

I R O H I N
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CAS Outreach Program

The Center for African Studies (CAS) is partially funded under Title VI of the Federal Higher Education Act as a National Resource Center on Africa. One of only 9 in the U.S., Florida's is the only Center located in the southeastern United States. The Center directs, develops, and coordinates interdisciplinary instruction, research, and outreach on Africa. The Outreach Program includes a variety of activities whose objective is to improve the teaching of Africa in primary and secondary schools, colleges, universities and local communities. The following are some of the regular activities which fall under the Outreach Program:

Jambo!

Each summer the Center holds a high school language program to introduce the students to an African language.

Publications

The Center publishes and distributes teaching resources including *Irohin*, a publication for K-12 teachers.

Summer Institutes

Each summer, the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida hosts a K-12 Teachers Institute. The objective of the institute is to help teachers increase their knowledge about Africa and develop lesson plans to use in their classrooms. The creative lesson plans and articles in this issue of *Irohin* were written by participants in the 2014 institute. Please feel free to use these materials in your teaching and share them with other teachers. Write or call the Center for African Studies for additional copies or download this issue, as well as previous ones, in PDF format at <http://www.africa.ufl.edu/outreach>.

The Summer Institute is free to teachers. To apply for next year, see the application on the back page.

Community & School Presentations

Faculty and graduate students make presentations on Africa to local communities and schools.

Teachers' Workshops

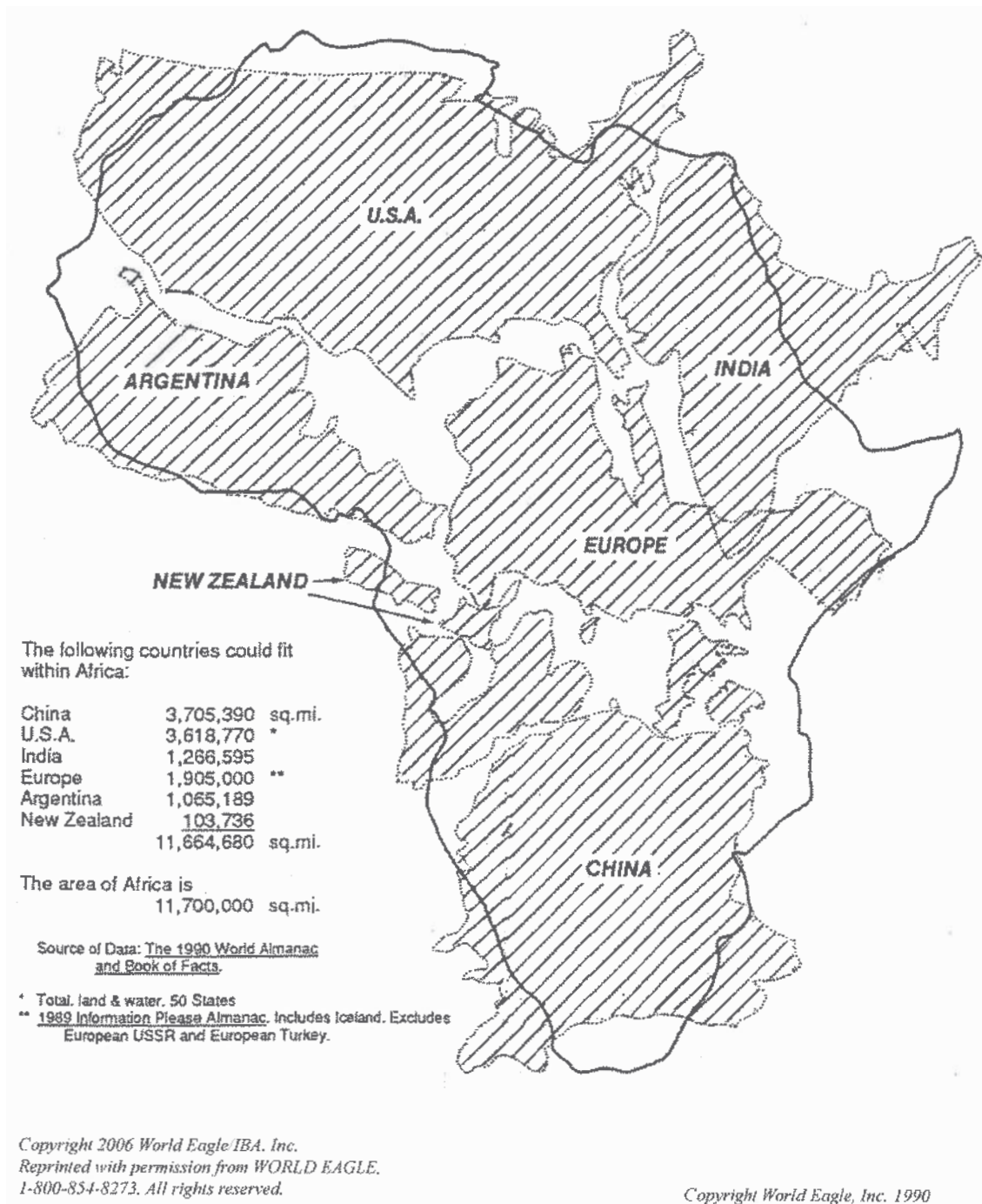
The Center offers in-service workshops for K-12 teachers about instruction on Africa throughout the school year.



2014 Summer Institute participants (from left to right): Dr. Agnes Leslie (summer institute director), Jessica Rebstock, William Marshall, Alex Martinez, Michelle Vargas, Buyiswa Mini (instructor), Chris Salamone, JD, Jasper Webb, Barbara Ferris, Sarah McKeever, Marie Pashkevich, Rachel Osborne and Dr. Rose Lugano (instructor).

Understanding the Size of Africa

For those of us who have only experienced Africa through images and maps, it can be difficult to understand the true size of Africa. The hard facts don't often resolve our misconceptions. It's understandably difficult to appreciate the vastness of 11.67 million square miles (the area of Africa). Instead consider this: have you ever flown—or driven!—across the US? If you have, then you can appreciate the size of the US; you've seen the variety of terrain; you've heard the accents shift; you've sat and sat and sat. Now consider this: Africa is more than three times the size of the contiguous United States; there are more than 500 extant languages spoken across more than 50 countries; and the landscape spans from desert to rainforest. Languages, cultures, scenery and even the hemispheres change as you traverse Africa. This map may help us understand the true size of Africa and it's diversity.



KNOWLEDGE APPLIED



Marie Pashkevich attended the K-12 teachers' summer institute on Africa hosted by the Center for African Studies in 2014. In this article she shares the impact of the institute and how she implemented what she learned.

Making Meaningful Connections

MARIE PASHKEVICH

This past year, the theme that has guided my art curriculum at JJ Finley Elementary School in Gainesville, Florida, has been “Around the World”. Throughout the year, the students and I have “traveled” to various countries and continents across the globe to learn about the people, customs, culture, life, history, and art. Some of our stops have been in Japan, Mexico, France, Peru, and Florida. Most recently my students and I journeyed to the continent of Africa, where each grade level studied a specific country or aspect of culture from a country, which inspired our art making.

My goal in teaching students about Africa was to show them the diversity of the continent and expose them to some of the rich cultures in hopes of sparking their interest and helping them establish meaningful connections with the cultures and people of Africa. After announcing we were moving to Africa and doing a quick check for background knowledge (Where IS Africa? What do you know about Africa? Is Africa a county, continent, or city?, etc.), I introduced the

continent to my students using a brief image-packed powerpoint that touched on various countries and cultures. I asked the students to compare/contrast the images, lifestyles, and cultures they saw with each other and also with their own lives. I wanted the kids to understand that Africa is very diverse, and also get a feeling for the similarities/differences between their own lives and people in other countries. I ended each introductory lesson with a Youtube video filmed by an American in Uganda. The video shows kids, teenagers, and adults in a village dancing and expressing themselves to the song “Happy” by Pharrell Williams. After inviting my students to dance along with the Ugandans, I asked my students to point out the things they had in common with these kids, and if they thought they would have fun playing with the people they saw in the video, which always received a very enthusiastic YES!

Throughout the week, about 600 students come to my art classroom, where I teach grades K-3 for a 30-minute period, and 4th and 5th graders for 40 minutes. I usually choose a dif-

ferent project for each grade level, as their artistic skills and capabilities are very diverse at the elementary age. I taught kindergarten –4th grade about Africa, but was unable to fit Africa into my curriculum for 5th grade due to time constraints.

In kindergarten classes, I focused specifically on the Ashanti people of Ghana, and I began by reading the children’s book *Oh Kojo! How could you?* This is a tale about a young Ashanti man who is continuously tricked by a mischievous old neighbor. His luck turns when he is granted wishes by a magical bird, and at the end of the story his pet cat, which he had been tricked into buying from his neighbor, saves the day and is declared the most respected animal of the Ashanti people. After brainstorming all the types of cats that possibly live in various parts of Africa, we chose to focus on lions. We discussed the shapes that could be used to draw a lion’s head, such as an oval for the head, circles for the eyes, etc. We then learned how to use acrylic paint and practiced making brush strokes with this new material. Finally, we put

these skills together and painted lion heads, which we finished by outlining in black crayon.

In 1st grade, I led my students in a project that focused on masks from various ethnic groups throughout Africa. We began by talking about why people wear masks, the purpose and function in culture, and the materials used to make them. The students took special interest in animal-inspired masks, and I found that many of them really connected to the idea of wearing animal disguises and acting like an animal. After learning about symmetry and the primary colors, the students then created their own masks out of collaged paper we stamped. Students were given the choice to choose the animal they were creating, and were asked to demonstrate their understanding of symmetry.

In 2nd and 3rd grade, my students learned about Ancient and present-day Egypt. After studying the culture of the past and current Egypt, we compared and contrasted the two civilizations. We then spent a class period learning more about Ancient Egypt, specifically looking at the process of mummification, the purpose and creation of pyramids, and the art of ancient Egyptians. I found an interactive website which allows viewers to enter the Pyramids of Giza and visit the Great Sphinx, which the kids took particular interest in.

I taught my students about the ancient Egyptian way of drawing people with the profile of the face matched with the shoulders drawn from a frontal angle and legs also drawn from the side. Egyptians did this to highlight the best angle of each physical feature.

We also learned about horizon lines, vanishing points, hieroglyphics, and I gave the students a quick lesson on how to draw pyramids. To combine all these elements together, the students created self-portraits, drawn in traditional Egyptian style, with a background of pyramids correctly decreasing in size as they appear to be approaching the horizon line.

Finally, the project that most excited me as a teacher was my 4th grader classes. These students learned about traditional dancing in various countries, looking specifically at the Dogon ethnic group in Mali. We then learned about gesture drawing, which is drawing with the intention of capturing the body in motion in a way that is not interested in features on anything specific but focuses on quickly drawing movements of the body. When I attended the African Summer Institute, there was a day dedicated to music and dance, and I took videos of the musicians and dancers as they performed for us. I used these videos in my classroom during my instruction on gesture drawing. I would pause the videos from time to

time and ask the students to create a gesture drawing of the dancers. We spent several class periods working on this, and my students became very attached to the dancers and also were happily surprised that their drawings got better and better each week. I found that my students really connected with this project, and were able to immerse themselves into the culture and dances that we looked at. I have noticed that some of my students, not limited to but including African American students, have trouble engaging in the context of the art lessons I teach. Although they might enjoy the art-making process, they don't seem to care about the depth of the lessons, and lose interest in the context of what I am teaching. I was very happy to find that many of my African American students really engaged themselves in this project about African dancing and gesture drawing. They seemed to take a sense of pride in the dances, wanted to know about the culture and tradition, and seemed to be able to relate to the love of dance and music. The students connected to the videos and culture in a way I had never seen before, and their interest showed in the care they put into their artwork.

