

Dear Oprah

an interdisciplinary study of contemporary urban Brazil

by David Matthews

Participant—Fulbright Summer Study in Salvador, Brazil, 2004

Purpose:

Students examine the economic situation, cultural elements, and grassroots community development in contemporary Salvador, Brazil.

Goals:

Students will write a persuasive letter to an appropriate media outlet of their choice championing the cause of Didá, a community improvement organization in Salvador, Bahia, or another similar group.

Requisite Learning:

Locate the following on a map of South America: Bahia (state), Salvador, Rio de Janeiro.

Sequence of Activities:

- Show a clip of “Obvious Child” from *Paul Simon Live in Central Park*. Have students key in on the percussionists. They are from Salvador and are playing a hybrid rhythm, “samba reggae,” which originates from there.
- In a direct teach mode, provide historical, economic, and cultural background info on Salvador, Brazil, illustrated with slides of Salvador.
- Screen the documentaries *Girl Beat* and *Carlinhos Brown* (available from LLILAS Outreach, contact Natalie Arsenault). Have students jot down the cultural keys (see “12 Cultural Keys” handout, attached) they notice while watching the movies.
- Discuss and have students write a journal entry comparing their school and family life with what was portrayed in the two films.
- After organizing students into small groups, assign Internet research on topics related to the Bloco Movement in Salvador (*Olodum*, *Didá*, *Ilé Ayé*, *Timbalada*, *Carlinhos Brown*, *Neguinho do Samba*, *Pelourinho*, *Filhos de Gandhi*, *Ara Ketu*, and a *Rio escola de samba*, *Beija Flor*; for more info on the bloco movement, see attached article). Students must complete a fact sheet and present to the class. Supplement their findings with any pertinent info they omit, as well as musical examples and digital images.
- After a day of research, brainstorm a list of appropriate media outlets, including the Oprah Winfrey Show, that students can petition by writing

persuasive letters. The ultimate goal is getting Didá, or other community-based Brazilian groups, wider exposure.

- Students will employ the campus standard writing cycle.

Standards, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS):

Among the 6th grade Social Studies learning objectives targeted are:

(1) History. The student understands that historical events influence contemporary events. The student is expected to: (A) describe characteristics of selected contemporary societies such as Bosnia and Northern Ireland that resulted from historical events or factors such as invasion, conquests, colonization, immigration, and trade; and (B) analyze the historical background of selected contemporary societies to evaluate relationships between past conflicts and current conditions.

(4) Geography. The student understands the characteristics and relative locations of major historical and contemporary societies. The student is expected to: (C) explain ways in which human migration influences the character of places and regions; and (D) identify and explain the geographic factors responsible for the location of economic activities in places and regions.

(5) Geography. The student understands how geographic factors influence the economic development, political relationships, and policies of societies. The student is expected to: (B) identify geographic factors that influence a society's ability to control territory and that shape the domestic and foreign policies of the society.

(8) Economics. The student understands the various ways in which people organize economic systems. The student is expected to: (A) compare ways in which various societies organize the production and distribution of goods and services; (B) identify and differentiate among traditional, market, and command economies in selected contemporary societies, including the benefits of the U.S. free enterprise system.

(9) Economics. The student understands the role factors of production play in a society's economy. The student is expected to: (A) describe ways in which factors of production (natural resources, labor, capital, and entrepreneurs) influence the economies of selected contemporary societies; and (B) identify problems and issues that may arise when one or more of the factors of production is in relatively short supply.

(10) Economics. The student understands categories of economic activities and the means used to measure a society's economic level. The student is expected to: (B) describe and measure levels of economic development using various indicators such as individual purchasing power, life expectancy, and literacy.

(13) Citizenship. The student understands that the nature of citizenship varies among societies. The student is expected to: (A) describe roles and responsibilities of citizens in selected contemporary societies including the United States; (B)

explain how opportunities for citizens to participate in and influence the political process vary among selected contemporary societies.

(14) Citizenship. The student understands the relationship among individual rights, responsibilities, and freedoms in democratic societies. The student is expected to: (A) identify and explain the importance of voluntary civic participation in democratic societies.

(17) Culture. The student understands relationships that exist among world cultures. The student is expected to: (A) explain aspects that link or separate cultures and societies; (C) analyze how culture traits spread; (D) explain why cultures borrow from each other; (F) evaluate the consequences of improved communication among cultures.

