

YOUR MANGO, MY MANGO, OUR MANGO

STORYCRAFTING ACROSS CULTURES

EXPERIENCES IN STORYCRAFTING IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND GLOBAL EDUCATION



Your Mango, My Mango, Our Mango. The starting point of this *Storycrafting Across Cultures* publication is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, with special emphasis on the articles concerning the liberty of self-expression of children and youth of the world as well as their right to be heard.

One way of allowing their thoughts and views to be known is storycrafting, a method developed in Finland to enhance participation and democratic communication between children and adults.

The system has been used extensively among children with multiple ethnic backgrounds. This book contains stories in English, some of which are translated from Bengali and Finnish. Instructions for storycrafting are presented in several languages at the end of the book.

This book presents storycrafting as it has been used in Bangladesh, Zambia and Finland.

The aim is to provide different perspectives for those working in development cooperation and education as to how to use storycrafting in their own working environment.



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STORYCRAFTING ACROSS CULTURES

Experiences in storycrafting in development cooperation and global education

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"CHILDREN ARE TELLING" (LAPSET KERTO VAT)

The "Children Are Telling" research and development projects
focus primarily on the experiences of children and young people,
but also on the experiences of adults, too.
The research distances itself from the traditional orientation.
While the traditional approach makes children and young people
the object of the research, this perspective highlights their
thoughts, their own culture including their games, discussions/
conversations and stories and also their specific ways of
producing knowledge.

Moreover, the development of work practices, analytical tools
for research and educational systems to active participants is
part of the projects.

In the core of this perspective is the participation of children
and young people, but also that of adults and elderly people,
in the family circle, social service institutions, and international
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WE TAKE CHILDREN'S VIEWS INTO ACCOUNT

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

WE PROVIDE THE CHILD A CHANCE TO BE HEARD

2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child
Article 12

STORYCRAFTING AND MEETING FRIENDS

This book is designed for every professional, educator and teacher working in development projects as well as for global education.

We hope that this book will encourage everyone working for the rights of children to use the storycrafting method.

Storycrafting has the same basic principle as the 13th article of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: the right to freedom of expression without adult interference.

First we will take a look at the storycrafting method, its history and use. Basic instructions are presented at the end of the book in several languages. This will enable as many people as possible to make use of the book in development cooperation.

The use of storycrafting has been recommended in crisis management. The tsunami of December 2004 caused a humanitarian crisis in Asia. The Finnish National Board of Education advised and instructed schools to discuss the natural disaster in schools. Storycrafting was brought forward as one potential tool.

Aila Keturi, a teacher from the Uomarinne School in Vantaa, Finland, will discuss her own experiences on using storycrafting with her own pupils as a means of discussing the disaster. In addition, several staff members from various schools and institutions will share their experiences in storycrafting.

Storycrafting has been tested and developed in Finland ever since the 1980s. It has been the subject of numerous publications and it has been found useful in several countries in addition to Finland.

One multicultural experiment took place in Kotka, Finland. It was called Storybridge and it involved children from Finland, Beirut and Palestine exchanging stories.



STORYCRAFTING IS ALL ABOUT PARTNERSHIP

Excited about the potential of storycrafting as a participative tool in development cooperation and global education, we at Operation a Day's Work Finland, ODW, decided to experiment with storycrafting in cooperation with our partners from our global education project, which took place in 2003 and 2004.

Since ODW works actively in Finnish schools where a multicultural environment is an everyday phenomenon, our goal is to publish, in addition to experiences from children from developing countries, any stories and thoughts about storytelling told by young children with immigrant backgrounds.

This is how an intriguing journey to traditional storytelling, imagination and partnership was born. This book also contains stories from Bangladesh, Zambia and Finland.

EXPERIENCES FROM BANGLADESH AND ZAMBIA

In Bangladesh the stories have been gathered in close cooperation with the development project as well as with Uttaron Samaj Kallyan Samity (USKS), a partner in the global education project.

USKS supports returning child labourers to school and the advancement of financial support to low-income families in the Jhenidah area in southwest Bangladesh.

The stories are told by children of different ages who have been forced into hard labour. Today every child who participated in our storycrafting project in 2003 is attending school.

The stories from Zambia are told by teenagers from Zambia and Finland. The stories were created in cooperation with the organization CINDI (Children in Distress), located in the city of Kitwe.

CINDI-Kitwe supports orphans in their communities in Kitwe, which is the third-largest city in the country with tens of thousands of orphans.

The pupils of Kallavesi High School in Kuopio, Finland, visited the children in Kitwe in the autumn of 2004. As a result, this book contains several stories created during that time.

We thank our southern partners USKS and CINDI-Kitwe as well as the Finnish teachers and volunteers for their creative, professional and warm cooperation.

We would also like to express our gratitude and admiration especially to all the children with whom we are able to enjoy making things together and dive into a limitless source of imagination, liberty and creativity.

*Liisa Karlsson
Tiina-Maria Levamo
Salla Siukonen*

* Previous publications by ODW concerning the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are the Bengalia role-play and the ODW calendar for the school year 2004-2005.

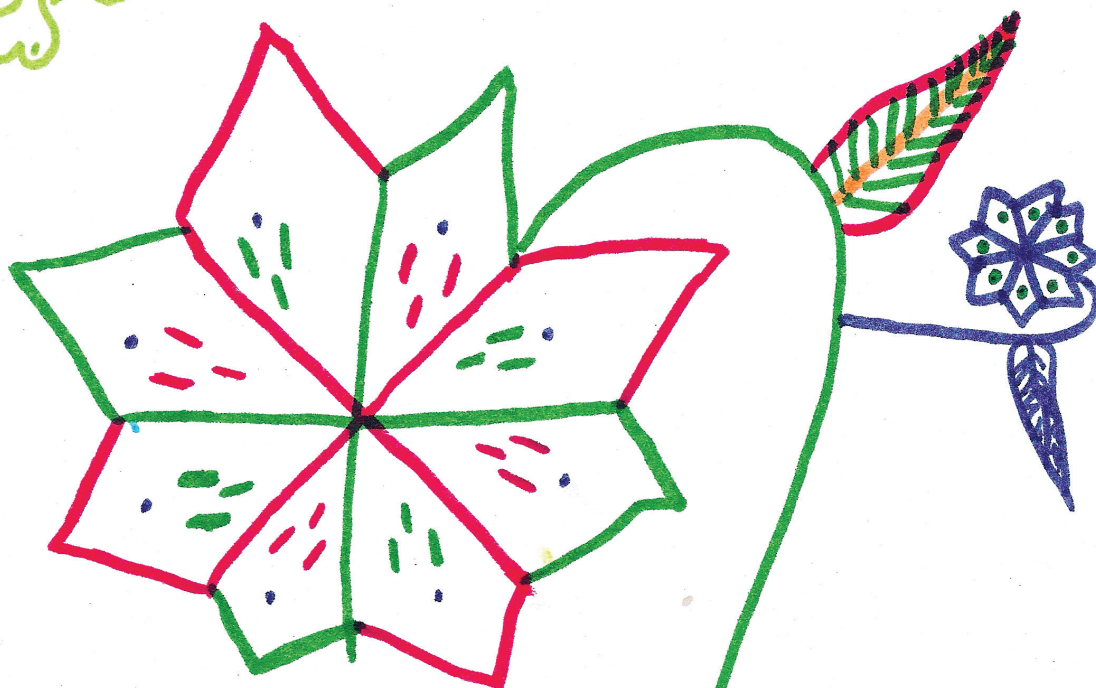
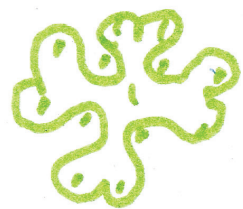
MANGOS IN MINIATURE

This book is intended for everyone working with children and youth in the fields of:

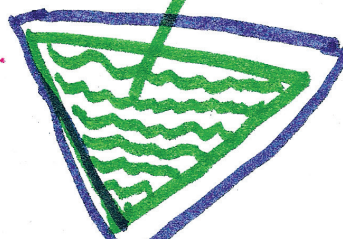
- Development cooperation
- Global education
- Youth work
- Education
- Crisis management
- Counselling



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STORYCRAFTING PROMOTES THE RIGHTS AND SELF-EXPRESSION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

by Liisa Karlsson

A TALE OF TWO FROGS

Once upon a time there were two frogs. One lived in the south and the other one in Africa.

There was this mountain between them. They both wanted to see what life was like for the other one. And then they were up there both of those frogs and they both looked at each other's lives and when they were looking they saw how similar their worlds were. Then they both thought that this was for nothing since both lands were exactly the same.

And there was grass on that mountain. They were drowning in that grass. And there were these crickets that played violin. Two crickets gave the frogs a violin each. Then the frogs started imitating those other crickets. Then it was time for those frogs to return to their own lives. And those crickets said goodbye to them. Both of those crickets that had allowed them to play gave the violins to them to keep since they had been playing them earlier. Then they both went back to mom and dad and they both had supper and went to bed. The end.

Storyteller: Sanna, 8 years. Kotka, Finland

Storycrafted by: Liisa, 9 November 2000

CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO HAVE AND EXPRESS AN OPINION

Children and youth have the right to have their own opinions and to make their voices heard in matters concerning them. This is guaranteed by the Finnish constitution and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been signed by every nation with the exception of the United States and Somalia.

It is important for everyone, children included, to be able to express their own thoughts and to be able to affect their own immediate environment here and now.

When people have not had the right to express their thoughts, they are not used to expressing them. They often feel that they are incapable of saying anything interesting, and even if they had the chance to express their views, they could not think of anything worth telling.

Children have traditionally been told what to do or which thoughts to adopt in life. Plans for instruction and activities are the framework for all the things that are meant to be taken into account.

School children do whatever assignments are given to them. There is very little room for their own ideas and feelings. Adults often want to listen, but lack the time and necessary resources.

TAKING PART ALWAYS REQUIRES LISTENING

There are many ways to listen to another person. Often we simply hear, but do not actively stop in order to listen. It is easier to remember those parts in the story told by another person that we find interesting and that support our own presuppositions.

It is also possible to listen by putting yourself in the other person's position. Then you no longer hear what you want to hear, but instead what the other person wants to tell. It is as if you are able to tune your ears to a whole new frequency: so that's how you think, so that's why you think this is important. Active listening and putting yourself in the position of another person requires adjustment.

HOW TO GET TO KNOW A CHILD OR YOUTH

There are at least three ways to do this: by asking an adult, by interviewing children or by allowing them to have their own say.

1. An adult, an expert or a parent tells or writes about children's affairs

Getting information from other adults is our most common way of gathering information. This brings out important issues but the child often remains unheard.

2. Interviewing children

During an interview, it is the one posing the questions who determines the subject at hand. The respondent only has the option of answering questions. The person conducting the interview may also fail to include a subject particularly important for the child.

Children also consider how the adults expect them to answer. In this case, wondering about the actual content easily becomes secondary to them. It has also often been noted that an interview is an unnatural situation for a child when it comes to expressing thoughts. Children may feel interrogated and therefore keep their answers short.

3. Children discuss their selected topics in their own way

This is the method least practiced by adults. The challenge is to make children tell and express themselves or to find the potential moments for doing so.

Children and adults often think and act in different ways, and it is an arduous task for an adult to understand what the child is trying to say. Children communicate in ways that require concentration in order to hear the message. Storycrafting is a simple way of getting used to expressing thoughts to others. It forces you to stop and listen.

FROM WORDS TO ACTIONS BY STORYCRAFTING

When school psychologist Monika Riihelä, PhD in Political Science, was making a television programme in the 1980s she noticed that not a single school employee remembered the actual words that children had used in describing their problems. They could only remember their own interpretations.

This observation eventually led to the invention of storycrafting. It was discovered that children were willing to tell and adults were willing to listen under proper circumstances.

Storycrafting has been experimented with and studied in Finland for 20 years (Karlssohn 2005, 2000, 1999). The method is easy to understand everywhere and it forces you to stop and focus on the essential. For this reason it has spread to other Nordic countries and later to all other continents as well.

In 1999, the method was selected from hundreds of projects as a promoter of children's mental health in the EU.

In 2004, storycrafting and the Storybridge-project model received the second prize from the global education network of the Service Centre for Development Cooperation in Finland (KEPA).

YOU CAN STORYCRAFT ANYONE, ANYWHERE

New stories can be created by anyone, anywhere and anytime. The most important thing is that an adult or whoever is doing the storycrafting has genuine interest in hearing what the one telling the story has to say, and that this interest is also communicated through facial expressions.

Storytelling becomes a shared "thing" between the storycrafter and the one telling the story. It is born "between them" as one wants to listen and the other to tell something. It has been noted that the method allows people to spend time together without hurry. Storycrafting can have two parties: one tells a story and the other writes it down. It is also fun to take turns. One person may storycraft a larger group, or everyone notes down a sentence from the next person in order to make a shared story. Sometimes it is enjoyable to listen to another person's story while waiting for your own turn.