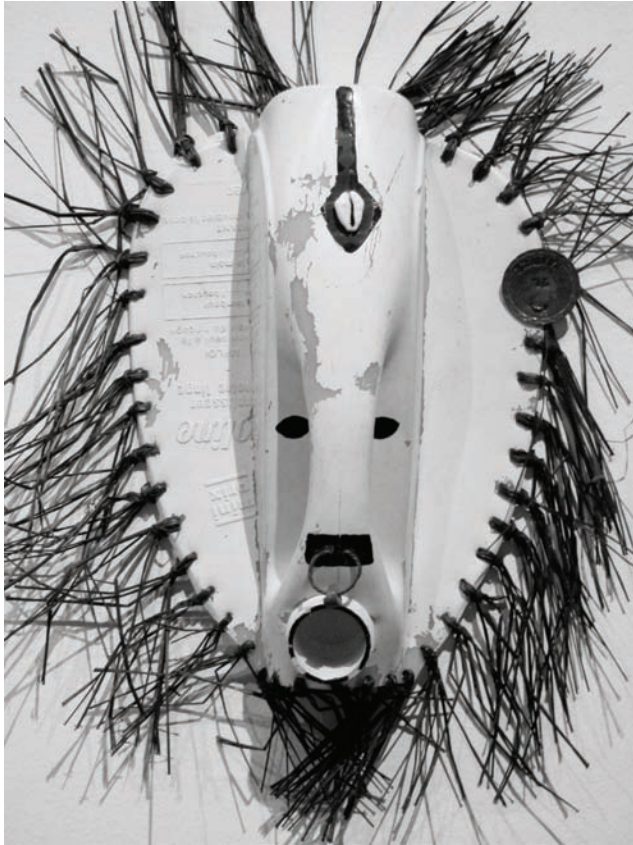
The African Summer Institute helped me gather many tools and materials concerning Africa in a way that transformed my teaching capability. Because of the intense connection I had been able to make with the continent, my students picked up on the importance and deep care I had for Africa and they too engaged themselves in the culture, tradition, art, and people. I know that many of my students who seem to have a difficult time relating to the art world, which has been dominated by white males for hundreds of years, felt very comfortable diving into the arts of Africa. I know that my students had a meaningful experience, and these types of encounters will remain a handprint on their brain and heart forever; this is why I teach.



Artwork by one of Marie's students.

The Importance of Finding Value in Everything: What Repurposed African Art Taught Me

MARIE PASHKEVICH



Ramaulde Hazoume's African mask from recycled materials.



Marie Pashkevich and her peers in front of an El Anatsui piece at the Harn Museum.

Western critics categorize African art into three distinct groups: traditional art, popular art, and fine or contemporary art (Grosz-Ngaté, 2014, p. 162). Traditional African art consists of masks, baskets, displays of scarification, and other “artifacts” that were important functional parts of many Africans’ lives. Popular African art, which emerged as an effect of the colonial era, is defined by artwork such as painted signs for businesses, fashionable clothing ensembles, and elaborately constructed and painted wooden coffins. Finally, as globaliza-

tion began to impact Africa, many African artists became known and recognized internationally, hence the term fine art. Contemporary African art covers a wide range of materials and subject matter, and is made for a global audience (Grosz-Ngaté, 2014, pp. 162-182).

During my college education there were two classes that were required for art majors: Art History I and Art History II. These were the overarching art history classes that were meant to give a little taste of art, basically exposing students to the creativ-

ity of humankind throughout history. It began with the first paintings known to humans in the caves of Lascaux and ended with contemporary artists such as Jeff Coons. The mandatory book that supplemented the class was titled *Art Across Time*. This massive, 1,022 page book, that I occasionally use as a makeshift dumbbell when I’m feeling ambitious, has a four page section entitled “Window on the World: African Art and the European Avant Garde.” The only artworks described are crudely carved statues, masks with exaggerated features, and one bronze

war helmet that had apparently been acquired by Pablo Picasso. These four pages were the only part of the book discussing African art. One of the four pages explains that “the understanding of African art is complicated by certain essential differences between it and other non-Western styles” (Adams, 2002, pp. 870-873). So apparently that equates to virtually “skipping over” Africa.

My confession is that when I set out to write this article, I was not very interested in African masks or traditional African art in general. Now, I certainly understood the importance of these objects and the great impact they have in Africa’s story. Philip Ravenhill insightfully states that these traditional artworks “constitute the most accessible forms of a given society’s visual culture. They exemplify the integration of aesthetic and daily life in Africa” (Ravenhill, 1991, p. 3). I cannot argue that these amazing traditional artworks have an important role in African culture, however, I can’t help asking about the *other* African artworks and artists. Is there any African artwork that I can actually *relate* to?

As an elementary school art teacher, I feel strongly about artistic experiences that both my students and I can relate to. I find it important to expose my students to all forms of art – including African, because every culture has a voice in the history of art. In my classroom, it never ceases to amaze me how much “stuff” parents and students bring to me as a means of recycling things they no longer want. I can’t tell you how many toilet paper rolls I get each week, how many magazines I have stacked around my room, and how many bottle tops I have collected in my drawers. I have an enormous crate of Starbucks coffee-cup holders, a box overflowing with floral water picks, and enough empty ribbon spools to go swimming in. I often joke that I could survive the apocalypse in my art supply room, as all my materials would certainly keep me safe from any cosmic forces. Yet despite my overflowing closet, I continue to plaster on my “Oh, I’m so grateful that

you brought this in!” smile as I reach out my hands and chirp my usual response of, “GREAT! We can definitely use (insert large amounts of some foreign object) when we are making something like African masks.....”

One day as I pondered my abundant supply of “assorted materials,” I found myself asking the question, “What is all this stuff, anyway? And what am I *really* going to do with it?” Igor Kopytoff suggests that objects should be regarded with the same dignity in which we might view a human life. He suggests that when looking at the biography of an object, one should ask questions such as: “Where did this thing come from and who made it? What was its intended use and how has it been used thus far? How does this thing’s use change as it ages? What happens to it when it is no longer useful anymore?” (Appadurai, 1986, pp. 66-67).

Kopytoff’s perspective on objects challenged me to view the “stuff” protruding out of my closet as potential materials rather than a trash collection. I began to envision my students creating elaborate “recycled art” projects that would make other art teachers in the county cringe with jealousy. Also, one of the hot topics in our culture right now is recycling and “being green,” so I figured this might earn me some brownie points with the hippy parents and maybe my principal. But then I began thinking, “Well, what exactly IS recycled art? Who does it? How can I teach about something I don’t know anything about?”

After laboriously perusing several art dictionaries and finding nothing on the topic of “recycled art,” I did some research and found that my terminology was wrong. “Repurposed art” or “readymade” art is what I actually had in mind when using everyday materials to create artwork. “Ready-made,” a term coined by Marcel Duchamp in 1913, refers to taking a commonplace object out of its functional context and manipulating or elevating it to hold a status of artistic value (Grove, 2009).

My thoughts drifted to the toys that I saw children make when I had

spent time in the Democratic Republic of Congo. With a creativity that would make Duchamp proud, the Congolese kids would use bottle tops, oil cans, sticks, and string to make intricately detailed cars and trucks. After Googling “African toys,” I found that the rest of the world has been tapping into this form of “art” that the African children have been making for years (Grosz-Ngaté, 2014, pp. 178). These toys, which fall under the category of ‘Popular Art’ in Africa, have been carefully crafted by young African children for years – probably since vehicles arrived on the continent. Young artists cut up rubber sandals or inner tubes that they wrap around wire to create tires. Children use metal scraps to create miniature bicycles, helicopters, lorries, and busses. Some even use paint to add details such as the name of a bus company or written prayers, which they model from public transportation in their countries (Andreasen, 2004, pp. 10-13). These creative youngsters and their use of everyday, common objects to create new, functional toys sparked my interest and inspired my research on other African “repurpose” artists.

One artist who caught my attention was El Anatsui, a contemporary African artist who is world-renowned for his larger-than-life sculptures that resemble fabric. These intricate, sometimes wall-size textiles are woven out of metal wiring, bottle caps, and other found materials. El Anatsui was born in 1944, raised in Ghana, and moved to Nigeria in 1975 to pursue a teaching career in the arts (Vogel, 2002, p. 24). He started working in wood sculpture, but soon he began incorporating tin can lids, bottle tops, cassava graters, aluminum drums, and gas cans. After finding a bag of bottle tops in the woods one day, he began to use these as a staple material in his work of weaving metal textiles that resemble traditional *kente* cloth (Vogel, 2002, p. 48-52). In reference to the bottle tops, Anatsui explains that he “thought of the objects as links between my continent and Africa and the rest of Europe. Objects such as these were in-

roduced to Africa by Europeans when they came as traders. Alcohol was one of the commodities brought with them to exchange for goods in Africa. Eventually alcohol became one of the items used in the transatlantic slave trade. They made rum in the West Indies, took it to Liverpool, and then it made its way back to Africa. I thought that the bottle caps had a strong reference to the history of Africa” (Vogel, 2002, p. 53-54).

Anatsui does not see his activity as recycling in the usual sense—as an effort to clean up the land, to return a material to usefulness, or to avoid expending new resources. He strongly feels that recycling involves returning an object to its original function so that it can perform again as it was created to. Anatsui uses the word “transformation” to describe his process and use of materials – as he gives the bottle caps new life in the function of his artwork. Not only does Anatsui reuse materials, but he also has recycled a traditional style of making artwork: communal. Presently, Anatsui hires studio assistants to help him with the labor-intensive process of his artwork (Vogel, 2002, p. 68). Traditionally in Africa, artists worked in groups on their projects and a community of artists would come together to create large works of art. In material, creation, and product, Anatsui has found a way to creatively transform an object or reality into something of worth and great value.

Another repurposing art development taking place in Mozambique is the *Transforming Arms into Plowshares/ Transformação de Armas em Enxadas* (TAE) project. From 1962-1975, Mozambique fought the Portuguese colonial rule for their independence. Then, from 1977-92, Mozambique fought a civil war that claimed 1 million lives and resulted in the displacement of at least 5 million people (BBC, 2014). In the aftermath of this destructive, tragic war rose TAE, a project of hope and peace. The mission of TAE, which was founded in 1995 by Bishop Dom Dinis Sengulane, is to promote and “facilitate com-

munity dialogue and civil education dealing with reconciliation, memory, healing, and forgiveness” (Schwartzott, 2011). One of the leading artists in this movement is Kester. This 49-year-old Mozambican, whose real name is Cristóvão Canhavato, is most famous for an artwork he did in 2001 for the Transforming Arms into Tools project. This piece, entitled “Throne of Weapons”, is a sculpture of a regal-looking chair that is made entirely of decommissioned weapons that were used in the Mozambique civil war (Throne of Weapons, 2004). After being haunted by famine, death, war, and economic collapse, this project strives to transform objects that are intended for death into symbols of peace while simultaneously bringing hope to a nation that underwent much suffering.

The final artist that I would like to focus on is Romauld Hazoumè. The Beninese artist, who began exhibiting in the early 1990s, is internationally famous for his sculptural “African masks,” which are made from discarded plastic bottles, oil canisters, scraps of cloth, and other found objects (Romauld Hazoumè, n.d.). He uses his artwork to express the impact of colonization, slavery, and globalization on the culture of Africa. His crudely elegant African masks challenge the viewer on ideas of consumerism, imperialism, and Africa’s role in the global economy (Art Romauld Hazoumè, 2012). Hazoumè’s artwork transforms everyday objects such as oil cans into a valuable piece of art, while simultaneously recycling the traditional mask-making art that was prevalent in earlier African cultures. He tangibly and conceptually transforms what is around him into a valuable message to share with the world.

El Anatsui once said in an interview, “The materials that we used in school—I knew that they were strange. In art history we learned that in the caves, they painted on the cave wall, or did the engravings on the walls. It means that you do art with whatever is around you. They don’t make plaster in Ghana!” (Vogel, 2002, p. 103).

My research about African Repurpose Artists taught me what “recycled art” really is and gave me a totally new perspective on African art, in general. I realized that an artist does not necessarily have to use specific objects of value in order to create marvelous things. In fact, it’s quite the opposite. One must necessarily use the mundane, accessible things around himself or herself and transform them into something of value. Many African artists have mastered the art of repurposing objects and materials, and through this process they have also found a way to recycle and transform their very histories by taking the old and making it contemporary and relatable to the modern person.

African artists have taught me that there is value in everything, ranging from traditional ceremonial masks to the pieces of rubber on the side of the road. This idea of taking accessible objects and transforming them into valuable pieces of art is a wonderful lesson not only in the art classroom but in everyday life. What “things” in my own life could use some repurposing? Returning to Ravenhill’s thought about traditional art being the representation of daily life in African society, how can I repurpose and give new meaning to everyday parts of my life, much like Romauld Hazoumè has done with traditional masks? Maybe a chair, or my collection of paper scraps, or even a relationship or two could use a little recycling. And that art supply closet of mine – WOW, what a treasure box! There is purpose in everything, and great value in “recycling” the things in your life that you might deem “useless.” I leave you with the empowering thought that I have learned from African artists: creativity can transform anything into something of greater value.

