GLASGOW'S AFRICAN TALES

‘Glasgow’s African Tales’

An oral history of African traditions

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Foreword

Scotland has long attracted waves of migrants to its fair shores and, at the end of WWII, Britain actively encouraged immigration from several Commonwealth countries in Africa and the Caribbean to ease the labour shortage. These new migrants accepted jobs in public transport, hotels, restaurants and hospitals, jobs that the British people often did not want to do themselves. Further migrations followed and, since 2004, Scotland has welcomed immigrant groups from Ghana, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia and Senegal. Many of these late 20th and early 21st century newcomers did not want to leave their homelands but were compelled to flee from wars, atrocities and persecution.

However, relatively little is recorded of African migrants' personal experiences. It may be argued that their presence is, to an extent, shrouded in mystery. It may be further argued that this has resulted in widespread perceptions of Africans as 'the other'; history shows us that this sense of 'otherness' often creates obstacles to amelioration and acceptance by indigenous populations. This is increasingly evident in the current political and social climate, which is exacerbated by the rising popularity of right-wing parties, economic crises and recessions, and by negative campaigning during recent referenda. Unfortunately, these are not the only problems faced by Africans in Scotland. With many having fled war-torn countries, tensions between some of the African peoples remain evident in British based communities, and some still refuse to interact or cooperate with other African nationalities.

Although the reasons for migration to Scotland widely differ, undoubtedly, the influx and continued presence of ethnic minority families in Greater Glasgow has made an immense contribution to society and local culture. Focusing on African migrants in Scotland, 'Glasgow's African Tales' explores the memories, traditions and artwork of Africans now living in Scotland's largest city.

Volunteers from across Glasgow's ethnically diverse population received professional oral history training and were supported to digitally record interviews with Africans living in the 'dear green place'. The foci of the interviews were African traditions and cultures. Older people often fear that their traditions, values and history will be lost and their children lead astray, whilst younger African-Scots sometimes struggle with notions of dual-identity, particularly if they have too few elders to engage them with their traditional African heritage. Recording these African tales was therefore important to African-Scots of all generations. Some of those testimonies are shared in this book, whilst others have been disseminated through a range of events and activities, and on a wonderful bespoke website, aptly named 'Glasgow's African Tales'. Our hope is to nurture the traditions of the past as a way for Africans in Scotland to find common ground and to share their heritage with others.

Chief Gift Amu–Logotse
Friends of Wumenu Community Farm
February 2019

Dr Sue Morrison
Oral History Research & Training Consultancy

Introduction

"However far a stream flows, it never forgets its origin!"

-African proverb

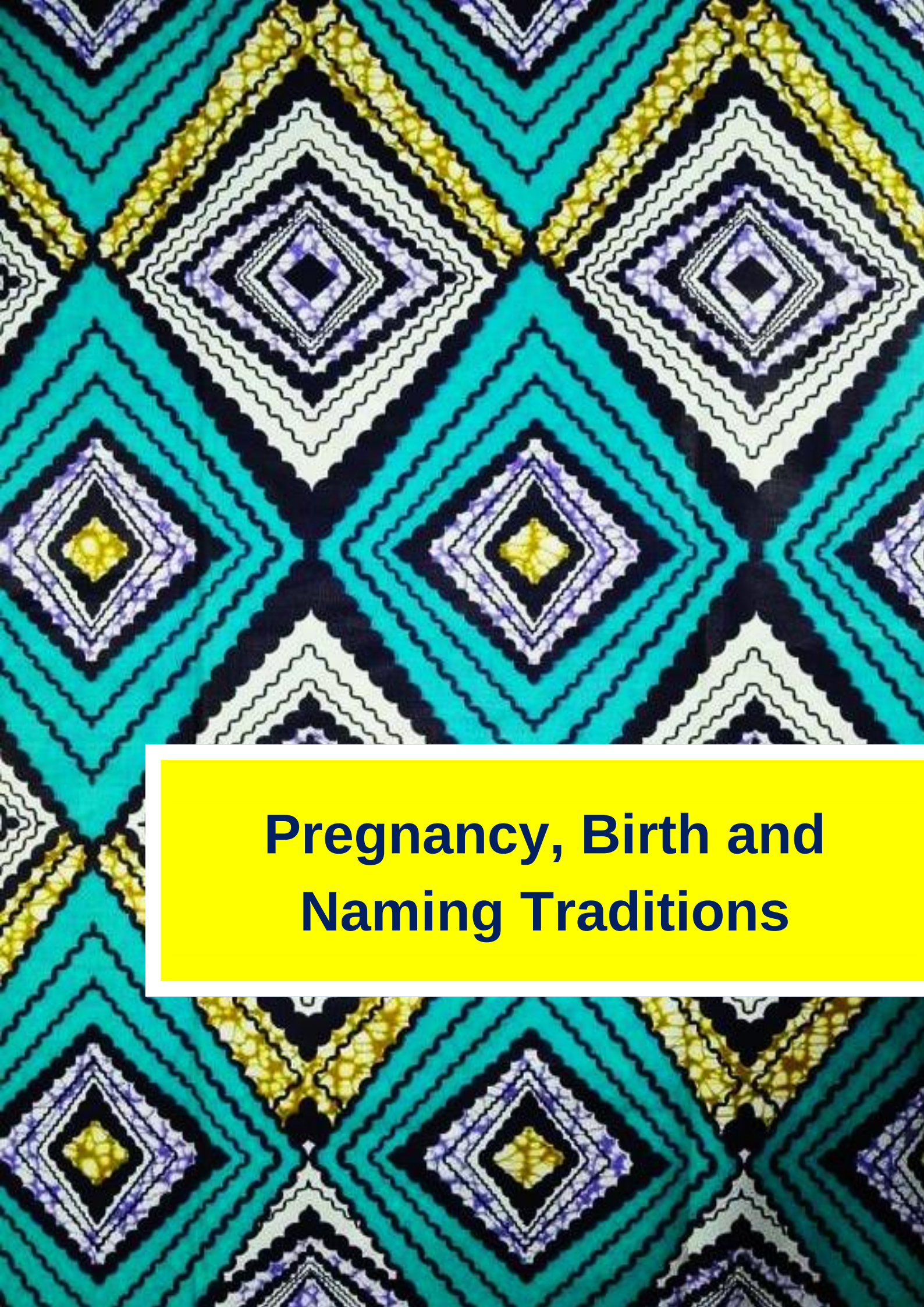
Led by Friends of Wumenu Community Farm, a Scottish charity based in Glasgow, Glasgow's African Tales' was funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and Oral History Research & Training Consultancy.

Actively encouraged by Britain to ease the post-war labour shortage, it is now more than 70 years since African migrants began to arrive on our shores in relatively large numbers. They accepted jobs in hospitals, transport and hospitality and quickly became part of Britain's post-war social history. It was important for the whole team to appreciate the complexity of African traditions, which is understandable since the continent contains 54 countries and where, collectively, there are an estimated 1500-2000 African languages and dialects.

Focusing on migrants who settled in Scotland's largest city, 'Glasgow's African Tales' explores memories, stories and artwork of African cultural traditions and the ways in which migrants sometimes struggled to keep those traditions alive in a new land.

Volunteers from across Glasgow's ethnically diverse population received professional oral history training and were supported to digitally record interviews with Africans living here. The main aims of this cross-generational project were to record, communicate and celebrate African migrants' rich, vibrant culture and heritage, and to discover ways in which these can be used to promote mutual interest and understanding between generations and across ethnicities.

We are indebted to our funders and national lottery players, and to project organisers, volunteers and respondents, for coordinating the project's many activities, recording testimonies, and sharing personal stories and memories. These testimonies have been, and will continue to be, shared and promoted through a range of events and activities, and on a unique bespoke website. We are also grateful to the African and Scottish artists and photographers who gave permission to use images of their work in this publication.



Pregnancy, Birth and Naming Traditions

"A family tie is like a tree, it can bend but it cannot break"

- African proverb

Contraception and Family Planning

Attitudes toward contraception and family planning vary across Africa, though most tribes know about it. For example, contraception is not widely practiced in Congolese communities due to religious beliefs, though methods are available, and some families do use natural methods rather than modern ones. Their religion stresses that children are a gift from God, and infants are highly valued. Infant mortality rates in the Congo are high. Abortion is strictly illegal and punishable by imprisonment; it is also forbidden by cultural laws. Despite this, premarital sex is common, and abortions are performed as families consider it shameful for unwed daughters to give birth. Abortion is often induced by taking herbal medication orally, or it is performed by illegal abortionists. Having an abortion is punishable by prison sentence. An alternative to abortion is to allow the pregnancy to progress to term and to then take the baby and new mother to the home of the baby's father, and then demand that he pay them a fine. The baby and its mother are then left with his family and they become responsible for both.

Traditions around pregnancy and birth

The Samburu People

There are fewer ceremonies and traditions surrounding pregnancy amongst Christian Africans, but these remain prevalent in many African tribes, including the Samburu of Kenya. Just like the Maasai, the Samburu are a semi-nomadic people, only they remain very traditional and still follow the old customs, unlike the Maasai. Samburu custom allows women to have sexual relations with men other than their husbands; however, once pregnant, the wives may only have intercourse with their own husbands and only for the first months of pregnancy. As the birthing time nears, the women return to the homes of their mothers or grandmothers and remain there until the child is of walking age. With the birth of a baby the woman becomes a boofeydo or 'someone who has made an error,' and she cannot see or speak with her husband, nor can the husband show any interest in her or the baby. After two to three years, the woman is able to visit her husband but not live with

him. She may only return to her husband when her mother buys everything that is needed for her daughter's marital home.

Serign Sanneh, Mandinka, Gambia, on guessing the sex of the baby:

"Yes, I guess they have their own way of predicting things - if the belly's too big it's probably a male child and oh, they have their own way of predicting things."

Pa Ebou Ngum, Wollof, Gambia, on guessing the sex of the baby:

"Back home there are some women, not all, who can look at your face and tell you what you're having, yeah special people they have that qualities."

One of the birthing practices of the Baganda in Uganda

In the Baganda group of people of Uganda there is a tradition of making banana leaf waistbands for the expectant mother, just before she was about to give birth. These would come from both the male and female banana plantations, in readiness for either sex of baby. One of them would be used to tie the baby to the mother depending on the outcome of the birth.

Nassar Lule, Baganda, Uganda:

"But still they have that one, it still continues. When you have a baby, there is a lot of tree. That one, your mum or grandpa have to bring tree leaves, and all that, and they birth you on that. That one is necessary, even if you born in the hospital. They have to bring you home. When they bring you home, the grandma is gonna be there, birth you with that one."

Birthing Chair

Nassar Lule, Baganda, Uganda, on birth in Glasgow:

"Yeah, even here, oh, it is something that never go away. Even the people if they have baby here, they born in the hospital they talk to them over there and they say I'll send you…(laugh), then they send it. They smash it, so it come like a powder."

Rohay Conteh, Mandinka, Gambia, on birth in Gambia:

"Oh, yeah, yeah, mostly if you have a mum, she will help you… She will teach you how to wash the baby, how to clean the baby… Yeah, will teach you a lot of things, yeah definitely working very hard for most of the time when it comes to sleeping and stuff like that because maybe you're too tired and need support, yeah definitely and also, yeah, how to look after yourself as well because we have medical help after people give birth and also the local traditional way that you see some people they use hot water and towel to massage the one who had the baby because also they lose a lot of blood, so they have different things they do as well like leaves and a towel to massage the mother for a few days… Some people use banana leaves, yeah banana leaves."

Rohay Conteh, Mandinka, Gambia, on birth in Glasgow:

"Oh yeah it goes on, that's what I'm saying. If you don't have a banana leaf you can use a towel. It carries on here. Some people they do it for most people and it's very helpful. And also, they tell you to tie your tummy after giving birth."

Sifudu

Umtata tribes (in the south-eastern cape of Africa) maintain several traditions after the birth. The afterbirth is used to 'cleanse' the baby and is similar to ceremonies performed by several other African tribes. The umbilical cord is cut back to a length of 7-10 cm using a strip of dry grass. One hour later, the cord is again cut, this time to a length of 5cm. The remaining umbilical cord is then salved by female attendants with a preparation of ash, sugar and an egg-shaped poisonous fruit called 'umtuma'; this is meant to rot the cord, which then drops away after three to four days.

A ceremony named 'sifudu' is performed between the third and fourteenth day after birth. Literally meaning 'passing the baby through smoke', the sifudu ceremony centres around a small fire made with pungent leaves from the sifudu tree. The leaves create an arid smoke which irritates the eyes, nose and mouth. A female attendant holds the baby upside down by its legs and passes the child through the smoke several times. The infant is then handed to its mother who is seated beside the fire; she then passes the child under one of her legs and then the other. The child is then bathed thoroughly. It is believed that the sifudu ceremony strengthens the baby, making it resistant to ridicule, fright or verbal torment.

Burying the Umbilical Cord

With the Bamiléké people of Cameroon, an important event after the birth of a child is to bury its umbilical cord under the roots of a tree. The Bamiléké have very close ties to the lands of their ancestors and to nature. If people live in the city, they will visit their ancestral lands as frequently as they possibly can due to these ties.

Jean Albert Nietcho, Bamiléké, Cameroon, on keeping up the tradition of burying the umbilical cord now that he and his family are in Glasgow:

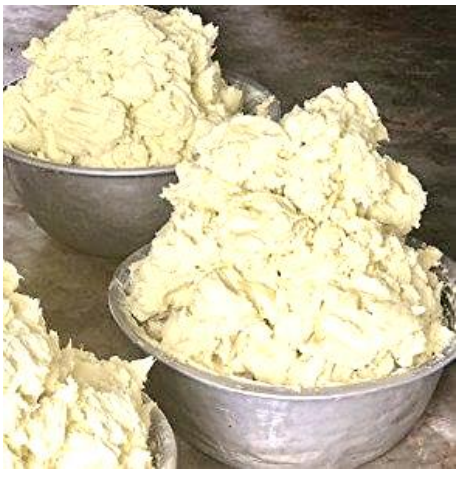
"When you have a baby there is one that…the ceremony that you have to do….one of the most important ceremony. The umbilical cord….because the umbilical cord is very, very significant for us. You have to….you bury…you bury your umbilical cord where your ancestor came from. Even my kid's one. I keep it from the hospital. I keep it and when I go back home, I will bury it where our ancestors came from. We do believe that is a link to where we came from… What we do here is when we have a baby. I will call it baby seeing. So, you do, you invite people. They call it in French vois bébé. So, we do it here."