(18) Culture. The student understands the relationship that exists between artistic, creative, and literary expressions and the societies that produce them. The student is expected to: (A) explain the relationships that exist between societies and their architecture, art, music, and literature; (B) relate ways in which contemporary expressions of culture have been influenced by the past; (C) describe ways in which societal issues influence creative expressions; and (D) identify examples of art, music, and literature that have transcended the boundaries of societies and convey universal themes.

(20) Science, technology, and society. The student understands the relationships among science and technology and political, economic, and social issues and events. The student is expected to: (C) make predictions about future social, economic, and environmental consequences that may result from future scientific discoveries and technological innovations.

(22) Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to: (B) incorporate main and supporting ideas in verbal and written communication; (E) use standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation.

(23) Social studies skills. The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings. The student is expected to: (A) use a problem-solving process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution; and (B) use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences, and take action to implement a decision.

Curricular Resources:

Music of:

- Olodum
- Didá

- Ilé Ayé
- Timbalada
- Carlinhos Brown
- Neguinho do Samba
- Filhos de Gandhi
- Beija Flor

Carlinhos Brown—Bahia Beat DVD. Shanachie Entertainment Corp. 2004.
(52 minutes)

Girl Beat Video. The Cinema Guild. (47 minutes)

Fulbright Salvador group 2004 photographs

Student Samples (attached)

Background Info for Dear Oprah Lesson

Salvador, Brazil

Salvador (in full, *São Salvador da Bahia de Todos os Santos*, meaning “Holy Savior Bay of All Saints”) is a city on the northeast coast of Brazil. Salvador is the capital of Brazil’s state of Bahia, and was long known as the city of **Bahia**, and appears under that name (or as **Salvador Bahia**) on many maps and books from before the mid-20th century.

Salvador is situated on a peninsula on the Atlantic Ocean coast. It is a major export port and the heart of the *Recôncavo Baiano* area. Its population was 2.54 million in 2002, making it the third largest city in Brazil.

History

The settlement was founded in 1549 by Thomé de Souza and was commonly known as Bahia. It quickly became the main Brazilian sea port and first capital of Portuguese Brazil, a centre of the sugar industry and the slave trade. The city became a bishopric in 1552. The cathedral still standing today was completed in 1572. By 1583 there were 1600 people in residence. The Dutch captured and sacked the city in May of 1624, and remained in control of it until it was reconquered by the Portuguese in April of the following year.

The city was divided into a *cidade alta* (upper city) and *cidade baixa* (lower city), with the cathedral and administrative buildings on the higher ground.

Salvador was capital until 1763 when it was succeeded by Rio de Janeiro. The city became a base for the Brazilian independence movement and was attacked by Portuguese troops in 1812 before being officially liberated on July 2, 1823.

By 1948 the city had some 340,000 people, and was Brazil’s fourth largest city. By 1991 the population was 2.08 million.

In the 1990s a major project was done to clean up and restore the *Pelourinho* or old town section.

Salvador was the birthplace of noted musician Gilberto Gil.

Salvador Today

The city still contains many colonial buildings, including the first cathedral in Brazil, and the nation’s oldest medical college, but it has become more famous due to the strong influence of African culture on the city. The majority of the population of the city are of African ancestry. It is the center of Yoruba Candomblé and the martial dance art of capoeira, and has so many churches (over 350 including the 16th century cathedral) it has been dubbed the “Black Rome.” The African influence extends beyond religion to cover food, music (from the spiritually influenced afoxé and the community-based blocos afros to more popular axé and samba), and a dynamic cultural life.

The city's official literacy rate is about 81%. As of the late 1990s, the average monthly income was R\$537 (about 447 US dollars). Sanitation is a problem in the poorer neighborhoods. About 1/3 of the residents have neither sewage hookups nor septic tanks.

The city has several universities, including the Universidade Federal da Bahia, Universidade do Estado da Bahia, and Universidade Católica do Salvador.

Salvador is noted for its large Carnival celebrations.

Salvador is an important tourism destination, especially the *Pelourinho* old town and the beaches.

Source: http://www.fact-index.com/s/sa/salvador_brazil.html.

12 Cultural Keys

Cultural Keys is an organizational strategy for investigating a group of people and their place, region, or country. It provides students with a framework on which to build an informed portrait of a particular culture. If there is ever a question as to the key under which a certain artifact or custom belongs, let the class discuss and decide.