Image Reference

Hazoume Mask. Credit: rocor. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/rocor/5553111225>

African Influence in Puerto Rico

ALEX MARTINEZ

Many times when we put together the words *Africa* and *influence*, immediately we may think of the influence that the spread of Christianity and Islam has brought to the continent of Africa. However, Africa has greatly influenced many aspects of the Americas. As most people know, Africa is a continent with many cultures and many countries, each with its own identity, flag, traditions and languages. Some say that there are more than 500 languages in Africa. As a continent with so much diversity and so many different cultural backgrounds it would be almost impossible not to spread its cultural richness with all that come in contact with Africa.

One of the countries that have been heavily influenced by African traditions is the Island of Puerto Rico. The history of how Africa began to influence such a small island in the Caribbean is as diverse as the continent of Africa. It all began with the arrival of the first African freemen that came with Christopher Columbus. These freemen were called *libertos*. One prominent *liberto* was Juan Garrido, who arrived with Juan Ponce de Leon, first president of Puerto Rico. Another prominent *liberto* was Francis Gallego, the first black entrepreneur in Puerto Rico. Most *libertos* came from Seville, Spain. They came looking for work and were mostly domestic workers. *Libertos* assisted the Spaniards in conquering the Taíno Indians, who inhabited Puerto Rico (Afro-Puerto Rican, 2012).

After a few years, tension increased among the Taínos, the Spaniards and the *libertos*. The Spanish took advantage of the Taínos' good faith and enslaved them, forcing them to work in the gold mines and in the construction of forts. Many Taíno died, particularly due to epidemics of small-

pox, to which they had no immunity. Other Taínos committed suicide or left the island after the failed Taíno Revolt of 1511 (Afro-Puerto Ricans, Wikipedia, 2014).

Friar Bartolomé de las Casas, who had accompanied Ponce de León, was outraged at the Spanish treatment of the Taíno. In 1512 he protested at the council of Burgos at the Spanish Court. He fought for the freedom of the natives and was able to secure their rights. The Spanish colonists, fearing the loss of their labor force, also protested before the courts. They complained that they needed manpower to work in the mines, build forts, and supply labor for the thriving sugar cane plantations. As an alternative, Las Casas suggested the importation and use of enslaved Africans. In 1517, the Spanish Crown permitted its subjects to import twelve enslaved people each, thereby beginning the slave trade in their colonies (Afro-Puerto Ricans, Wikipedia, 2014).

According to historian Luis M. Diaz, the largest contingent of enslaved Africans came from the areas of the present-day Gold Coast, Nigeria, and Dahomey, and the region known as the area of Guineas, together known as the Slave Coast. The vast majority were Yorubas and Igbos, ethnic groups from Nigeria, and Bantu-speaking peoples from the Guineas. The number of enslaved people in Puerto Rico rose from 1,500 in 1530 to 15,000 by 1555. They were stamped with a hot iron on the forehead, a branding which meant that they were brought to the country legally and prevented their kidnapping (Afro-Puerto Ricans, Wikipedia, 2014).

It didn't take long for the cultural traditions brought by the enslaved Africans to begin to spread and form the cultural diversity Puerto Rico now en-

joys. Almost every aspect of the Puerto Rican culture has been influenced by Africa. Puerto Rico is considered to be "one of the zones in which the genetic and cultural assimilation of people of African descent have gone the farthest, and in which the legacy of Africa has been most persistently denied and most reluctantly acknowledged" (Brandon, 1989).

One of the most powerful African influences in Puerto Rican culture is noticed in music. As an important additional note, in the midst of all these historical developments, one cannot miss the fact that the popular music of Puerto Ricans has connected with Africa, particularly through *bomba*, *plena* and *salsa*.

The Bomba Puertorriqueña developed in Loíza, Puerto Rico, a town with a large concentration of African descendants. It developed from African ritual dance celebrations in the 17th century. The name was inspired by a fairly large wooden drum or barril covered with goatskin called the *bomba*. The barril was made using empty codfish barrels. The barril is the main drum and rhythm instrument. The musicians also use two small sticks to beat a secondary pattern on the side of the drums. *Maracas* are also part of the Bomba percussion instruments. Bomba participants form a dance circle and take turns in solo dance between individuals and the drum. It was at *bailes de bomba* that enslaved Africans celebrated baptisms, weddings, and births. Fearing rebellions slaveowners allowed the dances on Sundays only. Female Bomba dancers used their skirts to mimic and poke fun at the slave owners (Figueroa, AfroBorinquenMusic. 2012)

African roots have also influenced the foods Puerto Ricans eat



Traditional *Bomba* attire. The instruments are similar to African drums.

today and in earlier centuries. For example, “In a lecture he gave on Yoruba religion and culture Professor Wambole Abimbola mentioned the Yoruba dish called *Fufu*. In Puerto Rico, *Fufu* is almost forgotten. The dish was made with plantains, squash, and yams” (Gonzalez, 1983). Although the *Fufu* dish is now rare in Puerto Rico, many of the popular dishes eaten today on the island contain numerous ingredients that are widely used in Africa. “Nydia Rios de Colon, a contributor to the *Smithsonian Folklife Cookbook* who also offers culinary seminars through the Puerto Rican Cultural Institute, writes about Puerto Rican cuisine:

“Puerto Rican cuisine also has a strong African influence. The melange of flavors that make up the typical Puerto Rican cuisine counts with the African touch. *Pasteles*, small bundles of meat stuffed into a dough made of grated green banana (sometimes combined with pumpkin, potatoes, plantains, or *yautía*) and wrapped in plantain leaves, were devised by African women on the island and based upon food products that originated in Africa.” (Rios de Colon, 2014)

Puerto Rican religious traditions also have been influenced by Africans. In 1478, the Catholic Monarchs

of Spain, Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, established an ecclesiastical tribunal known as the Spanish Inquisition. It was intended to maintain Catholic orthodoxy in their kingdoms. The Inquisition maintained no rota or religious court in Puerto Rico. However, heretics were written up and if necessary remanded to regional Inquisitional tribunals in Spain or elsewhere in the western hemisphere. Africans were not allowed to practice non-Christian, native religious beliefs. No single African religion survived intact from the times of slavery to the present in Puerto Rico, but many elements of African spiritual beliefs have been incorporated into syncretic ideas and practices. *Santería*, a Yoruba-Catholic syncretic mix, and *Palo-Mayombe*, *Kongolese* traditions, are also practiced in Puerto Rico, the latter having arrived there at a much earlier time. A smaller number of people practice *Vudú*, which is derived from Dahomey mythology (Afro-Puerto Ricans, 2014).

Another area in which African traditions have influenced Puerto Rican culture is its language and therefore its literature. Although Spanish is the official language of the island due to Spanish colonization, there is also evidence of African influence in the Spanish language and literature. One

well known name for this type of Spanish is called the Afro-Puerto Rican *Bozal* language. “Although deriving its origins from captives’ struggle to learn Spanish from their tormentors, Afro-Puerto Rican *Bozal* language outlasted and outgrew slavery and oppression, to add its subtle touch to the life, literature, and language of all Boricuas” (Lipski, 2008)

In conclusion, although many African men and women were forced to leave their homeland in order to work in the Puerto Rican sugar mills their homeland never left them. Instead of totally adopting the Taino and Spaniard traditions and customs these enslaved Africans impacted the island in a variety of ways. Now Puerto Ricans enjoy a very rich cultural diversity and uniqueness in most part due to the heavy African influence. This African influence goes deeper than an outward skin color. It has influenced all the senses of Puerto Ricans to the point that you can see it, hear it, touch it, eat it, and speak it.

Image Reference

<http://media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/50/5e/9f/505e9ff40446e4ff500ed03b5ebc86ef.jpg>

The Ancient Roots of African Stereotypes

RACHEL OSBORNE

The modern idea of Europe's relationship with Africa is often associated with the era of European imperialism. In reality, Europe's connection with Africa stretches back to antiquity. These early interactions point to a complex foundation of cultural understanding that both contradict modern ideas of the roots of African stereotypes and lay the foundation for European imperialist assumptions about the African continent – roots that drove European empires to colonize and exploit this continent. These roots are grounded in Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire, which have been carried into modern concepts of Africa and Africans.

To appreciate the context of Greek and Roman interactions with African kingdoms, it is important to understand the history of the political and economic histories on their own. Along the Upper Nile through South Sudan, as well as the western Sahara, permanent agricultural communities thrived well before 4000 B.C.E.—well before the Grecian city-states. According to author Felix Chami, this population and the language as well expanded south down the Red Sea coast to the Sub-Saharan region of Africa; at the same time, relatives of the Libyco-Berbers were thriving in the northwestern region of the continent.

The most famous of the many civilizations of Africa, Egypt developed in wealth and power partially through its imports from South and East African regions. They used these resources themselves, but also funneled goods to export throughout the Mediterranean and Arabia. A largely hidden supplier of these goods was the more southerly kingdom of Punt, commonly referred to by Egyptians as “the land of the gods.” Punt was also the major

supplier of gold and myrrh for Egypt and from there, the global market. This supply chain was severely disrupted as Egypt lost its power, though it is not clear whether the decline was a political power loss or the interception of goods from Punt that eventually weaken Egyptian control and profits from the Puntite resources. Chami explains:

“The disorder that followed emanates from the fact that Egypt had monopolized affairs in Africa and kept secret its Puntite sources of gold, myrrh, and other tropical products by associating the source of these goods with various mysterious circumstances... When the secret was discovered by other powers including those emerging at the end of the 2nd Millenium BC, the control and monopoly of Africa by Egypt came to an end as every other power begun to scramble for it.” (p. 193)

This historical domination of African resources by Egypt is a little-known but important chapter of cultural and political dominance of the African continent. Traditionally, it is European forces that are portrayed as being the economic exploiters of this region; evidence clearly shows, however, that within the continent itself, there were similar power structures led by Egypt. On a global scale, Egyptian dominance might have set the tone for how Ancient Greece and Rome viewed Africa outside of Egypt. Even in modern times, Egypt is often thought of as being distinctly separate from the rest of Africa: perceived as being historically more refined, civilized, and advanced, a view that Egypt held to be true, given its economic relationship with the other regions.

Despite Egyptian monopoly, African goods were widely available: “mainly minerals, plants, and animal products were available in large world markets extending from the Atlantic in the west, via the Mediterranean region and the Middle East and as far east as India and Southeast Asia” (Chami, p. 208). Indeed, away from the Mediterranean sphere, Sub-Saharan Africa was well known by ancient traders and explorers – even the Chinese, who have described the mountains and valleys of the region (Chami). The Puntite region became a major international trading hub, noted to have a global mix of citizens from all parts, including Greece, India, Chinese, Cretans, and Oceania.

While Ancient Greeks had a much greater understanding of the African continent than most textbooks demonstrate, it was still a narrow view. Despite a documented presence and exploration in Nubia, Punta, West Africa, and other areas, their main filter from Africa was the influence of Egypt. Their generalized knowledge is evident in the distinction they draw in literature between Libyans (referring to the Libyco-Berber area of Northwest Africa) and Ethiopians, who the Greeks used as a reference to all other non-Egyptian black Africans. Additionally, as indicated by Chami, Homeric-era Greeks sailed out to the Atlantic and reported back about the inhabitants of West Africa—possibly stirring the first rumors of the city of Atlantis.

It is, perhaps, this creation of an Atlantis myth that is most telling. To be clear, Ancient Greeks did not specifically believe that Africa or Africans were beneath them; rather, Greeks believed themselves to be the supreme civilization above all others. With that

reasoning, it would be difficult to accept that non-Greeks could produce a complex society, no matter their race. Therefore, they interpreted their observations in a culturally-comfortable, superiority-sustaining mythology to make sense of the discovery. Unfortunately, their attitude was passed on through the subsequent European powers, and greatly fueled the European imperialist view of the world.

