

P.O.V.

Season **22**

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Bronx Princess

A film by Yoni Brook and Musa Syeed



www.pbs.org/pov



LETTER FROM THE FILMMAKERS

NEW YORK. JUNE 2009

Dear Viewer,

The situation might seem strange: Two men can't leave a beauty shop. From the moment we stumbled upon the corner shop in the Bronx, its owner, Auntie Yaa, treated us as if we were her own children. With her big smile and sharp wit she welcomed us immediately, cajoling us to try on wigs and sample the lotions she brings from Ghana, her homeland. And we weren't the only ones — everyone on the block called her "Ma." Customers trusted her not only to tell them which soap would get rid of acne, but also to tell them how to patch things up with their boyfriends.

But the one person who wasn't so enamored of the community's matriarch was Auntie Yaa's own daughter, Rocky. When self-assured 17-year-old Rocky walked in, we saw a family conflict brewing: the teenage search for independence butting against the parent's stern guidance.



Yoni Brook, co-director/producer, cinematographer (left)
Musa Syeed, co-director/producer, sound recordist (right)
Photo courtesy of Scott Rudd/Highbridge Pictures

The film was outlined for us within minutes of meeting Rocky. She sketched out her summer in three acts, as if she had been waiting for a film crew to arrive at any moment. A few weeks later, Rocky would graduate from high school with honors. Then she would hop on an airplane to spend the summer with her father, a royal chief, at his palace in Ghana. The final step in her plan stood as a culmination of her journey: After her return from Ghana, she would become the first woman in her family to attend college, on a full scholarship no less. We were floored. She was about to live a fairy tale by transforming from an anonymous girl in the Bronx into an African princess at her father's palace.

Our first film, "A Son's Sacrifice" (PBS' *Independent Lens*, 2008), explored a father-son relationship at a halal slaughterhouse in Queens, and we had hoped to make a companion mother-daughter film in another borough of New York. However, making a documentary is rarely a straight path, so we weren't sure how to meet our ideal subjects. After hanging out with Rocky and her mother, we knew the stars of **Bronx Princess** had found us. And having spent a year inside a slaughterhouse, we were eager to swap the smell of goats for that of perfume.

Although we aren't West African or women, we have deep connections to this story. As the children of Jewish and Muslim immigrants who have made journeys back to our parents' respective homelands — Israel for Yoni and Kashmir for Musa — we understood Rocky's journey. And perhaps more importantly, as filmmakers in our twenties, we are still close to the experience of being teenagers trying to find a sense of independence. Reliving that experience wasn't always easy, especially reliving it through a strong-willed person like Rocky. At times, she would poke fun at us for being so corny and lame, bringing us back to our days in the high school pecking order.

**LETTER FROM THE FILMMAKERS**

But through a summer of such great change, we were the only constant presence in Rocky's life. By sticking with her through that tumultuous time, we gained her respect, and earned a coveted spot in her circle of friends.

Despite the many surprises and twists, the film we completed nearly two years later, **Bronx Princess**, closely adheres to the story Rocky laid out for us that first day. Making the film became more of collaboration with the family than we had expected. We became a familiar sight at Auntie Yaa's store — Yoni pointing a camera and Musa balancing a boom pole. Most customers assumed we were making a commercial for the store, but after a few months they realized that even infomercials didn't require so much shooting.

Our long hours enabled us to gain the trust of both mother and daughter. After one fight at the store we followed them back home, and the mood was tense. Rocky went to bed early, and then Auntie Yaa asked us to sit down with her. We thought that she was going to kick us out for invading her family's privacy. But instead she said to us softly, "We're all family now. Tell me: Am I being too hard on her?" The next day, we found ourselves becoming Rocky's confidants as well, as she admitted she might have an attitude, but added that she really just wants to be appreciated. We learned to be good listeners so that we could include both of their perspectives in the film. He encouraged us to look for our common ties with Rocky and her mother.

Equally challenging was our journey to Ghana. We lived at the family's palace for three weeks while filming. There are special rules for interacting with the chief, such as speaking modestly in front of him. But as filmmakers, we needed to make certain requests of the chief, such as asking him to wear a wireless microphone, that were seen as challenges to his authority. After he scolded us for overstepping our bounds, we promised to be more careful.

