

Initiative fund – making a difference

The GA's Initiatives Fund provides grants of between £250 and £1500 to provide new opportunities for geography teachers. Two recent recipients are Villa Real School and to support a one day seminar for geography teachers in Blantyre, Malawi. For more information please go to <https://geography.org.uk/funding-opportunities-for-geography-teachers>.

Villa Real: Green careers

Introduction

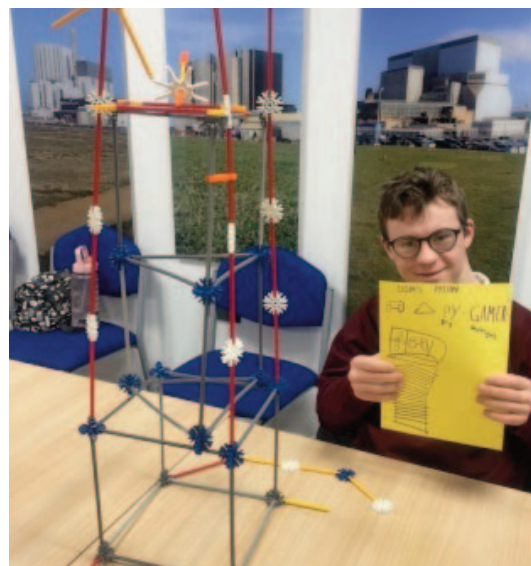
Villa Real is a school for pupils aged 2–19 who have severe, profound, medical and complex learning difficulties. We were awarded the Silver Primary Geography Quality Mark in 2023; while completing the award, we became aware that there was a need for quality geography resources suitable for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD). We decided to explore how the GA's resources could be adapted to meet the needs of our pupils by developing a programme of green careers.

A focus on green careers

We are committed to ensuring that our young people are prepared for a sustainable world and understand the global dimension. Green skills and jobs are topics of particular interest to our pupils, and our careers curriculum works toward the Gatsby Benchmarks. We decided to create resource packs for six green careers sectors: farming; energy; transport; engineering; construction; and life science.

Creating the resources

For the resources to be engaging and accessible for our SLD pupils, we created learning packs by using a specialist Widgit software called InPrint 3 to introduce each green careers sector. Each learning pack is approximately 12 pages long and organised in sections, so that they can be adapted and personalised to meet individual pupils' learning programmes. Many of our SLD pupils are visual learners, and each page of the learning pack has a corresponding PowerPoint slide with photographs to support individual and small group teaching.



A Villa Real student at the EDF power station in Middlesbrough

Impact of the green careers packs

The green careers packs have been very beneficial in supporting whole school events. For example, during Green Careers Week 2023 many of our teachers, including those specialising in autism provision, utilised the symbols-based packs to support their pupils who are either non-speaking or pre-writing. The packs have also been used by KS4 and KS5 pupils to support their work-based learning curriculum. These pupils used the energy resource pack to consolidate their learning after visiting the EDF power station in Middlesbrough (see above).

Classes have likewise used the packs to support pupils' learning during their farming sessions at Bowlees Education Farm (see below).



Learning by doing at Bowlees farm

Blantyre, Malawi: Geography seminar

In November, letters of invitation were sent to twelve secondary school geography teachers in Blantyre district: Miss Siti, Mr William and Mrs Chirwa (Njamba Secondary School); Mrs Kapelemela (Zingwangwa Secondary School); Mrs Gondwe (St. Pius Community Day Secondary School); Mr Paul (Soche Hill Secondary School); Mrs Naomi Phiri (Chirimba Community Day Secondary School); Mr Julius (Ngongomwa Community Day Secondary School); Mrs Bitoni (Thuchila Community Day Secondary School); Mrs Chitakamile and Mr Munthali (Chichiri Secondary School); and Miss Mukiwa Matapwata (Community Day Secondary School).

The seminar was planned on 25 November 2023 during a meeting held at Njamba Secondary School. The teachers agreed that the seminar was to be held for one day. Official permission was obtained from the South West Education Division (SWED) manager, Mr Kandio.

The seminar took place on 4 January 2024 at the Wildlife Environmental Society Offices in Blantyre, facilitated by Mrs Jere and Mrs Rudi. Mrs Jere facilitated on how to deal with challenges in a geography classroom and how to handle challenging topics in geography. Mrs Rudi facilitated on assessment in geography.



Mr Khumbo Kamanga, the GAIF applicant (centre), opening the seminar



Participants getting ready for the first presentation



From left to right: Mrs Kapelemela; Mr William; Mr Munthali; Mr Paul; Mrs Chitsakamile; Mrs Naomi Phiri; and Miss Mukiwa



Mr Chidaya, the IT technician (left), setting the projector



Above: Mrs Jere giving a presentation
Right (from left to right): Mrs Naomi Phiri, Miss Mukiwa and Miss Siti listening to a presentation



Geography – getting more from your subscription

Did you know that GA members who subscribe to *Geography* also receive free access to the eight journals listed below via Taylor & Francis Online?

- IRGEE (International Research in Geography and Environmental Education)
- Journal of Geography in Higher Education
- Children's Geographies

- Environmental Education Research
- Social and Cultural Geography
- The Geography Teacher
- Journal of Geography
- Geographical Review

Log in to the GA website and go to:
<https://www.geography.org.uk/Journals/Geography>
where you will find the links to these journals.