The stories may also be transformed into traditional plays, radio plays or into a shared storybook in which older people storycraft younger ones. If the stories are compiled to create an exhibit in the public library with a proper ceremony, the ones who have told the

story will come to realize the importance of their story in the minds of other people.

Storycrafting has been used successfully with people of all ages, from toddlers to the elderly. Adults have also storycrafted each other. For example, they have listened to memories of their relatives or observations in the work of a colleague. Storytelling is also a good method when going through a crisis.

Storycrafting creates a sense of togetherness. Many storycrafters describe the situation as very unique: when you stop and look into others person's thoughts and story, you create a connection that you have never felt before. The greatest things about storycrafting have usually been having a good time together and facing people in a new way.

VOLUNTARY STORYCRAFTING AT REGULAR INTERVALS INCREASES SELF-CONFIDENCE

It has been noted that storycrafting yields the best results when the same people are crafted regularly. This is when we hear how the other person thinks, what their most important thoughts are at the time, and we start to notice what the other person wants to tell us in other situations as well.

Studies have shown that children and youth who regularly craft stories get accustomed to sharing their thoughts with others in various situations. In addition, their self-confidence increases.

During the first storycrafting session, the activity might feel strange if the storycrafter fears that it will not work out as planned. This is why a couple of practice runs may be in order. Little children are often the easiest to storycraft, as they usually indulge themselves in the twists and turns of the story devoid of prejudice. Youth and adults might already have a firm impression that they are not capable of telling a story.

It is surprising, though, how quickly people realize just how easy it is to be storycrafted, as the youth of Zambia describe the matter later on in this publication. Often the insight occurs during the initial session, but occasionally the storyteller requires time and wants to listen to the stories of others first.

Storycrafting is always voluntary. To force it would undo the basic premise of storycrafting: that the person writing the stories down focuses on listening to what the other person wants to tell. If the teller does not want to tell a story, the storycrafting session will be

rescheduled for another time.

Providing a stimulus can be a part of storycrafting. At first, we can read the stories crafted by others (see: storybooks and website listed on the bibliography). By hearing the stories of others we note how different they are. It is not required to know anything previously written by heart.

CULTURES MEET AMONG SHARED STORIES

Different cultures value different matters. In some cultures, highlighting the shared know-how is more valued than elsewhere. The strong storycrafting tradition lives on from one generation to another. Being a pen pal can be a good way to get in touch with new people. The story is sent to another area or country where it is read, followed by the stories written and sent back in response.

In many of these cases, this pen-pal practise has continued for years. In the Finnish Storybridge-initiative, the people from Kotka, Finland, have been pen pals with people in Beirut and Palestine as have people from Helsinki with Kurds in Iraq. A video describing the Storybridge-project can be found in the bibliography.

Daily life differs quite a lot in different corners of the world. Different cultures meet among shared stories. Those involved in pen-pal exchanges have often realised how similar people are despite our cultural differences. Children are unified by their adventurous spirit, friendship and shared humour.

The crafted stories are about daily tasks, musings of the future, adventures and messing around. They can be lengthy stories or observations of a few words.

It is important that the storyteller is allowed to decide what kind of story his or hers is without anyone judging it or telling what would be a better form for a tale or what a story should be like. In this case, the person writing down the stories does not express a genuine desire to listen to the other person, but rather implies he or she knows better what should be told and how. This might cause the storyteller to feel incompetent and to stop wanting to tell a story.

People with immigrant backgrounds can be crafted in Finnish in order to become confident in expressing oneself in a new language. The belief in the fact that others understand me, the storyteller, will be strengthened despite language difficulties. Expressing oneself in one's first language is important as well. This way the very nuances and feelings of the mind emerge more easily.

It is wise to teach the storycrafting method to the child's parents, in which case they can storycraft their children at home in their own language. In doing so, the parents adopt a new way of listening to their children. Many parents are surprised how a new connection can be formed through storycrafting. Storycrafting is also a popular way to collaborate with parents (Karlsson 2003, p. 174-189 and www.stakes.fi/lapsetkertovat).

STORYCRAFTING HALTS THE RUSH AND HELPS CONCENTRATION

The storycrafting method is a way of delving into the realm of children and youth as it gives leeway to their thoughts and initiatives. The story produced through storycrafting is about telling a quiet speech out loud where the storycrafter gets to take part in the inner dialogue of the other person.

Storycrafting sensitises the adult or the hearer to notice and to follow the train of musings and ideas of the children. For the adult, the method heightens the senses and makes the mind more playful. Storycrafting also brings out the children's own culture with its richness.

Storycrafters are often astonished when they notice how clever children are. The storycrafted children are encouraged to express themselves and take initiative in bringing forth their suggestions. They demand to be heard in other situations as well. The self-esteem of the child is strengthened, which is of utmost importance in growth and learning. "Storycrafting is possible in pairs or in a group, in an intimate situation or in a public place. Storycrafting unifies and brings people together, it encourages and creates comfort. Storycrafting halts the rush and helps to concentrate on the essential, the words and the messages of the quiet speech between the words.

Storycrafting deals with emotions in an imaginative story without rational, smart-alecky analysis. The power of the storycrafting method is in the fact that the storycrafter and the narrator are momentarily on the same wavelength, in a manner similar to timeless storycrafters, ready to be carried by the freely flowing story into the twilight zone between the mental images and the real."

Monika Riihelä

STORYCRAFTING ENCOURAGES INTERACTION

Studies show that storycrafting encourages, among other things, diverse expression, use of imagination, the alternation of written and spoken word, multi-faceted narration, communication, respect for others, acknowledging different points of view, information processing, personal activity and initiative.

Furthermore, both children and adults find storycrafting pleasant and important. It enhances solidarity and creates a fruitful sense of community. Storycrafting is a combination of listening and respecting others, performing and experiencing together, working things out and learning about them, and enjoying the present moment.

For many professionals, storycrafting has taken root as a tool which continuously produces new insights and ideas. In doing so, the whole operational culture begins to change essentially.

Regular storycrafting and mutual sharing of experiences between adults is an opportunity to find new methods, subjects and ideas which advance the work constructed with children. The most essential thing, as it has turned out, is for the adults to change their methods so that an operational culture can be created where people can meet and storycraft each other (Karlsson 2000).

HOW TO CRAFT A STORY

The following is a quickstart to the use of the storycrafting method. It is suitable for all ages living in different cultures. The copyable instructions for storycrafting can be found at the end of this booklet. In this publication, the term "story" refers to a story that the storyteller wants to tell.

Storycrafting is easy to use in international cooperation, as leisure activities, at school, and at home as well. You can get to know new people and develop a sense of community through it. One can also bring up unpleasant issues in storycrafting, or get lost in building exciting, long trains of thought.

The idea of storycrafting is to give the child and the youth an opportunity to tell about his or her own thoughts. During storycrafting, the other listeners, in turn, are interested in listening and genuinely want to hear what the storyteller wants to tell right at that particular moment. The story is defined by the storyteller. It might be an adventure, a true story, a feeling, a poem, a joke or simply an utterance of a couple of words (Karlsson 2005).

Prompt the child or the youth: "Tell me a tale or a story!" Then, write down the storyteller's story just the way it is being told at the moment. Write it down word by word in front of the storyteller, without changing or correcting a thing.

When the story is done, read it to the teller so he or she can fix or change it, assuming that is what he or she wants. It is up to him or her to decide what kind of story it is. One should avoid judging or reviewing the story. With the storyteller's permission, it is nice to read the story to the rest of the group of children, to parents, or to other adults.

Write down the name of the storyteller and the date the story was told, possibly followed by the place where it was written. On a separate sheet of paper you can write how the situation started, what happened next and what you thought and felt during the situation.

Children often want to draw a picture about their story. Sometimes the storyteller wants to draw first and tell later. It is good to reserve a separate folder for the stories or hang them up on a wall in a visible spot. It is nice to watch how the stories change, and which themes emerge at different times.

Instructions on how to start storycrafting in different languages can be found on page 48 of this booklet.

MANGOS IN MINIATURE



In storycrafting

- The children and the youth convey their thoughts
- The adult is the listener
- Listening and putting oneself in another's shoes are important things
- Voluntariness and regularity are essential

Storycrafting

- Was invented and developed in Finland
- Has spread to the Nordic countries and to the rest of the world
- Is suited for all ages
- Increases self-confidence
- Encourages versatile expression, acknowledging others, and initiative

You can storycraft:

- With another person or in groups
- With friends and siblings
- With parents and children
- With a teacher or a supervisor
- With people from different cultures
- At school, day care, club, or at home - you name it
- Whenever and wherever: outside, inside, on a train, in a forest, in a classroom



WE ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child
Article 13

BANGLADESH, ZAMBIA AND FINLAND: STORYCRAFTING ACROSS CULTURES

Stories reflect the society of the people who are being storycrafted. They are windows to cultural phenomena, different traditions, conceptions of good and evil, and justice.

The plot structures of the stories are driven by different behavioural patterns and problem-solving methods, which reflect the approaches that the people being crafted have adopted from their environment. Storycrafting provides a unique opportunity to familiarise yourself with the everyday life of children and youth just the way they experience it at the given moment.

In the following section we will familiarise ourselves with fairytales as told by the Bangladeshi children in Bangladesh, Zambian and Finnish youth in Zambia, and children with Somali background in Finland.

THE POSSIBILITIES OF STORYCRAFTING AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

We hope that the storycrafting sessions carried out in Bangladesh and Zambia during 2003-2004 will encourage professionals in development cooperation to accept storycrafting as their tool. Storycrafting is a participatory method where the children's and the youth's sides of the story are prioritized

Regular storycrafting encourages both youth and adults to perform and experience things together. This can lead to new ideas, courses of action, and solutions in the mutual relationships of adults and children, and, in the long run, to possible changes in the whole community.

Storycrafting can also be used with dispossessed groups or individuals of the community. For instance, storycrafting a female group of small farmers in the village community, or street children, or those suffering from AIDS, is a respectful, equality-based way to approach these groups and individuals.

Compared to traditional interviews or conversations, storycrafting proceeds fully on the conditions of the storytellers. Because the tellers are neither forced to answer questions nor to talk about a certain topic, they can freely share their most important issues.

Thus, for both the storycrafted and the storycrafter, storycrafting offers viewpoints and information about the everyday life of the crafted in the way it presents itself at the time. The story liberates the crafted to ponder his or her story and is a way to process everyday life.

STORYCRAFTING AND GLOBAL EDUCATION

"Usually growing into internationality can be imagined as a process which develops the know-how required in the globalising world, influences sentiments in a positive way, and leads to being responsible and to activity which takes sustainable development into account."
www.kansainvälisyyskasvatus.net

Global education contains all the activities that steer us towards universal and joint responsibility.

The goal of global education is to accept everyone for being different, that we know the methods of other cultures, that we realise that we are globally dependent upon one another and that we respect the principles of equality and human rights.

The premises of storycrafting are parallel to those of global education. Thus, storycrafting is a suitable tool for global educators as well.

The stories which are presented in this publication and told by Zambian and Finnish youth in Zambia in October 2004 are fascinating examples of global education.

The musings of the youth about storycrafting illustrate well how storycrafting brings youth together to examine how they live, think, and experience.

STORYCRAFTING AND IMMIGRANTS

The storycrafting method has also frequently been used by those working with immigrants. These experiences have been encouraging.

Speaking and listening form the basis for the adoption of a spoken language. The storycrafting method is a natural way to use the language in immigrant education. The stories encourage and motivate, as well as provide opportunities to practise different areas of language. They also help the immigrants to deal with cultural issues.

In this publication Salla Siukonen, a class teacher, writes about two storycrafting projects she has carried out with children of Somali background in school.

MANGOS IN MINIATURE

As a tool, storycrafting works with

- Development cooperation initiatives
- Global education
- Guidance for immigrants
- Crisis work
- Youth work





BANGLADESH: STORIES IN THE LAND OF WATER AND VERDANCY

by Tiina-Maria Levamo

In spring 2003, Uttaron Samaj Kallyan Samity (USKS), our partner organization which carries out a development cooperation project and a global education project along with ODW, came with us to realize our first joint storycrafting project.

USKS operates in the Jhenidah District in southwestern Bangladesh where poverty and the exploitation of child workers are part of everyday life. The goal for our partner is to support the schooling of former child workers and to help indigent families.

We agreed that eight children would take part in storycrafting. At the time, four of them had already made it to school, but four were still at work. Nowadays, all the Bangladeshi children telling stories in this publication attend school.

Including child workers in storycrafting was important for us. We thought that for these children it would be important, to counterbalance work, for them to get a chance to be heard and to have time and space to be children. Our idea was that through the stories told by children we would be offered a chance to better understand the experiences of child workers.

