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# One Hen: How One Small Loan Made A Big Difference (CitizenKid)



## Synopsis

Inspired by true events, *One Hen* tells the story of Kojo, a boy from Ghana who turns a small loan into a thriving farm and a livelihood for many. After his father died, Kojo had to quit school to help his mother collect firewood to sell at the market. When his mother receives a loan from some village families, she gives a little money to her son. With this tiny loan, Kojo buys a hen. A year later, Kojo has built up a flock of 25 hens. With his earnings Kojo is able to return to school. Soon Kojo's farm grows to become the largest in the region. Kojo's story is inspired by the life of Kwabena Darko, who as a boy started a tiny poultry farm just like Kojo's, which later grew to be the largest in Ghana, and one of the largest in west Africa. Kwabena also started a trust that gives out small loans to people who cannot get a loan from a bank. *One Hen* shows what happens when a little help makes a big difference. The final pages of *One Hen* explain the microloan system and include a list of relevant organizations for children to explore. *One Hen* is part of *CitizenKid*: A collection of books that inform children about the world and inspire them to be better global citizens.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 810L (What's this?)

Series: *CitizenKid*

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Kids Can Press (February 1, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1554530288

ISBN-13: 978-1554530281

Product Dimensions: 9.2 x 0.4 x 12.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 52 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #97,589 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #45 in *Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Money & Saving* #53 in *Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Homelessness & Poverty* #56 in *Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Africa*

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 2-5 •After his father dies, Kojo quits school to help his

mother collect firewood to sell, but there is little money or food. However, his small Ashanti village has elected to try microlending, a system where the village loans money to one family to buy something that will hopefully improve their lives; once it is paid back, another family borrows it, etc. When it is the boy's mother's turn, Kojo uses a few of the coins to buy a hen. The story then follows him as he grows and slowly but steadily builds the proceeds from that one hen into the largest poultry farm in West Africa. Throughout, the author shows how his success impacts the lives of everyone it touches, from the people whom Kojo is able to employ to the taxes he pays that will build roads and medical facilities. The story is based on the experiences of an actual Ashanti poultry farmer and could open diverse avenues of discussion, including how a community's mutual support and teamwork operate for the good of all. Fernandes's large acrylic paintings capture the warmth of the climate and include numerous details, such as splashes of kente cloth, that authenticate the setting. There are also many illustrations that spark the imagination, such as the one of a tree with Kojo's first hen at its roots, growing more hens as the tree grows, with eggs blossoming from the branches. This distinguished book will enhance many curriculum areas. Tololwa M. Mollel's *My Rows and Piles of Coins* (Clarion, 1999) is a good companion piece.

—Grace Oliff, Ann Blanche Smith School, Hillsdale, NJ Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Families in a Ghanaian village pool their small savings into a community bank that makes loans available to members. When Kojo's mother borrows money, he asks her for a few coins to buy a hen. The hen produces eggs for the family as well as a few for him to sell at the market, and Kojo uses that money to grow his business into a thriving enterprise. As a successful adult entrepreneur, Kojo now loans money to other aspiring businesspeople. Kojo's inspiring, upbeat microfinance story makes the economic concept easy to grasp and admire. Sunny acrylic illustrations incorporate African animals and scenery into impressionistic full-page art that reflects the optimistic tone of the story. Back matter includes a photograph and short biography of a "real Kojo," information on microcredit organizations, and a glossary. Grades 2-5.

—Linda Perkins

What a great story and such beautiful and entertaining illustrations. My son read this at school and "demanded" I order a copy for him. He's 10, reading well above grade level, but read this to me last night. I was mesmerized and so was my 14 yr old son who wandered in mid story (although he mostly got a kick out of the illustrations). I would suggest this book for pretty much any age. A

parent to read to a younger child or as in my case, the other way around. :)

I review advocacy tools and resources @ [...] and wanted to try out some kids books to write a "books that lead kids to change the world" type of post. This book was EXCELLENT and spurred great discussion with my 8 & 6 year-old about finances AND poverty. I will definitely recommend this. The images were beautiful too! The only downside was that it was a little complicated reading-level-wise for my kids. I had to simplify some of the worlds and work a bit harder at making it exciting

Great story about poverty solutions for kids. This book matches the "When Helping Hurts" mindset. It is very well written story, and teaches really good principles.

Gorgeous and colourful illustration written in simple and easy to understand English. This is an inspiring story based on a true character that if you start small and dream big, you never know where it can take it. What I really liked about this story is how it teaches you to give back to the community and the principle of micro finance. The central character uses his wealth and knowledge to help other people in his community improve their lives and acquire their own wealth. It also teaches the value of paying it forward. Those who received help from him are made to promise that they will extend help to someone else. People are not greedy and selfish nor are they fearful that by sharing, they will have less for themselves. I think it's a good reminder that we should not be afraid to share because instead of being shortchanged, we actually gain more in return. This is a great book for both children and adults!

Very good book. Nice pictures of true character at the end of the book. Shows entrepreneurship, loans, and determination.

My son's teacher read this to him in school and he came home and told me about it. I'm glad he did because this is a great book with a great back story behind it. These are the kinds of stories we need to share with our children. It leads to great discussion and a lot of learning about how other people live their lives. When my kids learn about how other people live their lives, I remind them how lucky they are and they recognize that that's a truth.

Very cute story!!!!!!!

This is a nice story. The art work is bright and the characters are portrayed with respect for their culture and creativity. I was very pleased that this story was in fact based on a real individual whose short biography was in the back of the book. I bought his as a gift for my child who thoroughly enjoyed looking at the pictures and seeing how good acts blossom into great things.

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