

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE STORY OF IDRISSA

Niger at a Glance: Capital City	Niamey		
Population	9.10 million (estimate for 1995)		
% of Population	22% 10-19 years old		
Surface Area	489,218 square miles		
Language(s)	French, Hausa		
What Things Cost: chocolate bar	\$ 1.47	cola	\$10.53
music tape	\$ 4.91		
Average Life	52.5	Expectancy	
Political Regime	Presidential regime in transition from military to civilian system.		

Figures from the World Resources Institute 1992-93 Guide To The Global Environment.

BEFORE THE FILM:

The role of tradition is examined in this segment of the TURNING 16 series. Usually we think of traditions as applying only to people who live in tribes or practice ancient-seeming rituals. But cultural traditions include many practices. Some are based on religious affiliation others on ethnic background. What traditions can you cite? Think of the variety of marriage ceremonies practiced across the country.

Do you have traditions that are not in synch with the people around you? In many rural U.S. communities, where hunting is not merely a sport but a means of survival, the opening day of the season has typically been a day off from school. Now some school board members, many of them from suburban or city communities, are questioning this tradition. Do different groups have the right to maintain traditions that conflict with ideas held by others?

Niger

The Story of Idrissa

Are cultural values being threatened?

"If I don't stay close to my parents, I won't learn much about my Touareg culture and traditions."

Idrissa is a member of the Touaregs, a proud nomadic society in the Sahara. Already at 16, Idrissa runs a small supply shop, but has no formal schooling. Things are changing rapidly in today's Africa. Can Idrissa maintain his Touareg roots in this age of the "Pepsi Generation"?

AFTER THE FILM:

To Idrissa's father, school is a threat to cultural traditions. Children attend school in cities and return with no practical knowledge of how to work in their rural homelands. Is this problem comparably to the complaint in the U.S. that some cultural traditions are ignored in our education system? Recent attempts have been made to re-write American history to include more than the white European point of view. African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans and others want the contributions of their ancestors to be included in the history books.

Is the "melting pot" theory of American life outdated? Does it produce a unbalanced representation of our mixed heritage? Some have put forth the competing theory of an American "stew" where all the representative pieces of our heritage are mixed together, not "melted" so that they disappear, but whole and visible. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each theory?

In the film, young members of the Touareg tribe become men when they grow facial hair and begin wearing the ceremonial turban. For some groups in America, having facial hair is also a sign of manhood. However, some schools prohibit facial hair on their students. Which rule or tradition should win in this case?



Series of eight 26 minute programs

Youth and the Global Village (Introduction)

Do teens around the world hold similar views on issues such as marriage, culture and religion?

The Story of Rosie (Jamaica)

What is the role of the family?

The Story of Idrissa (Niger)

Are cultural values being threatened?

The Story of Eman (Egypt)

Do men and women share the same rights and freedoms?

The Story of Pintinho (Brazil)

Are sports a ticket to the future?

The Story of Puttinan (Thailand)

Are young people being exploited?

The Story of Sonam (India)

Do teens believe in God?

Youth and the Future (Conclusion)

How do teens feel about their future?

Bullfrog Films
Oley, PA 19547