Lydie Bere Flere Dossa, Akan, Ivory Coast, on pregnancy and birth in Glasgow:

"Yeah, in Glasgow, yes, the African community…. Because, it's not only people from Ivory Coast. Because when you emerge in another country, you know other African People, as well, because I have friends from all over the world. From Congo, from Cameroon, from Benin. I have them from Eritrea. I have them from Egypt. I have them from America. I have Scottish friend. Beautiful Scottish friend, families, you know. I have them from France, Germany, Italy, all over. You are like friend. There is friend and there is close friend and there is family. You know, because I have some Scottish family who are like family. You do things together, you travel together, with our children, so that you are like family. So, people like this they gave me food, they was cooking for me, you know, for my child, for me. They came and visit me. They bring me gift… So, I told the health visitor, no, I have people to look after me. But she asked me, she asked to bring help to go and do my shopping. I said, no, I have people to look after me. But she asked me, she asked to bring help, to go and do my shopping. I said, no, I have people around me, so, I feel fine. So, the same way that in Africa, people are around you when you give birth. Here, as well, I think so, I think there's people around you to give you help."

Shea Butter

One of our Akan respondents, originally from what is now the Ivory Coast, told us about the tradition amongst new mothers of using the lovely smell and skin enhancing properties of shea butter to show that they are doing well and are in good health after the birth. Shea butter has been known for centuries as 'women's gold' in Africa, as it is a product which has been primarily made by women for women. They extract the product from the karité nuts



(which grow in the Sahel region that stretches from West to East Africa, from Guinea and Senegal to Uganda and South Sudan), and it is then used locally and in the cosmetic and food industries.

Naming Ceremonies

Hausa

The Hausa are the largest ethnic group in West Africa. They are mostly located in north-western Nigeria and in neighbouring south Niger. Music and art play a big role in their everyday life and the Hausa are well known for their craftsmanship and crafts, which are sold throughout West Africa.

The wife is bathed every day during pregnancy and frequently after she has given birth. Guests are sent invitations to the naming ceremony on the sixth day after the birth. The father buys kola nuts (a West African nut used for its stimulant properties) to offer to the visitors. Food is also prepared and offered to the guests to mark the birth of the child. The Imam goes to the house and the women greet him whilst the men wait outside. He slaughters an animal provided by the father of the child. Everyone prays to Mohammed in both Arabic and Hausa. The Imam is then given gifts by the father.

Names are chosen from the Koran (or Qur'an) by the father, without consultation with the mother. Boys are named after prophets; girls names reflect historical figures, such as Amina and Aishatu.

Mandinka

The Mandinka live in a number of West African countries. The largest number are in the Gambia and make up 40 per cent of the population. They are descendants of the people of the Mali Empire, which stretched over most of West Africa and had one of the richest kings in history.

The process of pregnancy and childbirth is shrouded in mystery amongst the Mandinka. It is believed, for example, that talking about pregnancy and the future of the baby may bring bad luck and even endanger the life of the child. Once the baby is born many rituals are performed and traditions observed in order to protect its life. An example of this being that the mother is compelled to stay inside, with a fire to accompany her, for the first week after the birth.

After one week, the naming ceremony takes place. The child is usually named after the relatives and friends on the father's side of the family. The names are typically Africanised Arab names. The father invariably arranges the ceremony, which normally takes place in the morning. An elder will either shave the baby's head or cut a lock of hair from the child whilst saying a silent prayer. He then whispers the chosen name into the baby's ear. It is then spoken out loud. While this is going on, a chicken or goat is slaughtered. The lock of hair is then buried. Kola nuts (a stimulant indigenous to West Africa) and cake and other celebratory food is given out to guests. Guest in turn bring gifts for the baby. A big meal is then prepared, and celebrations are undertaken, complete with drumming and dancing.

Serign Sanneh, Mandinka, Gambia, on the naming ceremony:

"After seven days when a child is born, you have a naming ceremony, you have a ram, a sheep, basically a grand ceremony… "It's an all-day party of food and dance, and because we, it's a Muslim community we don't drink but we have a lot of food and, and dancing and sometimes even masquerades. We have a traditional masquerade from the Mandinkas, called Kankurang, that looks like it's an all red masquerade. The masquerade is usually red because they peel the back off a tree and that it is a red colour so that masquerade is like…. does dance and they go about with machetes and scare people off. It's good, but in general it's pretty much like that."

Serign Sanneh, Mandinka, Gambia, on maintaining the naming ceremony traditions in Glasgow:

"Most people here do not like the kola nuts, like people my age and slightly older, it's people like mums and dads that like the kola nuts… Nowadays the naming ceremonies here is like a big party, yeah, a big party, so basically it's like an open-air concert for everyone."

Yoruba, Nigeria

The Yoruba are one of the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. They have for many centuries been among the most skilled and productive craftsmen of the continent of Africa. They have worked at occupations including blacksmithing, weaving, leatherworking, glassmaking, and ivory and wood carving.

The Yoruba take the naming of a child extremely seriously, as it is believed that the name will have an influence on the fate of the child. The naming ceremony is traditionally carried out on the ninth day for a boy, and the eighth day after birth for a girl. The ceremony usually takes place early in the morning, with close and extended family and well-wishers present. The spirits of the ancestors are invoked for the ceremony. Native gin and kola nuts (a native nut that is used as a stimulant) are used in order to gain the blessings of the ancestors. Salt and honey are present to represent the sweetness and bitterness of this life. Bitter kola is used to represent long life. Alligator pepper (a type of ginger native to North Africa, with a hot spicy taste, used in both food and in ceremonies) symbolises the birth of many children. Everyone presents money in a bowl of water and then carries the baby and gives them a

name. The names are then chosen by the ones that are used most for the child over the first few months of its life.

The child is given at least three names in order to guide them on the path of life. These may be:

- Amutorunwa name (name brought from heaven). This name is given to children born under the same circumstances. Most notably with twins. The first-born twin will always be called Taiwo (has the first taste of the world) and the second born will always be Kehende (he who lags behind).
- The 'Orile' name is indicative of the child's kinship group. Names can also be given according to parent's preferred deities, and sometimes the profession of the parent.
- A child born after the death of grandparents is called Babatunde or Tunde (the father has returned), or Yevande, Yetunde, Iydbode and Yeside (the mother has returned). If an elderly person names a child, then they can use that name for the rest of their lives even if no-one else does. There are many other categories of name.

Lydie Bere Flere Dossa, Akan, Ivory Coast, on birth in the Ivory Coast:

"Yeah, the birth, is in, two kind of birth, one you are a first mum, is your first child. Like, you are an orphan with your first child. You always gonna find somebody around you who can guide you. She will come and help you because you don't know anything about child. She will help you to show you how to clean the child, how to give him his bath. What to do when the child is crying. The way to feed him. The way to change him. All of these ones she's gonna give you the basic advice. And she gonna come, from time to time, to check on you, to check on the child. But, if you are not an orphan and you have a family….your mother….and if your mother come do it, she will do it. She will come and stay in your house for some time. Sometimes she can stay a year. Sometimes she can stay six-month, three months. And she's gonna be the one to bath the child to even bath you as well, to give you some massage, cook for you and your husband…if you are married thing like this…So, she gonna show you all the step with that."

Wollof

The Wollof naming ceremony is strongly influenced by Islamic teachings. It takes place on the seventh day after birth. The parents or grandparents choose the name. The baby is brought to the ceremony in a white cloth and the call to prayer is whispered into its ear

whilst its head is shaved. Kola nuts are broken and a chicken or a sheep is slaughtered. Griots (story tellers) then announces the name and feasting commences.

Pa Ebou Ngum, Wollof, Gambia, on naming ceremonies:

"That's one of our rituals that you have to….in the religion side. There are two aspects, you have the religion side and the cultural side. Like, the religion side, you have to give the baby name and recite verses for it and then the cultural side, we have the cousins. That come in for you and singing you the words of praise, you know, reminding you or naming your great grandparents, you know. It is a big occasion whereby, you know, you tend to dish out money to them. So, a sign of happiness and appreciation. That's how we normally do our christening and wedding ceremonies… The only difference is like, normally we slaughter a sheep. So, that's the difference, but what happen is like, normally, it's communication, as soon as the baby is named a sheep is slaughtered back home."

Younis Odum, Ghana, on the naming ceremony in her village:

"Well I don't know much about all of Africa, but I know in Ghana when a child is named, well from my culture, they normally name the child within seven days and sometimes they do an outdoor where they bring the child outside for the first time and then they gather friends and family and then they give the child a name and then they do a dedication, if it's a Christian family… "I've noticed that sometimes they can merge and do the naming and the dedication together, they just wait and do it all at Church."

Younis Odum, Ghana, on traditions carried on in Glasgow, including the naming ceremony:

"I mean some things are kind of hard to pass up on, like your clothing, you can't really pass up on that, and we, we've modernised it so like a fresh new look on that. Like the whole naming thing is still maintained here. Piercing a child's ear when they a little girl still happens, the circumcision I know that still happens for boys. The whole 'knocking thing' my brother had to do that. So, most of those things are still in place here".

The Nuer, South Sudan, and sacrificing cattle at life event ceremonies

Like many pastoralists the Nuer of South Sudan place a huge emphasis on the importance of cattle to the point that their society revolves round them. They are sacrificed during important ceremonies.

Simon Koang, Nuer, South Sudan, on the naming ceremony in South Sudan:

"The father will bring a cow, or a goat and he'll kill it. All the people will make a party. After 42 days the baby his mother will come out of the room. The baby will stay in the room there's no going out of the house until 42 days… From that day they will give a name for the baby. It will stay for 42 days, no name. They will give a name for the baby and they will have a party… "We have Christian cultures and traditional cultures."

Simon Koang's children were all born abroad, and he is one of only a couple of people in Glasgow from South Sudan:

"Yeah, my children…Two was born in Khartoum, and one - three was born in Kartoum, one was born in Cairo and one was born in Israel."

Ofomu Clark, Edo State, on the naming ceremony in Glasgow:

"Yes, we do, but I, as a Christian, never did that, but we do… I did a child dedication in Church where I invited my friends and family and they came to do a thanksgiving session where they chose names. After that we have the party at home."

Ofomu Clark, Edo State, Nigeria, on what traditions she is keeping in Glasgow:

"I still prepare traditional foods, I still wear my traditional attires… I'm trying to get my sons to know the traditional way and they love traditional food as well."

Fulani Naming Ceremony

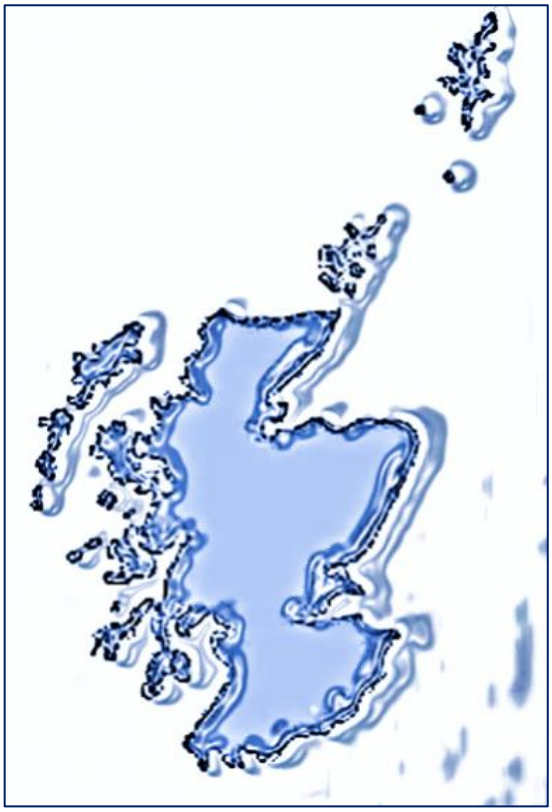
The Fulani naming ceremony is carried out under the dictates of Islamic law. It takes place after seven days, like many other West African naming ceremonies. If the child is to be named after someone then they play a special role in the ceremony.

Kaddi Jatu Jobe, Mandinka, Gambia, on the Fula naming ceremony that her baby had in the UK:

"Yeah, different, different tribes do it differently, but because my husband he's not, he's from a different tribe, he's not Wollof or Mandinka, he's Fula, so when I had my daughter, we had to do like the Fula tradition… My Mum's tradition from the Mandinka is that when you have a baby at the naming ceremony the Mum would come and sit down, but with the Fula tradition the Mum stays inside, and the sister-in-law brings out the baby. So, when I had my daughter, my sister-in-law brought my daughter out for the naming ceremony, it was really nice, but the food and the other dishes are still the same… So, when the seventh day of the baby's birth, we do have the Muslim ceremony. So, that only takes like a minute or so…so, what they do, they put the Adhan in the baby's ear. That's the call of prayer, in both ears. And, that's it, but the rest of it is all traditional. So, we got the traditional…like these kind of wraps that we've got…I can show you. That's what you get and wrap the baby in there. It has to be handmade. So, it's handmade from Africa and sent out to us here. So, that's what we use. And we have….so you keep it and then use it for all the babies… After the ceremony what we do. Is like so, because I couldn't come out. That's the tradition. So, my sister in law brought the baby out. So, after the ceremony they take…. they brought the baby back to the bedroom. So, what they do….they go like, oh, so in my

language it means….I'll just translate it for you. So, it means we're selling the baby. And then you try to hold….they take it away. Are we selling the baby? (laughs) there's a baby for sale. Then, when you try to reach the baby, they will take it back. They did it for. I think about 3 times and obviously then they give you the baby… So, when they're doing the christening, we have a tradition…what you do….you put like a lot of salt in the water. So, like they tend to say ok, the more salt you put in the water. The more, like, kind of, liked, blessed or popular the baby will be in whatever they intend to do in their later life."