These are the 12 Cultural Keys and examples:

Appearance - clothing, costumes, jewelry, tattoos, make up, hair style and color, skin and eye color, piercings, masks, hats, shoes, scarification, facial features, facial hair, stature

Belief System - religion, superstitions, ceremonies, luck, fate, folk medicine, taboos

Communication - languages, alphabets, numbers, codes, gestures, symbols, signs, greetings, measurement, proverbs, idioms

Dates - calendar, time, holidays, observances, punctuality, siesta

Entertainment - music, sports, dance, visual arts, games, recreation, drama

Food - cuisine, spices, utensils, avoidances, vegetarianism, breads, drinks, fruits/vegetables/meat/insects, cooking methods, libations

Government - leaders, structures, laws and regulations, capitals, taxes, documents, flags and symbols, anthems, currency

Homes - houses, dwellings, buildings, architecture, materials, room, furniture, decorations, gardens

Information - education, oral history, media (newspapers, TV, books, magazines, texts), advertisements, billboards, maps, photography, history, technology

Jobs - occupations, male/female roles, economy, businesses, salary, type of work, respect/importance, chores, unemployment, child-rearing, clubs and organizations, volunteerism

Kinds of Environment - climate, habitat, geography, resources, population, wildlife, elevation, preservation

Leftovers - transportation, energy, weaponry, health care

Afro Blocos and “good works” in Bahia

By Phillip Wagner

In January of 1998 I made my third trip to Brasil, where I met personally with the directors for three very well organized efforts to assist marginalized Brasileiros in Salvador, Bahia. Each of these efforts is associated with a “bloco” in the Afro Bloco movement of Bahia.

Brasilian Afro Blocos in Bahia are community organizations which represent the personality, and address the needs of, the residents who live there. The emphasis of the blocos identified here is strictly “self help and self reliance.” These “good works” are worthy of any genuine offer of assistance which will help the people of their districts to help themselves, but which does not expect something in return.

Brasilians, like people everywhere, are frustrated by the failure of their government to effectively address social problems. The blocos have stepped forward to establish innovative, meaningful social programs within their own districts. These programs are designed and implemented by residents within their respective communities with assistance from people who do not reside in their district(s), who willingly offer some necessary special expertise.

Blocos have evolved in such a way that they are frequently led by music maestros. Each bloco has a musical group which performs music which is uniquely identified with that bloco. The colors of the performers’ clothing and instruments, the type of instruments, the rhythms of their music, and the performances are specific to each bloco. The bloco movement grew along with Carnival because district musical groups have traditionally competed with one another at that time. As social problems in Brasil grew out of control famous music personalities like Carlinhos Brown, Neginho do Samba and Vovo of Ile Aiye have promoted the idea that performing artists should lead efforts to improve life within their own communities.

Carlinhos Brown is a true superstar of Brazilian music. Brown promotes the idea of an “elegant revolution” to build a more cooperative society. He believes that people of all races should work together to resolve the great social problems facing Brasil. He recognizes that we have to deal with our differences, but asserts that each of us must recognize what others contribute to society.

There are 4 music groups associated with Carlinhos Brown. “Jair,” which is led by an 18 year old with blonde hair, reflects his syncretic philosophy. “O Zarabe” is composed of more than 200 men. Brown established this very unique primitive percussion orchestra to show how poor people, if well organized, could very suddenly appear in the street for a “revolution in sound,” and then just as suddenly disappear again. And that is exactly what they do during Carnival. No one knows when they will appear among the huge crowds to sing, dance and play their instruments. And then they vanish, as if never there.

Some O Zarabe members play “clarines,” a form of primitive natural trumpet with no valves.

“Timbalada” is named after the “Timbau,” a conical drum. Carlinhos Brown is very famous for making improvements to this kind of drum and a US manufacturer is currently negotiating to

produce it under his name. “Lactomia” is a group of teenagers associated with Timbalada, but working with different materials.

Neguinho do Samba (Antonio Luiz Alves de Souza) has been associated, at one time or another, with every Afro Bloco which has ever existed in Salvador, Bahia and even in the native Indian bloco (which has an Afro sound). His father played the bongo drums and his mother was a laundry woman. He was soon tapping out rhythms on his mother's metal wash bowl.

