Number 26 + 2005

EARTH FOCUS

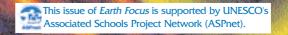
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How Much Do You Know About Africa?

- 1. Name two of the most famous deserts in Africa.
- 2. What is the name of the language spoken in several countries in East Africa that allows people from these different countries to communicate with one another?
- 3. What is the highest mountain in Africa?
- 4. What animal is called "the king of the jungle?"
- 5. What is the name of the first black president of South Africa?
- 6. Name the longest river in Africa.
- 7. What is the name of the ocean off the East coast of Africa?
- 8. Which animal is known as "simba" in Swahili?
- 9. Mt Kilimanjaro is in which country: Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya or Ethiopia?
- 10. Name one major river that flows into the south Atlantic off the west coast of Africa



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Bonus Questions

- 11. Who is the President of Egypt?
- 12. What is Zanzibar?
- A) A land-locked country. B) A peninsula.
- C) An island.
- 13. Which African country has the largest population?
- 14. Which five of the following animals are not found in Africa: lions, giant pandas, jackals, caribou, hyenas, koala bears, tigers, giraffes, zebras, moose, warthogs?
- 15. What is the height of Mt Kilimanjaro?
- A) 5,895m
- B) 6,400m
- C) 4,920m

By John Monks, England

Answers to Quizz - 1. Kalahari, Namib, Sahara; 2. Swahili; 3.Kilimanjaro, 4. Lion; 5. Melson Mandela; 6. Nile; 7. Indian Ocean; 8. Lion; 9. Tanzania; 10. Orange, Congo or Niger; 11. Hosni Mubarak; 12. Archipelago – group of islands; 13. Nigeria (more than 113 million); 14. Giant pandas, caribou, koala bears, tigers, moose; 15. 5,895



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Earth Focus is a forum for discussion and a catalyst for action for young people. We deal with issues concerning the environment, community, and culture at all levels.

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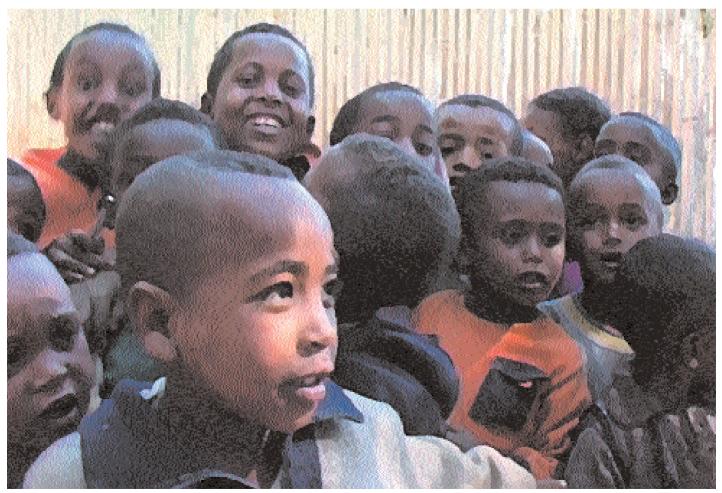
Positive Developments In Africa

Just over 115 years ago, in 1885, European leaders met in Berlin to decide the future of the African continent, its people and its development. The Berlin Conference decreed a particular partnership between Africa and Europe, a partnership of master and servant. Africa was conspicuously absent from these discussions. In June 2002, a very different discussion took place in Kananaskis, Canada to discuss the future of our continent. This meeting was also attended by European powers, the United States, Japan and other important international role players. But unlike the Berlin Conference, the Africans themselves also attended the Kananaskis Conference, where the implementation of a development programme for Africa was discussed. The Kananaskis Conference focussed on the birth of a new partnership of equals between Africa and the developed world – one based on the concept of human solidarity.

The establishment of the African Union, the African Parliament and the development of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has given African governments a positive framework for the creation of peace and stability, democracy and good governance. There now exists, on our continent, a blueprint for dealing with the indignity of poverty, ignorance and economic marginalisation.

This new vision reflects the determination, optimism and hope of the African people to rid themselves of the shackles of poverty, underdevelopment and dependence. The challenge is for the rest of the world to create an enabling environment which will indeed facilitate the realisation of the African Renaissance.

Ambassador Nozipho January-Bardill, South African Embassy, Bern, Switzerland.





The World Does Care

Dear Readers

The tsunami disaster of 26 December 2004 has both shocked and galvanized the whole world. We are appalled by the scale of the human disaster, but we are also encouraged by the immediate worldwide response from governments, organizations and individual people who want to help.

I doubt if there is a single school in the world that is not trying to do something to raise money for the disaster appeal. The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) is working with UNESCO, UNICEF and AUSAID in two important projects. We are sending volunteers who are helping to train new teachers to begin to replace the hundreds who lost their lives in Indonesia. We are also pairing IB schools with schools in Sri Lanka that were affected by the disaster.

The IBO has a long tradition of community service in its schools and we have been hugely encouraged by the response to our appeal.

If you want more information please go to our website www.ibo.org

Whatever you are doing to help, be quick and be generous. The only good that can come from such a tragedy is the strong message that the world does care and is prepared to act.

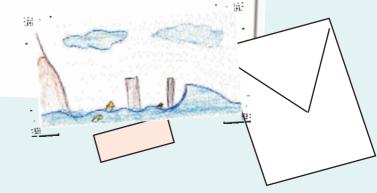


With best wishes,

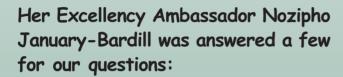
George Walker



Director General International Baccalaureate Organization Geneva







How long have you been the South African Ambassador to Switzerland?

For about three and a half years. I really enjoy it and find it extremely fascinating. Bern (the capital of Switzerland) is calm and quiet. It is great because it is easy to get around. It is a very charming place and a lovely area to live.

Did you grow up in South Africa?

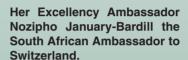
Yes, I did. I lived during my primary and teenage years in Kimberly. I left just after I turned eighteen. I then moved to Swaziland, before returning to South Africa in 1968. I left again in 1993.

What are your views on apartheid?

I think that it was an extreme waste of time. It wasted many lives and was terrible for the South African people. Racism just took its toll. It caused so many problems in South Africa and was an awful thing.

What do you like the most about South Africa?

The people, I love my people. They are just so warn inside and they love life. In the worst of times they can always find a way to be happy and put a smile on their face. There is always such a warm environment when you are with them.





Why did you become the Ambassador to Switzerland?

The president of South Africa, Tabo Mbeki, asked me himself. I felt so honored and I knew that I could not refuse the opportunity.

Emma Hofmans, 15, South African & Dutch and Sadie Perkin, 15, British





Why Africa?

Why The Earth Focus Team Chose to Feature Africa

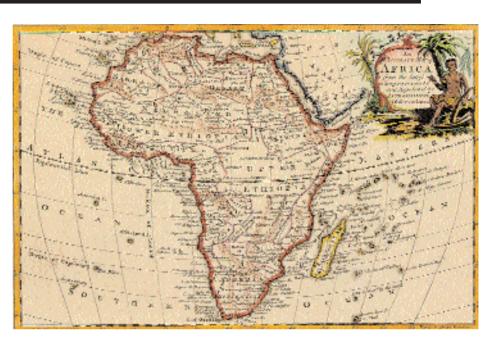
were inspired to prepare an issue on Africa after our school, La Chataigneraie (International School of Geneva) hosted an African week. This was a very special week where the majority of classwork focused on aspects of life in Africa (literature, economics, habitats etc.) The purpose was to increase people's awareness of the reality of this developing continent, beyond the images portrayed in nature programmes or tragic scenes on the news. Our school invited guest speakers with a wide range of African experience,

including people who had lived in Africa, studied in Africa or who came from Africa. The presentations included issues such as African orphans, HIV/AIDS, Mercy Ships, story telling, conservation and apartheid. Evening events included African music and dance, debates on health, and lectures on conservation.

We all learnt a great deal about various African cultures, lifestyles and people. I think the most important lesson that every student took away from this experience was that Africa is a land of such great variety. It does have some problems, but there are also many positive things happening across this vast continent. We tend to generalize Africa as one country, yet now we see Africa as a continent made up from many different countries, with individual traditions and ideals. We hope that this issue of EARTH FOCUS truly expresses our energy and enthusiasm about Africa, that you learn something new and are inspired to take a deeper look at this wonderful and diverse continent.

Bryony Perkin, 13, British, La Chataigneraie

Kathryn Nicole Christman *12, USA* reflects on Africa week: "An eventful week. I feel that I now understand Africa much better. Africa is a poor continent with many wars. But the beauty of this continent is astonishing. I wish I could visit it and



get to know all of its many cultures. Africa is not a country; it is a continent in which there are many different countries."

Elizabeth Bigelow, *11*, writes about her experience of Africa week: "We saw a Tanzanian film. We saw tribes, animals, the highest mountain in Africa, the baobab tree and a lot more. We were told about how a tribe sacrificed a deer and ate it afterwards. I had so much fun. A lot of people in school wanted the same thing every morning of the week. From watching a Tanzanian film, we were able to learn about child orphans, African music, African languages and African perspectives."

Tim Scmoll, 11 United Kingdom recounts his thoughts about Africa week: "The week was amazing! There was so much to learn about the countries, religions and cultures, and about the fantastic people who have led African countries to independence. The story that struck me the most was the talk from a Ghanaian woman about African perspectives. It showed me that Africa carries the negative image of war and poverty, but if you dig deep for information or even go to the continent itself you will find that it may be poor and may have wars going on, but it is also home to some of the most incredible wildlife resorts and scenery."



African Masks

animal skins and sandstone. Sacrificial blood is often used to increase the power of the mask with its vital energy. A mask maker may add other materials to his mask like cloth, raffia, cowrie shells, beads, teeth, bones, berries, vegetable fibers and pieces of metal.