Students often wonder what roles Africans played in Ancient Greece, and later Rome. According to Frank M. Snowden Jr., “Although Greek writers in only a few instances state specifically that Negroes were on Greek soil, the numerous references... in certain passages, together with the many representations of Negroes in Greek art, seem to furnish evidence of a racial type that was taken for granted by the average Greek.” (p. 35) Indeed, they were employed by Minoans and served in military regimes from the early times of Greek civilization, and appear in various art works that include a Homeric shield. There are numerous

references to “Ethiopians” in Greek literature and plays; Homer describes them as he “furthest of men,” an indicator that early references to them was “usually as representative of peoples living near the edge of the world;” (Isaac, p. 36) and the Greek historian Herodotus grants them the equivalent modern label of the “noble savage.” They are often reported as being in an opposing army’s ranks, where they are respected for their strength and fighting skills, as well as occasionally appearing in artistic works of pottery or painting.

As previously noted, Ancient Greeks referred to almost uniformly as “Ethiopians.” Descriptions of them have survived in various writings; Snowden Jr. translates one such piece: “The majority of them (i.e., Ethiopians), and especially those who dwell along the rivers, are black-skinned, flat-nosed and woolly-haired.” (p.31) This description is fairly consistent across Greek and later Roman accounts, though the Romans omitted generalization of the nose. Aristotle

further compares the difference of hair between the Scythians and Thracians (straight) with the “woolly hair of the Ethiopians and people who live in hot regions.” (p. 32) Aristotle’s inclusion of people from hot climates alludes to a widespread belief in “environmental determinism.” Common to both Greek and Latin texts, this interpretation of race and temperament holds that “collective characteristics of groups of people are permanently determined by climate and geography... Entire nations are believed to have common characteristics determined wholly by factors outside themselves, which are, by implication, stable and unchangeable.” (Isaac, p. 35) Ironically, these characteristics are then thought to be genetically passed down to offspring. Ancient Greeks therefore believed that the “woolly” hair of the Ethiopians (non-Berber Africans) was due to the heat of the sun—as were “bandy legs” by some accounts, comparing the warping of dry planks with the warping of human bodies. (p.36)



A depiction of the Queen of Sheba.

Belief in environmental determinism—as well as foundations of African knowledge – were passed on to the Roman Empire as it rose to dominance. In fact, Rome used the concepts of environmental determinism in its claims that they were more qualified to control the Mediterranean region than the Greeks. With its expanding territory, Rome did gradually evolve from Ptolemy’s view of Ethiopians being the majority of Africans to a specific region along the Red Sea. (Burstein) However, the racial and cultural stereotypes continued to evolve as well, with Rome creating—whether by accident or design—the seeds of personality and character being endemic to Africans.

The earliest literature to document a generalization of (specifically Numidian) Africans is from the Roman writer Livy. In “Livy, Passion, and Cultural Stereotypes,” S.P. Haley discusses Livy’s employment of character virtues for dramatic effect as being (perhaps unintentionally) a starting point for cultural generalizations about Numidians—and later, most Africans.

Livy wrote of the Numidians within the context of the second Punic war, as “a romantic interlude describing the affair between Masinissa, prince of the Numidians, and Sophoniba the daughter of... a Carthagian general.” (Haley, p. 375) Prior to this literature, Numidians had mostly widely been known for their willingness to switch political alliances as it suited them—a trait that greatly troubled Rome. Livy, however, creates a new character trait for Masinissa: passion. For literary juxtaposition, passion is the antithesis to the pragmatic Roman ideal, and therefore an ideal plot device for tension. Haley explains that Livy uses Masinissa’s character to create “moral-ity and moral considerations” into the narrative; however, a consequence of this is that Livy transposes the characteristic of “passionate barbarian” into a trait of all Numidians. This is despite the fact that he wrote other passionate characters implying that there was a previous social assumption that lust and passion were part of the Numidian culture, if not Africa as a whole.

This implication is supported by Haley’s explanation that Livy relied on the works of another Roman writer, Polybius. While he initially emphasized more of the fickleness of Numidian alliances than passion or lust, “he reports that [Masinissa] lived until he was ninety and one of his most noteworthy characteristics was his physical strength and stamina... At the age of ninety, when he died, Masinissa had left a son of four years old...” (p. 377) His description emphasizes, though not as overtly as Livy, that virility and strength were unique characteristics of Numidians. Haley traces Roman stereotypes of “passionate barbarians” as far back as Vergil, who made veiled references to Dido’s Numidian, hostile neighbors in the Aeneid. For the purposes of plot, it was Dido who was passionate; but it is obvious from the actions of the passionate Dido, and the hostility of the Numidians, that Vergil “still accepts the general stereotype of the passionate (hence inferior) barbarian.” (p. 379) From Vergil to late Roman poets, Haley argues that a connection between sexuality and North Africans persists—even through the 17th century. (p. 308)

The cultural and racial disconnect is perhaps best illustrated in contradictory interpretations of the story of the “Queen of Sheba.” In the European Christian tradition, the Queen of Sheba represents the danger of sexuality; as Hall describes it, she is “the temptress with the body of a lustful animal beneath the silken robes.” (p. 183) In the Ethiopian Christian church, however, Sheba is depicted as an innocent noble, “the mother of Menelik, the first in the line of Ethiopian emperors. In this version of the story, the innocent Queen is seduced by Solomon by means of a trick.” (Hall, p. 182) From these conflicting versions, the perceptions of European Christians of the African continent, as well as the “lustful barbarian” stereotype of Livy, are clear—and notably absent in the Ethiopian version.

The idea of Africa has been handed down through European ages from Ancient Greece to Rome, later to

be funneled through the medieval writers and geographers. This historical creation of an African concept is arguably what led to European confidence that they could colonize and exploit an entire continent. After hundreds of years of generalizations and stereotypes, “The image of Africa as the ‘dark continent’ predates the beginning of colonial penetration by many centuries.” (Hall, p. 179) Colonization and imperial control of African resources further perpetuated and encouraged stereotypes of the African peoples, supporting and reproducing the means of European resource exploitation and economic profit. Despite the plethora of vital resources African countries export that fuel global energy, technology, and communication industries—as well as industries being born in places like Ghana, Kenya, and Botswana, among many others—there is still a reluctance to create new narratives for the diverse countries of Africa.

Image Reference

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ea/The_Queen_of_Sheba_%282131716999%29.jpg

Views of Nollywood: The Nigerian Film Industry

WILLIAM MARSHALL

The history of Africa's film industries begins with colonialism. While subjugated by foreign powers, the idea of Africa as "the dark continent" was emphasized through various Colonial Film Units (CFU) established by the British government. Adesokan (2014) explained that established in 1939 and dissolved in 1955, the CFU produced more than 200 films. These films were made for and distributed to African audiences with the purpose of reinforcing Great Britain's rule over its colonies (Adesokan, 2014, p. 234; *Colonial Film: Moving Images of the British Empire*, 2010, para. 1-4; *The Economist Newspaper Limited*, 2012, para. 7-8). America, too, played its part circulating the "old racist images of Africa" with Tarzan and other "jungle epics that further reinforced negative stereotypes of the continent" (Adesokan, 2014, p. 234; *The Economist*, 2012).

There were filmmakers, though, that sought more educational and socially impactful goals with their films. According to Adesokan (2014), from 1948 through 2004, the French ethnographer Jean Rouch produced films about Africa. These films centered on his idea of "shared anthropology"... the process whereby a foreign director filmed a cultural event or ritual and later exhibited the film to the same people who had been filmed, with the expectation that mutual understanding would result from the encounter." (p. 234). In spite of the good intentions of Rouch and other ethnographers, the racist image of the uncultured, wild inhabitants of the continent remains; Rouch's goal of "shared anthropology" was little realized due to his position

as "a foreign interlocutor" and lack of African audiences (p. 235).

Adesokan (2014) explained that as colonization came to an end African film became "a tool for revolution" and "mouthpieces" for a continent. African scholars used film as a means to present nations' images, convey national platforms, and foster independence. Unifying these burgeoning nations was the Festival Panafricain du Cinéma de Ouagadougou (FESPACO), established in Burkina Faso, and the Carthage Film Festival in Tunisia. These institutions aided African filmmakers in presenting their "nationalist ideals of Pan-Africanism" (p. 235, 237). Noted African author and filmmaker Ousmane Sembene worked to develop Africa's standing in the world of cinema. Sembene films dealt with many themes including "historical, social, political, and personal dimensions of contemporary experiences of the continent" (Adesokan, p. 237).

As Adesokan (2014) presented, Ousmane Sembene and others worked to create a foundation for post-colonial African film. However, issues of financial dependence, slow development of technology, distribution, and preference for Hollywood films impeded the blossoming Africa's film industry. Entertainment cinema was regarded as an indulgence; nations lacked the necessary means to promote and support such industries. (p. 238-239).

Nigeria may lay claim to one of the most successful—if not the most visible—film industry in Africa: Nollywood. Nollywood has made its mark by using local production companies, low-tech equipment, and producing films at a rapid rate. Nollywood direc-

tors also convey most of the real world around them rather than extravagant and expensive sound stages. The directors' style is what is known in the US as "guerilla movie-making," or "shoot and run." The cameras roll and someone keeps watch for the authorities. These decisions, based on necessity, have given Nollywood movies their own quality and allowed producers to make cheaper films at an accelerated rate (Adesokan, 2014, p. 239; *The Economist*, 2012). The development of digital technology was a watershed moment for Nollywood. This new availability of high-tech, affordable equipment made filmmaking much more accessible and polished.

In response to the expense involved with movie-making, many African directors turned to a "do-it-yourself," low-tech approach to filmmaking. Many other African countries now have burgeoning film industries due to this approach. Kenya is the home of Riverwood, the nation's film industry. It, like other African countries, has found inexpensive ways to create a thriving film industry. Thanks to affordable digital equipment and fast post-production times, Riverwood has been able to release about over 20 films a week. This industry has brought jobs to many Kenyans, either through self-employment or with the production companies (Southern Innovator, n.d.). Increasing Kenya's value in the filmmaking world is Lupito Nyong'o. Nyong'o is a Kenyan actress; she won an Academy Award (2014) for her work in *12 Years a Slave* (Gathiga, 2014).

South Africa, too, has an up-and-coming film industry, having grown

from 4,000 people in 1995 to 25,000 (South Africa, 2014). The country has been the site for many international productions such as *Lord of War* (2005), *District 9* (2010), *Blood Diamond* (2006), and *Invictus* (2009). South Africa has also produced its own award-winning films. *Yesterday* (2004), which was nominated for an Oscar, and *U Carmen E Khayalitsha (2004) which receiver Berlin's film festivals Golden Bear award (South Africa. Info, 2014).*

The first Nollywood movie was conceived as a simple marketing tool. It is reported that the film was produced because a trader, Kenneth Nnebue, was trying to move some blank video tapes. In 1992, Nnebue hired a theater director to shoot a short film and then record it onto the blank tapes as a kind of added value. The movie was "Living in Bondage"; it sold over 500,000 copies (The Economist, 2012).

Much has changed since 1992. According to *The Economist* (2012), Nollywood movies sell millions of copies and provide many jobs. Nigeria's unemployment rate is 23.9% (CIA, 2014). However, according to Moudio (2013), the film industry is the one of the largest industries in the country (after agriculture) employing over one million people. Jason Njoku found opportunity in the industry. At 32 years old, he has a multi-million dollar film-distribution company and employs 71 people.

Moudio (2013) pointed out that it had been speculated that Nigerians could have even more access to jobs with just a little help from government backing. This didn't fall on deaf ears. President Goodluck Jonathan pledged to N32.6 billion (\$200 million US) to Nollywood in 2010 (Agabi, 2013). In 2013, Agabi (2013) stated, Jonathan then pledged another N3 billion (\$18.4 million US) to further bolster the film industry, create new jobs, and generally improve the whole industry. Nevertheless, according to Africa Renewal Online (2013) and other reports, Nollywood sees \$590 million (US) annually and produces about 50 films a week

at a cost of about \$32,000 (US) per film (Institute for Cultural Diplomacy; Moudio, 2013, *table*). This is truly a far cry from the movie business that Rouch and even Sembene experienced.

