

# Teaching Beyond the UK: Africa in focus

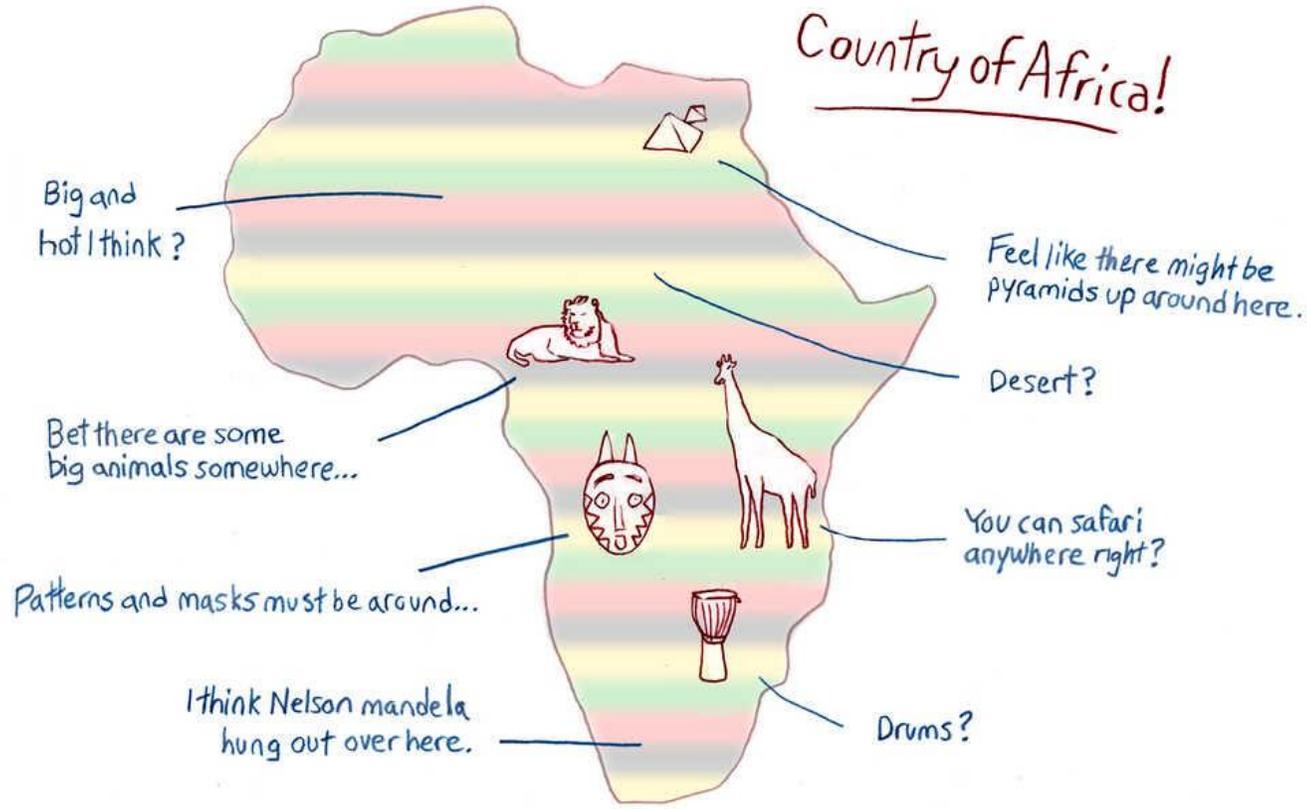
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# What is wrong with current teaching about Africa?

