Africans Don't Use Mobile Phones: A critical discussion of issues arising from the Leeds University Centre for African Studies (LUCAS) 'African Voices' project.

Richard Borowski and Jane Plastow (University of Leeds)

Background

'African Voices' is a project run by LUCAS that takes African postgraduate students studying any subject at the University of Leeds, trains them in relation to the British education system and to active learning methodologies and then sends them out into Leeds schools, years 5-8, to work in a range of modes to challenge negative ideas about the continent, to help make Africa 'real' to young people, and to seek to arouse their interest in different cultures.

The origins of the project go back to 2004 when I was approached by a postgraduate student who had previously been working for the Leeds Development Education Association. She asked me if LUCAS would have any interest in promoting Africa in local schools and told me about the mini-grants available from DfID through the DEA to develop small scale projects promoting development education. As is the case when one takes on so many new initiatives, I had a personal as well as professional interest in developing this idea. My own son is mixed race Tanzanian-British. Over the years I had learned to dread those times of the year when either Blue Peter or Comic Relief appeals were being made. Well-meaning schools would enthusiastically encourage children to donate to poor Africans and my son would come home fuming that his peers thought everyone in Africa lived in mud huts and needed food handouts. My immediate thought therefore was that our project should focus not on African poverty and deprivation but on promoting ideas of African diversity and the contributions Africans make to both their own communities and to the world. It seemed to me that by putting high achieving African students in front of Leeds school children we could immediately disrupt ideas of disadvantage that would open up spaces for more interesting discussion, and at the same time we could offer positive role models for BME children (Leeds has very few ethnic minority teachers).

LUCAS therefore applied for and got a two year mini-grant to pilot a project in Leeds schools, and in September 2004 we recruited four African PhD students to work in three local high schools. It was obvious that we would need to provide support and training for our students who would be working in an education system very different from the disciplinarian talk and chalk regime that still seems common in most of Africa. We were also determined to pay our students properly for their work in schools, since we expected a serious level of professional engagement. The bulk of our modest spending would therefore go on training and payments to students for teaching, with all administration carried out on a voluntary basis. The training was where Richard came in. He was at the time working for Leeds DEC but agreed to work with his erstwhile colleague who had suggested the programme on a weekend training scheme. Just how this developed will be part of the bulk of our paper. Our initial teaching was subject based, according to student skills and school

requests. In that first year we worked with Year 7 groups in the areas of geography, theatre and PHSCE.

However during that year I had a number of meetings with our local education body, Education Leeds. At the time they were very interested in the area of transition between primary and secondary schools, and they asked if we would be interested in widening the programme to deal with year 6 primary pupils from a particular 'family' of schools and with year 7 pupils in the related high schools. So it was that in our second year we started the work that we are principally discussing today, regarding our findings of work with senior primary school pupils, by going in to 6 Leeds primary schools to run three day 'Africa' programmes covering a whole range of participatory activities with year 6 pupils in the period after their SATS exams.

 The work was received overwhelmingly positively by teachers, pupils, students and even our meticulous external evaluator, Bob Hirst, whose report summary said that:

> "This project has benefited the African students, been received positively by the school teachers and has had an impact on the pupils involved, and all has been achieved extremely efficiently and economically. These are major achievements."

> (Hirst, p5, 2006)

Equally pleasing was the fact that we seemed to be making an impact in changing children's negative perceptions of Africa as evidenced by the following quotes from children interviewed in focus groups:

> "I used to think everyone was poor, but now I know they can make lots of things themselves."

> "I thought it was all animals and poor people, but now I can tell people that they have their own culture and can do things themselves."

> "I'd really like to go to Africa. I keep asking my Mum to take me. When she asks me why I'd like to go I say it's because I want to see their culture. I used to think it was all animals, but now I know there's lots of people and I'd like to go for ten days."

What is particularly pertinent to our paper in these quotes are the observations that children had previously thought everyone was poor, or that Africa was mainly given over to animals. It would seem evident that these views came from a mixture of television viewing about wildlife and disasters, and from the pressures to give charitably, which focus persistently on notions of Africans as not only poor but as helpless, unable to do anything for themselves. This is a perspective, cultivated from good intentions, that surely borders on the racist.

