

Makutano Junction

A Kenyan TV soap opera



Activity

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

15 Democracy for all?

Activity description

This activity encourages students to explore the notion of “democracy” and what it means. It invites students to think about where in the world democratic systems of government exist and where they are lacking and then asks students to examine their attitudes towards Africa and systems of Government there. Students will watch a half episode of Makutano Junction where there is a local election taking place and they are invited to examine some of the key principles underlying the notion of democracy that the programme tries to communicate with its audience.

What you need?

- Several copies of maps of the world (enough for each group).
- Makutano Junction; Series 4, Episode 10, first half.
- Flip Chart paper.

Aims

- To explore the concept of “democracy” and to discuss whether “democracy” as we know it is applicable and appropriate for all societies in the world.
- To explore attitudes held by students of systems of Government in Africa and see if there are commonalities with the system of government in the UK.

Curriculum links

- Citizenship KS3 &4
(The Importance of Citizenship, Key Concepts of Citizenship including the notion of justice and the key processes involved.)
- Geography KS3
(Cultural Understanding and Diversity)

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

GLOBAL DIMENSION

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



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



Social Justice – understanding the importance of social justice as an element in both sustainable development and the improved welfare of all people.



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.



Conflict Resolution – understanding how conflicts are a barrier to development and why there is a need for their resolution and the promotion of harmony.



Human Rights – knowing about human rights and understanding their breadth and universality.

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

Sustainable Development
Interdependence

Top Tips

Africa is renowned for its corruption; we read about it in the papers, we hear about it in the news, we look at Zimbabwe with astonishment and other African countries where the poor are oppressed by their corrupt leaders who will not “let go”. On a more micro-level, bribery is often present.

While there is no denying that this is the case, it is worth questioning not only why this happens, but it is also important to realise that corruption is a global phenomenon. For example, “bribing” could be seen as paying for a service before it is rendered, whereas tipping is paying for a service afterwards, and tipping is quite normal and acceptable here. There are also a number of “sleaze allegations” within the British Government – payments made in “brown envelopes” for favours made. Corporations bribing Government in the West occurs; “cash for honours” is a recent political feature that we often hear about. The examples are numerous and worth highlighting with students. It's not just Africa that's corrupt!

What you do

- 1 Begin the session by dividing the class into groups. Give each group a map of the world and ask each group think of a place that they believe is run along democratic principles and then a place they think is undemocratically run. Give them 10 minutes to discuss in their groups and prepare to present back to the class their choices, plus justifications for why they have made those choices.
- 2 As they present back, invite them to write up what they understand by the word “democracy” or “democratic” and ask them to justify their choices. Write these definitions up on the board.

One definition is:

“A system of government in which there is free and equal participation by the people in the political decision-making process.”

Invite other definitions.
- 3 After each group has presented, ask the class if they believe that the system of Government in the UK is democratic? If so, why? If not, why not? Give examples.
- 4 Break the class into groups again and ask them whether they think democratic principles apply in Africa? Ask them to list on a piece of flip chart paper their examples. Where have they read in newspapers/heard on tv/radio? Have they heard anything about Kenya and the elections held at the end of 2007? If so, what did they learn?

5 Ask them to watch Episode 10, Series 4, first half (this depicts local elections in Makutano where they are voting for their Member of Parliament. Four candidates are running: Mr. Matata; current MP, corrupt and buys votes from the electorate, KK, who is an outsider and appeals to the youth, Mr. Mabuki who is councillor and Hope, who is the daughter of Bernadette and Hannington Baraka, and until recently has been the chief at Makutano. She is local, a woman and stands for honesty and integrity and democratic principles).

6 Ask them to write down on flip chart paper what they think about the following as they are watching:

- i) what have they learned about the African context for voting, from watching this episode?
- ii) What do they think are the key points that the episode is trying to communicate to viewers about democracy?
- iii) Do they agree with these points?
- iv) Do they think that the recommendations within MJ are present in the UK? Ask them to justify their answers.

7. Get groups to present back to the class.

Variations/additions

- Get the class to divide into different imaginary political parties (of their choice) and give them the task of devising their own election pamphlet, outlining clearly what it is their party stands for.
- Invite the groups to write the script for a minute-long radio announcement for UK radio, publicising their new political party.
- Ask groups to list what principles they would wish to promote if they were to become the new prime minister of UK – and why.

Follow-up/research questions

- What other forms of government exist or have existed in the past that are counter to democratic principles?
- Have they been effective? How?
- Why might democratic principles not work so well in some cultures?
- Is it morally right for one culture to super-impose its ideals on to another?
- Where has this happened in history and to what effect?

Useful resources

http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-africa_democracy/debate.jsp
Africa & Democracy

<http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/democracy.htm>
History Learning Site



TAKE ACTION

- Do not buy products from countries that are undemocratically run.
- Lobby against corruption when you hear of it in this country.