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TELEVISION PROGRAMMES IN GHANA

IN HIS ADDRESS delivered at the inauguration of Ghana Television, Osagyefo the President had this to say about the aims and objectives for which the service was being established.

"Ghana Television will be used to supplement our educational programme and foster a lively interest in the world around us. It will not cater for cheap entertainment nor commercialism. Its paramount objective will be to educate in the broadest and purest sense Our Television should be African in outlook and in its content, even though it may express and reflect outside and foreign experiences, should remain geared to the needs of Ghana and Africa."

These aims and objectives form the basis of the programming policy of Ghana Television.

With a projected daily telecast schedule of 6 hours or more, and, at present, very limited supply of trained man-power, this is indeed a formidable assignment. But we are on the right track, for at the moment no less than 70% of our programmes are produced locally, and from local material.

Programmes are organized under three main categories—Education, Public Affairs and Entertainment. The boundaries between these three sections are very fluid since nearly all programmes can offer something of educational value. There is also a News Section which produces two 15-minute newscasts each day covering both national and world events.

The Education Section is responsible for Schools programmes—Secondary, Technical and Teacher Training, Adult Literacy programmes, and programmes for Women, Children and for the Farming and Fishing communities. Altogether, there are ten

different evening programmes controlled by the Education Section.

The school programmes have a twofold aim—to enrich, supplement and give some depth to the classroom lesson by the use of techniques and materials which are not normally or readily available to the classroom teacher. Secondly, to provide formal lessons in specific subjects where, owing to the lack of suitable equipment or trained teachers, there is a need for television to help.

The distribution and installation of sets to all Secondary Schools, Teachers' Training Colleges and Technical Schools in reception areas (which in fact means about 90% of all of these institutions in Ghana) have now been completed. The test transmissions were begun on 15th November to accustom students and instructors to this new medium of education. Between 10 a.m. to 11.15 a.m. each weekday morning 20- to 25-minute programmes are being broadcast. The courses that have been launched so far consist of: Geography, Biology and O Level English Literature for Secondary Schools; Science, English Language and General Teaching method for Training Colleges; and courses on basic Engineering and Communications for Technical Schools.

These first transmissions have been planned only for a 4-week period. But from January 1966 they will be regularly broadcast throughout the academic terms, and teachers will be supplied with full programme notes outlining the necessary preparation to be carried out in the classroom before the lessons, and giving suggestions for follow-up work to supplement and reinforce the information pupils have been given on the screen.

Another outstanding feature of the Ghana Television Service, which is of great importance in Adult Education and which is also potentially of very wide social and cultural value, has been the setting up of free Community Viewing Centres in public places throughout the country. The government provides the sets and local authorities or institutions arrange the viewing facilities. Group leaders guide discussion or give further instruction after programmes have been viewed. Such centres also have a great part to play in the Mass Literacy Drive that the Government is conducting.

It is the Government's aim to eradicate illiteracy from Ghana. A great deal of work has been done by the Ministry of Social Welfare through their literacy programmes to teach illiterates to read their particular languages. There is, however, a great need for the

average worker to have a basic knowledge of the English Language. "I will speak English"—a Ghana Television adult literacy programme—is designed to teach English to those who have little or no knowledge of the language. The programmes are based on the material and methods used by the Ministry of Social Welfare.

Other programmes for adults, which include those for women and programmes on farms and fisheries, are designed to inform and help broaden the outlook of the viewer. They introduce new ideas, teach new techniques and carry out the extension of work of such government agencies as the Nutrition Board, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture.

There is a weekly children's programme aimed at making children aware of the world around them and, through this awareness, to introduce simple concepts



Fig. 1. A scene in one of the studios during a rehearsal for an educational programme.

