Amazigh Children's Toys and Play Cultures

By Jean-Pierre Rossie

ABSTRACT

This article shows handmade toys, and the games in which they are used, by indigenous children from the large group of Amazigh peoples living in North Africa and the Sahara.

Key Words: play, toys and games, Amazigh, Shawia, Tuareg

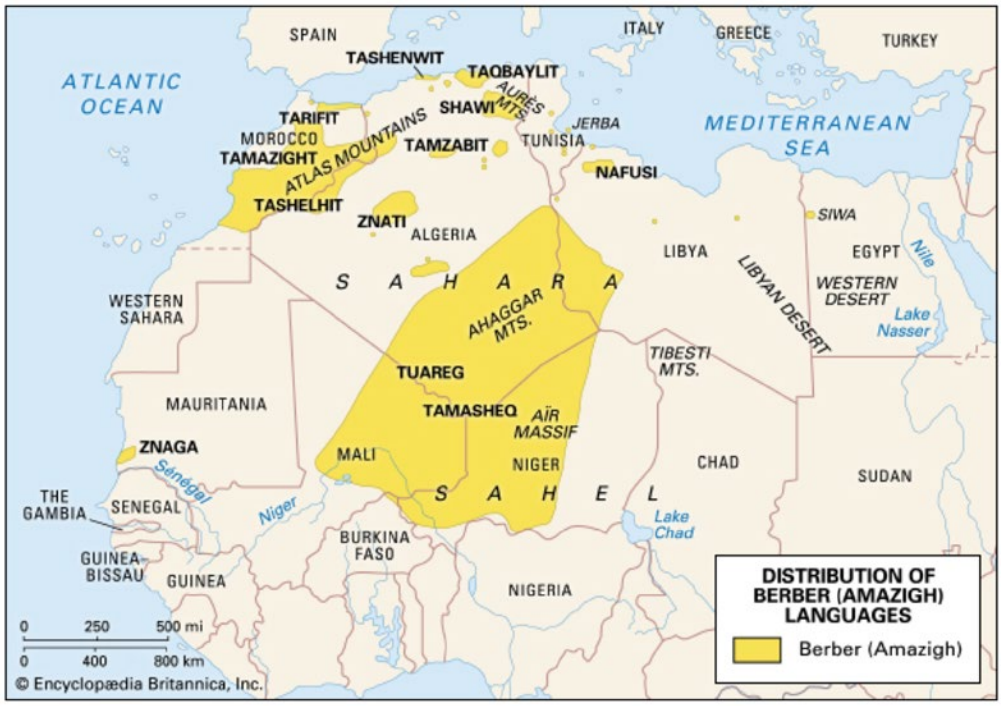
The Amazigh (also referred to as Berbers by outsiders) are the native inhabitants of Northwestern Africa with a history extending back in time for 10,000 years, before the beginning of the Christian era. They were in contact with the Greeks, Carthaginians, and Romans. The worldwide population of Amazigh is estimated to be as high as 50 million people. The populations mentioned in this article are the Anti-Atlas, High Atlas and Middle Atlas Amazigh in Morocco, the Kabyle of the Kabylia Mountains, the Shawia of the Aurès Mountains and the Mozabite of the Saharan Mzab Valley in Algeria, and the Tuareg living all over the Sahara Desert and the northern Sahel. Amazigh peoples are not only located in Morocco but also in Algeria, northern Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, northern Niger, Tunisia, Libya, and a part of western Egypt—essentially all across the northern tier of the continent of Africa.

The information on Amazigh children's toy and play cultures comes from the author's fieldwork in the Atlas Mountains (1992-present) and the examples from the other Amazigh communities

Amazigh children talking about their games, Anti-Atlas, 2007, photo Kh. Jariaa

were found in documents published in the first half of the 1900s. With few exceptions, these children live in rural areas where tradition and modernity go hand in hand but where the influence of the toy, entertainment and high tech industries and of globalization slowly or quickly overturns children's own ways of producing play materials. A PowerPoint presentation with additional photographs is available on the two websites mentioned in the References.