Kaddi Jatu Jobe, Mandinka, Gambia, talking about post-natal care in Glasgow: "They do yeah…so, I had my mum here. So, she tells me what date when you were pregnant. And I have other relatives….my aunties, my elder cousins as well as my sister in law as well. So, they are telling me….oh, this is what you do, this is how you do it and that kind of thing. And when I had the baby as well….my sisters in law they came. One came from America, the other came from Germany. And I had my mum as well from Reading. So, they were all…So they were all helping around. So, yeah, it was a house full of helpers. It was great, yeah."



Gloria Oju Onyekwere, Kaduna State, Nigeria, on naming ceremonies in Glasgow: "Yeah, I'm a mum of three. I've got two girls and one boy. I'm a Christian, like I've said earlier on. I practice the biblical way, which is naming ceremony on the seventh day. So, all my kids are named on the seven day. I get the pastor to the house. They pray and they declare…and they name the child and they say the meaning of the name… Most Nigerians were kind….I think every little thing were kind of…we are very entertaining…with foods, drinks and obviously our dance. So, after the naming, obviously, I present food to them and they pray over the food. And then others who have come to rejoice with me have something to eat and drink. And music comes on. Because those who know me know I love music and I love dancing. So, I can't do anything without that taking place. Eh, it depends on what ceremony. If I am doing my naming ceremony, I'll just do the basic food. Which is jollof rice, plantain…. then,

the snacks which is our Nigerian meat pie, then puff puff. Then get the Nigerian malt, then obviously mix and match with the coke and Fanta."

Alix Joseph Offorojamu, Nigeria, on the naming ceremony where he comes from:
"Yeah, if you are doing like naming ceremony you just gather the community together and everybody is playing music, happy, drinking, that's how we do it."

Alix Joseph Offorojamu, Nigeria, on the naming ceremony in Glasgow:
"Yeah, we are free to practice it, we don't have any disrespect from the Scotland Government if we do anything like that. We do it here as well if we can gather the African people together."

Chief Gift Kofi Amu Logotse, Ewe, Ghana, on naming ceremonies in general in West Africa and the belief in reincarnation:
"One thing we all have in common is it doesn't matter what tribe you're from if you're born by the seventh day, you have a name you know, and not just any naming name, your first name that anybody will call and welcome you with is day you were born. If you're born on Friday like me, you will be called Kofi and you can't get away from that. I am no relation to Kofi Annan, the only thing we have in common is we are both born on a Friday, you know, and that's it and then somebody else will look at you the way they have seven days like me and maybe they say 'you're behave like your Grandad look at you, you crying like him' and the people who can do that are the older people, you know, so that's why it's always good when the child is born for an old, the oldest woman in the family or the oldest man in the family have a look at the child and they straight away can tell you who it is that came back, see what I mean?…and they will name and do things to celebrate and welcome that person back so what they've lost, they welcoming back from another way. So that is the concept behind which is come, it is comforting in a way."

Nelson Sule, Benin, Nigeria, on naming ceremony in Benin City:

"From what I know, basically when a child is born, after seven days the child is named. On the eighth day, you will have a kind of celebration where the child is given a name and this celebration in my own family, each family has different ways of doing it. In my family we always give the Grandparents the honour of naming the child, that first child, we always give the Grandparents the honour of doing that. For my own child, my Dad was given the honour of naming my first child."

Nelson Sule, Benin, Nigeria, on early circumcision and naming ceremony in Glasgow:

"Yes, like the circumcision, when I have, I've got two boys. When I have my two boys I had them circumcised within seven days in line with our tradition back home when we also did the naming ceremony as well for both of them, where we had the, the, we improvised where we could and some of the stuff we couldn't get that signifies that is used to signify certain stuff for doing the ceremony."

Salt and sugar in West African naming ceremonies

It is common in West African naming ceremonies for children to be given a taste of salt and sugar amongst various other things for different reasons depending on the individual tradition. This can represent various aspects of life but commonly it is associated with giving the child a taste of both the sweetness and the bitterness of life.

Birth – Day Names

Even before parents select a western or religious name for their child, the baby already has a name. Among some Ghanaian ethnic groups like the Akan, Ga, Ewe and Nzema, a name is automatically assigned based on the day the child is born, though the name may not necessarily appear on official documents:

Monday - Kojo (male), Adwoa (female)
Tuesday - Kwabena (male), Abena (female)
Wednesday - Kwaku (male), Ekua (female)
Thursday - Yaw (male), Yaa (female)
Friday - Kofi (male), Efua (female)
Saturday - Kwame (male), Ama (female)
Sunday - Akwesi (male), Akosua, (female)

These day names can vary slightly depending on the ethnic group.

Aya Rashid, Nigeria, on the birth and naming traditions in his culture:

"Most of the children are born in wedlock and for those that are born out of wedlock, they are treated the same way… When a child is born it is like a new whole world is just begin. Enemies put aside their differences, people put aside their beliefs, and work together to bring a new life into the world… People believe that on the seventh or eighth day of a child's birth they have to be celebrated. They make the child taste honey, salt, water and sugar-cane."

Sean Thomas, Lagos, Nigeria:

"We have um, the days the child is born sometimes we name the children according to the days they are born. Traditionally in Africa we have a naming ceremony seven days after the child is born, so if you were born on a Wednesday you would be named after Wednesday. There is a huge ceremony where family, friends, everybody would be invited to you know, name this child, and in Africa everybody has a name for the child - so your Uncle could come and say I want to call you Jack and your other Auntie can decide to call you Jill, but everybody has a name that they give the child, but the 'name' is the one that your parents have give you."

Esan naming ceremony

The ceremony is held on the third month after the birth. The baby is often given a name with meaning pertaining to a significant event which was happening at the time of its birth; It may also be named after a person whom it is believed has come back through a process of reincarnation as the child. Ridiculous names are put forward and rejected at the ceremony.

Chief Josephine, Esan people, Nigeria:

"When it come to the time to name the child, normally the oldest, might be the father to the actual father of the child, because through Esan land they will throw the child up and they will throw the child up to about seven times very high up and catch them and then he'll say "welcome to this world," and we are all welcoming to this world and everybody now will start giving the names and the final person will give the honorary to the father or the father has given that honour to his father or one of the elders of the community, who will go up and say, "my name is this and the name I give this child is this."

Guy Ngansi Deyap, Bamiléké, Cameroon, on why he loves his African name:

"Ngansi, I love a lot because Ngansi in my culture, my tradition, my mother and father dialect, because my mother and father are from the same village, it means that - got roots… You see, the roots of the tree, that's why I got the meaning".

Chief Josephine, Esan people, Nigeria, on naming ceremony in the UK and Glasgow:

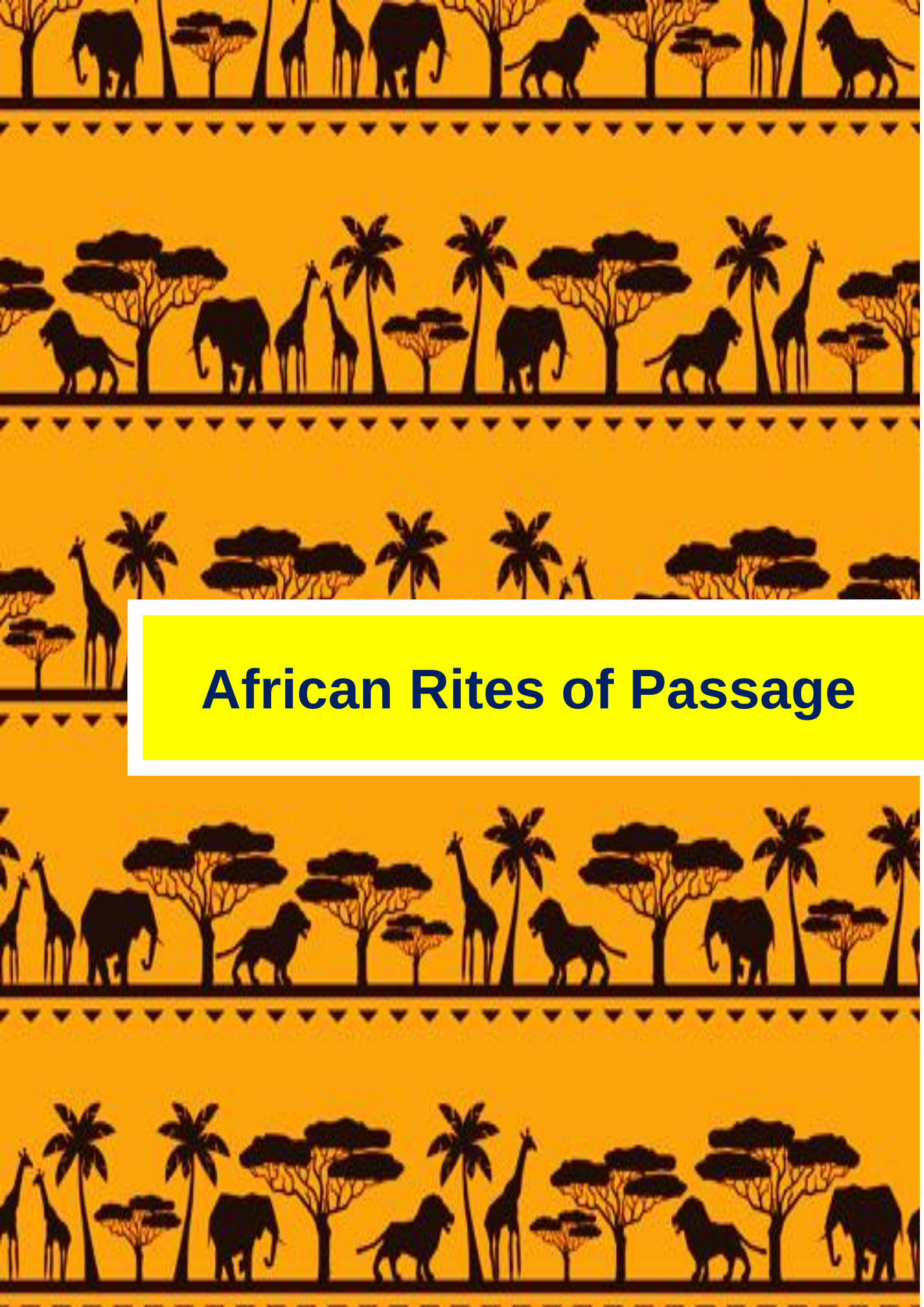
"What we did was that we had the western naming ceremony at St Paul's Church for my twins and then we also organised the African naming ceremony separately so where the African names were given, but we ensured the African names came first. Luckily for me at that time I was actually going back to Nigeria, so we had the African naming ceremony in Nigeria but then wrote to have the Scottish one here in Scotland at St Paul's church who have good traditional naming ceremony which is African. When we had the African one we had a reverend I think from the Church of Scotland to the African naming ceremony to also give prayers to the children during the African ceremony with all the elders of the village, but if you cannot afford to do that what most Africans will do is to call the most senior persons here of their community and then give the traditional name to their children and go to church and recognise it also in the church… I think, Africa, one thing that we have which some people don't appreciate even for an African brought up Esan, is that we are very rich in culture, we are very rich in humanity and we have a lot of festivals that bring happiness to the life of the community and, as you just said, one of them is birth. We used to believe and still believe that a child is a gift from God, given to you that you can't buy with money."

Mariarose Ngosi, Lilongwe, Malawi, on birth in Malawi and advice given:

"It was something that was special and only the ones who have gone through it and the older ones who were allowed to talk about it."

Mariarose Ngosi, Lilongwe, Malawi, on the difference between gifts brought for the baby in Malawi and in Glasgow:

"No, we don't have naming ceremony, no, but we do have…But we so have like, eh…. people coming to see the baby. So, they'll bring things like…I remember I was talking to my friend here. I was telling my friend here. When you go and see the baby you bring money and clothes and what…but in Africa it's completely different. Eh, you can bring even live chicken to come and see the baby (laughs). So, I used to laugh with my friend. So, my friend used to laugh with me to say-What will the baby do with the live chicken?! Yeah, it's a cultural thing. So, you do bring gifts, but, eh, there is no naming ceremony in Malawi… Yes, we do have a Catholic christening."



African Rites of Passage

“If you don’t initiate your young men into the tribe, they will burn down the village”

-African proverb

In many African countries, a wide array of rites of passage play a central role in marking the different stages in an individual’s development and their relationship and role to the broader community. Perhaps the most important of these rites is the transition from child to adult, when they become fully entrenched in their community’s cultural customs and ethics. For this reason, it is often claimed by African traditionalists that these rites of passage are critical in nation building and identity formation.

It is not unusual to see women across Africa carrying their babies on their backs as go about their daily chores – working in the field, caring for their own children and those of other women, fetching water and firewood, cleaning their homes and cooking family meals. Young girls learn from their mothers’ example and often care for their younger siblings whilst still young children themselves. From a young age, children in many African countries are taught adult responsibilities and learn from their parents and elders how to work and manage their homestead. They are raised to do their chores without complaint and to treat their parents and elders with utmost respect. Here, children learn to bow or kneel down when greeting elders and not to make direct eye contact or offer handshakes. Children are often considered to be the responsibility of the wider community rather than just of the family, which includes both learning and discipline; the latter is usually strict and may involve verbal chastisement or slapping.

In countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), it is common for male children to be sent from their homes to an initiation camp. They may spend up to a year in the camp, learning traditional crafts, how to hunt, and perfecting their musical and dancing skills. At the end of their stay, the boys experience a rite of passage into adulthood, which traditional involves circumcision and a festival. The boys then return to their families as men.

Mandinka, Gambia, on coming of age

Traditionally, both male and female circumcision have been carried out amongst the Mandinka. It is more commonly practised in the countryside than in towns and cities in the modern era. Teenage boys are taken out into the bush and initiated into the ways and rules

of Mandinka manhood and the medicinal use of plants as part of the rite. The Karakunga spirit is present, in ritual form, for protection.