And then there were customs of which we were simply ignorant. One day, Yoni casually crossed his legs while sitting in front of the chief. The chief called in one of his advisors to explain that crossing one's legs in front of a chief was a great insult. Eventually, we learned how to work within the chief's parameters and before long we were on the dance floor with him, celebrating his chieftaincy at a family party.

We could not have made the film without the early support of ITVS and our executive producer Marco Williams, whose film **Two Towns of Jasper** (co-directed with Whitney Dow), aired on **POV** in 2003 to much acclaim. He encouraged us to look for our common ties with Rocky and her mother.

Like Rocky, we have parents who had high expectations when it came to our education. Just like Rocky's family members, our parents came to the United States to further their educations and ensure a better future for their families. By following Rocky through her summer of transitions — from the Bronx to Ghana to college in Pennsylvania — we saw the different ways that her parents tried to prepare her for adulthood.

We hope audiences come away with an appreciation for the many manifestations of Rocky's education, both the charter-school classrooms of the Bronx and at tribal councils in Ghana. Rocky's parents want her to achieve success in the United States by attending college and becoming a lawyer, for example, but it is equally important for her to embody their cultural values of familial respect and tradition. Rocky's journey between her parents' worlds and her future may be filled with squabbles and tears, but those growing pains reflect a young woman forming her own identity.

Yoni Brook and Musa SyeedCo-directors, **Bronx Princess**



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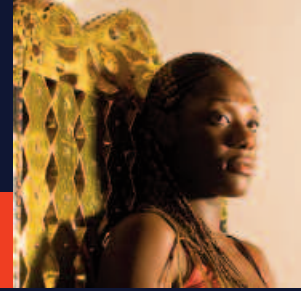
Musa Syeed
Co-director, Bronx Princess

**INTRODUCTION**

Bronx Princess, a 38-minute documentary, follows headstrong 17-year-old Rocky's journey as she leaves behind her mother in New York City to visit her father, a chief in Ghana, West Africa. Filmed during Rocky's tumultuous summer between high school and college, the film tells her coming-of-age story.

By showing this teenager's struggle to forge an identity independent of her parents and yet rooted in her African heritage, **Bronx Princess** raises universal questions about culture and immigration, coming of age, parent-child relationships and visions of success. As an outreach tool, it provides a story that will resonate with a very wide range of viewers.

Rocky Otoo, 17, center, stands with her father, Nii Adjedu, left, and her mother "Auntie" Yaa Otoo, right, in the Bronx, NY.
Photo courtesy of Yoni Brook/Highbridge Pictures

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS****KEY ISSUES**

Bronx Princess is well suited for use in a variety of settings and is especially recommended for use with:

- **Your local PBS station**
- **Groups that have discussed previous PBS and POV films relating to coming of age, African immigrants in the United States or teen/parent relations, including *The Education of Shelby Knox* and *Rain in a Dry Land***
- **Groups focused on any of the issues listed in the Key Issues section**
- **High school students**
- **Faith-based organizations and institutions**
- **Cultural, art or historical organizations, institutions or museums**
- **Civic, fraternal and community groups**
- **Academic departments or student groups at colleges, universities and high schools**
- **Community organizations with a mission to promote education and learning, such as local libraries**

Bronx Princess is an excellent tool for outreach and will be of special interest to people interested in the following topics:

- **Adolescence**
- **African diaspora**
- **Coming of age**
- **Cultural studies**
- **Education**
- **Family dynamics**
- **First-generation college students**
- **Ghana/West Africa**
- **Immigrants/immigration in the United States**
- **New York City**
- **Parent-child relationships**

USING THIS GUIDE

This guide is an invitation to dialogue. It is based on a belief in the power of human connection, designed for people who want to use **Bronx Princess** to engage family, friends, classmates, colleagues and communities. In contrast to initiatives that foster debates in which participants try to convince others that they are right, this document envisions conversations undertaken in a spirit of openness in which people try to understand one another and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and listening actively.

The discussion prompts are intentionally crafted to help a wide range of audiences think more deeply about the issues in the film. Rather than attempting to address them all, choose one or two that best meet your needs and interests. And be sure to leave time to consider taking action. Planning next steps can help people leave the room feeling energized and optimistic, even in instances when conversations have been difficult.

