

Africa in the Irish Classroom

From Ancient Civilisations to Present-day Encounters

"Member States should promote, at various stages and in various types of education, the study of different cultures, their reciprocal influences, their perspectives and ways of life, in order to encourage mutual appreciation of the differences between them .. give due importance to the teaching of .. civilizations and cultural heritage as a means of promoting international and inter-cultural understanding" (UNESCO Recommendation concerning education for international understanding co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms. UNESCO General Conference, Paris, 1974).

"children should also have opportunities to learn of the contribution of people in other lands to human development. These international elements should reflect cultures and traditions from European and also non-European contexts" SESE History Curriculum Teacher Guidelines.

Africa in the Irish Classroom is a Curriculum Support Programme aimed at first and second levels.

The programme involves:

- Designing Africa-related Materials for the following SESE History and Geography Strand Units:

Story, Myth and Legends

Early People and Ancient Societies

People and Other Lands

Stories from the lives of People in the Past

- Delivering the programme in the Classroom

- In-Service and Pre-Service Courses

- Recommending educational resources for African Studies at first and second levels

The programme is offered in two formats: one day or five-day (over one week or five visits). It will involve:

- Classroom contact with the students and their teachers.

- Support materials for follow-up activities, as well as after-visit advisory service.

The programme currently focuses on two countries: Ethiopia and Ghana (Working title: *Have A Break*).

Reference to other African countries such as Mali, Nigeria, Sudan, will be made to give teachers a wider choice.

<http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/royal-art-benin#sect-activities>

Further Information:

African Cultural Project

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Kaldi & the Dancing Goats, is a book which retells the story of Kaldi, the goat herder whose goats discovered the berries which turned out to be what we know today as the beans from which ***Coffee***, the world's second most consumed hot beverage, is brewed.

The story goes that an Ethiopian goat herder named Kaldi was sleeping on the job and awoke to discover his goats had roamed to a distant hillside and appeared to be dancing around a wild bush. He hurried his way to them and saw that they were eating the red berries from the tree. Curious about the dazzling energy of his usually lackadaisical goats, Kaldi decided to try the berries himself.

Before long, Kaldi also experienced the burst of energy and a euphoric high. The berries became a daily ritual for Kaldi and his dancing goats. Along came a local monk who questioned the goat herder about their behaviour. Kaldi showed him the red berries from the tree.

The monk, amazed, experimented with different ways of preparing the berries and began to serve a drink made from steeping them in his monastery. Hence, the beginning of coffee and, ummm, dancing goats.

Whether or not Kaldi discovered the wonders of the coffee tree, we do know that the earliest records of natural organic coffee consumption are from monasteries in his homeland of Ethiopia. From there it spread throughout the Ottoman Empire.

First coveted for its medicinal properties, it was the social effects of coffee that made it an integral part of Arabian and Turkish life and by the mid sixteenth century the world's first coffeehouses were opening in Constantinople, Cairo and Mecca.

The story of Coffee's origins is, perhaps, one of the most interesting legends which is directly connected to the daily lives of the majority of the human population aged 18 years and over.

This story will also appeal to anybody for whom coffee has become a daily ritual, or even observes fellow citizens engaging in this ritual, and is interested in coffee's origins.

It will also be a strong choice for study in a number of Strand Units in the Irish Primary School Curriculum and the African Cultural Project has designed a Curriculum Support Programme educational resource based on the story about the origins of the coffee plant as recounted in this book.

Primary Curriculum Support Programme

The African Cultural Project has designed a Curriculum Support Programme based on the origins of coffee as recounted in the book ***Kaldi and the Dancing Goats***.

It is especially aimed at the following Strand Units: *Myth and Legends, People and Places in Other Areas, People and Other Lands*.

Programme outline

- Classroom contact with 3rd to 6th class students and their teachers.
- Reading the story of ***Kaldi and the Dancing Goats***.
- Information on the Kaffa region of Ethiopia.
- Information about Coffee and the story of its journey around the world.
- Related activities and cross-curricular links.

Programme schedule:

The programme is offered in two formats: one day or five-day (over one week or five visits). It will involve:

- Classroom contact with the students and their teachers.
- Support materials for follow-up activities, as well as after-visit advisory service.

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