Neguinho worked for years as an electrician, an iron worker and a street peddler. All the while tapping rhythms, which is as customary in Salvador as practicing basketball is in Indiana in the United States. Real drums are not affordable for the poor in Bahia but, as an iron worker, Neguinho realized that the drums which his poor community in Salvador could not afford to buy for Carnival could be made within the community. Iron rods, used in construction, proved to be ideal as struts on the outside of the drums. And scrap metal could be used to form 13 inch rings to secure the struts at the top and bottom of each drum.

Neguinho discovered that a drum with 5 struts was good for samba but a drum with 8 struts was best for the music performed by Timbalada.

Neguinho created an organization which developed a process for building drums in his father's workshop. He secured participation from iron workers. And he convinced scrap metal dealers to cut and solder the scrap metal they were donating into the 13 inch rings, complete with nuts through which the rods could be secured.

The availability of affordable drums contributed to the regeneration of Salvador's most historic district—Pelourinho. Twenty years ago Pelourinho was ruled by drug dealers, those exploiting prostitution and petty criminals. It was one of the most dangerous areas of Salvador. Today Pelourinho is a thriving tourist mecca which has been transformed in large part by the work of African blocos and their musical groups which have imparted the importance of self discipline, enhanced pride and promoted education. Most notable among these groups, though not the first, is the world famous Olodum which was formed in 1979 and has performed backup for David Byrne, Paul Simon and Michael Jackson. Olodum performed at the Indiana University Lotus Festival in the autumn of 1997.

In the 1970s Neguinho, who would later become mestre of Olodum, was Mestre of Ile Aiye, which is led by Vovo (who is and ever was the leader of Ile and the district of Curuzu/Liberdade). From the outset he began to put his own musical ideas into Ile Aiye. He began to think that each bloco, or music school, was intended to be unique. He devised the first rhythm uniquely identified with Ile. This rhythm came to him as he thought about the people associated with Ile and the “mother” of Ile (Vovô's mother and “mother-of saint” of one of the most famous Candomblés on that district). This rhythm reminded him of the time of slavery and the hard work of slaves to create “sisal” fibers. It also reminded him of Candomble, which is the form that Afro religion has taken behind the facade of Catholicism. He could see from the movements of these (Ile) people that they “fit” with this rhythm so they could “find” their own identities in the rhythm.

In 1983 Neguinho helped to form the children's version of Olodum and, in a later year, the all children's bloco Mirim. There were only 20 days before Carnival when Mirim was formed and Neguinho's appeals to other organizations for assistance were met more with demands than offers of assistance. Neguinho worked to organize the parents of the children and encouraged them to assume responsibilities for the group. He asked the street children whose parents were not there "won't your parents come? If not you will not participate" Soon these parents began to appear (all of them!!!), and as they appeared they received a t-shirt with the name of the "banda" and participated in the Carnival by holding a rope in a circle around the children to protect them from the crowds. This practice is employed by all of the blocos that participate in Carnival in Bahia, but in this case their was a dual meaning to it: a physical barrier to protect the participants and the protective barrier provided the children by their parents...

Neguinho do Samba also created "Samba Reggae" to honor the Afro peoples of Jamaica. Jimmy Cliff came to Bahia where he performed with Neguinho. Jimmy Cliff later created a sound to honor the people of Bahia. The music of Neguinho do Samba gained international recognition and he was greeted in Japan by large crowds with great banners. The mayor of Tokyo presented him with a commemorative plate.

So respected among the long time leaders of the Afro Bloco movement is Antonio Carlos Vovo, president of Bloco Ile Aiye. Vovo, or "grandfather" as he is now known, is helping to determine the nature of Afro Brazilian education and is recognized by government officials in the city of Salvador and the state of Bahia as a leader who represents the interests of the Afro Brazilian community.

Under "grandfather's" guidance Ile Aiye has assumed an increasingly prominent role in the very large and independent district of Liberdade. "Liberdade" is the Portuguese word for "liberty," or "freedom," and is a frequent theme in the music of the district. Vovo has successfully negotiated Ile Aiye participation in cooperative efforts involving both governmental and non governmental agencies to secure a better future for young Afro Brazilians in Liberdade. A recent example of this is a program in which the Ile Aiye and Muzenza Blocos have joined in a coordinated program with the office of the Secretary of Work and Social Action for the state of Bahia, a consulting firm called "DCN" and Liceu, an arts oriented trade school currently serving 160 teenagers. Their mission statement is to "spread the Afro culture where African descendants have the will, and show the capacity, to redeem their self esteem with pleasure and happiness." Ile Aiye itself was declared a non profit non governmental "public utility" in 1989.

