

POV

Community
Engagement & Education

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Biblioburro: The Donkey Library

A Film by Carlos Rendón Zipagauta





MAGDALENA, 2011

I met Luis Soriano when the town of Magdalena paid tribute to him. When the ceremony was over, I approached him and asked about his work. Luis began telling me about the genesis of his “Biblioburro,” and as he talked passionately, I began seeing the story in images. In other countries, this would be fiction, but in my country, it is a reality. I thought this would be a magnificent story to tell, for what it says about human goodness and inventiveness and for what it reveals about the dignity of the Colombian people, especially the poorest among them.

Carlos Rendón Zipagauta,

Filmmaker, **Biblioburro: The Donkey Library**





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INTRODUCTION

Biblioburro: The Donkey Library, a 52-minute documentary, is the story of a librarian — and a library — like no other. A decade ago, Colombian grade-school teacher Luis Soriano, from the rural village of La Gloria, was inspired to begin spending his weekends bringing a modest collection of precious books, via two hard-working donkeys, to the children of Magdalena province's poor and violence-ridden interior in Colombia. As Soriano braves armed bands, drug traffickers, snakes and heat, his library on hooves carries an inspirational message about education and a better future for Colombia.

Soriano's simple yet extraordinary effort has attracted worldwide attention. As an outreach tool, the film will effectively engage people in questions about education as a basic human right and who should take responsibility for ensuring that the world's children gain the power of literacy.





Biblioburro: The Donkey Library 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 children, political violence, human rights or literacy, including *Discovering Domingo*, *The Devil's Miner* or *The Betrayal (Nerakhoon)*.
- Groups focused on any of the issues listed in the Key Issues section
- High school students
- Faith-based organizations and institutions
- Cultural, art and historical organizations, institutions and 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

Biblioburro: The Donkey Library is an excellent tool for outreach and will be of special interest to people looking to explore the following topics:

- Activism
- Books
- Colombia
- Developing nations
- Economic development
- Education
- Human rights
- Libraries
- Literacy
- Poverty
- Rural populations
- Social justice
- Sociology
- South America
- Teachers
- Violence
- War

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 **Biblioburro: The Donkey Library** 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.pov.org/outreach





Colombia: Country Profile

POPULATION—After Brazil and Mexico, Colombia is the third-most populous country in Latin America with nearly 45 million people. Ninety percent of the country’s citizens are Catholic, and 58 percent are of mixed racial origin. The remainder are split between white, mulatto, black, Amerindian and multiethnic backgrounds. The official language is Spanish, and a number of indigenous languages are spoken as well.

According to the World Bank’s world development indicators for 2008, the annual per capita income in Colombia was 2,740 dollars, and 17.8 percent of the population lived on fewer than two dollars a day, while 7 percent lived on fewer than one dollar a day. These low figures are partly linked to the many forms of violence that have plagued Colombia for centuries. Though the country has managed to sustain the growth of its economy in recent years, the economic impact of Colombia’s armed conflict and its participation in the “war on drugs” is significant. According to the World Bank, if Colombia had been at peace for the last 20 years, the per capita income of the average Colombian would be 50 percent higher today, and it is estimated that an additional 2.5 million children would live above the poverty line.

LANDSCAPE—The fourth largest country in South America, Colombia spans a swath of land about the size of California and Texas combined (440,000 square miles) and stretches from the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean Sea. The terrain is tropical along the coastland and through the grasslands in the east; the area surrounding its three parallel mountain chains — the northernmost tip of the Andes range — is cooler. Urban areas are home to 75 percent of the total population, with 30 cities each supporting a population of 100,000 or more. Bogotá, the capital, has a population of 7.8 million in its metropolitan area.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS—A republic, Colombia officially declared independence from Spain in 1810, and its current constitution was adopted in 1991. Like the United States government, the Colombian government is split into three branches — the executive, judicial and the legislative, which is in the form of a bicameral congress.

Simón Bolívar was elected the country’s first president in 1819, and conflicts between his followers and those of his vice president, Francisco de Paula Santander, led to the formation of the two political parties that have dominated

Colombian politics for the last two centuries: the Colombian Conservative Party, which seeks a strong central government and maintains a close alliance

with the Roman Catholic Church, and the Colombian Liberal Party, which stands for a more decentralized government, with the state assuming control over education and other civil matters.

