:

- What are three important features that were missing from the garage where the Niyazbek family used to live?
- What would you miss the most if you had to live in a garage like Imanaliev Niyazbek?
- Explain two important features of a cane reed house and why Imanaliev Niyazbek enjoys them.

In groups, the students could write a short play about what happened on the day the Niyazbek family discovered they were going to be a part of the Habitat for Humanity project. What would they be most excited about?

Responsibility and the environment

12-14 years

The effects of global warming

Equipment: Watch the video “Six Degrees Could Change the World” at channel.nationalgeographic.com/episode/six-degrees-could-change-the-world-3188/Overview#tab-Overview. You may also need large pieces of paper and some pens.

Ask the students to research the main causes and effects of global warming, including some of the effects mentioned in the video. Individually or in groups, get the students to create a mind map detailing the main cause of global warming and linking them to two or three possible solutions.

After they have finished, ask the students to work out how many features of the cane reed house are solutions to global warming. Ask them to research a type of alternative energy or other environmentally friendly features that could be used in the Kyrgyzstan Habitat community.

Cane reed housing

Equipment: The booklet template from Appendix 2.4. A pair of scissors or a craft knife, pens and pencils.

Using the template provided in Appendix 2.4, create a booklet to give to a volunteer going on a Global Village trip to build cane reed houses.

- What kind of information would they need to know?
- Provide a step-by-step guide that explains why the cane reed house is sustainable and environmentally friendly.
- You could include photographs or drawings of the house in different stages of construction. Here is a list of terms that you may want to include: insulation, heating, locally sourced, cane reed, disinfect, clay, sustainable.

Innovation and design – Creating an environmentally sustainable house

Equipment: The Internet and research books, pens, pencils and paper

Divide the class into groups of three or four students. Tell the class that they are now small independent design companies battling for a new contract. Habitat for Humanity International has asked for new house designs for a country in Europe. The design companies must choose a country to base their house in and then address the following brief:

The house must be:

- Affordable to build using locally sourced materials (in their country of choice).
- Designed for a family of four—two adults and two children—but with the potential to be adapted for families of different sizes.
- Environmentally friendly, reducing the amount of energy used or using a new alternative energy source.
- Safe and sturdy in construction.
- Appropriate for the local climate.

Each design must be submitted with a detailed construction drawing that lists special features of the house. There must also be a report to explain which country the house is designed for and why, how it is adapted to suit that country, and how it is environmentally friendly. Students also could include a persuasive letter to Habitat explaining why their house design should be chosen.



Fundraising ideas

If you would like to help more Kyrgyz families like Imanaliev Niyazbek's to gain a new home, you could raise some money in support of Habitat Kyrgyzstan. Here are some ideas to get you started:



Dinner party

Food is a very important part of the Kyrgyz lifestyle; it is also one of the most memorable parts of many Global Village trips! Try to create a traditional Kyrgyzstan dinner party using the recipes provided in Appendix 2.5. You could even research some more recipes in cookbooks or online. You could decorate your house or classroom in bright colors and try to create some traditional Kyrgyzstan clothing. To help raise money, you could make tickets for the dinner party for people to buy or ask people to make donations as they are leaving. The dinner could include a presentation of the cane reed housing solution or some of your classes' work on the housing situation in Kyrgyzstan.

DIY sculpture party

This fundraising activity could be included in your traditional dinner party. Buy some party bags and fill them with materials that could be used to make a sculpture: wire, felt, elastic bands, tape, blue tack, pins, etc. Ask the guests to buy a party bag for 50 cents. Once they have the party bags, ask them to construct a house out of the materials in the bag. The contestant with the best house design could win a prize. You could also use the house design template from the Habitat website; this lets you construct houses out of paper. You could sell the templates to people for 5 cents and then display their finished creations. habitat.org/youthprograms/ages_5_8/paperhouse.aspx

