



# Crossing the Continent

ISSUE 8: CULTURE EDITION

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## CONTRAST OF ART AND FASHION

This is a painting by Patrick Minuitia, a well-known Kenyan painter. His art incorporates many colours reflecting Kenya's vibrant culture and traditions. The painting in the article shows the traditional attire of tribal women; and Patrick's use of colour really brings the painting to life, showing the creative yet alternative way of life.

Patrick has named the series of paintings "The people of Kenya". From my understanding of Kenya he does justice to Kenya's way of life and its past. Patrick's paintings show the clothing at the time. Masai women typically wear vast plate-like bead necklaces, and colourful wraps called kanga. The men are famous for wearing a red-checked shuka (Maasai blanket) and carry a distinctive ball-ended club. For Masai, red clothing stands for power. Many Masai wear simple sandals, sometimes soled with pieces of



motorcycle tyres. When males become 'morans' (warriors), around 14 years of age, they traditionally dye their hair red with ochre and fat.

Here is a British painting from the renaissance period (right). You may notice the painting style is completely different to Patrick's. This is not only because it is from hundreds of years ago but the paintings also reflect the different ways of life.

As you can see, this painting is more realistic and has a certain innocence about it. Generally in this time period the artist would paint the sitter paler, making them look wealthy.

Her waist appears very slim in this painting and you may notice the pale almost glowingly white skin which was the height of fashion. To show off her power and wealth she is wearing pearls and diamonds and a huge dress. Women would typically wear a chemise, a corset stiffened with iron, a petticoat, a hoop skirt, stockings, a gown, sleeves, and a neck ruff and wrist ruffs.

There are many anecdotes of women gasping for air and fainting because of their tightly laced corsets. The corset was undoubtedly a danger to health as it pushed against the rib cage, dug into the stomach, and put pressure on the organs. However women still



endured this as it was the height of fashion.

This is a painting of Queen Elizabeth of England. The artist has intentionally emphasised certain elements to make her appear more 'flattering' to the eye. The Elizabethan era was a time of great vanity, so pictures were often made more glamorous than the person itself.

**Bella Joslin**

## CONTRAST OF EDUCATION

There are many similarities but also many differences between education at Agoro Oyombe secondary school and West Buckland School.

Of course all students in each school work towards exams; for students studying at West Buckland these are called GCSEs as well as A levels and similarly at Agoro Oyombe, The pupils take KCSE exams. Pupils at both Agoro Oyombe and West Buckland may choose to retake exams if they fail them in order to get a better mark, opening better job opportunities. However, the teaching methods in both schools are quite different. At Agoro Oyombe the teachers use blackboards and chalk as teaching aids whereas at West Buckland, whiteboards and computers are more commonly used. The traditional style of teaching used at Agoro Oyombe means that teachers lecture their words of wisdom to the classes, and textbooks are often used. On the other hand, at

West Buckland teachers encourage students to find things out for themselves using resources they are given. Olivia Prentice, a West Buckland student, who visited Agoro Oyombe in 2013 noticed a difference between the attitudes of students from Agoro Oyombe to that of pupils at West Buckland.

*"Students at Agoro Oyombe have more enthusiasm to learn, they are also very ambitious and pretty much all of those that I spoke to knew what career they wanted"*

Olivia also described how impressive it was to see students standing at the front of the class to teach from the textbooks when teachers went on strike. I am full of admiration and am humbled to hear how eager students at Agoro Oyombe are to learn compared to West Buckland.

**Madison Shepherd**

## KENYAN AND ENGLISH FOOD

The traditional food of Kenya has evolved to incorporate a little bit of the exotic such as spice. Simple and wholesome would best describe many traditional dishes which form the foundation for the cuisine of Kenya. In rural areas local ingredients are put to good use to filling meals.

The staple food of these meals is a type of starchy porridge called Ugali. This cornmeal can be shaped into a ball for dipping, used as a wrap to pick up meat or shaped into a scoop. Ugali is usually eaten with all kinds of stews, meat, fish or vegetables.

