

Makutano Junction

A Kenyan TV soap opera



Activity

Helping you develop the **Global Dimension** across the **curriculum**

1 Exploring Kenya

Activity description

A class based activity exploring where we get our information about and perceptions of Kenya from. It then uses Makutano Junction to examine and challenge those images or perceptions, and leads on to researching other sources of information, and comparing them.

Aims

To encourage students to think about what they know about Kenya, and to challenge any stereotypes they may have. To explore what shapes our understanding

of particular places or communities, and how that effects our relationships with them.

Curriculum links

- Citizenship KS3 and KS4:
1.3 Identities and diversity: living together in the UK
- Geography KS3:
1.1 Place
1.7 Cultural understanding and diversity
- ICT 3 and 4:
1.5 Critical evaluation

Further details of how this activity meets requirements of the new Secondary Curriculum appear on the Curriculum Links table. For subjects outside the statutory curriculum, check your own exam board for their requirements. For general information on the Global Dimension across the curriculum, see www.globaldimension.org.uk

What you need?

- Outline map of Kenya and the UK
- Access to other sources of information about Kenya – on line, or in the library etc.
- Background to Kenya Supplementary Sheet

GLOBAL DIMENSION

Underlying the concept of a global dimension to the curriculum are **eight key concepts**. The following three are covered by this activity:



Citizenship – gaining the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to become informed, active and responsible global citizens.



Diversity – understanding and respecting differences and relating these to our common humanity.



Values and Perceptions – developing a critical evaluation of images of the developing world and an appreciation of the effect these have on people's attitudes and values.

The other five key concepts which can be explored using other Makutano Junction activities are :

Social Justice

Sustainable Development

Interdependence

Conflict Resolution

Human Rights

Find out more: www.globaldimension.org.uk

Top Tips

- It would be good to do this activity early on in the Makutano project to encourage the students to realise that what they see happening in Makutano Junction does not necessarily happen all the time all over Kenya.
- The week before the lesson, you could ask the students to make a note of any information they have, see or read about Kenya.
- It is important to emphasise that there is great diversity within countries, both in the UK and Kenya.

What you do

- 1 Give each student a blank outline map of Kenya. Ask them to write or draw anything they know or think about Kenya inside the map outline. Give them just 3–4 minutes to do this. Then ask them to think about how they know or why they think that, and write these sources of information outside the map outline, linked to the information inside. Or do this as a class discussion, using a big version of the map on the board.
- 2 Watch an episode or half an episode of Makutano Junction, Series 2, Episode 13, first half.
- 3 Ask the students what they learned about Kenya and people in Kenya from watching the episode. Write these on a big version of the Kenya map, or the whiteboard. See how they differ from previous perceptions. Discuss anything striking or surprising.
- 4 Now ask the students what British soap operas they watch. Pick one that most have heard of or watched. Ask someone to describe it briefly – where it is set, what happens, what life is like – or better still watch a snippet of an episode. Present an outline of the UK on the board. Ask the students to imagine themselves to be Kenyan school children, who had never been to the UK, and whose information about the UK comes mainly from watching that TV soap. What assumptions would they make about England and the way we live? Would those assumptions be true of your life here in 'x' school/community? What other information would you like to recommend to them to get a more accurate picture of what your life is like?
- 5 Now think about other sources of information that are available to you to find out more about Kenya. List these. They might include the TV news, other TV programmes, wildlife programmes, Makutano Junction, newspapers, internet, friends who have visited, family who live there, school projects, school links, watching athletics etc. The students split into small groups, each taking a source of information. They look critically at the context of that information – whose perspective does it represent? Whose story does it tell? Does it give the whole picture? Does it favour any particular group? What does it leave out? How much do you trust the information? How could you find out more?

6 Each group presents their thoughts back to the class. Ask them to think carefully about anything they see or hear about Kenya or other African countries over the next week, and think about the context of the information.

Variations

Include in the beginning of the session a photo activity. Collect a series of photos, some from Kenya, some from the UK, showing poverty and wealth, rural and urban, and diversity in both countries. Put them round the room, and ask the students which were from Kenya and which UK. Ask them to pick one that particularly surprises/strikes them, and say why.

Continue this line of enquiry into Kenya, and different stories of Kenya. Compile a selection of facts, figures and stories, presenting them with an analysis of where they have come from. A kind of country profile of well known and less well known facts and stories.

Use 'Compass Rose' analysis of an episode of Makutano Junction.

Follow-up/research questions

Start a blog or a wiki about Kenya using the information that the students are finding from various sources. Involve school link partners if possible. Organise a weekly trawl through Kenyan websites for information that actually comes from Kenya rather than being reported through British organisations or media. Put together a weekly digest/school radio slot/school newsheet of what you find.

Explore your local community and see if there are people or organisations locally with links to or roots in Kenya. Perhaps local Kenyan students, or groups involved in your local Development Education Centre. Invite them to come to your school to speak about Kenya from their perspective – tell their own story. Remember that theirs is only one of many!

Look at the history of Kenya, and the British colonial period and its legacy. Or focus on the story of Kenyan Asian communities. The Last King of Scotland may provide an interesting hook for this.

Look at Kenya's place in the world in terms of Athletics, with the Olympics coming up. Explore and celebrate Kenya's reputation for world beating middle and long distance runners. Think about what implications it may have for the individuals and communities and the country. Why do some Kenyan athletes take on citizenship from other countries? Are barriers to immigration to European countries less restrictive for those with the potential to win gold medals?!

Create a display/ piece of art using as many diverse images from Kenya as possible, to show the diversity of landscape, people, experience.

TAKE ACTION

Whenever you hear or see representations of a particular place or people that you think is not accurate, or generalisations that could create wrong assumptions, challenge them! Don't let people get away with sweeping statements such as 'In Africa everyone lives in mud huts, or 'In Kenya, no-one has enough to eat'.

Useful resources

Ask your local Development Education Centres (DEC) for ideas of resources, organisations or people. For a list of DECs see www.globaldimensions.org.uk.

Also for Development Education resources on Kenya see:

<http://www.actionaid.org.uk/644/kenya.html>
Actionaid - Kenya

<http://www.unlockingthearchives.rgs.org/themes/kenya-achangingnation/default.aspx>
Kenya - a changing nation