Not everything had gone right in the pilot project. Work in some secondary schools had proved difficult, both in schools with a very challenging pupil environment and in places where teaching schedules were often disrupted, with work on Africa seemingly given a low priority. Administration had also been somewhat less than perfect as I was juggling it alongside a full time academic job. However unexpected bonuses had included just how positive our African students felt about both training and delivering their work in schools, and the impact teachers said the project had on some of their BME pupils. There was enough, we felt to justify seeking to expand both the range and the

ideas informing our work, and so in 2006 we applied for a three grant from the DfID Development Awareness Fund, which enabled us to restart the project in 2007; this time with Richard Borowski as both administrator and one of our two trainers, and with the funds to significantly expand our work.

Synopsis of practice in primary schools

The LUCAS Schools Project seeks to help young people in Leeds schools understand that they are part of a global community, that African societies have many interests similar to their own, and that it is important that they do not see Africa as an exotic 'other', but as a functioning continent with historical, cultural and economic links to their own lives. Over the past two year the project has recruited and trained 25 African post-graduate students from 12 different countries to deliver one and three day activity programmes to 2,100 Year 5 and 6 pupils in 39 Leeds primary schools.

In September each year LUCAS recruits MA and PhD students from Africa to be part of the Schools Project. The students come from a wide range of African countries but mainly from English speaking regions of the continent. They are recruited from across the University and study a broad range of courses such as Development Studies, Education, TESOL, Economics and Finance, Communication Studies, Sociology, Public Health and even Chemical Engineering.

> "I was really interested in the program because of the objective that it aimed to achieve. I felt it would be a good opportunity to project Africa and show Africa as it really is rather than the misrepresented Africa on BBC and the foreign media." Ejekwumadu Ikechukwu, MA Sociology, Nigeria (2007/08)

The African students recruited to the project have a very different experience of schools - 'chalk and talk' lessons and classrooms with little technology. To prepare them to deliver lessons in UK schools they are provided with a course of training about the UK school system, active learning methodology, teaching strategies and classroom management and lesson planning. In becoming a LUCAS Schools Project Teacher the students have an opportunity to develop their teaching and communication skills and leave having made a positive impact on the local community.

> "It was a great experience. It gave me an opportunity to be in a group of dynamic young Africans that I would have otherwise not met. Secondly, the support was so great that I ended up thinking teaching was the easiest job on earth and I know it is not true – the tools we were equipped with made our lives so easy. I also enjoyed the bond between the school's teachers, pupils and us. The Saturday trainings were great. It always felt like a family get together in a place very far from home." Ret'sepile Makamane, MA Development Studies and Gender, Lesotho (2008/09)

The LUCAS Schools Project offers primary schools in Leeds a unique opportunity to learn about Africa directly from post-graduate student from Africa through Year 5 Africa Days and Year 6 Africa Programmes. Besides stimulating the interest of pupils in Africa, these interventions also enhanced the delivery of Global Citizenship by increasing cultural awareness and promoting racial

harmony. The African post-graduate students also provide a balanced and positive view of Africa, challenging stereotypes and promoting positive role models.

"…the student is a resource, providing first-hand experience and an excellent source of information and inspiration for pupils. …a means of promoting racial awareness within school, by providing positive role models, breaking down stereotypes, and perhaps contributing to an Award about racial equality or inclusion generally." Bob Hirst , External Evaluator (2008)

The delivery of the Year 5 Africa Days and Year 6 Africa Programmes is structured around a pre-view, new-view and re-view model to enable to pupils to reflect upon and acknowledge their own learning. The pre-view is delivered by the class teacher and is designed to evaluate pupil perceptions of Africa and provide them with an opportunity to explore where their ideas about Africa come from. The new-view is delivered by the African post-graduate students and consists of a mixture of 'generic' activities about Africa such as true/false quizzes, diamond rankings and role plays; country profiles and workshops on contemporary themes developed by the students; and cultural activities such as stories, music and dancing and games. The re-view is delivered by the class teacher and provides the pupils with an opportunity to explore how their ideas about Africa have changed.

> "[the African student created] a whole different atmosphere, an aura … which changed preconceived ideas and enabled pupils to see things from a different perspective" Year 6 Teacher, (2007/08)

The impact of the work on pupil perceptions of Africa and African peoples is evaluated through, mind maps, positivistic pupil questionnaires and empirical semi-structured focus group interviews. The mind maps and pupil questionnaires are incorporated into the pre-view and repeated in the re-view to identify changes in perception.

The mind maps used with Year 5 pupils explore through drawings or words pupil perceptions of Africa prior to and following their Africa Day. The pupil questionnaires used with Year 6 pupils are more focused than the mind maps and designed to identify the following.

