



This session introduces Senegal, Seckou Keita's homeland, using maps and photos. Use this session to:

Challenge misconceptions and stereotypes of a country in Africa

Raise questions about borders

Consider what's important in our own localities

Background information

- Senegal has been colonised by the Portuguese, Dutch, British and French. It gained independence from France on 20th August 1960.
- The Gambia was colonised by the British until independence on 18 February 1965.
- The languages of Senegal are French (official), Wolof, Pulaar, Jola, Mandinka, Serer and Soninke. Seckou usually sings in Mandinka and Wolof and sometimes French and English.
- The Gambia is 295 miles (475 kilometers) long and 15 to 30 miles (24 to 48 kilometers) wide and is surrounded by Senegal on 2 sides and the Atlantic Ocean on the other.
- The questioning frameworks included can be used with any photoset.

The Session

Select the activities most suitable for your learners.

1. Where is Ziguinchor?

Explain that we will be learning about the musician Seckou Keita and finding out where he comes from. The first slide on the powerpoint shows a picture of Seckou with a kora (West African harp) and the cover of his album *Homeland: Chapter 1*. Explain that Seckou was born in the city of Ziguinchor (Pron. Zig-in-shor) and we are going to discover where that is using some clues. Slides 2-5 zoom in to the city of Ziguinchor.

Resources

1. Powerpoint
2. Photoset
3. Inference framework
4. Development compass rose



2. What is Senegal like?

Give learners an opportunity to explore Senegal using a digital mapping platform such as Google Maps or the subscription service, Digimap. Based on what they can see, ask them to imagine what it may be like there. Discuss climate, vegetation, landscape and what they think daily life might be like in Dakar and/or Ziguinchor. Compile their ideas along with anything they may have heard about the country, onto flipchart.

3. What's in the photo album?

Now give learners a chance to explore the photographs of Senegal. These photos have been selected by Seckou because they represent different aspects of home for him. Learners might explore them as a whole set and/or you can give pairs an image and use the Inference Framework or the Development Compass Rose provided to encourage questions and critical thinking. Decide which framework would be most suitable for your learners. The aim of these frameworks is to:

- Encourage deeper thinking
- Build oracy skills
- Identify any misconceptions and/or assumptions
- Encourage critical thinking
- Initiate enquiry

If you are looking at the photos as a whole set, encourage discussion by asking:

Do any of the images surprise you?

What do they say about Senegal?

Whose stories are being told?

Whose stories are missing?

When do you think they were taken? What clues are there? (Note: the photos shown were taken between 2020 and 2024)

What aspects of life in Senegal do they portray? What aspects are missing?

Different photographers took the pictures, professional and amateur. Can you tell which are the professional pictures and which are amateur?

What choices did the photographers make when taking the pictures?

What choices might Seckou have made when choosing the pictures to share with you?



Whilst learners are discussing the photos, it is critical that we listen out for any misconceptions or assumptions and address them with the group. An example is below:

During a lesson, a small group of children (aged 7/8) were given a photograph of children playing in a compound in Ziguinchor. They were asked to write down any questions they had about the picture. The children wrote the question *'Why don't they have any shoes?'* A discussion followed. It became apparent that the children believed that the children didn't have shoes because they were poor. The children had made this assumption because they knew the photograph was taken in a country in Africa. They were asked if there might be any other reasons why the children were not wearing shoes. They were also asked if they ever played without shoes on. They were then challenged to come up with some other questions. With support, they said, *'Where are their shoes?'*, *'Do they have shoes?'* and *'What kinds of shoes might they have?'* The session concluded with a whole class discussion about the assumptions we make when we look at photographs and what might be going on beyond the frame. As an educator, how might you have responded? What might you do next?

Extension Activities

- A. Slide 6 has a video which explains how Gambia got its border, suitable for older learners. It can be used as a stimulus for generating philosophical and open questions about the relationship between Senegal and The Gambia, colonialism and borders.
- B. The following ideas could be picked up in a cross-curricular project between geography and art, geography and music, or art and music. They dovetail well with the session 'Where's Home', which is in the MUSIC section of the Homeland resources. An exhibition of this work would provide an excellent opportunity for learners to share and express their ideas with a wider audience. Please contact Seckou Music (admin@seckoumusic.com) if you would like to exhibit work at one of Seckou's forthcoming concerts. See the 'live' section of his website for more details.
 - i. You could ask learners how they might visually represent ideas of home and homeland.
 - Would they use a map?
 - Would they create something abstract to represent feelings of home and homeland?
 - Would a collage better convey the complexities of the concepts of home and homeland?
 - ii. Create a photo gallery of your home. This could be the area around your home, community centre, music venue or school. Give learners the opportunity to take photographs that represent home for them. Share these digitally. As a group select 20 that best represent different aspects of your home and ask learners to create captions for each picture. Create an album or a gallery of the pictures with the captions. This could be an on online gallery or a physical one. Invite others to come along and visit your gallery.