

STUDENT'S HANDOUT

GHANA INSPIRATIONAL COMMUNITY RADIO



Background Information

For a long time, the people of Ghana have been isolated from the rest of the world by a lack of education and access to information. In Ghana, on average, for every 1000 people there are only 14 newspapers, 118 televisions and 12 phone lines! Only a few lucky people have internet access – there are only about three internet connections per 1000 people. However, these figures don't take into account the ever-growing medium of radio. Using local resources and know-how, the impossible is becoming possible through community-run radio stations!



Instructions

After reading the text, form groups of 3 to 4 students. Each group will design a community radio program schedule for your school, following the example set by the community radio station described below. What topics do you think are important for your station to address?



Ghana: Inspirational Community Radio

Although Ghanaians have been held back for a long time due to the lack of education and access to information in their country, community radio is starting to change things! More than eight radio stations are currently operating, transmitting information to a large part of the population, speaking out for victims of injustice, and voicing opinions on issues affecting their communities. This method of getting information is very popular, especially in the countryside, where 7 out of 10 people own a radio in order to listen to these broadcasts.

Radio Ada was the first independent community radio station in Ghana, founded by Wilna and Alex Quarmyne, a couple who are very active in Ghanaian society. Radio Ada now broadcasts its programs on six stations across the country. Currently three more stations are in the process of obtaining broadcast licenses.

A society which can communicate, speak out, and become better acquainted with their rights and responsibilities is less likely of being oppressed in any manner. The media plays a fundamental role as a way to interact and to exchange information, particularly in areas of the country where education is lacking, as it is in rural Ghana. Development projects such as Radio Ada are quite favourable, since they considerably reduce the marginalization experienced by the public.

This internationally recognized radio station takes an unusual approach: programming is designed and developed locally based on the knowledge and resources of the community it serves. The role of community radio is not to entertain or to make money by selling advertising spots, but rather to benefit the community. Programming is dedicated to public education, local news, listener interaction, and shedding light on problems and issues affecting the community. It is both a means of communication and a partner of the community. Development of more initiatives like Radio Ada is being encouraged, since it considerably reduces the marginalization Ghanaians have been suffering for a long time, due to the lack of education and proper access to information.



Over the past few years in Ghana training for local journalists on human rights issues has greatly improved. In collaboration with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the organization “Journalists for Human Rights” (JHR) has helped to increase the quantity and quality of radio programming content, which in turn improves millions of people’s lives.

The existence of a free and independent media helps ensure not only democracy but also public education. Therefore it’s the citizens’ responsibility to think critically about the information given to them by the media, and to defend the press from threats to, or abuses of, its freedom.

Information about Ghana

	Republic of Ghana	Canada
Capital :	Accra	Ottawa
Area (in thousands of km²):	239	9 985
Population (in millions of inhabitants):	21,4 (2004)	32,0 (2004)
Population density (per km²):	89 (2004)	3 (2004)
Urban population (%-2003):	45	80
Gross national product (GNP) (per person):	320 \$ US (2003)	23 930 \$ US (2003)
Life expectancy at birth:	46 ans (1960), 58 ans (2003)	71 ans (1960), 79 ans (2003)
Mortality rate for children under age 5 (per 1000 children):	215 (1960), 95 (2003)	33 (1960), 6 (2003)
Adult literacy rate (% 2000-2004):		
Total	54	99
Men	63	99
Women	46	99

Sample Programming Schedule Sheet

Show's title	Content

AN INITIATIVE OF THE
In-Terre-Actif Network of the Comité de Solidarité/Trois-Rivières



PRODUCED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
THROUGH THE



Canadian
International
Development
Agency