

COMMUNICATION

ACROSS
CULTURES

An NGC Resource Guide

The websites, books, films, and documentaries we recommend are based entirely on those our staff has used, liked, and think are relevant to NGC Teams continued understanding of intercultural communications—a key building block of any New Global Citizen. Additionally, we selected materials that were either readily accessible online or at local libraries. If your school or public library does not carry these books or films, it is common for a community member to request his/her local library purchase new materials. We encourage you to advocate to your school or local library that they include the following important intercultural communications resources in their collection. Below is an example letter you can modify and use to submit an official request to your library.

To Whom It May Concern,

We are members of a Washington High School student organization called New Global Citizens. We are active in taking action for global change.

Currently we are supporting a Global Project called Afghan Institute of Learning. The project provides education to women and girls in Afghanistan. To better understand our project we are learning about Muslim culture. We are seeking DVD materials in your library and we've noticed the library is limited on the number of documentaries connected to Muslim culture.

We have recently learned about a fascinating documentary called Muslim Borders (2005) featuring how Muslim youth living in the United States maintain a balance between American youth culture and their Islamic identity.

This film is available to purchase at a low cost. My team would like to submit a request for Washington Library to purchase this film for educational purposes.

Thank you for your consideration. The request form is completed and attached to this letter.

Best wishes,

Washington High School
NGC Team

Websites

Facing History and Ourselves

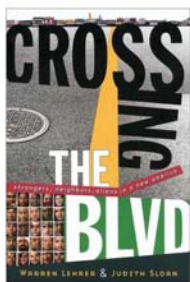
Helping classrooms and communities worldwide link the past to moral choices today. Visit facinghistory.org to learn more.

Peace Corps World Wise Schools

Learn more about the global community through the experience of United States Peace Corps Volunteers. Visit www.peacecorps.gov/wws/ to learn more.

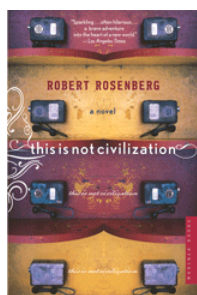
Books

Crossing the BLVD: Strangers, Neighbors and Aliens in New America



Queens, a part of New York City, is the most ethnically diverse community in the country. Over a period of three years, from 1999 to 2002, editors Warren Lehrer and Judith Sloan collected stories from a sampling of the borough's two million residents. The result is this book, a much-needed tribute to the people, most of them immigrants, who make Queens such a culturally rich locale. Their stories are wide and varied, and the words of the storytellers are, for the most part, kept intact. Crossing the BLVD is also visually engaging. There are numerous photographs, pieces of artwork, maps, and other visuals. This compilation of contextualized oral histories is a useful book for students in learning about immigrants to the United States, and about the rich tapestry of urban life. Visit crossingtheblvd.org.

This is Not Civilization



With captivating insight, realism, and humor, this stunning debut novel tells the parallel stories of two native villages, each facing cultural extinction. It's the end of the twentieth century, and in the towering mountains of post-Soviet Central Asia, Anarbek Tashtanaliev is single-handedly providing for his small village in the face of a collapsed economy.

Half a world away, in the high canyons of Arizona, Adam Dale is a young Apache basketball star and the future hope of his tribe. He struggles to keep his family together amid the pressures of reservation poverty and the corrupt rule of his increasingly bull-headed father, the tribal councilman.

Anarbek and Adam seek out the one person they think will be the solution to all their problems: an American aid worker who'd once volunteered in both of their villages. Now working as a refugee resettlement officer in Istanbul, Jeff Hartig must suddenly play host to first one, then both of these men from his past. Soon, Anarbek's disgraced daughter joins them and the unlikely foursome find themselves sharing an apartment in the magical, sprawling city. Equally fascinated and perplexed by one another, they discover hope, then friendship, then love, unaware that they will soon face one of the most disastrous earthquakes of the century. Yet it is only in traveling so far, and surviving so much, that each person realizes his or her own capacity to endure.

Sweeping, compassionate, and deeply moving, this novel celebrates the power of human connection in a largely unsettled world.