- The words pupils would choose to describe Africa

- The images pupils would choose to represent Africa

- The perceptions pupils have about African people

- The level of knowledge pupils have about various aspects of life in Africa

- The level of importance pupils place on supporting Africa

Where possible the mind maps and positivistic questionnaires are followed up by empirical semi-structured focus group interviews with pupils. These interviews not only seek to find out to what

extent the pupils enjoyed their African Voices Programmes but to explore how and why their perceptions of Africa changed.

Pupil perceptions of Africa

The results from the pre-view Africa maps with Year 5 pupils prior to their Africa Days confirmed the findings of the pilot study undertaken in 2004-06. Some examples of these maps are shown below.
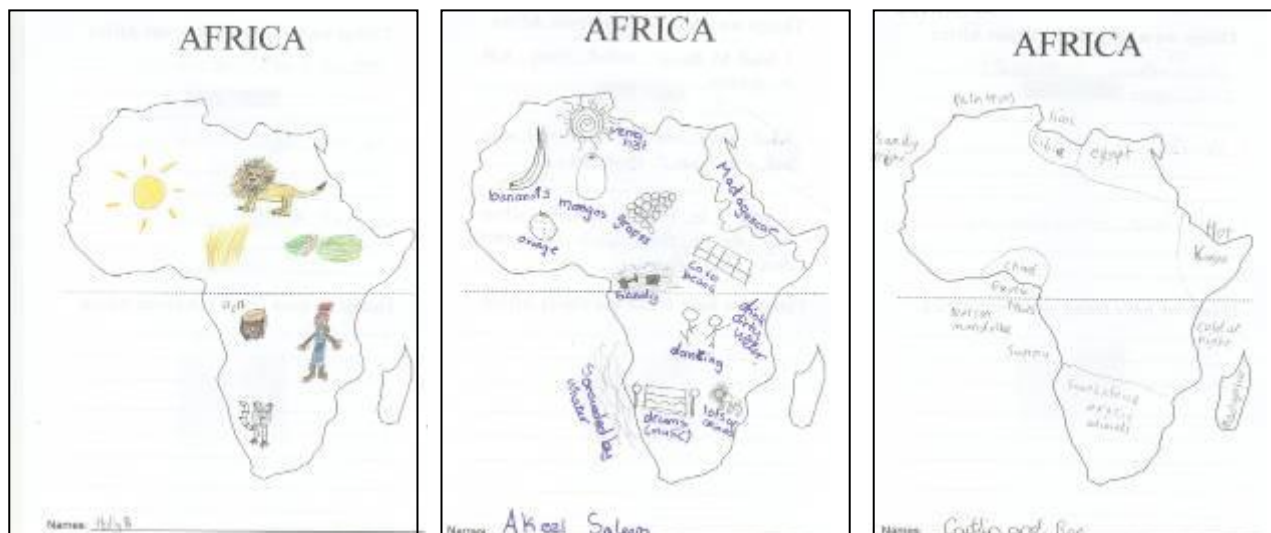
The responses provided by Year 5 pupils in the pre-view varied between schools but the Africa maps indicated several general perceptions of Africa:

Hot and Dry

The pupils perceive Africa is a hot, dry sunny place lacking clean drinking water. On most maps there is a drawing of the sun or words such as hot, dry, lack of water, dirty water, desert or sand accounting for about 31% of all responses

Countries and People

The pupils know the names of several different African countries, in particular Egypt, Kenya, South Africa and Madagascar, and the best known African is Nelson Mandela. These responses accounted for about 22% of all responses.

Wildlife and Safari

The pupils envisage Africa to have an abundance of wildlife and see it as a place where people go to view wildlife. Drawings of wild animals or the word safari accounted for about 15% of responses.

Poverty and Poor People

The pupils perceive African people to be poor or living in poverty. This is indicated on the maps by the way they draw people or use words such as straw huts and accounted for about 12% of all responses.

African Culture

The pupils associate African culture with sport, music and dancing. Drawings of drums and musical notes together with people dancing and the names of premiership footballers from Africa accounted for about 9% of all responses.

The results from the pre-view pupil questionnaires, used with Year 6 pupils prior to their Africa Programme, provide a greater insight to pupil perceptions of Africa.