Masks portray many facial characteristics; they can be abstract, animal, or a combination of human features with exaggerated, frightening expressions. The "face" mask is not attached to the head, but is held in front of the face as part of the costume or head covering. The "helmet" mask covers the head. Some masks are carved from the full trunk of the tree and cover the entire head, resting on the wearer's shoulders. The "headdress" is worn on the crown of the head, joining a costume that covers the entire body. The dancer looks through a hole in the costume's material – this effect is used to make the wearer look unusually tall, thus confirming the belief that he is a supernatural spirit.

Emma-Julia Fuller, 16, France

ost African masks are made of wood due to the natural abundance of forests. The carver chooses the wood for specific reasons. Africans believe that trees are living beings with a soul, and carry a life force. They also believe that trees possess an inhabiting spirit. Before a tree is cut down, the carver consults a spiritual guide, undergoes a purification ceremony and offers a sacrifice to appease the spirit of the tree. As soon as a tree is cut, the carver sucks the sap to mark his brotherhood with the tree. He then leaves the tree for a day so that the tree's spirit can find a new home. The carver believes that the tree's spirit is transferred into the carving and increases the mask's power.

Usually fresh, green, soft wood is carved, and then palm oil is applied to slow down the drying process. The masks are stained or colored with vegetable and earth dyes. The carver then softens the surface with organic materials like leaves,







The Hadza Tribe

he Hadza tribe is a nomadic hunting and gathering tribe, which lives in extremely severe conditions between the Yaeda Valley and Lake Eyasi in Tanzania, Africa.

Living Environment

The region where the Hadza tribe lives is located around the western Mbulu District, and is a thorn, bush and low acacia environment. In the savannah there used to be plenty of wild animals like antelopes, which the Hazda would have hunted for food. One of their current problems is the relative scarcity of wildlife.

Daily Nutrition

The Hadza tribe eat plants and animals which are native species and usually in plentiful supply. The Hadza are able to feed on them without deteriorating the populations.

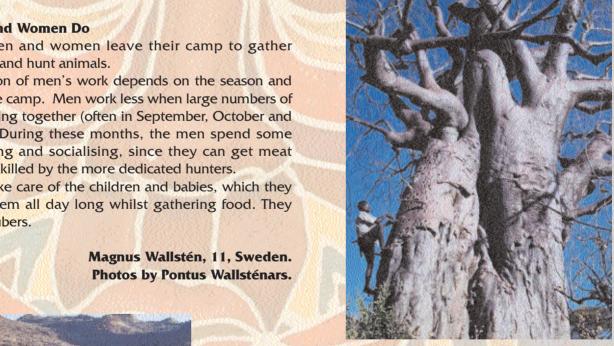
Their food includes tubers, honey, small berries and baobab fruit, as well as various mammals, such as dik diks and bush bucks. The Hadza also occasionally farm maize and cattle.



Normally men and women leave their camp to gather edible plants and hunt animals.

The duration of men's work depends on the season and the size of the camp. Men work less when large numbers of Hadza are living together (often in September, October and November). During these months, the men spend some time gambling and socialising, since they can get meat from animals killed by the more dedicated hunters.

Women take care of the children and babies, which they carry with them all day long whilst gathering food. They also dig for tubers.



A Hadza hunter-gatherer climbing a baobab tree.



The Yaeda valley, where the Hadza live.

Since 2001, students from La Châtaigneraie have been fortunate to have the opportunity to visit the Hadza tribe in the Yaeda Valley. It has been an extraordinary experience to share their astonishing way of life with these resourceful people, if only for a day or two. Digging for tubers, eating various edible berries, searching for (and usually finding) the most delicious honey, and trying out bows and arrows. The Hadza live as they did ten thousand years ago. It is worth noting that they have never suffered famine. Their ecologically sustainable way of life allows



them to live in perfect harmony with their environment.

The Modern Curse

In 2003, young people (15-24 years old) accounted for half of all new HIV infections worldwide, more than 6,000 became infected with HIV every day.*

Even as you read this, AIDS is taking lives in Africa, swallowing up families, communities and hopes. So far 20 million* have died. At least 25 million may follow. This is an intimate look at the modern curse.

Imagine life as dealth stalks:

You get up in the morning and eat breakfast with your three kids.

One is already doomed to die in infancy.

Your husband works 200 miles away.

You only see him twice a year and he sleeps with other women when he is not with you.

You risk your life in every act of making

You pass a house on your way to work where a teenager lives alone,

Tending young siblings without any source of income.

In another house the wife has been branded a whore

For asking her husband to use a condom,

Then beaten silly and thrown into the streets.

Over there lies a man desperately sick,

Without access to a doctor or clinic or medicine.

*The latest figures on the world epidemic of AIDS & HIV, published by UNAIDS/WHO in December

www.avert.org/worldstats

2004. See

Or food or blankets or even a kind word.

At work you eat with colleagues,

Every third one is already fatally ill.

You whisper about a friend who admitted she had the plague,

And was stoned to death by her neighbours.

Your leisure time is occupied by the funerals you attend every Saturday.

You go to bed fearing adults your age will not live into their 40s.

You and your neighbours and your political and popular leaders act

As if nothing is happening,

Death stalks Africa.

Sara Whylie, 14, Jamaica, and Scarlett Marie Storr, 14, England









Africa's Herbal Traditions

the earliest times. One of the oldest medicinal books, called the Ebers Papyrus, is dated 1500 BC. The Ebers Papyrus contains more than 700 medicinal herbs, used to treat a wide range of disorders, from chest complaints to crocodile bites; it also describes 870 treatments and formulas. Medicinal plants are still important today, particularly among the African population.

From the abundance of medicinal plants, I have chosen to talk about *Sutherlandia Frutescens*.

Sutherlandia Frutescens: How and where does it grow?

Sutherlandia Frutescens grows in South Africa. It is a South African native shrub that likes wet winters, wind and mild frosts. It is fast growing, and flowers in its first year, presenting beautiful, scarlet-red, pea flowers with magnificent, puffed up, green seedpods and small, greyish, pea-like leaves. This elegant plant is also known as the "Balloon Pea" or "Cancer Bush".

How is it used and how can it help?

Sutherlandia Frutescens is used in food and medicinal treatments. It acts on the immune system and reduces the effects of deterioration in the body. *Sutherlandia Frutescens* helps people with HIV/AIDS and cancer or other diseases



Sutherlandia Frutescens

related with the immune system, to gain weight and fight infections. *Sutherlandia Frutescens* contains substances like *Pinitol, L-Asparagine, L-canavanine* and GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid) which are patented for the treatment of many side effects of HIV/AIDS.

Candice Galé, 12, Switzerland

Victims of AIDS - A Poem

Orphans – alone,
Searching for a loving home,
Living on anything they find.
Parents dead – victims of Aids,
Inevitable death awaits them.
Unaware of their fate
They soldier on, day by day
Struggling to feed their bloated
bellies

And shelter their naked bodies. Loving strength, losing hope, Swatting the flies of death and heat. Strangers walking past,
Looking but not seeing,
Feeling but not reacting,
Forgetting with every onward
step.

Homeless children with empty eyes.

Scavenging, not finding, Thirsty, not drinking, Hungry, not eating, Alive, but not living, Death awaiting. Madeleine Campbell, Lucille Tong





Give Vaccines to Africa!

Major Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

here are many diseases that can be prevented via vaccinations, the following are introductions to the most frequent occurring diseases that can be prevented by vaccinations.

Polio

Polio is a disease that can strike at any age but over 50 percent of all cases involve children under the age of 3. There is no cure for polio, the

only way to prevent it is via vaccination. Polio is caused by a viral infection that invades the nervous system and can cause paralysis within a

matter of hours. People catch the virus through direct person to person contact, through contact with infected secretions from the nose or mouth or by contact with infected faeces. The virus enters through the mouth or nose, multiplies in the throat and intestinal tract, and is then absorbed by the blood and travels to the spinal cord and brain where it causes paralysis.

Diphtheria

Diphtheria is common in all age groups and should be vaccinated in early childhood (booster vaccinations should also be taken during school entry). Diphtheria is an infectious disease that spreads from person to person through droplets from the throat by coughing and sneezing. The disease usually effects the tonsils, pharynx, larynx and occasionally the skin. Diphtheria can just result in a sore throat but it can also result in the

life threatening diphtheria of the larynx where the disease results in the formation of a membrane in the throat that may get to big until it completely blocks the larynx, causing death by suffocation.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B can affect people of all ages and is transmitted by either infected mothers to their infants at birth, through contaminated blood, unsafe injections and sex. The disease is more widely spread in developing countries as in the developed countries vaccinations are available. Hepatitis B cause an inflammation of the liver which can result in liver cancer and cirrhosis. Symptoms include yellowing of skin and eyes (jaundice), dark urine, extreme fatigue, nausea and vomiting.

Yellow Fever

Yellow Fever can affect people of all ages and is transmitted by mosquitoes that have bitten somebody that was infected by Yellow fever and then bite somebody who does not have it. Yellow fever usually goes undetected in somebody that has it since the symptoms are similar to those of malaria and

viral hepatitis, such as muscle pain, headache, shivers and nausea. If no vaccination is taken then there is still a fifty-fifty chance of getting away without permanent damage, but that means that half of the people that contract the illness are not so lucky and die.

Pertussis (whooping cough)

Pertussis can be caught from anyone. The symptoms are common to those of a regular cold. Although Pertussis is most severe in children, since it can cause brain damage. Pertussis is a highly contagious bacterial disease that is transmitted through direct contact with discharges from respiratory mucous membranes from infected people into the air. The bacteria invade the nose and throat and the trachea causing the same affects as a cold.