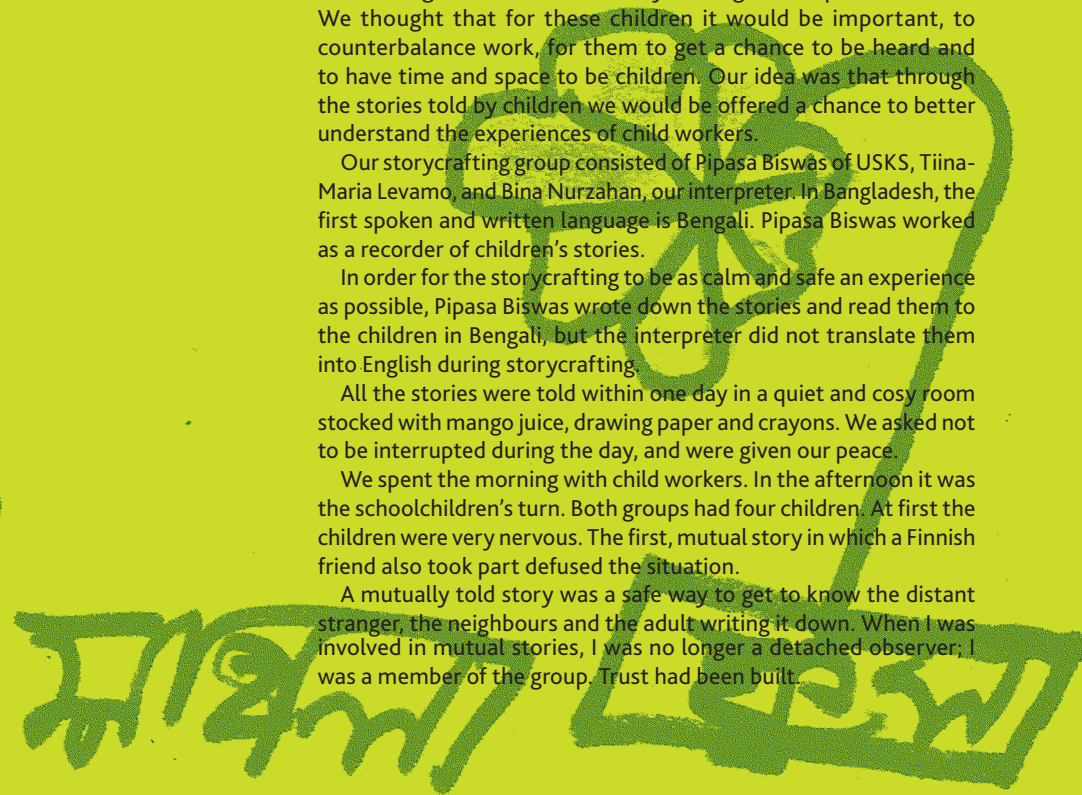
Our storycrafting group consisted of Pipasa Biswas of USKS, Tiina-Maria Levamo, and Bina Nurzahan, our interpreter. In Bangladesh, the first spoken and written language is Bengali. Pipasa Biswas worked as a recorder of children's stories.

In order for the storycrafting to be as calm and safe an experience as possible, Pipasa Biswas wrote down the stories and read them to the children in Bengali, but the interpreter did not translate them into English during storycrafting.

All the stories were told within one day in a quiet and cosy room stocked with mango juice, drawing paper and crayons. We asked not to be interrupted during the day, and were given our peace.

We spent the morning with child workers. In the afternoon it was the schoolchildren's turn. Both groups had four children. At first the children were very nervous. The first, mutual story in which a Finnish friend also took part defused the situation.

A mutually told story was a safe way to get to know the distant stranger, the neighbours and the adult writing it down. When I was involved in mutual stories, I was no longer a detached observer; I was a member of the group. Trust had been built.



A MAGICAL FLOWER

by

*Tiina-Maria Levamo, Nasima Khatoon, Nazmun Akter and
Nurul Islam*

Once upon a time there was a magical flower in the garden in the town of Jhenidah. The flower kept on growing and blooming; it kept on becoming more and more beautiful.

All the children of the town came to see the flower, and enjoyed its beauty. They thought, if this flower keeps on growing then this magical garden will become smaller and there will be no more space for them to sit.

Then they prayed to the Allah so that this flower does not grow any bigger and stays as beautiful as it is. Hence the flower stayed that way.

But one day someone picked the flower up. Then one man brought lots of magical roses and many flower plants grew, many parks were built.

After we had finished telling the story, Bina Nurzahan translated it and Pipasa Biswas read it out loud. Everyone was mesmerized. Especially the working children's group seemed unable to contain their excitement when waiting for their turn to tell a story.

Waves of calm and exhilaration alternated when one story after another was told to the others. After we had finished storycrafting, we drew pictures related to these stories. However, the children kept peeking at each other's drawings and the situation may not have been as natural as we had hoped for.

It was noteworthy that the child labourers seemed to have a strong need to tell about their lives and experiences while storycrafting. The situation gave birth to an atmosphere of conversation in which the children began building trust between themselves and the adults present.

They also seemed to enjoy the fact that the adults were willing to listen and pay attention to them.

We shared the experience with others in an event held by USKS. Guests included employees of the organization, as well as teachers from schools established for child labourers. Pipasa Biswas gave them a presentation about storycrafting and read them a few of the children's stories.

The Bangladeshi children had told stories of both mundane life and more traditional fairytales. Stories related to everyday life were often filled with dreams of a better life, while stories resembling more traditional children's fairytales opened up a cultural window to the familiar stories the children had heard before.

MANGOS IN MINIATURE

- Storycrafting is most natural when speaking one's first language
- When storycrafting, make sure you have enough time, and a calm, peaceful environment
- You can also add pictures and drawings to the stories





EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLAY

The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture and enable him, on a basis of equal opportunity, to develop his abilities, his individual judgement, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.

The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents.

The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavour to promote the enjoyment of this right.

The United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of the Child 7th principle

STORIES BY FORMER CHILD LABOURERS

HUNGRY FAIRIES

by

Salim Hossain

Salim is 13 years old. He is from the village of Pobhati of Jhenaidah District. His father works as a carpenter. Earlier Salim helped his father in his work. At present he is in class three at Jhenuk Focal Center. His mother is a house wife. He has got three brothers and four sisters.

Once there was very poor couple in a village.

One day the husband told the wife: "I couldn't give anything to you, you are a rich man's daughter, and you were born in a rich family, but I have nothing."

They decided to leave the village and went deep into a nearby forest.

Inside the forest they saw some fairies. The fairies were dancing and playing. After a while the fairies became very hungry. They wanted to eat something. So they came near to the couple and asked for some food.

The poor couple gave them four breads, all that they had for themselves. The fairies were very pleased by the couple's generosity.

They said: "Now what do want from us? Whatever that you will ask you will get."

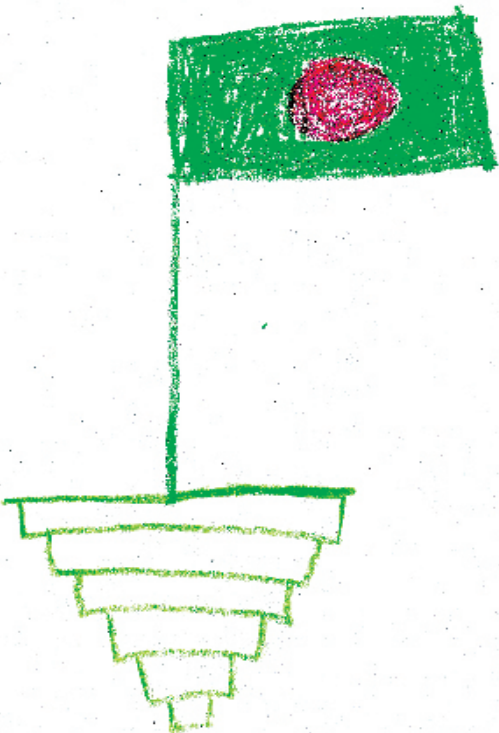
The couple asked for a pan and they received that.

Night fell by the time they were coming out of the forest. So they had to go to a friend's house close to the forest. The friend let them in but asked about the pan. The couple told him the story.

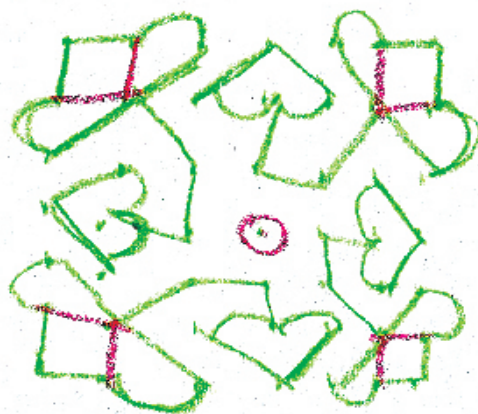
In the middle of the night when everyone was sleeping the friend stole that pan. The couple found out about it in the morning – a fairy told them what had happened. They were very sad.

The husband told his friend: "You have betrayed us!"

Then they left the house and went back to their own house. But the fairies soon brought them more wealth and they became very rich.



MISSINER SIMRKHITIN
মোছাঃ নাশিমা হুশাভুজ



A HAPPY FAMILY

by

Nurul Islam

Nurul Islam is a 11 years old boy. His father pulls a traditional manual three wheeler van. Earlier he was also pulling a van. There are six members in his family. Today Nurul reads in class three at Usha Focal Center.

When I will be big I will stay with my parents, siblings, grandparents, uncles and aunties, we all will stay together. Everybody will study.

We will have a nice house to live in. There we will have chicken, ducks, cows and calves. We will cultivate. It will be a lot of fun. There will be no lack of money.

①

②

(ମାଧିମା — ଧାତୁର)

ବିଜ୍ଞାନ

ମାଧିମା ①

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A TUNTUNI-BIRD BUILDS A NEST

by

Nasima Khatoon

Nasima Khatoon is 11 years old. She is from the village of Venna Tola. Her father is a share cropper. Earlier Nasima worked as a maid servant in a upper class family. There are seven members in her family. As of now she reads in class four at Aronno Focal Center.

A Tuntuni bird was building a nest in the egg-plant tree. Suddenly a needle of that tree penetrates into the bird's nose.

Tuntuni immediately came to the rat: "Please pull that needle from my nose." The rat said: "No, I can not."

Then the bird went to the blacksmith and said: "O dear blacksmith, please pull that needle from my nose!" And then the blacksmith pulled the egg-plant needle from Tuntuni's nose.

STORIES TOLD BY CHILD LABOURERS*

A SAD GIRL

by

Sri Sadhan Karmokar, Shirina Doly, Firoza Doly and Tuhin Mistri

Once upon a time there was a girl in Bangladesh, she was very pretty. She used to live in a beautiful house. She had her parents and grandparents. She had friends and they used to have a lot of fun, they used to play with the dolls. Then one friend died. They got separated. Then that girl left for another town with her parents. There she got admitted to a new school, and grew older. One day she remembered those friends from the childhood and went back to the village to meet those friends of her. There she saw that one of the friends had grown into an alcoholic, one as a thief, one became a drug addict, one was a rickshaw puller, and the others were only roaming around. She became very sad and left for her parents. She told her parents that her friends had changed and she was deeply distressed.

SEVEN QUEENS

by

Tuhin Mistri

Tuhin is 12 years old. His father is a carpenter. Earlier he helped his father in his work. His mother is a housewife. He is from the village of Kanchan Nagar. There are six in his family. Tuhin is at class four at Jhinuk Focal Center.

One king had seven wives. Six wives conspired against the seventh one and bit her severely. The seventh queen got infuriated and wanted to leave. Then a holy man told her: "You do not leave, stay." The queen stayed. The king said, "I have seven wives but no children." The seventh then gave birth to a child. The six again conspired and wanted to kill the baby boy. But they could not kill him. Once the first queen took him to her lap, then the second took him to her lap. They mixed poison in the drinking water, but could not make him to drink. The seventh noticed what they were doing and she changed the water. The king heard all about it and bit his six wives. Again the six conspired and went for a bath. They all left the household responsibilities to the seventh. The boy grew a little bit. Then all the six left a snake inside his room and the boy got killed. Everyone shed tears, no one admitted. Then one of the wives admitted: "We killed him." The six queens were sent to exile in the jungle.

**This storycrafting took place in 2003, at which point the children were still working in heavy labour. At present all of the children are attending school, supported by ODW's partner organisation, USKS. The families have had the chance to improve their financial situation by, for example, utilizing microloans.*



A VULTURE AND A RICH NEPHEW

by

Firoza Doly

Firoza Doly is 10 years old. She is from the village Hatgopalpur. Her father is a manual three wheeler van driver and her mother works as a maid. Earlier Firoza worked as a maid servant for a family which lives in Jhenidah town. She has got six members in her family. Now she reads in class three at Aronno Focal Center.