MAP of the mentioned Amazigh peoples



After an overview of these children's toy and play cultures of dolls, toy animals, toys referring to domestic life and to technical activities and of skill games, some sociocultural aspects will be discussed: creativity, signs and meanings, communication, interpersonal relations, continuity and change.

Children's toy making and play activities

The age of the children whose toys and games have been studied ranges from about three to about fifteen years. There is little or no information on babies and tots because, as a male researcher, I hardly have access to infants living closely with their mothers. Fortunately, since 2005, I could rely on the collaboration of Khalija Jariaa, an Anti-Atlas woman, who became a mainstay for my research on children in this region. Children mostly represent the source of information, but the memories of adolescents, adults and older people have also been used. This range of sources starting at the beginning of the 20th century and until today offers a view on the evolution of these children's play and toy cultures.

Since thousands of years ago until present times, children have been making toys with natural materials (such as sand, clay, stones, pebbles, flowers, plants, leaves, branches, sticks, reed, bark, ear of maize, nuts, dates, summer squash, potatoes, bones, horns, snail shells, hair, skin, intestines, dung and children's hair) or waste material (such as earthenware, wood, paper, cardboard, glass, plastic, rubber, metal, paint, makeup products, parts of toys, furniture, bicycles, cars, and, nowadays, also polystyrene packaging). The oldest toy made with waste material I know about was collected in 1935 and made by a Tuareg boy with a piece of wood and four round tin cans as wheels (Rossie, 2013, 122). However, child toymakers often combine natural and waste materials. When creating toys, rural

children use locally found objects as hand tools, e.g. stones or other heavy objects and the child's own teeth or other sharp objects.

Amazigh children's playgroups consist of family members and neighbors, which surely favors the communication of the childrens' culture. These children's toys and games are inspired by the world of the adults living in their communities. However, I view their play activities not as imitation but as an interpretation through children's eyes. In this context Brian Sutton-Smith wrote: "Play schematizes life, it alludes to life, it does not imitate life in any very strict sense... it is a dialectic which both mirrors and mocks reality but never escapes it" (1986, p. 141).

Dolls

Among the Moroccan Amazigh, the Kabyle, Shawia and Mozabite, during the 19th and 20th centuries and sometimes until today, girls, less often boys, use a cross-shaped frame of two reeds or sticks to dress it with rags or, since a few decades, with pieces of shiny packaging ***(Figure 1)***. This figure also shows the traditional coexistence of dolls with and without facial features:

Figure 1: Anti-Atlas dolls, 1998; Rossie, 2005a, 166-169; photo J.-P. Rossie

Tuareg children made two different types of dolls, the woman sitting in the tent, and the warrior or notable man possibly riding a camel ***(Figure 2)***.

Figure 2: Algerian Tuareg, about 1940; Rossie 2005a, 52-68/78-87; photo M. Delaplanche/D. Ponsard).

With few exceptions, the dolls themselves and the play activities for which they are used symbolize socially valued characters and activities. In the sphere of the male world, the doll becomes a bridegroom, camel rider, horseman, herdsman, warrior or nobleman. In the sphere of the female world, doll play refers to playing household roles, enacting festivities, especially weddings, staging a pregnancy, childbirth or burial. Girls sing, dance and tell riddles or stories during doll play. Moreover, they treat the dolls they made with a lot of indifference when the play activity is over and rarely reuse them for another make-believe play.

Around 1937, girls and boys created female dolls and used them in make-believe games (Rossie, 2005a, 107-109). This mention that Shawia boys regularly made female dolls, shows that one should be careful with generalizing statements about girl versus boy toys and play.

Toy animals

The toy animals made by Amazigh children represent domestic animals (e.g., dromedaries, horses, mules, donkeys, cows, zebus, sheep, goats, dogs, cats, rabbits and chickens), and wild animals (such as elephants, rats, turtles, birds, snakes, scorpions and fish).