A primary focus of Vovo and Ile Aiye has been to document and offer up an educational curriculum which offers instruction based on an African, rather than on a European, historical perspective. This redirected historical focus offers the overwhelming Afro population base of Salvador and Bahia, estimated to be 80%, a more meaningful perspective which relates more directly to their own lives.

Source: <http://www.iei.net/~pwagner/gooddeeds/afrobloc.htm#English>.

An Open Letter from Didá

Since the mid 1990s the Didá School of Music has been developing for, and delivering to, the women and children of Salvador, Bahia programs promoting music, culture, participation in family life, responsibility to society, and academics. Didá pursues these programs on both professional and pre-professional levels in the historic district of Pelourinho in Salvador, which is the soul-center of Afro-Brazilian cultural expression.

Didá is dedicated to improving the condition of women and children through constructive social engagement revolving around a core of music and dance classes offered at the Didá educational center. In recent months Didá has continued to expand its offerings, and its dream to serve an ever increasing number of those who live on the margins of existence. Maestro Neguinho do Samba and the Didá staff believe in the need to incorporate the family, the community and the public schools in its efforts to ensure that all students are well served.

Didá has also devoted itself to providing professional opportunities for young women to express themselves culturally. This commitment culminated in the release of the first Didá female percussion band CD in April of 1999. As of this writing, Didá women's band was the only Afro- Brazilian percussion ensemble composed of only women. This group celebrates Afro-Brazilian culture and promotes Afro-Brazilian cultural awareness by performing at high profile events throughout Brazil.

The Didá school of music is a non-profit organization that offers training to women and children in music and dance, focusing on traditional local styles such as Afoxé drumming, Afro-Brazilian dance and the Brazilian martial art form known as capoeira. Didá hopes to expand its curriculum to also emphasize visual arts. Didá offers its classes, and participation in the performing arts, free of charge to women and children from poor districts in Salvador. These groups have historically been denied widespread participation and professional training related to cultural expression.

Maestre Neguinho do Samba, a Brazilian music super star referred to as the "god of percussion" is, along with Carlinhos Brown, Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso and others, one of the true pioneers of Brazilian music. Neguinho who has become reknown throughout Brazil for his innovative percussion based expressions learned to tap out rhythms on his mother's wash tub. He directed the Afoxé drum corps Olodum on Paul Simon's *The Rhythm of the Saints*, and used his share of the proceeds to purchase the building in Pelourinho where Projeto Didá is now located.

In 1990, and again in 1992, Neguinho traveled to New York and California where he conducted a series of Afoxé drumming workshops for public school children. He has also traveled to Haiti and lusophone Africa conducting similar workshops, has been publicly recognized by the mayor of Tokyo and twice been visited by the President and First Lady of the United States.

Didá has, up until now, received the majority of its financial support from Neguinho himself, and asks the families of students from better situations to pay tuition according

to their means. Approximately 20% of students pay some level of tuition, while others participate in the physical maintenance and administration of the school. As of this writing neither the Federal Government of Brazil, nor the State government of Bahia, have responded to Didá's requests for assistance. The municipal government of Salvador funds a meal program for Didá's students. As the Brazilian economic problems are addressed funding for social programs is exceedingly difficult to come by.

The commitment of Didá is to instill in its students an understanding of, and appreciation for, the knowledge and behaviors necessary to be successful within society. It is not the aim of Didá to provide charitable relief to the marginalized of Brazil. It is the aim of Didá to provide women and children with the means and the motivation to secure their own future.

Source: <http://www.iei.net/~pwagner/gooddeeds/dida.htm#Letter1>.

Didá Educational and Cultural Association

CULTURAL PROJECT

The Didá Educational and Cultural Association is a cultural, not-for-profit association that offers free educational activities with a foundation in popular forms of art created and maintained by Africans and their descendants. The educational base focuses on transformational music teaching through the drum, more specifically the samba reggae, the rhythm created by Maestro Neguinho do Samba, Didá's founder, who shares his more than 30 years of experience in helping poor youth from the historic center of Salvador, who have few choices for their futures, become responsible citizens and conscientious family members.