Despite the positive economic effects the film industry has on Nigeria, Nollywood does have its opponents. In a 2010 piece, *The Economist* (2010) described a shared fear of "re-colonization" by various African nations and critics alike. This re-colonization was one of a cultural intrusion rather than an outside power; it has been labeled "Nigerianisation" (The Economist, 2010). However, Dr. Emmanuel Adedayo Adedun (2014), senior Lecturer in the Department of English, University of Lagos, described the themes found in Nollywood films:

"Nollywood filmmakers have applied their talent and imagination to both historical and contemporary issues as reflected in diverse themes of their movies. The themes range from religion to governance, from crime to adventure and from rural/urban living to campaigns against social vices like AIDS, corruption, prostitution, etc. These are produced as common video genres like horror, comedy, urban legend, mythic parable, romance, witchcraft, melodrama, Christian morality tale and historical epic" (p. 114)

These themes are often mixed with contrived or poorly developed, "completely wacky" plots, and "nonsensical phrases" (Thetimes, 2008, p. 114).

There also exists the argument that Nollywood is aiding in the extinction of many indigenous Nigerian languages. Dr. Adedun (2014) studied sociolinguistics of Nollywood films. His research found that several Nigerian languages were at risk due to the preference for Yoruba, Efik, Hausa, Ibibio, and Bini, all with intermittent English. Yoruba was the most used language in production while Igbo was totally absent. He also pointed out that most production companies chose English over other languages in which to produce their movies (p. 132). What

does that mean for Nigeria's languages? According to Dr. Adedun (2014), the extinction of language is a gradual process; other languages are preferred and taught more than others. English is considered a "super language" that is indicative of education, prestige, class, and opportunities. This leads to what Bamiro referred to as "subtracted polyglossia," or "the ascendancy of the English language at the expense of the regression and decline of the local languages" (p. 133). Children learn English and/or major Nigerian languages at the expense of local or mother tongues (p. 134).

Parents who are concerned with the implications of their children watching Nollywood movies have echoed Dr. Adedun's findings. Pidgin – a language that is formed from a mixture of several languages when speakers of different languages need to talk to each other – is pervasive in Nollywood movies. Parents have complained that their children's English has suffered because of the influence of Nollywood. Non-Nigerians object to the Nigerian accent mimicked by their children and cite it as evidence to the amount of control Nigeria has. Still other parents have claimed that Nollywood has affected the family in other areas: family members' work ethics, church attendance, and household norms have been disrupted (Kamundi, 2010). There also is the view that Nollywood portrays Nigeria as a country steeped in sorcery, loose morals, and poor acting (*AllAfrica*, May, 2104).

Does this view towards Nollywood actually come from the negative light the industry shines on Nigeria with its depictions of witchcraft, voodoo, and the like? Or is it merely the low quality, small budget films that flood the market? Some argued that it's been the tendency of the producers to turn a profit rather than "portraying the good image of society" (*AllAfrica*, May, 2014,).

There are arguments from the other side of the aisle. In contrast to the growing fears of losing indigenous languages to Pidgin, English, and more common languages, writer



Cast and Crew on a Nigerian film set.

Akinwale Adekunle maintains that Nollywood is “the purveyor of Nigeria’s art and culture,” and stated, “It shows the new generation what our diverse culture entails” (*AllAfrica*, June, 2014). Adekunle was outspoken about the benefits of Nollywood. He went on to praise the industry for providing jobs to millions of Nigerians promoting the arts, and contributing to the nation’s GDP (*AllAfrica*, June, 2014).

Still others find the escapist quality of Nollywood films alluring. “Thank God for Nigerian movies, they are an escape from news where politicians dominate coverage,” said Grace, a Nollywood fan (Kamundi, 2010). Kamundi (2010) showed how this sentiment is echoed by many Nigerians who do not only enjoy Nollywood films, but find present them and the world a true representation of the Africa around them. “Nigeria’s pulp movies have had a wide influence on African popular culture,” stated Thetimes of The Nigerian Voice (2008). “Nollywood offers an

innovative and cheap way to expand the African story through a variety of voices and images that can only serve to turn around the image of a dying, helpless Africa to one that celebrates itself (The Nigerian Voice, 2008, para. 22).

Image Reference

<http://www.nigerianemployment.com/jobs/nollywood-child-actors-back-behind-scene-photos-new-movie/>

Green Initiatives: Promoting Women in Africa

JESSICA REBSTOCK

It is no secret that sustainable living or being “green” is the trend heard around the world. However, it is not just western countries taking action in an attempt to be ecological. What does a country need to do in order to be considered a nation that is making progress in environmental sustainability? Many people think of solar panels and wind turbines used to generate energy. Others think of more modern technologies such as hybrid cars, or an endless supply of high efficiency appliances. While these things are some examples that help contribute to living an eco-friendly lifestyle, “green living” can be found in many more creative outlets that not only improve sustainability, but also reveal an underlying theme of women's empowerment. African women across the continent are finding innovative solutions to help the environment.

A Glance at Wangari Maathai

Sustainability is not a new concept to African countries, mainly because Africa is a continent rich with natural resources. Perhaps one of the most notable environmental undertakings implemented in Africa is Professor Wangari Maathai's Green Belt Movement.

Started in 1977 and based outside Nairobi, The Green Belt Movement is a response to Kenyan women who expressed their concern of fading streams, diminishing food supply, and an ever increasing distance to walk just to get wood necessary for daily life. The Green Belt Movement inspired women to get involved in planting trees across Kenya and, in return, received

a small financial incentive (greenbeltmovement.org). Subsequently, this original green initiative allowed Maathai to simultaneously address other issues, such as the disempowerment of women. This ecological initiative spread to other countries in Africa, where the women were the driving force behind the project. The Green Belt movement not only improved the land by the planting of more than 35



The late Wangari Maathai with, at the time, senator Barack Obama in Nairobi.

million trees, but also brought together many groups of women who were organized and collaborated to make a difference in their own lives and in the lives of others (Maathai, 2007). Throughout her journey of environmental achievements, Maathai showed that although she had gone through many phases of her life, both the suc-

cesses and failures have helped her be more inspiring and encouraging to other women with the message that “the sky is the limit” (Maathai, 2006, pp. 136). Today, young African women are following in Maathai's powerful footsteps to help continue promoting green efforts in Africa through a variety of business endeavors including the following:

Lorna Rutto - Recycling Plastic Waste

Kenya produces over 10,000 tons of plastic waste each day while less than 2% of Kenyan land is forest (ecopost.co.ke). As a young child living in poverty, Lorna Rutto witnessed the build up of trash around her. Instead of allowing the surrounding trash to suppress her aspirations, Rutto was inspired to make various adornments and jewelry from the plastic trash and sold them for money (unreasonableinstitute.org). This idea at a young age paved the way for Rutto to fulfill her dreams of entrepreneurship to help Kenya's land. Living in Nairobi, Lorna Rutto has since become the founder of EcoPost Limited (2010); a sustainable living venture that turns plastic waste into a usable and ecofriendly plastic timber, which is then used for fencing posts. This plastic timber not only aids in the issue of deforestation, but also provides prospective jobs, specifically for Kenyan youth and women. Remarkably, “EcoPost has withdrawn over 1 million kilograms of plastic and saved an estimated 250 acres of forest.” (ecopost.co.ke). Recycling Kenya's excessive plastic waste has prevented 2,500,000 kg of CO₂



Bamboo bicycle built in Ghana.

emissions, which has helped alleviate the issue of climate change (ecopost.co.ke). In 2011, the Cartier Women's Initiative Awards recognized Rutto for her sustainable efforts in Kenya and for her entrepreneurship. The Cartier Women's Initiative Awards is a program that creates an international network of women entrepreneurs and encourages the business ideas of women around the globe (cartierwomensinitiative.com). Lorna Rutto is an ideal model of a woman transforming trash into treasure—a true sustainable effort making a significant difference in Africa's ecosystem.

Bernice Dapaah - Making Bikes from Bamboo

Traditionally, Bamboo in Africa is used for things that do not require much durability or longevity, such as walking sticks, various art figures, and laminated coffee tables. In Ghana, there are no records of farmers even growing bamboo mainly because it is mainly seen as a free substance that can be readily found throughout in the forest (Rudolf and Emmanuel, 2013, pp.1). However, because bamboo is a non-timber product and grows rapidly regardless of the climate, consuming Ghana's bamboo allows for the

production of sustainable products (Rudolf and Emmanuel, 2013).

Named as one of the 2014 Young Global Leaders, Bernice Dapaah is helping put Ghana on the map regarding progress in sustainable living by transforming bamboo into a sustainable mode of transportation. Dapaah is the executive director of Ghana Bamboo Bikes, a green initiative to help Ghana combat some of its major challenges: climate change, poverty, rural-urban migration, and high unemployment rates among Ghana's youth (ghanabamboobikes.org).

While Ghana is rich with natural resources, including cocoa beans, and gold, it also has an abundance of bamboo (ghanaembassy.org). Utilizing this bamboo in an effort to help Ghana's land and economy is one driving force behind Dapaah's green bike initiative. These organic bamboo bikes are ecofriendly as opposed to traditional steel and aluminum bikes, which require using a lot of energy to produce. Additionally, these bikes have a natural shock absorption system, and a high load bearing capacity—up to 500 pounds. These features are ideal for Ghanaians who use these bikes to transport various materials across a rugged land. Focusing on the business aspects, the Ghana Bamboo Bikes

Initiative has created job training in the making of these bikes, which has helped the economy. When asked about her support and empowerment of women through her business, Dapaah explained that her business employs more women than men and that women hold the top administrative positions (empowerwomen.org).

Conclusion

In the words of Professor Wangari Maathai, "We owe it to ourselves and to the next generation to conserve the environment so that we can bequeath our children a sustainable world that benefits all." This statement embodies the essence of what it means to live "green" and how this rings true for businesses established and managed by remarkable women throughout the countries of Africa.

Image Reference

Maathai and Obama. Credit: Fredrick Onyango. http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maathai_and_Obama_in_Nairobi.jpg

Bamboo Bike. <http://www.myafricanow.com/bamboo-bike-business/>

Women's Economic Empowerment

MICHELLE VARGAS

While the world continues to be ever changing and progressing, the role of women in society, while expanding, continues to crave new dimensions and empowerment. Women play incredibly important roles in all realms of society including as mothers and wives, but lack the acknowledgment of their role in the socio-economic development of their countries. In Africa, women are held equal to men in various realms including religion and political power, but in some areas are not acknowledged for their roles and status.

“Women constitute more than 50 percent of Africa’s population and account for 60-80 percent of the agricultural labor force. They dominate informal and service sectors activi-

ties and contribute substantially to self-help socioeconomic development projects” (“A Study of the Economic Empowerment,” 1998). Unfortunately, they receive very little credit for their contribution and face barriers to entry as potential game changers.

The problem faced in Africa lies in a series of factors that constrain women from becoming important members of Africa’s economic activities. Among the lack of acknowledgment for the tasks that they perform, other constraining factors include “unequal access to education and training, demanding reproductive responsibilities and high fertility rates, restrictions to women’s employment in both the public and private sectors of the economy, limited access

to resources, attitude and cultural practice” (“A Study of the Economic Empowerment,” 1998).

Achieving Gender Equality

According to the operational framework of the United Nations Millennium Project Taskforce for Education and Gender, in order to achieve gender equality and truly empower women, there must be a change in each of the three domains (Dejene, 2007, p. 5):

i.) Capabilities Domain – refers to the basic human abilities as measured by education, health, and nutrition;



© Green Belt Movement

ii.) *Access to Resources and Opportunities Domain* – refers to equality in opportunity to use or apply basic capabilities through access to economic assets, including land, property, and infrastructure, resources, such as income and employment, and political opportunities that allow for female representation in parliament and other political bodies; and

iii.) *Security Domain* – defined as reduced vulnerability to violence and conflict, as violence targets women and girls and limits them from reaching their maximum potential.

Once the three domains have been fully achieved and a structure for equal gender opportunities have been set in place, women empowerment will be achieved and allow for a truly thriving society of balance.

Women's Entrepreneurship

Historically, women in Africa have been celebrated for their strength, work ethic, and dedication to their families through matriarchal traditions. However, as African countries continue to develop into contemporary societies, the roles of women within their communities have remained stagnant and “women’s entrepreneurship in micro and small business that are often considered informal, despite concerted efforts of poverty reduction initiatives through increased access to skills training and micro-credit, have not been able to reach the growth potential” (Dejene, 2007, p. 2).