An uncle and a nephew plough the land. The nephew had two buffalos so the uncle asked the nephew to give him the buffalos to plough his land. He got the buffalos. Then he started to use the buffalos so much that they died. Then the nephew ran after the uncle with a chopper.

A vulture heard of all the noises that they were making. It asked the nephew: "Let me eat the buffalos. If you let then I will arrange a marriage for you with a good girl." The nephew agreed and the vulture flew him to a different village and dropped him to a house of that village.

In that house there were two girls. The boy married both of the girls. Then he became very rich. The first wife sang a song on her way to home; the second wife made fun on her way to home. The landlord saw them. One of the landlords clients told him: "O lord! They have grown wealthier than you."

Then the landlord ordered the client: "Bring me the bones of my grandparents from these two holes." When the client entered into the holes. Then the landlord sealed the entrances.

MONEY FOR EDUCATION

by

Sri Sadhan Karmokar

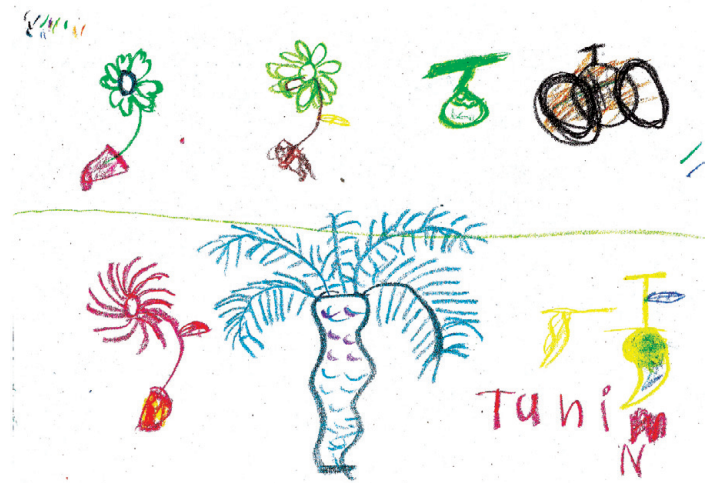
Sri Shadhan Karmokar is 13 years old. His father works in the field as a day labourer. His mother is a house wife. Sadhan has five sisters and a one brother. They live in the village of Vennatola.

The year 2004 was a hard year for the family. It was hard for them to manage food for the eight members of the family.

During the flood Shadhan had to work hard on part time basis in a shop. Food distributed by USKS saved their lives. At the moment Shadhan reads in class three at Aronno Focal Center. He has a great interest for study.

I will get an education and later will get a job and will earn money. Then I will establish a school in the village. There poor children of the village or the hamlet will get education.

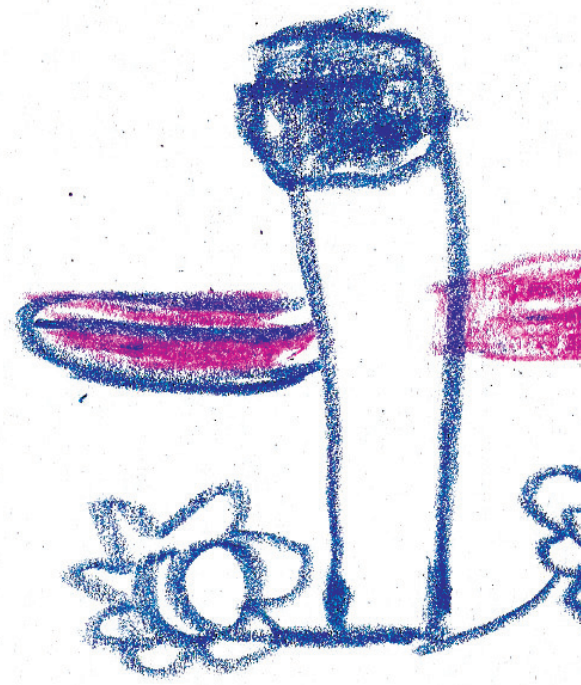
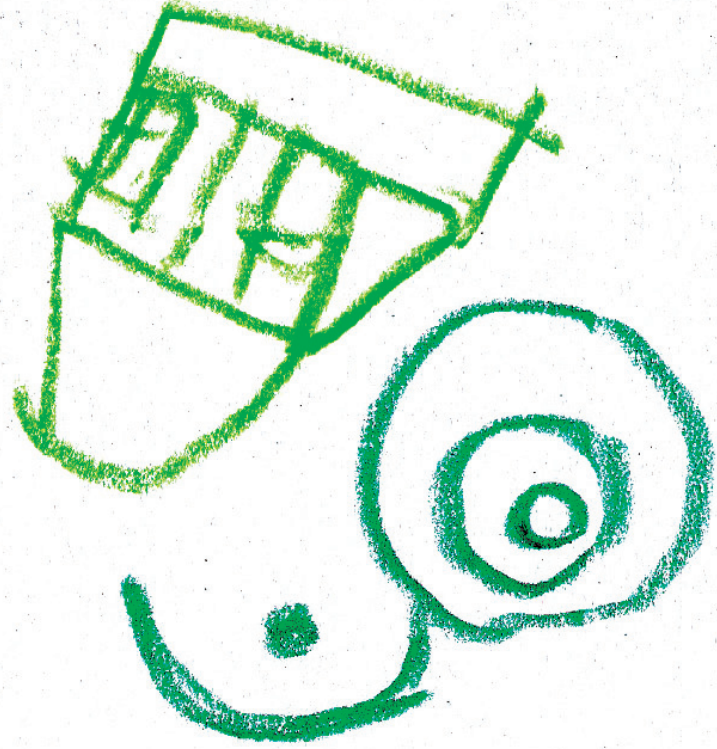
Then they would not have to work in a garage, like I do. And they will not miss out of education due to a lack of money.



(10th)

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1. The first part of the book is a collection of poems. The second part is a collection of stories. The third part is a collection of essays. The fourth part is a collection of letters. The fifth part is a collection of speeches. The sixth part is a collection of plays. The seventh part is a collection of songs. The eighth part is a collection of dances. The ninth part is a collection of games. The tenth part is a collection of sports. The eleventh part is a collection of puzzles. The twelfth part is a collection of riddles. The thirteenth part is a collection of jokes. The fourteenth part is a collection of anecdotes. The fifteenth part is a collection of biographies. The sixteenth part is a collection of histories. The seventeenth part is a collection of geographies. The eighteenth part is a collection of sciences. The nineteenth part is a collection of arts. The twentieth part is a collection of crafts. The twenty-first part is a collection of professions. The twenty-second part is a collection of occupations. The twenty-third part is a collection of hobbies. The twenty-fourth part is a collection of interests. The twenty-fifth part is a collection of passions. The twenty-sixth part is a collection of dreams. The twenty-seventh part is a collection of wishes. The twenty-eighth part is a collection of hopes. The twenty-ninth part is a collection of fears. The thirtieth part is a collection of loves. The thirty-first part is a collection of hates. The thirty-second part is a collection of joys. The thirty-third part is a collection of sorrows. The thirty-fourth part is a collection of triumphs. The thirty-fifth part is a collection of defeats. The thirty-sixth part is a collection of successes. The thirty-seventh part is a collection of failures. The thirty-eighth part is a collection of achievements. The thirty-ninth part is a collection of setbacks. The fortieth part is a collection of milestones. The forty-first part is a collection of landmarks. The forty-second part is a collection of turning points. The forty-third part is a collection of crossroads. The forty-fourth part is a collection of forks in the road. The forty-fifth part is a collection of paths. The forty-sixth part is a collection of journeys. The forty-seventh part is a collection of adventures. The forty-eighth part is a collection of expeditions. The forty-ninth part is a collection of travels. The fiftieth part is a collection of voyages. The fifty-first part is a collection of pilgrimages. The fifty-second part is a collection of quests. The fifty-third part is a collection of quests for knowledge. The fifty-fourth part is a collection of quests for power. The fifty-fifth part is a collection of quests for love. The fifty-sixth part is a collection of quests for truth. The fifty-seventh part is a collection of quests for justice. The fifty-eighth part is a collection of quests for peace. The fifty-ninth part is a collection of quests for happiness. The sixtieth part is a collection of quests for meaning. The sixty-first part is a collection of quests for purpose. The sixty-second part is a collection of quests for fulfillment. The sixty-third part is a collection of quests for completion. The sixty-fourth part is a collection of quests for perfection. The sixty-fifth part is a collection of quests for excellence. The sixty-sixth part is a collection of quests for greatness. The sixty-seventh part is a collection of quests for immortality. The sixty-eighth part is a collection of quests for legacy. The sixty-ninth part is a collection of quests for impact. The seventieth part is a collection of quests for change. The seventy-first part is a collection of quests for progress. The seventy-second part is a collection of quests for innovation. The seventy-third part is a collection of quests for discovery. The seventy-fourth part is a collection of quests for invention. The seventy-fifth part is a collection of quests for creation. The seventy-sixth part is a collection of quests for production. The seventy-seventh part is a collection of quests for distribution. The seventy-eighth part is a collection of quests for consumption. The seventy-ninth part is a collection of quests for enjoyment. The eightieth part is a collection of quests for satisfaction. The eighty-first part is a collection of quests for contentment. The eighty-second part is a collection of quests for peace of mind. The eighty-third part is a collection of quests for inner harmony. The eighty-fourth part is a collection of quests for self-awareness. The eighty-fifth part is a collection of quests for self-knowledge. The eighty-sixth part is a collection of quests for self-understanding. The eighty-seventh part is a collection of quests for self-realization. The eighty-eighth part is a collection of quests for self-actualization. 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THE TWO WIVES OF A KING

by

Shirina Doly

There was a king. He had two wives. The first wife had two hairs, the second wife had only one. So the king kept the first wife and threw out the second wife.

The second wife with a heavy heart left the palace and arrived under a Banyan tree. Under the large tree there came a Fakir.

The Fakir asked: "My dear, why are you weeping?"

The second wife said: "I used to be a queen but now not anymore. The king had thrown me out of the palace. Because the first queen has two hairs and I have only one."

The Fakir said: "Take some mud from this pond and put that on your scalp, after that dive seven times deep into the water."

She did what the Fakir had told her to do and was very happy to find her scalp full of dark and long hair. Now with a very happy heart she started to walk towards the palace.

On the way the Bell tree told: "Small queen! Small queen! Pluck a large Bell fruit from me."

She plucked.

The Tal tree told: "O queen! Pluck a large Tal fruit from me."

She plucked.

The Pata tree said: "O queen! Take a beautiful and a large leaf from me."

She took.

The Tengra fish said: "Dear queen please let me free in the water!"

She let the fish free in the water.

On her way back to the palace she felt very hungry. So, she broke the Bell fruit to eat, but she found that the fruit is full of gold jewelries. She broke the Tal fruit to eat but found it is full of beautiful dresses. Inside the leaf she found shoes.

Now she put on all these and arrived in front of the king. This time the king threw out the first queen and kept the second one.

Disappointed first queen heard the stories of the second queen so she decided to do something about it. She went down to the pond and dived deep into the water but in her case she only managed to loose both of her only hairs.



EDUCATION TOWARDS FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN NATIONS

The child shall be protected from practices which may foster racial, religious and any other form of discrimination. He shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood, and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men.

The United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of the Child
10th principle



ZAMBIA: STORIES AND MANGO JUICE

Tiina-Maria Levamo

Tiina-Maria Levamo has a Master's Degree in Sociology. During the years 2002-2004 she was employed by Operation Day's Work Finland as a Project Coordinator for Development Education Project funded by the European Union and the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. She has specialized in education and in the use of participatory methods in development co-operation and development education.

During the school year 1998-1999 the Finnish children and youth raised funds for the Zambians. The funds were allocated to support the education of orphans due to aids, to raise awareness on hiv/aids as well as to social support during the period of 1999-2002. One of the Zambian partner organizations was Children in Distress in Kitwe (CINDI-Kitwe).

In 2002 CINDI-Kitwe became a partner with Operation Day's Work Finland in a joint Development Education Project funded by European Union and the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs during 2002-2004.

One of the aims of the project was to bring together the Finnish and the Zambian youths, particularly those Zambians who had received support from Operation A Day's Work Finland. Therefore both sides could exchange experiences and learn from each other.

In October 2004 eight pupils from the Kallavesi Upper Secondary School travelled to Zambia to meet their peers. The Finns and the Zambians spent three days together in the in Kitwe in northern Zambia.

Earlier in 2002 a group of Zambian youth had visited Finnish schools and familiarized themselves with the Finnish culture and school system. These same youths were in their hometown Kitwe to welcome the Finnish youths in October 2004.

