



Africa – a continent of contrasts

Lesson 6: Education in Ghana – moving forward.

Key Ideas:

- a) Ghana is a country in west Africa
- b) Ghana is an example of a successful African nation. In spite of problems and challenges, it has made progress and improved the lives of the majority of the people in recent years.
- c) Education is a key area of development in Ghana and improvements in provision will have a direct impact on people's lives as well as the future of the country.

Starter activity:

Education photo pair

Show the two photos (available as a PowerPoint slideshow) which show aspects of education in Ghana. Ask the students what questions they would like to ask about the photos.

Main activity:

Rather than trying to look at the education system as a whole, it is better with younger students to try and take a particular aspect as a focus. With the education system, it is suggested that there are two possible strands: A typical school day for a student in Ghana and The School Feeding Programme.

If you wanted to look at a further aspect of the improvement in services in Ghana and the impact on people's lives, then the health service is good example. With the health service, it is suggested that a useful focus is malaria which is the largest single cause of death in Ghana. A great deal has been done, with the assistance of a number of NGOs, to deal with this problem.

Task 1: A typical school day for a student in Ghana

A key resource is the document *Ghana Education – my typical school day stories* (available as a Word download). These are excellent first-hand accounts from young students in Ghana and they give a vivid insight into the daily lives of these young people as well as into their school experiences. The language is very accessible and students of most abilities should be able to use this resource as a piece of primary evidence. It also includes two example timetables and a few photos. A second resource is a video split into two files which shows young Ghanaian students talking about play activities and games. The quality of spoken English is very high and is itself impressive. The video can be accessed on the [Plan-Ed website](#).

In this task, students complete a descriptive writing task and make comparisons between their typical school day and that of a student in Ghana. Following this, they consider the types of courses and qualifications that Ghanaian students might take when they reach the age of 16 years, and how this prepares them for their working lives.

Task 2: The School Feeding Programme

The following links provide information about the Ghana School Feeding Programme:

[School Feeding Programme article 1](#)

[School Feeding Programme article 2](#)

[School Feeding Programme article 3](#)

The first article is from 2006 when the details of the scheme were outlined at a meeting in the Netherlands the government of which country has contributed a large of aid money to this project. The second article is from the Accra Mail in January 2008 and highlights some of the benefits of this ambitious programme – “The school feeding programme in Ghana has increased children's nutritional status, improved school attendance (particularly girls), increased school enrolment and retention, and more recently, addressed community health problems.” The third article sadly reflects a problem still all too common in Ghana – corruption – and ironically is a concern that was voiced in the 2006 article.

At a time when ‘school dinners’ in the UK are declining in popularity, these articles provide an interesting insight into the importance of providing food for schoolchildren in at least the most deprived areas of this developing country. Ironically, the success of the feeding programme in the poorest areas of northern Ghana has highlighted the problem of inadequate provision of classrooms and teachers as more children have been encouraged into schools.

In this activity, students consider the effects of the programme on school attendance and consider the knock-on effects of such a scheme both within schools and in the wider community.

Plenary

In terms of the work still to be done to meet the Millennium Development Goal of ‘achieving universal primary education’ Ghana still has an uphill struggle. The general data shown below provides an optimistic picture but the Word document *Primary School Attendance* shows the wide variations that exist beneath the average figures for the country. Working out how the remaining children will be encouraged into school is a tricky question – the adults in Ghana are not sure of the answer – perhaps our students will have some enterprising or maybe just some common sense solutions.

Ghana – national data for primary school attendance

(Millennium Development Goal = 100%)

1991	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
53.5	57.4	60.9	56.1	58.9	61.7	57.8	64.7	64.5	71.9

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Additional resources:

US Aid - Africa Education Initiative

A pair of videos looking at US Aid education projects (has a useful transcript):
http://www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan_africa/initiatives/aei_video/

Plan-Ed Ghana resources

A pair of videos looking at the games played by Ghanaian children:
<http://tiny.cc/p3rEq>

All four of these videos can be downloaded for viewing offline.