

Since the beginning of the year the 4eme students have been learning about alternative school systems and schools around the world. One section of work focused on the importance of having an education and how some children will go to any length to go to school, something the students witnessed in a few video clips entitled 'Some Dangerous Journeys to School.' These video clips sparked a debate amongst our 4emes on how important school is to them and many realised how fortunate they are to be able to attend school every day and travel either by car or van without much difficulty, like most children in first world countries.

Then we went on to learn about the work UNICEF is doing to help children around the world to continue their education, despite living either in a war zone or in an area that has been hit by a natural disaster. This UNICEF programme is called 'School in a Box'.

The 4eme students read articles on how UNICEF is using a large box containing all manner of things required to set up a mini school for many children worldwide. In this box there are workbooks and textbooks, pencils and rulers and the lid can be converted into a portable blackboard with the application of a special blackboard paint sent with the box. These 'School in a Box' boxes are often one of the first sets of educational supplies sent out to refugee camps. While escaping violence and war, school can be a valuable place to be. It gives a sense of hope to refugee communities and provides children caught up in disasters opportunities for further development.



After reading and discussing UNICEF's work, the 4eme students were faced with the task of creating their own 'School in a Box'. Taking the scenario of : 'Mauritius has been hit by a class 4 cyclone and it is impossible to go to school', the students had to imagine themselves going out and helping the community by educating children. The task included creating a box containing materials that they think are important to teach a specific age and also think about where they would teach the children. Our students met the challenge with great inspiration, creativity and precision. We enjoyed listening to a variety of ideas like teaching in a cave, in tents, on a boat and even a bus. Our students included the basic school materials in their boxes which even included handmade colouring books. Then there were those who went on to add puzzles and small musical instruments like whistles and small xylophones « so that the children could sing and have fun ». For the scientific students, a

small solar powerbank was included. We all had a lot of fun creating and presenting the boxes, but we also realised that even when disaster reigns, there is always hope.

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