For more detailed event planning and facilitation tips, visit www.pbs.org/pov/bronxprincess.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION



African Immigrants in the United States

In the last 20 years, the African population in the United States has grown threefold. There are currently about 1.2 million African-born immigrants in the United States, according to the Migration Policy Institute, amounting to just over 3 percent of the immigrant population. Most of this population lives in New York City and Washington, D.C., with smaller groups in Atlanta, Minneapolis and Los Angeles. In both New York and Washington D.C., the majority of immigrants are from West African countries, predominantly Ghana and Nigeria. According to the 2000 census, there were 86,918 Ghanaians living in the United States. Researchers note that the actual number may be slightly higher, as the census does not count undocumented immigrants.

Chief Nii Adjedu I, center, and "Auntie" Yaa Otoo, right, dance at an enstoolment celebration in honor of his chieftaincy in the Bronx, NY.

Photo courtesy of Yoni Brook/Highbridge Pictures

Many African immigrants, including Ghanaians, habitually send money back home to their nuclear and extended families. According to a report by the Department of International Development in the U.K., money sent back to Ghana accounted for more than 13 percent of that country's GDP in 2003.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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"Auntie" Yaa Otoo holds a photograph of her husband Nii Adjedu, at her beauty shop in the Bronx, NY. Photo courtesy of Yoni Brook/Highbridge Pictures

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Rocky Otoo, 17, rides a horse at a beach in Accra, Ghana.

Photo courtesy of Yoni Brook/Highbridge Pictures

Ghana

Located on the coast of western Africa, just north of the equator, between the Ivory Coast and Togo, Ghana has a population of 23 million people. Fewer than half reside in urban areas. The population includes many different ethnic groups, with the largest being the Akan, Mole-Dagbon and Ewe groups. About two thirds of the people are Christian — of the non-Christian population, about half are Muslim and one quarter follow traditional faiths of the area. English is recognized as the official language, but most people also speak African languages. Approximately 3.5 percent of the population speaks Ga, the language spoken by Rocky's family. Rocky's mother is Ashanti and speaks Twi.

When European traders arrived in Africa in the 15th century, Ghana, then known as the Gold Coast, was one of their first stops. Portugal, England, the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany all controlled parts of the coastal region, until the English consolidated control in the early 19th century. For almost 150 years, Ghana was the center of the British slave trade. Western traders arrived in ships loaded with manufactured goods to barter or trade for slaves. The British held Ghana as a colony until 1957, when it became independent. The remnants of the trade in Ghana are still visible today in dozens of forts and castles built by Europeans in the 15th century.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

More recently, a series of military coups destabilized the government of Ghana for decades. Jerry Rawlings, formerly an officer in the country's air force, led the last successful coup in 1981 and ruled for a decade before laying the foundation for an elected parliamentary government. After the constitution was approved in 1992, Rawlings was twice elected to serve as president. John Atta Mills, the current president, was elected in December 2008. In the last two decades, Ghana has emerged as a strong and stable force in western Africa, and the constitution has endured.

In July 2009, President Barack Obama made his first official trip to Africa since taking office, and he chose Ghana as his first destination on the continent.

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CIA World Factbook: Ghana. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html>; BBC News Country Profile: Ghana. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1023355.stm; U.S. Department of State Background Note: Ghana. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2860.htm>; Encyclopedia Britannica: Ghana. www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/232376/Ghana; Eltis, David, et al. *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999; Gocking, Roger S. *The History of Ghana*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2005; St. Clair, William. *The Door of No Return: The History of Cape Coast Castle and the Atlantic Slave Trade*. New York: Blue Bridge, 2007; Thomas, Hugh. *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440-1870*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997.



Rocky Otoo, 17, left, stands next to her father Nii Adjedu, right, the chief of the Nii Okaiman traditional area, at the family's palace near Accra, Ghana.

Photo courtesy of Yoni Brook/Highbridge Pictures



BACKGROUND INFORMATION



First-Generation College Students

Rocky is the first person in her immediate family to attend a post-secondary institution, making her a first-generation college student.

Despite the overall high levels of education in the United States, there are still many first-generation college students. A 2006 study that surveyed 385 four-year colleges found that one in six freshmen were first-generation college students. Research suggests that students whose parents did not attend or complete their post-secondary education face a distinctive set of challenges. Such students often face greater challenges than their peers when applying to colleges, due to lack of family knowledge of the application

Rocky Otoo, 17, prepares to sign in as a first-year student at Dickinson College, in Carlisle, PA.