The oldest toys in northern Africa are clay animals dating back to two thousand years. They were excavated in 1981 at the Inland Niger Delta in Mali at the southern border of the Sahara. These toy animals are special because their front legs are assembled in a single leg. The last example of a three-legged toy animal belonged to a Tuareg child and was mentioned in a book from 1958 (Rossie, 2005/2013, 83-88). It surely is remarkable to find such a two thousand-year-old, and probably much older, clay toy tradition in the southern part of the Sahara.

Shawia boys from the Aurès Mountains (Rossie, 2005b, 80-84/91-92) and Moroccan Amazigh boys and girls (Rossie, 2005/2019) enjoy playing with toy animals and sometimes with live animals. When creating such toys these last decades, children living in the Atlas Mountains often combine natural and waste material. A good example is the chicken created by an eight-year-old boy with a plastic bag, reed and feathers ***(Figure 3)***.

Figure 3: Anti-Atlas, 2007; Rossie, 2018, 166-169; photo Kh. Jariaa

Through play activities related to the animal world, rural children learn a lot about the natural, animal and human environment in which they grow up, an apprenticeship still important today.

Toys referring to domestic life

Creating toys and playing games related to adult life is strongly represented in Amazigh children's play world as it is with other North African and Saharan children (Rossie, 2008, 2019). This make-believe play not only embraces games referring

to household duties and subsistence activities but also to entertainments, rituals and feasts. The children's creativity is not limited to adults' everyday life but refers not only to tradition but also to modernity. The toy making and play activities, in which children recreate the life of their parents and other members of their family and community, familiarize them with the material culture, the ways of communication, the relationships, the economic activities, the customs and beliefs of their social group. Moreover, this socialization largely takes place through the children's own effort. These play activities are very often collective and open air games bringing together children from the same family and neighborhood in girls' or boys' playgroups, seldom in mixed playgroups.

The tradition of modeling toys in clay-earth, drying them in the shade, baking them in mother's bread oven or in an oven made by girls, and possibly decorating them, is still popular in the Atlas Mountains' villages. Preferably during a rainy period, girls, and less often boys, model large series of miniature toy utensils, household items and furniture ***(Figure 4).***

Toys referring to technical activities

The themes arising in the games and toys related to technical activities of Amazigh children in Morocco as well as among the Kabyle, Mozabite, Shawia and Tuareg peoples, are very varied but they can be divided in three groups: hunting and fighting, transport and communication (Rossie, 2013).

No doubt that games and toys referring to these three groups are the preserve of boys but girls sometimes make such toys and play with them. This gender differentiation surely reflects the division of Amazigh adults' duties into male and female occupations.

The toys used in this make-believe play are created with a lot of natural and waste material. However, these last decades the use of waste material became prevalent. Amazigh and other North African and Saharan children are very prompt in using whatever new waste material becomes available in their environment. One of the recent examples is the use of polystyrene for making weapons, cars, busses or airplanes (Rossie, 2013, 80, 149, 173, 231) ***(Figure 5).***

Figure 4: six-year-old girl playing household and baking bread, Anti-Atlas, 2002; Rossie, 2008, 213; photo J.-P. Rossie):

Figure 5: car made by a seven-year-old boy, Anti-Atlas; Rossie, 356-358' photo J.-P. Rossie

Girls also use pieces of polystyrene packaging to make dolls or a hospital bed (Rossie, 2005a, 176; 41, 54). Toys created for games referring to transport and communication technology show that Anti-Atlas children closely follow recent technological developments, e.g., in about 2005 boys and girls started modeling their own digital phone in clay (Rossie, 2013, 246-247).

