Global Book Bag

**Title:** Armando and the Blue Tarp School  
**Authors:** Edith Hope Fine & Judith Pinkerton Josephson  
**Grade Levels:** 2-4  
**Global Competence:** Empathize with others

The goal of this book bag is to help students develop their empathy for those around them through the investigation of a community from which they are not so far removed geographically. As the quote from the School Library Journal states, “This well written text will be a revelation for those children who think that school is guaranteed.”

*Armando and the Blue Tarp School* is a fictional story based on a real person and events. In 1980, David Lynch, a special education teacher from New York came to volunteer in Tijuana, Baja California (Mexico), and began to teach lessons on his “blue tarp school” for needy children who lived near the local dump. The story sheds light on the challenges that those children and their families overcame to have that which many of us take for granted – the opportunity to attend school and learn.

**Bag Contents:**

*Armando and the Blue Tarp School*  
Composition book  
Pencil and eraser  
Crayons or colored pencils

**Directions:**

1. Read *Armando and the Blue Tarp School*.

2. As you read the book, use the composition book to write questions that you have about the events in the story and words you may not understand. Make sure you leave enough space between each question so that you can write answers to your questions (or maybe someone else can provide an answer when they read the book).

3. With an adult’s help, use your home or school digital device to watch the following short videos*:

   - Poor Schools in Tijuana (Lucas Family Foundation)  
     [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQgnaTJ9yTE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQgnaTJ9yTE)  
   - Paraguay’s "Recycled Orchestra" turns Trash into Music  
     [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzHj6Xqol0U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzHj6Xqol0U)
4. After viewing each video, discuss what you saw, thought, and felt while watching. Consider these questions:

- How is life for children in these places (Tijuana, Mexico and Catuera, Paraguay) similar or different from your life?
- How is school for children in these places similar or different from your school?
- Why is education important to people around the world?

5. Write a summary in the composition book about what you have learned, what you found interesting or surprising, and how you feel about education for children.

**Extended Learning**

1. Write a statement about education or school to share with your classmates.

2. Investigate and write about other “non-traditional” classrooms you can find through an Internet search.

3. Look for and participate in local opportunities where you can help others and write about the experience.

4. Discuss what it means to “empathize with others.”

* Note: Parents/guardians should preview these videos and use discretion when showing to young children and discussing living/learning conditions.