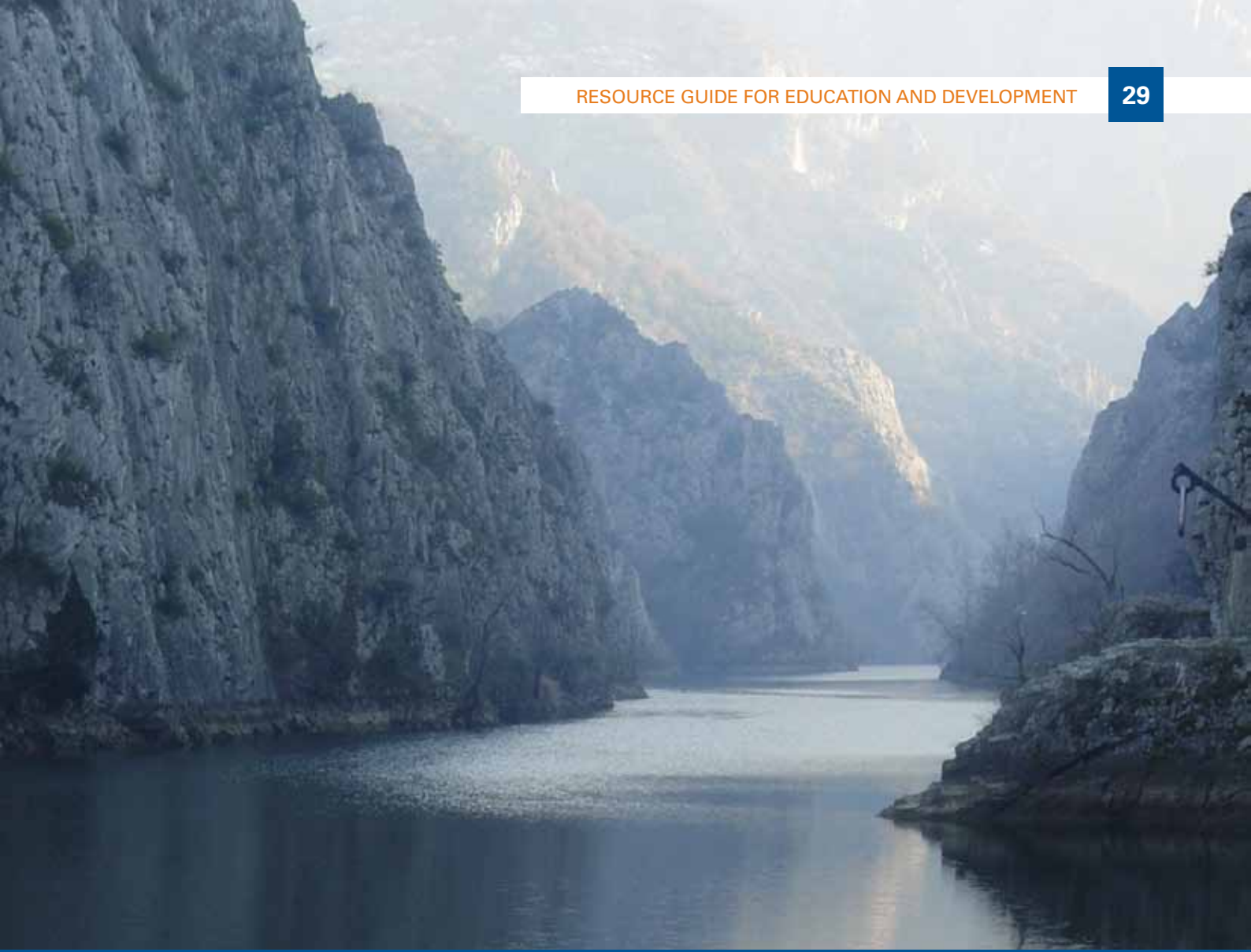
Sponsored campout

Imagine what it would be like to have a nomadic lifestyle. To raise some money, you could have a sponsored campout in your school or garden. You could collect sponsorships from friends and relatives to see how long you could live like a traditional Kyrgyz.



Sponsored cycle

Get people to sponsor you and your class to cycle or walk to school for a week. This will help to cut greenhouse gases by reducing the amount of times you or your parents use a car in your week. It promotes awareness of global warming, and you could raise money for Habitat Kyrgyzstan.