Today, additional parties at play in Colombia include Social National Unity, Radical Change, Alternative Democratic Pole, Party of National Integration and numerous smaller political movements. Although these movements now challenge the grip of conservatives and liberals on the government, power primarily swung between these two parties throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, often leading to violent conflict. Two civil wars have resulted from the strife between the parties, including the War of a Thousand Days (1899–1903), which claimed an estimated 100,000 lives, and La Violencia (The Violence) (1946–1957), which claimed about 300,000 lives.

Though contemporary armed conflict in Colombia has its roots in these bipartisan battles, the conflict is no longer framed as a war between members of these two parties, but rather one fueled by a number of competing factors. Economic interests are largely at play, with illegal groups seeking access to routes for the cocaine trade, corporations seeking to displace peasants to gain access to minerals and oil, and other similar scenarios.

A new constitution in 1991 decentralized the government and brought major reforms to Colombia’s political institutions. While the new constitution preserved a presidential, three-branch system of government, it also created new institutions, such as the inspector general, a human rights ombudsman, a constitutional court and a superior judicial council. The new constitution also reestablished the position of vice president.

The constitution’s influence in Latin America has been widespread: The new constitution emerged from a broad consensus that covered diverse sectors of the political spectrum and represented the plurality of voices beyond the traditional parties that had dominated Colombian politics for more than a century. Among other things, the constitution recognized religious liberty and cultural and linguistic diversity and granted autonomy and land rights to indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations that historically had been excluded.

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Colombia in Conflict

Roots of Conflict

Despite having one of the most well-balanced constitutions in Latin America, Colombia has suffered the longest running armed conflict in the Western Hemisphere. For more than 40 years, continued and recurring confrontation between government, guerrilla and paramilitary forces has made organized criminal activity and extreme violence a way of life in many regions of Colombia, with civilians suffering murder, rape, torture, kidnappings, looting, threats, extortion, deaths from landmines and forced displacement. In 2002, an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 civilians were killed in fighting; in 2001, more than 4,000 children were killed. Of Colombia's 44 million people, 3 million have been displaced, many of them forced not only to leave their homes, but to leave all their possessions behind as well.

Today's violence can be traced back to the period of fighting between liberal and conservative parties that lasted from 1948 to 1958, killing an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 people and displacing more than 2 million, mostly from rural to urban areas. The displacements led to a shift in landownership, an increase in socioeconomic disparity and the rise of the leftist rural movement, which sought to defend beleaguered ordinary Colombians.

The leftist movement gave rise to several guerrilla groups, including two that persist today: the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN). Beginning in the 1980s, self-defense paramilitary groups formed in response to the guerrilla groups, often with the complicity and support of businessmen, public officials and drug traffickers. By the 1990s, these paramilitary groups boasted both independent military and political power. They then united under the right-wing um-

rella organization the Colombian United Self-Defense Groups (AUC), estimated to have tens of thousands of members.

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The War on Drugs

A boom in the illegal drug industry in the 1980s benefited both guerrilla and paramilitary groups, which either worked directly in the business or provided security for drug traffickers. Experts estimate that the FARC takes in between \$500 million and \$600 million annually from drug-related income. It's also been estimated that Colombia provides as much as 80 percent of the world's cocaine, as well as a significant amount of heroin.

The so-called "war on drugs" launched by Nixon 40 years ago and orchestrated by the United States ever since has been instrumental to Colombia's drug-related violence. While policymakers at the time believed that harsh law enforcement would lead to a diminishing market, the scale of the global drug market has dramatically increased instead. According to the June 2011 Report of the Global Commission on Drug Policy, drug prohibition has failed to have impact on global consumption of drugs. The report criticizes the war on drugs for inadvertently creating black markets and criminal networks that resort to violence and corruption to carry out their business. The report cites U.N. estimates that opiate use increased 34.5 percent worldwide and cocaine use 27 percent from 1998 to 2008, while the use of cannabis, or marijuana, was up 8.5 percent.





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Government Response

In the late 1980s and 1990s, amid a period of ever-escalating violence that saw the assassination of three presidential candidates, as well as a steep rise in kidnappings and extortion, the Colombian government held peace talks with both the FARC and the ELN. Though no lasting agreements were reached, the government did reach agreements with several smaller splinter groups, including one called M-19. This led to the adoption of a new constitution in 1991 and the incorporation of M-19 into the official political spectrum. In November 1998, President Andrés Pastrana ceded a sparsely populated section of the country, an area about the size of Switzerland, to the FARC as a neutral zone where peace negotiations could take place; the FARC continued its violent attacks and expansion in coca production, and the move was considered unsuccessful.