The potential growth lies in the power to educate women to use their traditions of hard work and dedication towards non-traditional fields that will truly put African women on the map as leaders of their economy. Global organizations like Young Female Entrepreneurs (YFE), who aim to create a network of women worldwide to help them start and grow businesses (“About FYE,” n.d.), and Dot Connect Africa, a Kenyan organization with

special interest in the education of African girls and women in the technology sector (“Vision and Objective,” n.d.), can provide effective foundations for entrepreneurship and transformation from traditional to non-traditional economic trends that will allow women to compete and be truly empowered economically.

School Girls Unite

The goal of organizations such as YFE and Dot Connect Africa is not only to empower women financially, but also allow them to become members of new industries. They understand that the basis for power starts with education. School Girls Unite, a non-profit organization based in Mali dedicated to freedom via education outlets, was inspired by the idea that “education is the starting point to solving almost every problem, including reducing diseases and ending poverty, and eventually increasing the number of women in leadership positions throughout the world” (“About School Girls Unite,” n.d.).

They believe that by providing young girls with a formal education, they are providing a foundation for growth, opportunities, and ultimate freedom. School Girls Unite, or *Les Filles Unies pour l'Education*, provide scholarships to young girls to tackle problems of low elementary graduation rates, child brides and illiteracy among women (“About School Girls Unite,” n.d.). Through these efforts they are better able to set these young girls in the right path to leadership roles in their communities and powerful minds for socio-economic advancements and recognition.

Heifer International

Heifer International is a charity organization that works with communities to end world hunger and poverty through the “teach a man to fish” philosophy. They strive to “empower families to turn hunger and poverty into hope and prosperity” by providing them with the necessary resources

and training them to use sustainable agriculture and commerce within their families and to gain sustainable incomes (“About Heifer International,” n.d.). Heifer International has a particular interest in empowering women to change the world.

“Women are often the most vulnerable, and building real skills and social capital can help lift them and their families out of poverty” – Keo Keang, Heifer Cambodia Director

Heifer provides the livestock, training, and assistance to help women be self-sufficient. The program helps women achieve enough profits to send their children to school, pay for their medical expenses, and to provide their children with the opportunity to find a niche within their communities and a voice within themselves. The idea of this project is that “if you change a woman’s life, she will share her knowledge with her sisters, daughters and friends” and spread the power of femininity and womanhood (“Empower Women to Change the World,” n.d.).

Empowerment Inside Out

It is evident that African women are strong and prepared to take on roles of essential members of their socio-economic development and is it time that they bring that strength inside out. African women have struggled and succeeded for centuries, and with the foundations that local and worldwide organizations are helping establish, they will once more gain recognition for their strife and perseverance. Looking at the potential roles of women, one finds that if society is to develop, “it is vital that society effectively utilize the talent, experience and expertise of women in all levels of decision-making” (Bond, 2000, p. 79). Without gender equality, there will come a point where there will be no more progression for lack of consideration of the other half of society.

Image Reference

<http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/news-and-events/media-resources>

Tunisia, Three Years Later: Reflections on Jasmine Revolution

JASPER P. WEBB

Background

On Friday, December 17, 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi, a twenty-six year old street vendor, poured gasoline on himself, lit a match and set himself ablaze in front of the governor's office in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia. He could hardly have known as the flames engulfed him that his actions would be the catalyst that would spark a half century of social and political tensions in Tunisia into a full scale revolt that would spread across national boundaries through much of northern Africa and parts of the Middle East. For him, it was a personal statement against a government that he felt had oppressed him for many years.

When Bouazizi was only ten years old, he became the primary provider for his family supporting his mother and five younger siblings by selling produce from a wooden cart (Ryan, 2011, 15 January). Despite applying to join the army and seeking employment in various sectors, Bouazizi would continue to support his family as a street vendor until the day he died. Bouazizi was often harassed by police and forced to pay bribes while selling his wares to support his family (Beaumont, 2011). On December 17th, Bouazizi was confronted by police led by a female municipal official, Faïda Hamdi. They physically assaulted him, confiscated his electronic scales, and overturned his produce cart (Abouzeid, 2011, p. 8). Enraged by the altercation, Bouazizi sought the intervention of the local governor, but the official refused to meet with him. Less than an hour after the altercation with the police, Bouazizi self-immolated in the middle of traffic in front of

the government building that, to him, represented corruption after exclaiming, "How do you expect me to make a living?" (Simon, 2011, p. 1). It was a sentiment shared by many Tunisians.

In order to understand the desperation of Bouazizi and many of his fellow Tunisians, we must begin our investigation earlier than December 2010. Situated on the Mediterranean Sea of northern coastal Africa, Tunisia has a long history of power struggles dating back to antiquity (Perkins, 1986, pp. 15-95). In modern times, France invaded Tunisia in 1881 under the auspices of protecting French Territory in Algeria from raids by Tunisian Khumir tribespeople. This invasion culminated in the establishment of Tunisia as a French protectorate under the Treaty of the Bardo which was further reinforced by the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 between European powers and the Ottoman Empire (Perkins, 1986, p. 85). Following WWI, a Tunisian nationalist movement began to develop and made modest inroads towards autonomy from French rule (Perkins, 1986, pp. 97-107). The second world war saw Tunisia fall to the Axis powers, occupation by Germany, and upon Allied victory, return to status as a French protectorate despite the issuance of the "Manifesto of the Tunisian Front" by a coalition of numerous political leaders, labor activists, educators and religious officials calling for self government and an elected assembly (Perkins, 1986, pp. 108-110). During the post war years, France encountered increasing nationalist movements in its territories in Africa and Indochina, and in March 1956, French Prime Minister Guy Mol-

let ceded control and granted independence to Tunisia (Perkins, 1986, pp. 109-115).

At the end of the protectorate, nationalist leader Habib Bourguiba was elected the first prime minister of independent Tunisia and president of the Republic of Tunisia - a position he held from 1958 until he was removed for medical reasons in 1987 (Perkins, 1989, p. 28). Bourguiba's presidency was characterized early on by a wide range of social reforms intended to modernize the country. His Neo-Destour party had long been a secular nationalist movement which neither rejected nor invited participation of Islamic religious leaders (Rinehart, 1979, p. 52). He quickly made moves to eliminate what he considered to be "obsolete" religious customs and regulations including abolishing the religious courts, absorbing the school of the Zituna mosque into the new University of Tunis, prohibiting the wearing of the veil by women, and increasing women's legal rights including access to birth control and abortion (Rinehart, 1979, p. 52). He also adopted socialist-etatist socio-economic policies that established a large bureaucracy to provide social services, expanded security services and the army, subsidized foodstuffs and energy production, and created a large number of public sector employment opportunities (Winckler, 2013, p. 68). These policies led to rapid economic growth and a sharp decline in unemployment during the 1950s and 1960s; also, the oil boom of the 1970s brought Tunisia vast revenue sources from neighboring oil-rich arab countries in the form of aid, labor migra-

tion, and tourism (Winckler, 2013, p. 69). Economic opportunities bolstered young Tunisians, particularly the educated, against opposition to Bourguiba's regime by muslim fundamentalists and other opponents (Winckler, 2013, p. 69).

By the time Prime Minister Zine El Abidine Ben Ali assumed the presidency, Tunisia was in decline. Due to a rapid population increase and the effect of the global decline in oil prices during the 1980s, the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth rate had fallen from 7.5% to 3.6% - the unemployment was 16.4% (Winckler, 2013, pp. 70-72). Unemployment continued to rise during the 1990s and the early part of the 21st century reaching 28.4% in the 15-24 age bracket just prior to the financial crash on Wall Street and the subsequent global financial crisis (Winckler, 2013, p. 72). The Tunisian government attempted to counteract the economic trend by tripling subsidy expenditures between 2000 and 2010, but this was insufficient to maintain the prices of energy production and basic food supply (Winckler, 2013, p. 73). As was to be expected, popular opinion evolved from the support of Bourguiba to growing dissent and a feeling that the Ben Ali administration was not responding to the peoples needs - as things got worse, an increasing portion of the population began to see the government as corrupt (Winckler, 2013, p. 74).

It was in this socio-economic environment that Mohamed Bouazizi felt he had no future and chose to set himself ablaze that December morning. His physical protest statement quickly led to mass protests in the streets of Sidi Bouzid, and by December 27th, demonstrators were beginning to occupy the streets of the nation's capital, Tunis, and labor unions were calling for "solidarity protests" (Bhatnagar, 2010). Protests continued through December and spread throughout Tunisia. In January, a general strike by lawyers and teachers led to increased violence between police, military, and protesters. Meanwhile Ben Ali de-

nounced violent protest as unacceptable (Al Jazeera, 2010). On January 14th, Ben Ali fled the country with his family to Saudi Arabia, leaving the Prime Minister, Mohammed Ghannouchi, to take over as interim president (BBC, 2011, 15 Jan). Ghannouchi formed an interim government and vowed to resign after holding transparent and free elections within six months. Protests against Ghannouchi and the ruling RCD party continued, and Ghannouchi announced in a television address on January 27th that 12 ministers had been replaced. He further insisted the government was "transitional" and would "take the country to democracy" (BBC, 2011, 27 Jan). Protests continued until Ghannouchi resigned on February 27th saying: "After having taken more than one week of thinking, I became convinced, and my family shared my conviction, and decided to resign. It is not fleeing my responsibilities; I have been shouldering my responsibilities since 14 January [when Mr Ben Ali fled]" and that his resignation would serve the revolution and the future of Tunisia (BBC, 2011, 27 February).

Social Media Plays a Central Role in 21st Century Revolution

Technology found a new role in the events of the Jasmine Revolution. During the months of revolution, social media proved to be more than just a place to post pictures of cats or idly banter about social politics. Instead it became a tool that played a central role in determining the outcome of the Jasmine Revolution and the greater Arab Spring. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube brought elements to the revolution that had been absent from previous protests and uprisings.

First, social networks transformed into political networks that provided instant connections between mass groups of protesters. A study analyzing over three million tweets, gigabytes of YouTube content and thousands of blog posts found that "a

spike in online revolutionary conversations often preceded major events on the ground" (Howard, 2011, Abstract). These modes of communication provided connections that were, at least initially, beyond the scope of government censorship. Here dissidents were empowered to share ideas and discover information that was otherwise prohibited or unavailable (Ross, 2011). Ross explains further that, "on the whole, the clear evidence of recent history shows that the network technologies infusing the nervous system of modern political, economic, and social life tend to resist centralized control and empower decentralized movements of ideas" (Ross, 2011).

Communication through these networks allowed individuals to meet virtually in situations where organization in person would have raised government attention and been classified as unlawful assembly. Moreover, social networks allowed leadership and organization to be diffused among many participants instead of one leader or core group (Ross, 2011). In addition to connecting the protesters, tweets, Facebook and YouTube posts provided the rest of the world with instant on the ground reports of revolutionary progress and setbacks.

Women's Role in the Revolution and Beyond

Tunisian women played an active role in the Jasmine Revolution. Ambassador for Global Women's Issues, Melanne Vermeer, told the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "They were in the streets of Tunisia ... standing shoulder to shoulder with the men as they struggled together to build a better future for all" (Vermeer, 2011, p. 4). Furthermore, since most conventional media networks in the Arab Spring countries were dominated by older males, cyberactivism gave women their own voice both locally and internationally (Newsom, 2012).

One such case was blogger, Lina Ben Mhenni. During the most violent days of the uprising, she travelled to Sidi Bouzid, and was the only blogger



Women played a significant role in Tunisian liberation.

in Regueb and Kasserine when the security forces massacred people there. She provided first hand accounts and photographs of the dead and injured on her blog, "A Tunisian Girl," to ensure that other Tunisian activists and international media would know what was happening (Ryan, 2011, 21 October). Moreover, she was one of the few brave Tunisian cyberactivists who blogged and tweeted under a real name during the reign of former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (Ryan, 2011, 21 October). The revolution was not just for young women either. Saida Sadouni led the historic Kasbah picket that succeeded in forcing Mohamed Ghannouchi's interim government out of office, but she does not conform to the typical image of an Arab revolutionary. The 77-year-old Tunisian woman camped in front of the prime minister's headquarters for more than two weeks in the bitter Tunisian cold. "I have resisted French occupation. I have resisted the dictatorships of Bourguiba and Ben Ali. I will not rest until our revolution meets its goals," she explained to thousands of protesters who joined her. Many have hailed Sadouni as the mother of Tunisia's revolution, a living record of her country's modern history and its struggle for emancipation.

