3D Printers Used to Make Houses for Community

What is 3D printing?

- A 3D printer follows a computer design to print layers of material upon each other, until a 3D object is created.

- 3D printers can be programmed to make a whole range of objects, from plastic cups to buildings.

Illustration: A 3D house being printed.

Was your home built using bricks and mortar? Maybe concrete blocks or wood? Or was it poured out of a hose?

Two organisations have teamed up to use the cutting-edge technology of 3D printing. They are building houses for a community in Tabasco, Mexico.

A non-profit organisation, called New Story, help build homes for people in need. They have already built over 2500 homes using normal building supplies.

However, they recently joined forces with a 3D printing company, called ICON, to help build even more homes.

The 3D printer they are using resembles a car wash. Although, instead of spraying water and spinning brushes, this machine slides back and forth, pouring concrete out of a hose. The concrete looks like an enormous grey ice cream.

You wouldn't want to eat it, though! The concrete rapidly pours in a special pattern which gets higher and higher to create the walls. Local builders add a roof, doors and windows, to complete the home. The impressive machine begins work on the next property.

Each home has a living room, bathroom, kitchen and two bedrooms. They are designed to shelter a family from the wind and rain, and also to stand up to earthquakes!
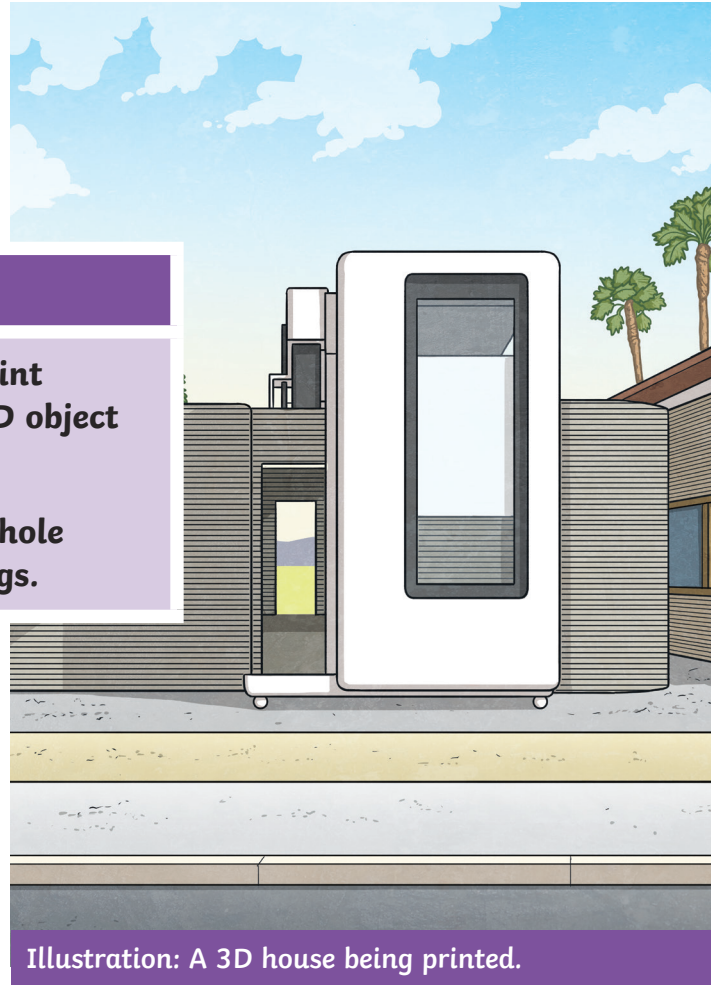
The United Nations says the world's population will increase to almost 10 billion by 2050. New Story's website states that by then, roughly 3 billion people will be living without access to adequate housing.

Brett Hagler, who works for the charity, hopes to learn from the process. He said that he hopes they can "share the technology... to help everyone improve and reach families faster."

And who knows, maybe even more homes will be made from 3D printers in the future?

Glossary

community	All the people who live in a particular place.
non-profit	Any extra money gets spent on those who need it most.
resembles	To look like something.
access	To be able to get something.