Sarjo Koita, Mandinka, Gambia, on coming of age ceremonies:

"Circumcision for males, that is also another very big cultural event in my community back home. The village would choose a year and they say…. this year we are going to do circumcision for male children… Can be ranging from ten and below, only children that were not circumcised within that age. They will come together and they will be circumcised. They will group together you know, in one group, and that also is a school that circumcision time because you can stay in that. Sometimes they will take us to the bus, you will not, your mother, no woman not even your mother will not have access to you during that period. So, it's a school where the elders will teach you… They will show you all you need to know as a man. Being circumcised you have to obey whatever thing they do to you, you have to obey it. So, it's a very rich tradition because that, after that circumcision you have to learn how to respect your elders."

Nelson Sule, Benin City, Nigeria on the lack of rites of passage, in his experience, growing up in that city:

"Probably, before I was born…but the time I was born we didn't have that. But I think the neighbouring tribes still do it up to today. Like,

the Ora, the Ora tribe, em, I've heard them say they still do it but I've never been privy to that."

Sarjo Koita, Mandinka, Gambia, on male circumcision in Scotland:

"Well, we don't do that in Scotland here now, like how we do it back home. You can't do that here because it's a different environment, different culture, different whatever…So, you can't do that kind of things here. So, when you have a male child here, you have to do according to what the law says here. So, we don't definitely do anything like that."

The Wollof circumcision rituals in the Gambia are similar to the Mandinka ones already described but are called Harraf instead of Sunnnaro.

Pa Ebou Ngum, Wollof, Gambia:

"From the day you have the procedure, you are put in a big room and normally they go in, in fives or tens. They are put in a room whereby they have what we call guardians looking after them and those are ones that train them how to be man. Like train them the qualities of honesty, ethics and what come as a man, so as soon as you are healed and about to come out, so that's the guidance ceremony. It's a time for celebration as we have men coming out, so that is the motive behind the ceremony. Celebrate the brave man, with dance, drums, sing songs."

Pa Ebou Ngum, Wollof, Gambia, on coming of age in Glasgow:

"So, we are rulers and warriors, but most of them are griots. We happen to be griots, so that is passed on to me. I am a very cultured person, I am a very cultured person. So… I organise the first cultural festival here in Glasgow…performance, drumming, singing, you know. When boys coming out from circumcision I chant as they walk."

Blandine Damsk, Bafoussam, Cameroon, on male coming of age rituals:

"In Cameroon we have 208 different cultures in one country. When I say culture, I mean language, dress styles, lifestyles, all these things, so. My Mum and Dad come from different villages, so I will talk about my Mum's… In my Mum's village there is a procedures when you have, when you are a teenager, a boy teenager, you are introduced to the Chieftaincy so they organise an event once every two years for teenagers of 13, so during that period they teach you how to be a man, how to become a man. So, they spend two weeks in a house like isolated from their families and friends they are just with the elders of the village, women just cook and bring but they don't see the boys. They just bring it and the men, the elders, will take the

food and go in and they are well fed, because after those two weeks, ooph, they change, because if they were slim, they would just be a bit like…normal, you know (laugh). Sometimes, if you are fat already, you will come out with a big tummy like that (demonstrates)… After six days, on the seventh day, they will release them for eight days, so every day they will go out for about two hours to run all over the city but before going out they have to be scary, so what they do is – one, they don't dress up, apart from a loin cloth and the rest of the body is painted with black stuff, I don't know what it is called. You just see the eyes and the teeth, so they're scary, and they will have some like leaves in their mouths and stuff like that and one leaf in their mouths, one leaf for each person so then they will be running they will be holding the horn of the elephant. They will be running all over the city."

Blandine explained that they usually did this when the schools came out between the hours of 2pm and 4pm. They would run after people to try and scare them, sometimes giving them a little jab with the horn if they didn't run away. It is the tradition that everyone runs away from them, no matter what their age is. After two weeks there is a big celebration in the village with food and dancing, everyone attends, the chief, the elders, parents, etc., to witness the 'new men' in the village. This day is like a bank holiday and no-one works.

The Mende people have complex and ordered coming of age ceremonies for both boys and girls called poro and sande initiations respectively. These are secret societies with their own languages and with the goal of teaching the ways of adulthood to the young initiates.

Abdualle, Mende, Sierra Leone, on coming of age ceremonies among the Mende in Sierra Leone:

"Yeah, yeah we do those cultures. We have, those are the main important things that we do not forget, because those are the things our great ancestors, they taught us. You know. Within those cultures, when someone going to get married, pass through, this kind of thing… It's deep in my own culture, the Mende."

Abdualle, Mende, Sierra Leone, upon asked if any traditional Mende ceremonies are still carried out in Glasgow:

"Not really. It only happens when it's like national celebration. For we here now, so we think about that, so we try to celebrate it here as well. And in London where we have a big Sierra Leone community, we celebrate different types of occasion as well."

The Bull Jumping Ceremony, Hamar, Ethiopia

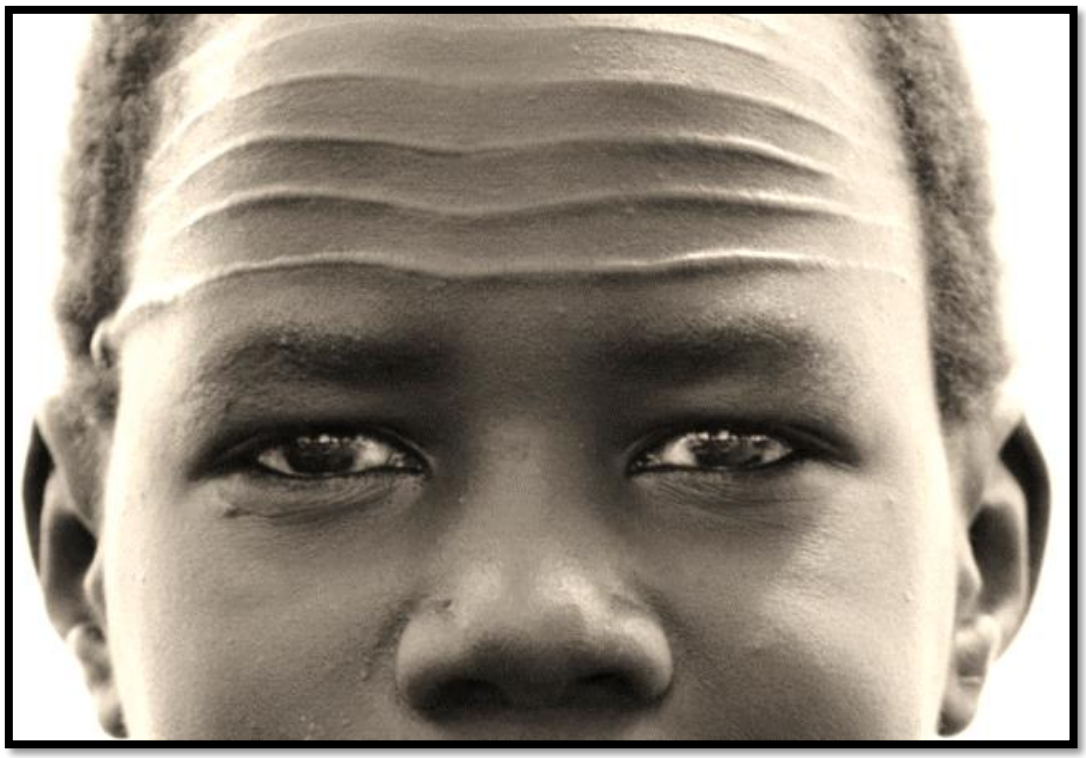
In the Hamar tribe of Ethiopia, young men seeking permission from a girl's father to marry his daughter may have to undertake a ritual. Here, to become worthy of marriage, men first have to jump over a herd of cattle. The Bull Jumping Ceremony was traditionally held after harvest time, July to early September, but now it may be held earlier or later in the year. The ceremony begins with young Hamar girls jumping in unison as their heavy metal jewellery forms a rhythmic beat. These girls are often relatives or friends of the boy who is about to be initiated into manhood. The girls will jump towards men, the maza, who have already gone through this rite of passage. The girls hand the maza a green stick, which is then used to whip the girls' backs as they continue to jump. The lashing continues until blood is drawn and the men then stop; the girls bow to them and jump away. The scars that form show that the women endured pain for the initiate during his passage into manhood. The tribe forms a circle around a herd of cattle and sing. Four of the biggest castrated bulls are lined up side by side and the naked young initiate(s) is brought to the cattle. He must jump onto the first bull and then run back and forth three times across the backs of the four beasts. Once the task is completed, the boy is a maza, or man.

Tuareg Veils

The Tuareg, numbering approximately two million, are a nomadic, mainly Muslim people, who live across the Sahara Desert, including in the North African countries of Mali, Niger, Libya, Algeria and Chad. When Tuareg men reach the age of twenty-five, they begin wearing a veil that covers their whole face, apart from their eyes. This tradition may have begun with the need to protect their faces from the sometimes fiercely blown sands of the desert.

Nuer scarification, South Sudan

The Nuer of South Sudan practice scarification of teenage boys as a rite of passage into adulthood. The scarified marks are usually six vertical lines across the forehead which are called Gaar. This is the case with our respondent Simon. After the rite the boys are not allowed to milk cows, but many other avenues are now open to them. They can marry. They are given a spear and can go on cattle raids. They are also given an ox and an ox name.



Simon Koang, Nuer, South Sudan. Simon is one of only a couple of people in Glasgow from South Sudan:

"Yes, when you get about 18 years old or 15 years old you will get the marks, you get them from 15 to 16… From the day you get the marks you become a man, you will man, you are not a boy anymore… Yah, the day you are going to get the marks. All the village will know of the boy or guy is going to get a mark today. And it will be a group for boys in the village. They put them togethers in one place. The guy who make the marks will come with knife, just cutting. After that they will make a party. Kill two or three bulls and all the family will eat togethers in one place."

Sean Thomas, Lagos, Nigeria, on his own personal rite of passage in moving to Glasgow:

"Not formally in Lagos...Lagos being a very cosmopolitan city. I know of other African traditions where they have certain ceremonies that mark the rite of passage for young male adults. In my case….I didn't formally go through any rite of passage. The journeys I took myself which inevitably led me to Scotland, where I am today. So, I could consider that as my own rite of passage. Leaving Africa and coming here and actually having a family and living and working here. So, I would say that is my own rite of passage."

Ali Abubakar, Zanzibar, left in the early 1960s and converted to Christianity:

"Celebrating the move of Prophet Mohammed from Mecca to Medina, at that time…. depending on the comfort of the family. A boy, so we're talking about me, will have a certain duty to perform. And that would be killing a goat, skinning it, cutting the meat and share the meat with the families who are not so fortunate. I was going to say rich but fortunate .But, that's the ceremony, I mean you just give little bits of meat to families around you. But it wasn't…in my case I learnt vaguely the reason, the purpose of the ceremony, but unfortunately it wasn't taught…I wasn't taught deeply about it…. I think what that helped me to see was that ours was a, once again, a fortunate family."

Simon Koang, Nuer, South Sudan, talks about menstruation:

"Yah, the girls, when the first period come. The father will bring the cow. One cow with milk It will make something traditional. He will put it on this cow. Nobody, no man, no boy, unless the woman like her. The woman can drink the milk. Because this cow is marked to the girl. All the time up till the girl is married. Nobody will drink the milk of this cow. Only the girl or her mother or her sister. When the boys or the brother of the girl drink the milk of this cow, the cow will die. Because there is some

traditional, they put on the cow. Because any time the period of the girl come. The girl will not drink all the milk. When there is period time, you will not drink the milk of different cows, only this cow."

Aya Rashid, Nigeria, on circumcision:

"There are two circumcisions. The male circumcision and the female circumcision. The male circumcision is done quite very quickly, eh, apart from any medical implication or medical process. An African culture does not believe in the infliction of pain and you know the process of circumcision involves pain. The foreskin has to be cut off which is quite painful so they do it before the child is forty days, so the pain will be brief and it will not last long. They have their own ways of sorting out the injuries as well, which is quite quick."

Female Genital Mutilation

What was previously referred to as female circumcision is now known more accurately as female genital mutilation (FGM). Once commonly practiced in many African countries, FGM is gradually becoming culturally unacceptable and is illegal in many African and other countries, including Britain. Young women, some only infants at the time, endured a painful procedure whereby partial or all external female genitalia, such as the clitoris, labia and the vulva, were removed. It is now widely accepted that the 'cutting' inflicted long lasting physical and psychological damages. And yet, the practice still continues amongst some tribes.

FGM is most commonly carried out by older women when the female child is young and consent is taken from the parents, not the girl. The practice is often associated with cultural or religious reasons. Some people condone female genital cutting, insisting that it is beneficial for the well-being of the woman's future husband and children, and also necessary to curb her promiscuity and maintain her 'pureness'. Those women who do not undergo genital cutting are sometimes considered to be unclean and sexually promiscuous. However, research across the world, including many studies by Africans, has found that FGM often results in life-long health issues such as menstrual disorders, serious infections, hepatitis and HIV. Furthermore, these women will also suffer from psychological trauma and disorder, sexual dysfunction, and have a higher chance of having complications during child-birth.

Female circumcision, also known as female genital mutilation, was also performed on girls when they became adolescents and was accompanied by a ceremony out in the forest which had the purpose of preparing them for marriage. FGM is now illegal in the Gambia.

Sarjo Koita, Mandinka, Gambia, on FGM in Gambia:

"Well, during our time it was not abolished. They do female circumcision there. How they do it, I don't know. To be quite honest, I can't tell that. Because, I've never witnessed it on my own eyes. But all I will say, there'll be female circumcisions, there'll be celebrations. But, how they do it I can't say because I don't see it."

Yunis Odum, Ghana, on rites of passage where she comes from:

"I know that in certain parts of Africa there is rites that they perform like going hunting and stuff like that. I know some people will do the, they do different things at different stages, so like for example babies, male babies get circumcised by a certain early age and some will feel that when a girl gets to a certain age she should get circumcised as well, but that's not in my culture, that's ones I've heard of. I personally don't agree with it."