Words

Pupils were given 22 different words, a range of both positive and negative adjectives, from which they had to choose three that best described what they thought about Africa. The most popular words chosen were Scorching, Arid, Thirsty, Starving, Deprived and Primitive accounting for 76% of all choices.
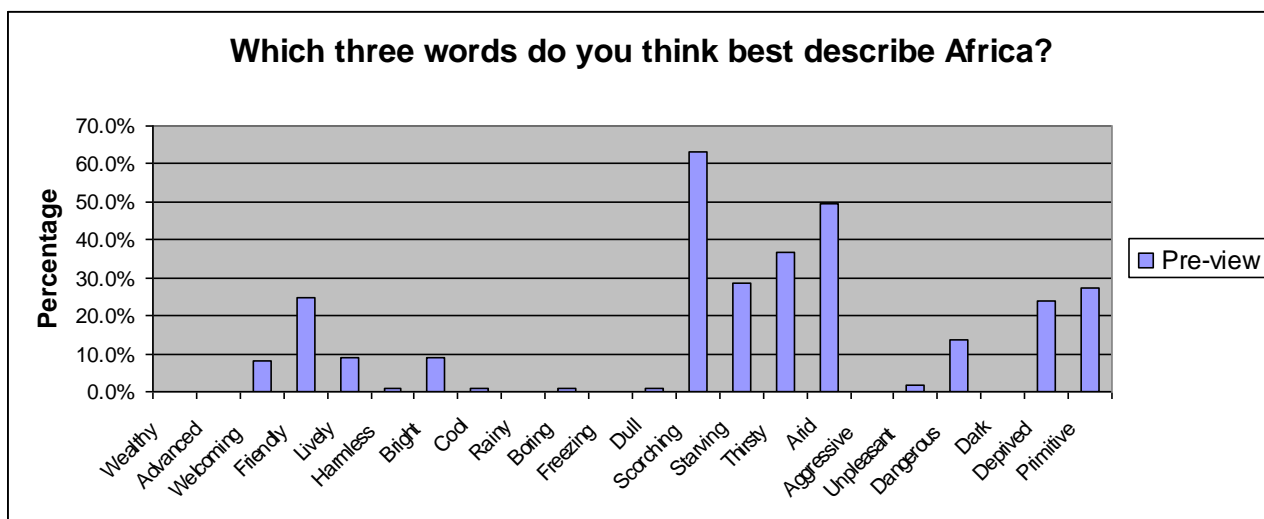
Images

Pupils were give 12 different photographs from Africa, a range of both positive and negative images, from which they had to choose three that best showed what they thought Africa was like. The most popular images were those of hungry children, tea pickers, rural housing and traditional dancers, accounting for 75% of all choices.

Perceptions of African People

Pupils were asked whether they perceived African people to be rich / poor, hardworking / lazy, happy / sad, interesting / boring and healthy / sick on a scale of one to five. The results indicated that they saw African people to be poor and sick, neither sad nor happy, but harder working, interesting.

Perceptions of Africa

Pupils were given five statements about Africa and asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with them. The results indicated that the pupils generally thought of Africa as a place with little food, having no TVs, being a dangerous place to live, having no tall buildings and being a place where people do not use mobile phones.

Support for Development

Pupils were given five ways of supporting Africa and African people and asked how important they thought they were. The results indicated that there is a high level of support for buying fairly traded goods, supporting charities and volunteering but less importance was placed on going on holiday to Africa or finding out more about Africa.

Analysis of pre-view results

There are two key findings that emerge from these pre-view results. Firstly, most primary pupils have a very negative perception of Africa and its peoples. They see Africa as a hot, dry and dangerous place with an abundance of wildlife and African peoples as poor and hungry, living in straw huts and lacking clean water and modern technology. Secondly, most primary pupils place importance on supporting African development. They perceive African people to be hard working and in need of assistance through buying fairly traded goods, supporting charities and volunteering to help African people.

The pre-view results from the Year 6 evaluation also indicate significant differences in the level of negative perceptions of Africa between the participating schools. This could be a result of several factors; the school curriculum; the class teachers; the academic ability of the pupils; the class 'dynamics'; or the socio-economic conditions of the local area.

To compare pupil perceptions of Africa quantitatively a numerical value was placed on each response and cumulative average pre-view scores calculated for each school (the higher scores indicating the more positive perceptions).

	Cumulative Pre-view Score
St Theresa's	33.60
Templenewsam 1	34.44
Templenewsam 2	35.30
Wigton Moor 1	37.49
Bardsey	40.85
Wigton Moor 2	44.35

These results highlighted several factors that could contribute to the level of negative perceptions of Africa.

Class 'Dynamic'
At Templenewsam primary there is a difference of less than one point between classes indicating that the two classes are of very similar 'character'. But, at Wigton Moor primary there is a difference of nearly seven points between classes indicating the two classes are of very different 'character'. Interviews with the teachers indicated that Wigton Moor 1 was a difficult class with several troublesome pupils which could have contributed to the differing results.

