Textured Dialogues: A Tapestry of Immigrant Perspectives on the Meaning of Education
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Edited by
Belinda J. Hardin
Silvia C. Bettez
Emily Manning

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Dedication

Dedicated to our parents and first teachers...

Sarah C. “Nita” Hardin, who taught me the importance of honoring the diversity of all members of our communities and whose teachings guided me in putting together the tapestry.

Sonia P. Bettez and Donald T. Bettez, who taught me about the beauty of cultural diversity and the importance of striving for social justice.

Polly Gillespie, who has taught me strength, courage, perseverance, humility, and compassion; and Patrick and Katerina Gardner, who taught me to love and support diversity of all kinds, and also made possible my formal educational opportunities. I thank each for teaching me the value of life-long learning.
Tapestry Artists

Niyonzima Deogratia, Burundi
Ngé H, Bahnar
Muna Pradhan, Bhutan
Amina Tahirou, Niger
Daphne Rodríguez-Baron, Honduras
Nhia Vang, Hmong
Claudia E. Blanco, Colombia
Mayra Mejía, Dominican Republic
Ndabazezwe Viki, Zimbabwe
H Nga Aдорож, Bu Nong
Ibrahim Mohamed Salih, Sudan
Se Da, Burma
Leo Vega, Mexico
Iang Za Men, Chin
Melissa Cortes Espitia, Mexico
Zumo M. Kollie, Liberia
H Duat Adrong, Rhade
Shashe Gebrys, Ethiopia

Project Advisory Committee

Raleigh Bailey, Center for New North Carolinians
Kathy Hinshaw, Center for New North Carolinians, Latino
Community Coalition of Guilford
Million MeKonnen, North Carolina African Services Coalition
Megan Fair, North Carolina African Services Coalition
Zumo M. Kollie, Liberian Community
Amina Tahirou, Niger Community
Lynn Thompson, New Arrivals Institute
Leilani Roughton, New Arrivals Institute
Touger Vang, Hmong Community
Acknowledgements

Individuals representing the following community organizations worked in partnership to develop the Textured Dialogues project.

The **Coalition for Diverse Language Communities** (CDLC) at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro promotes innovative, relevant, and collaborative work in the areas of community-engaged research, outreach and advocacy, policy work, and professional development. Specifically, the CDLC aims to address the educational and sociocultural well-being of DLC individuals and groups by: establishing and strengthening partnerships among stakeholders; promoting policy changes at the local, state, national, and international levels; and advocating and engaging in outreach activities to leverage positive change for diverse language communities.

The **North Carolina African Services Coalition** (NCASC) is a nonprofit organization that provides services to refugees and asylees who resettle in Guilford County. Originally founded in 1997 as a community support organization for the local African community, NCASC has since become a full-fledged refugee resettlement agency through grants with the NC Office of Refugee Resettlement and with the Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC). NCASC services include: assisting families in acclimating to their foreign environment and tapping into a well-developed network of resources to achieve success in the areas of employment, education, finances, health, and more.

The **Association of United Liberians** in the Triad is an organization of immigrants whose purpose is to unite Liberians and address their needs.

The **Center for New North Carolinians** (CNNC) at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro works to build bridges among immigrant populations and existing communities throughout the state of North Carolina by providing: Outreach and Educational Programming; Research and Evaluation; Information Services; Technical Support; and Immigrant and Refugee Leadership Development.

The **Latino Community Coalition** of Guilford County is a nonprofit organization dedicated to full integration of Latinos into the community and recognition of the gifts they bring.

The **New Arrivals Institute** (NAI) assists refugees and immigrants with self-sufficiency and US Citizenship through education. Currently, NAI offers five adult classes and two early childhood transitional classes. In addition, NAI also provides employment readiness classes and cultural orientation seminars every week. The Institute acts as a community liaison to educate individuals and community partners about newly arrived refugees and immigrants, and the services available to them.

We would like to thank Dean Wixson, her staff, the Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations Department, and the Specialized Education Services Department for supporting the tapestry gala. We would also like to thank the following individuals who volunteered their time to assist with this project: Sonia Bettez for translations from English to Spanish and Spanish to English; Beth Bursuck and Joel Gunn for assistance with assembling the tapestry; Kathleen Edwards for assistance with writing the introduction and editing; Yvette Layden for design and layout of the project book; Megan Simmons, for designing the gala flyer; Cherese Childers-McKee for editing; Colleen Fairbanks and her husband, Paul, for the poster display; and Belinda Harding for sewing together the tapestry.
Organization of the Book