Sarjo Koita, Mandinka, Gambia, on FGM in Scotland:

"Well, here, obviously, like I tell you… We always emphasis that to our community members. When you go to Rome do as Romans do. What the law of the land says. You can't do it…You can't do it. You don't even have to try it. Because if you try it, you are going against their law. So, to say, it's my child, it doesn't matter. The law protect everybody including yourself and your children. So, you can't, you can't even….I have, I have girls' children, you know, girls. But you are not there to think about even doing that to them. Because we are living here. And even back home, before, you know, I against it. Obviously, I wouldn't do it to my girl child."

Aya Rashid, Nigeria, on FGM circumcision:

"There are two circumcisions. The male circumcision and the female circumcision… The female circumcision is quite a little bit complicated. It depends on, it doesn't depend on anything basically. No tradition forbids it, so it depends on how the parents, the biological parents can stand their feet and say, 'I want that for my child, or no I don't want that for my child'. It is not really obligatory, it depends on where you come from because some traditions are much more stronger than others and some have let go the whole time tradition when it comes to their circumcision. However, it is still prevalent in Africa and I can say it is done day in day out, everywhere."

Pa Ebou on female circumcision:

"Yeah, is female circumcision but is being discouraged now, it's not happening. It is happening, is being done, outside the main area, and there are some people that have that mentality that they won't give away or give up that practice. They came here and find their ancestors doing it so why should they, that kind of…but for me, like it's still happening."

Blandine Damsk, Bafoussam, Cameroon:

"Muslim people in the north of Cameroon do excision. They say they do it because ehm they don't want women to cheat on their husband, which is not fair because we do nothing on them for them not to cheat on us so they shouldn't be doing that and actually the, the Government have found it illegal and they are kind of fighting for it and they are hiding and doing it because it's their culture and they still believe in doing it."

Lydie Bere Flere Dossa, Akan, The Ivory Coast, on circumcision:

"In the other time, in the north of the country in my country, Ivory Coast, because the north most of people over there are Muslim women, you know, so, there that's because of Muslim and their girls, but later on they are stopped. The people who are Christian doesn't do that. In my country it used to happen but doesn't happen anymore, uh-huh, because that would affect a lot of womens."

Chief Josephine Oboh-Macleod, the Esan, Nigeria, on circumcision:

"My father explained about the circumcision because I asked him about it. Through his lifetime was that, during the time before the medicine, the women had a lot of problems so did the men with hygiene. They were living in the deep forest and the

law of their limitations to medicines that they knew of, although they had traditional herbs for certain things, but they didn't have traditional herbs for thrushes and all those other things that have to do with hygiene, and a lot of women also were barren, which is a 'big' issue in Africa, not to have a child in those days…if you don't have a child they expect you to adopt or something. You must be seen as somebody who is saying I don't want a child you will say "ah this person is strange". So, the issue of trying to prevent themselves going sterile was very, very important to them, so that it was important for them that they advised women to, to have the circumcision, so that the likelihood of catching thrushes is limited. But eventually, unfortunately, these turned to become sexually orientated in stories as time went past, that some men were trying to say that if they have the lady circumcised, she doesn't cheat on them, which is obviously not true."

Chief Josephine Oboh-Macleod on circumcision in modern times:

"I believe that most Africans will not want that for their child. It would be very strange to find somebody in this modern age of medicine that they are going that the child should be circumcised, but definitely most Africans for the male child is, they will do that, you know, because also in the Bible is where I think, I think those with the Catholic thing especially, you know, will circumcise their children. You know, are going to Catholic faith and stuff like that and will circumcise their boys since this is actually being done by doctors. Most circumcisions in the male, now that I know that Africans are doing and a lot of this is not done at home ,except maybe some of them that do not have money and can't afford doctors or they are far away from medical places, but most of it is being done with the doctor at the time before the child is due to go home because it is not painful for the child. The female one, I haven't heard of any African I know of in my own generation, that have taken their daughter male or female to have them circumcised because there is no reason for it. But if I was living in the village and my daughter had a thrush problem and I know there was no medical doctor to see to them, then obviously I would consider it as, okay, a preventative, because actually there is preventative medication. In those days you was eating a lot of preventative stuff, I remember my mum cooking soups, special soups and you must eat it type thing and it's supposed to cure fever, it's supposed to reduce malaria."

Labia Elongation in Uganda

Labia elongation is practiced amongst a number of the groups of people in Uganda as well as in other parts of the African continent.

Twimukye Macline Mushaka, Bakiga, Uganda, on labia elongation and how she would not encourage her daughter in Glasgow to do this:

"And then, part of the culture where I come from, the women of my generation had a practice that they called…it's the opposite of female genital mutilation. I'm sure you've heard of female genital mutilation, but, this one, is the extension of the labia. And, they claim, it's supposed to make the sex more enjoyable. I think for the man. That's how I look at it…rather than for the woman. And, in terms of how that is done, you know, the man would stimulate the extended labia, and then that whole process is meant to be enjoyed. And there is evidence, who said, women who have been interviewed, and they think that it is more enjoyable than simply not doing it… For me, from an activism point of view… I've looked at that process. While I subjected myself to that process, because it was culturally acceptable and I was expected to do it… I made a conscious decision that I wasn't going to let my children go through that. Because I didn't see from a biological point of view… was altering nature, what should

be. So, I made that conscious decision. But, if my daughter was to marry a Bakiga man today, unless that Bakiga man is an educated man, not a…not every woman should have those extended labias, then, she would not fit in because she would be from them. But, also, I think the practice is dying down, through women becoming more empowered and being able to decide… make a conscious decision that they don't want to conform to what culture expects from them. My generation of the fifty's women, you know, women who are fifty and above. We were still trying to fit into what was culturally acceptable. But today's women don't, and I count myself as one of today's women as well, even though I'm from that generation."

Twimukye Macline Mushaka, Bakiga, Uganda, on labia elongation and how she would not encourage her daughter in Glasgow to do this:

"The girls are supposed to do it before their menstruation period. Because it is believed that, that's another myth, I would believe, that after the menstruation period that it wouldn't work. But I think the reason that it is done, and it would be subject to research and everything, is that by the time the girls become, reached the puberty stage, they were being prepared for marriage. So, if you hadn't done it by that time, you were not going to have the time to do it, because you were being prepared to go and marry. So, I think the practice was encouraged for girls from the age of 8, not even younger. Because it was enforced. Girls were educated about the practice, normally by their paternal aunties. To say, in marriage you need to be like this and that's how, as a woman, you should be presented. And, therefore, you needed to conform to that, so that your husband would find you like that… And that was the same practice as promotion of virginity before marriage, because, for instance, long before, you know…. if a girl go to marry and they found that she was not a virgin, they would return her back to her family. But those kinds of practices have now died down. My mum used to tell us she was a happy thirty-year-old virgin when she got married. And today (laughs), I don't think there will be many thirty-year-old virgins. It would be like….huh?!... You can see the culture changes with time, obviously…and what is important…that we, you know, talk about oral history…is about some of those things that may not necessarily have any empirical evidence or

research done on them…not to disappear completely, as if they never happened. Yeah, do like, the extension of the labia, or genital elongation is the word that used in literature. I think it's a practice that must…should not necessarily be enforced. It was…the good thing was, you were not forced to do it. So, someone would not come and pull them for you. You would be taught how to do it yourself. And because you knew that you were preparing yourself to be a woman, a wife, a mother, you had, you know, you had to make sure you do it…and it had a particular measurement, you know. You had to make sure that you put it and it was as long as your middle finger, you know, you had to pull it and it's as long as that. But, you know, um…I've spoken to women who say that they've found sex, for example, painful if the guy doesn't know that they're there and simply goes with part of the skin inside. That can be really painful. And so, for guys that are sensitive, that care to explore their wife's body, know that they first have to open it up, so that they then have proper process of that part of the job. Without wanting to appear like an elderly aunt on the record (laughs).

Courtship and Engagement

"Let your love be like drizzle: it comes softly, but still swells the river"

-African Proverb

Morocco

The first phase of the Moroccan marriage begins with the betrothal, or 'khetba', whereby the future husband's parents meet with those of the bride and ask for the hand of their daughter on behalf of their son. Once the bride's parents give their agreement, the two families begin to prepare the marriage ceremony.

Cameroon

Betrothal in Cameroon is usually a serious affair, with much advance thought going into the prospect of marriage between two people. Once a decision has been made to offer marriage, the prospective son-in-law must meet officially with the girl's family in a ceremony known 'Toquer a la porte,' which roughly translates as 'he's knocking at the door'. The future husband is accompanied by his family and friends, who bring gifts, which may include rice, Corvina bars (fish fillets), matches, juice and beer. The families and friends eat together whilst they discuss the marriage proposal, and the bride's father presents the suitor with 'The Sorrowful', a list of things required for the dowry. If the dowry is agreed, the suitor is given permission to ask permission to marry the girl. At this point, the head of her family addresses the girl directly, saying, saying something like, "This man has come here to ask you to marry him. If you agree to take him as your husband, take a few bottles from those he brought and give them to me. If you do not want to marry him, you must return the bottles to him, so that he may leave with his belongings." The girl then makes her decision whether to marry the suitor.

Guy Ngansi Deyap, Bamiléké, Cameroon, on engagement in his family unit:

"It depends on the culture…my family, my father he don't ask for much. He loved to see people getting married. Even use his own money to pay for your bride price. Because he want people to get married. In my family, personally we don't ask for much. Because my father said to me, you have to take the bride price because traditionally that is a symbol. But, don't exaggerate. You have to…my father would never…he would take maybe fifty pounds, buy something, so that's the way we was."

Guy Ngansi Deyap, Bamiléké, Cameroon, on his bride price sent to him in Glasgow:

I got married to my wife in 2016. They sent me a list. That were two thousand pound for the list."

Boris Zamba, Cameroon, on engagements:

"A man comes to the family and presents himself officially before, so that they know that he is official, dependant to get woman and, ah, and that ceremony. The woman's family will make some notes of requirements, what is needed for him to marry their daughter, and then they will hand him that piece of paper."

Courtship amongst the Mende

A Mende girl may be betrothed by her parents to a suitor when she is still a child. She does have the right to change her mind when she becomes an adult. If she marries without her consent, then the husband's family must pay a bride price. If the bride price is not paid, then any children resulting from the union are considered the property of the wife's family.

Abdualle, Mende, Freetown, Sierra Leone:

"Well, engagement in Sierra Leone, when you will get to the woman in Sierra Leone, traditional way the month you have to buy maybe the goat or a cow, then you have to get money or kola, everything has to wrap in a white cloth to show that you respect this family that you are going to take their daughter away from them. So, the ceremony in Sierra Leone is very, is very, very deep culture and that's another thing I like to talk about, those are the things that our great ancestors taught that you have to respect women when you're going to have them. So that is why when you're going to have a woman in Sierra Leone, you have to get prepared with the kola, the cow, goat or sheep, for you to take that woman away."

Abdualle, Mende, Freetown, Sierra Leone, when asked if any traditional Mende ceremonies are still carried out in Glasgow:

"Not really. It only happens when it's like national celebration. For we here now, so we think about that, so we try to celebrate it here as well. And in London where we have a big Sierra Leone community, we celebrate different types of occasion as well."

Mourad Bouhadjar, Algeria:

"Engagement, so you need to, to see Imam in the Mosque or call the Shia in Algeria in North Africa, call the Shia. When you make an arrangement, engagement, so we need to see the witnesses to the Shia Imam, is that's what I'm going to ask for the hand of that woman for marry."

Sissala courtship

Sissala dowries are paid in cattle and tend to be fully paid several years into the marriage as an insurance that the wife is capable of bearing children. Neighbours, friends and elders are consulted on the suitability of a match before it may go ahead. It is forbidden for people from the same village to marry.

Chief Suleman Chebe, Sissala, Ghana:

"In my tribe before the wedding you have to send some kola nuts to the lady's side of the family and so the kind of kola you send determines the character of the man and if, you know, if the kola is accepted it means that you are ready, so, irrespective of your engagement plans and all those things, if the kola nut is not well received by your in-laws, means your wedding plans could be severely upset."

Ofomu Clark, Edo State, Nigeria, on her engagement back home:

"I met him in Uni as well, back home. We did an introduction in my family home. He came with his family and, you know, and made the request known to my parents. That he was interested in me."

Engagement amongst the Baganda

Traditionally the Baganda parents made the decision over who their children would marry. In the past, an aunt would have first been sent to meet the bride's parents but now it can be other members of the family. A bride price is required before the marriage is agreed. This used to be in the form of a chicken or a goat, or some locally produced bark cloth, but can now amount to thousands of pounds, depending on the wealth of the family.

Nassar Lule, Baganda, Uganda:

"Yes, they have to ask, and the parent have to go to the other parent to talk to them, but sometime the other parent, they don't like you or don't support that family, or maybe they have their reasons, so sometimes there is trouble over there. Yeah, sometimes you find there is trouble over there, you see, because the parent they

have to make a decision. It is so funny to make a decision for people who love themselves, and their parent they have to make their own decision."

Nassar Lule, Baganda, Uganda, on engagement amongst those who have since moved to other places, such as Glasgow:

"There are really few people who make their own decision who to marry and those are usually the people who are educated, sent to Kampala or somewhere, they can make their own choice."

Iko Prince Meko, Ohafia, Nigeria, on courtship:

"If a man find a woman, or if either the parents find the wife for him and show him that, oh, an Ohafia woman or girl for, that very good and they will invite the man to come and see the girl. After that and they accept then they will continue. Or if a man find a wife he will go and tell his parents, especially his dad, that I have found somebody that I wish to marry, then the father will say "who is the person?", and the boy will brief to his father the person and the father will say "okay, you have to give us some time for us to go and check the family.""

Gloria Oju Onyekwere, Kaduna State, Nigeria:

"The guy comes and makes his intentions known to your parents and then they will call you out. I remember my dad calling me out saying, "this man over here, do you know him?", and then you identify the person by saying you know him and you are in support of what he's asking for and then, after then, they'll fix an engagement party, bring the two, both family, and each day they come can take up to three to four hours."