Case study 3:

Vulnerable communities in the Republic of Macedonia

Macedonia is a mountainous country in southeast Europe. It is landlocked, surrounded by five countries: Kosovo and Serbia to the north, Bulgaria to the east, Greece to the south and Albania to the west. Macedonia became an independent country Sept. 8, 1991. Since independence, the official name of the country has been a point of contention between the Macedonians and the Greeks. Greece claims that the name “Macedonia” could not be used as it is a Hellenic name and is also used to represent an ancient Greek region. The dispute has not been resolved, but has reached a stalemate. Most countries have agreed to use the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia, but in many situations the country has to be referred to as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It is common practice in less formal settings to refer to the country as Macedonia.

The Macedonian flag is a red background with a yellow sun in the middle. The sun has eight rays that extend to the edges of the flag. Red and yellow have always been the two colors associated with Macedonia, but the yellow sun in particular represents liberty.

The recent history of Macedonia

Macedonia was part of the socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 1943 to 1991. During World War II, Yugoslavia was invaded by the Axis powers, who were led by Germany. Yugoslavia created a strong resistance movement, and by 1944 (with the help of the Soviet army in the final push) they successfully liberated themselves, joined the Allied forces and continued liberating other occupied zones. At this point, Yugoslavia consisted of six federal states: Federal State of Macedonia, Federal State of Montenegro, Federal State of Croatia, Federal State of Serbia, Federal State of Slovenia and the Federal State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1945, after the war ended, the leader of the resistance movement, Josip Broz Tito, was elected prime minister of Yugoslavia, and the country changed its name to the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia. The names of all six federal states also changed their names to “the People’s Republic.” In 1948–55, a rift occurred between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia when Tito refused to join forces with Soviet leader Josef Stalin. As a result, Yugoslavia became economically isolated from the surrounding Soviet countries and was under the imminent threat of invasion from the Soviet army. The West was quick to respond to this rift and sent aid to Yugoslavia to try to boost its economy. As a result, Yugoslavia’s economy boomed during the 1950s, with unemployment rates dropping dramatically and industry experiencing a huge increase.

Quick facts

Capital: Skopje

Population: 2,066,718 (est. 2010)

Median age range: 35.4 (2010)

Population growth rate: 0.262% (est. 2010)

Infant mortality: 9.01 deaths/1,000 live births (2010)

Literacy rate: 96.1% (2002)

Life expectancy: 74.68 (2010)

Population below the poverty line: 28.7% (2008)

Courtesy of CIA World Factbook



After the death of Tito in 1980, Yugoslavia began to fall into debt and unemployment rates began to rise. The country began to break apart. In 1991, Macedonia peacefully withdrew from Yugoslavia, claiming independence in a constitution signed on Nov. 20, 1991.

Macedonia was often considered one of the least-developed countries in the former Yugoslavia. After declaring independence, its economy began to struggle because of a weak infrastructure coupled with Greece's trade embargo during the disagreement over the country's name. This was not helped by the Kosovo crisis in 1999, when 300,000 refugees sought temporary homes in Macedonia. International aid helped Macedonia cope with this crisis, and many of the refugees did return home, but the country's already fragile infrastructure was badly affected.

The recent economic crisis in Europe has not helped Macedonia in its recovery. Unemployment rates continue to rise, with more and more people becoming reliant on benefits.

Vulnerable communities in Macedonia

There were several ethnic groups in Macedonia that were significantly underrepresented. Consequently, the Orhid Framework Agreement

was created in 2001 with the assistance of representatives from the European Union and the United States of America. The framework was aimed at calming hostilities that were beginning to break out near Kosovo, where interethnic tensions were mounting. The framework calls for the protection of ethnic minorities in Macedonia via the creation of specific rights to prevent any racial or religious discrimination.

The Roma are perhaps one of the most vulnerable communities in Macedonia. The Orhid framework—although designed to address Albanian rights—has helped to raise awareness of the community. The Roma currently have a representative in parliament and are very successful in local elections. However, the Roma population still struggles to gain some of the basic needs within society. A large part of the Roma live in a suburb of Skopje called Shuto Orizari, a community built in 1963 after a major earthquake destroyed most of the housing in the capital of Macedonia. The community is the only Roma municipality in Europe. Most of the residents in the area of Shuto Orizari participated in building their own homes. However, many of the properties are now 30 to 40 years old and are in need of renovation. There are still far too many homes that are not connected to water or sewage systems.