They had conversations about issues that concern youth worldwide. Based on their discussions they planned and organized a performance

about the rights of young people. The public performance was called Youth against AIDS and Drugs for a Better World.

During this journey there were stories crafted as well. Three Zambian and two Finnish youths aged 16-17 volunteered to spend some time together in crafting stories.

Since the time was limited and after a long day everybody was tired, it was agreed that only joint stories would be crafted. This decision was safe since the participants were slightly anxious about the situation and what it would demand of them.

There were three stories told during that evening. They were told in English, which was not the native language for any of the participants. Therefore the youths had fairly equal starting position, though the Zambians were slightly more used to using English, since it is the official language of the country.

The youths chose "Determination" as the theme and title of the first story. It was interesting to see how Finns and Zambians in turn were leading the story to the direction of their own culture and daily life. Thus resulted to giggling and voices of surprise.

The Zambians wanted the story to be serious and educational, very much suited to the Zambian circumstances. The Finns were taking the story to head to a direction with Finnish characteristics.

In the beginning some of the members of the group had a strong need to control and comment on the story. I reminded them that everybody has a right to tell a story without interruption as well as that everybody is equal in story crafting. According to the rules of story crafting it is not allowed to make judgement or comment on the stories during or after the story crafting.

When we had crafted and made the corrections to our first story, Determination, we started to laugh and applause. Everyone loved the story line and the surprising ending.

The two following stories were about a mango lying on the table. First some of the youths thought that mango was a boring subject. Finally we decided to try out how separate groups of the Finns and the Zambians would tell a story about mango.

The story told by the Finns was clearly on the side of fiction, while the Zambian mango story was connected to daily problems, such as how hunger affects the relationships among people.

Mango-stories were surprising to the youths as well. They resulted to laughter and a relaxed atmosphere. The Zambians also created a fictional ending to their story.



DETERMINATION

by

Henni, Johannes, Chiti, Jemana and Fabian

Once upon a time there was a little girl, a mother and a father who lived in a beautiful city called Lapland. They had one child named Emily. She had all the things she could think of in the world. She could go to an expensive school, get nice clothes, but then one day her father and mother fell ill and they died.

She was taken to a boarding school where she had to start a new life. Unfortunately she had to work for her living at school, because her parents money had been taken away from her by somebody who had blamed to be her father's colleague who promised to take care of the girl, but he did not. She always wanted to do drama and music but her father would have been more pleased if she studied medicine or law, so she could work for a big firm and make money. She loved her parents so much that she promised to do anything for them. She had to make her decision. She had to choose whether to follow her late father's wish or go for with her drama and music.

However, there came a time when it was difficult to make the right decision because things had totally changed. She had no money to go to the university if she had to do medicine to fulfil her father's wish or to take up drama and music, which was quite easy to get through with. There was the little poor girl with nothing but the driving force in her heart.

So she decided that she should get some money before she would make the decision because both schools, music, drama and medicine school were expensive. So she went to down town asking for a job, but everyone said no.

When she was coming back from down town she walked through the forest and there was a big bear who ate her. She was

gone to bear's stomach. She had a cellular phone with her and she called her only friend and said: "Could you come and get me away from here?"

Suddenly she woke up and she realised she was dreaming. She fell asleep when she sat beside a big tree to rest when she was coming from town. And in the dream she heard the voice of the father telling her: "Emily, you'll make it in life. Do medicine and become a doctor".

As she had no money for her education she couldn't. Fortunately there was this lady coming down the road who saw the poor girl sitting and looking lonely. She tried to find out what she was doing there and Emily explained the situation. She offered Emily some domestic work at her home but Emily couldn't because her parents taught her never to settle for less.

She continued to search for her job so that she could get some money and study medicine. On one beautiful morning she received a call telling her that she had been accepted to be an officer at some clinic.

After some years of service her employer thought that she was an enthusiastic young lady who was determined to follow her dream if only she was given a chance. So he decided to sponsor her to go to university so she could follow her dream. She could not believe that she had finally met her chance of a lifetime, something she had always wished and prayed for.

But still she remembered the promise she had made to her father and she decided to ignore the promise. She applied to the Theater High School and became actor.

Because she was so determined she had achieved her goal as an

A CRAZY JUMPING MANGO

by

Henni and Johannes

There is a nice and crazy mango on the table and it is jumping all around the table. Because the mango was missing it's tree, it had just fallen down from the tree and someone had picked it up and that someone was a merchant at the market place. Mango didn't like that aggressive way to collect mangoes and it didn't want to get eaten.

So it continued jumping. Jumping was a success because mango fell off the table. It was going on and the mango was trying to find a tree, but there came little boy who picked up the mango and took it home.

At home boy took knife on his hand and tried to peel mango. Then mango punched the boy to his head and ran away.

But it didn't get far away because at the stairs little boy's granny came and ate it. When grandma next time went to the toilet, she was making poop and mango jumped to the water. But grandma flushed the toilet and mango gone down the drain.

So the rest of its' life the mango lived in the drainage and never found it's tree.

A TROUBLE OVER MANGO

by

Chiti, Jemana and Fabian

There is a green mango on the table. This mango almost landed the owner into problems because he was accused of stealing it. So he told the mango fruit that next time you misbehave I will not give you water so you won't grow.

He only had one mango tree but it could hardly bare fruit. So during that particular season there was only one mango which he hoped would save his family from the coming famine.

The people in the neighbourhood who are very envious of the mango because they had nothing. So there was a certain man who wanted piece from the mango but was denied. He later decided to go screaming, blaming that the mango was his and that it had been stolen from him.

Trouble began and he was almost killed over the mango because everybody in the community wanted to eat it. Right now the mango is in the museum in the memory of what happened.

MANGOS IN MINIATURE



- Try storycrafting between children and youth from different cultures
- Storycrafting promotes tolerance and understanding between people from different cultures and backgrounds
- Don't be afraid to storycraft in a foreign language
- Translating stories is easy

THOUGHTS ON STORY CRAFTING BY ZAMBIAN AND FINNISH YOUTHS

Johannes Koivisto and Henni Sammatti:

"FOR A FINN IT IS NOT UNUSUAL TO BE EATEN BY A BEAR"

Johannes Koivisto is 17 years old. He lives in Kuopio and studies at the Kallavesi Upper Secondary School. His hobbies are snowboarding and wakeboarding. He also likes to draw, write and design computer graphics. In the future he would like to be a designer or a graphical artist.

Henni Sammatti is a 17 year old girl from Kuopio. She studies at the Kallavesi Upper Secondary School, which is focusing on intercultural education. Her hobbies are reading, movies, going outdoors with her dog and writing. In the future she hopes to work abroad.

Story crafting made it possible to go deeper into the ideas of the local youths. Crafting stories with different people was interesting and fun. We got to spend "quality time" together.

It was difficult to express ideas in a different language. There were only complicated sentences in our heads. We had to simplify what we were trying to say. While crafting stories we had to think about grammar a lot more than usually.

Story crafting felt nice especially since we were doing it with youths different from us. It was surprising especially because we didn't know how others developed the story line and how they wanted it to advance.

In the beginning we felt excited, how to get started and do we manage to create a "coherent story"; one which has a clear point and is not just confused messing with different points. In the end we felt that we had succeeded in it and the stories were great.

It was exciting to see how the story line developed. On their minds everybody had a different version of the story and everyone in turn developed it into their own direction. One of the advantages of story crafting is that other's opinions don't matter and you can imagine what you please.

It was nice when the Zambians were crafting stories: cultural differences were there to be seen. The mango story turned out to be quite different when told by the Zambians than when told by us Finns. Our mango was a living creature, which bounced around. Zambians might have thought that was a bit abnormal, and their story was a bit more sedated.

We also crafted a story about a girl from Lapland who had difficulties in choosing her career. Her father wanted her to be a doctor, but the girl herself wanted to be an actress. In the process of the story crafting it was most difficult to choose a career, since it seemed like none of us would like to make such conflicted decisions.

Mercy and other Zambians must have thought that being from Lapland is very exotic. We thought it was fun too, but seldom a Finnish story tells about a girl from Lapland, especially about an orphaned one. To be an orphan in Finland leads you to be taken care by the social welfare services, but for Zambians it was perfectly normal for her to be left to manage by herself.

Zambians didn't want the story to be changed into a fairytale, when the girl ends up inside the stomach of the bear. Therefore Fabian turned the story around so that she was just dreaming about being eaten by a bear. Maybe this shows that we Finns have heard a lot of animal stories, in them it is not unusual to be eaten by a bear.

Our school has an optional creative writing course, where Henni has crafted stories previously. Johannes had no earlier experience about story crafting, but he would like to do it again.

We think we should try story crafting with the exchange students in our school. We found a nice connection with the Zambians and noticed some cultural differences.

There are many courses in our school where story crafting could be done. Then we could edit a publication of the stories. We hope we can do story crafting with our friends. It was really fun and we got to laugh at the strange plots.





Chiti Bwembya:

"STORY CRAFTING MAY BE USED TO HELP AND TEACH PEOPLE TO RESPECT ONE ANOTHER'S OPINIONS"

17 years old Chiti Bwembya completed her Upper Secondary School in 2004 and is awaiting the grade 12 results in order to go to college. In the future she would like to study psychology or medicine. This will enable her improve the way of life of her fellow orphans and street kids in the world, Zambia in particular.

I should say that the cultural differences were manifested in the stories. The story about mangoes told by the Zambians showed more of an African culture, while the story by the Finns showed a Finnish culture.

Story crafting is very useful. It is useful in the sense that people get to learn to think fast and always be attentive. Furthermore, story crafting may be used to help and teach people to respect one another's opinions, views and ideas, despite the cultural differences.

It's educative and it's a lot of fun. I got to know and learn how other people look at life. Furthermore, I realised that although we come from different cultures and backgrounds we have almost the same thinking capacity. I can say that the story crafting was my most wonderful moment and I think it was fruitful. I now have a different way of looking at life.

Story crafting exercise is an amazing way of creating stories. I think that any group can even write the world's best selling novel if only they are attentive, creative and sharp because that is what the exercise taught me.

I would say that it was not difficult for me because English is my second language and I speak better English than Bemba, which is my first language.

Before we started I was quite curious for I did not know what this exercise was about. In the beginning I was excited but in the end I felt and thought that I was intelligent and sharp.

I would love to do the exercise again but I don't know if we would do it again.

Jemana Bwembya:

"I USED TO THINK THAT STORIES WERE DIFFICULT TO CREATE"

17 years old Jemana Bwembya is currently a Trainee Journalist (certificate) and working temporarily with Zambia National Broadcasting Services (ZNBC). She is studying at Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation. Her future plans are to study for a diploma in journalism and then work for a big media institution.

I hope to do the story crafting again. I hope I will have a chance of sharing the knowledge of story crafting with my fellow youths at CINDI.

I learnt a lot from the story crafting exercise. I used to think that stories were difficult to create but with that exercise I now know that stories can be created by anyone, on any topic provided the participants develop the skill of listening and creativity.

I intend to teach my fellow friends and see if we can come up with a book that the children at some schools can read and enjoy.

The cultural difference was manifested in both story crafting and in the stories. The mango story told by the Finns was depicting Finnish culture while the Zambian was on an African ground.

Story crafting can be used to open up people's mind to help increase their thinking capacity. It can also teach people to respect other people's views, opinions, ideas and values.

The use of English language was not difficult for me because English is my second language.

At first I did not know what it was all about but I was not nervous. I was surprised how easy and fun it was to craft stories. It felt so nice that I wished it could go on and on.



Fabian Kashoba:

"I AM ABLE TO BE ATTENTIVE, CREATIVE AS WELL AS FAST IN THINKING"

17 years old Fabian Kashoba completed his Upper Secondary School at Hillcrest National Technical High School, Livingstone, Zambia. His future plans are to study electrical engineering and work with one of the good companies in Zambia. Thereafter, he intends to help the needy in society with part of the money that he will be earning and then get married and have a family of his own.

Story crafting was one of the activities we had with the Finnish people during their visit to Kitwe, Zambia. They brought in the idea of story crafting – a form of story telling involving a number of people telling the same story. One would start and end anywhere for the next person to continue. This goes on with someone else, not taking part, writing down whatever is being told until the story ends.

The cultural differences between them (Finns) and us (Zambians) were revealed more in how the stories were crafted. To begin with, in the story we crafted about "determination", I noticed that the Finnish youths were having some difficulties coming up with ideas which were in line with the context of the story.

The reason for this may be that the way a Finn could be determined is much different from how the Zambian could be. In that, Finnish people fight less as compared to Zambians to earn a better living. This is so because Finland is more developed than Zambia, meaning that there are more opportunities for the Finns.

On the contrary, a Zambian has to fight really hard and should be

very determined to achieve his/her success. I think this is why we came up with better ideas than them considering the way we experience determination.