Films & Documentaries

Viewing films and documentaries is an effective way to further understand the dynamics of communication across cultures. The following films and documentaries highlight key concepts in intercultural communications. Unless otherwise indicated, all films are available on most DVD rental websites such as Netflix. We encourage you to share this list with your team, school, and community—Perhaps you can even host a “culture and diversity film festival” as an upcoming NGC Team event. And, just a reminder, it’s important to get permission from your Team Advisor prior to viewing these films as part of a team meeting and/or event.

Arranged (2007)

When Rochel and Nasira—an Orthodox Jew and a Muslim, respectively -- meet as new teachers at a Brooklyn school, co-workers and students expect friction. But the women discover they have a shared expectation of entering into arranged marriages. As they experience tension between their traditional cultures and life in contemporary America, Rochel and Nasira form a special bond.

Farmingville (1995)

This documentary is a look into the ongoing nationwide controversy surrounding a suburban community, its ever-expanding population of illegal immigrants, and the hate-based attempted murder of two Mexican day laborers. In the late 1990's, some 1,500 Mexican workers moved to the middle-class town of Farmingville, New York, on Long Island. This influx of illegal immigrants sparked friction with the Anglo populations; charges and counter-charges of lawlessness and racism; protest marches, unity rallies and internet campaigns, and vicious hate crimes.

The Letter: An American Town and the ‘Somali Invasion’ (2003)

In the wake of the 9/11 tragedy a firestorm erupts when Mayor Larry Raymond of Lewiston, Maine sends a letter to 1,100 newly arrived Somali refugees advising that the city's resources are strained to the limit and asking that other Somalis not to move to the city. Interpreted as racism by some and a rallying cry by white supremacist groups across the United States, THE LETTER documents the crossfire of emotions and events, culminating in a "hate" rally convened by The World Church of the Creator and a counter "peace" rally involving 4,000 Lewiston residents supporting ethnic and cultural diversity.

Boys of Baraka (2005)

In an experimental program to reduce the rate of juvenile delinquency, the city of Baltimore sent a group of 12-year-olds deemed "at risk" to a boarding school in Kenya, affording the boys the rare opportunity to turn their troubled lives around. Focusing on four of the youths, this compelling documentary follows the students as they struggle to overcome the obstacles of their past in their hopeful bid for a shot at a brighter future

Muslim Borders (2005)

The film features Muslim snowboarders who strive to maintain a balance between American youth culture and their Islamic identity. Muslim Borders is an important observation of what growing up in America is like for a group who finds themselves both inside and outside of the dominant culture.

Note: This film is available for purchase only through ASTROLABE.com.

Visit <http://www.astrolabe.com/muslim-boarders-a-short-documentary.html> for more information.

God Grew Tired of Us (2006)

After raising themselves in the desert along with thousands of other "lost boys," Sudanese refugees John, Daniel and Panther have found their way to America, where they experience electricity, running water and supermarkets for the first time. Capturing their wonder at things Westerners take for granted, this documentary, an award winner at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival, paints an intimate portrait of strangers in a strange land.

After the Film—Activity

After you have finished viewing a film with your team or as a community education event, you have a powerful opportunity to capture what the audience learned and was moved by.

Below is a suggested activity to capture and display that information for your whole school and community to see.

Materials Needed

- Rolls of different colored kraft paper (ask your art room or craft store to donate materials)
- Different colored markers, paint, and/or other random drawing materials
- A whole bunch of scissors

How To

- Ask people to work in pairs to complete the first part of this activity. Provide each person with a sheet of kraft paper about 6 inches longer than the person's height and width.
- Tell pairs that one will lie down on the sheet of paper. The person being drawn should have his/her arms at least a few inches from his/her side so there is a space between the arms and the body. It's important to stay very still while the other person traces the outline of the body with a dark marker. Pairs then switch places.
- Cut out body silhouettes.
- Have these questions on a poster in the front of the room or have a copy written down for each pair—What did you find the most interesting about the film? What new realization about American culture or another culture did you have? Why do you think communicating across cultures is such a challenge?
- Ask everyone to choose a question each likes and write down a response inside their silhouette.
- Find a public area to hang the silhouettes together. (Makes sure you get permission ahead of time.)
- Add a poster about the film, your NGC team, and when your next team meeting will be by the group of silhouettes.
- Take lots of pictures as your group does this activity. Consider even sending those photos with a letter to a community leader to advocate for their support of your team and Global Project.