Measles

Measles are usually caught by children, although they occasionally occur in adults. Measles is considered to be the most contagious child killing disease. Measles are spread by droplets from the nose, mouth or throat of the infected person. The symptoms are fever, coughing, and the presence of Koplik spots (reddish spots with a white center) in the mouth, then on the face. Measles can result in long-life disabilities, such as blindness, deafness and even brain damage.

Neonatal Tetanus

Neonatal Tetanus only affects newborn babies. It is transmitted to them through when a mother delivers a child in unsanitary conditions, like at home without the presence of a skilled birth attendant. In the absence of immunisation, transmission occurs when bacteria come into contact with open wounds or



broken skin, such as the umbilical wounds and circumcisions. Neonatal Tetanus is the second leading cause of death from vaccine-preventable diseases around the world.

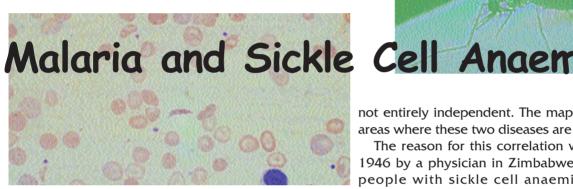
Tuberculosis:

Tuberculosis is usually more common in adults, but it is more serious in children and adolescents. The disease is caused by Mycobacterium Tuberculosis. The initial infection can lie dormant in a person for years without signs of any symptoms showing, until suddenly it is reactivated and is spread by prolonged close contact with an infected individual through airborne droplets from coughing or sneezing.

Haemophilus Influenza Type b (Hib)

Haemophilus Influenza Type b (Hib) is mostly common in children and is a bacterium that can colonise the human nasal-pharynx. It is spread by droplets through coughing or sneezing and is often common in overcrowded living conditions. Symptoms are similar to those of a common cold only that they are more severe.

Jan Faller, International School of Geneva



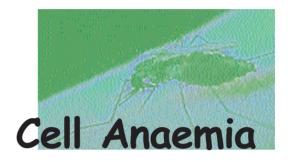
Mutated red blood cells, note the sickle shape.

he African continent is plagued by many diseases, which are hard to combat. The task is all the harder as Africa lacks the resources and money for relevant medicines and vaccines. One of these diseases is malaria. In the western world, medicine is easily provided to stop it spreading. However, two million people die from this disease yearly and 90% of these cases occur in Africa.

Malaria is caused by the protozoa, Plasmodium, which is a single cell parasite. The disease is carried from one person to the next by the bite of a mosquito. The infected blood is transmitted through the mosquito's infected saliva. There is a 9 to 14 day incubation period before symptoms are seen. These include fever and vomiting and eventually, as the disease progresses, kidney failure, liver damage or blood clots in the brain.

The Hb gene is a recessive allele, meaning that a person needs two affected genes in order to display the symptoms. A person may have one abnormal copy of the gene, meaning that they are not affected by the disease but can pass it on to their children.

The presence of sickle cell anaemia and malaria are



not entirely independent. The map below shows the areas where these two diseases are most prevalent.

The reason for this correlation was discovered in 1946 by a physician in Zimbabwe. He noticed that people with sickle cell anaemia had a greater resistance to malaria. We realise that this occurred because the plasmodium parasite that causes malaria is unable to survive in these sickle shaped blood cells.

The existence of malaria therefore leads to a higher proportion of the population having the sickle cell trait. This is because the carriers of the mutant gene are more likely to survive to adulthood, whilst those who have no sickle cell genes are prone to malaria and thus an early death.

In Africa sickle cell mutation can therefore be seen as a 'beneficial'; but it comes at a price, as 25% of offspring have sickle cell anaemia. It would be interesting to see whether the eradication of malaria would lead to fewer cases of sickle cell anaemia. However, providing medical aid to the highly infected parts of Africa is very costly. We therefore first have to overcome the problem of poverty in Africa and then malaria itself.



Peace Poems

hese *Peace Poems* were written by children, whose mother tongue is French, during their English lessons. The creative process involved guided visualisation, responding to music via images, translating the images into words, and using these words as building bricks for the final pieces. Developing on the idea that peace is a personal feeling, the children created a peace dance to nourishing the self and others, by listening and responding with sensitivity to others' energy, and giving and receiving. The main idea used as a stimulus was parental love and care.

A Big Galaxy

In the giant universe, there is a big galaxy.

In this galaxy, there is a shiny sun. Around this sun, there are incredible planets.

One planet is the earth.

On earth, there is a little boat, a little white boat, floating on the calm ocean.

Near the shore there is a crab, a red crab walking on the sandy shore.

All is peaceful, on the calm ocean, on the sandy shore, in the huge world.

Carl

Why can't we be

The breeze blows in my face, Fairies fly around pretty flowers. In the dark sky There are little stars That shine and glisten.

Peace and love

Surrounds those little things.

They make me smile.

Why,

Why,

Why can't we be like those

Sweet stars.

Those flowing rivers,

The blue sea,

The green grass that sways?

Charlotte

A Peaceful Poem

A peaceful poem.

The flowers are growing, There is a rainbow in the sky.

The cat is playing with the dog and the rabbits are singing With the vegetables in the garden.

Happiness is joy, nature is in your heart, And the night is dark, you are sleeping.

Victor

Blue

Blue sky.

Blue water.

Blue fish.

Blue, blue...

Two beautiful blue unicorns,

A mummy and her baby,

Galloping in the blue and green nature...

Blue, blue, and just blue...

Deep blue ocean,

And just blue, blue

And

Blue.

Victoria

Peace

The night is dark The stars are shining.

Nature is way asleep.

Everyone is way asleep.

Peace is floating in the world.

Peace, peace everywhere.

The universe is listing the dreams, the

beautiful dreams.

The dreams of nature, big nature.

The moon, the stars and the planets,

And people sleeping

And the universe is way asleep too.

Peace, peace floating,

Peace in all the universe.

Fanny

Sasha

What a Beautiful Life

Two birds, Two small, blue birds, Flying in the sky.

Straight.

One fish.

Singing,

"What a beautiful life."

Some people,

Dance in love.

Love for life.

Big Sky

Big sky

So blue,

Tell me the secret

To make

Peace.

The secret

That makes you

So blue, of happiness

Floating everywhere.

Tell me the secret

That makes

The sun so bright.

Tell me!

But, the sky never answered me

So I am still

Waiting,

Waiting,

Waiting.

That the sky answers

Me.

Samuel

Running Away

The sea.

Harmony.

See

A baby blue sea.

Two birds flying away

In the floating sky.

The little boat

Gently waves away.

A little girl

Running

On the golden sand.

The little girl

In a silky dress, Her long blond hair

In a braid . . .

Silky dress girl

With her dog

Running away.

Nikki



Sky, Ocean and Earth

One sky, one ocean, one earth.

In the air.

Singing all together.

All singing beautifully.

The ocean under the sky.

The sky in the earth.

The earth in space.

All singing.

Singing together in the moonlight.

With a beautiful melody.

One boy going to sleep.

The boy is singing with the sky, the

ocean, the earth.

He fell asleep singing.

One

One sky,

One ocean,

A little boat,

Floating,

In the ocean.

A little boat

Giving,

Love and kindness.

I am floating on high on a cloud.

One girl,

One boy,

Hand in hand,

Running in a garden,

Happy, hand in hand,

In a garden of happiness and joy

Nature is sleeping.

No clouds, no sun, no stars,

Only peace.

Peace is Everything

Grand boat.

Floating in perfect harmony

With the waves.

Not waves of water, but waves of wind

and peace.

Waves of peace all around it.

Nothing

But peace.

Peace is everything.

Kindness.

Walking in the boat.

Boat full of freedom

To float in joy and laughter.

Sebastian

Anthony

Conservation or Wealth?

An interview with Author and WWF Representative Tom McShane

n 16th November 2004, Tom McShane, a senior WWF representative, came to our campus to talk about conservation in Africa. Our school had invited various speakers to our Africa Week, where the objective was to make us more aware of issues in Africa. Mr McShane came to speak to us about ecology and conservation throughout the African Continent. After the speech, we asked Mr McShane to tell us more about his activities and experience.

Rafael

Earth Focus: How long did you work in Africa?

Tom McShane: About twelve years

EF: So what can governments throughout the world do to help the WWF to preserve the natural environment?

Tom: Well, governments need to think about the economy in a different way. They think about growth. There is something definitely wrong with that mentality.

EF: Which form of government would you personally recommend so that conservation prospers?

Tom: I think the best type of government would be a dictatorship where the dictator loves nature. But otherwise, democracy is pretty good.

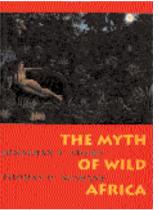
EF: How many species do you believe remain undiscovered throughout Africa?

Tom: I don't know... I would say definitely lots of insect

species, in particular arthropods, and other types of "creepy crawlies".

EF: Seeing that conservation can lead to profit, have governments made it a priority?

Tom: Well, of course, all governments are interested if there is profit involved. I



Tom McShane's latest book, The Myth of Wild Africa.

think as a result, they are engaging much more with communities. However, there are some cases where the government takes over local enterprises, leading to greater exploitation. For example, in Zimbabwe, the villagers near National Parks were allowed to have small, profitable schemes involving killing animals near the park. When the government saw the immense success of these ventures, it swooped in and took control. As a result the locals have been stripped of their source of income.

Overall, Tom McShane established that it is hard to find a compromise between wealth and conservation. We thank Mr McShane for thoroughly entertaining and informing us about the implications of conservation in Africa.

Sebastian Ellis, Colombia, 14

Cheetah Census

DeWildt Wild Cheetah Project / National Cheetah Management Program

Took part in a cheetah census in the Atherstone Nature Reserve area of Thabazimbi in the Limpopo province of the Republic of South Africa. Limpopo is located in northern South Africa, and Atherstone lies 20km south of the Botswana border. The province has a semi-arid climate with little rainfall. The area has suffered from drought conditions for the past three years. The landscape is flat and dry with a thick bushveld. The Tropic of Capricorn slices through the province and temperatures are hot.