Toys for games of skill

To play some games of skill Amazigh children do not need toys and play materials, but for several other ones they must use different play materials and/or make toys. Self-made toys or materials children find locally are, among others, balls, bows and arrows, hoops, hopscotch and other designs, kites, musical instruments, seesaws, skateboards, skipping and other ropes, slingshots, spinning wheels, stones, swings, stilts, strings, tops and windmills. Natural and waste materials are used in making these toys, e.g. tops modeled with clay and a soccer table created with different waste materials ***(Figure 6).***

Figure 6: playing on a self-made table soccer, High Atlas, 1994; photo J.-P. Rossie

Amazigh children play many games of physical skill, e.g. games of dexterity, aiming, equilibrium, strength, fighting, speed, self-control, teasing, daring, ball games and games using the natural elements. They also play games of intellectual skill, e.g., games of wit, insight, strategy and board games. Several games of skill are based on cooperation between playmates and some contain an element of competition. However, the same game can serve both purposes following the wish of the playgroup members. Some games of skill are typical for girls and others for boys, but a lot are played by both sexes, mostly in separate playgroups. These games can be played alone or in a group, for the fun of the exercise or to show one's skills, and occasionally they become competitive games.

The games of skill and the self-made toys used for them are directly related to the ecological environment in which the children grow up. Factors such as climate, relief, desert, rural or urban areas, availability or lack of water and vegetation directly influence the possibilities for playing and making toys. Factors related to the human environment are not less important, among which the customs, norms and beliefs of the society, the family and community organization, the means of subsistence, the role of age, sex and social group and the impact of environmental, technological and sociocultural change.

Sociocultural aspects of Amazigh children's toy and play cultures

The play and toy cultures of Amazigh peoples belong to the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and the communication to the next generation of these heritages is largely the

responsibility of older children and peers. This communication not only includes games and toys but also the non-verbal and verbal transmission of knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, behavior, skills, sensibilities and emotions related to toy-making and play activities. These children's play is very important for their informal learning and for their integration into the family and community. However, these children do not play to become culturally and socially adapted nor to become skilled, but for the well-being and pleasure it offers them.

Communication in toy making and play

Amazigh children's toys are objects intentionally designed by children for children, rarely by adults for children. Girls and boys alike create dolls mostly representing adults in socially esteemed roles, e.g., Tuareg warriors, Amazigh brides or bridegrooms, mothers and grandmothers. They also make valued items such as miniature household items and furniture, musical instruments, vehicles and more recently airplanes, helicopters and digital phones.

An interesting aspect of giving meanings to toys and transmitting these to others is the way Atlas children bestow new significations on traditional toys and imported dolls. For example, when a reed toy with a turning blade becomes a helicopter or when a slender plastic doll becomes a traditional well-fed woman because it is being dressed in hand sewn local outerwear. Making a traditional toy to sell it to tourists is rather exceptional in the Atlas Mountains even today. I know only one exception, namely the animal toys boys weave with palm leaves and sell to tourists at the spectacular Todgha Gorges in the eastern part of the High Atlas Mountains. When I visited that area in 1992 this was already the case and outside the touristic season one could pick up several of these thrown away, unsold toy animals.

When making toys children must look for specific material in relation to particular purposes. When analyzing North African and Saharan toys the first aspect I thought about was shape and its role in children's choice of materials. A good example is shown to the right of Figure 2, where the jawbone of a goat or sheep is used as basis for creating a camel or a horse. The possibility of holding the elongated part of the bone in a child's hand makes it easy to imitate the animal's movements and the hollow on top of the jawbone is useful to put a toy saddle and a rider on. Sometimes it is a part of the object that makes it important, like when High Atlas girls give very long hair to their reed doll by choosing a reed with long green leaves at its top which they split with their finger nails into small strips.

The difference between the non-durability of most toys created by Amazigh children and the durability of toys from the toy industries should be stressed. Traditional child-made toys are mostly not intended to be long lasting. On the contrary, when the play activity stops, the toy becomes an object that can be left on the spot or thrown away. Moreover, making a new toy is seen as part of the play activity.