Nelson Sule, Benin City, Nigeria, on courtship in Benin City:

"Yes, there is, but the time I grew up in Benin City, umh…we've had loads of influence from the European cultures. So, most of us, you don't really bother about the traditional cultures. But what I know is…during the time of courtship with my wife, I never step foot into the house, you still keep that respect, you meet your partner somewhere in town. Obviously, you are not allowed to come into the house until you've made the intentions known proper. I remember when I was ready, I had to first go with my friend. I picked two of my friends and we made an appointment and, ehm, then I went to see the dad and asked to come in to start the courtship with my wife and, I was told, ehm, I can't do that on my own. I was born into a family so I need to come with my family, obviously, and then we had to go back, I had to go back with my parents, Mum and Dad and extended family. You tell them the day you're

coming and a big feast is held as well and they welcome you, and if all goes well then you are allowed to start coming to the house, ehm, to visit whenever you like. Then during the engagement ceremony, that's when we fix the date to get married."

Ali Abubakar, Zanzibar; left in the early 1960s and converted to Christianity from Islam:
"Courtship? It didn't. Male and female were kept apart… I don't think that's the case now, but I can't tell for certain."

Engagement amongst the Nuer, South Sudan

As pastoralists, cattle are a major part of the world view of the Nuer. They are given as a 'bride-price' and may be taken back if the husband passes away. A premium is put on tall and good -looking women who will command more cattle as a result of these qualities.

Simon Koang, Nuer, South Sudan. Simon is one of only a couple of people from South Sudan in Glasgow:
"The marriage. In our traditional there is two different ways to get marriage. Or, you have a girlfriend, you love each other, you get married. Or, you decide to marriage. You have girlfriend. You don't love her to be your wife… Your family, they can bring you a girl. They know the background of the family. The background of the girl. They will tell you, "You Simon, going to marry this girl. Going to marry that one." From there they will make…send somebody, information to the father. And the father will go, "Ok, go and meet the girl." You call your friends and the girl will call her friends. You meet togethers and talks. If you agree, you can marriage. If you disagree…the friends of the girl they say, "No, this guy is ugly, he's no good. Yes, we don't want him." They will say "No, we don't want you and that is…". If the girl, if the girl like you, accept you, it's ok. But, you, you don't have choice to say "No", because you are the one that's been sent by your father. And you come and the girl is the one who have the choice. To look at you, accept you, says "Ok"…she will say, "Ok, you go to my father." From there, you go to her father and make an exchange, how many cow they wants, and you pay the cow."

Courtship amongst the Mandinka of Gambia

The traditional Mandinka marriage was arranged by the parents and not by the prospective bride and groom, although the rules on this have, in some cases, relaxed in modern times. Male members of the groom's family take kola nuts (a very common element in ceremonies in West Africa) as a gift to the woman's parents. They express the man's interest, whilst they are there, and if the bride's family agree, then family members are informed and the wedding arrangements can go ahead.

Sarjo Koita, Mandinka, Gambia, on courtship:

"Yes, that one is another very interesting area. What we've said in our land. Couples can see each other, and they want to get married. But they have to get a permission from their parents. To accept it or not. So sometime, you can see, a woman will want a man. A man will want a woman. And they decide they are everything. But, the parents of one side will not agree. Even though they want it…and they cannot go against it."

Sarjo Koita, Mandinka, Gambia, on Courtship in Glasgow:

"Even in Scotland here…when couples see each other and they want to get married and both of them are Gambian. they still need to send permission back home. And I have met someone. Because at least 99% of the Gambians here have their family back home."

Serign Sanneh, Mandinka, Gambia, on courtship:

"When someone is looking for a wife you send your family members, you speak to your mum and dad and say "I've seen a wife I want to marry", and they'll buy kola nut and go to that family and say, "Our son wants to marry your daughter" and they will wait to see if they agree or not."

The Akan 'koko ko', or 'knocking ceremony'

Amongst the Akan 'knocking ceremony', the man goes to the family of women he wants to marry and knocks the door. He brings schnapps and other gifts, such as kola nuts and money. If the family agree to the marriage, a bride-price is then fixed. In recent years, this sometimes occurs on the same day as the wedding.

Lydie Bere Flere Dossa, Akan, Ivory Coast, on courtship amongst the Akan:

"Ok, over there, when you start dating…most family would like you to bring the man [home]. For the man to know you, and for them as well, to make appointment with the man family. For mum or dad to go there with you. For the family to know each other. In case anything happen. You know where he came from… Now, in gradual time, when you do this one. When you are working or the man is working, and he say, "I want to take her in my house to come and live with me". Like you are partner. You are not married yet. Before he does it…he need to go and see your family. Especially this father's side. Because, over there, everything is father's side who decide. Mum's side have nothing to do. Because, you still go on this way. It's father's side. So, they need to go and see your father, plus his brothers. No sisters, brothers. So, your uncles' side. You need to bring a drink. They call it knocking at the door. They call it 'koko ko'. Is to say that "From today, your daughter, Lydie, is living under my roof. If anything happen I am responsible for her.""

Lydie Bere on courtship in Glasgow:

"Even for the koko ko, you send money. Because three, maybe four months ago…I been to Elizabeth and John. The John is a retired policeman. He's from Scotland, he's a retired policeman. He marry one of our friends from Ivory Coast. She's fifty-two, he's sixty-one. So, they bring money to do the koko ko with the family first. When he was living with her."

Yunis Odum, Ghana, on courtship in her village:

"How, it's almost a no-no…especially if you're in the church. It's like, no, coz they feel like there's more sin, in quote, in that. So, they either would prefer you to just wait, to be set up by either a parent or an aunty. Someone older. Or for the person to come and just marry them straight away. Instead of going through the process of just getting to know them a bit."

Yunis Odum, on courtship in Glasgow:

"I think it's still happening. Eh, some might…a lot of people wouldn't. I personally wouldn't. Even, I, myself…I've been set up several different times…it doesn't really work out. I don't think it is better to get to know the person yourself…instead of just being forced onto one person and being forced to generate feelings or affections for that person. I don't think that's the most natural way of it happening."

Esan courtship, Nigeria

In Esan culture, both sons and daughters are highly valued. If a daughter is maltreated by her husband, then the family wants to be able to pay the dowry back in order to save her from the situation. This is why dowries are set very low traditionally. In modern times a large dowry may be asked for but the majority of it will be given back to pay for the newlyweds to set up their life together

Chief Josephine Oboh-Macleod, Esan, Nigeria, on engagement in Esan lands:

"If a suitor sees a beautiful girl that he likes, generally he'll go try to make investigation, call an uncle of his, or investigate where that girl is from, or what she is, sometimes a lot of them - they don't have a relationship or they don't want to have any sexual relationship with the girl, they want her to come as she is or to come like that, then they'll go there and normally what the family would do is ask "Which of them you know?", then they point or describe her for the family to be very sure the one you're really

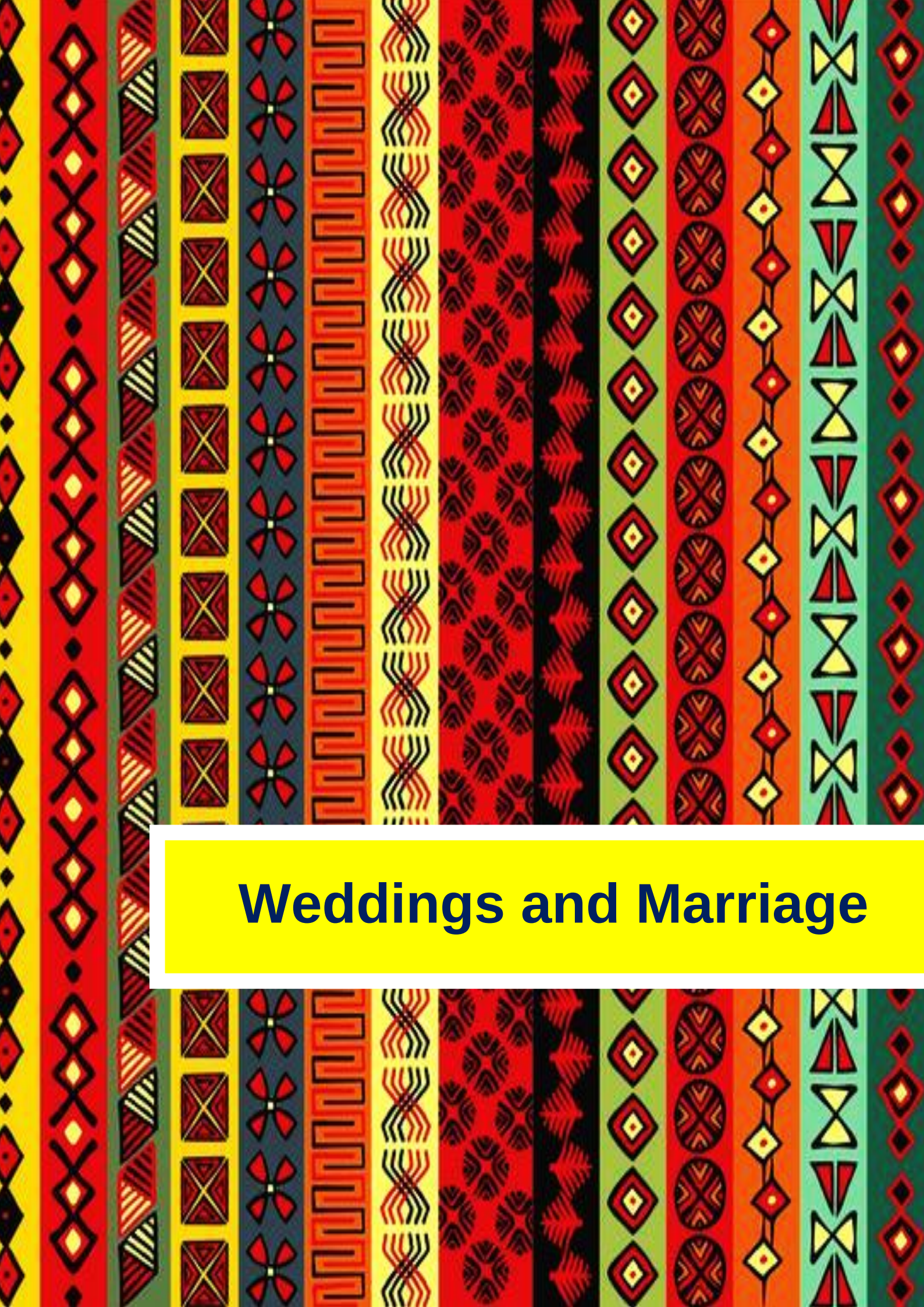
talking about. Then they say “Okay”, and the families will say ask her first…most families. There’s no family I know of that would just say “Oh, let’s go ahead and do that - blah blah, blah blah”, because in my culture, I don’t know about some of the other people, in my culture the reason why we make dowries very, very cheap, the exact amount they pay for dowries extremely cheap is because they felt that in those days a lot of their girls were married, the man comes with very good intentions, takes her away to another kingdom and then this girl is maltreated but they cannot pay back that dowry that had been paid. So, us, in Esan land, our dowries are normally nominal.”

Mariarose Ngosi, Lilongwe, Malawi, on courtship in Malawi:

“Every culture has their own system. So ,for example, if I want to get married, I wouldn’t go to my mum or my dad, I would go to my uncle, yeah. I would go to my auntie, who is my uncle’s wife, and tell her “I want to get married” and stuff, then she would tell my uncle, then between the two of them would talk and take the news to my parents. And so once they take the news to my parents, they ask if I’m still going and want to continue with it, then it will be my uncle’s duty to make all the arrangements, all the necessary arrangements, all the rules and requirements to do for me to get married. So my mum and dad will be looking up to my uncle to make sure everything is done, that’s including with me, yes… Yes, they do, they do bring gifts. Mainly, traditionally, it depends with the area. Ah, in my culture, the northern region…so, you bring gifts mainly for the mum, for giving…if it’s the child, the girl…so, they will bring something to give to the mum. It’s like thanking the mum for giving birth to the child. Like, eh, bring her up. Like the way she is…if she is very good. If they like her, like they bring the mum’s gift. To thank her… Then, on that point, they also agree the dowry, whatever they want. If it’s money or whatever. Nowadays, I think they only use money.”

Mariarose Ngosi, on courtship in Scotland:

“In Scotland, in here, it’s different. But, eh, for example, the ones who are marrying, they are Malawians. Eh, they would consult someone. I think from the one…other Malawians. So, but it’s different, but, as long…while those things are happening here…If those two have parents in Malawi. In Malawi they also meet. So, everything else can happen in Malawi while here they are continuing with the marriage.”


Weddings and Marriage

“The man may be the head of the home
but the wife is the heart”

-African proverb

Sadly, many of our respondents feel that traditional African weddings are becoming less popular amid an influx of the so-called ‘White Western’ African weddings. Yet marriage is still a special celebration of the’ natural continuity of life’ in every part of Africa, with the bride being treated with maximum respect because she is a link between the ancestors and the anticipated unborn children that will result from the marriage. Although wedding styles and traditions may change, a bride might bear a very powerful and strong child, which is so important for Africans, and, in some parts of East and South Africa, the grooms’ family may move to the brides’ village to help the new bride to be happy and to create a healthy family.

Marriage amongst the Ewe of Togo

There are three types of marriage in Togo. The civil, the Christian, and the traditional. Chiefs are sanctioned to perform traditional marriages, which are legally binding. The Christian wedding is not legally binding in or of itself. Couples often perform all three types of marriage. Amongst the Ewe of Togo, most ceremonies take place in the groom’s home. The bride arrives with female relatives bearing cloth as a gift, and then the celebrations begin with dancing, music and food.

Anani Fiado (Joe), Ewe, Togo, on the difference between marriage here and in his country:

“Because marriage is not like here. Because a marriage is different issue altogether. So, it have process. Because everything have to be in the court or the priest have to set the date. But there is the family. Want to make sure everything is going to be…yeah, the ceremony, the family, if everything come ok…the family will meet and the man will bring what they want. The list they ask…”bring drinks”. It’s like in the bible. How Solomon do it. Ehm, how Abraham do it… They will bring traditional drink. We have traditional drink, that is called palm wine. It’s very sweet. But I bet you cannot finish this cup (laughs). We have pito with wheat. It’s also very powerful. And you drink it in the calabash. All the two, you drink them in the calabash. And they will give the woman a small one in the calabash to go and find her husband. Sit down with the man. The parents of the woman will give the drink. For the woman to go and give

her husband. And she give the husband a drink. Then the husband will hold her hand. It is very beautiful. Yeah is very beautiful."