Level of Deprivation

The cumulative pre-view results were correlated against the level of deprivation in the areas surrounding the school – the percentage of pupils living in the 10% most deprived areas of the city.

Schools such as Wigton Moor and Bardsey with fewer pupils from the 10% most deprived areas scored higher in the preview than schools with a high percentage of pupils from the 10% most deprived areas. This indicates that pupils from more affluent backgrounds are more likely to be positive about Africa and African peoples than pupils from less affluent backgrounds.

BME Pupils

The cumulative pre-view results were correlated against the ethnic background of the pupils – the percentage of BME pupils.

All of the schools apart from Wigton Moor had a percentage of BME pupils less than 6%. One of the classes at Wigton Moor had the highest cumulative pre-view score indicating that the presence of BME pupils has a positive influence on pupil perceptions of Africa (this finding is also backed up by similar studies undertaken in secondary schools with differing percentages of BME pupils). The reason for the lower cumulative pre-view score of the other Wigton Moor class has already been covered in class 'dynamic'.

Curriculum Initiatives

Even though the classes from Templenewsam primary have the highest percentage of pupils from the 10% most deprived areas and a level of only 3% BME pupils the cumulative pre-view scores were higher than that from St Theresa's primary. Interviews with teachers at Templenewsam revealed that the school was in an area where the BNP are very active and to counter racist propaganda they had embarked on a whole school initiative, the Stephen Lawrence Award, with support from Education Leeds.

Children's negative images of Africa

One of the main questions this project has caused us to debate is why children have such negative ideas about Africa. The evidence seems to be that there are two main sources of negative image making: the media and charity campaigns.

The images that children are exposed to in the media, and this we think would be primarily on the television, are of an Africa that is disaster ridden. There is very little cultural or documentary material shown on British television relating to the continent; instead it appears mostly on the news and overwhelmingly then in relation to bad news stories. When I did a trawl on the internet for this article to see what the BBC had been recently saying about the continent I quickly came to an Africa site that invited me to put in only the following keywords: civil war, elections, famine, human rights, peace negotiations, political parties and war. These are apparently for the BBC the things that primarily go on in Africa. It is no wonder that young children see a largely undifferentiated continent of helplessness, danger and poverty: for that matter many of their parents and teachers probably see the same things. The only other image of Africa that is widely pedalled relates to the exotic. Wildlife programmes such as the BBCs Big Cat Diaries, or ITV's

appalling wildlife drama, Wild at Heart, where Africans usually come with thick accents and a willingness to serve while white people nobly rescue beautiful animals, are standard fare; while occasional series and documentaries tend to feature brave and beautiful young white people going off to live - ostensibly alone (except of course for the TV crew) - with Africans of the noble savage variety - Massai and San bushmen are favourites here, demonstrating how 'aboriginal' peoples really do have cultures, but are of course usually being squeezed out of their peaceful lives by the incursions of such forces as corrupt governments, predatory farmers or foreign tourism. The brave young white people always fall in love with these 'aboriginals', go through a spiritual experience, wear some weird clothes and eat something utterly disgusting before sadly saying goodbye to the accompaniment of a vibrant music track. Given this highly selective and distorted imagery it is hardly surprising that primary school children in the UK believe that Africans don't use mobile phones, buses, computers, or iPods? Or that they think most Africans live in mud huts whereas the latest statistics show that 38% of the continent is now urbanised, and Africa is experiencing the greatest growth in the use of mobile phones anywhere in the world.

The second source of popular information is undoubtedly charitable campaigning. Programmes such as the annual Comic Relief beano or Blue Peter appeal bombard us with pictures of cute children - often again outside mud huts, and on the major charity's websites one finds image after image of poverty and suffering. Within schools charitable giving is often encouraged as being a good thing to promote compassion in children, but inevitably it is likely to further promote ideas of African helplessness and of the superiority of life in the West, not just in material terms, but arguably in terms of the West being better, kinder and necessary to the well-being of the world's helpless poor. At worst we would argue this is a breeding ground for racism. These people are so different, so useless, that we in the West just must be superior.

Pupil perceptions of Africa post intervention

Our experience from the Schools Project showed that is was possible to modify children's attitudes to Africa in a very short time. The following results are from the Year 5 re-view Africa maps, following the interventions by the African post-graduate students.

Countries and places

About 32% of all re-view responses included the names of African countries, other than those known to the pupils prior to the day, or places of interest they had found out about such as Victoria Falls or Mount Kilimanjaro.

