The Baga people migrated during the 15th and 16th centuries from the Sudan area to Guinea and Guinea-Bissau on the west coast of Africa. They have rich spiritual traditions that can be seen in their artwork and sculpture-making. However, much tradition changed when Islam was introduced to the community. Sixty thousand people make up the Baga tribe who live in small villages in the northern part of Guinea and on the coast. The Baga live in family units with an elderly man as the head. In the Baga communities men fish, and grow cola nuts (the main ingredient in soda that grows on the cola nut tree in Africa), while women grow rice.
Warding Off Disaster in Tallahassee, Activity Lesson Plan: K – 5

Session Activity: Bird and human characteristics intertwine in the Anok sculptures of the Baga Tribe. In this activity students will create an Anok sculpture which combines bird features with representations of themselves. Prior to discussion, questions include “Which bird would you choose? What about the bird makes it represent you?” Students will be asked to write descriptions of their birds to include feather colors, beak and size characteristics and so on. In concert with this activity students will study their chosen birds within their environments. Students will describe their birds’ various habitats.

Objectives:
1. Each student will utilize art criticism skills to analyze a Baga sculpture.
2. Each student will create a three dimensional work of art, an Anok-type bird sculpture.
3. Each student will apply research on birds, as well as self-reflection, to his/her sculptural design.

Materials:
Cardboard, masking tape, Styrofoam scraps, plastic containers, wire, wire cutters/pliers, brushes, acrylic paint, puffy paints, scissors, plaster gauze, paint markers.

Activity Procedures: Start with class discussions about the Anok sculptures and about Baga culture. Show images of various forms of Anok sculptures and Baga people. Show pictures of the making of a sculpture by a Baga craftsman. Ask students to describe what they see. Have them also describe the elements and/or principles in the Anok sculptures. Tell students they will be creating their own sculptural pieces influenced by Anok concerns and designs. Encourage each student to pick a species of bird and to explain why he/she feels it is a good representation of him/herself. Suggest that students utilize key characteristics of Anok sculptures, for instance, the long beaks. Students will research their chosen birds according to a list of prompts given by the teacher. Students will design and construct their sculptures by combining knowledge of the Anok pieces, within the context of the Anok culture, with their bird research and their self-reflections. Ask students to tell the reasons a long beak symbolizes protection. Ask students to tell situations and events from which people in Tallahassee want protection, as the Baga use these sculptures as a spiritualized defense against various problems and disasters.

Sunshine State Standard: K – 5
Social Studies: Geography, Places and Religions.
Description: Recognize how people view places differently by asking questions; using graphic organizers; and studying art, poems, legends, or songs about a region or area.

Sunshine State Standard: 6 – 12
Social Studies: Respond critically and aesthetically to various works in the arts.
Standard: Apply various types of critical analysis to works in the arts, including the types and use of symbolism within art forms and their philosophical implications.

Baga Animal Sculptures, Art History Lesson Plan: 6 – 12

Session Activity: The Baga tribe uses many different animals in their sculpture-making process, all of which have different spiritual meanings to the community. After a general overview of images of the Anok sculptures and culture, have the students research specific pieces. Have each student write a brief description of a specific piece according to the following prompts. After research, have students create PowerPoint presentations so they can share their research with their fellow students.

Prompts:
1. Describe the materials in this piece.
2. What is the dominant element used in this piece? The dominant principle?
3. Name differences between this sculpture and other sculptures of the Baga people. Address them aesthetically, describing differences in the way they look. Address their meanings.
4. What does the animal represent to the Baga culture?
5. Who uses this sculpture? What is its purpose?
6. How long has this sculpture been important in Baga culture?
7. Is this sculpture art?