

# Images of Tanzania - A Photo Pack for Primary School Teachers

**Produced for Cumbria Development Education Centre and Cumbria Healthy Schools by Clare Greenwood**

Reviewed by Lizzie Downes

Clare Greenwood's *Images of Tanzania* is a resource pack consisting of a booklet and a CD-ROM of 47 digital images, 22 of which are included also as A4 photographs. The photographs are drawn from summers she spent teaching in Tanzania with a Catholic religious order. The publication is well-meaning but flawed, and its usefulness is limited.

The quality of the photographs at the centre of the resource varies from poor to average: some of the prints are clearly pixelated; others are out of focus or simply bad quality or dull reproductions. One image includes the photographer's finger smudging a corner. In my view several are not of sufficient quality to merit classroom use.

Unfortunately many of the poorer quality images are the more interesting ones. In some cases, the accompanying notes, which are on the whole very informative, paint a much more fascinating picture than what the actual image shows, e.g. the construction of a wattle and daub house. The pack's cover image is ambiguous: it is unclear what the child is holding, or what the context of the image (which appears to have been cropped) is, and there is no caption to clarify. The prevalence of high-angle shots of children, the lack of close-ups overall, and the absence of people's names in the captions suggest to me unequal power relationships between photographer and subjects.

As the booklet lacks an introduction, the objectives of the resource are not immediately obvious. There is patchy background information on Tanzania, alongside more concrete suggestions for teaching approaches. The section 'Using the photographs' gives appropriate ideas for different levels, and pinpoints exact UK curriculum units where the different photo-related themes might be relevant. Parallel niches could be found in the Republic of Ireland's Primary Curriculum.

Although development education is not specifically mentioned, 'global issues', human rights and citizenship curricular opportunities are. With a critical photo-literate focus, a few of the images and ideas could facilitate a development education approach to the subject areas signposted, e.g. Geography, PHSE, Science, and circle time for younger learners.

Suggestions for teachers of early learners are largely helpful: "guide the

children to look for the unfamiliar”, “explain alternative ways of doing things” (for example, “some Tanzanian houses have nets rather than windows to keep out the insects”) and so on. However, setting up young children to “write a list of statements about life in Africa” - which can then be challenged by the teacher “using evidence in the photos” is, in my view, an approach destined to reinforce the very stereotypes it claims to challenge.

The design is somewhat inconsistent, and there is scant bibliographic or reference information in the resource, beyond a footnote crediting the photographs to the Greenwood family. There are no page numbers. Neither is there a publication date, and the comparative data on life expectancy and infant mortality, which credits the World Bank website, has no access date. Such omissions could reinforce unconscious notions that we are looking at images of a ‘static’ place, untouched by time and development.

The map of Africa showing only country names and borders is of limited use. A map of Tanzania showing bordering countries does not indicate the featured towns and villages, and is too small to be pedagogically useful. The apparently random inclusion of diagrams of “a ventilated improved pit latrine” and “water filter assembly” is both intriguing and puzzling.

The image categorisation into ‘homes’, ‘daily life’, ‘water’, ‘education’, is teacher-and curriculum-friendly, but like many packs of this kind, the emphasis on rural living with minimal reference to city life is misleading. I wonder how a child of Tanzanian origin would respond to these images.

The truest and surely most interesting images of Tanzania might have been captured had the camera been put in the hands of some of the children in the photos: a real Southern ‘perspective’.

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