I worked with the National Cheetah Management Program, which is sponsored by the DeWildt Wild Cheetah Proect. The project tracks collared cheetahs on the Atherstone

Reserve farmlands. The tracking is done by ultralight aircraft. Cheetahs are tracked to determine the size of their home range, coalition structure, etc. The census also uses camera trapping to estimate the population. The census will eventually take place in an area of over 8,000,000 hectares.

I worked with Deon Cilliers, who is an experienced conservation officer and heads up the Wild Cheetah Project, and Kelly Wilson, who is a field research officer. The Project plays a lead role in the conservation of the wild cheetah through the establishment of a forum to develop a national strategy for cheetah conservation. There remain only about 350-400 cheetahs in the wild! One of the project's main aims is to educate farmers who have viewed the cheetah as a threat to their livestock and who in the past have shot them on sight. Predators do kill livestock and the cheetah is often blamed because it is a diurnal (daylight) hunter. But it is often the hyena, leopard, or jackal who kill the livestock. They are not seen by the farmers as they are nocturnal (nighttime) hunters. The cheetah is the scapegoat for these other predators. The Project is working with farmers who, rather than shoot, call Deon when a cheetah is found on their property.

DeWildt uses a compensation fund that shows the farmer how to trap the cheetah and pays 5,000 rand (\$1000) to the farmer when one is captured. This compensation scheme is unique in the world as it is the only scheme that compensates farmers for catching cheetahs alive and not for damage caused by the cheetahs. In the past, cheetahs were of no financial value to farmers so they were simply shot. Cheetah shootings are rarely reported, but it is estimated that 38-40 cheetahs have already been shot this year. One farmer near Atherstone reported that he had shot two

cheetahs, but his young son (who felt so badly) told one of the rangers that his Dad had actually killed three. If farmers and young people are educated and come to understand the cheetah and her plight, the wild cheetah will have a chance for survival. After capture by the farmer, the cheetah is then relocated to a cheetah friendly area. This is an area where the cheetah will not be hunted, and the area may also be "lion free". Over 100 cheetahs have been captured and relocated.

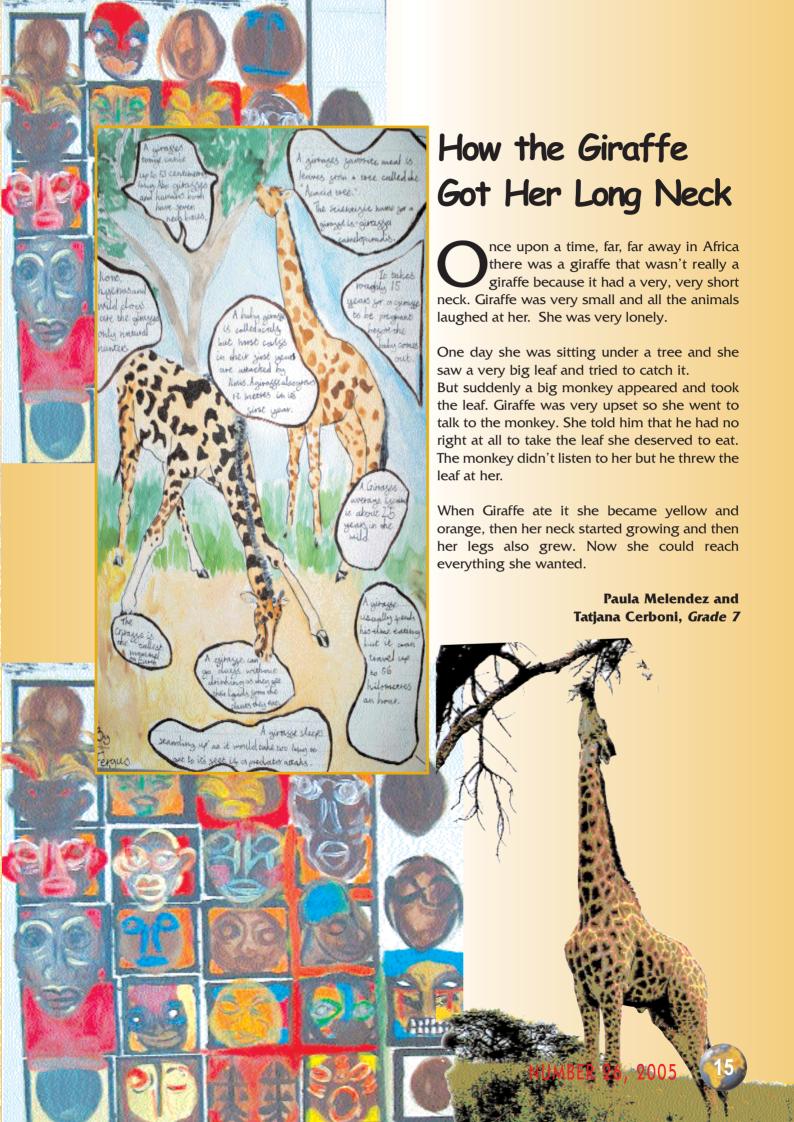
Every morning Deon and I would take off in the ultralight at 5:00am. We would ascend to a relatively high altitude so that we could get a good telemetry reading on the collared cheetahs. We would stay up for 2 to 3 hours searching for cheetahs and then following them. This helps get a good idea of the range of the collared cheetahs. Many times we found them outside of Atherstone on private game farms. This is dangerous for the cheetahs because some farmers still shoot them. Cheetahs travel around 10-20 km from one day to the next. The range size of the collared cheetahs is approximately 32,000 hectares. From 10am to 3pm, Kelly, Deon and I would go out around the Reserve to check on the camera traps. There are over twenty on the Reserve. The traps have cameras on a laser beam trigger release that record cheetahs who pass by the camera. Every cheetah photographed is identified by its unique spots and then entered in the log. The camera traps are set up in areas where cheetahs pass frequently (axis of Reserve roads, areas where they mark their territory or leave scats.). The results of the camera trap census is amazing and shows that 6-14 cheetahs roam in the study area. In the later afternoon we would go up again in the ultralight (around 4:30pm) to continue tracking, and stay up until sunset. In the evening we would enter data into the Project's laptop and plot the cheetahs' position on a GIS system.

This was a fantastic experience for me. I have been interested in cheetah conservation for five years, and adopted a cheetah at DeWildt Cheetah Research Center three years ago.

It is vitally important to save wild cheetah from extinction. This will only happen if a national strategy is adopted. It involves education, relocation and awareness. The biggest threat to the cheetah is man, who has taken away so much of its native habitat, as the cheetah needs huge tracks of land to roam.

Alexandre Pomeroy





Female Circumcision / Female Genital Mutilation



here has been a hue and cry in recent times about the practice of genital surgery on women in Africa. All over the world, innumerable reasons abound for the practice of genital surgery on both sexes. It is a procedure that dates back to at least 5,000 BC. Broadly, the reasons can be categorized according to health, religion, social, political and cultural considerations.



Female circumcision is most commonly performed between the ages of four and eight. The circumcision procedure for girls involves the removal of all or part of the external female genitalia. Often done with crude knives in one of their huts, the painful operations can cause lifelong health risks. The cutting may cause lifethreatening infections, increased susceptibility to HIV, and can deprive the girls of ever having any sexual sensation.

So what are the reasons for carrying out the procedure on women? For some cultures it is a rite of passage to socially acceptable adulthood. For others it is a nuptial necessity. For yet others, it is a mark of courage, particularly where it is carried out on older people. Some believe it is a reproductive aid, increasing fertility. For others, it enhances sexuality. Many parents want surgery on their daughters because they believe it may protect them from would-be seducers and rapists.

As with any surgery it should be performed

under hygienic conditions with an appropriate anaesthetic, but such technology has only been available for a relatively short time. Even today the procedure

is usually carried out without anesthetic in unclean conditions. As any surgical procedure, female circumcision can be extremely painful, and dangerous. Some argue that making the process illegal drives it underground and thus puts the recipients at greater risk.

There are several countries in Africa where efforts are being made to discourage female genital surgery. They are doing this by providing up-to-date information to show its disadvantages, and why it may not be necessary to achieve whatever it is believed to accomplish. Other countries have banned the practice all together.

Even in countries where the governments have recently banned the practice, parents are still risking jail terms and heavy fines to put their daughters through this rite of passage.

For more information:

http://www.webstar.co.uk/~musnews/ffgm103.ht m l http://www.webstar.co.uk/~musnews/ffgm103.html

Jennifer Ellis, 16, Colombia



Woman Refugees



refugee is a person who has been forced to leave their country due to fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, politics, civil war and famine or other natural disasters. The UNHCR has been helping refugees for 50 years by providing protection for them and helping to conserve their human rights.

More than half of the world's refugees are women and children. When someone flees from their home, they have the right to seek protection in another country. However, the condition of aid that the refugees receive depends on the country they go to. Refugees may not always be able to seek asylum in certain countries as those countries may also be going through economic difficulties.

In various African countries, women are abducted, raped and physically abused. They may also be abducted to be forced into marriage. As a reward for their service, soldiers are given women as sexual slaves or wives. Many people cannot sleep in their own homes at night for fear of this threat. They walk for hours in large groups to find churches, halls, tunnels and other shelter for safety.

The UNHCR talks to women in refugee camps to help them overcome their terror of returning to their home country. Many women are scared to return because of the risk of being forced into marriage. All over Africa, as soon as a girl reaches puberty, she may be forced to marry. This is mainly due to religious beliefs.

Alexis McGivern, 11, Canada and Tess Solomon, 11, USA





Dutch Tolerance?

ong have the Dutch enjoyed the reputation of being some of the most tolerant people in Europe, if not in the world. Some recent events, though, seem to show that this is no longer the case.

