

Activity 7

Ghana – a model country forever?

Role-play



3 hours



12-30 people



challenging

Materials:

- Structure of the role-play and game master's tasks
- Scenario description for all groups
- China's credit offer for all groups
- One of the six role descriptions per group



Game documents for activity 7 can be downloaded at erlassjahr.de/mitmach-option/bildung

What it's about

- The participants are dealing with the economic situation of a country in the Global South.
- They deal with the mechanisms which lead to a debt crisis from the perspective of different social actors.
- The participants are testing their ability to debate strategically.

How to play

In a role-playing game, the emergence of national debt is illustrated using the example of the West African country of Ghana. Ghana was successfully relieved of its debt in 2004, and has been regarded as a model country for economic development in sub-Saharan Africa ever since. Oil was found off the coast of Ghana in 2007. The role-play reflects the situation in Ghana in 2009, when it came to developing those oil reserves.

A lot of money is needed to build up the infrastructure for oil production. Ghana does not want to repeat the mistakes that Nigeria made. Therefore, an oil production law is intended to ensure that the proceeds from the oil business mostly remain in Ghana, that jobs are created and the economy is stimulated.

The starting point of the role-play is a letter from China, in which the Ghanaian government is offered a cheap loan. The country is striving for transparency. This means that both state and citizen stakeholders should have their say in a hearing before a final decision is made.

The roles are:

- The Ministry of Finance
- The Ministry of Economic Affairs
- *Ghanaian Network on Debt and Development*, a non-governmental organisation for debt relief
- Association of Takoradi Fishermen and Women
- Members of the *Christian Council*, an ecumenical umbrella organisation representing a variety of Christian churches in Ghana.
- The *Ghanaian Independent* daily newspaper

The hearing and the parties represented in it are fictional, the arguments that are exchanged are not.

From today's perspective, it has become clear that the oil boom has made a few people rich while many have remained poor. Most of the fears of the fishermen, NGOs and churches have come true. Ghana is now, once again, a country deep in debt. Trusting in future high revenues from the oil exports, Ghana has taken out extensive foreign loans. These also served to build the infrastructure needed for oil production.

Debts must be serviced in foreign currencies, mostly in US dollars. As oil prices and other commodity prices have collapsed and are now at a low point, the Ghanaian state is taking in far less foreign exchange than expected. In addition, the Ghanaian currency has lost value in relation to the dollar.