Marriage amongst the Akan of the Ivory Coast

When a date for the wedding is set, the groom sends palm wine to the bride's house and then brings her to his family home where he provides her with the food for the feast. There is invariably an elaborate traditional wedding where clothes from different groups of people in the Ivory Coast are worn by the bride throughout the day. There will also often be a religious or civil wedding.

Lydie Bere Flere Dossa, Akan, Ivory Coast, on weddings in her native culture:

"Before to do the white wedding, you need to do the African wedding first, because is the one is the most important first, you know. Even in the register office in our country is recognise that the African wedding is recognised as the wedding. So you need to do this one… In my tribe, like in my tribe, you come, they gonna say "Okay your wife is coming but you need to pay a fee again." Is just to bring the, the comedy on, you know, to bring the party on. So they gonna ask you "Oh, give me ten pounds, I need to buy petrol to my car to go pick up your wife to bring here."

Lydie Bere, on acting as a stand-in mum at a Cameroonian man's wedding:

"Because the boy's mum, the boy from Cameroon…his mum pass away. I was sitting as his mum."

Blandine Damsk, Bafoussam, Cameroon,

"According to tradition and elders, if you choose to marry and only have the legal ceremony, you are not recognised as being married, you have to have a traditional wedding to be recognised as being married. Before a traditional wedding, the 'fiancée' will come with his family to introduce himself to his prospective in-laws. This is called 'knock door'. At this time a 'bride price' is agreed and this could be anything from a goat or sheep to money. He is given a list of items that the family (including grandparents, etc.) require, and he has to agree to provide all the items on the list…. The family of the bride will cook lots of food and it is a big celebration. When people start arriving, they brought lots food and wine with them too. The guests will also bring a suitcase for the bride and this will contain clothes, shoes, make-up, handbags blankets and money, then throughout the evening the ladies will open the suitcase

and help themselves to the items in the case… Then comes the celebration time, the girl will be hiding somewhere. The girl won't be there to welcome them, it's the family, as the girl is hiding somewhere. Then the Dad will say, "Okay, you see visitors here, they say that they came for somebody. I don't know who they are here for, could you tell us?" Before that they will give the visitors drink, just to welcome them.
"Yeah, tell us why you are here."
"Well we came here because we saw a ripe mango here."
"A mango? Okay, can you please go and get a mango?"
They say, "Oh no, we're not talking about this, we're talking about a beautiful lady here and our heart is beating, we cannot leave without her."
"Oh, I know what you mean, no, so which one of them do you mean? I've got many girls here?" Even if he's only got one daughter, he's got many girls there.
You should never give the name because if you give the name it's not being polite, so you say, "She's beautiful, with bright eyes." "

Blandine then explained that one girl would be brought out covered from head to foot with only the tip of her shoes showing. The groom then has to say if this is the girl he wishes to marry. Then another girl is brought out and he has to say if this is the right girl. Eventually, the bride is brought out, and the groom knows this is his 'bride' because, before the wedding, the bride has told him what shoes she will be wearing on her feet to make sure he

guesses the right one. The Dad asks the girl if she's sure she wants to marry and when she says "Yes", he takes a drink from a glass of wine, gives it to his daughter and then to her husband. Then he takes a bite from a kola nut, gives it to his daughter, then the husband. Their traditional 'ring' is the kola and the wine. The marriage has now taken place.

Lydie Bere, on making a marriage work in the Ivory Coast:

"In Ivory Coast, if there is no communication, it's not like you're a slave, to do what he say to do, no, no, no, you have your say with him. But whatever you want to discuss, you discuss it both of you, and you agree and you do it."

Lydie Bere, on making a marriage work in Glasgow:

"Even here in Scotland, most of the family who are living together as husband and wife here…they always listen to their husband. Some of them are stubborn. That does not listen. It bring a lot of arguing, quarrelling in the family. And divorce at the end because there's no mutual consent. And some time it's small, small thing, but there's no mutual consent on it and it will just destroy you. But here, most of them are trying to follow it. Most of them are trying to follow it. One way, sometime, eh, family can jump in to try to resolve it. The woman can go and speak to the woman or the man can speak to the man, or the man can speak to the woman, woman can speak to the

man of this family – “No, try to calm down. Let it go, listen to your wife.” Eh, “This one, she got good point, you need to listen to her as well. You know, she have a say on it but, you are still the head of the family but this one she is right so just look on it and you will see.

Lule Nassar, Baganda, Uganda, on marriages in his culture:

“That one it depends, in Africa, it’s not like here, it depends. Some people, they have money, they can stay there for a week playing drums and drinking. Because they have money. So, the people who don’t have money, they don’t put on any ceremony at all. They just marry each other. And there are two married…you can go to church or the head of the village. They can give you your wife… Some people they do traditional and they go to church. Those are the people who have money.”

Marriage amongst the Bamiléké of Cameroon

Traditionally, parents would find marriage partners based on the reputation of a prospective marriage partner and their family. Marriage is very much about the coming together of two families. New clothes are given to the bride as a sign that she is off the market. The community often blesses the wedding.

Jean Albert Nietcho, Bamiléké, Cameroon, on marriage in his culture:

"The wedding ceremony is so amazing. You should have a look at one video of this kind of thing. It is fun. It's just like a comedy. Because before…they will just make a way...because the family, we just try to make performance. So, you the bride, you the man. You can give more money, more money, more money… For example, because you are saying that, they will just try to…they will bring quite a lot of girls. They will ask you "Which one your wife." They will ask you to choose which one between them. Or they will cover the face, cover the face and ask you to choose. If you choose the wrong one (laughs) that mean you are going to pay more (laughs). That mean "You want our girl, you don't even know who she is!" That's kind of just like a comedy. They just do that all over the night before they say, they will say "Ah, you have to pay for flight to go and get, or you have to pay for taxi to go and get." And people will come and sing with you. Sing in front of you. Sing all sort of the thing. The man's family. The man's side… The special thing as well, in my wife, my wife family, what they do, is, eh, shopping in the morning. What they do, everyone in the village, they going to bring vegetables, yam, food to sell at the end, before you go. There will be potato, you have to...but all the village do that kind of thing. Will come and do the business. Will come with the potato and thing. The man family they will buy it and sometimes they overprice it."

Jean Albert Nietcho, on whether people marry in Glasgow or go back to Cameroon to marry:

"Sometimes people will go and do the traditional marriage back home. It's something that Home Office acknowledge as well. So, if you have your wife, even by doing the traditional marriage, if you can prove…if you can prove that. I'm talking the same with me, my wife. We get the civil marriage here when I applied for visa, but I have to prove that we are together. That it is my wife because of these traditionals. See, you have the picture. You have to prove that traditional marriage. And have to bring the photo, that's what I did, to give some confidence, to Home Office that…also because, my wife, we get married here. But the traditional one we did that back home… I am actually attending here…if you have a big family here. Just like me, if I become and stay here for that long…for very, very, long time. My son, or if I get a daughter…get married. I can do it here. But sometime, it is good to do it back home because there will be that extending family. This uncle and auntie, they are very, very important when you get married."

Younis Odum, Ghana, on marriage in her culture:

"The white wedding is almost always certainly on a Saturday. Always…I'm not sure if there is a particular reason for it but it's almost always on a Saturday. Occasionally I've seen people who do the white wedding and the engagement on the same day. So, they start the traditional really, really early, and then they break off and go to the church and do the white ceremony, just put everything on the one day. But they try not to space it out too much. So, once you are engaged or once you go through the traditional, they almost expect you to be married within a month.

Younis Odum, on a wedding she attended in Glasgow between a man from Ghana and a woman from Zimbabwe:

"I think it was, the girl…they basically had similar outfits, so it was all navy blue and the guy had…it was like sewn for him and so was hers…and basically, it took me by surprise because I've never witnessed a Zimbabwean wedding or tradition before. But basically, the woman's mother was sat on the floor beside her daughter to give glory to her daughter, yeah, and the woman who was getting married was on her knees to wash her future husband's hands, and she was on her knees and washed everyone else in the house's hands as a sign of respect, which I had never seen before. I felt bad for her because she was literally walking on her knees to go take the bowl to the next person."

Aya Rashid, Nigeria, on weddings in his culture:

"It could last up to three days. That is after months or probably years of preparation. But the ceremony itself. The first day, you do, eh, an informal introduction. That is when your family meets our immediate family. Then when it comes to the marriage proper. Three days to the marriage proper you do the introduction. That is a societal introduction. Ok, bring whoever you've got. I bring whoever I've got. Let them meet and let them meet together. Ok, this is our child going to your family. What have you got? They put differences aside because two people are coming to an innocent world and it's big. The following day they apply the western ideology. Some of us go to the court for register wedding, some of us go to the church for church wedding, some of us go to the mosque. But the third day is the big one, that's the celebration. You come

with everything you've got. You come with your girls and gears, everything you've got. And you dance your heart out."

Muslim weddings in Gambia

The marriage can take place whilst the couple are absent and it is often only men who attend the mosque. The dowry is paid at the wedding, which is usually a small or nominal amount set by the bride's family. Kola nuts are also present. Prayers are made.

Serign Sanneh, Mandinka, Gambia, on the difference between a Mandinka wedding and one and a Western one:

"It's much different to the Western way of getting married. It's basically like the honeymoon… When I was getting married, I was here and my wife was still in Gambia, so, because we didn't need to be there, so it's the elders that do everything and then my wife joined me here. So, and that's still the way it is."

Grace Manika, Malawi, on marriage in her culture:

"Oh, if two people like each other and they want to get married, they get married… You marry in church or you marry in the Registry Office."

John Unis, Freetown, Sierra Leone, on the differences between the traditional and the Western wedding in his culture:

"In the wedding of my elder sister, that being like the culture is still there in Africa, because we make all arrangements within the traditional way of a wedding, which was more fantastic on that day compared to, we call them, 'the Western version,' which we appreciate as a traditional. People living and show people that we can still do a wedding with traditional costumes, so at least one hundred percent of the people all around the area all admire all that we have done more than the Western wedding."

Rohey Conteh, Mandinka, Gambia, on weddings in Glasgow:

"Yeah, it can be similar. They do try a lot. It's just sometimes a little bit different because of the environment. Like, in Gambia, you have outside. People will cook outside, sort of like in the garden. So, yeah, the environment's a little bit different because most of the things…they do cooking inside of the house and then they take it to the hall and they play the music and people will come over. Uhm, whilst in Gambia, if you have your own compound, or your own house, you have everything in there. You don't need to take a hall. Your friends and family will come and meet you there. And the cooking will be in the house."

Pa Ebou Ngum, Wollof, Gambia, on weddings in his culture:

"When they are married, there are a special day when she is handed to the husband and that day, the night they are, the night she is handed to her husband, the most important time is the morning. They will put them in a room and wait for the morning. That's the time when the mother will not sleep because he has to prove that her daughter is a virgin before she is given to the husband. So, in the morning the proof will be the bed sheets and that night the bed sheets will be white, so when the morning comes and they saw the bed sheets, they will straight away know, yeah, she was, and then they start beating the drums… In the Muslim religion you are allowed to marry up to four wives. It's nearly compulsory. If you can do it, and doing it, that's the hardest part. Coz to treat everybody…you have to treat everybody the same."

Kaddi Jatu Jobe, Mandinka, Gambia, on weddings in her culture:

"You do the traditional marriage first and then you set a date to do like the wedding. It's up to you whether you want a white wedding or you want like a kind of mixed white and traditional wedding, then the husband's people will get, like, clothes, shoes, bags, fragrances and different, different stuff for ladies, and put in a suitcase and everyone will contribute whatever they can contribute, and then they will take it to you, to the bride's family… Some will wear white, some will wear violet, some will go baby pink. Depends, actually, depends on the taste… It's usually three days. So, you have the actual wedding, and then you have…so, that night, that's when the kinda…They perform this traditional kind of bath on you. And then you wear like white clothes. And you have like kind of beads on your head as well. And uhm, dunno, how that thing is called…so, there's this kind of, hmm, it's kind of like pumpkin but it's not, it's like the hard bit. So, they just cut in the middle and take up the seeds, and you hold it in your hand. And then they will take you to the husband's house. So, in the morning they will come and get you, and they will do drumming and that kind of thing. So, after that then the husband will…actually, the husband's family, will get you like a gift. That's another celebration. But, at the end of the day. That's the end of the wedding. After three days."

Kaddi Jatu Jobe, Mandinka, Gambia, on weddings in Glasgow:

"Yeah, yeah, like back home, yeah, yeah. The only thing I've not seen is the traditional at the end of the wedding ceremony, in the evening. I've never seen that here just yet… But I've seen it in London. I've not seen it here, but I've…cause I've not been here so long. So, maybe they do. Maybe, I'm not sure…"

Mariarose Ngosi, Lilongwe, Malawi, on weddings in her culture:

"Typical marriage ceremony, what they will do is…one, they will go to the church, to start with, if they believe in church. So once from church, they will go to the houses first. Where the bride and everyone are gathered for food. Then they will eat…the bride and groom they will eat. And after that they will go to the hall. If they have, like, eh, after celebration, which everybody else will gather there. So, on my…on our side, we have like a master of ceremony which, eh, make sure put everything in order. So, the bride and the groom will sit at the high table, plus his best males and the best girls for the bridesmaids and the bridegrooms. So they will sit. I would say the whole bridal party will sit on one side. So, once it's done, like that…the master of ceremony bringing people one by one. And we put money. You can bring the gift but you also have to carry money (laughs). So, on the ceremony they can call to say the man's side. And then they'll put the music and you go and you put money. So, there's lots of

things…like on the female side you also do the same. Then they will bring other people, the uncles. There will be speeches and stuff. But eh, before you do all that…you can't make a speech without putting money on… Ah, the food is…typically, when you go to the… because we have, like, two different food. If it's in Malawi, after the church, you go to the house where you eat. They will cook like a nsima [porridge] which is like ugali, sadza from the maize meal. So, they will have that. They will have some nice. Ah, normally we don't go to the butcher. Ninety per cent we will get the cow, live cow, which they will kill for the event. Or, goat or lamb, whatever they have. The chickens…they will have that. So, that will be like the people from all over, because the wedding is big… If you have a big family. So, I can easily have three thousand people, yeah, so, through that, every family brings their own. So, if it's my side, say we meet here [The African Arts Centre, Ibrox, Glasgow], this all for my woman's side. They will have another house for the man's side. So, from that side they will be cooking things like that, and when the brides are coming, they will eat. After they eat, then they will go to the hall, so in the hall, it's completely different type of food. It's just nibbles and eh, like drink… Normally it's white dress. Normal white wedding dress and the normal suit. But, eh, from the family, sometimes. Sometime during the wedding time…they can pick a colour. African colour. So, everybody will be in the same colour with the different design."