Geographical features

Many pupils demonstrated a greater geographical awareness of Africa through acknowledging the size of the continent, the number of countries and the number of languages and the diverse landscape of the continent, the rain forest and savannah as well as the desert. These accounted for about 28% of all re-view responses.

African issues

The Africa Day programmes delivered by the students were set up to challenge some of the stereotypical views of Africa and its people. The changes in pupil perceptions about everybody

being poor, food shortages and the lack of technology were reflected in their re-view Africa maps accounting for 22% of all responses.

Cultural awareness

Stories, songs, dances and games from the African post-graduate students had a significant impact on pupil perceptions of Africa accounting for 11% of all re-view responses.

The results from the Year 6 re-view questionnaires provide more insight into how pupil perceptions of Africa changed as a result of their Africa Programmes.

Words

Whilst Scorching and Arid were still popular in the re-view, accounting for 30% of all choices, Arid, Deprived and Primitive were replaced by Welcoming, Friendly and Lively, accounting for over 40% of all choices.
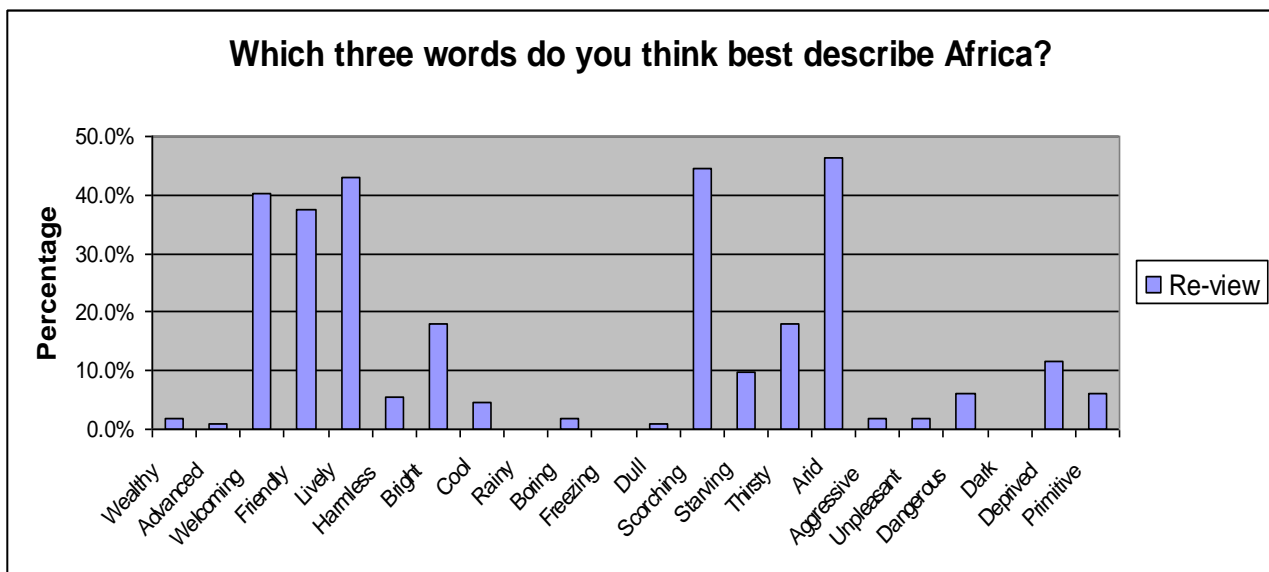
Images

Whilst the tea pickers and cultural dancers were still popular in the review, accounting for 35% of all choices, the hungry children and rural housing were replaced by wildlife and city landscape, accounting for 26% of all choices.

Perceptions of African People

In the re-view the pupil perceptions of African people changed, they thought them to be richer, happier and healthier than they first thought. Their perceptions about Africans being hard working and interesting were maintained in the re-view.

Perceptions of Africa

In the re-view the pupil perceptions of Africa changed, the pupils realised that Africa was not as food deprived, as rural, as dangerous or as technologically deficient as they first thought.

Support for Development

In the re-view buying fairly traded goods and going on holiday to Africa maintained their importance but the importance placed on the others decreased slightly.

There are two key findings that emerge from these re-view results:

Firstly, the negative perception that most primary pupils have of Africa and its peoples can be changed by the interventions of African post-graduate students. Pupils use more positive words to describe Africa and choose more positive images to represent what Africa looks like. Their perceptions of African peoples and life in Africa also become more positive.

Secondly, the more positive perceptions of Africa and its peoples do not translate into greater support for development. The high level of support observed in the pre-view did not increase and in some cases, such as supporting charities and volunteering, the support declined slightly. We think this happens because as children's knowledge deepens they become more unsure as to what might be an appropriate response to a complex reality.

