



# Discussion Guide

Season 3.0, 2011

*Uprooted (Colombia)*, 44 minutes

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# Introduction

This guide contains suggested discussion questions to orient viewers and discussion facilitators on how best to frame conversations about the films featured in AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange, Season 3 (2011).

First there is a short list of general discussion questions that can be used to initiate a discussion of all the films after the screening or broadcast. These general questions provide a solid platform for channeling the immediate emotional response of the audience into a collective experience or narrative.

After the General Discussion Questions, each of the AfroPoP films contains content for a discussion guide to frame the historical, aesthetic and emotional reactions of the viewer in a participatory way.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Prior to screening the film, remind the audience that there will be a discussion afterwards (with the filmmaker if s/he is in attendance). It's generally a good idea to start the discussion immediately after the film with a few broad questions.

Following are some suggestions:

- What are your immediate reactions to this film?
- What did you learn from this film?
- Describe a moment in the film that you found particularly moving. What was it about that scene that was especially compelling to you?



# Uprooted

A Film by Juan Mejia Botero

[http://www.uprootedthemovie.org/Uprooted/Uprooted:\\_the\\_movie.html](http://www.uprootedthemovie.org/Uprooted/Uprooted:_the_movie.html)

<http://www.uprootedthemovie.org/Uprooted/Trailer.html>

TIME: 44 minutes

## Targeted Audience

- Columbian Americans
- Columbian immigrants
- African American activists
- Environmental activists
- Peace activists
- Human rights activists

## Film Summary

Due mainly to the Colombian Pacific region's harsh environment and inaccessibility, for centuries it remained exclusively a mining frontier on the periphery of developing centers of commerce, education, and state authority. The majority of the population—freed and runaway slaves and indigenous peoples—lived in relatively dispersed communities up and down the river basin, where their livelihoods depended on agriculture, gold panning, fishing and the collection of shellfish in the river deltas.

After independence from Spain (1819), the Pacific was left largely to these communities, who lived the dual paradox between autonomy and abandonment, and richness of natural resources and poverty. Since the late 1980s however, the Colombian Pacific has become a new frontier for development, including macro-development projects and new forms of capital accumulation, such as hydroelectric dams, African palm plantations, industrial shrimp cultivation and oil extraction. But as Colombia's civil war has escalated violence and mass displacement have become all too common as struggles for land and resources intensify.

At the center of *Uprooted* is Noris and her family, a mother and community leader displaced since 1996 and living in a refugee shelter of Villa España on the outskirts of Quibdó, a growing city on the Pacific Coast. Noris' captivating story lends a human face to what is an often invisible and dehumanized population. 'The displaced' are portrayed as an uncomfortable consequence of the civil war, and a drain on resources. *Uprooted* acts as a counter-narrative to humanize internal refugees in Colombia, and across the world.

This documentary is an intimate portrayal of the tragedy of uprooting; a beautifully detailed tale about struggle and resilience; a bittersweet story of loss, love, family, and dreams.

## For Discussion

- *The Impact of Race Relations in Columbia*: Did you notice references to race in the film?
  - What role do you believe race plays in the challenges Noris and her family face?
  - Does the film indicate what role race plays Colombian society and politics?
  - Many in the United States have at least a passing familiarity with the violent conflict resulting from drug trafficking in Columbia. However Black organizations -- in Columbia and abroad -- see it as a direct backlash to the territorial gains made by Afro Colombians after the 1991 Constitution (which was also the official governmental recognition of Afro Columbians as a distinct ethnic group).
- Noris: “This is a really a war of the landowners... It’s very fertile land... and they need us to leave so they can take it over.” In what ways does Noris’ sentiment express a grasp of the political dynamics behind her family’s displacement?
- *Displacement and Human Rights*: 2010 was the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. These principles were developed in response to statistics such as the following: more than 26 million people in over 50 countries continue to be internally displaced, away from their homes, as a result of armed conflict or other violence. Many millions more are internally displaced due to natural disasters. Displacement affects groups in different ways. Experience shows that some groups tend to suffer the most: women and children, especially if they are heads of households, older persons, persons with disabilities, persons who are seriously ill or injured, and the poor and other socially marginalized groups.
  - What is the government’s role or responsibility in returning land to owners who were unlawfully displaced?
  - Do you think that America’s drug policy -- the “war on drugs” - has played a role in the violent displacement of families like Noris’?
    - How so?
  - Are there points in the film where you recalled the United States’ own communities of “internally displaced people”? Please describe.
    - In what ways were their displacements similar?
    - In what ways are they different?
- About the filmmaker: In the filmmaker’s biography profile on the film’s website, he describes himself as an activist filmmaker. In what ways do you believe he would you like to see this film play a role in the advocacy for better policies to redress the economic and social conditions of internally displaced persons in Columbia?

- We see Noris as the head of the household, and Johan refers to his aunts as having helping him with his clothing for his trip. Are the families in the displaced communities largely led by women, or do you think that the filmmaker chose to focus this female-headed household?
- Current statistics from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre estimate that between 3 million and 5 million Columbians are displaced in the country, while over 100,000 have fled as refugees.
  - Does the filmmaker know the areas where most have fled?
  - Are the means for leaving the country the same for Columbians of African descent as other Columbians?