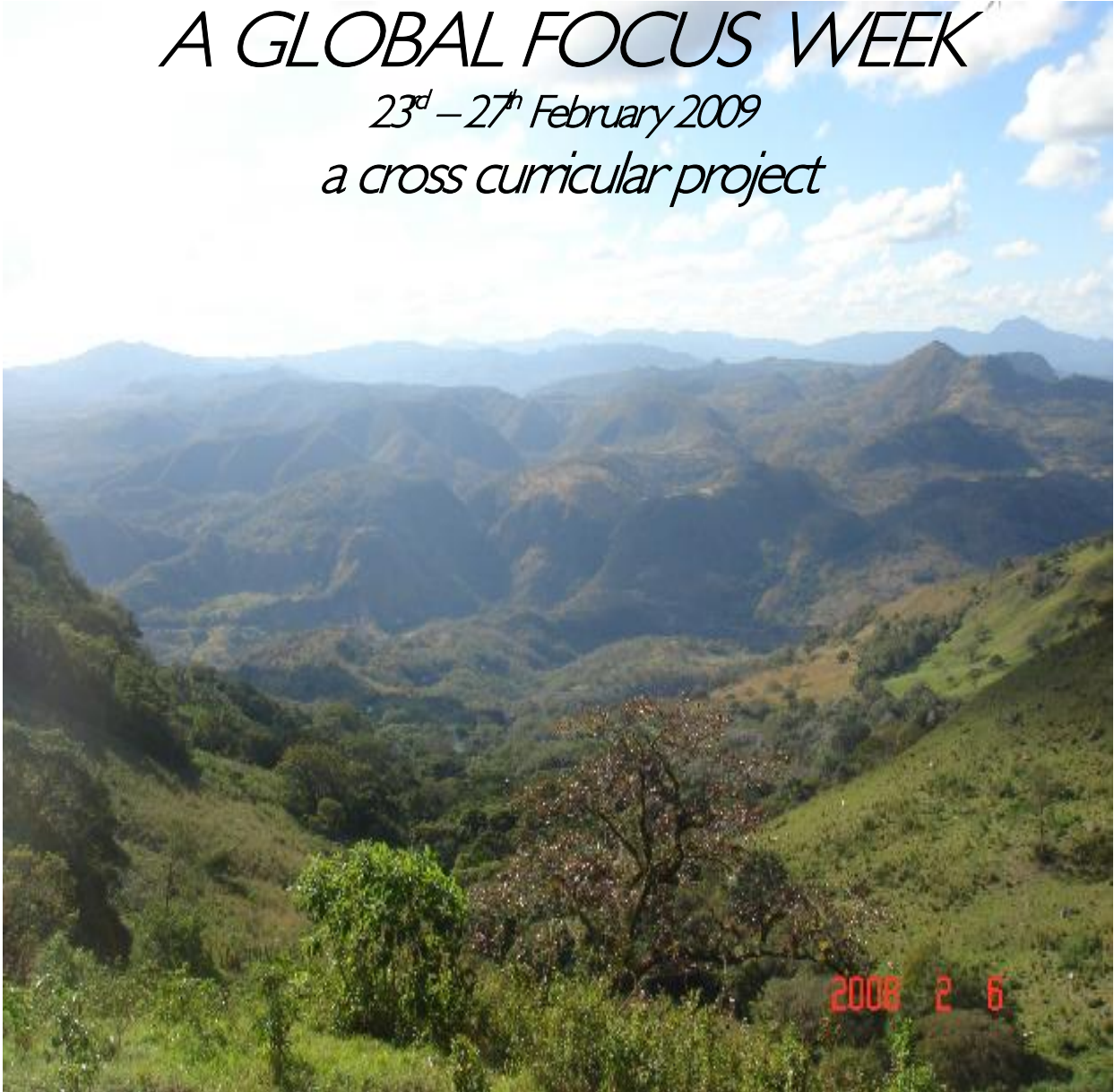


*Dunhurst School*

*A GLOBAL FOCUS WEEK*

*23<sup>rd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> February 2009*

*a cross curricular project*



Nicaragua and the  
Miraflor community

# CROSS CURRICULAR PROJECTS

## Introduction

Through a collective focus generated in our cross-curricular projects at Dunhurst School, we can encourage initiative and creativity in exploring interests beyond the school. This flexibility supports an environment where questioning and divergent thinking are encouraged and further develops a shared skills base through a range of activities. We are keen to release a sense of learning that can thrill and invigorate.

Penny Watkins



## The Background to Dunhurst school and Miraflor By Louise Banks

'A year ago, a talk given by Martina Gruppo to pupils initiated a link between Nicaraguan coffee farmers and Dunhurst School. The children heard how Martina -who spent a year working as a voluntary English teacher in a protected nature reserve called Miraflor in the northern Nicaraguan mountains- has returned to set up her own business; the Coffee Fairy Ltd.'