How Habitat for Humanity is helping

Habitat for Humanity Macedonia was established in 2003 and is focusing on three main projects:

- **House building**
Many people in Macedonia are living in overcrowded apartments and cannot afford to move or build a new home. In response to this problem, Habitat Macedonia is building a housing complex in Veles, a fairly large industrial city in central Macedonia. The complex will be able to house up to 90 families.
- **Water supply and sanitation**
Many members of rural communities and informal settlements on the edge of cities in Macedonia lack access to clean water and sanitation facilities. Habitat Macedonia is offering families and communities a small loan to help them connect to the main water and sewage lines.
- **Home improvement loans and Roma housing fund**
Habitat joined up with some finance partners in the country to offer families small loans to help them improve their homes. This project was so successful it was adapted to meet the specific needs of the Roma population in Shuto Orizari. This loan helps vulnerable communities make home improvements and gain access to clean water and sanitation facilities. The loans are adapted to cater to families on a low income who may not have access to other funds.

Microloans for the Roma: Problem, goal and solution

The problem

In Macedonia, 80,000 households lack long-term housing solutions, and 12 percent of the houses in Macedonia are classed as substandard. Fifteen percent of the population—320,000 people—live in illegally constructed buildings. Almost 23 percent of rural communities lack access to clean water.

Macedonia is home to the largest Roma community in Europe, and yet most of the community lives in slumlike conditions on the edge of big cities such as Skopje. Many of the houses need renovating and refurbishment, but an overwhelming number of families lack access to funds or cannot provide guarantees for loans. As a result, the poverty cycle continues, with house conditions constantly deteriorating.

The goal

Habitat for Humanity's goal is to reduce poverty and improve the living conditions among Roma communities and other vulnerable groups in Macedonia. Habitat plans to serve 86 families in one year by distributing home-improvement loans and providing education on home maintenance. This will help break the poverty cycle experienced by many of the marginalized communities in Macedonia by giving them a safe and decent place to live.

The solution

This goal will be achieved through the use of microloans to help renovate, refurbish and repair houses in Roma communities. The microloans are tailored toward helping vulnerable and sensitive communities. It is a far more viable option to offer small loans to assist with repairing existing dwellings than to build entirely new



homes. Habitat for Humanity Macedonia works in partnership with Horizonti, a microfinance institution already established in the area. Horizonti assesses the creditworthiness of applicant families while Habitat identifies the housing need, delivers advice and monitors the building work. The work consists mostly of repairs and renovations such as fixing leaks and holes to keep out rain, snow or even rodents and other unwanted pests. There are also many renovations to create more space or privacy within houses; it is common for three generations to live together in one house. Habitat for Humanity helps tackle this type of overcrowding by adding extra rooms (extensions), or by adding partitioning walls to create more privacy and personal space.

Additional resources:

The Republic of Macedonia – PowerPoint on CD

An overview of the housing need among vulnerable communities in Macedonia – PowerPoint on CD

Key words and definitions:

Landlocked: Entirely surrounded by land.

Hellenic: Related to the language and history of ancient Greece.

Stalemate: A point in a dispute or argument where no further worthwhile action can be taken, or where there can be no winner.

Constitution: A document that outlines the basic laws of a country and the rights of its citizens. It is a document that structures the way a country is governed.

Republic: A political system in which all members are considered to be equals and the members elect a leader to represent them in political decision making.

Infrastructure: The systems in operation in a country to help it run successfully. For example, water supplies, sewage systems and public transport.

Trade embargo: Most commonly a governmental order or agreement passed to prevent a country from trading with another country.



MACEDONIA



The story of Nebija Jonuz

My name is Nebija Jonuz. My family is one of the many families in Shutka that has to deal with the harsh realities of being Roma in Skopje. Three generations of my family live in a small house along Shutka's many muddy alleyways. My husband and I are in our late 50s, and we share our humble home with our son Alvin, his wife, Alisa, and our 3-year-old grandson, Rahman.

When my husband and I got married, we looked forward to raising a family, full of hope that they would be able to provide a better life for their children than the one we have had. However, I am proud of what we have achieved. I was one of the first Roma women to attend nursing school and was excited when I started working as a nurse at

an orphanage in Skopje. My husband managed to gain the respect of the community when he became an imam at a mosque. Together we built our tiny one-room house, which we hoped to make additions to as our family grew. We had three sons, but the youngest was not like most boys: He was deaf. As if life wasn't already difficult enough—working long hours for a modest wage, making sure to provide for the needs of our three children, all the while sharing a living space that was getting more cramped as each child grew. The news of Alvin's disability shocked all of us, but we were determined to pull through as a family.