Non-verbal communication, especially visual communication, gestures and movements, is important in the playful communication between Amazigh children but verbal communication, through monologues, dialogues and songs, is more or less present. Gilles Brougère writes on playgroups:

> *There has to be agreement not only initially but in pretend games throughout a play process, which is characterized by a series of decisions. These decisions have to be communicated by the players to become acts of play on condition that they are agreed with the other player(s). Consequently, play forces the child to make use of a variety of complex abilities in the area of communication (1994, 284-285).*

In dolls and doll play, for example, a lot of symbols, significations, esthetic, social and moral values are transmitted from one generation to the next and interiorized by the children in a playful way. Traditional toys and games still made and played today in the Anti-Atlas rural areas show that the communication of the local toy and play culture between older and younger children functions well. However, it is unknown how far this still is the case in other Amazigh regions, as I did not come across relevant recent research.

Through their toy making and play activities Amazigh and other North African and Saharan children have been developing their interpretation of the adult material world, of female and male roles and duties, of festivities and rituals, of convictions, beliefs and morals. Yet, children are not only quickly adapting to internal and external changes but sometimes even advancing these changes. In 2002 for example, in a make-believe play about the wedding feast, the bride doll refers to traditional occupations. However, during this game, two Anti-Atlas village children use a mobile phone toy, in reference to high tech preoccupations at a time when no mobile phone network was locally available.

The basic role in this communication does not belong to adults but to children. It occurs between older and younger children and between peers, whereby long lasting playgroups based on family and neighbour relationships play an important role. Play areas in villages and popular quarter streets of towns are real laboratories for development. It is there that children from the age of about three, daily interact with children of their own age, older children and sometimes adolescents. Yet, in this process, verbal instruction is rather seldom and learning how to do and how to behave is largely dependent on observation, participation and demonstration.

Children's creativity in toy making and playing

Amazigh girls and boys not only show fidelity to the traditional canons of the local play culture but also show much creativity. When looking for creativity in the toys they make and in their games, an important distinction should be made between an individual and a collective creativity. In the first years of my research, I was inclined to stress children's collective creativity in these regions. However, the more I learned on Moroccan children, the more I became aware that beneath this apparent similarity of toys and games particular to each community, there were individual variations according to each child or small playgroup. Because of the significant importance of Amazigh children's playgroups, I put forward the hypothesis that their creativity in making toys and playing with them is more often expressed through children's interactions within playgroups rather than in the case of isolated players. However, individual creativity regularly exists and this is easily attested by asking local children who is a specialist in making dolls or

vehicles and who excels in one or the other game of skill; the reply indicated a particular girl or boy.

Gerhard Kubik's statement on children's creativity in sub-Saharan Africa can be applied to North African and Saharan Amazigh children as well:

> *The culture of sub-Saharan Africa emphasizes the children's huge creative potential, despite the ephemeral nature of most of the objects: things are made, but just as quickly discarded. In many areas, the children's creativity is allowed to be expressed autonomously and without limitations, because adults are usually not interested and intervene only when they feel disturbed or threatened (1997: 117).*

The interested reader will find more information and concrete examples of Amazigh children's creativity in two chapters (Rossie, 2005/2013, 93-103; and Rossie, 2008, 364-371).

Children's interpersonal relations in play and playgroups

In Amazigh regions in general, and in the Atlas Mountains in particular, children's leisure activities are very often outdoor and collective. From the age of about three years onwards, playgroups become, along with family, the basic social groups for children. Mixed playgroups with girls and boys up to about six-years-old are regularly under the supervision of an older girl, exceptionally of an older boy, whereby the young ones engage in parallel or collaborative play. What young children experience and learn through their playful relations with same age or older children is without any doubt of fundamental importance for their development and for the relationships they will build out as adolescents and adults. Moreover, the close contacts between children in playgroups strongly influence their socialization and the development of skills, intelligence, communication, worldviews, beliefs and morals. In such children's societies, girls and boys learn most games, venture to make toys, integrate the rules managing playgroups and gender differences, learn the non-verbal and verbal child culture, and so on. In small children's playgroups supervised by an older girl or possibly an older boy, as well as in playgroups formed by children of primary school age, situations of informal learning regularly occur especially when creating toys.