Furthermore, on the story about "mango", I have come to notice that their story was more of a fairy tale than reality. Our story had some reality in it. That is, "The part where everybody in the community wanted to partake of the mango."

We were trying to indicate the poverty levels in our country. It is a situation where there is less food for more people. Therefore I am able to conclude that life in Finland is better because they could not come up with ideas of problems affecting them.

As already mentioned, the use of this kind of crafting is to see whether one can come up with ideas connected to his/her way of life.

Both parties (Finns and Zambians) had to use English which is not our original first language. As such, we couldn't find the right words to express our ideas the way we wanted them to come out.

Besides, it was my first time to participate in such kind of an exercise. So, before we could begin I was so nervous. But as we started and went on, I discovered I could do it even better and in the end I was so happy and overwhelmed.

This criteria has been of help to me as I have been able to use it with my friends and family who have appreciated it. It has also been of great help in that I am able to be attentive, creative as well as fast in thinking.

I have used this as well in other aspects of life. I really cherish and appreciate this criteria. I also have intentions of introducing it into the activities of CINDI-Kitwe given an opportunity.

Mercy Musiwa:

"THE STORY CRAFTING CAN BE USED TO HELP THE ORPHANS EXPRESS THEIR SAD AND GOOD TIMES"

Mercy Musiwa has just completed an advanced certificate course in social development at the National College for Management and Development Studies in Kabwe. Her future plan is to go back to the same college and pursue a diploma course in the same field. After getting a diploma, she will become a social worker and provide assistance to the needy people in society.

The cultural difference between the Finns and the Zambians were manifested in the story. This is because during the crafting of a story called determination, a topic which was selected by both parties, Finns and Zambians, made each of us to stimulate ideas and liken them to our daily lives activities, hence associating the story to what goes on in our Zambian and Finnish societies respectively.

The story about mangoes was differently told by both the Zambians and the Finns in a unique way. The Finns made the story from the beginning very interesting until the end. As for the Zambians, the beginning was not very interesting.

I almost felt that we failed the crafting but one of the Zambians made the ending interesting when he said "right now the mango is in the museum for history record". I think that was very creative thinking, hence making the story interesting.

The use of the story crafting was all about assessing how creative the Finns and the Zambians are. Secondly, how we were able to interact and bring about ideas to craft a story without having difficulties especially that it was our first meeting.

Thirdly, the story crafting was about finding out any cultural affiliations or cultural differences among the Zambian and the Finnish youths.

Crafting a story in a language which is not your original or first language is hectic, frightening and uncomfortable. This is articulated to the reason that one may not be conversant or fluent in language which is not originally his/her hence the panic to search for suitable words to make the story interesting.

The story crafting was very nice, hilarious and interesting. The

beginning part of it was frightening, because you were prompted to start a story from nowhere that will make sense for others to be able to pick up from where you end.

But the ending was amazing and very nice such that we were able to laugh it all and marvelled at how beautiful the story crafting turned out to be. During the crafting you did not have to force yourself to continue from where your friend had ended if you were listening carefully.

The story crafting in CINDI activities can be used to help the orphans express their sad and good times which will enable them to be creative and be strong to withstand the trauma they go through after losing their both or single parents and focus on their future with great determination.

Crafting stories is very helpful as it helps us to express our innermost feelings, therefore I think I would not mind crafting stories again.



MANGOS IN MINIATURE

According to Finnish and Zambian teens, storycrafting is useful for:

- Orphans and teens in order to boost their confidence
- Exchange students in schools
- Friends and family
- Schools and academies combined with different courses and themes
- Communication between people from different cultures
- Life in general



ACKNOWLEDGING CHILDREN FROM ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 30

FINLAND: STORYCRAFTING IN IMMIGRANT EDUCATION

by Salla Siukkonen

In this article I describe my personal experiences in using storycrafting with immigrant children. I used this method while working with pre-primary pupils who had, at that point, lived in Finland for less than a year. I have also storycrafted with pupils who were born in Finland and were in the first grade of basic education.

A STORY ABOUT A TREE AND A BIRD: FINDING THE WORDS IN FINNISH

The pupils in pre-primary education often come to class without any Finnish words in their vocabulary. Slowly they begin to find them. Words are collected from all around: from hallways and recess, from television and friends. Storycrafting is possible after just a few days of attending a Finnish school.

Eight-year-old Ayan came to my class, in which most of the pupils already spoke Finnish quite fluently. She observed carefully for a few days before wanting to tell us about her family on her own:

"Girl Ayan, mother Hawo, father Abdullah, boy Osman."

Simple stories like this can act as confidence boosters in the early stages of language learning. Oftentimes these sentences are also engraved in the teacher's memory.

When working with children who are learning a language, it is useful to apply routines and repetition in daily tasks, such as pupils sitting in a story chair telling about their previous day.

The pupils' days were often similar to the previous ones, but they never seemed to get bored of the story chair. The act of telling a story was more important than the story itself.

Imaginary fantasy worlds become important to pupils in pre-primary education, since working long-term motivate them.

When they get to know the fantasy world, they wait for the story to continue and wonder what is going to happen next. This ongoing project also makes it possible to include words related to certain themes into their active vocabulary.

Before storycrafting in the pre-primary group I often told my pupils stories about a tree and a bird.

Every time I did this I drew big pictures of the characters on the board.

Repetitive storytelling is well-suited to immigrant education. The same story can be repeated a number of times so that even the slower learners can begin to find meanings in the language.

The pictures drawn on the board are designed to help to understand the story. These pictures also help the pupils to repeat the stories themselves by pointing at the pictures representing difficult words. The teacher can also introduce new vocabulary to the story, although the pupils re-tell the story in their own words.

After we had created the world of the bird and the tree, I storycrafted the pupils. While some of them continued the adventures of the bird and the tree or repeated previously told stories, others left this world behind completely.

It was exhilarating to see how these children, who had only studied Finnish for a few months, created new stories with their newly found language. They struggled, dared, and finally wanted to tell new stories. Often these stories were about friendship and caring.

There once was a tree and a home. The tree wept. Then a boy came and picked apples from the tree. The tree waved and the apples fell. The boy came again to pick apples and the mother was happy and liked his boy. The tree and the boy became friends. A rain came, and the boy came out and shovelled.

Then he saw a sunflower seed and it was night. Then they woke up and the sunflower had grown a bit. The boy went to see the flower and the tree was guarding it.

The boy had gone to school. There he learned to read and to write. He came home from school and went to see the sunflower and everyone had grown. And the boy was thankful that the tree was guarding it. And it was night again.

Then it was morning and the apple tree hadn't slept. He guarded the sunflower all the time. The flower talked to the tree. They were friends. Night came and the apple tree was happy that the sunflower had slept.

Then a vole came from underground. He tickled the roots of the apple tree.

The tree said "that tickles."

The vole said: "I'm sorry."

He went home. Then came the morning and the boy went to pick apples again. He watched the sunflower and it was the same as before again.

by Abdi, 7 years old

A squirrel and a rabbit were friends with the tree. Then the rabbit and the tree played.

The bird came and said: "I want to play with you, too."

Then they went inside the house. They ate apples.

The rabbit said: "I'm still hungry."

And they went to take apples again and eat. Then the girl came into the rabbit's house. He ate an apple as well. The girl also ate an apple.

Then the girl said: "I'm still hungry." The rabbit went to make food quickly.

He made rice and put tomato in it. It was good. He set out a plate and the girl ate and then the rabbit went to take bread and butter and cheese. Then he gave her bread.

by Amina, 10 years

Among the literate children, stories can also be crafted together. Everyone takes turns in telling the story, and the storycrafter switches after each sentence. Meanwhile others can write down the story. This way every pupil can practice facing the attention of the entire class.

Everyone is responsible for the story, as a group but also as individuals. This poses a challenge to the teacher. One has to accept that the story might come out as non-ideal.

For example, some pupils can decide to lead the story to the world of a computer game that only some of them are familiar with. On the other hand, this is exactly what makes storycrafting so special – everything is possible. The children can deal with matters that they consider important in an imaginary world that they hold dear.

COURAGE IS FOUND IN STORIES

There was another group of children learning Finnish as a foreign language. The group included two first-graders of Somali background. Our goal was to support their self-expression, as well as to encourage them to produce both spoken and written language.

The storycrafting took place in a primary school in Helsinki during a class of Finnish as a foreign language. To create a peaceful atmosphere suited for storycrafting, the only people present were the pupils and the teacher who wrote down the story on a computer. Safia and Adam, both seven years old, took part in the three-week-long project. In the beginning they seemed a bit reserved, but still enthusiastic.

Adam: "I don't know how to do this."

Teacher: "You can tell anything you like."

Adam: "But I can't. I can't read much yet."

The pupils' skills and their own impression of their skills affected the situation. Adam's first experience with storycrafting began insecurely. The first story came after a long period of silence. It is likely that Adam experienced the session as a teaching situation, an environment in which he had previous experiences of failure.

However, Adam's insecurity was not as evident come the next class, and he was excited to tell stories. With children like Adam, one of the goals of storycrafting is to encourage them to overcome their insecurities.

Safia was already familiar with the method from day care, so it was easier for her to begin. She also had previous experiences of success from her first year of school. This seemed to help her in the storycrafting situation, which was different from normal school days.

Formal language teaching goals were not the highest priority of this class. For example, correcting grammatical errors during a creative, oral process such as storycrafting seemed inappropriate. The goals of storycrafting and the goals of formal language teaching are not, however, mutually exclusive.

Both children had attended school for a few months, and were now learning to read.

It was clear that Safia was conscious of the written aspect of the story while telling her stories. She looked at the computer screen

while the teacher was typing the story, divided her speech into sections and, when necessary, waited for the teacher to catch up with her.

Adam's stories, on the other hand, were marked by their speed. He often accelerated his stories into such speed that typing them down was impossible. When slowing down and repeating the story, he also changed it or began from another part that did not exist in the previous version.

Safia's stories often took place at home. The persons in the story were the unnamed daughter, son, father and mother. The stories were full of conversation and debating. Safia often told dialogues between the two main characters of a story. The parents were firm but caring, and the children asked many questions. Sometimes the debates heated up into arguments, as in the event of the cat and the dog.

The following are three of Safia's stories:

BOY GOES SCHOOL

There once was a boy. He went to school. Then his mother said, go fast to school now. Then the boy said why I have to go school. Mother said, because you learn many things.

Well, what things?

Well, many new things.

What new things?

Many good things, ha!

Why do I learn new?

Because you are a good reader.

And then I don't want to go school.

You will go to school.

Father I don't want to go school.

Well, you must go to school.

GIRL GOES SCHOOL

Father I have to go school. I really like school.

Yes, it is fun.

Yes, I want to go school and learn many new things.

Good that you go there. You will learn many new things there.

Well okay, I go school but I come back home.

CAT AND DOG

Cat and dog went outside. There they make hamburgers, toy hamburgers. Cat say:

Why we make hamburgers?

It is good.

You can't eat.

Yes I can.

Stay out of my things.

No I won't.

It's not your business.

Well ok, I do what I want.

Okay, I go home.

Dog said that I go home too. The end.

Adam, too, wanted to tell about the cat and the dog after hearing Safia's story. However, he took only the main characters of the story and transferred them into a completely different situation. His story begins in the middle, using the word then, most likely because he had listened to Safia's story carefully and wanted to continue it on his own.

ABOUT CAT AND DOG

Then they go to mother and father. Then they go to mother and grandpa. Then they go home. Then they come outside tomorrow. Then they go home.

The everyday encounters play an important role in both children's stories. Safia told dialogues about children's everyday life. Sometimes you argue over toy hamburgers at the sandpit, and you have to go to school no matter how nervous you feel. Adam's stories often had many characters, and the main characters liked to visit relatives.

Storycrafting sessions were full of discussion. Only a small portion of it was typed down and saved as stories. I'm sure that the stories that were told on the way to the computer class and between other stories were equally important.

Storycrafting sessions offered the children a moment that was separate from the rest of the school day: a moment of freedom reserved for their own culture and thoughts. Among the themes discussed were friendship, skipping swimming class, and the eager anticipation of Eid, marking the end of Ramadan.



MANGOS IN MINIATURE



Try the following:

- Use a story chair in the classroom
- Try storycrafting as a writing exercise: one crafts a story, others write it down
- Encourage discussion after the story is over
- Show genuine interest in what the pupil is saying
- Let children illustrate stories as they are being told

STORYCRAFTING IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

by Liisa Karlsson

Storycrafting has been used in many kinds of activities with adults and children of immigrant background.

They have told stories about their lives in classrooms, small group settings, remedial education, secondary schools, day care, children's after-school clubs, word-art workshops, adult education, museums and at home.