Analysis of re-view results

There are two key findings that emerge from these re-view results. Firstly, the negative perception that most primary pupils have of Africa and its peoples can be changed by the interventions of African post-graduate students. Pupils use more positive words to describe Africa and choose more positive images to represent what Africa looks like. Their perceptions of African peoples and life in Africa also become more positive. Secondly, the more positive perceptions of Africa and its peoples do not translate into greater support for development. The high level of support observed in the pre-view did not increase and in some cases, such as supporting charities and volunteering, the support declined slightly. We think this happens because as children's knowledge deepens they become more unsure as to what might be an appropriate response to a complex reality.

The pre-view results from the Year 6 questionnaire also indicated significant differences in pupil perceptions of Africa between schools. To explore the impact of the African post-graduate students the re-view results were quantitatively analysed in the same way. Each response to the re-view questions was given a subjective numerical value to obtain a quantitative measure of pupil perception (the higher scores indicating the more positive perceptions).

	Cumulative Pre-view Score	Cumulative Re-view Score	Change
St Theresa's	33.60	54.58	20.98
Templenewsam 1	34.44	53.08	18.64
Templenewsam 2	35.30	53.87	18.57
Wigton Moor 1	37.49	47.93	10.44
Bardsey	40.85	55.70	14.85
Wigton Moor 2	44.35	52.24	7.89

From these results it is evident that the African Voices Programmes had the greatest impact on the pupils in schools with the lowest cumulative pre-view scores. Pupils at St Theresa's primary showed a 21 point change in their cumulative average score whereas Wigton Moor 2 showed only an 8 point change. But regardless of their starting point all classes except Wigton Moor 1, which was discussed earlier in the paper, achieved a cumulative re-view score of above 52 points. This means that African post-graduate students, through their African Voices Programmes, were successful in raising the awareness of Africa and its people of all pupils to roughly the same level regardless of the initial starting point.

Several factors contributed to the success of the Africa Programmes. These became evident during the focus group interviews with pupils and from the teacher questionnaires after their sessions with the students.

Role Models

By being present in the classroom the African post-graduate students presented a different perspective of Africa – highly educated, relatively wealthy and articulate.

> "All the students that came into school were positive role models, not just for black people but for us all."

> "… both students presented themselves in a friendly, professional way … excellent role models." (Year5/ 6 teachers)

Their presence also had a significant impact on the BME pupils in the class. The students reported on how at the start of the African Voices Programmes the BME pupils would be wary of how the student's presence would impact on their relationships with white pupils. But, after observing a positive response from the white pupils in the class, the BME pupils became very protective of 'their' black teacher from Africa.

Personal Bond

All the pupils interviewed enjoyed their African Voices Programmes, they commented on how much they had learnt during the three days and about the bond that had been established between themselves and their African post-graduate student.

> "All the information changed what I thought about Africa… Ret'sepile didn't lie, she told us about good and bad things." (Year 6 pupil)

> "The children enjoyed being with someone who grabbed their attention …the personality of the student was very important."

> "The children absolutely loved Charles – he made learning interesting and fun through a variety of activities, he was a great African role model." (Year 5/6 teachers)

The post-graduate students were encouraged to allow time at the beginning of their programmes to get to know their pupils and for their pupils to get to know them. This meant that the student became a 'real' person that the pupils could relate to and value what they had to say.

Active Learning

The pupils liked various aspects about their African Voices Programmes – indoor and outdoor games, Scramble for Africa, the role play trading game, African stories, meeting the students and learning about different countries and cultures.

"What I liked the most was when we decided how much we should get (reference to a fair-trade role play)".

"I liked the quiz best 'cos it made you concentrate (reference to a true false quiz)". (Year 6 pupils)

"The children were allowed to have fun again after the monotony of SATs."

"The children were 'buzzing' while the students were in."

"I didn't expect the children to be so motivated and interested … I think this was due to how well-prepared Charles was and how he related to the children." (Year 5/6 teachers)

The post-graduate students were provided with some generic activities about Africa and encouraged to develop their own about their home country and their specific areas of interest. These activities were based on a range of active learning approaches and collectively they were able to sustain the interest of the pupils over a three-day period.

Content and Information

The pupils indicated during the focus group interviews that their perceptions of Africa had changed because of what they had learnt about Africa during the African Voices Programmes.

"We saw pictures of cities and mining in Africa."

"I learnt that there are wealthy people in Africa as well."