Introduction & Background Information

Map Depicting the Country of Origin for Tapestry Contributors

Descriptions of the Tapestry Squares

Each description includes a photo of the square, a description of how it depicts the meaning of education in the contributor’s home language followed by the English translation, and information (including an optional photo) about the community member who contributed the square. The translations were either completed by the artist or a community member. The descriptions in this book are presented in the order of their appearance on the tapestry beginning in the upper left hand corner. The placement of squares was simply aesthetic. Some community members identified themselves by country and others by ethnic community. The order of the tapestry squares is as follows:

Burundi
Bahnar*
Bhutan
Niger
Honduras
Hmong***
Colombia
Dominican Republic
Zimbabwe
Bu Nong*
Sudan
Burma (Myanmar)
Mexico
Chin**
Mexico
Rhade*
Ethiopia

*These communities are Montagnard tribes from Vietnam.
** This is an ethnic group from Burma (Myanmar).
***This community is from Laos.
Textured Dialogues: A Tapestry of Immigrant Perspectives on the Meaning of Education

How this project emerged
From 2011 to 2013 faculty members and graduate students at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) engaged in a qualitative research project titled “Community Voices,” which entailed conducting focus groups with parents who represent local diverse language communities about their experiences with education in the US. The majority of participants identified as immigrants and refugees who shared stories about the mismatch between their ideas about US education and the reality of their children’s experiences in local schools. To extend the Community Voices work, faculty members Belinda Hardin and Silvia Bettez applied for and received a grant from the Coalition for Diverse Language Communities at the UNCG School of Education to develop this “Textured Dialogues” community service project. Soon after the grant was awarded, UNCG doctoral student Emily Manning assumed the main coordinating and organizing tasks, working closely with various community members and organizations.

About the project
This project reflects a collaboration between community members, non-profit organizations, and university faculty and students who wanted to create an opportunity for Greensboro area immigrant and refugee locals to share their stories about the meaning of education through the arts. The ultimate goal of this project is to circulate the resulting tapestry (pictured on the front cover), along with this book, to various community sites—colleges and universities, schools, non-profit agencies, community organizations, museums, art centers—to encourage dialogues about the beliefs, practices, experiences, and aspirations of immigrant and refugee families surrounding the meaning of education. Through the process of sharing these multifaceted ideas about education, we hope traditional U.S.-based educational practices in Guilford County and beyond can be improved.

Immigrants and refugees in Guilford County
The immigrants and refugees that have made Guilford County their new home contribute to a kaleidoscope of diversity that brings brilliance and beauty to this community. North Carolina, and Guilford County specifically, benefit from the diversity of perspectives, cultures, and experiences that these New North Carolinians bring with them.

- In 2008 there were 60,000 people reported to be living in immigrant families (as immigrants or children of immigrants) in Greensboro;
- Guilford County School District reports that there are more than 118 first languages spoken in the schools, and students represent more than 142 ethnic groups;
- Guilford County has the fifth largest Latino population in the state;
- Outside of Vietnam, Guilford County has the largest Montagnard population in the world;
- About 10 percent of Guilford County’s African populations are refugees.

How the tapestry was created
The art images in this book are photographs of the individual artists’ squares from a large 98” x 120” tapestry that includes the work of immigrants and refugees in the Greensboro, North Carolina community. At the start of the project we formed an advisory committee with representatives from community agencies who work with local immigrants and refugees. The agencies included:

- The African Services Coalition
- The Center for New North Carolinians
- The New Arrivals Institute
Staff from these organizations spread the word about the project, inviting immigrant and refugee community members to contribute to the tapestry with their original artwork. Contributors were asked to create an art piece that represented their ideas about the answer to this question, “What does education mean to you?” How education is defined varies. For example, some people may define education as formal schooling, while others may define it as informal experiences that are learned from a family member and happen in the home or local community.

In this project, each interested person contributed a square and narrative description of their contribution that reflected their ideas about the meaning of education. Some of the contributors considered themselves artists prior to this project, others were community members who took the opportunity to express their stories artistically; one contributor chose an already woven textile from his homeland (Zimbabwe) and shared the meaning of it related to education. A total of 18 squares were sewn together to create the tapestry. Contributors were paid $100 for their participation.

**Whose work is represented?**
The tapestry, and this book, includes the representations about the meaning of education from 18 different immigrant or refugee community members. Geographically, these contributors originally came from 15 countries and four continents. Culturally and politically, the countries can be divided into these three world regions:

- Africa: Burundi, Ethiopia, Liberia, Niger, Sudan, and Zimbabwe
- Asia: Bhutan, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, and Vietnam
- Latin America: Colombia, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, and Panama

While artists may have come to the United States from these recognized countries, due to religious, ethnic, or political oppression, some artists identify more with their ethnic or tribal communities than with their national identities. In the book we listed either the country or the ethnic group of each artist depending upon which identification the artist preferred.