On the morning of November 2nd this year, film director Theo van Gogh was cycling to work, on the Linnaeusstraat in Amsterdam, when another cyclist rode up next to him and shot him off his bike. The police arrested a man suspected of the murder, "Mohammed B.", the same morning. After Mr van Gogh was shot, the man was seen running into the Oosterpark, and was caught after an exchange of shots at one of the exits of the park, which had been quickly blockaded.

Theo van Gogh always was a much-discussed filmmaker. The tone of his work was always

provoking; he always seemed to be trying to make a group of people angry – and was usually successful. His latest film, "0605", is about the murder of extreme-right politician Pim Fortuyn, generally considered a xenophobe and a racist, whom Theo had always supported. Before being killed, Mr van Gogh was working on the sequel to "Submission", a film he made with politician Ayaan Hirsi Ali about the position of women in radical Islam; this film obtained very sharp reactions from the Muslim community in



Theo van Gogh, from the Dutch daily newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*, 2nd November.

the Netherlands, and might be connected to the murder. Ms Hirsi Ali was also threatened, and is currently in hiding.

Significant is the fact that the murderer was a secondgeneration immigrant: born to a Moroccan family in the Netherlands, he was raised there, spoke Dutch, had Dutch friends. It was always believed that secondgeneration allochtonous* youngsters were integrating well. Many actually are, and don't consider themselves allochtonous at all; but still nuclei of violent, indoctrinated Muslim youngsters are forming.

Mohammed B. was part of the so-called Hofstad Group. Central in this small network is

a man called Abu Khaled, 43, a Syrian; he is the "spiritual leader" who "inspires" the young members of the group to fight the "godless". In recent tumultuous, but successful, police actions (including a siege of an apartment in the Antheunisstraat in The Hague by no less than the Special Support Unit of the Marine Corps, which went on for hours) another seven members of the group were arrested, none of them older than 26, the youngest only 17; the police believe they were planning attacks on Ms Hirsi Ali and

Mr Geert Wilders, also a politician. Mr Khaled has not yet been found.

Violence calls for more violence. As radical Islamic groups are attacking, ultra-nationalistic Dutch youngsters are ravaging Muslim schools and mosques in return. The murder of Mr van Gogh triggered a series of attacks. On 8/11, an Islamic school in Eindhoven was bombed. Two days later, in Uden, another such school burned down. On 15/11, a mosque in Helden was partially destroyed by a fire. By the time you'll be reading this, much more will have happened. There isn't always evidence of intentionality in these episodes, but texts such as "Theo, rest in peace", "White Power!" or insults to Muslims and the Islam are often found near or on the ruins.

Another impression of the anti-Islamic sentiment can be given from the outcome of the recent TV-show "The Greatest Dutchman of All Time": the winner was Pim Fortuyn. An interesting comment was that of the German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: "You [the Netherlands] lost your *Bodenhaftung*, your grip on the road." The nation seems out of control. Some blame it on the government. Easy to blame everything on them. The real problem is ignorance.

The day of Mr van Gogh's murder, The NRC Handelsblad newspaper interviewed some young Dutch Muslims in Amsterdam. Here are some of the things they said:

"It's getting worse and worse, especially after September 11; it's no longer fun for me here. After I finish school here I'll say 'Bye Netherlands, thanks for my education, I'm gone!' "

"Whether things are getting worse? Look at the faces of the Dutch people. Just now a passer-by shouted 'Filthy Moroccans!' at me."

"He [Mr van Gogh] was offensive, but also funny. It's not up to us to kill someone."

"He had his opinion, and he was allowed to voice it, even if he offended Islam."

"Everyone's just shouting something. Islam is a peaceful religion. Islam disapproves such a cowardly murder."

How many western people can say they really know what the Islam is about? Even I can't, really, not in any detail, and I consider myself a politically aware and active person; I even have a roommate from Palestine here at college, for crying out loud!

The truth is, we don't know the first thing about the Islam. After making the film "Submission", Mr van Gogh was killed, and now everybody's saying "it's the Muslims, they're radical, they're fundamentalists, they mistreat their women, they hate us, they...". It's always "them", "they";



The Islamic primary school of Uden on fire, also from the NRC (10/11/04).

blaming it on a minority, something men have been doing for ages. It's high time we started understanding "other" cultures than "ours", because they are no longer others out there, they're here, they're part of our culture, and ought to be given a space in our midst. We can coexist peacefully. It's all about understanding the other party's point of view, and accepting it even when it differs from ours, as long as it respects the basics of tolerance, such as not killing filmmakers or burning mosques.

On estimate, over 900,000 Muslims live in the Netherlands. Islam has become part of Western European culture. Many keep saying Europe is Christian, many keep thinking Islam is a cruel, faraway religion, that those Muslims in the Middle East are cruel people, cruel to their women, cruel to those who don't share their religion. They are not. The vast majority of them are not. They are friendly, peace-loving people who never wanted any of this to happen. And they're among us. They're not responsible for any of this. It's our own short-sightedness we want to blame.

Haro de Grauw, 16 Li Po Chun United World College, Hong Kong me@harodegrauw.net

The Dutch Central Bureau of statistics defines an allochtonous as "a person of whom at least one parent is born abroad. A first generation allochtonous is a person who was born abroad with one or two parents born abroad; a second generation allochtonous is a person who was born in the Netherlands with one or both parents born abroad."



since the 1960s developed nations have taken a keen interest in helping economically less developed countries to become states of economic prosperity. A plan was declared in the United Nations, and various methods have been created. One after the other, third world countries have been creating industries, exploiting their natural resources and stabilising their government.

It has become apparent that development in Africa has stagnated in comparison to Asia. Korea, for instance, which was previously a poverty-stricken nation, has now established itself as a central car manufacturer. However, most nations in Africa have not been able to achieve such a level of success.

There are several determining reasons for this. Firstly, African countries have been subjected to national turmoil, with little cooperation between the citizens and the government. The lack of comprehension and agreement between the

- Since the 1960s developed nations have taken a keen interest in helping third world countries to become states of economic prosperity.
- There is a lack of cooperation between the citizens and the government.
- Development can be achieved.
- South Africa's natural resources were not being exploited to their full potential.
- Africa has enormous potential.

masses and the state has lead to tension. In addition, some African governments are corrupt, so funds for development are pocketed, making development unachievable.

However, when comparing past and present situations in various African nations, it is clear that progress has been made. A few years ago South Africa, like many other countries in Africa, was in national turmoil. There was a vast disagreement between the African citizens and the White imposed government. As a result of the lack of cooperation South Africa's natural resources were not being exploited to their full potential. But now, subsequent to the end of Apartheid, markets and industry have started to thrive, imports and exports have increased and the country is developing.

It has thus been established that achieving economic prosperity requires both governmental and ideological input. Until stability is assured, development is near impossible. To increase GDP and decrease unemployment rates and the budget deficit (all of which are signs of development) the governments and citizens need to cooperate.

It is clear that Africa has enormous potential. Due to its vast natural resources and population, Africa has the means to create a prosperous life for all.

Jennifer Ellis, age 16, Colombia



Media Distortion

Developing countries need to be more selfconfident and overcome Western domination by providing the world with news from their own perspective.

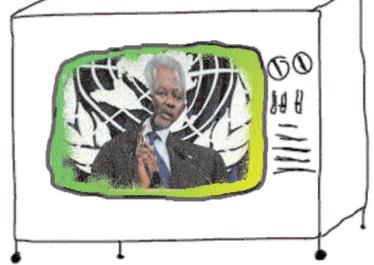
t present, the image of the economically developing world given to us by the mainstream media is often distorted. Stories carry a certain ideology, intentional or not, and tend to favour certain voices over others. Negative, short-term events are focused on. What most people know about developing countries and what they base their opinion on, is from European or US media. Many scholars warn of the "cultural imperialism" of the news and other media material by the United States.

There are vast inequalities in the coverage of developing countries. For reasons of time and space it is impossible for the media to give all places the attention they deserve. Therefore, it is impossible for the general public to get a full picture of the world by merely relying on the mainstream media. The danger is that viewers, readers and listeners may forget that the stories reported are highly selected and ignore most of what is going on. The poor in the developing countries are often spoken about, but never get to speak themselves.

At times reporters are hardly given the opportunity to access information from every side, as it is censored. Moreover, the distribution of correspondents is very uneven and has a major impact on what will be covered or left out. If journalists are flown into a region just to cover a major event, they will not be able to report on (perhaps more significant) local stories as they would were they based in that area. Therefore, African droughts and famines affecting millions are focused on, rather than other ongoing but equally crucial events.

In order to have the so-called objective view, news agencies prefer their correspondents to move every few years, so that they will never integrate the foreign culture. This, however, limits their ability to fully understand events and processes.

For reasons of time, space and budget, easy availability of a source is very important; this favours elite nations and people. Because negative events are often more spectacular, many countries are presented as eternal problem areas, incapable of any achievements of their own.



It has been claimed for instance that during the civil war in Angola, the international media focused on the inability of the Angolans to live in peace and emphasized their "traditional" tribal rivalry and ethnic nationalism.

The first interpretations of an event are the most influential. Developing countries need to be more self-confident and overcome Western domination by providing the world with news from their own perspective.

Various factors, such as the roles played by news agencies as well as censorship and other limitations for journalists, should be taken into consideration in order to get the full picture of the economically developing world.

The importance of cultural media diversity can be found in the words of Mahatma Gandhi: "I want the culture of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any".

Ritika Sood, 14, Indian, La Châtaigneraie

Crash Course in Swahili

Become a pro in under 10 minutes!

Jambo = hello Kwaheri = Goodbye

One = moja Two = mbili Three = tatu Four = nne Five = tano

Six = sita Seven = saba Eight = nane Nine = tisa Ten = kumi

Did you know?

There is no letter C in the Swahili alphabet.

