



Global Voices Information Sheet

Saving the treasures of Darfur



Darfuri women in the Goz Amir refugee camp perform a traditional harvest song for Mia Farrow's cultural archive. (Photo: www.miafarrow.org)

Background Info

- Darfur is a region in the west of Sudan, the largest country in Africa.
- There are as many as 80 different ethnic groups in Darfur, including the Masalit, Zaghawa and Fur. Some of these groups are ethnic African and others are of Arabic origin.
- In 2003, conflict broke out between the Government of Sudan and rebel groups in Darfur. Although there are United Nations peacekeepers in Darfur now, fighting still continues.
- Approximately 2.5 million people have been driven from their villages; one million of them are children. Their villages have either been destroyed or other foreign tribes have been allowed to move in and take them. These people are living in camps in Darfur or elsewhere in Sudan.
- Another 250,000 people have fled Sudan and now live in refugee camps in neighbouring countries like Chad and the Central African Republic.
- The Government of Sudan, and its President Omar al-Bashir have been charged with war crimes by the International Criminal Court for deliberately attacking innocent people during the conflict.
- Mia Farrow is an American Hollywood actress who has appeared in more than 50 movies and TV series since 1959.
- In 2000, the United Nations appointed Farrow to be a UN Goodwill Ambassador. She has worked to raise awareness about humanitarian issues for children in many countries including Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Chad, Nigeria, and Haiti.

Key terms

- **Refugees** – People who have been forced to leave their country because of conflict or natural disaster.
- **Displaced persons** – People who have been forced to leave their homes because of conflict or natural disaster, but are still living in their home country.
- **Tradition** – Passing cultural practices from generation to generation. Traditions can include religious ceremonies, songs, stories, and specific ways of doing jobs or making things. Traditions are often not written down, but are passed on orally.
- **Archive** – A collection of records, documents or other materials containing historical information.

Global Voices Elementary Educator Resources

Note to Educators:

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. Activities are structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Extension and conclusion activities are included to challenge students and finally, encourage them to reflect on the issues at hand.

Since these activities are designed as discussions rather than formal lessons, assessment strategies are not included.

Themes and Course Connections

- Immigration, emigration, refugees, diversity, culture, multiculturalism, citizenship, family heritage
- Course Connections: Social Studies and Language

Materials

- Chart paper and blackboard
- Computers and internet
- Markers
- Video camera

Specific Expectations and Learning Goals

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in written and spoken language or other forms of expression.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express, and defend a position on an issue and explain how to put the ideas into action.

Knowledge and Understanding

1. Pack your Bags (estimated time: 10 minutes)
 - a. Explain to students that in this exercise they will attempt to put themselves, at least imaginatively, in the shoes of a refugee. From this activity, students should understand that refugees are generally not able to plan their migration in advance; consequently, they end up ill-prepared to face the incredibly difficult situations ahead of them.
 - b. Tell students that they will be given two minutes to gather their belongings, whatever they choose, since they are being forced from their house and community, and will most likely not return. During these two minutes students will

- brainstorm and write down what they should take. Distractions such as locking the doors can be applied.
- c. From there, lead a discussion on the lists that have been created and their content by asking:
 - i. What did you take with you? Why?
 - ii. Why did you think you would need these things?
 - iii. Did you take identification/documentation with you? Why would you need this? If you did not bring this, how can you prove who you are?
 - iv. Was there anything you left behind that you wish you had brought with you?
 - v. Did you choose to bring any sentimental belongings with you?
 - vi. How did this activity make you feel?
 - d. Explain to students that in this activity they put themselves in the shoes of refugees forced to flee their country because they fear for their safety or are in search of a better life.
2. What is a Refugee? (estimated time: 15 minutes)
- a. Write the word refugee on the board and ask students to give their ideas of what a refugee is. Record their responses.
 - b. As a class define refugee.
 - c. Divide the class into small groups.
 - d. Explain to the class that they are going to read a story about a group of people in the north-eastern African country named Sudan. In 2003, a conflict broke out in the Darfur region of Sudan, and as a result caused many refugees to flee their homes.
 - e. Ask each group to research the following information about the conflict in Sudan:
 - i. What caused some Sudanese people to become refugees?
 - ii. Where did they go after they had left their home country?
 - iii. What happened to the refugees when they reached the camps? What difficulties did they face?
 - f. When the groups have finished their research, ask them to share their findings with the class.