In 1999, with backing from the international community, including the United States, the government under Pastrana launched Plan Colombia, an offensive against violent groups and drug traffickers. The plan entailed drastically increasing the size and budget of official military forces. This offensive included (and still includes) an aggressive coca eradication campaign consisting of the aerial fumigation of millions of acres of coca and poppy crops, an effort that has been denounced by numerous non-governmental organi-

zations and rural communities for its negative impact on the environment, subsistence economies and human health. According to a 2001 report from Human Rights Watch, the paramilitary groups maintain close ties with the government, army brigades and police, which work with and even profit from the violent groups.

In 2002, Alvaro Uribe was elected president on promises of restoring security and reaching a peace settlement with paramilitary groups. His policy of "democratic security" mobilized Colombian military for war, which resulted in the state regaining control in some areas of the country and forced the FARC into defensive positions. Uribe's administration bargained with paramilitary groups, offering pardons for fighters and reduced prison sentences for leaders, which resulted in the demobilization of 30,000 fighters in the AUC paramilitary organization and 20,000 guerrillas. Uribe's popularity spiked as a result, and congress amended the constitution to allow him to run for a second four-year term in 2006. The demobilization proved short-lived, however, with many of the groups later reemerging and many of the confessions of paramilitary members going unprocessed.

In the meantime, the emergence of a truth and reconciliation commission has been an important step for human rights battles in Colombia. Judicial institutions have begun investigating and prosecuting related war crimes and listening to the grievances and accusations of victims and civilian groups who have traditionally been silenced by the war.

Critics argued that Uribe's peace process actually represented a final incorporation of the paramilitary into the Colombian state and economy, rather than an eradication of it. In 2008, the government extradited 15 paramilitary members, including seven top commanders, to the United States on drug charges, a move that ultimately allowed them to escape the Colombian justice practices set up to process former paramilitary. Nevertheless, violence decreased drastically under Uribe, as did the strength of the FARC, which shrank from 16,000 members in 2001 to 8,000 in 2010; in September 2010, a Colombian military operation killed the top FARC military commander, Victor Julio Suarez Rojas, a.k.a. Mono Jojoy.

Despite the decrease in violence, Colombia competes with Sudan for the greatest number of displaced people in the world. Over the past decade, more than 2.4 million people were forcibly displaced from their homes. Fully 98 percent of these displaced persons live below the poverty line and 82.6 percent are considered to be living in extreme poverty. Most displacement occurs around areas rich in mineral resources





opened up to multinational corporations in the past decade. Recent revelations of corruption and misallocation of government subsidies, extrajudicial executions by the army and illegal wiretapping of government critics have clouded Uribe's legacy.

Colombia's current president, Juan Manuel Santos, elected in August 2010, has vowed to work to strengthen human rights in the country and investigate corruption. In June 2011, the congress passed a historic law known as the victim's law that aims to return stolen and abandoned land to internally displaced Colombians and provide reparations — including financial compensation — to victims of human rights violations and infractions of international humanitarian law.

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United States-Colombia Relations

The United States is widely recognized as Colombia's closest ally and a powerful financial backer in the country's fight against drugs and violence. The relationship between the two countries began during the Reagan administration in the 1980s and was cemented in 2002, when Uribe gained support from the Bush administration and the U.S. Congress began providing more support for Colombia's fight against narcotics and, ultimately, terrorism. Support

has included not only financial backing of Uribe's military efforts (including sales of equipment and arms and the arrival of U.S. mercenaries and army personnel to assist in eradication and antinarcotics campaigns, along with an extradition agreement that has sent thousands of traffickers to the United States) but also support of humanitarian and socioeconomic interests. Questions surrounding the war on drugs have emerged on many fronts, including, most recently, from environmental and human rights groups, as well as a number of former officials in both Colombia, Mexico and the United States, all calling for a reevaluation of this 40-year "war."

According to the U.S. Department of State, the United States is also the largest source of foreign direct investment in Colombia, particularly in regard to mining and hydrocarbon projects. In 2008, investment topped \$10.6 billion; in 2009, it was estimated to be more than \$9 billion.

President Santos, who has moved to distance himself publicly from the foreign relations policy of former President Uribe (under whom Santos served as minister of defense) is expected to maintain close ties with the United States. His government has resumed talks with the United States about a free trade agreement that has stalled numerous times in the U.S. Congress due to Colombia's poor record in human rights and widespread violence against labor unions.

