



Classroom Activities

PARAGUAY: SOUNDS OF HOPE

VIDEO OVERVIEW

Political turmoil and lack of infrastructure in Paraguay have left about 60 percent of its citizens in poverty. To help improve the lives of Paraguay's poor and neglected children, the famous musician and social entrepreneur Luis Szarán founded the program Sounds of the Earth. In the video *Paraguay: Sounds of Hope*, students will meet Szarán and see how the Sounds of the Earth program is organizing communities and bringing about social change through music.

GETTING STARTED

For classrooms studying global Studies, world history or music, FRONTLINE provides a set of video themes and discussion questions to help students analyze and understand key current events around the globe. Watch the video and start a discussion about how music education can promote good citizenship. Go further into this topic with the *Paraguay: Sounds of Hope Lesson Plan* that asks students to discuss the benefits of studying and performing music and infer how a music education program in Paraguay could bring about positive social changes over time.

VIDEO THEMES

- Jesuit missions in colonial Paraguay had used music as a way to teach aspects of life such as respect, a democratic spirit, teamwork and discipline. Luis Szarán wanted to recreate that idea with his Sounds of the Earth program.
- One challenge in getting Sounds of the Earth off the ground was to get adults in each community to come together and organize themselves to fund-raise, to find a building for their community's music school, to feed the students, and to organize community concerts.
- Szarán began work in a few small communities, where children received free instruments and musical instruction. Sounds of the Earth has since grown so that there are now sustainable programs in communities all over the country.
- Szarán says his music program is a pretext to create social networks and social change in Paraguay. For example, the Don Bosco orchestra in Asunción integrates orphans with other children in the community.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What aspects of the Jesuit musical tradition in colonial Paraguay did Szarán want to recreate with Sounds of the Earth?
- Why does Szarán think organizing adults is just as important to the program's success as providing free instruments and musical instruction to children?
- What are some of the ways that the Sounds of the Earth program has changed the lives of its participants?
- In the video, Luis Szarán says, "Keep in mind that we're not looking for good musicians, but rather good citizens." What does he mean by that?

GO FURTHER

Featured Lesson Plan: "[Music as an Instrument of Social Change](#)"

Web-exclusive Resource: [Slideshow: Lives Touched by Music](#)
<http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/paraguay604/slideshow.html>

FEATURED LESSON PLAN: MUSIC AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Overview:

In this lesson, students will examine how a music education program is being used in Paraguay to bring about positive social change. They will then predict how Paraguay's economy, politics and culture might be different in 20 years as a result of the program. For more background information on Paraguay and the vision for this music program, please see the [Related Resources](#).

Grade Levels:

Grades 9-12

Subject Areas:

Social Studies, Geography, World History, Global Studies, Music

Objectives:

The student will:

- Examine a program for poor children in Paraguay that aims to bring about positive social change through music
- Discuss benefits that come from studying and performing music
- Infer what economic, political and cultural changes might occur in Paraguay over time as a result of the program

Estimated Time Needed:

One 50-minute class period

Materials Needed:

- Internet access and equipment to show the class an online video clip and to conduct research
- The FRONTLINE/World film *Paraguay: Sounds of Hope* (length: 14:03)
- Map showing the location of Paraguay

Procedure:

1. Ask the class if anyone plays a musical instrument. Invite those who do to describe any benefits they have received from studying music. Capture these benefits on a list that everyone can see. Have students consider whether any of those benefits might help them to be better citizens of your community.

2. Explain that you are going to show the class a video that tells the story of a famous Paraguayan musician who is trying to bring positive change to his country by providing free instruments and musical instruction to poor and neglected children. Point out the location of Paraguay on a map. Explain that years of political uncertainty, corruption and a poor infrastructure have meant that about 60 percent of Paraguayans live in poverty.

3. Show the class *Paraguay: Sounds of Hope* (length: 14:03). Focus student viewing by having them take notes on the ways the Sounds of the Earth program has changed the lives of its participants. After watching the video, have students refer to their notes to make any additions to the class list about the benefits of music.

4. Make further additions to this list by highlighting some sections of FRONTLINE/World's interview with Szarán
http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/paraguay604/interview_szaran.html

Specifically, have students consider his answers to these questions:

- What kinds of music do children play in the program?
- What has been the most difficult part of running the program?
- How have years under a dictatorship defined the country?
- Tell me more about your efforts to expand Sonidos into urban areas. What has it been like to work there? What are some of the challenges?
- Five years on, how far and wide has your program spread?
- Why did you take some of the kids from the program to Europe?
- And for those who are not geniuses, what happens to them? What do they learn?

5. Ask students to take what they've learned about Paraguay and the class list about the benefits of music and write a one-page description that predicts how Paraguay might be different in 20 years as a result of the Sounds of the Earth project. Students should frame their predictions by how they think changes might take place in the areas of economics, politics and culture.

6. If time permits, invite students to share what they've written with the class. As they read, play audio clips from "The Music of the Missions"
<http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/paraguay604/music.html>

EXTENSIONS:

- Learn more about life for street kids who incorporate music into their recovery process. Have students read FRONTLINE/World's extended interview with Emilio Jose Fernandez
http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/paraguay604/interview_fernandez.html

Look at Slideshow 2: The Don Bosco Home for Boys

<http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/paraguay604/slideshow2.html>

Instruct students to choose one of the boys featured in the slideshow and write a fictional story about him that shows the impact of music on his life over time.

- Invite student musicians or local professional musicians to speak to the class about the benefits of studying and performing music. Have the class discuss how those benefits could affect their families, school and/or your community. Compare and contrast these ideas with what Szarán is trying to accomplish in Paraguay.

CREDITS

This teacher's guide was written by Cari Ladd.

RELATED RESOURCES:

Interview with Luis Szarán

http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/paraguay604/interview_szaran.html

FRONTLINE/World interviews Szarán, founder of the program featured in the video, who describes life in Paraguay, the inspiration for his program, his background, and what he hopes to achieve with Sounds of the Earth.

“The Music of the Missions”

<http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/paraguay604/music.html>

Luis Szarán, who is profiled in the video, wanted to recreate the musical tradition of the Jesuit missions in colonial Paraguay by starting his Sounds of the Earth program. This article provides more background on the music of these missions.

Paraguay Profile

<http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/paraguay604/additional.html>

FRONTLINE/World provides a history, map, related links and a description of life in Paraguay today.

RELATED STANDARDS:

These standards are drawn from “Content Knowledge,” a compilation of content standards and benchmarks for K-12 curriculum by McRel (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning) at

<http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>.

Geography, Standard 10: Understands the nature and complexity of earth's cultural mosaics

Language Arts, Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

Music, Standard 7: Understands the relationship between music and history and culture

World History, Standard 44: Understands the search for community, stability and peace in an interdependent world

World History, Standard 45: Understands major global trends since World War II