Photo courtesy of Julia Kumari Drapkin/Highbridge Pictures

process; additionally, their choices are often more likely to be constrained by financial factors. These students are more likely than others to be employed during their studies and are significantly more focused on college as a means to improve their material standing.

First-generation students often feel less academically prepared as well; studies suggest that they are more likely than their peers from college-educated families to arrive at college needing remedial or preparatory assistance. Adjusting



BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Rocky Otoo, 17, center, stands with her mother "Auntie" Yaa Otoo, right, and her Auntie "Hello", left, at her graduation from Bronx Preparatory Charter School in the Bronx, NY. Photo courtesy of Yoni Brook/Highbridge Pictures

to the social atmosphere can also be a challenge for these students, who may be older than the average student, since first-generation college attendees are more likely to spend time working between high school and college. The challenges that these students face make it more difficult for some to finish their schooling, and a first-generation student is slightly more likely to leave college without attaining a degree than the population as a whole. Those who do graduate, however, achieve professional status on par with other graduates and have similar long-term earning prospects.

Sources:

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Selected People Featured in **Bronx Princess****Rockyatu (Rocky) Otoo**

Rocky will be a junior at Dickinson College in the 2009-2010 school year. She is now majoring in women's studies, and she's hoping to study abroad, perhaps in India or Cameroon. Rocky has also been involved in several student clubs on campus, including a club for African students where she was elected to the board.

**"Auntie" Yaa** – Rocky's mother, shopkeeper

Yaa is still running her beauty supply shop on Mt. Eden and Townsend Avenues in the Bronx (and she loves welcoming visitors). Managing the business takes most of her time, and she relies on her children and friends to man the cash register, place orders and pick up merchandise. She spends a few months of every year in Ghana in order to spend time with her husband, Rocky's father. With Rocky gone most of the year, Yaa is now working on preparing Rocky's teenage sister Hana for college.

**Chief Nii Adjedu I** – Rocky's father

Rocky's father, Emmanuel Otoo or Nii Adjedu, is chief of Israel, a small town outside of Accra, Ghana. His duties include adjudicating family disputes, overseeing land ownership and local development agreements and helping local businesses organize and share resources. Nii Adjedu also meets regularly with other chiefs of the traditionally Ga areas so that they may work on various service projects together.



GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Immediately after the film, you may want to give people a few quiet moments to reflect on what they have seen. If the mood seems tense, you can pose a general question and give people some time to themselves to jot down or think about their answers before opening the discussion.

Unless you think participants are so uncomfortable that they can't engage until they have had a break, don't encourage people to leave the room between the film and the discussion. If you save your break for an appropriate moment during the discussion, you won't lose the feeling of the film as you begin your dialogue.

One way to get a discussion going is to pose a general question such as:

- **If you could ask anyone in the film a single question, who would you ask and what would you ask him or her?**
- **What did you learn from this film? What insights did it provide?**
- **What is the significance of the film's title?**
- **Describe a moment or scene in the film that you found particularly disturbing or moving. What was it about that scene that was especially compelling for you?**



Bronx Princess Co-directors Yoni Brook, left, and Musa Syeed, right, film Rocky Otoo's high school graduation in the Bronx, NY. Photo courtesy of Robert Caplin/Highbridge Pictures



DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Parents and Children

- Rocky says, “A lot of things make it hard for me to relate to my mom. The way we think is very different.” In what ways does Rocky’s relationship with her mother exemplify typical teen-parent relationships? How is it like or unlike teen-parent relationships that you have witnessed or experienced? Do you notice any cultural differences in their relationship? Do you think growing up in the United States affects Rocky’s ability to relate to her mother? Why or why not?
- How has immigration influenced the relationships in this family? What might be different if Yaa did not speak English? How would it be different if Rocky spoke her mother’s native language?
- In several instances, Rocky’s parents interpret her behavior as disrespectful. Do you agree or disagree with their assessment? What does respect look like to you? In your opinion, how can better understanding of cultural and generational values be created within families?
- Despite their disagreements, Rocky clearly knows that her parents love her. How do Rocky and her parents show that they love one another? How do people in your family demonstrate love, even in the face of disagreement?
- How is Rocky’s experience like or unlike other coming-of-age stories familiar to you?
- What did you learn from the film about the differences in how children and parents cope with starting higher education, such as college? How might that process be different in families where the child is the first person to go to college as compared to families where parents or older siblings attended college?
- In your opinion, how can communities support historically underrepresented populations in the college admissions process?