About the age of six years, children progressively escape the control of an older child and start organising their own playgroups with peers, although there can be some difference in age in such peer groups. The fact that peer groups are based on kinship and neighbourhood strengthens the cohesion between its members. From that moment on, comrades of age become an important reference group and long-lasting friendships are built that may continue into adulthood. Although mostly composed of same sex children, mixed groups can occasionally be found. Yet, in older girls' playgroups one can find small boys and girls they are caring for.

Playgroups organized according to sex are a key factor in children's lives from the age of about seven years. This gender differentiation is clearly seen in make-believe play as children mostly find inspiration in the local adult world with its separation into male and female spheres. So, dinner play and games linked to household tasks and wedding feasts are girls' games in which small boys can participate. Nevertheless, examples from the Moroccan Atlas Mountains refer to places where boys like to model toy utensils and hand mills but

not necessarily for playing dinner or household. On the contrary, a few examples from the Anti-Atlas show that some boys made this type of clay toys to sell them to girls. Play referring to male subsistence activities belongs to the boys' games, yet girls sometimes also play them. The play activities related to music, dance, rituals and feasts are girl games as well as boy games. The same gender division is found in games of skill but seemingly in a less pronounced way. Some of my Amazigh female informants stressed that as a child they liked to play together with their brothers, cousins and other boys from the neighborhood, for example, football or climbing trees. This makes it clear that the local cultural norms are not the only determining factors in children's play but that the personality and wishes of the players must also be taken into account. Moreover, there is no doubt that Amazigh girls more easily play boy games than boys play girl games.

Especially from the age of about eight years, the freedom of movement of girls and boys is strikingly different. Normally, one finds girls' playgroups nearby their homes or at least at a surveyable distance from home. Two reasons explain this situation: the girls should remain available for helping in the household and teenage girls must remain under closer supervision than teenage boys. Boys' playgroups can be found further away, the distance broadening as the boys become older, like in the case of an Anti-Atlas group of boys playing in the sea at two hours walking from their village.

Gender mixed playgroups sometimes exist but when children are about eight years it is often a question of parallel play in which girls play female roles and boys male roles. It should also be stressed that Amazigh girls more easily play boy games than boys play girl games.

The intergenerational transmission of Amazigh children's culture is based on contacts between older children or adolescents and young children, seldom between adults and children. Adults rarely interfere in children's play except when children disturb a lot, ask for help, or when a situation becomes dangerous. This non-interfering or even indifferent attitude to children's toy making and play is not only the case in Atlas families but also among most Moroccan preschool and primary school teachers. Yet, there is one special period in a year when Moroccan parents and other adults traditionally offer toys, sweets and new clothes to children. This is Ashura, a ten-day feast at the beginning of the Muslim year.

Changing children's toy and play cultures

Amazigh children's use of natural materials to create toys has been prominent for a very long time but these last decades, waste and imported materials became prevalent. Moreover, children are very quick in finding ways to use new materials that become available to them for making toys, such as shining gift packaging and polystyrene packaging. Using waste and imported materials however is not a recent phenomenon. For example, older girls from Mozabite families in the Algerian Sahara already used in the 1920s European pasteboard heads to make a type of dolls, which is exceptional in Northern Africa. The girls' fathers, almost all tradesmen, imported these doll heads from the North of Algeria. Another example from the same population and the same period refers to little households imported from Europe (Rossie, 2005a, 105 and 2008, 167).

My information on the Anti-Atlas villages shows

that plastic dolls slowly infiltrate the children's playgroups and that this doll and the traditional self-made doll still coexist. However, it remains to be seen for how long the traditional doll will survive. The import from China of very slender dolls does not only disable the use of the cross-shaped doll structure in reed or branches but at the same time proposes a fundamental change in the local vision of the ideal female body. These "Barbie-like" dolls in High Atlas communities are associated with a 'living skeleton'. A woman with such a figure is viewed, among older people, as a very lean woman whose appearance is to be attributed to one of the following pitiful conditions: poverty, sickness, having social or emotional problems, if not a combination of these.