- Africa is often taught as a **homogenous place** with one geographical narrative
- Africa is taught mainly within the context of **Development**
- Teaching and learning resources are **out-dated**
- Teaching and learning resources tend to enforce/reinforce **negative stereotypes**



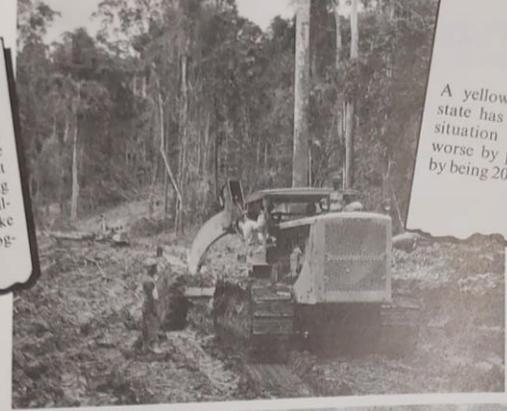
*“Africa is a nation that suffers from terrible disease”*

**(George W. Bush)**

### ENDANGERED RAINFORESTS

It is happening in Nigeria as well as in Amazonia. As you emerge from the quiet heart of the Nigerian rainforest you can hear the monster roaring long before you see it. A large yellow bulldozer is knocking the trees down like ninepins, to clear a road for the logging company.

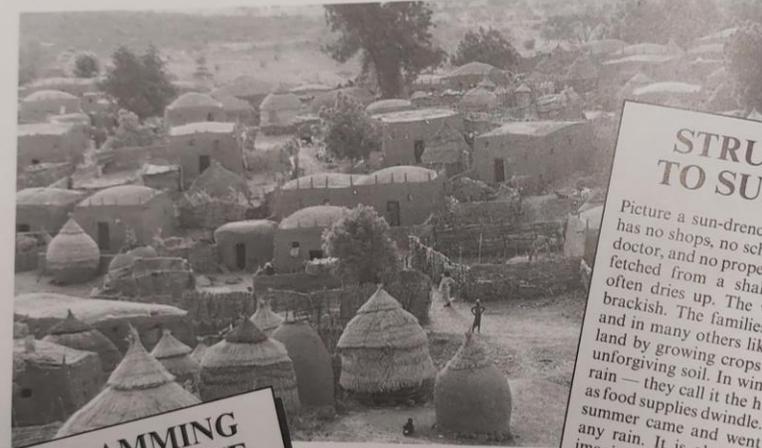
Fig 4 Logging in the Nigerian rainforest.



### Yellow Fever

A yellow fever epidemic in Kwara state has resulted in 16 deaths. The situation in Borgu has been made worse by poor medical facilities and by being 200 km from the state capital.

Fig 5 A village in Niger on the edge of survival.



### STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE

Picture a sun-drenched village which has no shops, no school, no clinic, no doctor, and no proper drains. Water is often fetched from a shallow well which is brackish. The water is usually and in many others like it live off the land by growing crops in a poor and unforbearing soil. In winter there is no rain — they call it the hungry season, as food supplies dwindle. Last year the summer came and went with hardly any rain. It is almost impossible to imagine the hardship of the village life when even basic needs like food and water are not guaranteed.

### A DAMMING EXPERIENCE

More and more West African rivers are being dammed. Dams are needed to hold back water for irrigation and hydro-electric power, and to stem floods in the wet season. They are often paid for with overseas aid and loans which have to be repaid with interest. Dams are symbols of progress, but in Ghana, on the banks of Lake Volta created by the Akosombo Dam, Abu Badanga and his family have another view. They cannot afford to pay for irrigation on their land, and electricity has not yet reached his village.

Fig 6 Collecting water from a hand-dug well in Mali.



# What is my personal and professional experience?

- Secondary School Pupil 😞
- Undergraduate Pupil 😊
- Secondary Geography Educator 😞
- Academic Researcher 😞

# How can we improve the teaching of Africa?

- Teach powerful geographical knowledge within an African context
- Move away from Eurocentric/Anglocentric ontologies
- Include African voices
- Make teaching real and relevant to modern day Africa
- Actively challenge misconceptions/stereotypes
- Co-plan with pupils
- Encourage critical thinking
- Educate ourselves!