**What we hope you will take away from this book**
We consider this text and the tapestry to be catalyzing artifacts that serve to facilitate dialogue about the meaning of education from diverse perspectives. Ultimately we want these artifacts and discussions to inspire actions that will improve education so it meets the needs of all people. We encourage you to consider these questions for critical thought as you view the tapestry and read through the artist’s statements in this book.

- How do you define education?
- What suggestions do you have for teachers in the US to better serve immigrant and refugee families?
- How does this work invite us to reimagine education?

**References**
Au Burundi, il était une tradition de vivre dans une maison dont le toit était en chaume. Avant que le pays ne soit surpeuplé, la population était essentiellement de pasteur. Les Barundi (Batutsi) étaient des nomades : il n’avait pas de nécessité de vivre dans des maisons en dur parce que la population vivait en transhumance chaque fois les vaches avaient besoin de nouveau pâturage. Les maisons étaient faites d’arbuste et d’herbes. C’était comme un gros nid parce que à la prochaine saison, la famille allait chercher de nouveaux pâturages.

Mais maintenant que la population a changé du nomadisme à une vie sédentaire, et aussi et surtout qu’il y a manque de terre et de pâturage suffisant, les Barundi ont besoin de construire des maisons en dur et intégrer une nouvelle façon de vivre. Seule l’Education peut donner les moyens d’adopter une nouvelle culture de vie.

La peinture veut montrer que dans l’esprit des enfants il y a l’image des méthodes de vie traditionnelles et l’enseignant leur apporte une nouvelle connaissance qui leur permettra de changer de vie et de mentalité. Vivre dans une maison en pierre et béton, dans une parcelle propre et un bel environnement, c’est atteindre un objectif qui ne s’acquiert que grâce à une adéquate Education.
In Burundi, living in a grass roofed house is a tradition. Before the country became overpopulated, the population was mainly pastoralist. Barundi (Batutsi) were nomadic. There was no need to live in very strong houses because the population was moving every time the cows were in a need of better pasturage. The houses were made of very simple and weak trees and grass. It was a kind of strong nest, simply because in the dry season, the family moves towards new green pastures.

But now that the population changed from nomadic to sedentary, and also with the lack of land and enough pasturages, the Burundi need to build strong houses and integrate a total different way of life. And only Education can bring the necessary means to survive in a new culture.

The painting shows that in the heads of the children there is an image of a traditional way of life, and the teacher is giving them the new knowledge that enables them to change mentality and change the way of life. To live in a house made of stone and steel, with a clean compound and beautiful environment, is the goal that can only be gotten through a proper education.

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Niyonzima Deogratia

Burundi

I teach French and ESL in a Military Academy, and I coach for Karaté Shotokan. I studied Philosophy, Theology and Journalism. I attended University and College Institutions in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria and Ivory Coast. The last Institution I attended made me a Professional Interpreter in the USA. I write and speak fluently Kirundi, Kinyarwanda, Kinyamulenge, Swahili, French and English.

As a father of three handsome boys and husband of the wonderful Natacha NIKOKEZA, surely I am one of the most blessed men.
Having a chance to go to school in America make me feel that I have freedom. Education is fun. I can learn many things that I did not know before I came to the United States. School can help you understand that if you work hard life can be much easier for you and your family.

(Description is only available in English.)
Hello, my name is Nger H. I speak the Montagnard language Bahnar. I am from Vietnam. I am married. I have one son and three daughters. Two of my daughters live with me in Greensboro and one lives in Canada. I like to go to school at the New Arrivals Institute and learn English. I speak a little English but would like to learn more. In my country Vietnam I was a farmer. This is what I did to support my family and get supplies I needed for my home. On the farm my family grew vegetables and fruit trees.
Why do we need education? Because education is LIFE. Without education there is no life. If we have education, our life is like a flower.

(Description is only available in English.)
Muna Pradhan

Bhutan

Muna Pradhan has lived in the U.S. for three years. She is married and has two sons. She has studied English since she was a child.
“Karamin sani kukunmii neé “ = Un petit savoir est genant.

La definition de l’arbre: En fait c’est toujours bon d’apprendre a partir des racines; c’est a dire du niveau elementaire jusqu’au niveau moyen qui est le tronc et continuer jusqu’au niveau superieur qui represente les feuilles de l’arbre.