British food has traditionally been based on beef, lamb, pork, chicken and fish, and generally served with potatoes and one other vegetable.



Ugali-A typical starchy porridge Kenyan delicacy

The most common and typical foods eaten in Britain include the sandwich, fish and chips, pies like the Cornish pasty, trifle and roast dinners. Some of our main dishes have strange, traditional names like Bubble & Squeak and Toad-in-the-Hole.

The staple foods of Britain are meat, fish, potatoes, flour, butter and eggs. Many of our dishes are based on these foods.



Traditional Roast Beef from Britain

**Ellie May Turner**

## KENYA'S LANGUAGE POLICY OVER TIME

Kenya was colonised by Britain in 1895. The settlers were native English speakers, many were businessmen and taught in the few secondary schools Kenya had at the time. Pupils picked up the language very quickly, as they had small classes and were highly motivated to become fluent, which would give them better employment prospects. They learnt the language so well because the majority of teaching staff were English and so that was inevitably the main language spoken in schools.

Kenya gained independence in 1983 and at that time the country had no language policy. English was widely spoken and was the primary language of politics, education and business. The problem was that there were many African languages spoken in Kenya at the time - so many that none of them stood out as dominant or as having the potential to become the official language. Teachers had no guidance from officials and so assumed that pupils would benefit most if their education was conducted in English. Students remained enthusiastic to learn English, as they were aware of its many advantages. However, it became increasingly difficult for the language to be learnt because of a decreased amount of resources such as textbooks, fewer native English teachers and larger class sizes. In the last 50 years there has been lots of development in the

written language, especially in business.

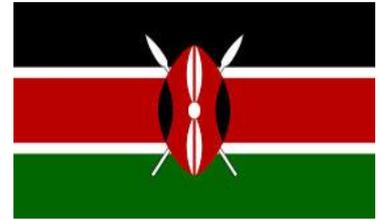
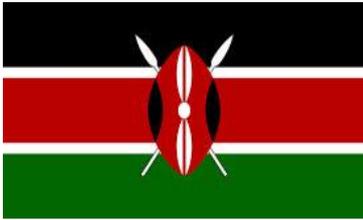
Ethnic groups often work together and so communicate in their mother tongues – therefore keeping their native languages alive yet still not widespread. Kiswahili, the main dialect of Kenya, has grown hugely over the last 25 years, from being relatively unknown, away from the coastal areas of Kenya, to being mandatory in all schools. It is expected to become increasingly influential in the country.



Sign language is also common as a vast amount of people are deaf, so this is the only way of communicating.

**Mary Bradshaw**

# KENYAN VIEW



The ICC or International Criminal Court is a permanent court created to investigate serious crimes that include crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes and crime of aggression. The court was set up in 1998. Kenyan president, Uhuru Kenyatta sat before the ICC last year accused of crimes against humanity, allegedly responsible for over 1000 deaths. This was after he was accused of organising ethnic massacres where people were brutally killed by means of torching, shooting and machetes. However, he retains his innocence because he claims that he didn't condone any of the killings.

### ICC JUDGES STOP SHAMING KENYANS

Kenya today is being ruled by people who are suspects in the ICC case. I don't think a person can work well while he or she is having cases at the ICC. This is just like taking stress (of being president) and adding to another stress of the case which just creates unmanageable amounts of stress. This may lead to depression or a breakdown. People surely cannot work with this?

I think the president and his deputy should step down for others to work as they proceed with their cases so the country can be better run by people not under immense stress. However all leaders are chosen by God and if we don't obey them, it will be as if we don't obey God and this may bring curses to our country.

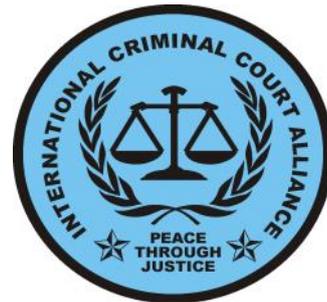
The issue of the president and his deputy going to ICC for trials I do not think it is a good thing. The presence of the president before the ICC is bringing shame not only to him but also Kenya at large.