The influence of the toy industry, especially from China, is even more striking in respect to plastic toys related to household, playing music, combat, transport and communication (e.g., utensils, drums, flutes, guitars, weapons, cars, trucks, boats, telephones and electronic toys). These imported plastic toys are gaining importance through factors lying outside Amazigh children's toy and play cultures: Since they are purchased and as such have a financial value; they are imported and thus belong to the outside world; they still are rare items in villages and therefore they bring prestige to those who have them and longing to those who do not have them. But maybe more importantly, they very often are a gift from an adult to a child, something that was only exceptionally done in former times.

In Amazigh children's play from the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21th century, the relation between play, on the one hand, and reality, on the other, is really strong. From rural Morocco, I can offer no examples of games and toys referring to a fantasy or virtual world. In opposition to this, it can be said that the inspiration for pretend play comes, today more than in the past, from situations and information that are not related to local life. Television and smartphones bring Amazigh children in contact with the way people eat, dress, play, go to school, travel and celebrate in North African and foreign countries. Watching news from all over the world and movies and comics, i.e. from Brazil, Egypt, Japan, Turkey and the United States, expose them to divergent multicultural information. European tourists and tourists of Moroccan origin living abroad also influence these children's ideas and behaviour. Their influence is obvious in recent Anti-Atlas girls' doll play (Rossie and Daoumani 2018, 38-39, 94-105).

Notwithstanding the evolution of Atlas children's play heritage away from tradition, many play and toy-making activities popular among their grandparents are nowadays regularly found in these rural communities. However, it remains to be seen what the result will be in one or two decades of recent technological and sociocultural changes.

Using indigenous play and toy heritages for pedagogical and sociocultural purposes

International organizations promoting the development of Third World children and stimulating a locally adapted educational system put forward the following principles:

- Respecting local child and family identities and cultures;
- Relating actions to families and local environments in which children grow up;
- Using young children's mother tongue;
- Involving children in their development by

taking into account their experiences;

• Stimulating children's resilience;

• Helping children to develop physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually and morally through playful activities.

These principles clearly demonstrate the need to respect, study, promote and use children's cultures not only in education, but also in the strategies of organizations addressing children, women and families. So, I like to add to *Children are the future of a country another saying, namely Development neglecting children's participation has no future.* Knowing that games and toys as well as other forms of entertainment, like storytelling, music, dance and feasts, are very important in children's lives, one should recognize their value for an ecologically, culturally, socially and educationally adapted development.

Formal and informal education can surely benefit from a well-considered use of play, games and toys. If this is true for Moroccan schools, where Arabic is the language used, this is even more so when the educational system needs to adapt to Amazigh-speaking children enrolled in preschool or primary school. Talking with children in their own language about play and toy-making activities will establish a positive relationship between teachers and children and reduce the gap with local children and families. It certainly is indicated to start from the knowledge children acquired about their natural and human environment to teach lessons about these topics. The information on children's play teachers can gather can be used to develop lessons on many subjects. The verbal component of games—such as specific words and expressions, riddles, dialogues and songs—represents a gold mine for learning languages. Several games of skill developing dexterity, equilibrium, suppleness, speed, strength and self-control can be included in the curriculum. Two Indian scholars, Arvind Gupta and Sudarshan Khanna, show how experiences gained in creating toys are useful for the technical and scientific training of children.

A recent evaluation by the Moroccan Ministry of Education and UNICEF offers a diagnosis of the preschool establishments and realistic proposals to ameliorate the Moroccan preschool (GEF, 2014). Comparing the role of play activities in Moroccan preschools with the situation in other countries, this study stresses that all analysed models show that play activities in the preschool are fundamental (2014, 7-8). It also states that in about 80% of the Moroccan preschools, play is not a priority, as compared to reading and writing (2014, 13). In the conclusions one reads that a major obstacle for a high quality and generalised preschool education in Morocco comes from a policy lacking educational principles and clear values appropriate for these children, and where learning through play is not a pedagogical priority.