"Most people use mobile phones."

"That there are over 1000 languages in Africa."

"I was surprised to find out there are 53 independent countries."

"I didn't know that there are lots of really tall skyscrapers."

"I didn't know that there was that much technology in Africa." (Year 6 pupils)

"The children didn't realise the countries inside Africa were so large and that the physical geography was so different from region to region." (Year 6 teacher)

The presentation of new information about Africa, by an African student, in an interactive and engaging way was integral to the African Voices programme and resulted in the observed changes in pupil perceptions of the continent.

Learning from the project to date

Development Education Practice
The LUCAS model builds on established Development Education practice – knowledge and understanding, active learning approaches and Southern perspectives – and demonstrates the

valuable contribution African post-graduate students can make to positively changing perspectives of Africa. Even in schools that are adopting a range of initiatives to improve global awareness and address racial prejudice the contributions of the African post-graduate students are acknowledged and praised.

> "We asked our children yesterday what their memories are of last year and across the whole school Julius and the team was the strongest memory for our Y5 and 6 children ... after everything we tried to do to develop better global understanding so we now know that visitors/teachers is the way forward for the children."(Primary Head)

Government and NGO priorities
The results of the LUCAS Schools Project provide evidence of how government and NGO priorities have influenced pupil perceptions of Africa and its peoples.

Firstly, DfID's emphasis on building support for development amongst young people is clearly having an effect; there is a high level of support for fair trade, support for charities and volunteering to help Africa.

Secondly, the use of negative images by NGOs to raise emergency and development donations from the public has had a negative influence on pupil perceptions of Africa and its peoples; the images of starving babies, mud huts and dirty water are prevalent amongst young people.

This perception of Africa and African people does not only apply to young people, there is a lack of balance in how Africa is portrayed in UK civil society and a simplistic response of compassion for those 'poor people' in Africa is deep rooted. The need to help people in Africa is reinforced by schools and teachers who encourage pupils to raise money for charitable causes such as 'Water Aid' or to 'Sponsor a Child'. The media also influences pupil perceptions of Africa by emphasising the negative, news reports from Africa of famine, drought, war and corruption, or by focusing on the exotic such as traditional cultures or wildlife.

The danger of persisting with this perspective of Africa and its peoples is that at best Africans will never be perceived as equal partners in global development and at worst – and entirely unwittingly – schools may actually be reinforcing attitudes of superiority that can lead to racism. What is interesting is that while anecdotally many Africans living in the UK are aware of and appalled by the images of Africa promoted in schools there seems to be little or no recognition by teachers or in published research of what we would argue is major obstacle to the promotion of real global citizenship agenda.

Research and the Learning Process
What started out as an evaluation of the impact African post-graduate students can have on young people's perceptions of Africa and its peoples has raised several educational issues about the learning process.

Our evidence is that schools – despite their best efforts – are currently having a limited impact on children's negative ideas about Africa, no matter how much they promote charitable giving, or even if they have links with an African school. The only difference we found in attitudes prior to our interventions was between children attending schools in middle class as opposed to more deprived areas. The level of social deprivation has a significant effect on how young people

perceive Africa and its peoples. The schools where views of Africa were most negative were all in relatively deprived areas. Educationally this evidence supports primary school work which builds self-esteem to improve social cohesion – you can't feel good about others if you don't feel good about yourself. Middle class children seem to be slightly better informed and slightly less negative about Africa. It appears, therefore, that generally the main source of influence on young people's thinking in relation to Africa comes not from the school environment but from parental influence.

We did find that the presence of BME pupils in the classroom has a positive effect on how young people perceive Africa and its peoples. This has limited impact though because without external reinforcement the information and imagery disseminated by national media and NGO campaigns has a greater effect.

Our research shows unequivocally that the presence of an African post-graduate student in the classroom can overcome the negative effect of social deprivation and reinforce positive perceptions of BME pupils. The evidence demonstrates that no matter where a class of pupils start from they end up at roughly the same level of perception. In all cases, and among both teachers and pupils, our work has resulted in more positive – and more complicated – perceptions of Africa This result has to date been achieved through only short – 1 to 3 day – interventions. In order to sustain changes in attitudes, and to really begin to come to grips with the complex issues underlying why levels of development and perceptions of the West and of Africa are so different, we would need more time and to be able to offer more support to schools. New funding bids to develop our work will all be focussed on not just replicating our work to date but on finding ways to deepen and sustain impact and on ways of highlighting the dangers of current pedagogical and NGO strategies in relation to seeking to engage pupil's compassion and support for people from the developing world.