Rocky Otoo, 17, sits outside her father’s palace in the Nii Okaiman traditional area near Accra, Ghana. Photo courtesy of Godwin Azameti/Highbridge Pictures



DISCUSSION PROMPTS



Transmitting Culture and Values

- Compare and contrast Rocky's beliefs about adulthood, independence and success with the beliefs held by her mother and father. Which set of beliefs comes closest to matching your own attitudes? How do their beliefs on these issues reflect their respective backgrounds?
- Rocky's mother distinguishes between "book knowledge" and "sense." In your own experience, how has each of those kinds of knowledge been valued or devalued?
- In the film there are formal educational environments, such as classrooms, and informal cultural learning situations, such as the chief council meeting where Rocky is lectured. How would you characterize the difference between learning in school, "book knowledge," and learning from one's elders, "sense," as Rocky's mother calls it? What examples of

Rocky Otoo, 17, left, stands next to her father Nii Adjedu, right, the chief of the Nii Okaiman traditional area, at the family's palace near Accra, Ghana.

Photo courtesy of Yoni Brook/Highbridge Pictures

informal education have you experienced?

- An elder in Ghana asks if Rocky understands Ga. Why would her ability (or lack of ability) to understand and speak the native language be important to him?
- The film captures Rocky adjusting to environments different from the one where she grew up. What are the unique challenges of each new culture she encounters (e.g., Ghana as compared to a college campus)?
- Did the portrayal of life in Ghana surprise you? Why or why not? What informed your expectations?



DISCUSSION PROMPTS



Leadership and Responsibility

- In high school, Rocky was a leader – president of the student council, captain of the debate team, editor-in-chief of the yearbook and more. She identifies herself as a “natural born leader.” In your view, what accounts for Rocky’s drive? What do you think are the characteristics of a leader? Do you see any of those traits in Rocky? Based on how we see her interact with her friends in the cafeteria and in class, what kind of leader is Rocky?
- Chief Omaikan suggests that Rocky should think more about what she can do for her people than what she might do for herself. In your view, does Rocky have an obligation to heed his words and help Ghana or its people? What kinds of obligations does Rocky inherit because her father is a chief? In what ways does her American birth or the privilege

Rocky Otoo, 17, argues with friends during a yearbook staff meeting at Bronx Preparatory Charter School in the Bronx, NY.
Photo courtesy of Yoni Brook/Highbridge Pictures

of attending college affect her relationship to her parents’ homeland?

- We see Rocky in a college class discussing the question: “What is a social justice leader?” How would you answer that question? In your view, is Rocky prepared to be the kind of leader she describes (i.e., not one who is always “standing in front,” but one who is “listening to what everyone has to say”)? What kinds of experiences help young people develop leadership skills?



TAKING ACTION



- Host a screening of *Bronx Princess* at a college night for high school juniors and seniors and/or for high school students whose parents are immigrants. Facilitate a discussion of what they learned about their own families by viewing the film.
- Host a college fair in your community. Invite high school counselors, speakers from local college admissions offices and, if possible, first-generation college attendees. When drawing up a list of participants to invite, be sure to include representatives who understand the specific needs of your community members.
- If your local library doesn't provide free college readiness materials, encourage it to do so.
- Facilitate conversations with graduating high school seniors and their parents about their attitudes regarding responsibility, respect and independence. What questions or concerns do parents have about their children attending college or institutions of higher education? What do they think graduating seniors need to know before they leave home?

Rocky Otoo, 17, stars in her high school musical "Aida" at Bronx Preparatory Charter School in the Bronx, NY.
Photo courtesy of Yoni Brook/Highbridge Pictures

- Convene a teach-in on Ghana and West African immigrants. Create a forum for immigrants from Ghana (and other West African countries) and their children to tell their stories.
- Many communities offer parenting classes for new parents or parents of young children. Investigate whether or not your community offers parenting classes for parents of teenagers. If so, offer the organizations that run such classes copies of the film to use as a resource. If not, join with appropriate agencies, schools and community groups to create such a class.
- Build partnerships with immigrant communities with roots in Ghana or elsewhere in West Africa.
- Create a multigenerational community event at which participants share coming of age stories.



