

# Teaching about distant localities

## CPD activity 2: Why teach about localities in the South?

It is important for teachers to be convinced of the merit of what they are teaching. There are three activities to enhance teachers' appreciation of the value of locality studies in general and of studying a locality in the South in particular.

### 1. Brainstorming localities in the South

#### Aims:

To consider the advantages and rationale of studying a locality in the South.

To find out where teachers are starting from, so that the course can be built around their experiences.

#### What to do:

Ask teachers to brainstorm 'why teach about localities in the South?'. Write down everything they say on a flipchart without commenting - discussion should take place when the list is complete.

Some of the reasons raised by previous courses have been:

- it breaks down some of the stereotypical ideas children have about distant places;
- children are usually very interested and curious about other places;
- it's fun!;
- it can improve the self-esteem of children from different ethnic groups, even if the study focuses on a distant locality which is not their own;
- it provides an opportunity to explore and develop values and attitudes such as tolerance and sensitivity;
- children already have an awareness based on what they have seen on the TV or from holidays abroad. We can build on this.

#### Discussion points:

This session can be rounded off with a discussion about which points teachers feel are most important. What difficulties might they encounter as they try to take advantage of some of these benefits (for example, in making cross-curricular links)? Trainers may also find it helpful to highlight the issues that their course will be addressing specifically. Participants can return to the brainstorm at the end of the course to see if their views have changed, or to consider how their rationale for teaching about localities in the South has been enhanced by the work they have done.

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## 2. Learning from locality studies

### **Aims:**

To consider the wide range of issues which can be explored within locality studies.

To help teachers to prioritise these issues.

### **What to do:**

You will need three blank cards for each participant.

Ask teachers individually to consider three things they would like their pupils to gain from the study of a locality, be it their own or a more distant one. They should write each idea on a separate card. Then divide participants into three groups and ask each group to prioritise a set of group aims. Finally, these priorities can be shared and discussed with the other two groups. Participants on Oxfam courses have suggested: appropriate factual knowledge, a sense of the world's richness and diversity, an ability to question, respect for other cultures, a sense of responsibility.

## 3. What are our concerns?

### **Aim:**

To discover what concerns teachers may have in teaching about localities in the South.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the session in dealing with teachers' concerns.

### **What to do:**

You will need a flip chart and pen.

Ask teachers to brainstorm all the problems or difficulties they think might arise from teaching about localities in the South. Write these on a flip chart and display around the room for the duration of the course.

Participants on Oxfam courses have suggested: teaching about places they have never been to and have little previous knowledge of; giving pupils a distorted image of a locality in the South; dealing with 'controversial' issues such as poverty, colonialism or development; finding appropriate resources; dealing with institutional constraints, e.g. time.

### **Discussion points:**

Allow time at the end of the course to check how many of the issues have been dealt with.

Suggest ways in which unresolved issues might be addressed - for example, through working in groups, networking, or providing specific materials to individuals.