Si tu as un petit savoir, tu ne serais pas en mesure de communiquer ou affronter certaines situations. Mais si tu es intellectuel, tu serais a l’aise en discutant avec n’importe qui dans n’importe quelle situation.
Niger

Karamin Sani Kukunmii Neé – Haoussa language

Small knowledge is annoying or embarrassing.

The meaning of this tree, is that it is good to learn from the roots-the ground level up to the trunk (medium level) and up to the leaves (high level). If you have small knowledge you won’t be able to communicate as well or deal with different situations, But it you have high level education you will be comfortable to communicate with anyone in any situation.

Amina Tahirou

My name is Amina Tahirou. I am from West Africa (Niger). I currently live in Greensboro, NC. I have a college degree in literature. I think it is always good to learn!
En la pintura, describiría que el significado de la Educación para mi es CRECIMIENTO. Con raíces bien sementadas podemos tener un camino robusto y un futuro fructífero. Decidí simbolizar a la Educación con un árbol, porque desde el inicio de nuestra especie, decidimos comer del árbol del conocimiento, y así abrimos nuestros ojos para saber la diferencia entre el bien y el mal y subsecuentemente la digestión del fruto fue responsable de la adquisición del “conocimiento”.

Los otros componentes en mi pintura son La Familia, La Escuela, La Iglesia, la Tecnología, Las Noticias y Los Libros; Estos son las raíces de nuestro crecimiento. La familia es la primera que nos da conocimiento desde nuestro nacimiento, en mi perspectiva, es fundamental para nuestra educación; nos enseña a hablar, a comer, a caminar, a comportarnos socialmente y muchas otras cosas. En la escuela nos enseñan ciencia, matemática, lenguaje, historia, arte, educación física, y muchos otros temas con importancia; La escuela es la forma de educación más importante que tendremos, ya que es la base de nuestro conocimiento y la que llevara a que tengamos carreras exitosas y en consecuencia un futuro brillante. La educación religiosa es enseñada por la Iglesia; esta institución es la encargada de ser nuestro guía espiritual y al crecimiento de nuestra Fe. Los otros tres elementos, La Tecnología, las noticias o los periódicos y los libros, son también muy importantes en
nuestra educación, ya que de ellos aprendemos de política, de asuntos y noticias locales e internacionales, de moda, de entretenimiento, de deportes, incluso podemos educarnos en línea estos días. A través del internet, podemos sacar diferentes títulos académicos y cursos de todo tipo. Por último, los libros, éstos desarrollan nuestra imaginación, es de ellos que podemos experimentar individualmente cualquier cosa que el autor quiera que sintamos, el cielo es el límite de todo el conocimiento que podemos adquirir de leer un libro.

En conclusión, cuando tenemos raíces fuertes, una fuerte base de nuestra familia, de nuestros maestros, mentores, disciplina, motivación para ser mejores, creceremos diariamente en nuestra educación y nos convertiremos en una versión mejorada de nosotros mismos y así poder crear una sociedad que pueda mejorar el mundo.

In my painting I would describe that the meaning of Education for me is GROWTH. With its roots well founded we can have a robust path with a fructiferous future. I decided to symbolize education with a tree, since from the beginning of our species we decided to eat from the tree of knowledge, therefore opening our eyes to the difference between good and evil, subsequently the digestion of the fruit was responsible for the acquisition of “knowledge.”

The other components in my painting are family, school, church, technology, news, and books. They are the roots to our growth. Since the family is the first to give us knowledge from birth, in my perspective, they are fundamental in our education. They teach us how to speak, how to eat, how to walk, how to behave socially and many other meaningful things. In school we are educated in science, math, language, history, physical education and so many other important subjects. School is the most vital form of education that we will have since it is the base of our knowledge that will lead to successful careers and in consequence a bright future. Religious education is given by the church; this institution is in charge of our spiritual guidance and the growth of our faith. The other three elements, technology, news or newspapers and books, are also very important in our education since from them we can learn about politics, local and international affairs and news, fashion, entertainment, sports, we can even educate ourselves online these days, earn different kinds of degrees and courses of all types; and lastly from books we can develop our imagination, it is from them that we can individually experience whatever the author wants us to feel, the sky is the limit to all the knowledge we can take out from reading a book.

In conclusion, when we have a strong root, a strong base of our family, teachers, mentors, discipline, motivation to be better, we will grow each day in our daily education and become the best version of ourselves and make a better society that can improve the world.

**Daphne Rodriguez-Baron**

**Honduras**

Mi nombre es Daphne Rodriguez-Baron. Tengo 30 años y soy de San Pedro Sula, Honduras. Mi esposo Juan y yo llevamos 5 años de casados y tenemos una bella hija llamada Arianna. He vivido en Carolina del Norte desde 2009 y actualmente vivo en Greensboro, NC.