As time went by, our sons grew up, but the house never grew in size. Life became unbearable



for us. My eldest son was unable to find a job, and now with a family of his own to feed and shrinking living space, he decided that the time had come for him to move to Belgium and leave all of those he loved behind. My heart was breaking, not knowing when I would see my son and grandchildren again, but life in Shutka couldn't offer anything for them, and the house my husband and I had hoped would be a refuge for our children was now causing my family to be torn apart.

I was aware I was growing older. One winter, while the old windows in our house were shaking and rattling in their frames from the harsh wind, I noticed that my hands were shaking too. At first I thought it was from the cold, as the house did not have a proper floor but rather cold concrete, and the cracks on the walls and the drafty windows and doors were letting the cold air seep in. But the shaking did not stop even when the weather improved, and I became aware that it wasn't a simple case of being cold but something much more serious: Parkinson's disease.

The arrival of my grandson Rahman lifted my spirits. Despite the fact that my health was failing me, I now had another reason to continue to be strong and try to help my son and my daughter-in-law with the new baby. But as always, the house did not meet the needs of my family, and it caused me great concern. Rahman kept getting sick. The house was not warm enough for a baby, and with every rain the walls of the house would become damp on the inside. The day when a part of the

wall collapsed and let the rainwater into the house was the last straw. My family and I knew that something had to be done to protect the newborn, but we knew we could not do it ourselves. My husband's income was very small, Rexhep was out of a job, and Alvin's salary as a mechanic was barely enough to cover their monthly needs. We considered borrowing money to improve the house and make it a safe place to raise a child, but banks didn't want to offer us loans as we were too poor.

When Habitat for Humanity Macedonia began offering loans for improving Roma housing, my whole family thought this could be the ticket for a better childhood for Rahman. We applied for the loan and were accepted! With the small loan Habitat gave us, we managed to change the drafty doors and windows, added a room to the house, improved the walls and finally, for the first time in our lives, had a floor that was not just a slab of concrete. The lifelong dream of my husband and I of owning a safe home for our family was becoming real.

Life is still difficult for us. We still have to struggle with the problems that come from being Roma in Macedonia. Nevertheless, we finally have refuge from the problems of the outside world. Before the loan from Habitat for Humanity and its partner organization Horizonti, we lived in an overcrowded, unsafe and unhealthy environment. Now we have the safety and stability of our own home and a place that will keep our family together.

Vulnerable communities lesson plans

Community matters

Students will learn what the term “community” means and will gain an understanding of their role in a community and the importance of responsibility within a society.

Primary years program, ages 7-11

Subject focus: Social studies, art and literature/ language.

Themes: Different types of communities, how they are formed, and the individual's role and responsibilities.

Focus questions:

1. What is a community?
2. Where can communities be found? School/ cities/towns/clubs
3. What is the difference between acting as an individual and acting as a group?
4. How does it feel to be a part of a community or group compared with being alone?
5. What are the shared interests that create communities? (Location, nationality, language, interests?)
6. As a part of a group, what would be your shared responsibilities toward one another?
7. For example, what are your responsibilities to your classmates?
8. How can communities help each other or help individuals?

Vulnerability

Students will understand some of the ways in which an individual or a group can become vulnerable. They should also begin to understand what their responsibilities toward vulnerable people are and the ways in which they can help.

Middle years program, ages 12-14

Subject focus: Social studies, drama.

Themes: Different ideas of vulnerability and what causes vulnerability. The protection that some vulnerable people require, and how one person's vulnerability can be translated into an entire group's vulnerability. Some examples of vulnerable groups.

Focus questions:

1. What types of people are vulnerable? What causes vulnerability?
2. What responsibilities do both local and global communities have toward vulnerable people?
3. What types of people are not vulnerable?

Stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination

In this section, students could learn how stereotypes are formed and how they link to prejudice and discrimination. They should attempt to understand situations from different perspectives.

Middle years program, ages 11-14

Subject focus: Mathematics, media studies, social studies, art, physical education and language.