RESOURCES

FILM-RELATED WEB SITES

Original Online Content on P.O.V. Interactive (www.pbs.org/pov)P.O.V.'s *Bronx Princess* companion website

www.pbs.org/pov/bronxprincess

To enhance the broadcast further, POV has produced an interactive website to enable viewers to explore the film in greater depth. The companion website to *Bronx Princess* offers a streaming video trailer for the film; an interview with filmmakers Yoni Brook and Musa Syeed; a list of related websites, organizations and books; a downloadable discussion guide; and the following special features:

Q&A WITH ROCKY

Rocky will answer viewers' questions.

MOTHER - DAUGHTER LETTERS

Read letters written by Rocky and her mother, Yaa.

GHANAIAN CULTURE

Learn more about Ghana and traditions in the country.

OFFICIAL BRONX PRINCESS WEBSITE

www.bronxprincess.com

Visit the filmmakers' website to learn more about the co-directors of the film, get news updates and join the mailing list. Also follow the film on Facebook! Log-in to www.facebook.com and search for "Bronx Princess"

What's Your P.O.V.?

Share your thoughts about *Bronx Princess*

by posting a comment on the P.O.V. Blog

www.pbs.org/pov/blog or send an email to pbs@pov.org.

African and Ghanaian Organizations**AFRICA ACTION**

www.africaaction.org

Africa Action is the oldest organization in the United States working on African affairs. Its website has a list of initiatives in which people can get involved, related to issues such as HIV/AIDS awareness in Africa, the situation in Darfur and Africa's debt. There is also a substantial resources section that offers analysis of African policies and current events.

ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF CLASSICAL AFRICAN CIVILIZATIONS (ASCAC)

www.ascac.org

The mission of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations is to promote the rescue, reconstruction and restoration of African history and culture by supporting the study of African civilizations. The ASCAC hosts conferences and provides articles for people interested in learning about African history and celebrating African culture.

BBC COUNTRY PROFILE: GHANA

<http://news.bbc.co.uk>

The country profile provided by this broadcaster includes links to current news stories about the country, as well as more general information. The website offers a guide to the history, politics and economic background of Ghana, including additional resources from BBC archives.

CIA WORLD FACTBOOK: GHANA

www.cia.gov

The CIA World Factbook provides general information about Ghana.



RESOURCES

GHANA BROADCASTING CORPORATION (GBC)**www.gbcghana.com**

This website is dedicated to providing media that promotes “national consciousness, loyalty, integrity, self-reliance and a strong sense of national identity,” and it offers news reports from a Ghanaian perspective. A similar site not affiliated with the government is www.modernghana.com.

GHANAIAN AMERICANS**www.everyculture.com/multi/Du-Ha/Ghanaian-Americans.html**

Offering a helpful profile of Ghanaians living in the United States, including links to related organizations, this website provides an understanding of how Ghanaian Americans maintain close ties to their cultural heritage.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF GHANAIAN ASSOCIATIONS**<http://ncoga.org>**

The National Council of Ghanaian Associations exists to provide information about Ghana to people in the United States and focuses on building positive relationships between Ghanaians and African Americans. The website showcases initiatives that the organization has developed to improve the Ghanaian-American community.

NEW AMERICA MEDIA**<http://news.newamericamedia.org>**

A search for “Ghana” on the website of this ethnically focused news organization provides a variety of articles related to Ghanaians living in the United States and U.S. policies related to Ghana.

First-Generation College Students**WHAT KIDS CAN DO****<http://www.whatkidscando.org>**

What Kids Can Do (WKCD) is a national nonprofit founded by an educator and journalist with more than 40 years’ combined experience supporting adolescent learning in and out of school. The website has featured stories, details about WKCD’s publishing platform Next Generation Press, short publications that support youth voices and a Resources section that links to education information. WKCD also has free, full text books available online for first generation college students.