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Education and Literacy in Colombia

There is a marked contrast between education standards in urban areas of Colombia and education standards in rural areas of Colombia. While nine years of education are officially compulsory, only five years of primary school are offered in some rural areas. In cities, the literacy rate is 93 percent; in the country, it's 67 percent. Overall, about 80 percent of Colombian children enter school, and the ministry of education estimates that approximately 500,000 children are currently out of school altogether.

One of the primary reasons parents do not send children to school is financial hardship. Officially, the Colombian constitution guarantees free education but stipulates that the right





is “without prejudice to charges for the cost of academic rights for those who can afford them.” In other words, some fees are permissible, and may be mandatory, including matriculation fees as well as fees for mandatory uniforms (common in South America), books, paper, water, administrative costs or other supplies. Matriculation fees may be as minimal as \$4 to \$40 a year per student, and total costs (including matriculation, uniforms and school supplies) as low as \$100 per year, but these numbers can be prohibitive in a country where the annual per capita income is \$8,205.

One of the most underserved groups consists of the children of displaced families who have fled or been pushed out of their homes as a result of ongoing violence in Colombia. As of 2007, two million people were listed on Colombia’s national register for displaced people; at least one million more are estimated to have been uprooted by violence as a result of the internal armed conflict. About half of them are under the age of 18. In 2002, an analysis by Colombia’s ministry of education in 21 receiving communities found that only 10,700 of the 122,200 displaced school-age children (fewer than 9 percent) were matriculated. In the same communities, the enrollment rate for all children was 92.7 percent.

In another study, the ministry found that 52 percent of displaced children between the ages of 12 and 18 were not in school, compared to 25 percent of the same age group in the population at large. For displaced families the financial burdens of sending a child to school may exceed means. One survey of displaced women found that more than a quarter of those between the ages of 13 and 24 had left because of an inability to pay. Also, since education expenditures in Colombia are equal to only 3.9 percent of the country’s gross domestic product, schools are often cash-strapped and cannot always accommodate the children of displaced persons, although officially they are required by law to do so. Other times, costs or logistics of providing transportation to school (which may not be near students’ homes) can inhibit matriculation.

While poor displaced families are legally exempt from paying school fees, free schooling is available only to children whose parents have registered as displaced. Many parents cannot register, because state agencies often refuse to register people as displaced if they say paramilitary successor groups forced them to flee. This contributes to disparities between government and non-governmental organization estimates of Colombia’s internally displaced population.

Despite armed conflict and low matriculation rates in many regions, there are important civic and gov-

ernment initiatives taking place in Colombia that are tackling literacy and education. In 1998, the mayor of Bogotá, Colombia’s capital, began Biblored, a network of 19 libraries that serve some of the city’s poorest neighborhoods and provide free access to books, computers and technology. Thousands of people use Biblored’s services regularly, and in 2002 the network received the Access to Learning Award from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation — a \$1 million grant to expand its operations. Several other Colombian organizations have followed suit, including The Plan Nacional de Lectura y Bibliotecas (PLNB) which receives financial support from both the country’s ministry of culture and its ministry of education to promote public libraries and the expansion of book production. Since 2002, the organization has benefited 843 of the nation’s 1,119 municipalities by providing books and supplies for the development of libraries.

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Luis Soriano and Biblioburro

With just 70 books, Luis Soriano established his Biblioburro operation in his northern Colombian hometown of La Gloria more than a decade ago. Ever since, he has loaded up his donkeys, Alfa and Beto, every Saturday at dawn and Wednesday at dusk to bring books to a regular readership that now numbers more than 300.

Soriano visits 15 villages on a rotating basis, serving people who are impoverished and isolated, with little or no access to reading materials. These journeys, during which he transports as many as 160 books at a time, can be arduous and dangerous. Soriano was once tied to a tree by bandits, and



a fall from one of his donkeys in 2008 left him with a broken leg and a limp. He cannot carry anything that could be misinterpreted by the guerrilla forces as government propaganda material, including any books dealing with human rights or the Colombian constitution. When he first began going around on his donkey and gathering kids to read them stories, community members thought he had gone crazy. People made fun of him and pointed their fingers at him.

However, Soriano's Biblioburro operation now has more than 4,800 books, thanks in part to donations that came in after Soriano wrote a letter to a journalist and author he heard on the radio. Soriano asked him for a copy of his book, and the author broadcast details about Biblioburro on his radio program. A local institution provided some funds to help build a small library to house the books next to Soriano's home. Similar initiatives have sprung up around the world, and there are now donkey libraries in other countries, including Ethiopia and Venezuela.

