

Learning by Ear
People Who Make a Difference
Children-Parliament (Nigeria)

EPISODE 05

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Sound clips in DALET: Learning by Ear: PEO_**Kid Parliament Nigeria**

CHARACTERS:

Announcer:

- Young (male) voice

Sound clips: (1 woman und 2 young women)

- Head teacher (around 35)
- School friend (around 16)
- Esther (16)

Introduction (Announcer):

Hello and welcome to all our Learning by Ear listeners. In this series called „People Who Make a Difference“, you’ll meet some of the ordinary heroes of day-to-day life in Africa. They are courageous, flexible and committed. They don’t let themselves get put off by the daily problems of the rat race. They have a vision for the future. Today you are going to meet Esther, a Nigerian child politician.

TEXT:

1. **ATMO STREET** (Bring up at end of Intro, let run for 5 seconds and fade under OTON):

2. **OTON Esther1:**

“I grew up here. This is my home. I have lived here all my life. It is where I was born, so I am used to the environment. I can go and walk anywhere. I know everywhere, all the nooks and crannies of this place.”

3. **ATMO STREET** (Up again for 5 seconds then down again):

4. **NARRATOR:**

Esther Afolayan is 16 years old. She is the Senate President of the children’s parliament for Nigeria. But to get into a responsible position like that, it was a long way to go.

She has lived since she was born in the middle of the largest city of Nigeria – in Lagos. She has always lived in the same house, even now, although her parents and brothers and sisters have moved to another part of the city. Her father deals in construction materials and her mother is a primary school teacher. Esther stayed here because she wanted to finish off her last school year here.

5. OTON Esther3:

“This is my house, this is my whole life. I grew up here, I’ve been here for like nearly 16 years. Yes. I go to school from here. All the things I do are basically centered around here. My family used to live here; we used to be tenants here. We are just like family friends, so to speak, with the owners of this house. So are Grandma, Papa, Denrele, Jumoke and Aunty Dupe and so many other people from the families. There are the ones that stayed here. And we are always renovating.”

6. ATMO House renovation (fade in shortly before the end of OTON 2 and establish for 3 seconds, fade under)

7. NARRATOR:

There is always something that needs to be fixed. Not only in the house but also in the street out front. Actually, the government has lots to do, says Esther.

8. OTON Esther2:

“Our governor is really doing something great for everybody here. This road used to be bad. Uuhh! Everything you can think of was so, so bad. But it is ok now. You can just walk around as free as you like. Not bad.”

9. NARRATOR:

It was not always the case that the provincial or the federal government attended to the needs of the people. Actually, in Nigeria people are more used to the opposite happening. In other words, the politicians and the well-off didn't really care about the poorer people, not even the children.

10. OTON Esther5:

"We are supposed to care about other people – as Christians. Even if we are not Christians but as human beings we have feelings. We are supposed to care about other people. Some people are enjoying some things that they did not even work for. Or while some people are actually enjoying things they are not even thinking about those ones who do not have them."

11. NARRATOR:

Each time the diminutive Esther thinks about this, she screws up her eyes. When was the exact moment she decided that she had to do something positive to make a difference?

12. OTON Esther7:

"I remember I watched a documentary. I saw the situation and how bad it was. It was like, Christ, there are some people who really suffer. I do not know what the woman did to her child but I heard that she did some very terrifying things to her child. And I was wondering we are children, we are supposed to be cared for. We are supposed to be treated like fragile eggs. So I was wondering where the love and care went when those children were going through that situation. So I thought these children need someone to speak up for them because they cannot speak up for themselves."

13. NARRATOR:

It was at school that she got the possibility to write an essay about children's rights.

14. OTON Esther4:

"I think the topic was 'Orphans and vulnerable children: whose responsibility - the government or the society?'" That is what the essay was all about. Like, who should be caring for orphans and other vulnerable children? Is it the responsibility of the government or can we all work together in society and help them to survive."

15. ATMO SCHOOL PLAYGROUND (Establish for 7 seconds, then fade down under NARRATOR then up again for 5 seconds):

16. NARRATOR:

Someone like Esther, who is so good at what she does, draws attention to herself, and gains the recognition of others. And her friends and the head of her school are not the only ones who are impressed.

17. OTON Friend1:

"The name of our school has traveled far because for somebody to be the senate president of the children's parliament in my school, you know, it's something. Let me say, a role model. Yes! Everybody sees her as somebody that can bring on an idea because she can talk. She likes being with people and everything. By seeing what she has done and is doing, it is just like a challenge for other people. It is an inspiration because you just have to try and do

something and make a difference.”

18. ATMO SCHOOL PLAYGROUND (fade up again for 3 seconds):

19. OTON HEADTEACHER2:

“I am very proud and I hope the sky’s the limit for Esther. She inspires all of the other students. I think Esther, with God’s help, is really going places. I went with her once when she presented a paper. She did so well. I could not have added anything. The other students at MGHS love her very much. They see her as someone who can represent them.”

20. NARRATOR:

Ruth Olusheye Awobiyi is the Headteacher of the Methodist Girls' High School in the Lagos suburb of Yaba. Last year she was also named Headteacher of the Year out of 70 missionary schools throughout the whole of Nigeria. She has always supported Esther, first when she became vice-spokesperson for the Lagos children’s parliament and now as Senate President of the children’s parliament for the whole of Nigeria.

21. OTON Esther6:

“The major idea of setting up the parliament was to advocate the rights of the children. There are so many children who are less privileged. Even the ones who are not less privileged, they are vulnerable. Children are vulnerable. So the parliament was just set up for children to come and say what they think should be done and what they think is necessary to be carried out. So I said if to reach out to these children this is a perfect avenue.”

22. NARRATOR:

Now, Esther has to travel every few months during the holidays or at the weekend the 1000 kilometres to the capital of Nigeria, Abuja, in her function as Senate President of the children's parliament. There she meets children from all regions of the country. More than 70 delegates meet up to discuss the most pressing problems facing the children living in the country of 140 million people. Esther finds the high rate of child mortality appalling. And also the difficult circumstances the youth in Nigeria has to live in.

23. OTON Esther8:

"The major problem I have realized is that even children do not know their rights. In the aspect of child abuse I do not patronize children that hawk on the streets. Rather I ask them "Why are you not in school?" They look at me like 'what is this one saying?' I know that I am supposed to be saying that because if I buy from them, I am encouraging them to hawk and all that. I believe that if you do it repeatedly there is somebody that actually listens, there is somebody that will think and go back to his or her mom and say 'I want to go to school, I want to be like this person.' And I communicate it with my friends, my class mates. Like in school we have opportunities to write articles in the school magazine."

24. NARRATOR:

And does Esther have ambitions to progress from the children's parliament to the country's parliament?

25. OTON Esther9:

“I want to study computer science. I love computers. There are so many things I’d love to do. I’d love to do law, too. But I just love computers. I appreciate the fact that someone can come up with such an idea. It is very fast, you want to do something now and in two, three seconds it is already done. I just want to know things about computers. Things that are not really general, that everyone knows like a computer has this and a computer can do that. In depth details of it. That is what I search.”

OUTRO (Announcer):

Esther loves going to the heart of the matter, she tells our author Hakeem Jimo before disappearing into the nearest Internet Café.

And that was Esther for you.

If you would like to read more or listen to her story again, why not visit our website at:

d w world dot de slash l b e (www.dw-world.de/lbe.)

Thanks for listening and hope you’ll join us next time for a new story in this Learning by Ear series called People Who Make a Difference.

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