



**National
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Association**

WorldView Magazine

Learning from an Adventure in West Africa: Using the Pulaku Documentary Project

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by Angene Wilson

Introduction

One of the highlights of the spring 2011 WorldView magazine is an introduction to the Pulaku Documentary Project put together by Christoph Herby and Guida Belco, an American concluding his Peace Corps experience and a Fulani friend. The pictures, short videos, and blog posts are intriguing and inviting. Through our computers we can go along on their early 2011 7000 mile motorcycle journey through West Africa, from Cotonou, Benin to Dakar, Senegal through Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali -- and we can see, hear, and learn some of what they have seen, heard, and learned. Here is the Peace Corps' third goal -- bringing the world back home -- par excellence! Since the site is bilingual, both social studies and French teachers could use this project with their students. The teacher will want to spend at least an hour navigating the website and looking at and listening to all the possibilities.

Goal

Students will learn about another culture and people through accessing the Pulaku Documentary Project, first delving into an area of the project in which they are interested and then sharing what they have learned with others. As an assessment, they will choose photos and design interview questions to demonstrate what they have learned from not only their own small group topic, but from other topics.

Materials

The Pulaku Documentary Project website: <http://www.pulaku.com>

Procedure

Teachers could introduce the project with Christoph and Guida's preview short video or their later longer Pas Deux video or with some of the photographs of Fulani people, depending on whether they think students will be more interested in getting to know Christoph and Guida first or whether they want to focus on introducing the Fulani as people of West Africa.

Then the teacher can assign various segments from the project to small groups based on student interest. The assignment can be fairly open-ended: What have you learned? What have you found particularly interesting? What questions do you have? Students should be encouraged to post questions and/or comments to the project. Perhaps Christoph or Guida or someone else will even answer.

As part of the small groups' brief presentations to the class, ask each to choose a couple of photographs that best describe their topic visually.

- Motorcycles: We've Got Wheels, Hitting the Pulaku Trail, Adventures on the Pulaku Trail
- Women: Toucouleur Portraits, Tchoodi Facial Tattoos in Mali, Wedding Ritual
- Music: Fulani Rap, Griot
- Education: Madrasa in Guinea, Guida as Muslim at a Catholic School
- EcoTourism in Guinea
- Fulani Artisans in Burkina Faso, Spinning Cotton, Wagashi cheese
- Ceremonies in Benin: Goro-Gah Gojo Ceremony, Quesse Goja Ceremony
- Environment: Bokolo One Well Village, Baaba Maal on climate change (BBC)
- Urbanized Fulani in Dakar

Individual Assessment

1. Ask each student to go back to the project website and choose five pictures that illustrate what they have learned on their own topic and at least two other topics and to write accompanying text.
2. Ask each student to construct questions for an interview with one of the Fulani people, such as Guida, Baaba Maal, the griot, the eco-tourism guy. The person should be in a different topic than the one the student participated in for the small group assignment.

Follow-up Possibilities

Perhaps the Palaku Project could inspire closer to home community documentary projects.