It should be emphasized that efforts in Morocco and other North African and Saharan countries to change mentalities about the pedagogical value of local play and toy heritages need to be complemented with campaigns to change parents' ideas towards this new strategy. Indeed, a member of Alliance of Labor Training and Action for Children (ATFALE), a non-governmental organization promoting quality preschools in Morocco, wrote that not only the pedagogical staff but also parents demonstrate a negative attitude towards children's play and toys in school (Bouzoubaâ, 1998, 16).

Intercultural and global education, a pedagogical field of growing importance, is discussed through the author's attempts of using Moroccan Amazigh-speaking and Arabic-speaking children's toy making and play activities for workshops with children, children and adult family members, pupils, students, teachers in training, appointed teachers and volunteers. These activities took place in museums, toy libraries, children's libraries, preschools, primary and high schools and in sociocultural associations in Argentina, Belgium, France, Greece, Italy and Morocco (Rossie, 2005/2013, 205-209; Rossie, 2013, 269-289).

The universality of the major categories of games such as pretend play, construction play, games of skill, games of chance and of the toys used in these games, favours a comparative approach. During workshops it has been quite easy to stimulate insight, empathy and creativity in children, adolescents and adults by showing them the diversity and creativity in the Atlas Mountains and other rural children's play culture. The positive image of African children transmitted in such workshops contrasts with the often negative images of miserable or starving African children shown in the media.

The reader will find examples of using children's play and toy heritages in European and South American countries together with several photos in my publications (Rossie, 1984; 2005/2013, 187-204; 2013, 262-268). Here follow some outstanding examples from this last decade.

In July 2008, the Museum of Childhood in the Greek town Nafplion invited me to develop an educational program related to Anti-Atlas children's play heritage. Inspired by toys Amazigh children had made, Nafplion children between six and twelve years old created their own toys during six workshops. These children made masks and dolls with natural and waste material they searched in the park surrounding the museum. Since then, using natural and waste material to create masks, dolls and possibly other such toys, has been a recurrent theme in my workshops up to the last one organised for children and their family members in the Musée du Jouet de Moirans-en-Montagne in 2014.

Two outstanding events have marked these intercultural activities. The first one took place in Argentina at the end of October 2010 at the Instituto de Formacion Docentes de Bariloche where I was asked to intervene in the training of their students and to show the possibilities of using children's play and toy cultures not only for a more holistic children's development but also for promoting intercultural and international understanding.

In order to give this message a more concrete expression, a workshop in creating toys with natural and waste material as Amazigh children do, was planned with pupils, teachers in training and appointed teachers. After my stay in Bariloche, similar workshops have been organised in Neuquén, another Argentinian town, in a primary school, a centre for professional education and a teacher training institution. The enthusiasm of the children and adolescents participating in these activities has been inspiring and stimulating.

The second example is special because the workshop was integrated into a larger project made possible by the author's gift of about hundred Anti-Atlas children's toys to the Associazione Lucertola Ludens of Ravenna in Italy. This project was called I Giocattoli in valigia because I brought them in a luggage from southern Morocco to Ravenna. When staying in Ravenna in September 2011, I conducted

a training seminar and a workshop for children and their parents who created dolls and cars with natural and waste material.

Next to organising workshops or seminars, I donated about 1,200 toys, mostly created by Moroccan Amazigh children, to museums and sociocultural organisations in Australia, Belgium, France, Italy, Morocco and Portugal. The major reasons to offer these toys to institutions outside Morocco are the preservation and exposure of this vanishing children's culture, the lack of interest of Moroccan cultural institutions and the integration of these remarkable artefacts into the cultural heritage of humanity.

I would like to emphasise the necessity of linking an intercultural approach to play, into which my research fits, to a playful approach to the intercultural. This is essential, because today's individuals cannot survive in a multicultural and interdependent world if they do not understand the universality and the specificity of the living conditions in their own group and in other societies. Using children's play and toy heritages from all over the world for pedagogical and sociocultural activities offers a non-threatening, positive and joyful way to relate children, adolescents and even adults to other ways of life and to the natural and sociocultural environment in which populations thrive.

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