Born into conflict in the 1970s, Soriano himself was displaced as a little boy to the city of Valledupar, a two-hour drive from his native village of La Gloria, due to violence by bandit groups. Far from his friends and family, Soriano found refuge in a local library, where he fell in love with literature. His love for books was encouraged by a very supportive teacher who would put books aside for him. His favorite was *Don Quixote*.

Soriano returned to La Gloria at 16 with a high-school education and got a job teaching reading to schoolchildren. He eventually earned a college degree in literature by studying with a professor who visited his village twice a month.

Years later, Soriano remembered how that teacher's support in Valledupar had helped him as he was learning to read. He recognized the transformative power that reading can have on young people who experience atrocities and felt the books he had read should be shared with other young people who were in circumstances similar to those in which he had once found himself. Thus was born Biblioburro.

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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.

Please encourage people to stay in 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?**
- **If a friend asked you what this film was about, what would you say?**
- **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?**

Education and Literacy

- As he prepares for his trek, Soriano jokingly asks, “So, what do you think, are we crazy?” What words would you use to describe Soriano and his work?
- Compare the attitudes toward teachers, books and education in the film and what you typically see in your community. What are the similarities and differences?
- Soriano encounters neighbors who resist sending their children to school. What are the possible sources of that resistance? If you were in Soriano's shoes, what would you do or say to overcome that resistance? What are the benefits of becoming literate?
- Soriano asks a fellow teacher if he has been paid, and learns that he has not. In your view, who is responsible for funding education and what are the parameters of that responsibility? (How much should be invested per child? For how many years?)
- The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26) reads, “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.” What do you learn from the film that might explain why some people consider education a basic human right? What could you do to ensure that this right is protected?
- At one point, Soriano hands out a book that also has a companion CD, though he knows that no one in the village currently has a computer. What difference do resources make in terms of creating educational opportunities? In particular, what difference could computers and Internet access make (positive and negative)?
- The children bring messages and requests from others in their families, indicating that Soriano's influence extends beyond children. If Soriano is a pebble in a pond, how would you describe the ripples (or potential ripples) he creates?





Soriano's Teaching

- What did you think of the children's stories about the violence they experienced or witnessed? What did you think of Soriano's answers to those stories, specifically when he says that once a story is told, "We're not going to tell that story again, or relive it, because we're going to replace it by new stories... We should put the past behind us... We have to live in the present, children... We're going to trade these sad stories for happy ones." What did you make of children attempting to master their fears through their drawings and stories?

- What do you think the children are learning from Soriano's actions? What do you think they are learning from his words? What are all the possible ways that a child might understand the following statement from him:

Because we're good people, we're going to show the world that we Colombians can be noble, and we won't let ourselves be intimidated, we won't be influenced by bad people. You hear that, children? You have to remember that we're courageous people, and each one of you is important for the future of this country... Who's going to change this country? Us! The children! We're going to grow up to be honest Colombians. We're going to be doctors, nurses, businessmen, policemen, everything... What are we trying to change? History! History of our country!

- What are the messages of the Rubén Darío poem that Soriano shares with the children and why do you think he chooses to share that particular poem?

Colombia

- What did you learn from this film about the impact of political violence and paramilitary activity on the lives of everyday people?
- How does the film's portrayal of Soriano confirm or contradict what you typically hear in the media about Colombia?

Additional media literacy questions are available at:
www.pbs.org/pov/educators/media-literacy.php

- Host a fundraiser for the Biblioburro project. Learn how to support Soriano's work with donations of books or funds, at biblioburro.com (in Spanish) or ayokaproductions.org/content/biblioburro-donkey-library.
- Join or create an initiative to improve literacy in your community. You might look at partnering with groups such as Literacy Volunteers, First Book and/or your public library system.
- Investigate U.S. foreign policy related to Colombia, its paramilitary forces and the violence experienced by civilians. Discuss what you think U.S. policy should be and share your opinions (and evidence for them) with your elected representatives, in letters to the editor, on blogs and so on.
- Soriano recites the poetry of Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío. Find more Darío poetry to share with your group, class, congregation or community. Or use the film as a prompt to write your own poetry about your dreams for the future or about people who inspire you.
- Donate books to U.S. and international schools and libraries, through organizations such as:

Book Aid International

www.bookaid.org/

Books for America

<http://www.booksforamerica.org/>

Biblionef

<http://www.biblionef.org/>

International Book Project

<http://www.intlbookproject.org>

Global Literacy Project

<http://www.glpinc.org/>

UNESCO Libraries Portal

<http://bit.ly/UNESCOlibraries>

A comprehensive directory of book donation programs can also be found at:

Directory of Book Donation Programs

<http://bit.ly/bookdonationdirectory>





FILM-RELATED WEB SITES

Original Online Content on POV Interactive (www.pbs.org/pov)

The POV **Biblioburro** website

www.pbs.org/pov/biblioburro

will include a **photo gallery** of images taken during the filming of the movie; a user-generated map of mobile libraries around the world; **bios of the key players** in the film; a film update; history of the bookmobile; and a comprehensive listing of book donation programs around the world. As with all POV film websites, viewers can also access a video interview with the filmmakers. Educators may record the film off of PBS and show **Biblioburro** in their classrooms for one year following the broadcast. Additionally, chosen video clips from the film are available for streaming along with the free lesson plan. All viewers can download and print out the free discussion guide for background information, discussion questions and tips for screening **Biblioburro** at their next community or school event.

What's Your POV?

Share your thoughts about

Biblioburro: The Donkey Library

by posting a comment on the POV Blog

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

Literacy

BIBLIOTECA NACIONAL DE COLOMBIA.

<http://www.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/>

This public library system has managed to expand its reach even to the most marginal regions of Colombia.

LITERACY.ORG.

www.literacy.org

This project of the University of Pennsylvania conducts and gathers research on literacy initiatives. Of special note on the website is an interview with groundbreaking educator Paulo Freire, who specialized in educating poor and rural populations.

LITERACY INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

www.literacydirectory.org

A search-by-zip-code tool assists in finding literacy initiatives in or near specific communities.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR FAMILY LITERACY

www.familit.org

The National Center for Family Literacy provides a wide array of resources for volunteers and professionals seeking to support family literacy initiatives.





Human Rights

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH.

“WORLD REPORT 2011: COLOMBIA.”

www.hrw.org/en/world-report-2011/world-report-2011-colombia

This international human rights organization issues annual reports on many of the world’s nations. This link is to its 2011 report on Colombia.

MADRE.

www.madre.org

The website of this international women’s organization focused on human rights includes information on the group’s special project Colombia: Building a Culture of Peace.

UNICEF. “COLOMBIA.”

<http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/colombia.html>

The UNICEF page on Colombia provides recent news and statistics about the country and efforts to improve the lives of children there.

UNITED NATIONS.

“THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.”

www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/

Article 26 of this document defines education, including free education at the elementary level, as a basic human right.

United States-Colombia Relations

JUST THE FACTS.

<http://justf.org/>

Just the Facts is a citizen effort to oversee and understand the United States’ military relationship with the rest of the Western Hemisphere.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

“BACKGROUND NOTE: COLOMBIA.”

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35754.htm>

The U.S. Department of State provides background information on Colombia, including a section on U.S.-Colombian relations

For additional information, see sources in the Background Information section of this guide.





Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and beginning its 24th season on PBS in 2011, the award-winning POV series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. Airing June through September with primetime specials during the year, POV has brought more than 300 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *POV's Borders*. Since 1988, POV 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. Visit www.pbs.org/pov.

POV Digital www.pbs.org/pov

POV's award-winning website extends the life of our films online with interactive features, interviews, updates, video and educational content, as well as listings for television broadcasts, community screenings and films available online. The *POV Blog* is a gathering place for documentary fans and filmmakers to discuss their favorite films and get the latest news.

**POV Community Engagement and Education
www.pbs.org/pov/outreach**

POV films can be seen at more than 450 events across the country every year. Together with schools, organizations and local PBS stations, POV facilitates free community screenings and produces free resources to accompany our films, including discussion guides and curriculum-based lesson plans. With our community partners, we inspire dialogue around the most important social issues of our time.

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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 develops 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.

**Join our Community Network!
www.amdoc.org/outreach/events**

Learn about new lesson plans, facilitation guides and our other free educational resources and find out about screenings near you. Joining our network is also the first step towards hosting your own POV screening.

You can also follow us on Twitter @POVengage for the latest news from POV Community Engagement & Education.

Front cover: Luis Soriano rides one of his donkeys
Photo courtesy of Carlos Rendón Zipagauta



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