Child Soldiers

Perhaps someday all the children will play together?



child around my age, dully squatting in the back of a mud-drenched truck... Dressed in camouflage fatigues, staring numbly out of the back, his head carelessly bouncing up and down with the jolting movement of the rusty vehicle... Eyes... dead to the world; unseeing, uncaring, unfeeling... blind to the corruption and devastation unfolding before them, indifferent to the cold weight of the gun in his hand.

That was the image invoked when I saw that one photograph of a child soldier, shown during a presentation on orphans in Congo. Merely a photograph but yet hellishly vivid enough to allow me to see into the child's eyes. To look into them and sense a numb acceptance, a dreary dullness that did not belong on his youthful face. Gazing into those eyes, I search in vain for the glint of innocence, the promise of fun that I like to imagine every child is born with. Where is it? It is as if the ugly black metal of the weapon he is holding has cast a shadow, smothering his consciousness.

To me, the fortunate leader of a sheltered and wholesome life, this child should not be miserably squatting in the back of a military truck; he should be playing, laughing, crying, smiling... living like a child, no matter the environment. What monsters are responsible for this unwholesome brain-washing; what were they thinking?

A Child soldier... to me at least, that term is an "oxymoron", the disgusting binding of two words

that should have nothing to do with each other. High and mighty words you might say; but all this is just the voiced objection of someone who cannot understand the depraved motivation behind placing a gun in the hands of a child. Perhaps I am making a massive generalisation, but I think, or rather I hope, that most of these children do not want to be soldiers; they just have no alternative... we should give them an alternative.

But I am well aware of the countless difficulties that unmercifully bombard those who do try to help. Beleaguered organisations try so hard, yet every step they take is blocked by another hurdle... and another... and another.

However, some organisations are pushing forward, brave pioneers venturing beyond the world of human error. Slowly and surely, they continue their fight against these atrocities, and the utter disregard of the basic rights of mankind. Every step they take saves millions of lives, and fills countless others with a profound sense of hope.

Perhaps someday all the children of the world will play together.

Bayu Pangestu, 14, La Châtaigneraie, International School of Geneva





HISTORY

Equatorial Guinea has been shaped by the kingdoms, empires, customs and peoples that have governed it over the years. The country suffered terribly at the hands of colonisers and still bears the scars of civil war today.

After the Second World War, several political parties were set up; the working class joined unions to defend strong ideals.

The ruling party today is the Democratic Party for Equatorial Guinea (PDGE), which was set up in 1952 by Ahmed Sékou Touré. In 1958, the PDGE, and the people of Guinea strongly opposed the French President's plan to integrate Guinea into the French community. Equatorial Guinea became the only French colony to vote « no » to General de Gaulle's plan for Africa, and to ask for independence. Other French colonies in Africa cut off economic relations with Guinea. As most Western countries followed suit, Guinea strengthened its ties with Russia and China.

The Guinean president, Sékou Touré set up a one-party dictatorship, and eliminated numerous rivals by severely repressing any attempts to oust him.

When Sékou Touré died in 1984, the colonel Lansana Conté took power and a commission was set up, which lead to the drafting of the democratic constitution, which was adopted in 1991. The first multi-party democratic elections took place in December 1993, and although close and tense. Lansan Conté was elected.

POPULATION

The Guinean population is estimated at around 6.7 million. More than one million live in the capital, Conakry. Around 250,000 live in the regional capitals, Labé, Kankan and Nzérékoré,

and around 29.6% of the population live in the countryside.

There are a number of different ethnies and tribes in Guinea:

- 1. The Peuls, which live in Fouta-Djalon, account for about 35% of the population
- 2. The Malinkés, located in High-Guinea Haute-Guinée, account for 30%; the Soussous, on the coastal plain, represent 20%.
- 3. The country is home to many other ethnies, some of which are limited to the boundaries of a single village.

LANGUAGES

French is the official language, but it is not spoken in the countryside or in the suburbs of major towns. African dialects vary from one region to another.

RELIGIONS

Almost 85% of the population is Muslim. The majority of non-muslims are Christian.

The Muslims of Guinea follow traditional islamic practices.

MENTALITY

Guineans place their trust in their families and ethnies. The majority of Muslims are moderate and accept pain and deception as being part of God's will. It is more important to live in the present moment than to plan for the future. Personal relationships are very important, much more so than material things or belonging to a system.

CONCLUSION

In my opinion, despite its turbulent past, Equatorial Guinea has managed to rebuild and unite its people, despite their ethnical differences. It is now a stable country, and clearly on track for development.

Africa And The Olympic Games

During the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, African athletes from over 50 nations brought home 35 medals, 9 of them gold. However, the continent has had a shorter history of Olympic participation than Europe or the Americas, and it has been one marked by exclusion, alternating with triumph!

The first African country to claim a gold medal in the modern Olympic Games was South Africa, which won a gold medal in the 1908 games in London in the 100m sprint. Later medals included gold in cycling in 1912, tennis in 1912 and 1920, wrestling in 1928 and swimming in 1952. Up until 1992, only white South African athletes were permitted to participate. In 1960 the Ethiopian marathon runner, Abebe Bikila became the first black sub-Saharan athlete to win a gold medal. His victory began an era in which Africans dominated international long distance running.

In the 1960s African politics and the worldwide Black Power Movement influenced the Olympic Games. Plans by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1968 to readmit South Africa, (which had been excluded in 1964 for its apartheid policies) were changed after a group of 32 African nations declared a boycott of the Mexico City games. Kip Keino, a Kenyan athlete said before the games started, 'I'd prefer to give up all hope of a medal than have to run with South Africans, who regard my black brothers and colored brothers as

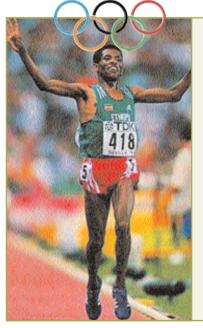
second class citizens'.

He went on to win two medals in Mexico City that year.

Again in 1972, the threat of boycott forced the IOC to prevent Zimbabweans from participating in the Olympic Games based on their racist views. On the track, African nations continued to triumph, with medals for Kip Keino once again, fellow Kenyan Mike Boit (3rd in the 800m race), Ugandan John Akii-bua (gold in the 400m hurdles), and the Kenyan 4 x 400m Kenyan relay team one gold. Africa has continued to produce world class track and field athletes, including gold medals for women runners in 1984 and 1992.

The 1996 Olympic Games saw the victory of Nigeria's soccer team in a sport long dominated by South America and Europe. Frankie Fredericks, an African sprinter brought home 2 gold medals, Ethiopian Haile Gebrselassie won gold in the 10,000m race, whilst Nigerian Chima Ajunwa, gold medallist in the long jump, and Gatuma Roba, an Ethiopian marathon winner, were two of the African women to shine in Atlanta. As an African sports fan told the New York Times, after decades of exclusion and controversy, 1996 was "the year of the black athlete".

Céline Cheng, 16, Hong Kong



Haile Gebreslassie – Ethiopian Track and Field Star

Haile Gebreslassie was born in Arssi, Ethiopia in 1973. As a child, he ran barefoot 25km roundtrip to school each day. This was excellent training for his future career! Like his brother before him, Gebrselassie began running competitively as a teenager. In 1992 he won both the 5,000m and 10,000m races at the World Junior Championships. The following year, competing against adults for the first time, he won the 10,000m event and finished second in the 5,000m in the World Championships. In 1996, Gebrselassie not only won the 5,000m event in the World Indoor Championships, but set an indoor world record, the first Ethiopian ever to do so, following that feat by with gold medal in the 10,000 meter at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia, setting a new Olympic record.

Treated to a victory parade in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, Gebrselassie became a national hero. In 1997 he set three more world records in the 500m, 10,000m and 2mile race. Gebreslassie shares his time between Addis Ababa where he has a job with the police department, and the Netherlands, where he lives with one of his brothers.

Sudan's Bitter Conflict

An interview with Dr. Mukesh Kapila, Former UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan

Many people have a vague idea as to what is currently going on in the Darfur region of Sudan, but don't know the full story. This article is to clear fact from fiction as to the conflict in Darfur, a conflict which has been called "the world's greatest humanitarian and human rights catastrophe" by the United Nations and "genocide" by Washington.

Few people know the whole story, but if there is one person who knows it, it is Dr.Mukesh Kapila. Dr. Kapila was the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan until April 2004. He was outspoken on the government's

handling of the conflict, causing him to have to leave the country. Nevertheless, he was the first person to bring the events in Sudan to international attention.

His job was to look at the situation in Sudan and develop a programme of assistance for that country. I interviewed him about the UN's role in Sudan, the different groups that are participating in the conflict and the government's part in all this. I learned a lot from him.

I asked Dr. Kapila what the government is doing about the conflict and he replied that "the government is part of the problem". He said that the Sudanese government is attacking its own people, the people who disagree with the government's policies.

The Jinjaweed Militia, a faction armed by the Sudanese government, has been "cleansing" the Darfur territory of black Africans. They have been terrorizing the native black population, razing entire villages, killing the inhabitants and stealing what they can find. They have violently raped many young women, and kept them as sex-slaves to be traded off as "wives". The government denies that the problem exists, and only acknowledges two cases of rape in the entire Darfur region. However, there is irrefutable proof that the numbers are far higher than this, and it is obvious that the Sudanese government knows this.

African Union military observers have said that the

Sudanese militia have been burning non-Arab civilians. In one case, they describe what happened to a black village. "Men rode into a village on horseback, looted the market and chained up people before setting them on fire". They also said that the militia were "believed to be Janjaweed".

The Sudanese Government has been called "an authoritarian regime" by the CIA. It took power in 1989 and is run by an alliance of the military and the

National Congress Party (NCP), formerly the National Islamic Front (NIF).

Sudan has known civil war for all but a period of eleven years (1972-1983) since its independence from Egypt and the UK in 1956.