Following the revolution, women are playing an increasing role in government. Raja bin Salama, a Tunisi-

sian feminist, called for the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights to be the basis of the country's new laws (Michaud, 2011, 6 June). Melanne Vermeer, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues told the U.S. Senate, "In Tunisia, which held its first fully democratic election on October 23 [2011], women won around 25 percent of the seats in the new Constituent

Assembly" (Vermeer, 2011, p. 6). Moreover, Vermeer advised, "All political parties who won significant seats responded to Human Rights Watch's pre-election (sic) survey indicating their support for the principles of gender equality and nondiscrimination. They all, including the moderate Islamist al-Nahda party, favored maintaining the country's progressive personal status codes which grant Tunisian women the same rights as Tunisian men" (Vermeer, 2011, p. 7). This seems to indicate an acknowledgment not only of women's role within the revolution itself but also their importance as Tunisia makes its way into the future.

Looking Forward: When Will the Sun Rise on Tunisia?

The Jasmine Revolution had severe effects on the Tunisian economy. In 2011, the GDP growth rate dropped from 3.7% to -1.8% (Winckler, 2013,

p. 70). The tourism industry, which had provided employment for 11.5% of the workforce and accounted for 6.5% of the GDP, suffered a 33% drop in revenue in 2011 (Winckler, 2013, p. 76). In an effort to combat the economic decay, the Tunisian government created 20,000 new positions for civil employees and raised the average public sector wages an average of 4.7% in 2011 (Winckler, 2013, p. 78). The tourism industry made a significant recovery during 2012, but deteriorated again in 2013 following the murder of opposition leader Chokri Belaid in February and Islamic attacks on tourist destinations in April (Winckler, 2013, p. 76).

Two years later, things are beginning to look more promising. In January 2014, the Tunisian national assembly adopted a new constitution that is lauded as a "shining star" in contrast with other Arab Spring nations such as Libya and Egypt that remain plagued by instability and political turmoil (Dasgupta, 2014). French President Francois Hollande, the only European head of state in attendance at the ceremony, declared, "The constitution honours your revolution and is an example for other countries to follow" (Al Jazeera, 2014, 7 February). "This constitution that we are celebrating today is a hope and an example for other countries," echoed European Council President Herman Van Rompuy (Al Jazeera, 2014, 7 February). Tunisian President Moncef Marzouki said it best, "By adopting the constitution, Tunisia celebrated a triple victory, over dictatorship, over terrorism that seeks to spread chaos and block our path to democracy and over our own divisions" (Al Jazeera, 2014, 7 February). *The Economic Intelligence Unit* also sees hope for Tunisia's future albeit with reservations. In June 2014, it reported that Tunisia is making progress beyond that of its Arab Spring neighbors, but they still have many hurdles to overcome.

Image Reference

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On the Rocks: A Sugary Chronicle of Coca-Cola's Impact on South Africa's Economic Development

CHRIS SALAMONE, JD

As a commercial force in Africa, globalization has become an unavoidable catalyst and consequence in the pursuit of a mass consumption-based worldwide economy. The list of intended and unintended consequences to the international economy, as a function of globalization, is long. Further, these consequences have resulted in meaningful and often distressing political ramifications between trading nations. However, instead of focusing on the purely negative aspects of globalization, this paper seeks to explore some of the key benefits associated with one particular international commercial enterprise, Coca-Cola, within a single African country, South Africa.

A Bitter Taste

The most common criticism of globalization is the potential for homogenization of human culture. (Holton, 2000, pp. 140-152). Local customs and habits relative to unique dietary constraints tend to evolve toward a global mainstream when a multinational company, such as Coca-Cola, establishes itself in a community. Unfortunately, Coca-Cola also tends to operate along other major transnationals such as McDonald's, thereby vastly exacerbating its impact on a cultural environment. This new uniform landscape may not be a positive change for cultures rooted in historical precedent, such as South Africa, and can be paralleled to the impact of British-influenced tea trading over generations. Also, a result of large-scale trade has been the

worldwide dominance of English as the lingua franca in business transactions. Evidence of this is that the most spoken languages of South Africa are Afrikaans and English, despite having eleven official languages. A fact made even more astounding by the reality that both popular tongues are foreign in origin. The rate of indigenous language extinction has only increased as globalization has continued to march forward. And, with the advent of shifted manufacturing and labor to less developed countries, pollution and the degradation of sensitive environments have both become increasingly pervasive. Sometimes these negative consequences may result in international trade regulations, tariffs or sanctions which create political tension in a fiercely competitive global economy.

On the Sweet Side

Conversely, in terms of positive effects associated with globalization, the most commonly studied (Rubenstein, 2011, pp. 29-30) has to be access to and the availability of affordable/quality goods and services. In large part, international outsourcing for labor is a direct result of lax international regulations pertaining to workplace safety, minimum wage, healthcare and age of employees. This is also the main reason why Coca-Cola tends to bottle and distribute their products regionally (Moore School of Bus., 2005). When taken in the aggregate, these labor trends amount to a higher return on investment for companies seeking to increase their

profit margins, but also a symbiotic and measurable benefit to the regional economy. Additionally, globalized labor forces shift scarce resources to less developed countries, therefore strengthening the economies of the countries which are most in need. Sometimes this strengthening can result in positive trade agreements, such as the South Africa Development Community (SADC), TDCA or FTA, which may favor all participating countries.

Direct economic impact can also be attributed to Coca-Cola's presence in South Africa. In 2003 alone, Coca-Cola's activities amounted to \$1.75 billion toward South Africa's GDP, which represents about 1.4 percent of the country's total GDP (Moore School of Bus., 2005). That simply means that Coca-Cola would be the equivalent of 1 in 100 companies that create the total value of goods and services within the entire country. Of course, all these goods and services have generated a large number of direct and indirect jobs, about 166,360.

Critics of globalization might be concerned and ask: *Why should we dedicate such a large section of the workforce to a product which possibly erodes dental enamel, stomach lining, as well as calcium in bones, and may contribute to rising levels of worldwide obesity?* And, obesity is a real concern in South Africa where 29.2% of men are either overweight or obese and a relatively shocking 56.6% of women are overweight or obese (Mbananga et al., 2012, pp. 1038-1048). While these statistics are troubling, few academ-

ics argue that products such as soft drinks should be banned internationally because of their adverse health effects. To argue that South Africa should be restricted would remove South African agency and individual responsibility. Should we also remove sugar from local grocery stores? Perhaps South Africans may not prefer the use of sweeteners or explore their own ability workout more? Are hammers too dangerous to sell out of hardware stores as well?

The links to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome as a result of the commercialization of alcoholic beverages in South Africa, are even worse. (May, 2000, pp.1905-1912). Fortunately, however, Coca-Cola is fairly isolated from the manufacture and distribution of alcohol products in South Africa. There are some regionally-owned bottling companies, which Coca-Cola utilizes, that also bottle and distribute alcohol. However, Coca-Cola (as a company) is not directly involved in the alcohol bottling process.

Jobs which stem from the Coca-Cola system are diverse and function in two primary business models within Africa. Both models receive flavoring or syrups from Coca-Cola's headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. From there, regional bottlers combine water, carbonation and the proprietary materials provided by Coca-Cola and distribute according to regional preferences. First, regional bottlers employ Manual Distribution Centers (MDCs) in large urban centers. These MDCs

require local individuals to come pick up Coca-Cola products from a central location. Second, and in more remote locations, distributors and salespeople via all forms of transportation carry Coca-Cola products into less-populous markets. These modes of transport include anything from truck, to bicycle, and even handcart (Berry, 2010). Of the 166,360 jobs reportedly caused by Coca-Cola's activities in South Africa, even legal and medical personnel, in addition to the many thousands of related and ancillary jobs from exclusivity contracts with other major companies such as McDonald's benefit from the Coca-Cola System's regional control network.

Omnipresent products like Coca-Cola have a tremendous impact on the economic activity of a market. Job creation and the generation of large quantities of goods and services are all positives for South Africa. But the story of Coca-Cola's impact does not conclude with GDP and jobs. Instead, a myriad of other local sectors also benefit from the production and distribution of Coca-Cola products. Businesses and industries which are involved in plastic, metals such as iron and steel, chemicals, motor vehicles, electricity, ancillary business services, trade, agriculture and food all derive benefits from their gargantuan and ongoing associations with Coca-Cola. This is important because the Coca-Cola System does not maintain complete control, nor by extension receive the total profit associated with local activity in South Africa. Instead, regional activities are controlled by regional individuals and businesses.

Finally, as of November 2012, Coca-Cola announced a strong commitment to the empowerment of women in South Africa. Worldwide, this initiative is known as 5by20, which aims to empower 5 million women entrepreneurs by 2020. In South Africa, 5by20 has translated to more than 4,600 women

who have been provided access to "business skills, financial services, assets and support networks of peers and mentors." (Coca-Cola Co., 2012). The goal is to reach more than 40,000 women in South Africa, Egypt and Brazil by the end of 2015! This is especially significant in South Africa, where Black Economic Empowerment has been a priority of the government since the end of the apartheid political system in 1994.

The Dregs

Much has been said about the negative ramifications of multinational corporations in culturally rich locations, like South Africa. Yet, the economic benefits of Coca-Cola's intrusion into South Africa have been vast and mostly non-exploitive. From local control, to contributions to GDP and job growth, as well as professional empowerment, Coca-Cola has also had positive effects. Even water stewardship, a concern for South Africa in general, has been aligned with Coca-Cola: by 2020 the company plans to replenish 100% of the water used in beverages back to communities and nature through the support of healthy watersheds and community water programs. In the aggregate, the more goods and services which are bought and sold in South Africa, the more citizens will have access to and be able to purchase necessary items, such as food, water, shelter, healthcare and education. Coca-Cola's addition of \$1.75 Billion to South Africa's GDP, hundreds of thousands of jobs, corporate social responsibility programs and maintenance of regional control in the international Coca-Cola System, ensure that while Coca-Cola may not primarily offer items necessary to survive, with the exception of bottled water, the company has nevertheless provided a gear for the South African consumption-based economy to turn on.

Image Reference

Credit: Megan Trace. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/megantrace/6886269689>



It seems that Coca-Cola is available just about everywhere.

Beta Israel: The Jews of Ethiopia

BARBARA FERRIS



Ethiopian Jews, or *Falasha*, maintaining their cultural traditions.

Ethiopia consists of many religious faiths, the most numerous being the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. Twenty percent of Ethiopians are of the Protestant faith, more than a third are Muslims, and there is also a small but longstanding Jewish community (Ethiopian Census, 2007). Before a mass emigration to Israel, there were about 28,000 Jewish people in Ethiopia. Today, only 7,000 of these people remain. This article is a short history of the Jewish people in Ethiopia, the Beta Israel, or, “The House of Israel”.

The Beta Israel lived for centuries in North and Northwestern Ethio-

pia, in more than 500 small villages spread over a wide territory among populations that are predominantly Christian and Muslim. Most of them were concentrated in the area around Lake Tana, and the Amhara Region of Gonder. In early times, they were referred to as “Falasha” which means outcast. Falasha also means “landless” in the dominant Amhara society. (Klein, 2007)

The Beta Israel are physically and linguistically indistinguishable from the Christian majority in Ethiopia but have considered themselves to be ethnically and religiously distinct. (Sal-

amon, 1999) They trace their lineage to the Lost Tribe of Israel from the Old Testament. Occupationally, the Beta Israel were skilled as potters, weavers, smiths and masons. Because of their outcast positions among the ethnic groups in Ethiopia, the Beta Israel were not allowed to own land. (Klein, 2007)

There are several theories about the origins of Beta Israel and how they came to be in Ethiopia. The three major theories are: the Lost Tribe Theory, which claims that the Beta Israel are the lost tribe of Dan (one of the twelve tribes of Israel from the

Old Testament) and came to Ethiopia in the mid eighth century BC because of a mass migration from Israel; the Convert Theory, which holds that Beta Israel were converted to Judaism from Christianity by outsiders traveling to Ethiopia; and the Rebel theory which holds that these people ended up separating themselves in rebellion against the political, social and economic structures of the state and church of Ethiopia. (Quirin, 1992) The Beta Israel group and the international Jewish community hold the belief that the Beta Israel are from the Lost Tribe of Dan who migrated from Israel in the eighth century BC. (Klein, 2007)

Historical records for the Beta Israel are limited. As early as the ninth century a letter by a Jewish traveler tells of a people who maintain Jewish traditions, possess Jewish texts and spoke Hebrew and established a powerful Jewish Kingdom whose people possess characteristic strength and valor (Adler, 1966). A common theme in the history of Beta Israel has been courage and valor within a framework of a persecution and of Jewish suffering (Kaplan, 1984).