Themes: The reasons why people form stereotypes; how stereotypes cause prejudice and discrimination.

Focus questions:

1. What is a stereotype? How are they formed?
Can you think of some examples?
2. Is it right to judge another person by background, culture or appearance?
3. What problems are linked to stereotyping?
4. What events in history have been linked to stereotypes, prejudice or discrimination?
5. Do the media discriminate or create stereotypes?
6. Are there any positive types of discrimination?





Classroom activities: A guide for teachers

Community matters

7-11 years

The importance of community

Equipment: Pens or paint and paper

Ask the students to draw a picture of a community or an image that they think best represents the idea of community. Once they have done this, ask them to draw themselves in the community. Discuss the drawings, asking questions about what community means, how it



can be represented and where individuals fit into it.

Design your own community

Equipment: Pens and paper, the Internet

Ask the students to create their own fictional community or society (in groups or individually). What rights and responsibilities would each member have? Would their responsibilities differ because of age or ability? What structure would it take; would there be a hierarchy? Each group or individual could also be given a budget and asked to divide the budget into sections, for example: health care, education, foreign aid, defense and pensions. The students could represent their budgets in the form of percentages and pie charts. They may have to research other countries' budgets and political systems in order to create their own utopia.

Comparative exercise: Groups vs. individuals

Equipment: A collection of materials to make a sculpture with, boxes, paper, scissors, etc.

Divide the class into several different-sized groups: one large group of 10, some smaller groups of five or three, and an individual without a group. Ask the groups (and the individual) to create a house out of the materials in front of them. You could make it into a competition by giving them all a time limit and asking them to create the best possible house. When the students have finished or the time has run out, judge each group's house based on sturdiness, creativity and speed. When the winners have been announced, get the students to review the

activity and compare their experiences. How did it feel to work in a very large group; was it hard to agree on decisions? How did it feel to do the task alone; did you miss sharing ideas? Is it easier to work in groups or easier to work alone? Were there any conflicts or disagreements? How were they resolved? How does this translate to our life in society or in a community? Are some activities always easier in a group?

Vulnerability

9-14 years

Comprehension and discussion

Equipment: A copy of Nebija Jonuz's story

Ask the students to read through the story and answer the following questions: What were the most challenging aspects of Jonuz's family home? Can you list three important improvements that the family was able to make as a result of the loan? How did the improvements to the house affect the family? What are some of the challenges that you think face the Roma community in Macedonia? What characteristics of this family made it even more important that they received help?

After the students have answered the questions, you could discuss the importance of helping vulnerable communities gain adequate housing, and how decent housing in particular is a good way to break a family's poverty cycle.

Nationality and culture

Equipment: Digital camera

Ask the students to work out what their nationality is. How can you determine what nationality you are? Is it based on your parents, where you were born, where you grew up or spent most of your time, or is it what your passport says? Divide the students into small groups, and get them to create a digital cartoon that depicts their ideas of nationality and culture or their own experience of nationality. They can do this by taking photographs of freeze frame positions and then adding text and speech bubbles on the computer.

Learning about cultural differences

Equipment: A ball (football or basketball)

Ask the students to stand in a circle and throw the ball randomly around the circle. Every time one of the students throws the ball, he or she



has to say something different about himself or herself. This game could also be played in reverse by asking the students to say something similar about themselves. This should help them to understand that everyone is slightly different, but it could also show that within a community there are certain similarities that hold people together.

Prejudice and discrimination

11-14 years

Stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination

Equipment: Pen and paper

Ask the students to write and act out a short play about vulnerability, prejudice and discrimination. Get them to show how these ideas can link together and how they make people feel. They could also depict some possible consequences of such actions, such as unemployment, poverty or loss of rights.

The media

Equipment: Video camera or digital camera and computer. Alternatively, you could use a voice recorder. May also require the Internet, access to newspapers or television.

After reviewing all of the information in the Macedonia case study, divide the students into teams of about four people. Ask them to imagine that they are foreign correspondents living in Macedonia. They have been asked to go and visit the Roma communities outside Skopje and create

a special report on living conditions of the groups and how they are being helped. They must report back either in newspaper or magazine format, radio report or discussion, or a television news story. Each person in the group can be assigned a title: researcher, journalist/reporter, camera person or editor. To complete the activity, the students could research their chosen media and see how news stories are depicted across different channels or papers. What biases can be found in the media, and how can these be avoided?