High school age: http://issuu.com/wkcd/docs/first_in_family_hs_yearsAttending college: http://issuu.com/wkcd/docs/firstinthefamily_collegeyears***THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER: “SOME COLLEGE-BOUND KIDS MAKING FAMILY HISTORY”*****www.uis.edu/newsbureau**

Journalist Kelsea Gurski argues that the growing social pressure to have a college degree is raising the number of first-generation college students. This piece discusses the challenges first-generation college students face, the role parents’ play in students’ success and the importance of guidance in the college application process. (Dec. 7, 2008)

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS:**“ACCESSIBILITY TO THE PH.D. AND PROFESSORIATE FOR FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE GRADUATES: REVIEW AND IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS, FACULTY AND CAMPUS POLICIES”****www.aft.org/pubs-reports**

This academic report from the American Federation of Teachers uses both qualitative and quantitative data to draw conclusions about the under-representation of first generation college students in higher education. Researcher Kevin M. Kniffin found that inequalities in education begin at birth. (January 2007)



RESOURCES

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE: “SHADES OF GRAY IN BLACK ENROLLMENT: IMMIGRANTS’ RISING NUMBERS A CONCERN TO SOME ACTIVISTS”

www.sfgate.com

This article discusses the growing division between African Americans and African immigrants in the United States in higher education. Some argue that affirmative-action programs in colleges are still excluding African-American students rather than increasing their numbers. (Feb. 22, 2005)

Higher Education, College Readiness and Scholarship Information

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION (ACE)

www.acenet.edu

Through advocacy, research and innovative programs, the American Council on Education represents the interests of more than 1,800 campus executives, as well as the leaders of higher education-related associations and organizations. Serving as a liaison between universities and Washington, D.C., ACE works to promote the interests of college students and advocates for widespread access to higher education.

BLACK ALLIANCE FOR EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS (BAEO)

www.baео.org

The Black Alliance for Education Options was launched in 2000 to advocate for parental choice to empower families and increase quality educational options for African-American children. With a focus on low-income and working class black families, BAEO exists to educate and inform parents about the educational options available.

COCA-COLA SCHOLARS FOUNDATION

www.coca-colascholars.org

This scholarship program supports exceptional young people’s thirst for knowledge and their desire to make a difference in the world. The website also has a resources section that directs students to other scholarship opportunities.

COUNCIL FOR OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION

www.coenet.us

The Council for Opportunity in Education is a nonprofit organization, established in 1981, dedicated to furthering the expansion of educational opportunities throughout the United States. Working in conjunction with colleges and universities across the nation, the council hosts a number of services and programs to help low-income students overcome financial obstacles and receive higher education.

FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE BOUND

www.fgcb.org

First Generation College Bound is a nonprofit organization in Maryland that helps underprivileged first-generation students get to college. The group’s website provides information on its programs and ways to donate.

GLOW FOUNDATION

www.glowfoundation.org

The Glow Foundation’s website outlines financial aid and scholarship possibilities for low-income students from under-resourced communities.

KNOWHOW2GO

www.knowhow2go.org

The KnowHow2Go campaign is a project of the American Council on Education, Lumina Foundation for Education and the Ad Council. The campaign was designed to use television, radio and outdoor public service advertisements (PSAs) to encourage eighth through tenth graders to prepare for college using four simple steps. The website details the four steps, includes links for students in the abovementioned grade levels and offers a section for mentors.

THE NELLIE MAE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

www.nmefdn.org/Foundation

This foundation provides grants and technical assistance for underserved learners in the six New England states.

**RESOURCES****THE PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE NETWORK****www.pathwaystocollege.net**

The Pathways to College Network is an alliance of national organizations that advances college attendance opportunities for underserved students by raising public awareness, supporting innovative research and promoting evidence-based policies and practices across the K-12 and higher education sectors. The group's website provides a college planning resources directory, a college readiness toolbox and publications on college access and related issues.

THE POSSE FOUNDATION**www.possefoundation.org**

Founded in 1989, the Posse Foundation identifies public high school students with extraordinary academic and leadership potential who may be overlooked by traditional college selection processes. The foundation hopes to provide students of all backgrounds the opportunity to gain a higher education, as well as to foster diverse communities on college campuses across the country. The group's website offers additional information about the program, as well as opportunities to nominate a scholar or to find out about the foundation's university partners.

READYSETGOTOCOLLEGE.COM**www.readysetgotocollege.com**

This website offers information for high school students looking to prepare for the college admissions process and offers tools for calculating higher education costs, as well as offering advice on how to pick the right major.

THE STEPPINGSTONE FOUNDATION**www.tsf.org**

Founded in 1990, the Steppingstone Foundation is a non-profit organization that develops and implements programs geared to preparing urban schoolchildren for educational opportunities that lead to college. Currently focused on Boston and Philadelphia, the group's website offers ways to get students involved and information on how to start similar programs in other communities.