My name is Daphne Rodriguez-Baron. I’m 30 years old from San Pedro Sula, Honduras. My husband, Juan, and I have been married for 5 years and have a beautiful baby girl named Arianna. I’ve lived in the US since 2009 and currently live in Greensboro, NC.
Daim no yog ib daim paj ntaub ua txo Hmoob ua noj ua haus. Peb Hmoob kev ua noj ua haus ces yog ib yam ua yuav los qhiav tau rau peb cov me nyuam hais thiaj peb Hmoob lub neej ua nyob rau ntuj qub qab nyob li cas. Peb Hmoob yeej tsis muaj kev kawm nyob rau peb Hmoog lub neej nyob rau peb roob. Yog li txo kev yuav los qhia ua dab tsi ces yog ua paj ntaub los yog ua noj ua hauv xwb. Ua paj ntaub yog ib yam leej niam txo hauj lwm los qhia rau cov me nyuam.
This is an art piece called “paj ntaub,” literally translated means “flower clothes.” This paj ntaub is about the daily routines of Hmong life. In our Hmong culture, the majority of the time in a day is always about preparing meals for the morning, lunch and dinner. Therefore, this is one way of teaching our children in the form of “education.” This paj ntaub captures one episode of our Hmong lives back in the older days. Hmong does not have a formal education system set in place in our homeland in the mountains of Laos. The way to teach our children is through learning how to make “paj ntaub,” how to cultivate the fields or preparing meals like this paj ntaub. The art of teaching “paj ntaub” is the role of the mother.

The art of “paj ntaub” plays an important role in terms of “education.” There is no formal education within the Hmong community until the late 1950s. “Paj ntaub” has always been a form of education for the younger Hmong children. While doing “paj ntaub,” conversations between the “teacher” and the “student” take place. During this conversation is when the teacher instructs the student how to sew, how to design a pattern, what colors to choose and etc. By doing so, conversations between the two takes the form of education.

Nhia Vang

Nhia Vang is an elderly respected Hmong woman who lives in Salisbury, North Carolina. She came to the United States in the 1990s. She learned how to sew and making “paj ntaub” from her mother. She does not remember how old when she first started learning but she only remembers that it was a very long time ago and when she can barely hold a needle in her hands. That’s when she started learning.
El tapiz tiene la interpretacion de educacion representada en una imagen del perfil del ser humano donde se encuentra el cerebro que todo ser humano posee.

Sabemos que la educación es un proceso por el cual todo ser humano aprende diferentes cosas inherentes a el.

Por medio de la educación es que sabemos como actuar y comportarnos en una sociedad, iniciando esta en nuestro hogar, pues nuestra educación inicia desde nuestra infancia y así continuamos hasta nuestra edad madura pues es bien sabido que día a día aprendemos algo.

El tapiz representa una parte esencial que es el cerebro siendo una esponja, que va reteniendo información con todo lo que obtiene y aprende en cada momento.

Nuestro cerebro es aquella caja fuerte donde guardamos nuestros tesoros que nos acompañaran queramos o no ya que es donde se guarda todo lo adquirido día a día.
The tapestry represents education with a side-view of a human brain.

We know that education is a process through which every human being learns different things inherent to him/herself.

Through education, which starts at home, we learn how to act and behave in our society. Education starts in infancy and continues into our later years, since it is well known that we learn something every day.

The tapestry represents an essential piece, the brain, as a sponge that retains all the information it attains at every moment.

Our brain is like a safe where we keep all the treasures that, like it or not, will accompany us. Our brain is the place where we keep what we acquire day by day.

I made the tapestry with cord of different colors. The background shows the colors of nature, of dirt, such as brown and ochre. Green represents grass and hope; and blue adds light and luminosity.