Stories have been crafted alone, in groups, to pen pals, to other children, and even to unknown museum workers. Children and youth have storycrafted with their parents, other relatives and friends. Next we will dive into the different storycrafting experiences of children, youth and adults of immigrant backgrounds.

MEETING OF CULTURES

by Reeli Karimäki

Folklorist and substitute teacher

Kannelmäki Primary School, Helsinki

I have storycrafted with many immigrant children at schools. It is as simple and fun as it is with native Finnish-speaking children. Cultural differences arise in the stories themselves.

Names and places, for example, usually reflect either the country of origin or the mother tongue of the child. These stories spark interest among their classmates.

In my experience, children want to know more about the places, nature and animals within the story that are new and exotic to them.

Native Finnish children often express their admiration and wonder of such exciting places. Not many of them know much about foreign countries. To them such vast knowledge is a thing to admire.

I often get the feeling that storycrafting raises the status of an immigrant child in the class. They get admiring looks and are asked a lot of questions.

The other children see them as an expert on their country of origin, and this piques their interest. This is what happened in the spring of 2004 when I asked a nine-year-old Chinese boy, Jon, to craft a story:

I will tell you a panda story. It is a warrior panda. It lives on the Great Wall of China or really close. But it doesn't eat bamboo, it eats hamburgers and rice. The best thing about it is that it knows many martial arts. The panda army practices on the Great Wall, running up and down. They don't practice no traditional Chinese martial arts, instead they have Colt Pistols. They practice self-defence. Once a spy called Lii wanted to go there, he took more pandas to the Beijing Zoo. I have been there, and they had pandas. Lii wanted them all, but the pandas crushed him. Then they continued on with their practice. The end.

by Jon, 9 years old

CHILDREN'S CULTURE WHEN A SUBSTITUTE IS PRESENT

I have agreed with other teachers that when I am substituting, we will study children's culture with the pupils. That is when I ask them to craft stories.

I have compiled many story books with different classes. From Haunted House to Skating, for example, was made with a special needs class with many immigrant children. Storycrafting with them does not differ from storycrafting with native Finnish children. Their book came out great. Everyone got their own copy, a colourful booklet with plastic covers. That project was a lot of fun!

STORY EXCHANGE WITH THE AFTER-SCHOOL CLUB

by Eija Asikainen

Planner

After-school activities for children, Joensuu

We tried the storycrafting method here in Joensuu as part of the Settling Family Project of the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare. In the spring of 2003, the Russian-speaking pupils of Joensuu's After-School Club crafted stories for children in Sortavala, Russia. They corresponded by sending their own stories to Joensuu. All of these stories were crafted in Russian.

Many of the children in our club are originally from Sortavala. One of the goals of this project was to give the immigrant children a link back to their country of origin and vice versa.

The children of Sortavala also got to know the culture of the children living in Finland. The one storycrafting these children was the club's instructor, Ljudmila Laine.

STORYCRAFTING IN SMALL GROUPS

by Paula Konsti

*Teacher of Finnish as a second language
Havukallio Primary School, Vantaa*

I utilize the story crafting method every now and then when teaching small groups of one to four pupils. The children like storycrafting and ask me to read aloud their old stories again and again.

The biggest surprise to me was how deeply invested the children are in stories about daily life. Stories such as: "I woke up and ate breakfast, brushed my teeth and got dressed, then I went outside".

These stories about daily life win over epic adventures where many die and blood flows. Perhaps children find it fascinating that the daily routines of others are similar to theirs. After all, many adults like reading novels in diary format and depictions of daily life.

My gut feeling is that storycrafting has a positive effect on children, child groups and the relationships between a child and an adult storycrafter.

STORYCRAFTING IN WRITING CIRCLES AND MUSEUMS

by Sirpa Kivilaakso

*Teacher of literature and word art
Helsinki*

Both native and immigrant children were asked to craft a story in word art workshops and in literature circles. The Sanasirkus magazine (March 2004) of The Art House of Pukinmäki featured stories and poems by immigrant youth. I have also crafted stories with immigrant school children as a part of Living Mysteries exhibition in the Vantaa Art Museum. Their stories were later featured in the same magazine (June 2004).

This project in the Vantaa Art Museum revealed the strong and rich culture of storytelling among the children with immigrant backgrounds, especially among Somali girls. The girls excitedly crafted several stories about the pictures and items shown in the exhibition. Their Finnish was also very good. The boys, on the other hand, kept quiet and gave the girls space. The narrative tradition is an important part of their culture, which should be utilized in education as well.

The story by fourth graders of Uomarinne School:

NEW RIDE AT THE LINNANMÄKI AMUSEMENT PARK

A big rail was built in Linnanmäki. Hundreds of people lined up to get there. In the car there were big faces looking outside. The people were amazed by the big faces. They did not dare to sit in the cars, but a brave bunny came and made them feel brave. Then people wanted to sit in the cars.

The people sat in the cars and it started up fast. The train rattled and the people were scared. The boy bunny called a girl bunny for help. Both bunnies made the people feel brave. The people went back home happily.

Storycrafters: Sahra, Laki, Halit, Vjollca, Tiia, Jenni, Som, Kevin, Abdi-Wahab, Mohamud

STORYCRAFTING IN A PREP CLASS

by Sini Alén

*Special education teacher
Uomarinne School, Vantaa*

Our prep class has eight pupils from four different countries. They are all seven to eleven years old. Since all of them have not learnt to write yet and the Finnish language is challenging, we asked the sixth graders for help. They obliged with pleasure.

All of the prep class pupils and the sixth graders looked in pairs for a quiet corner within the school. The younger ones crafted the stories while the older children wrote them down. These stories could either be based on real life or their own imagination.

When the story was ready, the writer read the story aloud to the storyteller and asked whether they would like to add or change something. The prep class pupils were very pleased with their stories. It had been nice to get attention from an older pupil. Finally we put the stories on the school walls for everyone to see.



STORYCRAFTING CREATES SAFETY IN A CRISIS

by Aila Keturi

Primary school teacher

Uomarinne School, Vantaa

I am the fifth-grade homeroom teacher and I also teach Finnish to a second-grade class. We started our school year in January. A tsunami had just caused immense damage in Asia and this affected our pupils deeply. That's when I decided to craft stories with them.

The second graders had never crafted stories before, so we made the first story together with all of them. I wrote down the entire class' collaborative story. After that I told them that each of them would craft a story with one of the fifth graders the following day.

The next day I divided the class to two different classrooms. Each pair found themselves a nice and quiet corner. The children were allowed to craft a story of their liking, whether it was about their own feelings or just an adventure of their own.

Afterwards the second graders also wrote down stories by the fifth graders. The classroom was marked by a safe but wondrous atmosphere, filled with trust.

If a teacher is not familiar with the concept of storycrafting, he or she may think it is merely about making up a story. However, it is much, much more. It is, emotionally speaking, quite an interaction and feels almost magical.

I am a Finnish teacher for the second-grade Swedish immersion class. I also persuaded parents to craft stories when we had an open day at our school in January.

I had asked a few of my fifth graders to come and craft stories with the second graders while their parents were listening. The atmosphere was very positive, with 15 parents following the class in action.

I asked the second grade storycrafters to have one of their parents craft a story as well. That was a very positive experience. The second graders listened in awe as the fifth graders read aloud their parents'

stories. This could also be done with immigrant children and their parents!

STORYCRAFTING FOR FINNISH PREP CLASS

by Riitta Iiskola

Teacher of the Prep class for 6-year-olds

Tiistilä School, Espoo

I have crafted stories with children for ten years. I use this method all the time. This is my sixth year storycrafting with six-year-olds as a prep class special education teacher. Once a year I also make story folders out of 1st grade children's stories in the Finnish as a second language class.

I am interested in the children's own stories. You get to know their way of thinking even if they do not know many Finnish words yet. Regular storycrafting also shows how much the children have learned in the course of a year. Everyone's stories are put into a folder, so that their next teacher can learn about their interests and how they express themselves in Finnish.

Some of the children in the prep class have just moved to Finland. These children get to draw their stories first and then I write down whatever they tell me. It is much easier for those who don't know many words yet. We also have a story wall where we put all our stories and pictures, so that everyone in our school can enjoy them. Children take great pride in their own stories.

At first the stories are like wordlists of what is in the picture, such as a house, a tree, a flower. Once a Russian boy, who had just moved to Finland, surprised me completely. Even though he had moved to Finland in July and we spoke English among ourselves, his story in November already featured stories with three word sentences: "Horse is yellow, man is small, sun is big". I had no idea he possessed this incredible skill.

STORIES DO NOT HAVE TO BE LONG

by Tuula Stenius
Storycrafting trainer

I was in a training session for storycraft trainers. We always began by sharing our experiences, insights and feelings.

Once, a teacher of an immigrant group was venting. She told us she got nothing out of the children and the stories were somehow unqualified. She read some of them out loud.

I cannot remember them clearly, but one of the stories went something like this: "A girl, blue, becomes, the sun". I found the story magnificent, tearful even. It was an entire story of a small person settling in Finland. It was a poem. It was short, yet it had it all.

We praised these stories and had a long discussion on them. That same teacher returned enlightened to our next session. She saw these bits of stories in a new light and proudly read them to us. After that the teacher storycrafted with a newly-found excitement.

ADULT IMMIGRANTS STORYCRAFTING IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE

by Hannele Pesola
Adult trainer
Helsinki

In social integration training programmes, I have noticed that people treat storycrafting as a sign of respect for the pupils' own mother tongue and culture. I think storycrafting in one's own language enhances the positive sentimental memories, and can even create harmony. The students tend to be more relaxed towards their teacher after the session. In many cultures the teacher is seen as a respected authority and a strict supervisor.

As a novice storycrafter, I shared and presented this method with the help of multilingual instructions on the former Stakes website

(www.stakes.fi/lapsetkertovat). Sometimes a student with more fluency in Finnish has been used as an interpreter.

After receiving instructions, the students storycrafted each other in their own languages. Then each writer read the stories in his or her mother tongue. This shared moment was fun for the students, and a great moment of solidarity. We listened to the rhythm and sounds of the languages. Based on these sounds, we also painted storycrafting images.

People that are present in the storycrafting training have just started studying Finnish. Therefore, translating the story or telling it in Finnish has not been possible in their own groups. Some of the stories were translated for me by the more advanced students. These stories mainly included folk tales, and even some stories from refugee camps.

It is possible to storycraft in Finnish in the training groups of language levels one to three, but the students are highly critical towards spoken and written language. The storycrafting sessions are most successful when they are held in the students' own language. Everyone also has the option of telling their story in Finnish.

We have enjoyed the similarities of folk tales in these groups. "Little Red Riding Hood" is a tale found in many countries, with some variations. This way we have been able to read Finnish folk tales and stories.

With two groups, we carried out a storycrafting project where students of nursing and teaching assistance, together with immigrant students, storycrafted all the other students as well as school staff members.

The stories were hung up on the walls for everyone to read. The storycrafting projects have been rewarding, educational, and have reduced prejudice. They have advanced the relationships between immigrants and Finnish students and encouraged their linguistic communication.

Storycrafting can be done regardless of cultural and religious background. The rules and ethics are the same as when storycrafting children. The object is to achieve a connection with each other and to respect others.

STORYBRIDGES BETWEEN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

by Liisa Karlsson

Researcher and developer of storycrafting

Editor-in-chief of the Children are telling -research and development network

Since 1996, people working with children and youth in different countries have used the storycrafting method as a means of listening to children and getting them to participate. That year, a Nordic Satukeikka –project generated a Nordic story correspondence between children around the world.

It created new ways for the children to have discourse and exchange personal thoughts; even the youngest were able to have a long-term connection with children from other countries through their own words. This dialogue was considered important in many countries.

In 2001, Finnish children started exchanging story letters with Palestinian and Lebanese children living in refugee camps. The children were storycrafted in both countries and the stories were either sent by e-mail, in a story folder or with the help of a visitor and a character called Mailmouse.

The story correspondence continues still. Through the Storybridge project, children in Kotka, Finland, and in Beirut have been able to peek at each other's thoughts and experiences through their stories, words and visuals.

As the workers in Beirut became more experienced in storycrafting, they said: "I tend to talk too much, and the children do not have enough space". This method has proven to be an actual teaching method for adults, regardless of culture.

Children live and play. In spite of all the cultural differences and variable life situations, their need to tell stories is limitless. They like listening to stories and will eagerly reply with new ones. Children have no boundaries.

Children are spontaneous. When children from Beirut and Palestine told a story about a mother with a sore leg, Finnish children had no trouble imagining the same situation. It is more common for children than adults to use the imagination. They hear stories as fairytales and can also see play and humour.

Storybridges based on correspondence with Finnish children and youth have been arranged to other countries as well: Finns have

exchanged stories with Kurds in Kuwait and pupils in Russia.

An 11-year-old Palestinian boy called Ihab lived in a Lebanese refugee camp, and had injured his hand. He was unsociable, unwilling, and unable to read or write.