Didá, a Yoruba word that means "power of creation," was chosen by the Maestro who understands that creation is the basis of all artistic expression. The institution today runs 11 courses, including: percussion, African dance, theater, capoeira, artesanry, singing, drums, guitar, cavaquinho (a type of small guitar), keyboard, and horns. The number of students per year varies from 600-800 children and adolescents. There are 23 professionals who serve as professors, coordinators, staff, cooks, and collaborators. Every day, basic meals (breakfast, lunch, and supper) are served to 40% of the students and morning and evening snacks are served to all of the students.

Didá is open on Monday through Saturday, from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Didá's main objective is the education of women and children through the arts. The courses are distributed among the various days of the week and are organized into different educational strands: Didá's multicultural family classes, a training course in Afro-Brazilian beauty and aesthetics, Afro-Brazilian carnival parade, Didá merchandise store, the Sòdomo project (creating partnerships with a child's family and school), and the Didá Female Band. In short, the projects aim toward the stimulation of collective artistic expressions, joint projects, and a consciousness of community life that respects both similarities and differences.

The main product of the Didá is the band, formed exclusively for women, an idea that also came from the brilliant mind of our Maestro, in his incessant search for Didá, for creation.

The women of Didá learned to rise above insecurity and to overcome fear of failure. They dared and today they represent, in Brazil and other countries, a point of reference for musical and artistic quality, seen in the innovation of their homage to Princess Anastácia, a black warrior who lived in Brazil and who continues today to grant miraculous favors to thousands of devotees. With the blessing of Anastácia, the Didá Band had the opportunity to record with the most famous names in Brazilian popular music, including Caetano Veloso, Gilbert Gil, Gal Costa, Elza Soares, Naná Vasconcelos, Emilio Santiago, Sandra de Sá, Leila Pine, and Dominginhos; and also with international artists, including the important American gospel choir, Mount Moriah and Roby Rosa. Without a doubt, Didá represents for the history of Bahia and also for Brazil, a new chapter, a turn

of the page, a new beginning for Afro-descended women who only through Didá gained access to their history, and a consciousness of their power to fight and to transform.

Extending the possibilities of work and income, Didá maintains its weekly classes, in the Praça Tereza Bautista, Pelourinho. Because of these classes and other events the women of Didá acquire financial resources to participate actively in providing for their family, and can also provide for their intellectual development, by paying for their college courses as they visualize their futures as women, mothers, and citizens. And it is in the carnival that the Band's musicality explodes, among hundreds of other groups Didá is the only exclusively female group, and during carnival the educational reach of the school is increased and not only 600 but 2,000 women can bring their children to drink from Didá's cultural fount. Hearing songs that exalt the Brazilian people, and witnessing the celebration of the family. In the Afro carnival parade, the participants are not charged any fees, and during this time we promote a large campaign of non-perishable food collection that is donated to other social groups on March 8: International Women's Day.

Many are the concrete products and results that prove the success of Didá Educational and Cultural Association: safer women with social representation, children who speak more and better, the awakening of a sense of leadership and citizenship, the birth of friendship and fellowship. But all of the victories result from difficult and brutal fights. The lack of support does not allow the strengthening of the project, and the school feels that it could do much more if it had better economic, material, and human resources. At the moment, the greatest challenges are the payment of back wages; public utility bills including water, light, and telephone; and taxes. The structure of the building is damaged and needs repairs, including electrical and plumbing repairs.

The difficulties are many, but the passion and the commitment of the team make it possible to survive, possible for this garden to bloom, possible for this field to germinate and to grow leafy trees with strong, fruitful, protective branches.

The school gratefully accepts the aid of volunteers, donations, and financial support. All initiatives including the promotion of our project by way of Internet and other means of communication are important for our humble family.

Contact can be made by telephone, email or visit:

Address: Rua João de Deus, 19 Pelourinho – CEP: 40.025-080 Salvador – BA

E-mails: viviam.caroline@terra.com.br, neguinhodosamba@ig.com.br

Tel: (71) 321-2042 / 8804-4807

Website: www.projetodida.blogger.com.br

Researcher(s):

Date:

Letter to Oprah Fact Sheet

You may choose to research alone or with partners.

Each student must write their own original letter.

Study Focus: _____

Early History:

The Leader(s) and the Lead:

Activities:

Community Involvement:

Effectiveness:

Info sources:

Persuasive Letter Template

address
city, state, zip
date

name, title
address
city, state, zip

dear line

introduction statement

first reason

second reason

third reason

fourth reason

counter-argument

concluding statement

closing
signature

Clint Small Jr. Middle School
4801 Monterey Oaks Boulevard
Austin, Texas 78749

Dear Oprah,

Making millions only to spend it all on poorly educated children and favelas (slum areas), Carlinhos Brown is one who shows no selfishness as he tries to make the world a better place. Having the chance to live the rich life, he choose to turn it down and help the people that deserve better than what they have. I hope that you will consider helping this man that cares more about others then he cares about himself...

