



## Children from Australia to Zimbabwe

by Maya Ajmera and Anna Rhesa Versola

foreword by Marian Wright Edelman,

founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund

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### Linking the Arts to Global Citizenship

Through the arts children can explore what it would be like to live in another country and what it means to be a global citizen. Rather than just memorizing isolated facts or trivia about a country, art activities allow children to express their views on how things are now and to imagine how they would like them to be. The arts offer children a chance “to think for themselves . . . and to discover, share, and create.” (Elisa De la Rock. “Snowflakes: Developing Meaningful Art Experiences for Young Children,” *Young Children*, Jan. 1996: p.82) If children envision how the world could be, perhaps they will begin to feel they have a role and a responsibility in creating that better world.

### Creating an Imaginary Place with Children

- Encourage children to create an ideal or imaginary place. They could use drawing, writing, drama, or a number of other arts activities. The place could be a community, a country, or the world. Emphasize that they are only limited by their imagination. If children have opportunities to talk about their own ideal world and hear other children talk about theirs, they can better understand other children's life experiences. Nearly 150 children at Forest View Elementary School in Durham, North Carolina, wrote and drew about their ideal place, which

was called Xanadu. Some of their writings and a mural by the children are included in the book *Children from Australia to Zimbabwe: A Photographic Journey around the World* by Maya Ajmera and Anna Rhesa Versola. The mural appears on the cover of the resource guide.

- Draw on resources from other cultures and countries to help children think creatively about what this place could be like and what it would be like to live there. You may want to use images from resources listed in the guide. For example, one of the books listed in the guide, Ann Morris's *Houses and Homes*, includes a photograph taken in Thailand. The book explains that the people in this area of the country use boats to go from place to place and build their houses on poles to keep them above water. Ask children what the environment would be like in their imaginary place and how that would affect their lives. How would people travel, and where would they live?

- Ask them to write or draw about things they could do to help other children. Children may like to see what other children around the globe have expressed about this subject. The books listed in the guide under “Global Citizenship and the Arts” offer a variety of children's perspectives on different topics. UNICEF's homepage, also listed in the guide, includes an international forum for kids to express their opinions about issues that affect them.