The teachers and workers in the mental health centre had tried everything to motivate Ihab to learn to read and do other activities, without success.

In one session, a special education teacher encouraged Ihab to tell a story that would be written down and then sent to Finland together with other letters included in the new Storybridge correspondence. For the first time, Ihab was excited about collaborating with the teacher.

After hearing the story, the teacher was amazed at what a wonderful story Ihab had to tell and how talented he was in expressing it.

The special education teacher, who knew the boy and his life very well, thought that Ihab had told a story about the invisible web of unskillfulness and disability surrounding him.

For the teacher, this story revealed how Ihab wanted to fight, together with others, in order to get out of this invisible web restricting his life. The story gave Ihab's innermost thoughts a visible shape.

Ihab was so excited about telling a story that later that day he announced to another worker of the mental health centre that he wanted to tell another story. As time went on, storycrafting motivated Ihab to learn to read and write.

STORYBRIDGE – PRDI CHIROK IN KIRKUK

by Kirsti Palonen

Psychologist

Finnish Psychologists for Social Responsibility

Once there was a wife.

She said: "Husband, please go and buy some tomatoes and cucumber."

Man came back. His wife was not home. The man went to look for his wife. He found her.

Man asked: "Wife, where were you going?"

Sanaria Burhan, a six-year-old Kurd girl opened the Storybridge pilot of Finnish psychologists for Social Responsibility in Kirkuk on 28th of August 2003 by telling this story to a Finnish storycrafter.

The tryout has proceeded as a Storybridge – Prdi chirok –project. To start off the first story, the children and adults sitting in the Abbas family yard were told about the storycrafting method and the Storybridge plan.

Shadea Abbas and Heifa Adbil Hamid, two mothers from Kirkuk, were taught during that same day to use the storycrafting method and to run the project in Kirkuk.

In these kinds of projects, where children exchange their tales born during storycrafting, a new kind of interaction develops between them. For traumatized children living in crisis areas and in otherwise challenging conditions, storycrafting may provide a chance for therapeutic processing and sharing.

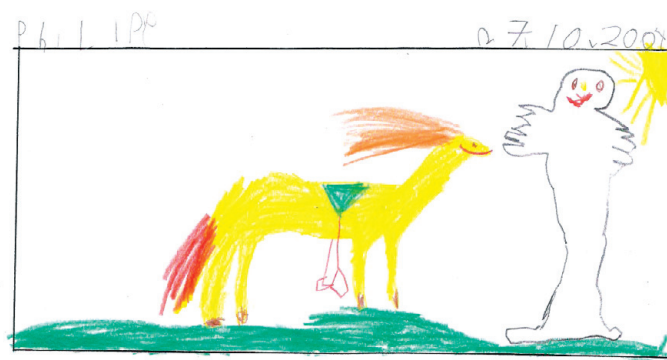
In Kirkuk, the storycrafters have had child groups in their own neighbourhoods and in the Kurdistan Save the Children organization. A vast number of stories and drawings has been produced, but since there is no functioning postal system in Iraq, delivering them to Finland has been difficult.

For security reasons it has been agreed by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the designed training sessions, including the more thorough Storybridge course, will be postponed.

Storybridge represents one type of global education arranged on childrens' terms and in a manner appropriate for them. However, it is also a way to practise the freedom of speech in areas where people have had to watch what they say even among friends. Children may practice speaking their mind and the adults learn to let them speak freely.

Sanaria describes the importance of Storybridge in a New Year's letter sent to Finland:

"Happy New Year for the children of Finland. I've seen pictures of them. They are beautiful. Give them my picture and tell them my name is Sanaria. I don't know the names of my friends, but I often look at their pictures. Tell them I'm their new friend."



MANGOS IN MINIATURE



Teachers' and educators' experiences in storycrafting:

- Storycrafting excites interest in class towards children with different cultural backgrounds
- A class of students can turn storycrafting into a book
- Children living in different countries can exchange stories
- Storycrafting can also be practiced between children and youth of different ages
- Storycrafting is a way of processing difficult matters in school
- Parents can participate in storycrafting
- Stories can be attached to walls for everyone to read
- Storycrafting is a way of practicing freedom of speech

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STORY CRAFTING IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

Tell a story that you want.
I will write it down just as you will tell it.
When the story is ready I will read it aloud.
And then if you want you can correct or make any changes.

Kerro satu sellinane kun itse haluat.
Kirjaan sen juuri niin kuin sen minulle kerrot.
Lopuksi luen tarinasi ja voit muuttaa tai korjata sitä mikäli haluat.

Berätta en saga, hurdan du vill.
Jag skriver upp den.
Och när den är färdig läser jag den för dig,
så att du kan ändra på någonting ifall du vill.

Kan du fortelle meg en historie?
Du kan gjøre det på den måten du har lyst til.
Jeg skriver den ned.
Når den er ferdig, skal jeg lese den høyt for deg slik at du kan
forandre på noe i fortellingen hvis du vil det.

Fortæl en historie som du vil.
Jeg skriver den op.
Og når den er færdig læser jeg den for dig,
så du kan ændre på den hvis du vil.

Segðu mér sögu og hafðu hana hvernig sem þú vilt.
Ég skrifa hana niður.
Þegar sögunni er lokið les ég hana fyrir þig
og þá getur þú breytt einhverju ef þú vilt.

Ispričaj priču ili pripovijetku.
Napisat ću, upravo onako kako ti meni kažeš.
Na kraju, pročitat ću tvoju priču,
i ti možeš ako želiš popraviti nešto ili promjeniti u priči.

Lugude jutastamine ja nende üleskirjutamine on meetod,
mis sobib kõigile. Seda on kerge kasutada ja see annab rohkesti
kogemusi nii loo jutustajale kui ka selle üleskirjutajale.
Kirjuta üles lapse päris oma muinasjutt, lugu ... just nii, nagu ta
seda jutustab. Kui jutt on valmis, siis loe see talle ette, et ta saaks
seda parandada, kui soovib.

Man bittet das Kind oder Erwachsene ein Märchen,
eine Geschichte zu erzählen, wie er selbst will.
Man schreibt die Geschichte mit denselben Worten und in
der Form auf, wie der Erzähler sie ausdrückt.
Wenn die Geschichte fertig ist, liest man sie ihm laut vor.
Der Erzähler kann, wenn er will, die Geschichte korrigieren.

Trego një përrallë ose trgim,
do ta shkruaj atë ashtu si do të ma tregosh ti,
në fund do ta lexoj tregimin dhe ti mund ta rregullosh ose
korigjosh sipas dëshirës tënde.

Peça para outra pessoa para contar uma história, de livre escolha.
Escreva-a literalmente, da mesma maneira que o contador se
expressa.
Quando a narrativa está feita, recontei-a, e dê ao autor a
oportunidade de fazer qualquer modificação.”

Испричај причу или приповијетку.
Написат ћу, управо онако како ти мени кажеш.
На крају, прочитаћу твоју причу,
и ти можеш ако желиш поправити нешто или промјенити у
причи.

li sheeg sheeko ama maaweelo.
Waxaan u qorayaa sidaad iigu sheegto.
Dhamaadka sheekada ka dib, waan akhrinayaa sheekadaada.
Waadna bedeli amaba sixi kartaa hadii aad rabto.

Bir masal anlat. Ben masalını aynen anlattığın gibi yazacağım.
Ondan sonra sana yazdığımı okuyacağım ve sen de istediğin
zaman onu değiştirip düzeltebilirsin.

SOURCES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

www.edu.helsinki.fi/lapsetkertovat/lapset/In_English/frontpage
On this website you'll find articles, a message board, children's stories, studies, publications and current information.

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Storycrafting with children - A key to listening and to sharing:
http://www.edu.helsinki.fi/lapsetkertovat/lapset/In_English/Karlsson.pdf
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How to use storycrafting at home or in the workplace.

Lapselle puheenvuoro. Ammattikäytännön perinteet murroksessa.

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Saduttamalla lasten kulttuuriin. Verkostotyön tuloksia Kuperkeikkakäytännössä.

Karlsson, L. (1999). Helsinki: Stakes.

Analyzes children's storytelling culture and the results of organized professional storycrafting. Examines how storycrafting makes children visible.

Storycrafting - Research report and a videotape. Filminova. Riihelä, M. (2001). Helsinki: Stakes. Raportti.

How do we deal with children's questions?

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Semantic aspects of encounters between children and professionals in child institutions.

Playing researchers - Research report and a videotape. Filminova. Riihelä, M. (2001). Helsinki: Stakes.

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Pohjolan lasten satusiltoja – Barnens sagoboar i Norden.

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Story exchange between five Nordic countries and the significance of story exchange. Also available on video.

BOOKS THAT CONTAIN STORIES CRAFTED TOGETHER WITH CHILDREN:

Korvaan päin - lasten satujen kirja.

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STORIES CRAFTED TOGETHER WITH CHILDREN ON VIDEO:

Pättäni. Lapset kertovat tarinoitaan erityisopettajalle.

Kemppainen, K. (2000). Helsinki: Filminova, Stakes.

Storycrafting and special education as told by teachers.

Kerro satu I, II & III.

A 7-part video series.

Tell a story.

Riihelä, M. (1997). Helsinki: Stakes.

A storycrafting video in English.

Qissah Wa Tawassul – Satusilta – Kotka – Beirut

Riihelä, M. (2002). Helsinki: Filminova, Stakes.

A story about story exchange between two cultures and its significance.

DEAR PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, UNCLES, AUNTS,
GODPARENTS

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF STORYCRAFTING AND LISTENING TO CHILDREN!

The storycrafting method is appropriate for everyone and easy to apply. The idea for storycrafting is to give children a chance to share their own thoughts. During storycrafting, it is the adult who is genuinely interested in hearing what the child wishes to tell him or her right at that moment.

HOW TO START:

Encourage a child, group of children or even another adult:

“Tell me a story, however you would like.

I shall write it down exactly as you tell it to me.

I will then read your story, and you can change or fix it if you like.”

Write down the story word for word in front of the person who told it to you without changing or fixing anything. When the story is finished, read it aloud so that the storyteller may change or fix it if necessary. With the storyteller’s consent, it would be nice to share the story with other children, a parent or a grandparent as well.

Children often like to draw a picture of their story. Sometimes the picture comes first, and the story is told afterwards. Write down the name of the child, the date when the story was told, where it was told and who wrote it down.

File the stories in a folder on a bookshelf or attach them to a wall. New stories can be made by anyone, anywhere, anytime.

The most important thing is that the adult is interested in listening to what the teller has to say and conveys this also with facial expressions. Storycrafting becomes a common “thing” for the child and the storycrafter. It gives them extra time together.

Storycrafting is widely tested, and it has proven to be a useful method. It has been successfully practised with people of different ages, from one-year-olds to the elderly. Adults have also storycrafted each other and thus listened to each other’s memories or insights from work.

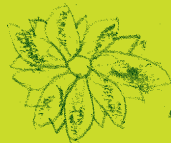
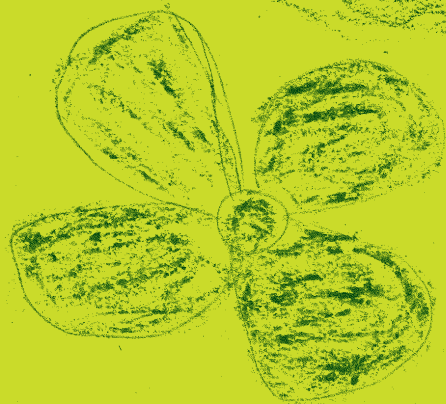
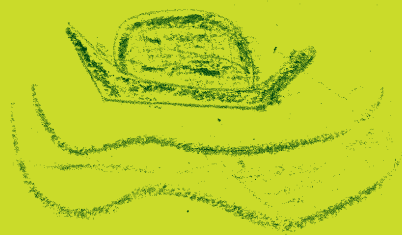
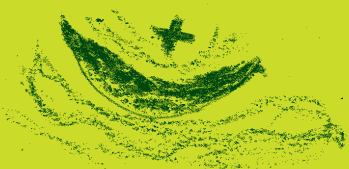
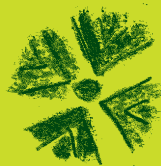
It has been found that storycrafting is most enjoyable when it is used regularly and often with a child. You get to hear what the child is thinking and which things are on his or her mind. Children get used to telling their stories in other situations as well and it really boosts their confidence. As it has turned out, the best part of storycrafting is being together, being happy and encountering each other in a new way!

Tell! --> I’ll listen --> I’ll write it down --> I’ll read it aloud --> You can change it --> You can draw --> Can I read it? --> Let’s make a book

Source: Karlsson, Liisa (2014); Sadutus. Avain osallisuuden toimintakulttuuriin. PS-kustannus.



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