First of all, the money he puts into music schools keeps kids off the streets and doing bad things. Most of the children's parents work all day and have no time for them so they wander the streets. He gives them a reason not to do things that they might be sorry for.

Second, he puts almost all his money back into his community to make it a better place. He has used money to renovate houses and buildings. He has even bought a building to make a music school. He wants to make his community a better place to live.

Carlinhos has also said "We do not play for money, but of happiness." He says himself that he is not in it for the noney. He just wants peace and happiness. I wish that all people could have that same view. If everyone lived their life with that in mind, the world would be a perfect place. The world isn't like that though, but there are people here like him.

Carlinhos Brown doesn't even use that much money on himself. He uses it all to help others and not himself. Most rich people today, use all their money on themselves. Carlinhos doesn't. Like I said, he really cares for others and wants to make the world a nicer place.

I hope that you will consider helping Carlinhos Brown and possibly have him on you show to get him publicity so that others can join him to. I know that Brown would love to get publicity and a helping hand in what he is doing in Brazil.

Sincerely,



Christopher Watson

Address: Clint Small Middle School
4801 Monterey Oaks Blvd.
Austin, TX 78749

Friday, November 05, 2004

Dear Oprah,

As you know, poverty is widespread throughout most of the world. Poverty leads to many things including: sickness, economic depressions, and many bad diseases. Like the rest of the world; Brazil has loads of poverty. My name is Trey Henninger and I go to Clint Small Middle School in Austin, Texas. I have learned about the poverty in Brazil and a man who is trying to help his community. His name is Neguinho do Samba. I would like you to help him help his community.

He has been initiating programs, which transform the lives of marginalized Afro Brazilians in Salvador, Bahia in Brazil. Neguinho do Samba has played with Paul Simon, Michael Jackson, and Spike Lee. He was once the head drummer in the group Olodum.

He is now working with a music school for girls, Dida which he founded. He is the head drummer. They currently have 80-90 girls attending and all their tuitions are free. They provide drumming and instrument lessons. They also have doctors come in to address health and sex issues. They have a band of 18.

Their activities include performances at Carnival and musical concerts around the world. This work at Dida is helping all girls from children to adults. It teaches them musical skills so that they can try and get out of poverty. They are also taught English and how to work with computers because they are the languages of the world.

Neguinho do Samba is constantly trying to generate medical facilities, research institutions, and an information management center for Dida. They need to buy study materials for the children, school tables with attached chairs, video tapes, they have only one small camera, dance room needs a mirror, CD's, tape players, computers, paper, and note books.

Perhaps you could feature the Dida band and Neguinho do Samba on your show. One reason in doing this would be that they have something to teach other communities about working together to improve their own community. Another reason is that this publicity would increase their record sales a lot and it would bring in money to their school. By doing this you would be helping to benefit Dida and help Neguinho do Samba help these girls. He already has had great success in working with these girls your support would just improve the effectiveness.

Sincerely,
Trey Henninger

4600
Austin, Texas, 78749
11/12/04

Jon Stewart
c/o Staff Member
Daily Show with Jon Stewart, The
2049 Century Park E #4170
Los Angeles, CA 90067
USA

Dear, Jon Stewart

I live in Austin, Texas, and would like to inform you that I watch your show. It's extremely funny, and I think it would be a good idea to invite Beija Flor on your show.

They are a Brazilian musical group that invests a lot of their money that they earn to their very poor community. One of their major projects is an elementary school, and it would be very nice of you to mention or invite them on your show.

It would help their popularity and you could make a few jokes along the way. Plus they are excellent role models.

Maybe you could play some of his music in the opening and ending to show their amazing talent and skill.

Although you do not usually feature musical groups of this genre, this one group will be worth your time. They are great role models and an antidote to the current bling-bling culture of popular American musical acts.

I thank you for considering my letter.

*Sincerely,
James Waller*

4801 Monterey Oaks Blvd.
Austin, TX, 78749
11/10/04

Conservation Trust, National Geographic Society
1145 17th St. NW
Washington, DC, 20001

Dear National Geographic,

As you might know, poverty is widespread throughout the world, including Brazil. There is still some hope though for some Bahia communities in Brazil as music groups such as Ara Ketu earn money through their work but spend it on their communities, instead of on themselves. It would also be a good idea for people to help them in their effort to improve life in poor Bahian communities.