Learning about raising awareness and helping other communities

Equipment: The Internet and other research facilities

Ask the students to organize a fundraising event like Live 8, but to help raise funds and awareness for the Roma community in Macedonia/Europe. Which bands would they invite to perform? Which speakers should be present? Where should it be held? The students should write the introductory speech for the event and could write a protest song to be performed. They could also design a logo for the stage and decide whether they should sell merchandise and what kind of merchandise would be appropriate. Would they need to have advertising and promotional videos, websites or posters? What would the budget look like, and how many volunteers would they need? What are the most important issues in Roma communities that would need to be highlighted?



Fundraising ideas

Here is a list of fundraising ideas that your school could use to help Habitat for Humanity Macedonia.



Bake sale

Many different types of cakes can be found in Macedonia. Why not hold a themed bake sale? You could research traditional Macedonian cake recipes and test out your cooking skills! This would be a good way of raising awareness of the program in Macedonia by getting people interested in the cultural cuisine. Below are two examples of websites where recipes could be found:

www.vmacedonia.com/cuisine/deserts.asp
macedonianfood.blogspot.com/

Host a debate

You could host a school debate about human rights or poverty housing. Raise interest by advertising the event using posters and leaflets. Charge guests a small fee to come and watch or participate in the debate. You could also invite local government representatives or maybe even people from a local nongovernmental organization to speak. You could also have a voluntary collection at the end for people who support the debate and Habitat for Humanity's work.

Film night

Have a selection of small film nights. Choose a film that is of interest to your school or community or perhaps one about poverty and human rights, and ask people to donate money on the way in. Or you could have a free film night and sell sweets at the beginning or halfway through.