I think the judges should postpone all the sessions until the time when he will end his term and then they can commence his trials. Everyone watching our president before the judges and seeing his reputation damaged is not good according to my opinion though I am not his supporter. As well as that this will stop unbearable stress for the president and stop the country being cursed. God bless our beloved country Kenya.

**Carilius Odongo**

### LET US ENCOURAGE THE ICC.

It is a good thing that our leaders are facing trouble at the international criminal court. Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto; the president and his deputy face different charges respectively. I think it is quite unfortunate to be ruled by suspects (criminals) and if it was my will I would encourage the ICC to continue with the cases because what happened in our country in 2007 and 2008 was not good.



However being that they are elected and have the mandate to rule by the constitution, we have to obey them and give them the opportunity to rule even though they have to face charges at the ICC.

I think the ICC should go on with the cases so that justice for the victims of the post-election violence can be met.

**AGOLLA JACKLINE**

# WHAT IS CULTURE?

Culture refers to the customs, ideas beliefs in a given country making up the culture of the country. In Kenya there are roughly forty seven tribes with their different cultures. Kenyan communities are mostly identified by different cultural practices and one way this is shown is through their dress. For example the Luo communities have got a well-known style of dressing that involves putting on

leopard's skin and making necklaces with animal teeth like a cow. The Luo also believe in the paying of the bride price. The bride price is mainly paid by giving cows and goats to the parents of the bride. Bride price among the Luo also indicates someone's wealth. Marrying of more than one wife [Polygamy], also indicates someone's wealth and abilities of a strong father.

In the Masai community, for someone to be pronounced a man, he should have killed a lion and carried it back to their village. They also believe in migrating from one place to another with their livestock in search of water and pasture. They believe in one Supreme Being and worship Him as their God .

**Christopher Otieno**



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This magazine is to be published on a regular basis.

The articles will be written by students from both West Buckland and Agoro Oyombe Schools, principally those involved in the exchange program.

Articles from other contributors are most welcome. Please contact the editor using the contact details opposite.

The intended audience is varied: students, teachers, parents, governors and the wider community in the catchment areas of both schools: North Devon and Siaya District.

## WHY DO KENYANS HAVE DIFFERENT SURNAMES?

In Kenya surnames are not treated the same as we do here; they give their children different surnames, dependent on the time of day, what the climate was like, whether the child was born around cattle, even if their child was born quickly or slowly, they all have different surnames. The 'Kip' part of the surname will be the same in the family, so different families will have different beginnings, but the last part will be dependent on the following.

A few names include  
**Kipkoech**--born at dawn  
**Kigen**--a long awaited son

**Kibet**--born at midday  
**Kiplagat** (Kiplangat)--born at sunset  
**Kipkemboi**--born at night  
**Kiprotich**--born when cattle are brought home for evening milking  
**Kiplimo**--born among grazing cattle  
**Kipkosgei**--born after a long labour, or a long interval between children  
**Kipchirchir**--born in a hurry, after short labour  
**Kiptanui**--fainted, failed to cry or breathe at birth  
**Kipkemei**--born during a drought  
**Kiprugut**--born during a famine

**Kipsang**--born outdoors

Kenyans also have a lot of different first names. The two most popular boys names begin with J, John is very popular, with 1.34% of boys in Kenya called John. James also has a high figure with 1.02% of boys called James. With girls the most popular first names are Faith and Sharon which both have 0.92%. Meanwhile In Britain James is 10th most popular first name, but John is not in the top 40, and neither Sharon or Faith are in the top 100 girls names.

**Holly Brimson**



### Classroom project at Agoro Oyombe

This photograph shows the roof which was added to the existing classroom structures during 2013-2014. The money for the roof came from the generous donations of parents and other individuals at the West Buckland School carol service in December 2013. Through fundraising efforts at Agoro Oyombe, the external walls have been lime-washed and window frames have been installed and painted.

The next objective is to raise the money to provide concrete flooring and the other items you would expect to find in a classroom such as desks and chairs. Please contact Matt Brimson at [mtb@westbuckland.com](mailto:mtb@westbuckland.com) if you are able to help.