



Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: Echoes of Africa: Three Weeks of Drumming, Dancing, and Singing in Ghana
Name: Ann Marie Hall

Other Team Members:

Program: Rural School and Community Trust Program
Trip Dates: 07/29/2011 - 08/21/2011
Location Visited: Accra, Kopeyia, and Cape Coast, Ghana

Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 01

Project Summary: As an elementary music teacher, I strive to provide my students with meaningful opportunities to study and perform music from around the world. In order to provide context to what they are singing or playing, I feel it is vital to incorporate the study of world cultures and geography into my music lessons. To deepen my knowledge of West African music and culture, I traveled to Ghana for three weeks with a study-abroad program sponsored by the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. The majority of my journey took place in the coastal village of Kopeyia, Ghana, at the Dagbe Cultural Center. I stayed at the Dagbe Center for two weeks, where I immersed myself in an intensive study of West African drumming, singing, dancing, and arts and crafts.

The following week, I traveled to other areas of the country, including Cape Coast, Kakum National Park, and Accra. While in Cape Coast, I toured Cape Coast Castle, a major site of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In Kakum National Park, I took a canopy walk and experienced breath-taking views of the Ghanaian rainforest. My last few days were spent in the capital city of Accra. In Accra, I attended a performance by the Ghanaian National Theatre, toured a drum maker's workshop, and bargained with artists in a busy marketplace.

Career Impact: *I broadened my knowledge of West African music and culture.
*I experienced authentic instruction from local experts in West African drumming and dancing.
*Becoming a student again helped me gain more insight into what my students experience in my classroom.
*I came to better appreciate the centrality of music and dancing within African culture.
*The Dagbe Center's location provided me with opportunities to foster relationships with local people.
*I gained a new perspective on day-to-day life in a developing country.
*I deepened my understanding of the connections between West-African music and American music.

Classroom/Community Impact:*Students' instruction in West African music and dancing is framed within a broad cultural context.
*Lessons on African music, geography and culture are supplemented with first-hand accounts, artifacts, and recordings.
*Students connect African music, history and culture to African-American music, history and culture.
*Students explore the role of the United States and Mississippi during the slave trade.
*Students and staff will form relationships with local blues museums and musicians, while acknowledging the direct impact of Ghanaian culture on Mississippi.
*Students will perform West African drumming and dancing for their community.

Open Response: *Lessons on West African drumming/ percussion.
*Lessons on traditional Ghanaian songs.
*Lessons on Ghanaian dancing.
*Ghanaian literature and arts and crafts used as extensions to music lessons.
*Students use video footage, pictures, books, and internet resources to research what life is like in a Ghanaian village.
*Students research the geography, climate, and natural resources of Ghana.
*Students compare and contrast blues music to West African music.
*Students will tour the Delta Blues Museum and make connections between the blues and African music.
*Students will perform West African singing, dancing, and percussion playing.

Quote: "I went to Africa to learn music, but I ended up learning lessons in so much more."

Photos:



A view from Cape Coast Castle



Children in the village of Kopeyia



The village school in Kopeyia



Dancers in Kopeyia



A Ghanian Funeral (A Celebration!)



Village children drumming



Canopy walk in Kakum National Park



A Ghanaian home in Kopeyia