Photography competition

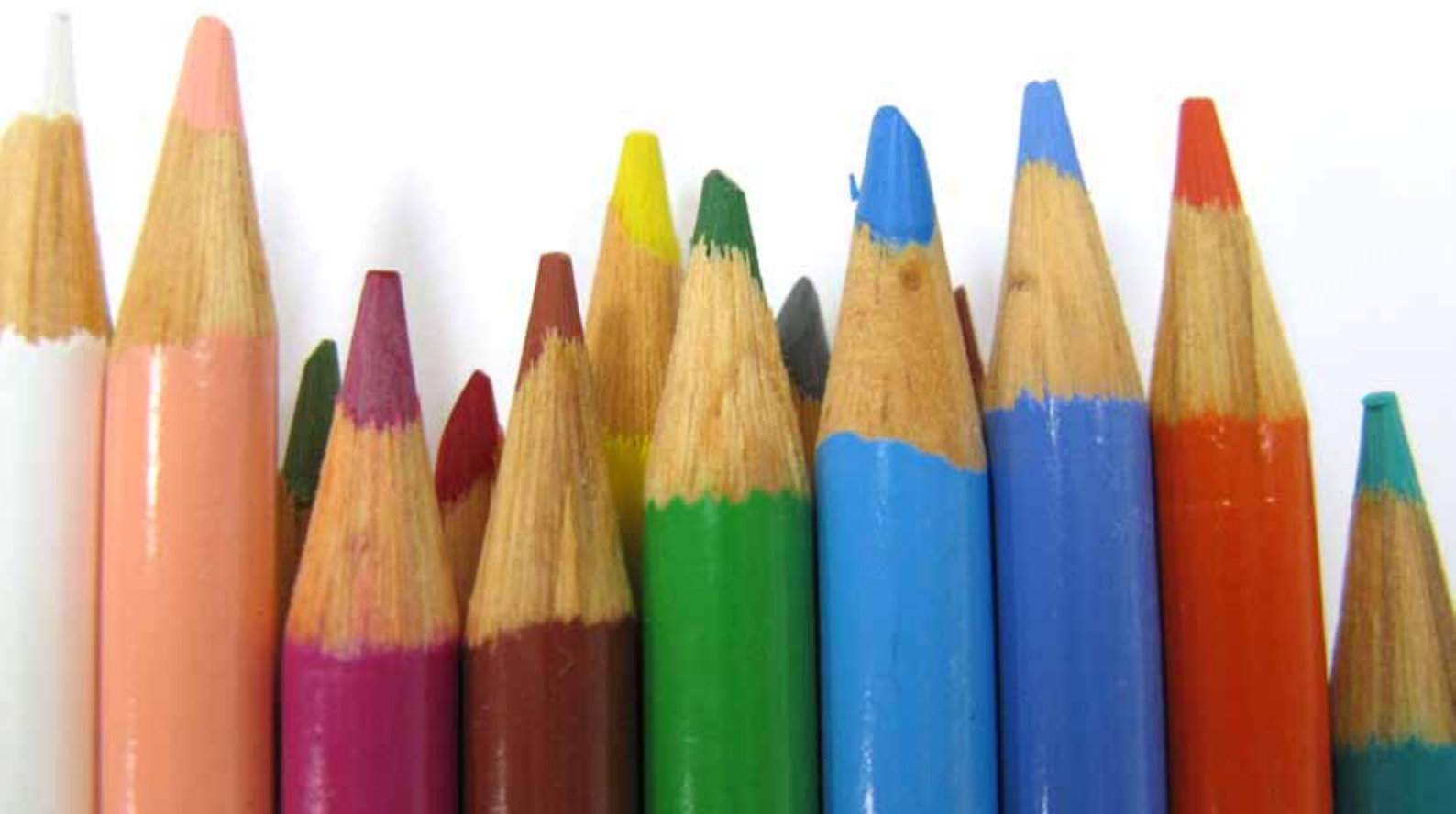
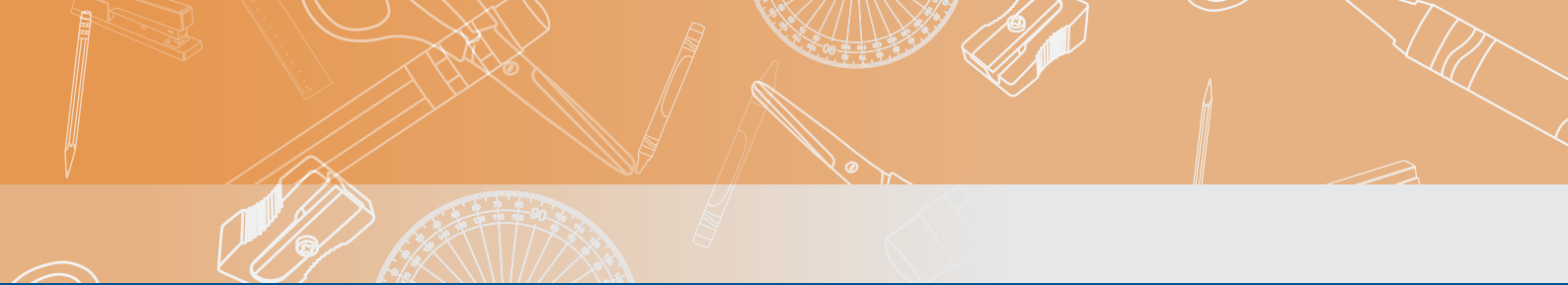
Organize a photography competition by asking people to pay for a sheet of information about the competition. The sheet could include a list of clues and questions that each photographer or group needs to answer using their camera. Set a time limit, perhaps a few hours, and get the photographers to return after they have finished answering the questions or when they have run out of time. All of the photographs are judged, and the team with the best selection of answers (images) wins a prize. You could then display all of the photographs in your school. The questions could be problems that need to be solved, and the answer can be easily shown in a photograph. Or clues to places and objects around the school or area, almost like a treasure hunt with images!

Fundraising party

If you have a good venue and plenty of willing volunteers, why not host a whole Habitat for Humanity fundraising party? You could incorporate all of the above ideas and add some more fun games and activities to really make it an unforgettable event. You could sell tickets to the party and create advertising material to help promote the event. It is always a good idea to have refreshments at any party; you could use the Macedonian cake recipes above or just sell cakes, chocolate, sweets and soft drinks. During the party, you could have a series of activities and speakers to help promote the ideas behind Habitat for Humanity Macedonia. For example, if you have a voice recorder, you could create a soundscape of all the guests' opinions of poverty housing. You could put paper up against one wall and get all of the guests to draw what they think Macedonia is like or their ideas of poverty housing.

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