Dr. Kapila said that the Sudanese Government has refused help from the UN and other countries, saying that they would prefer to "handle their own matters". The problem is that they are the cause of the genocide and are not doing anything to stop the fighting. There are mixed opinions as to whether the government is simply turning a blind eye to the Jinjaweed's alleged war crimes.

Genocide is the systematic and planned killing of an entire national, racial, political or ethnic group. In this case it is pro-Arab government troops killing the indigenous black African population so that the Arabs will have more land and resources. Dr. Kapila agreed that what was happening in Darfur was genocide saying, "Yes, 1 think that it is close to genocide." If the UN accepts that genocide is occurring it is legally obliged to take action to stop it.

Dr. Kapila said that the UN Security Council (the permanent members with veto power are the US, UK, France, China and the Russian Federation) is sending peace-keepers into Sudan and is putting pressure on the Sudanese Government to stop the



Dr. Mukesh Kapila, Former UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan.

violence. They have also considered imposing sanctions on Sudan.

When I asked Dr. Kapila whether he was in favour of the UN imposing sanctions on Sudan and what he thought would happen if they did he replied that sanctions would have to be very carefully set so that they didn't harm the civilian population. He would like to see sanctions imposed on the people who are funding the atrocities.

In April of this year both sides in the conflict signed a ceasefire, but it was neglected and the fighting went on.

Steps have been made, and on November 19th the UN Security Council left its New York headquarters for the first time in 14 years to go to the Kenyan capital to lend its weight to peace negotiations between the rival parties in Sudan. At the end of the summit, the Sudanese government and rebels from the south pledged to finalise a peace deal to end 21 years of fighting. An Interim

(short-term) deal on sharing power and wealth was agreed in May. The members of the Security Council also voted unanimously in favour of a resolution aiming to bring peace to the country and sending aid.

The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan says that a peace deal in the south would pave the way for an end to the conflict in the western region of Darfur.

Both the BBC and CNN agree that 70,000 people have been killed and more than 1.5 million have fled their homes as a result of ethnic cleansing that the pro-government Arab militia have carried out on the black African population.

Juan de Francisco Rasheed, 14, International School of Geneva

Sources: CNN, BBC, Channel News Asia, UN.org/news Google

Mercy Ships

Bringing Hope and Healing

uring our Africa Week at school I learned something that I must say, was remarkable. A lady who had previously worked with the Mercy Ships organization came to talk to us and show us a film about the ships. This organization has been in existence since 1978 supporting economically-developing nations.

"Mercy Ships are basically floating cities", stated our speaker clearly. They are huge ships that travel along the west coast of Africa and around the Caribbean. For the moment there are only two in action, but another is being finished. This article refers to the ship in action in Africa, the *Anastasis*.

The *Anastasis* is charity hospital ship, bringing hope and healing to the poor who do not have access to other caring facilities. The ship has a multi-national crew and staff who work voluntarily (the volunteers actually pay to work on the ships) to help people with illnesses. The ship is fitted with three fully-equipped operating theatres, a dental clinic and a laboratory. Several qualified surgeons and nurses on board operate on as many as three people a day. There are also land-based teams to supplement the work of the ship.



The *Anastasis*' goal is to serve one million people a year. Funding has enabled it to provide health care to 5.5 million people since 1978. A land-based volunteer goes around villages to teach families the basics of hygiene.

What I personally liked was that one of the kitchen staff was a teenager. He had come from America and had decided to take six months off school to experience working on the Mercy Ships. "Even though I'm in the kitchen all day and not physically helping people out there, I'm still making food for the hundreds of people working on the ship who are helping those people out there", he said.

For more information about the work of this organization visit www.mercyships.org

Chloé Smith, 14, Canada, La Châtaigneraie



was perfectly normal once, but you can't say that now. It's amazing how much a day can change in 300 people's lives. One attack on a village and all the people become abnormal instantly. None of us have our freedom left. All

camp is 50km from the border and the border won't protect us. We are all thirsty and hungry, but we have to keep going. We didn't have the choice. We had to leave because we wanted to live. We wanted to lead normal lives.

Darfur Refugees

of us left it behind that night, two weeks ago, when the militia attacked our village. Now we are so-called refugees on the run from our country, our ex-friends and our own lives. We don't have anything, not even something to drink or eat! We have to keep walking or the militia will catch us. We have to walk quickly. The border is not very far away now, but even if we reach it, will we be safe? The nearest refugee

Finally, we have reached the refugee camp, although not all of us. Many of us fell in the desert just before we arrived. Some were felled by the bullets of snipers lurking in the desert. We enter the camp and are immediately stopped by the guards. I was elected the leader of our group, and had to ask to meet the leader of the camp to get permission to live here and enjoy the privileges that brings. They take me to the chief of the camp, I have to wait even longer because he is having his lunch, while about 250 scared and starving people are waiting for me to come and tell them that is okay for us to stay here. After thirty minutes, the chief of the camp comes out looking delighted with himself. He tells me to step inside the tent and sit down.

After a long time of discussion about the amount of people and their age he finally says that it is okay for us to stay. We receive our first water and food in four days and each family gets a tent to live in and a set of kettles.

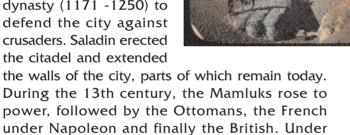
The war in our country will probably go on for many more years to come. Our families get used to living in the refugee camp, but one day the chief of the camp tells us that the war has finally ended and that the government has finally crushed the militia. We return to our homes in our country. But we still don't trust the government to be able to keep a new militia from forming. Most of us still sleep with knives under our pillows.

Mattias Bowallius

Cairo

The Largest City in Africa Has a Rich Ancient History, but Faces Many Modern Problems

airo was founded in 969 BC by the Fatimid general Juhar Al Rumi. In the 12th century, Saladin ended Fatimid rule and established the Ayyubite dynasty (1171 -1250) to defend the city against crusaders. Saladin erected the citadel and extended



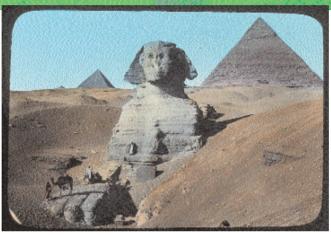
Ottoman rule, Cairo became the capital of Egypt.

By the 1900s Cairo was beginning to develop fast, taking on a new European look and catching up with the other modern nations. After the revolution in 1952, the population began to explode. Today, it is estimated that 20 million people live in Cairo. Due to its huge population, Cairo has expanded its city to the west bank of the Nile. Southern Cairo has now become a center for heavy industry.

Urbanization

Urban growth gives a rise to economies of scale for water supply and electricity. Industries benefit from lower communication and transport costs. The differentiated labour markets help to speed up technological innovation.

However, the consequence of this can be overurbanization. Cities become too big and at some point, diseconomies of scale begin. Over-urbanization



has also lead to the growth of slums. Slum settlements represent over one third of the urban population in all developing countries, such as Egypt. Air pollution, congestion, social disturbances and crime also increase with growth of cities. The

increase of population reduces what is available per person in the city and therefore the costs of services can rise enormously.

Transport Problems

Being a major city with thousands of citizens, there are major transport problems. The major transport problems are caused by the increase in urbanization and insufficient effective traffic management.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of privately-owned vehicles, which has increased carbon dioxide emissions, longer rush hours and traffic jams during the day. Cairo would benefit greatly from a better public transport system. The transport problems in Cairo affect the everyday life of Cairo citizens. Efforts are being made to solve these problems. If Cairo citizens used public transport instead of buying private vehicles, it would ease congestion.

Cairo has solved a major space problem by building an underground metro system running under the CBD (Central Business District). This has resulted in an increased use of public transport.





Smog greats the dawn over the nile. Air pollution is a major health concern for the residence of Cairo.

Air and Land Pollution

The populace of Cairo uses a vast amount of raw materials and produces a vast amount of rubbish. One single rubbish disposal organization disposes of over 6,000 tones of rubbish per day. However, this is only a very small amount in comparison to the total waste produced by the capital.

There is a high level of lead in the air, which is emitted by industries using lead smelters. Cars also contribute to the huge level of pollution. Industries located throughout the city contribute to the pollution. High levels of congestion along motorways lead to concentrated pollution in some parts of the city. The government has failed to educate the public on the importance of proper waste disposal techniques. Finally, there is a large problem of pollution of the Nile. The people living on the banks dump their personal waste into the river.

There are 10,000 to 25,000 deaths per year as a result of air pollution. A 1994 USAID study discovered that air pollution has the highest environmental health risk in Cairo. The fumes from Cairo's 1.2 million vehicles combined with lead, sulfur dioxide and suspended dust particles, plus sand blown from the neighboring Western Desert create a daily health hazard for its inhabitants in the form of toxic smog.

The government of Cairo is currently making efforts to try and sustain the pollution in Cairo. Since one of the main causes of the pollution in

Cairo is the burning of waste products from rice straw, it has been suggested that instead of burning waste it should be transported out of the city. The media is being used to raise awareness of the pollution problem, and a project called the Cairo Air Improvement Project (CAIP) has been set up. The CAIP supports the removal of polluting lead smelting facilities from populated areas to less populated areas where they are equipped with pollution control to reduce the output of lead. The government of Cairo is looking to develop environmentally-friendly technologies to dispose of waste and establish a specialized environment police to keep track of violations.

Water Pollution

Water from the Nile is the only source of water available for use of any kind in Cairo. This means that it gets overused. People upstream of the river Nile use the water and put it back in the river. People further downstream also have to use it, but it is already quite polluted by the time it reaches them. So most of the effects of water pollution impact the North of the city. Most of the problems stemming from water pollution are diseases caused by the bacteria that feed on the waste matter found in the water.