One of the biggest reasons I am writing this letter is because the group, Ara Ketu, is spending all the money they earn more on their community than on themselves. It is a good step towards improving life for some poor communities.

The group also has started a school for children of the street, which might be very helpful to them, considering those children might have not had any education opportunities at all. This also shows they care about every member of their communities and that all the money and fame they earn is for a good cause.

Ara Ketu also has had successful tours outside Brazil including a tour to New York once, which means that they are so dedicated to their work they even travel outside of Brazil to earn money for their communities. They are also still performing in the Carnival festival in Brazil showing that they are still active in their efforts.

They also work against racism, which shows that they discriminate nobody at all. That is also a marker showing that they work against racism you might see everywhere, but instead of doing it they go against racism.

From all this you can see that they are a very dedicated group towards a very good cause. First of all they spend the money they earn on their community. Second they work against racism and discrimination. Third they are also very dedicated in helping their community. That shows that they are a group going towards a good cause.

This is why I think that you should help Ara Ketu by publicizing this by putting in an article in your magazine about this, or a video tape or something so it when it gets more publicized, people who support the causes can help the group out in some way or another.

Sincerely,

Danyal Hussain

Clint Small Middle School
4801 Monterey Oaks Blvd.
Austin, TX 78749

Dear Oprah,

Racism is a tough thing to fight, so is discrimination. But, one group still tries to help out. Ara Ketu is a group in Brazil who tries to fight racism and discrimination against gender and religion. The name Ara Ketu means "People of Ketu" from the Yoruba orixa Oxossi (the god of Hunters). If you continue to read on I think that will be compelled to help them out.

Ara Ketu is a band from Brazil who started in 1980. Since then they have tried to fight racism and discrimination against gender and religion. Since 1980 they have created 10 albums and with their money have tried to destroy racism and discrimination all together. This is the reason you should help them fight this terrible thing.

Their albums include "Ara Ketu", "Vida", "Ara Ketu E O Povo Ao Vivo De Novo", "Ao Vivo", "Pra La De Bom", "Dividindo Alegria", "Dez", "Bom Demais", "Ara Ketu De Peroperi". Most of their music consists of a lot of drumming and a strong afro-brazilian beat. Their outfit is a blue suit with a bow and an arrow in honor of Oxossi. This is one reason you would help them.

They have started a school for the children in their area and they could use help funding that. They take children from the streets and help them learn how to drum. Their leaders are very diverse in ethnicity.

I think that the money they receive from record and other sales they spend on trying to stop racism. Or, they spend it on buying better instruments to make better music to spend on the racism problem.

So if you were to help them out a little bit they could do a lot of good in their country and possibly stop racism. Also they might be able to stop discrimination of religion and gender all together.

Sincerely,



Gabe Brewer

Caitlin Coker
Mr. Matthews's class
4801 Monterey Oaks Blvd.
Small Middle School
Austin, Texas 78749
11-9-04

The Early Show
524 West 57th St.
New York, New York 10019

Dear The Early Show,

In their home country of Brazil, they're famous. In America they are not. You go to get to know these guys. Timbalada is from a favela called Candead in Salvador. They are working to improve their community through their music.

I was wondering if you could help me share them with the world, especially the U.S.A. I want them to be noticed. In Brazil they are very popular and famous, but why not let the rest of the U.S citizens share that same popularity-ness. The U.S.A, I'm sure would want to listen and enjoy the hobby of these very talented group.

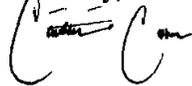
They are also trying to get people off the street and so do things get things that they need to support their group and their community. Their community like some parts of the U.S. is a very poor and not well developed.

The group Timbalada also needs support to get the things and/or the supplies that they need. In order to have this group as it is they would need thing to make to beat on and play their music on.

I know that you are probably saying that this is not the kind of show that you would usually do, but there is probably room for changes. Also I'm sure that having them on your show will help them reach out to the world and not just in Brazil.

So if you could help me support them. If they make it on your show they not only would be overjoyed but they could and would tell you all about the group and you could learn some of the dances and drumming that they do. Not only that you can also learn more about Brazil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caitlin Coker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Caitlin Coker