The aim of the Coffee Fairy Ltd is to show what's 'on the other side of the cup'. By working with local communities, growing shade growing organic coffee, a number of initiatives have raised an awareness of the plight of many third world producers.

The children at Dunhurst School were shown slides of the basic living conditions in Miraflor: mud floored shacks with no electricity, cold 'showers' fashioned from buckets filled with rainwater, classrooms with iron bars at the windows, smoky fires upon which a staple meal of kidney beans simmers in caldrons; breakfast, dinner and supper in most households. Transport is sporadic and dogged by mud slides, fallen trees and swollen rivers; all negotiable in an old yellow US bus.

By working with local producers and workers in Miraflor, living standards have improved and much needed support given to the education of the children. Through the sale of coffee, in June this year, sixteen people from Miraflor will go on a six month computer class in association with Familias Unidas. The aim is for further educational bursaries to be established to enable children from Miraflor to go to Secondary school and to have the opportunity to attend University.

Dunhurst's links with Martina and the coffee trade promotes the idea that change may not only be made by giving to charity, but by benefiting a community through trading fairly. This ensures a sustainable income for the coffee farmers and the community and acknowledges and values their part in the process.



## Our links so far Dunhurst Fair trade committee

Working closely with Martina Gruppo we are able to make direct links with the Miraflor community. With Martina as our liaison, we can be sure that activities at Dunhurst School are relevant and beneficial to Miraflor and that funds are spent wisely.

Current fund raising initiatives led by the Dunhurst Fair Trade committee have met with a fabulous response; shared in this most recent email (7<sup>th</sup> Feb 09) from Martina who is currently in Nicaragua:

*“ The best afternoon ever was when we went to paint the children’s desks, the children of Dunhurst school in the UK should be so proud of themselves for raising the money to buy these. They are fantastic. There was also enough money to buy a bookshelf for the kindergarten class and we also managed to paint the infants tiny desks and their teachers table too. I had asked what sort of colour they wanted, people said brown but in the end I went with the brightest green I could find, I wanted to brighten up the classroom and make it look cheerful. I asked for volunteers and four kids turned up and we set to work pulling the desks out onto the mountain side in the fierce winds and bright sunshine. It was brilliant, we were covered in paint and no*

*one cared, there was a major community meeting at the school at the same time and before it started some of the adults joined in and helped.”*



*'Discussions' about making the new desks bought by Dunhurst for Escuela Vicente Talavera in Sontule.*

A previous trip by Martina also met with an effusive response:

*“ ...I spoke to Marlon in Nicaragua on Friday and he said they will definitely have the desks by the end of the year as they are sorting out the money now. When I mentioned that Dunhurst School planned on raising money for the loos in the school, he was bowled over. He whistled down the phone and was absolutely over the moon! I said that it would take time but I asked him for a breakdown of each part so that we knew what we were aiming for. I wish you could have heard him, he was genuinely moved.”*

*Current fund raising initiatives aim to replace these old loos in Escuela Vicente Talavera in Sontule.*



At Dunhurst School the pupil led Fair Trade committee have raised funds by selling coffee at school functions and have established links with the children in Miraflores by writing letters to them in Spanish.



The Head of Escuela Vicente Talavera in Sontule reading out the letters written in Spanish from Dunhurst pupils.

Reading a letter from a pupil at Dunhurst School.



## Why have a Global Focus week?

A word about the four key concepts from Carol Innes – Head of Curriculum.

The aims of the Bedales Schools described in 'The Bedales Difference' promotes the value of engaging with other communities in partnership, in developing an international awareness and raising the children's' awareness of others needs. Citizenship, as part of the curriculum, looks at a way of behaving, thinking and learning which supports personal and community development and life long learning.

Through a global dimension to citizenship schemes of work, children should develop an appreciation of political, social and cultural diversity and have skills to challenge racism and prejudice. They will have an opportunity to acquire and develop an interest in topical, global issues and can become willing to take actions on areas of concern. The interconnectedness between local and global, between oneself and others is a common strand in citizenship curricular requirements and provides a basis for better intercultural understanding.

Learning opportunities may be offered in a range of contexts to enable the development of informed 'citizens' with skills of enquiry, communication, participation and research. In focussing on the Miraflor community we can plan around four key concepts: diversity, sustainable development, social justice and interdependence.

**Diversity.** Pupils will have opportunity to find out about the similarities and differences between their lives and the lives of children and their families in Miraflor.

**Sustainable development.** Pupils at Dunhurst will be able to explore the challenges that face the Miraflor community, in trying to sustain and improve their quality of life, without damaging the land for future generations.

**Social justice.** Basic needs are universal but not everyone has access to the same rights. We will explore and gain an understanding of any inequalities that exist within the Miraflor society and compare them with our own society.

**Interdependence.** Pupils will discover the links between Dunhurst School and the Miraflor community. Pupils at Dunhurst will look at the coffee industry; the costs involved compared with what the producers receive. We may explore other connections such as tourism, sport, and trade.

