

## Pemba's story

My name is Pemba and I am nine years old.

I live with my mum and dad, my big sister who is 15 years old and my little brother who is five.

My house has one big room where we all eat and spend time together. This is the room where we play and do homework and it has the fire where we cook our meals. I also sleep in this room with my sister and brother.

Our house has one other smaller room. My mum and dad sleep in there.

My dad works as a carpenter, which means he makes and fixes wooden furniture. My mum weaves baskets to sell and grows vegetable to sell and for us all to eat.

The first thing I do in the morning is help my big sister with chores. We help to get breakfast ready and wash the dishes.

I eat a large breakfast of *Dal Bhat*, which is a soup made from lentils. I have this with rice and *tarkari*, which is a vegetable curry. We don't eat at school but I have something to eat when I get home from school at about 4pm.

In the morning, before I go to school, I usually have some homework to finish. If she has time, my big sister helps me with my homework. But she also has to collect water from the nearby tap so we have water we can use in our home.

I use my reflection in the window to do my hair and then I wait by the window to spot my best friend who lives further down the valley.

When my best friend reaches my house we walk to school with my sister and some of our friends.

School starts at 9.45am. Some children have to walk a long way to get to school.

When we get to school day we have assembly and then do morning exercises known as 'brain gym'.

After school I like to play kitchen and cooking at home. I also like to help my mum.

My favourite subject at school is social studies and I want to be a teacher at when I grow up.

I really like school, it's important that I go to school and work hard so I can do well in my exams.

My mum didn't go to school but she says education is the most important thing. She says if I work hard at school then I can be whatever I dream of when I grow up.

I am very lucky to be able to go to school.



## Discussion questions

**Photo 2** – Questions: what do you think this area of Pemba’s home is used for? Why do you think Pemba and her brother are playing here? Note: This is the open fire for cooking and heating the home. The open fire is usually the only source of heating so this will be the warmest part of the house.

**Photo 3** – Questions: What is Pemba’s mum doing? What else can you see in the room? Notes: Pemba’s home is typical for this region with one large room for cooking, playing, living, eating and sleeping. Pemba’s parents have a separate bedroom, but many families will all sleep in one room. Pemba and her siblings all sleep together in this room. Pemba’s mum is weaving baskets to sell at the market.

**Photo 6:** Question: What do you think Pemba’s sister is doing in this photo? Notes: Pemba’s 15-year old sister helps collect water in the morning. The Himalayan Trust helped Lukla village install a water system that supplies most homes in Lukla. This home doesn’t have the water supply to the house but there is a tap nearby that the family can use to collect safe water. Many other villages aren’t so lucky and residents will need to walk several kilometres to the nearest water source.

**Photo 8:** Pemba is doing her hair. Is she using a mirror? Note: Pemba tells us she uses her reflection in the window to do her hair. The family don’t have a mirror in the house.

**Photo 9 and 10:** Pemba is walking to school – do you think she could travel by car or by bus? Note: There are no roads in the area just cobbled and dirt tracks, so people must travel on foot. Goods must also be carried either on foot or by yaks or mules.

**Photo 11:** Pemba’s school day starts with “brain gym” exercise and a school assembly. Why do you think they are having assembly outside? Note: The schools are usually a cluster of small classroom buildings. It is unusual for a school in the region to have an assembly hall or a room big enough for the whole school to fit into.

Looking at the photos 2-8, can you see similarities and some differences between Pemba’s home your own home? Families in the Himalayas share one large room for cooking, eating, living and sleeping. Many families believe that living closely together like this helps build and maintain strong family relationships. Do you share a bedroom or do you have your own room? Do you agree that sharing space helps build a good relationship with your family? Talk to your family and see what they think too!

Looking at photos 12 and 13, can you see some similarities and some differences between Pemba’s classroom and your classroom?

Pemba says some children walk several kilometres to get to school. How do you get to school? How far do you have to travel? What do you do in bad weather? Look at the photos of Pemba’s journey to school – do you think she could travel by car or by bus?

Pemba says she feels lucky to be able to go to school? How do you feel about going to school? What would you do if you didn’t go to school?

Write to Pemba to tell her about your family, your home and what you do on school day mornings. What do you have for breakfast? How do you get to school? Make sure you explain to Pemba about foods, places, or activities that you think might be different here in New Zealand.