

FOUND SOUNDS BAHIA

Ideas for Teachers and Community Leaders

Found Sounds Bahia isn't just an entertaining film. It's also full of ideas and possibilities that you can explore on your own or bring back to your community. The film motivates you to think not only about the value of reuse and recycling, but also things like the role of community leaders in inspiring young people, the need for artistic expression in community life, and the different forms that creativity can take.

Because it is about a group of young people, *Found Sounds Bahia* has the potential to be particularly meaningful for young people and those who work with them as teachers, community leaders and even parents. On this page you'll find a few thoughts on how *Found Sounds Bahia* can work in the classroom or in other contexts with young people. What follows here are several topics for discussion following a viewing of the film, with an emphasis on ideas which might lead to group projects or other actions and activities.

Topics for Discussion about the Film, and Possibilities for Action

How are the young people shown in *Found Sounds Bahia* like or unlike the youth in your community? Do they have different wants, needs, or interests? Candeal, the community in which the film takes place, is a low-income area in the Brazilian state of Bahia. Does that background make these kids different from American kids or kids from wealthier backgrounds?

The young people in the film like what they're doing with the musical group *Lactomia* – they think it's cool. Do kids in different places and from different backgrounds usually think the same sorts of things are cool? Or is what's cool different in different places?

The film shows how the young man Jair Rezende set out to create a musical group using recycled materials to make the instruments. Would a project like this work in your community? Could it be done through school, a church organization or community organization? Could it be done in partnership with a local landfill, or with a local conservation organization? Are there musicians or other artists in the community who would like to give their time by helping to develop and guide such a project? Would the kids be into it?

The young people in the film use recycled materials to make musical instruments and costumes for their performances. These are great creative ideas! But are there other sorts of things you can do to make use of commonly available throw-away materials in your area? What about other sorts of art ... sculpture or site-specific installations? Stage sets for theatrical performances?

It's also possible to use recycled materials to make useful things that aren't necessarily artistic. For instance, some people have made very good sandals using the rubber from old tires to make the soles. They work fine and the rubber soles lasts forever! Can you think of other practical items that can be made from recyclables? Might some of them even have economic value, with the potential to raise money for a worthy cause or for the students themselves?

What sorts of cast-off materials are most common in your area? Around here and in many other places, the current leader seems to be plastic water bottles and soda pop bottles. Can you think of good uses for the most common throw-aways in your area? (See below for some ideas for plastic bottles.)

Most of the musical instruments Lactomia was shown playing were percussion instruments. But many other sorts of instruments can be made from recyclables. Can you come up with ideas?

A few suggestions:

Many pieces of scrap metal make excellent chimes and bells. You can create tuned sets to play melodies either by trying out many scrap metal pieces to find those that make a nice scale, or by cutting pieces to different lengths. Remember that how the objects are held or supported, and what you strike them with, make a big difference in the sound. For a really good selection, look for good-sounding metal shapes in a scrap metal yard.

In the film you can see people playing on individual tin cans with sticks. If you create a whole set of tin cans of different sizes and tones, you can have a unique and effective melody instrument.

In the film, Jair mentioned briefly a type of tube that makes a nice tone when you whirl it. This effect is associated with corrugated flex tubes, which may be of plastic or metal. Large-diameter plastic flex tubes (anything over about 2" in diameter) work well with whirling. Smaller tubes, plastic or metal, can be played by blowing. Each tube can make several different notes depending on how fast you whirl or how hard you blow.

Narrow-necked glass or plastic bottles such as pop bottles can be played by blowing over the rim. Tune them to different pitches by adding water to vary the size of the air chamber inside. (For a permanent tuning, use plaster of Paris instead of water.) In addition, plastic bottles with just the flared portion of the neck cut out can make flared bells for the ends of wind instrument tubes, enhancing the sound and the appearance. With glass bottles or jars you can make tuned sets for percussion, tuned once again by adding different amounts of water.

Some pieces of scrap wood and scrap metal tubing can work very well for marimba-like instruments (sets of tuned bars). To sound well, they should be supported in a way that lets them vibrate well: rest the bars over a pair of pads so that between a fourth and a fifth of the bar overhangs its pad at each end. Tune by cutting to length or (for wood) by thinning at the center.

Bubble wrap: Pop it in rhythm; try dancing on it! The large bubble kind is better than small bubble.

The topics and ideas you've seen here are just starters. You may come up with other, equally effective discussion topics and project ideas to explore.

Ideas from *Found Sounds Bahia*.

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