## Programme for Nicaraguan week.

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> – Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

There will be opportunity to explore Nicaragua through assemblies, timetabled lessons, a Creative Arts day, Fair trade links, themed tutor time discussions, an interactive display and a special Jaw at the end of the week. Ideas and activities are being developed as this goes to print, but below is an outline of the work in progress.

### *Monday - Assembly*

**Assembly** – Martina returns from Miraflor with a video made by the children to show to Dunhurst pupils. Louise and Carol will give a presentation and introduction to the week.

**Group 1** - will spend Monday afternoon on their creative projects.

### *Tuesday – Music Ensemble*

**Samba percussion group** – pupils will work with John in creating music inspired by Nicaraguan festivals.

**Djembe group** – pupils will work with Kris to perform music inspired Central American traditions.

### *Wednesday – Tutor time*

Points for discussion to inspire debate during tutor time.

### *Thursday- ‘Creative Arts day’*

**Assembly**- Martin will give a presentation on the Nicaraguan Gigantona Festival.

**Groups 2 and 3**- pupils will work on a number of creative activities: Nicaraguan landscapes and head dresses using the Quetzal bird as inspiration. Pupils will also have an opportunity to explore the food and diet typical of the region.

**Blocks’** pupils will have opportunity to make historical character masks, to make giant hands and head dresses inspired by symbolism from the festival.

The creative projects will provide props for Simon's play in the summer. Simon will work with pupils to create and perform a Short History of Nicaragua from Pre- Columbian Times to the present day. Rosie will work on a dance project with Block I and Kath and Martina will work with some pupils on an IT project based on the coffee industry.

*Friday – A presentation on Nicaragua week for the whole school and parents. 3.15- 4.15 pm in the well.*

**Jaw** – an opportunity for the whole school to share their experiences and knowledge gained during the week with pupils, staff and parents.

**Film 4.30pm-** DVD 'Planet Carlos', hot off the International Film Festival circuit has been sent to Dunhurst by the director Andreas Kannengiesser before its general release! The film which is set in Nicaragua is about a 13 yr old boy who earns his living in a dance group but dreams of forming his own Higantona troupe.



### *Pastoral focus – Borders*

Boarders have been busy making a video offering insight into their life at Dunhurst School which Martina will take back to the pupils at Escuela Vincente Talavera in Sontule and Escuela El Jilguero in the coffee community.

Support will be given from language pupils at Bedales to provide Spanish subtitles.

### Curriculum focus-

**Outdoor work-** *the aim is to explore and recreate the growing techniques employed by the Mirafior community in producing comparable crops and food staples in the creation of a Mirafior garden.' Five thousand seeds have already been funded for the Escuela El Jilguero to create a garden.*

**Music –** *pupils will have an opportunity in the samba percussion group and Djembe group to create a piece inspired by Festivals common to Central America.*

**History –** *work has already started in exploring the history and religious influences of Nicaragua through I.T, weblinks and powerpoint. The aim is to create a board in the corridor that reflects modern Nicaragua; its flag, people and passions.*

**Modern Languages –** *pupils at Bedales will work on Spanish sub-titles for the video 'A Day in the Life of a Dunhurst Pupil'. In Spanish pupils will translate letters received from the children from the school in Sontule. In both French and Spanish lessons the children will describe 'A Day in the Life of a Nicaraguan Child'.*

**Science -** *Block Two as part of their chemistry programme will be watching and discussing part of a compelling documentary about the true cost of cocaine which will feature:*

- *The environmental costs of growing the crop*
- *The crude and dangerous extraction methods on site*
- *The economic exploitation of indigenous people and*
- *The destruction of their sustainable lifestyles*

**Drama –** *Block one will create and perform a Short History of Nicaragua from Pre- Columbian Times to the present day.*

**Art - Mask Making –** *Block 2 pupils will be making character masks for Simon's short history play about Nicaragua. They will be looking at traditional Nicaraguan Festival masks for inspiration. Pupils in Group 2 will make **piñatas** during the week.*

**P.E.** – Plans are afoot to have a sponsored walk of five kilometres; recreating the average distance children walk to school in the Mirafior community each day. The aim is to raise money for the new toilets and seeds for the two schools in the Mirafior community.

**Groups** – Pupils will draw comparisons between the needs of our community and the Mirafior community. They will explore different ways of communicating directly with the children in the two schools we are working with.

### **Fundraising-**

There will be a number of fund raising initiatives taking place during the week to raise money for new toilets and for seeds to create a garden at the school in Mirafior. Events will include 'Put on a Pound' fair-trade chocolate sale. Run by the Fairtrade committee; there will be a Latin American theme to the stall. The traditional chocolate and chilli combination may be an option along with the regular Divine bars!

Pay a £1 extra on the cost of your snack and the profit will go to the Mirafior school fund.

### **Thank you**

To Penny, James and all the staff in support of the Global focus week. Many thanks also to Diana Ensor, Fiona Binney, Diana Priestly, Mary Boxall-Mazas, and Sandra Stanton-Alayon for all their help.