Water supplies are now becoming more centralized. Several concepts have been developed in order to improve the system. Two major water treatment plants have been built. Monitoring systems have been set up to regulate water quality. The number of people without access to clean water decreased from 12.1m in 1992 to 6.8m in 2001. Other solutions such as raising the price of water and its maintenance or taxing the volume used have been suggested. What is clear is that water issues will increasingly need attention as the population continues to grow.

Grade 11 students, International School of Geneva, La Chataigneraie

The Origins of South African Law

Exploring the Colonial Influence on South African Law

oes South African law strike you as remarkably similar to European law? If it does it is because the South African legal system is made up of English common law, a system of rules which were first developed in different courts, and civilian Roman-Dutch legal principles. "But how did that happen", you cry! The answer is simple. The legal system was highly influenced by successive colonial governors.

The Dutch were the first colonial settlers in the Cape, hence South African law originated in Roman-Dutch law. The writings of Dutch writers of the 17th and 18th centuries, such as Grotius or Johannes Voet, are important sources of South African law.

Then, when the British took possession of the Cape in 1806, English procedural law was embraced, but without a substantive legal system. Legislative innovations were derived from English Acts and judges were mostly educated in England.

Following the Anglo-Boer war in South Africa between 1899 and 1902, it became more important to ensure

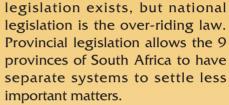
consistent legal practice among the four provinces, which were established in 1910. South African law is clearly a reflection, as in most countries, of its history. In this case, its history is one of colonial occupation.

The Apartheid era in South African law shows the legal system in practice. Apartheid actually became official policy in 1948. Laws were adopted during this era to segregate every aspect of life. The Population Registration Act classified the population in "racial groups" and another Act segregated residential and public areas.

Today, South African law appears to be a mix of English and Roman-Dutch law. South Africa is a constitutional state, with a supreme constitution and a Bill of Rights. The structure includes three separate arms of government: the Legislative, Executive and Judicial. Both national and provincial

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- South African law is a mix of Roman-Dutch and British Law
- Highlighting how the legal system was used during the Apartheid Era
- Focusing on the impact of the Colonial occupation



South African law is largely based on the law of the colonising countries. Although the British did not formally impose their legal system, their occupation has guided development in the area of law.

Elizabeth Padley, 16, Britian



Ten Different Ways of Looking at Africa

- 1. As the sun rises the humidity increases and the heat becomes unbearably hot.
- 2. Pyramids cast mighty shadows as the pharaohs inside them rest safely in their stone walls.
- 3. Giant rainforests house animals seeking their prey.
- 4. Poverty as people struggle to survive while diarrhoea slowly wastes away their life.
- 5. Amazing animals prowl slyly, carrying their dead lunch in their mouths.
- 6. Elephants thunder across the lands while people gaze in awe.
- 7. Tribes protect their culture fiercely while governments press them to change their ways; these tribes are admired by the rest of the world.
- 8. The Nile running through Egypt carries the history of the ancient ancestors.
- 9. Slaves labouring for rich owners.
- 10. Deserts destroying the agriculture so desperately needed to keep people alive.



Book Reviews

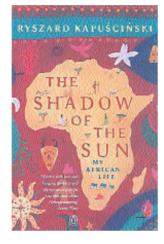
The Shadow of the Sun by Ryszard Kapuscinski

This collection of intense essays shows that Africa is an extremely varied continent. Africa is indeed complex. Even within countries, there are hundreds of dialects, religions and altogether different cultures.

Although all of his essays appealed to me, there were three which were expressed with unflagging

honesty: The Mountain of Ice, My Alleyway, 1967, and The Black Crystals of the Night. The author portrays his experiences of the great continent exactly as they appeared to him.

The Mountain of Ice is about his experience when he was struck down by malaria. The poetic essay deals with the symptoms of malaria: "dullness, weakness, and heaviness come upon you... violent onset of cold... you begin to



tremble, to quake, to thrash". No detail is spared or exaggerated.

As exceedingly honest was My Alleyway, 1967. This piece recounts life in the slums, the make-shift settlement, his alleyway which is difficult, disagreeable and altogether taxing. The fight against hunger is often lost; the young who are unable to find work, steal. If they are caught they are beaten savagely, their spoils ripped away. Kapuscinksi speaks with brutal honesty, and exposes life as it crawls past.

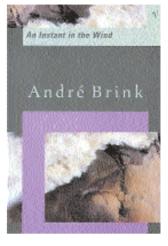
The opening paragraph of The Black Crystals of the Night describes the setting sun and the engulfing darkness, as well as the curious reaction of the taxi driver at dusk. Like others he is afraid of the dark and often refuses, when asked, to transport any passengers because "darkness unnerves them... they begin to peer apprehensively to the sides. Beads of sweat appear on their brows". Kapuscinski discovers the fear of witchcraft and wizardry, believed to be performed at night.

Kapuscinski's experiences differ greatly. He explores a ravaging illness, life in a poor area of Lagos, and wizardry. Each is expressed truthfully.

Isiomah Iyamah, 14

An Instant in the Wind by André Brink

André Brink's novel, *An Instant in the Wind* is a paradigm of one of the most common and ancient themes: the journey. Just like the biblical tale of Moses leading his people to the promised land, it describes the path towards the liberation of a people. Set in the 1750 Cape colony of South Africa, it is the story of Elizabeth, a native Capetonian woman who



has followed her husband, Alexis, on a scientific expedition into the interior. A prisoner of his own cold passion, Alexis one day runs off never to come back. Elizabeth, vulnerable and alone, finds refuge and comfort in Adam, a runaway slave who agrees to lead her back to the Cape. Antagonism turns into mutual respect, and mutual respect escalates into love. Elizabeth, previously a prisoner of her gender, and Adam, a captive as a slave, discover in each other what they would never have otherwise found.

André Brink's journey is well-worth reading for it reveals what is often unknown. The novel, evidently a parable for the struggle to freedom from apartheid in South Africa, presents a complexity most Europeans would not imagine was possible. The book focuses on how Africans see Africa. For even if the skin color, mindset and culture distinguish Adam from Elizabeth, both are African. Both discover their connection and tear down the separating barriers to allow them to mix. This blend rapidly turns into a deep, passionate and unique love story. It shows that the continent's greatest richness is the variety of peoples living on its soil, which André Brink celebrates in this novel. The novel is not a monochrome photocopy of Africa, or a snapshot in different shades of grey, but a rich and alive portrait of the most colorful of continents.

South Africa is a paradox. It is a unique case, far opposed in history to the rest of the continent, and the epitome of the vibrancy created by the characteristically African melting pot of cultures and ethnicities. André Brink's An Instant in the Wind incorporates a perceptive insight into the continent, which will enchant most readers, regardless of whether or not they have an emotional attachment to Africa.

Sebastien Arnold, 17, Switzerland



Flags of Africa

South Africa

Red: All the blood that was shed against apartheid Green: All the animal parks Yellow: All the goldmines White: The European people Black: The original South Africans Blue: The Ocean The Y symbolises the merging nationalities



Egypt Red: Revolution White: Bright future Black: Dark past





Sudan

Red: The struggle and the martyrs White: Islam, peace, optimism, light and love Black: Sudan and the Mahdiya revolution Green: Prosperity, good and agriculture



Kenya

Black: People of Kenya Red: The struggle for freedom Green: Agriculture and natural

resources

White: Unity and Peace

Shield: the defence for freedom



Mali

Green: Nature/agriculture Yellow: Wealth and Gold Red: Sacrifice made by our forefathers for independence



Blue: Vastness, Freedom, Greatness, Serenity White: Naivety, Purity, Frankness, Bravery, Confidence, Dignity, Equality Green: Hope, Belief, Faith Yellow: Tolerance, Hospitality, Charity



Malawi

Black: People of Africa Red: Blood of the martyrs Green: The ever green

nature

Rising Sun: The dawn of the hope of freedom



Green: Hope of prosperity Yellow: Economic

development

Blue: Happiness and peace The Sun: Enlightenment of

all the people



Angola

Red: The blood shed by Angolans during colonial

oppression

Black: The African continent

Yellow: Wealth

Cogwheel: The workers and industrial production Machete: The peasants, agricultural production and the armed struggle

Star: International solidarity

and progress



Red: Blood spilt during the liberation

Green: Vegetation and land resources

White triangle: peace and the "way forward"

Yellow: Mineral Wealth struggle Red Star: Internationalism

Namibia

Red: Heroism and determination of the people White: Peace and unity Green: Vegetation

Blue: The clear Namibian sky and the Atlantic Ocean Yellow Sun: Life and energy



Anna Thornborough, 15, Swedish/British and Emma Hofmans, 15, Dutch/South African La Châtaigneraie





One World Beat organizes the Global Music Festival 2005 and you are invited to join in.

On the first weekend of spring - March 18-27, 2005 - thousands of musicians will unite to make a difference through their music. Together they will raise funds and awareness to help street kids and vulnerable children to get an education - "Give A Child A Chance".

You can participate as:

- musician or band
- music venue or club
- promoter
- organization or school
- sponsor or partner
- volunteer

We already have concerts in preparation in England, United States, Canada, Australia, Thailand, Japan, Denmark, Switzerland, Slovakia, Spain, The Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Poland and many more countries. Musicians and volunteers are joining us every week. One World Beat united artists in over 150 events in 40 countries.

Latest News:

One World Beat is proud to announce the partnership with two "on the ground" help organizations to collaborate on the "Give the Child a Chance" project. The benefits of the OWB festival 2005 will go to LiberationThroughEducation.org and "OutsideTheDream.org". Both organizations are directly helping underprivileged children in Africa, India and Haiti to get a better future through education.

Join us now: http://www.OneWorldBeat.org



We hope to have you in the Global Music Festival 2005!

Connie Gentsch Global Coordinator One World Beat connie@oneworldbeat.org

Give A Child A Chance http://www.OutsideTheDream.org http://www.LiberationThroughEducation.org One World Beat 2005 - Music Making a Difference