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS.ORG: FIRST IN FAMILY SCHOLARSHIPS**www.collegescholarships.org/scholarships/first-in-family.htm**

This page lists scholarship opportunities for students who are the first in their families to get a higher education. Information on specific university programs and the various awards is also available.



RESOURCES

THE EDUCATION RESOURCES INSTITUTE (TERI)**www.teri.org**

This organization provides college assistance to low-income and underserved individuals. Through financial aid resources and college planning centers, TERI works to make college more accessible and easily available to all students, regardless of socioeconomic barriers.

UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND (UNCF)**www.uncf.org/aboutus/index.asp**

As the nation's largest and oldest minority higher education assistance organization, the United Negro College Fund provides resources for historically black colleges and universities, as well as scholarships for students who wish to receive a higher education despite financial challenges. With a long list of notable alumni, UNCF offers college guidance and assistance on its website in hopes of increasing the number of students it helps to send to college.

Women's Organizations**GIRLS INC.****www.girlsinc.org**

Girls Inc. is a national nonprofit youth organization dedicated to inspiring girls to be strong, smart and bold. With roots dating to 1864, Girls Inc. has provided vital educational programs to millions of American girls, particularly those in high-risk, underserved areas. The website provides fact sheets about women's issues and suggests ways for people to advocate for girls.

NATIONAL COALITION OF 100 BLACK WOMEN (NCBW)**www.ncbw.org**

The NCBW is a national organization comprised of over 7,000 members aimed at fostering black communities comprised of strong women leaders who encourage gender equity and sociopolitical advancement. The group's website covers upcoming programs, resources and membership information.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN**www.ncnw.org**

The National Council of Negro Women connects nearly 4 million women worldwide so that they may lead, develop and advocate for women of African descent as they support their families and communities. The organization conducts research and hosts advocacy services and programs at both the national and community level, with a focus on health, education and economic empowerment.

SAUTI YETU CENTER FOR AFRICAN WOMEN**www.sautiyetu.org**

The Sauti Yetu Center for African Women is a not-for-profit organization linking social justice activism with academic scholarship to promote and protect the rights of African women and girls. With the aim of empowering and advancing the lives of African women, the center's website provides information on its numerous resources and outreach programs in communities in New York City and across the United States.

SISTAS ON THE RISE**www.sistasontherise.org**

Located in Bronx, N.Y., Sistas on the Rise is a space for young women of color between the ages of 13 to 24 to collaborate and build a community focused on developing leadership skills and taking action for social change. The organization provides a safe environment for women and offers a range of sisterhood-building programs and resources, including childcare services.

**HOW TO BUY THE FILM**

To order **Bronx Princess**, go to www.bronxprincess.com



Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and beginning its 22nd season on PBS in 2009, the award-winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. P.O.V., which airs June through September with primetime specials during the year, has brought more than 275 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide, and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. Since 1988, P.O.V. has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information is available at www.pbs.org/pov.

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P.O.V. Interactive www.pbs.org/pov

P.O.V.'s award-winning Web department produces special features for every P.O.V. presentation, extending the life of our films through filmmaker interviews, story updates, podcasts, video and community-based and educational content that involves viewers in activities and feedback. P.O.V. Interactive also produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. In addition, the *P.O.V. Blog* is a gathering place for documentary fans and filmmakers to discuss and debate their favorite films, get the latest news and link to further resources. The P.O.V. website, blog and film archives form a unique and extensive online resource for documentary storytelling.

P.O.V. Community Engagement and Education

P.O.V. works with local PBS stations, educators and community organizations to present free screenings and discussion events to engage communities in vital conversations about our world. As a leading provider of quality nonfiction programming for use in public life, P.O.V. offers an extensive menu of resources, including free discussion guides and curriculum-based lesson plans. P.O.V.'s *Youth Views* works with youth organizers and students to provide them with resources and training to use independent documentaries as a catalyst for social change.

American Documentary, Inc. www.amdoc.org

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation. *Simon Kilmurry is executive director of American Documentary | P.O.V.*

Front cover:

Main photo: Rocky Otoo, 17, sits on her father's throne at his palace near Accra, Ghana.

Photo courtesy of Yoni Brook/Highbridge Pictures

Inset photo: courtesy of Robert Caplin/Highbridge Pictures