After the rise of Christianity in the fourth century, the Beta Israel withdrew to the mountainous Gonder region where they lived for more than 2,000 years. During this time, the Jews of Ethiopia withstood numerous conflicts with the rulers of Ethiopia because of the proselytizing by the church and aggressions towards non-Christians. One era of conflict was during the Solomonic dynasty in the thirteenth Century. Another was during the reign of Emperor Yshaq (1443-1430) which marked a turning point in which the non-Christians confiscated the lands of Beta Jewish peoples. The Beta Israel of that time compensated for this loss of land by becoming skilled in masonry and metallurgy (Kaplan, 1992). In the 15th Century, the Jews who lived by Lake Tana would have been completely wiped out if it was not for the greater threat to the kings of this era by the influx of Muslims (Kaplan, 1992). Between 1579 and 1590, the Jews were

attacked three times which resulted in a massive loss of life (Quirin, 1992). In 1614, Beta Israel tried to revolt against Emperor Susenyos. As a result, Susenyos ordered the extermination of all Beta Israel men and the sale of the women and children into slavery. The Beta Israel who did not revolt were spared, as long as they converted to Christianity. Another revolt in 1624 led to more extermination of the Beta Israel group.

During the Gonder Era, which was marked by the building of the City of Gonder in 1632, Beta Israel increased their skills as carpenters and masons to help construct the city's monumental castles and churches. They also maintained their traditional occupations such as smiths, potters and weavers. At this time, during the Gonder Era, Beta Israel were free to practice agriculture and were incorporated into the Ethiopian political economy with a relatively high economic and social status. The men of Beta Israel, at this time, developed a level of excellence in the smithing but were viewed with suspicion by their neighbors because of their ability to "spit fire" (Klein, 2007).

In the late 19th century, Gonder ceased to be a political center and was replaced by new "modern" cities (Klein, 2007). The effect for the Beta Israel is that their skills were needed elsewhere and they spread throughout the empire. The primary area of Gonder continued to exist, but with fewer numbers of Beta Israel as they were dispersed throughout the country. Famine and conversion to Christianity by the influx of Protestant missionaries further decreased the population of Beta Israel. During this time, some Beta Israel began doomed treks to Israel in which many perished, to save themselves from persecution, famine and to continue to practice their faith in the Promised Land.

The movement to save the Jews of Ethiopia was started in 1867 by French scholar Joseph Halevy (Klein, 2007). Jaques Faitlovitch, a student of Halevy's worked to improve the conditions of the Ethiopian Jewish com-

munity. Faitlovitch created schools for Beta Israel and acted as an emissary on behalf of the world Jewish community (Klein, 2007). Awareness of Beta Israel by Jewish and Israeli leaders have led to the mass exodus of Ethiopian Jews to Israel. In 1984, during a famine in Ethiopia, Operation Moses was arranged for 8,000 Ethiopian Jews who were flown to Israel. Operation Joshua, in 1985 helped with the removal of 494 Ethiopian Jews from refugee camps in Sudan to relative safety in Israel. In 1991, the dramatic Operation Solomon, over the course of 36 hours, flew 14,325 Beta Israel to Israel. More than 36,000 Ethiopian Jews now live in Israel. They continue to suffer from economic and social hardships. However, they are given assistance in their settlement in Israel. Their full integration into Israeli society is an ongoing process, worthy of continued interest (World Directory of Minorities, 2013).

Image Reference

<http://www.africanmag.com/FORUM-1687-design004>

Helping from Home: Assisting Children in The Central African Republic

SARAH MCKEEVER

In December 2013, UNICEF reported “unprecedented” levels of violence against youngsters with at least 16 children dead and 60 injured (at least two beheaded) and “MSF figures show they have treated over 1,000 people in Bangui in December”(African Research Bulletin). Bangui is the capital of the Central African Republic. The C.A.R. was formerly the French colony Ubangi-Shari (also spelled Oubangui-Chari by Juergensmeyer and Roof in 2012) until August 13, 1960 when it gained independence from France.

The C.A.R. is land-locked and bordered by Cameroon, Chad, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Republic of the Congo. Although the C.A.R. grows food crops including cassava, peanuts, sorghum, millet, maize, sesame, and plantains, it is listed as “one of the least-developed countries in the world” (Rholetter 2012). The C.A.R. is a country of 4.5 million people in Sudano-Guinean savannas (rural villages where “almost 70 percent of the population lives below the poverty line”). They depend on farming, hunting, fishing, and gathering to sustain their life expectancy of 49 years (Rholetter, 2012). The Central African Republic national languages are Sango and French, but most store clerks, cooks, government employees, traders, artisans, builders and pastors speak Niger-Congo language. Minorities speak Nilo-Saharan languages (Kaba) or Afro-Asiatic languages (Arabic and Hausa). Rholetter said that the 2009 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme ranked the CAR, “with an annual per-capita income of \$750, 179th out of 182 countries in its Hu-

man Development Index” (2012). The Central African Republic has “one of the lowest population densities in the world”; the Eastern part of the C.A.R. still has a lower population density yet as a result of the slavery raids the 19th, and 20th Century (2012).

Despite ending slavery, French colonization introduced armed groups to violently enforce the collection of rubber, the cultivation of cash crops, etc which led to mistreatment, sickness, hunger, exhaustion of the “more than 80 ethnic groups” (Roof, 2012). With French forms of Education, and religion, Central Africans converted to Christianity. In 2012, Juergensmeyer and Roof found that “Roughly half of the inhabitants are Christian, evenly split between Catholics and Protestants; 15% are Muslim, and 35% follow African traditional religion primarily. Jehovah’s Witnesses, Baha’is, Mormons, and Seventh-Day Adventists have a small presence as well... French Catholic and Swedish Baptist missionaries arrived in the region by the end of the 19th century. Converts were won slowly, mostly through the missionaries’ offerings of education, literacy, and medical care.” In the 20th century, the Mission to Africa and the church of Simon Kimbangu, “attracted huge numbers to their distinctly Africanized form of Christianity... characterized by faith healing, prophecy, divinely inspired prayer, and long, ecstatic worship services” (Juegensmeyer, Roof, 2012). In 2007, Nicolette D. Manglos explained that without a uniform religion, “commonalities across groups can be found in their belief in a supreme god, veneration for ancestors and for the elderly,

emphasis on divination and prophecy, and belief in witchcraft... Interactions between religious groups are generally peaceful, and there is a high level of tolerance from the government and religious freedom.” Perhaps this has something to do with having a female president? At least they are ahead of the United States in women’s empowerment...

After gaining independence, the country experienced successive military governments. With lack of nationalism, Seleka rebels overthrew President Bozize in 2013. Michel Djotodia assumed power as the first Muslim Head of State provoked the current crisis in C.A.R. Over one thousand people were killed in 2013, almost one million people fled, and one fourth of the country were refugees. 2.2 million people are in need. Catherine Samba-Panza, the mayor of Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic, was elected interim president by the National Transitional Council to replace Djotodia. She became the country’s first female leader. With 19.8 percent GDP growth based on October 2013 projections, this is a brave woman! State tax revenue cannot finance basic public services, and public investment is externally financed. In addition to political turmoil, general health is an issue, with 34% of pregnant women that participated in a Banghui 1996 study being diagnosed with an STD. The current fertility rate in CAR is five children per female. According to the CIA’s World Factbook, 40.6% of the country’s population is under the age of fourteen, with a median age of 19, 28% of children under five are underweight, and over half a million children



Wilfried Yeguete.

are in child labor. The C.A.R. is listed under the CIA's trafficking in persons watch list.

I first became interested in this part of Africa by talking to my friend, Wilfried Yeguete. He told me first-hand experiences, as he remembered the days he spent in C.A.R. as a child. Will just graduated from the University of Florida as a Gator Basketball starting forward. Although UF has idols on NBA teams, like Kenyon Martin, the recent former Gator great Chandler Parsons, or from my college years; the French former Gator National Champion Joakim Noah, is an idol to the youth of our day, including my own students! The day after bussing back from a night win at South Carolina, on Florida's way to the SEC tournament, Mr. Yeguete came and read "The Empty Pot" to my students. With his adorable French accent, he was simply wonderful with the kids. You can tell he's used to being in the spotlight of the press because he was more comfortable than even past interns I've worked with. He praised the students for their good listening skills, and Wilfried demonstrated deep self-connections as he read (about a successor to the Chinese emperor being selected because he was the only child that didn't lie by replacing the cooked seeds with a beautiful plant). Will answered questions, and demonstrated his awe-

some sense of humor and sportsmanship when a student who did not have a question, but raised his hand to say that he and his family were not Gator, but Badger fans! Referred to as "the unsung hero" in Rex Chapman's blog, Will also shared with the students the importance of learning, and his passion for knowledge of history, the world, language, sports, philanthropy (Dance Marathon), that got him where his is today!

My students are not the only lucky ones that this man, with a heart-of-gold, found time between his rigorous college ball/class schedules to meet on a personal level. In between his International Studies, Will mentored boys at other schools in the Boys Club, and also built a deep relationship with a local four-year old cancer patient. It's no wonder this heart-warming story of this uplifting man giving back to society was featured in Sports Illustrated.

Just before graduating, and always thinking about others, Will raised money for his father Lucien Yeguete's non-profit organization Awatole Solidarité Internationale. This company, established in August of 2004, helps "street children in cities across the Central African Republic". Will did this by spending six hours at Finish Line at the Oaks Mall in Gainesville, Florida. Will had a box to which we donated

money towards the street children. With this money, Awatole Solidarité Internationale supports its missions in both France and Africa. The President of the organization, Yeguete's dad says that it promotes civic values, respect for others, and solidarity (a great motto for a divided country). They have a three-day basketball camp in France every summer in Beauval. They teach basketball fundamentals, "because it's something we are very good at", but as his father pointed out, "If there's no infrastructure for playing basketball, it serves no purpose at all." And so, to help the "children who don't go to school", the organization collects basketball equipment, and builds basketball courts in Africa. Axelle Angouande, a 38-year old from Cribi, Cameroon is the auditor of the organization, and spoke, in the only online video about it that I found with English subtitles. She called the building of a basketball court in Poudoukou district of C.A.R. "a celebration". Apparently in attendance were both the Minister, and mayor! They get the importance of this "very educational" organization that teaching the children, the future about nonviolent ways to "attack, and defend".

After a great basketball season in which UF made it to the Final Four, Will traveled to Meaux and tried out for the French National Team.

I remember discussing with Will the truth behind a Jackie Robinson quote "A life is not important, except for the impact it has on other lives". Will's selfless, positive, go-getter outlook on life has impacted many lives in his 22 years, including that of a Gainesville-locked elementary teacher. Although he is not sure where his future endeavors will lead, I am excited to see what lies ahead for him, the organization, and the Central African Republic!

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Helping from Home

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TEACHERS' SUMMER INSTITUTE

The Center for African Studies at the University of Florida is offering a two-week Summer Institute for ten K-12 teachers. The objective of the institute is for participants to increase their knowledge about Africa, including its geography, history, and culture. Participants will develop lesson plans for use in their classrooms. Participation in the summer institute is free. **In addition participants will receive a stipend of \$700. Alachua county teachers will receive continuing education credit. Participants are responsible for their accommodation.**

HOW TO APPLY

Complete the application below and include the following items:

- A brief statement of at least one page outlining
 - What you teach
 - How you would benefit from the institute
 - How you would incorporate those benefits in your teaching
- A complete curriculum vitae
- A letter supporting your application from your school

SEND APPLICATIONS TO:

Dr. Agnes Ngoma Leslie, Outreach Director
427 Grinter Hall, P.O. Box 115560,
Gainesville, FL 32611-5560

T | 352.392.2187

F | 352.392.2435

E | aleslie@africa.ufl.edu

TEACHER'S SUMMER INSTITUTE APPLICATION

Name

Email

_____/_____/_____
DOB

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Telephone: Office / Personal

School Affiliation & Address

Home Mailing Address

Grades & Courses You Teach

Highest Degree

Discipline

Institution