Thinking

1. Guided Reading: The Global Voices Column (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. Have students sit in a circle and distribute one copy of the Global Voices column to each student.
 - b. Pre-reading steps:
 - i. Make predictions: ask students to read the title of the column and view the pictures. After doing so, ask them to make predictions as to what the column is going to be about.
 - ii. Introduce vocabulary from the column.
 - iii. Assess prior knowledge: ask students to discuss what they already know about these topics.
 - c. Reading steps:
 - i. Go around the circle asking each student to read a section of the column to the class, so that everyone gets a turn.
 - ii. As students are reading, offer guidance and coaching by providing prompts, asking questions, and encouraging attempts at reading strategy application.
 - d. Post reading steps:
 - i. Encourage students to provide a summary of the column in order to ensure they have understood the series of events.
 - ii. Ask questions about the text to judge comprehension.
2. Media Literacy (estimated time:15 minutes)

- a. On a piece of paper ask each student to write the title of the column at the top of the page. Underneath the heading, have them create a chart with two columns across and five rows down.
- b. In the first column, have them write the following questions:
 - i. What is the title of this column?
 - ii. Who is the author?
 - iii. What is the purpose of the column?
 - iv. What statistics or facts are listed in the column?
 - v. Are there biases or obvious points of view?
- c. Have the students revisit the Global Voices column and fill in the chart answering the above questions.
- d. Discuss the student's charts as a class. Address the reasons why it is important to understand the source and potential bias of a website or print resource offering news information. Explain that just because a source has a bias doesn't mean it has no value. One of the traditional purposes of publications is to express opinions and attempt to convince readers of their validity. Explain that this is why it's important for each of them to form their own opinion while reading publications instead of agreeing with everything.

Communication

1. Preserving cultural traditions (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. Explain to the class that they are about to watch a short video created by Mia Farrow, in which she explains why she decided to film the Darfur Archives. The video can be found here: <http://www.miafarrow.org/darfur-archives.html>
 - i. Teacher Note: The video has some graphic content, which may not be appropriate for younger audiences.
 - b. After the class has finished watching the video, ask the following suggested questions to generate a brief discussion:
 - i. What are the different ways that cultures preserve and pass on important traditions?
 - ii. Why is it important to preserve these cultural and familial traditions?
 - iii. What is the difference between oral and written traditions? Why is it more difficult to preserve oral traditions?
 - iv. Thinking back to the Global Voices column and the video, why would refugees and immigrants not want to practice certain cultural traditions?
 - v. Why were the refugees in the video initially reluctant to participate in the video?
 - vi. What are the consequences of not sharing these traditions with younger generations?

Application

1. Documenting cultures (estimated time: continuous assignment)
 - a. Explain to the class that they will be creating their own cultural video archive that will preserve the various traditions that each of their families observes.
 - b. Ask students to go home and decide which cultural tradition they would like to include in the class video (For example, this can include oral stories told to them by their parents about their cultural community, or a traditional dance or song, etc.)
 - c. Throughout the week, using a video camera document the various cultural traditions that students would like to include in the video.
 - d. Allow students to participate in filming, editing and producing the video.
 - e. When finished, present the video at a school assembly.

Additional Resources

In addition to the above lesson plans, you may want to share some additional resources with your students. Listed below are some links to useful online resources:

The UN Refugee Agency - <http://www.unhcr.ch/>

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>