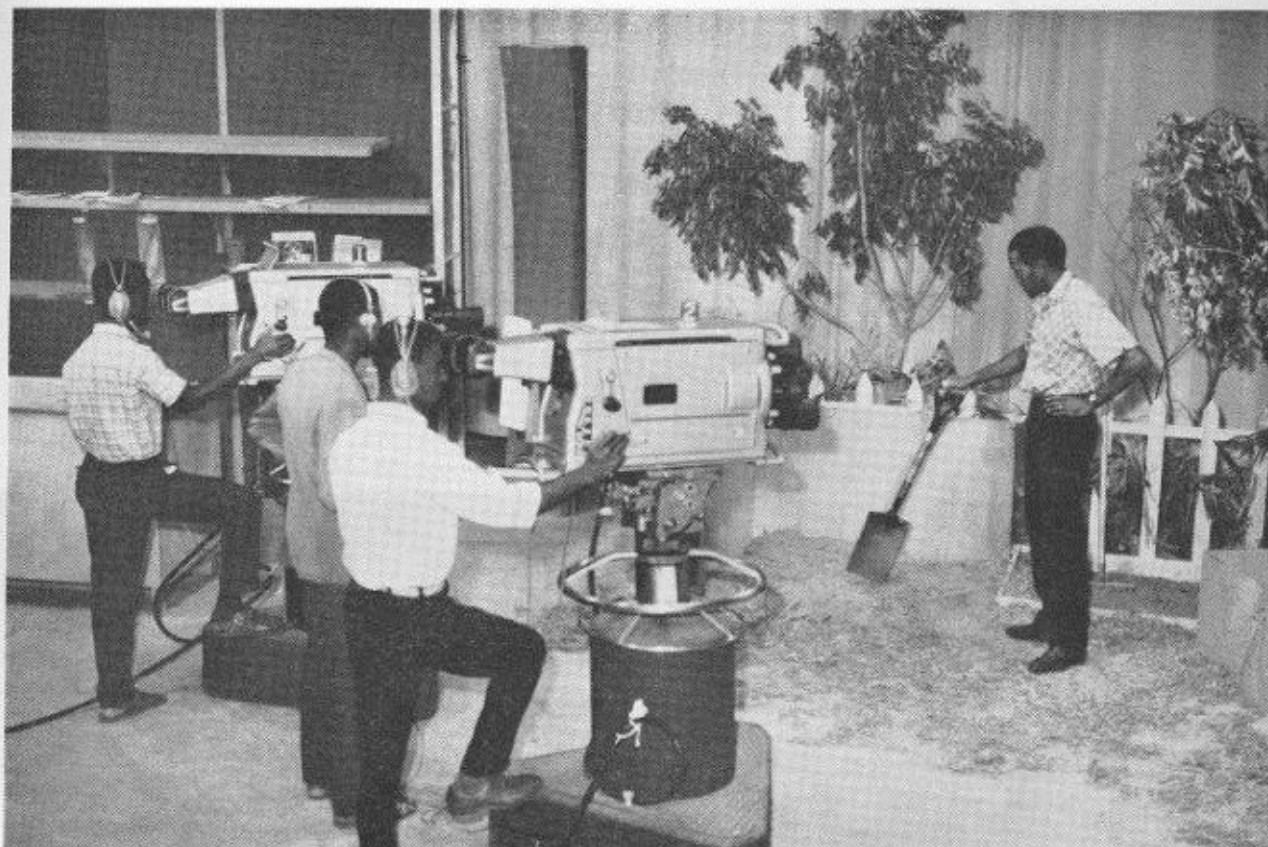


Fig. 2. A horticultural programme in progress. Television can be of immense value in disseminating information of this sort to large sections of the community.

of Science to them. Other children's programmes are basically designed to entertain as they educate.

Public Affairs programmes have one main objective; to inform the public of what goes on not only in Ghana but in the outside world, with particular emphasis on events which have a direct bearing on Africa and Ghana. This is the main function of our News Telecasts which make use of news film footage from all over the world.

Another aspect of these programmes is to bring home to Ghanaians the spectacular achievements of their Government in the socialist transformation of Ghana. "Ghana Builds" deals with the industrialization programme and "Ghana '65" deals with burning questions of the moment—to mention only two programmes. Outside broadcasts which include sports are also handled by this department.

Apart from the purely entertainment programmes which provide an outlet for Ghanaian musicians, actors and writers, a number of programmes are designed to make Ghanaians aware of their rich culture. "Cultural Heritage" brings to the television

screen Ghanaian art and crafts, and delves into our customs and traditions.

Since television should in the best sense be "a window on the world", G.B.C Television also broadcasts a number of documentaries and features from a large number of different countries. The Sunday evening series of "Great Classics" is notable in this respect. Recently there have been showings of *Julius Caesar*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Carmen*, *The Mikado*, *Anna Karenina*, *Ivan the Terrible*, and *Lenin in October*. Even in this ambitious field, however, Ghana has already been able to make its own contribution. An outstanding indigenous event in this series has been the showing of the adaptation of *Hamlet* filmed in Ghana and performed by Ghanaian actors, in which the setting of the play, which, apart from a few verbal changes, remains as Shakespeare wrote it, has been removed from Denmark to Tongo in Northern Ghana.

Ghana Television is barely three months old and we are still finding our feet. It has been a wonderful experience and we are confident that our declared objects are the right ones for Ghana.