Claudia E. Blanco

Colombia


My name is CLAUDIA E. BLANCO. I am from Colombia, South America. I have living in North Carolina since 2001, and my dream is to have a gallery with all the representation of Latin American crafts, to show our culture and art in different aspects to all people from North Carolina and USA.
Yo creo que la educación es muy importante y que actúa en nosotros de diferentes maneras. El conocimiento que ganamos crea sabiduría. El faro representa una luz que nos guía en la oscuridad. El niño representa una curiosidad innata acerca de la vida, un deseo de aprender, y una actitud de ingeniosidad. La madre significa el deber de cada padre de guiar a su hijo a través de la oscuridad y animarlo hacia la luz. Los tonos de rosado, morado y anaranjado son los colores del crepúsculo y los escogí porque, como dijo Olivia Dunbar, “el atardecer es un momento maravilloso cuando, por falta de un horizonte visible, el mundo no todavía oscurecido, parece infinitamente inmenso – un momento en el cual cualquier cosa puede pasar y cualquier cosa puede ser creída”
I believe that education is very important and that it happens to us in different ways. The knowledge we gain creates enlightenment. The lighthouse represents a light that guides us amid the darkness. The child represents and innate curiosity about life, a desire to learn, and an attitude of ingenuity. The mother figure signifies the duty that every parent has to guide their child through the darkness and encourage them toward the light. The pink, purple, and orange hues are the colors of twilight and I chose them because, as Olivia Howard Dunbar said, “[dusk is] a wonderful moment when, for a lack of visible horizon, the not yet darkened world seems infinitely greater – a moment when anything can happen, anything can be believed in.”

Mayra Mejia
Dominican Republic


Mayra Mejia was raised in Dominican Republic and immigrated to the United States in 1981. She lived in Florida for 24 years before moving to North Carolina in 2005. In 2012, Mayra published her autobiography, Misión en Brasil. She has two sons, a daughter and ten dogs.


There is a rumor that the flag of Zimbabwe was designed by the reggae legend Bob Marley who in fact was the guest of honor at our independence celebrations on April 18, 1980 at midnight. He raised down the Union Jack and hoisted the Zimbabwean Flag much to the jubilation of the people who packed Rufaro Stadium that night. What surprises most people is that is why the Zimbabwean government claim that the flag was designed by an anonymous person. There is speculation that Bob Marley might have died before he got paid for his work so the Zimbabwean government took advantage of his death not to pay what they owed him. The second speculation is associated with stigma since no person at the national and international level would want to be associated with someone whose drug use is so commonly known.

Our national flag has a lot of meaning to education. In fact, it is a concept in social studies from elementary through university. I guess the controversy surrounding the designing of the national flag will give impetus to research in education so as to give an answer to this nagging question. Colors and all the features have an interpretation of the Zimbabwe national flag. For example it has five colors which are red representing the blood shed during the liberation struggle, black which stands for majority rule, green for forestry and agriculture, yellow mineral wealth such as gold, emeralds, diamonds, and iron just to name a few and white stands for peace and reconciliation. As for other features and more information about the Zimbabwe national flag, please refer to the Internet. In Zimbabwe knowledge is power, yet education is our heritage. In fact education is viewed as a vehicle for social and economic transformation in my country regardless of political hiccups.

**Ndabazezwe Viki**

_Zimbabwe_

I am Ndebele by birth and tribe. Historically, we originated from Zululand. I was born on 25 December in 1967 and started schooling in 1974. Unfortunately I had to discontinue schooling because the war of liberation had intensified in 1977. After independence in 1980 I continued with my primary education which I successfully completed in 1984 which saw me proceeding with secondary education. In 1988 I passed my Cambridge examination with flying colors and pursued advanced studies that qualified me for college. In 1991 I was a student teacher with the University of Zimbabwe and graduated in 1994.

I had taught for more than decade when I fell victim to political intolerance that bedeviled my country and fled to neighboring Botswana for asylum in 2003. In Botswana I was hired as a temporary teacher, regardless that I was a more qualified teacher that the locals I taught with, because the government of Botswana wanted to avoid paying me benefits for a fulltime employment. However, I soldiered on with such unfavorable working conditions until I got resettled into the USA at the end of 2010.

I am currently employed as a janitor with Guilford County Schools because I do not have a teaching license. This is yet another painful experience because I can’t apply my professional skills and experience acquired over the years. I have come to conclude that probably some classified positions that I do qualify for as advertised on the school system’s website are a preserve for locals as, the hiring supervisors have never considered my applications.
My name is Nga. Education has helped me learn that I can go very far if I continue to go to school. Education can help me get a job. Education can help me get a High School Diploma. Education can help me live a better life. Education can help me communicate at the grocery store when I go shopping. Education can take you many places in the United States.

