

Title: African Countries and U.N. HDI: Low, Medium and High

Overview: In this lesson, students collect and analyze country data in order to analyze varying levels of economic development among African countries. Students then consider the ideas of "poverty porn" and "formality bias" and explore and summarize their learning in a synthesis writing.

Objectives:

- To collect and analyze basic demographic and economic indicator data
- To compare and contrast levels of economic development among African countries
- To identify shortcomings of economic statistics such as GDP
- To differentiate between the formal and the informal economy
- To understand the meaning of the terms "poverty porn" and "formality bias"
- To summarize learning in a synthesis writing

Grade Level: 9

Time: 3-4 class periods if no pre-teaching necessary

Required Materials:

- Internet Access
- Student handouts: africa\_econdevstats.pdf OR africa\_econdevstats\_filledin.pdf, africanentrepreneursyoungandrestless\_questions.pdf, africancountriesandunhdi\_lowmediumhigh\_synthesiswriting.pdf and africancountriesandunhdi\_lowmediumhigh\_synthesiswriting\_rubric.pdf
- OPTIONAL STUDENT HANDOUTS IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO BE PAPERLESS: Shortcomings of GDP.pdf, africanentrepreneursyoungandrestless.pdf

Minnesota Social Studies Standards - 9-12 Geography

Substrand 1: Geospatial Skills

Standard 1. People use geographic representations and geospatial technologies to acquire, process and report information within a spatial context.

Benchmark 9.3.1.1.1

Create tables, graphs, charts, diagrams and various kinds of maps including symbol, dot and choropleth maps to depict the geographic implications of current world events or to solve geographic problems.

Benchmark 9.3.1.1.2

Apply geographic information from a variety of print and electronic sources to interpret the past and present and plan for the future; provide rationale for using specific technologies for each application.

Substrand 3: Human Systems

Standard 5. The characteristics, distribution and migration of human populations on the earth's surface influence human systems (cultural, economic and political systems).

Benchmark 9.3.3.5.3

Compare the population characteristics of places at a range of scales using population pyramids, birth and death rates, and other key demographic variables.

Benchmark 9.3.3.7.3

Explain how social, political and economic processes influence the characteristics of places and regions.

## Suggested Procedure:

1. Prior to teaching the lesson, review Required Background Knowledge and all Student Materials found on Weebly: <http://africahdi.weebly.com/>
2. Pre-teach any necessary concepts included in the Required Background Knowledge. Concepts such as economic development and demographic and economic indicators are typically included in the Population and Economic Geography units of a high school Human Geography course. It is important that students understand how the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) is calculated and the meanings of the statistics they will be compiling.
3. Introduce students to the Weebly site and inform them that the INSTRUCTIONS for this lesson are paperless. Three graded items will be on paper:
  - Africa Economic Development Statistics Handout
  - Africa's Entrepreneurs Young and Restless Questions
  - African Countries and U.N. HDI: Low, Medium and High Synthesis Writing
4. Distribute and explain *africa\_econdevstatistics.pdf*. Students should use the Wikipedia link provided to select three African countries, one each with a High, Medium and Low U.N. Human Development Index ranking and then compile the statistics using the CIA World Factbook link. **STUDENTS SHOULD NOT CHOOSE MAURITIUS, BOTSWANA AND KENYA, AS THOSE COUNTRIES ARE USED ON THE AFRICA\_ECONDEVSTATS\_FILLEDIN.PDF.**
5. When students have finished compiling the statistics, they should carefully consider those statistics and write the summary as indicated at the bottom of the handout.
6. **OPTION: To save time, you can use *africa\_econdevstats\_filledin.pdf*, which includes a prepared data set.**
7. When students have finished compiling data and writing their summaries, discuss their findings using the discussion questions found on the Weebly. At the end of the discussion, introduce the concept of the shortcomings of GDP and in particular, the idea that GDP does not measure the informal economy.
8. **OPTION: On the Weebly you will find a link to a .pdf entitled Shortcomings of GDP. This can be projected in front of the class for class discussion or printed and distributed as a reference or as notes.**
9. Share and discuss the TED Talk by Robert Neuwirth entitled *The Power of the Informal Economy*, found on the Weebly. While watching, students should consider:
  - What is the informal economy?
  - "There's nothing underground about it. It's our prejudice that is underground." Explain.
  - According to Robert Neuwirth, what is "the power of the informal economy"?
10. Distribute and explain *africasentrepreneursareyoungandrestless\_questions*. Provide time for students to read the corresponding *Africa's Entrepreneurs Young and Restless* article on the Weebly and complete the questions.
11. **OPTION: On the Weebly you will find a link to *africasentrepreneursareyoungandrestless.pdf*. This can be printed and distributed as an alternative to reading the article online.**
12. When students have finished reading the article and completed the questions, share and discuss the TED Talk by Dayo Olopade entitled *The New African Narrative*. Olopade is featured in the *Africa's Entrepreneurs Young and Restless* article and the author of *The Bright Continent*.
13. **OPTIONAL ARTICLES LINKED ON WEEBLY:**
  - *Africans Are Fighting Media Poverty Porn By Tweeting Beautiful Images Of Their Real Lives* - Plaid Zebra
  - *The Informal Economy Driving World Business* - NPR

**14. OPTIONAL: If you have access to a Twitter account, peruse the Twitter hash tag #TheAfricaTheMediaNeverShowsYou. This can be projected in front of the class. Students can discuss what they see that does not fit myths or stereotypes about Africa. (Another option is the Instagram account Everyday Africa.)**

15. The culminating activity is a synthesis writing. Distribute and explain the Synthesis Writing and Rubric (africancountriesandunhdi\_lowmediumhigh\_synthesiswriting.pdf) and africancountriesandunhdi\_lowmediumhigh\_synthesiswriting\_rubric.pdf.

Answer student questions and determine a due date.

16. Collect and assess student materials.

Extensions: Collect and analyze data for other continents, research additional examples of informal economic activity around the world, research the idea of "Africa Rising" economically, research Chinese investment in African infrastructure projects, research "Nollywood", research African innovators.

Assessment:

- Africa Economic Development Statistics Handout
- Africa's Entrepreneurs Young and Restless Questions
- African Countries and U.N. HDI: Low, Medium and High Synthesis Writing

Resources: <http://africahdi.weebly.com/>

Credits:

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