(Description is only available in English.)
Hello, my name is H Nga Adrong. I am from Vietnam. I speak Bunong which is a Montagnard language. I have one son. I am a single mom that work very hard to make a good life. I came to the United States in 2009 with my family. I have 2 sisters in Vietnam and 7 brothers that came with me in 2009 to live in the United States. My goal in life is to have my own business one day. I like learning the English language. I enjoy sewing and talking to my friends. When I lived in Vietnam I help my mother and father on the farm. Farming is very hard work. My family sold vegetables to make money. I am glad that I came to America so that I can find a job with the help of Montagnard Dega Association Employment Specialist.
نحن نشجع نحن الأشخاص لأن نحن نحب التعليم و بגע التعليم تحقيق كل شيء لأنه التعليم يعزز الحياة من غير التعليم لا شيء لها وبالتعلم يمكن الإنسان أن يحقق كل طموحاته إذا أردت أن تجعل النور في منزلك لأبد من تعليم أطفالك. كل الدول التي تراها متقدمة استمرت عن طريق التعليم لأنه التعليم يرفع بنتا لأعماده والإنسان التعليم مثل الشمعة المنورة فذلك نحن نحب التعليم كثيراً ونتمي كل الإنسان أن يتعلم ويتعلم أطفاله لأنه بالتعلم يمكن الإنسان أن يحقق المستحيل. نحن وأبنائي نحب التعليم.

شكراً
إيوباهيم صالح وأسرته
السودان.
We painted this picture because we love education. With education one achieves everything. Education is light. Life is worthless without education. With education one achieves all his ambitions. If you want to see light in your house, make sure your children get education. All countries that deemed advanced have achieved that through education. Education raises a baseless house. An educated person is like a candle burns to light for others. For all this we love education very much and we wish every human would get education and be able to educate his children. With education one achieves the impossible. My children and I love education.

Ibrahim Mohamed Salih

I am from Sudan. I speak Arabic. I have three sons (Mohamed, Fadol, and Basheer) and a lovely wife. I enjoy making handicrafts like jewelry, lamps, and guitars (rababas). I have many goals. I would like to improve my English ability and then attend GTCC’s dental hygienist program.
I don’t have much education in my life. I need job. If I have education I can get job to help my family. My father taught me planting. My friend taught me to draw. My teacher Elizabeth teachers me English.

(Description is only available in English.)
Se Da
Burma

Se Da has been in the U.S. for 5 years. She lives with her family-- her parents, 1 sister, and 1 brother. She has been learning English for 4 years.
“Somos lo que aprendemos”

La educación es un conjunto de conocimientos intelectuales, culturales y morales que tiene una persona. Toda información proporcionada o encontrada casualmente y la adaptamos nuestra, es una forma de educarnos.

La importancia de educarnos correctamente.

Todos estamos expuestos a adquirir cualquier tipo de información, como saber cual es la información correcta?. Toda acción contiene una reacción, acciones buenas trae buenas reacciones, así mismo es la información, buena información, buenas ideas y un buen sentido común.
“We are what we Learn”

A person’s education is a combination of intellectual, cultural and moral knowledge. We adapt all the information that we are given or that we casually encounter, as a way of educating ourselves.

The importance of educating ourselves appropriately.

Since we are all exposed to the acquisition of just about any type of information, how do we know which is correct? All action contains a reaction. Good actions bring good reactions. It is the same with information. Good information results in good ideas and good common sense.

Leo Vega
Mexico

Mi nombre es Leonel Vega soy de México Distrito Federal y tengo 10 años viviendo en Winston Salem NC, soy un amante del arte en general.

My name is Leonel Vega. I am from the D. F. in Mexico and I have lived in Winston, Salem, North Carolina for 10 years. I love all art.
Chin

(written in phonetic Chin; the language is more of a spoken one that evolved, and the actual Chin alphabet characters are not widely known, or commonly written)

Kan mah lai mi cu kan nu pa chanin thin phor lau thlaue in kan paw kan i cawm kan lau ah hin fung voi, facang, ne cia, mai le zil te hna cin in kan paw kan i cawm i zu le va hna nih an kan ei piak sual lai tiin chun ni tlak kan ngak ko hman ah kan ei khim kan hmuh kho ton loi kan si hi a fah tuk i siang inn te hna zong kan kai dutuk ko nain kan kai kho lo caah ca zong kan thiam lo
My mother and father are working in the corn. They live in village. We eat the corn. They planted sunflowers so we can eat seeds. They taught me how to plant and garden. The work is hard – the birds come to eat the corn and sunflower seeds.

Iang Za Men
Chin (Burma)

Iang has lived in the U.S. for 10 months. She lives with her husband in Greensboro. She has been studying English for 7 months.
Es complejo ser Hispano en los Estados Unidos. Hay prejusios y otras adversidades que, como Hispanos, tenemos que vencer, y la única manera de lograrlo es a través de la educación. Las raíces representan exactamente lo que son, raíces. La educación es la raíz del éxito. La educación ilumina y provee ideas e ideales que nos proporcionan poder, el poder para hacer una diferencias en lo que nos apasiona. La representación de Frida Kahlo, una mujer inspirada, demuestra algunos de los prejusios que son atribuidos a mujeres como yo y otras hispanas. La educación es el puente que puede cambiar y vencer las imágenes estereotípicas que son como velos que nos cubren. La señal de dinero detrás de la mujer representa el miedo a la educación superior que algunas veces las Hispanics tenemos. A veces el dinero es la excusa que damos para no buscar educación. El dinero puede ser un obstáculo, pero con esfuerzo y motivación de verdad que no hay obstáculos lo suficientemente fuertes para pararnos. Como la mujer en la pintura lo hizo, dejando el dinero atrás.
Being Hispanic in the United States is complex. There are stereotypes and other adversities that as Hispanics we have to overcome and the only way to do so is through education. The roots represent exactly what they are, roots, education is the root to success. Education enlightens and provides ideas and ideals that we put for ourselves as individuals and gives us power, the power to make a difference in what we are passionate about. The Frida Kahlo inspired woman is a representation of some of the stereotypes that are attributed to me and other Hispanic women. Education holds that bridge that can overcome and adjust/conquer the images that stereotypes hold as veils over our heads. The money sign behind the woman represents the fear that sometimes as Hispanics we have of higher education. Money is sometimes the excuse that we give for not seeking it. Money may be a tough obstacle but with drive and motivation there is really no obstacle big enough to stand in our way, just as the woman in the painting did, leaving it behind.

Melissa Cortes Espitia
Mexico

I am a student at UNC at Greensboro, majoring in Sociology with a concentration in Criminology and a minor in French. I was born in Guanajuato, Mexico, into a family of nine (3 sisters, 3 brothers and my parents). My mom, my siblings and I came to live with my father at the age of five. Learning when I first arrived here and getting an education was always a top priority. Being a Latina in North Carolina, and in the U.S. in general, has made me work harder towards having a better education and achieving my goals.
The Liberian Tradition cloth is a product from Liberia West Africa. The cloth is pure 100% white cotton. The white cotton grown by Liberians was dyed into different colors from natural indigenous plants and/or plants products. In the traditional schools, boys and girls learned how to grow cotton, process the cotton into threads, and how to weave them into clothes. Centuries ago, the clothes were the only clothing indigenous Liberians had until Western clothes were introduced. More people turned to Western clothes because they cost less in labor than the traditional ones.

Among the Lorma tribes in Northern Liberia the stripes were symbols of education. The traditionalist believed that Education is an endless journey with challenges, dark and bright moments. The dark/blue stripes represents the moment in education when there is no inspiration. The red represents the challenges or struggle involve in acquiring knowledge or inspiration, and the white represents the joy and pleasure that comes from discovering knowledge or inspiration that can benefit an individual and/or the community.

The dark stripes is developed from dying the white threads with a plant leave called “Calagee” in Lorma. When the white cloth is dyed with the grinded Kola nuts water it produces the red threads which are made into the
Liberia

stripes. After they are dried the weaver gets on his traditional machine, made from wood and weaves them all together into a cloth. The clothes are then sewn together by hand, mostly by women into shirts and “Lappas” to be worn or tied around the waist to cover the lower body.

(English is the official language of Liberia.)

Zumo M. Kollie
Liberia

I am from Liberia, West Africa. I migrated to the United States in 1991. Currently I live in High Point, North Carolina. Education is a great passion of mine. I am grateful to my mother, father and community that educated and taught me the importance and joy of learning.
Education can help me learn English. This also can help me support my family. Learning how to read and write will help me everyday life in America. When I go to school this will help me get my license so that I can drive to my job. I like going to school because I meet new friends from other countries.

(Description is only available in English.)
Hello my name is H Duat Adrong. I speak the Montagnard language Rhade. I am from Vietnam. I am married. I go to New Arrivals Institute for English Class. I came to the United States in July 2011 with my family. I really like to sew in my free time to make things for my family. I work as a packer for Debbie's Staffing. I was a farmer in my country. Most of the things my family grew was coffee, and vegetables. I made extra money by going to the market to sell the items we grew. I am very quiet. I like to cook for my family and friends. Now that I am in the United States I feel very happy.
Ethiopia
The tapestry depicts that education starts in church teaching spiritual and modern education. The church plays a big role in spiritual growth and as well as in this world. So the church is inseparable of one’s life. Therefore, education helps in growing spiritually and learning the skills and knowledge to help you live a better life in this world.

Shashe Gebrys
Ethiopia

I am from Ethiopia and have been in the United States for ten years. I have four children, three boys and one girl. Two of my children live in Norway, one in Sudan and one in Ethiopia. I am going to school at GTCC to learn English. I enjoy sewing in my free time.