Mariarose Ngosi, Lilongwe, Malawi, on weddings in Glasgow:

"Oh yes, my cousin got married here. I would say fifty percent was similar to back home. The culture is still the same. For the money wise, we are still putting the money. And what we do here, now, because in Malawi, we give money on the wedding. Because Malawi wedding, when you go to the wedding, you have to carry money. But, because pound is big (laughs) you can't put, eh…you can't have one pound because it's only the coins. Only you can start with five pounds and five pounds is big. So, what we do is we change to dollars. So, you can have one dollar, one dollar, one dollar… Yes, so we put the dollars in the…during the wedding…so, yeah, when you go to dance, you put money. So, we still have that culture. But, when it comes to food, we don't go to any…once we from the church or from the registration, we go straight to the hall… We have the bigger food, yeah, it's easy to get the food. So, we have…so many people does African food now. But it's easy, yeah… But most of the time, nowadays, people can chip in to help. So, like, ehm, I would say "I will cook rice." Someone will say "I will cook chicken." Someone will say "I will cook fish." Or, if you have money, you will have someone to cook for the whole wedding."

Parenthood

"Mothers raise their daughters,
and let their sons grow up…"

-African proverb

Sean Thomas, Lagos, Nigeria, on neighbours as parents:

"I grew up in Lagos, it's one of the world's most populated cities, um, very hustle and bustle. It's an island, a very small island actually, just like Britain, but with much, much people. I grew up in a very, very tight knit community where everybody knows the neighbours, and the neighbours are, are considered to be your parents as well. So, they says, this is the community that brings out the child, and that was one of the legacies I grew up with living in Lagos, Nigeria."

Ofomu Clark, Edo State, on boys being valued more than girls in her culture:

"Yes, I think so, because, em, by our culture, the male child has been seen as special and the heir apparent to the family throne, because as a family, we believe that there is…there's something to be preserved in the family, so, when a male child is being born, it's like, it's preserving the family's name and it will take it into the next generation… The boys are treated differently in the homes, usually coz they feel like

the girls are growing up to become mothers and so they have to play the mother…they have to be taught the motherly role that they will have to perform later in life. So, we do all the chores at home and the boys did less work. So, they were treated better than us, like we felt at the time. But growing up, at the moment, I'm so grateful that I learnt everything I learnt at that time. Because that's what I have and I'm holding on to as a mother."

Sean Thomas, Lagos, Nigeria, on both sexes being regarded equally in his culture:

"In Africa in my, where I come from, I can only speak for area which I grew up, which is Lagos, ehm, definitely, the man, the head of the family, was happy when he's got a son, but it's equally celebrated as much when they get a daughter."

Abdualle, Mende, Freetown, Sierra Leone, on teaching his children his culture here in Glasgow:

"We have to teach them, we have to teach them about our culture, it is something that we have to be teaching them every day. I am happy to teach my children my culture and I am teaching them my culture."

Chief Amu Logotse, Ewe, Ghana, on the attitude of one family in his culture:

"Em, yes, my father did and so was my grandfather. So, my mother, my grandmother had ten children, nine daughters, one son. So, all our aunties and their children are our brothers and sisters as far as we're concerned, and by Ghanaian tradition that's the way it goes, we don't call them cousins, no, we call them brothers, we call them sisters. So that made it more exciting, and there was no, no differentiation or

demarcation in whose child this is, you know. We are all the one family, especially when we have the same surname, it makes it even exciting."

Gloria Oju Onyekwere, Igbo, Kaduna State, Nigeria, on whether boys are valued more than girls in her culture:

"No, why should I do that?... My two daughters, I carried them for nine months, my son I carried him for nine months… The one that I would recommend we should fight about, is the way no girl child should be treated. You see a man that has got maybe one son and three girls, ehm, they would rather train the one son and leave the three girls away."

Chief Suliman Chebe, Sissala, Ghana, on his upbringing:

"I had a very joyous upbringing, sometimes it was tough, life was tough sometimes but apart from the toughness and the difficulties, we ran out of some supplies and sometimes the water not been as clean as this side of the world. It was such a joyous upbringing that I will always remember with fond memories."

Anani Fiado (Joe), Ewe, Togo, on bringing up children:

"If you go to a humble home you see the way children behave, so there's no difference between the culture or the character, is the way you train your children. You brought them up to be humble, to be respectful and to prosper."

Simon Koang, Nuer, South Sudan, on bringing up children in his culture:

"The men they don't know how to care for the small kids, only the mother knows how to care for them."

Simon Koang, Nuer, South Sudan, on what he is teaching his children about his culture now he is in Glasgow:

"Yeah, yeah, like my children, I'm teaching them from my language all the traditions, the respect, to understand my language to know my background… I talk to them about many things and they say, "What is that?""

Sarjo Koita, Mandinka, Gambia, on the differences between his upbringing and that in Glasgow:

"We were born in a polygamy family, where my father has two wives living in the same compound, so we all have grown up together… It's very interesting, you see, because this old man will bring this whole family as one unit. So that's the interesting thing about it and all the mothers, everybody will be together and we

all get on well, unlike in this present generation where it's almost impossible to do that."

Nassar Lule, Baganda, Uganda, on whether boys are more celebrated than girls in his culture:

"Yes, yes, yes, that one is also happen a lot, because if you have a boy it means yes, yes, our clan now have getting a boy, so we having power. For the women, they don't say anything because men and women in Uganda they don't talk."

Jean Albert Nietcho, Bamiléké, Cameroon, on baby boys being valued more than girls in his culture:

"Yeah, because, ehm, in my tradition, for in my family if I pass away, there is someone going to be taking over because of the succession. It have to be a boy, because a woman does not succeed a man and a man does not succeed a woman."

Nelson Sule, Benin City, Nigeria, on teaching his cultural values to his children here in Glasgow:

"We are from Africa, it's our heritage, we need to identify with it, its part, probably. My kids call me old school, but the values, I think, should be kept should be instilled in our kids growing up. The different values that we need to uphold."

Alix Joseph Offorojamu, Nigeria, on teaching his children his culture whilst living in Glasgow:

"Yeah, yeah, as far as if you are, if you are born as a different minority, like Igbo, Yoruba, you must teach your children the culture as well."

Kwaka Amankwah Frimaponna, Kumasi, Ghana, on how he is teaching his son about his culture whilst living in Glasgow:

"Yeah, I'll try. Yeah yeah, to me, I'll try, but depends the, the person. My boy, if they wish to be, there is no problem. Normally I teach them so they can learn many things about Africa, yeah."

Pa Ebou Ngum, Wollof, Gambia, on whether girls are valued more than boys in his culture:

"Whatever your wife delivers, boy or girl, you left it in the hands of God, that's what meant to be."

Rohey Conteh, Mandinka, Gambia, on whether boys are more valued than girls in her culture:

"There are people who have their beliefs, and tribes that they always want to have a boy instead of girls, yeah, so definitely they will look for boys. It might be something like a bad luck if they don't have a boy to inherit them, because a male can inherit when they are not around. To have a male child is very important to them."

Twimukye Macline Mushake, Bakiga, Uganda, on how she was encouraged by her mother to exceed the expectations put on female children at the time:

"Well, I would say my childhood was happy, as I said, because I had loving parents. But, at the same time, it was challenging, because I had to walk that extra mile to have an education. Uhmm, there were things that were quite different because of my disability. That did not conform on expectations of the girl child. Because the women of my age grew up knowing that they were going to be someone's wife at some point. And fulfil the duties of being a wife and mother. And my mother instilled in me, the belief that I'm not going to be that perfect wife, perfect mother. But I can be a professional. And I will never thank her enough for that, because, for me, the things I have done over the years! I've eventually become a wife. Eventually, as I can say. But, that was never my grounding. My grounding was me, being me. And being able to do the things I do because I have worked so hard to do them."

Twimukye Macline Mushake, Bakiga, Uganda, on bringing her children up in Glasgow:

"I do, as an African, know that there is that identity that I want my children to have, and that is them being to be able to at least speak an African language when they go home… I think there is an advantage of being able to speak another language."

Ali Abubakar, Zanzibar, on teaching his children Swahili here in Glasgow:

"I used, when the children were younger, to sing them Swahili songs, yeah. I didn't teach them anything…just now sometimes. My son, Michael, would eh...I would ask him if he remembers because he went to Zanzibar twice. I, he remembers such and such a word in Swahili and interestingly he would remember a little bit."

Mariarose Ngosi, Lilongwe, Malawi, on her upbringing:

"I had a good childhood. I didn't stay at home much because I used to be in boarding school. Me and my sister went to boarding school since I was five years old. So, my whole life I spent much time in boarding school, which I liked it. It was a girls' boarding school. After I went to High School, I was also in boarding school, so I didn't spend much time at home, but when I was at home, being girls in Africa, we didn't have much time to play with other kids because we were doing housework. My mum was very strict. She made sure we learned how to cook, to clean the houses and to do anything to do with the house. So, she didn't let us much to go and play… She used to say that "the more time that you go and play with your girlfriends, you will be gossiping, and you be starting fight, so there is no point because if you go to your friends every single day what're you going to be talking about? But if you go to your friends once a week or maybe three times in a month, at least you have something to

talk about because you've missed each other for a while." So, we spend more time in the house, yeah, doing housework or teaching us how to bake, yeah."

Mariarose Ngosi, Lilongwe, Malawi, on the fact that girls are more celebrated than boys in her culture:

"Eh, I would say maybe girls are more celebrated than boys because there are so many things can be done by girls than the boys. When it comes to the lavora (dowry) like in my family's culture, it's the boy who pays the lavora. The boys pay to the girls. Yeah, so I would say girls get celebrated more than boys… For my son, I would want him to learn, but it's up to him if he wants to learn because he was not born in Malawi, he was born in Scotland, but it's good for them to know where they are from, where they existed. It's good to know but it's up to them. If they want to learn, then yes, definitely yes. I would love my son to know exactly where I'm from, to know my family and stuff. I've introduced to them anyway, but later on I can't choose for him."

John Unis, Freetown, Sierra Leone, on teaching his children about his culture whilst in Glasgow:

"We have to keep our children informed about Africa, where we came from and some of the history. At the same time, we are taking them back home to see where their great, great parents came from, so in future they can get the bigger advantage of interacting with the Africans and with the Europeans, which will make them much better."

Leadership and Governance

"An army of sheep led by a lion can defeat an army of lions led by a sheep"

-African proverb

Akan

An Akan becomes an elder by first being selected by his or her older female relatives. Once selected, the elder joins other lineage heads and officials to sit on a council advisory to the Ohene (King). Elders are referred to as nana, though not everyone called nana is an elder. Akan elders open their meetings with prayers and beverages and ask for the ancestors' continued blessings, protection, prosperity, and happiness for the entire community.

To become an ancestor in Akan culture, the deceased must have been an elder in life. When death comes, his or her female relatives make ritual preparations to facilitate passing of the spiritual personality. Ancestors are separate and distinct from other immortal spirits, and becoming an ancestor requires that one live one's life from the beginning in anticipation of the end. Eternal existence becomes possible only after one has first achieved the position of an elder. As ancestors, they exist with God, but unlike God, they cannot create or change the created order. They can, however, reincarnate via their spirits to help people.

Yoruba

Differences between an older person and an elder reflects a significant shift in personal and collective responsibilities in Yoruba culture. Adult men usually have the responsibility to protect and defend the community, whilst the women are responsible for nurturing and educating the community. Consequently, men are often tasked with obtaining and providing those resources that sustain and advance life for themselves, their families and the community. Women's time and interests are centred on creating a warm environment conducive to the growth and development of life for them and their families.

The onile is the symbol of Yoruba eldership; it is represented by two iron figurine spikes (one male, one female) joined at the head with a chain. The Yoruba believe that the head is contains the spiritual essence of a person. Symbolising the sacred bond between male and female elders and stressing the importance of 'the couple', the onile's emphasis on sexual attributes is designed to convey the mystical power of procreation and the omnipotence of

the elders. Male elders take on the role of Baba Agba, which means 'senior' or 'nurturing' father', while female elders take on the role of Iya Agba, which means 'senior' or 'warrior' mother. Women elevated to the status of eldership are devoted to protecting and defending the spiritual balance of the community, whereas men are dedicated to securing and establishing its spiritual harmony.

Nigerian Chiefs

Chiefs in Nigeria are not constitutionally recognised but are legally recognised and it is a criminal offence to pose as one. They are often found on the state council of traditional rulers, and chiefs of each state there.

Chief Josephine Oboh MacLeod, Esan, Nigeria, on chiefdom in Nigeria:

"I believe there were female Chiefs before, but I don't have the records that's why recording these things are very important. You know, I believe that if the Chief, the female Chief, had had her ceremony done properly, she should actually try and archive them. Because I don't have the record and when I ask the Director of Chieftaincy Affairs, they claim that the only record they know is the record on the archive that's the Government people, and also the Governments in Edo State have also put in laws down that if you, you can wear the coral beads and carry an ox-tail all you want (that means respect and everything), to wear it in marriage, to wear it around, but if you say "Oh, I am a Chief" and you, oh, you are perpetrating and trying to make people believe that they a chief with your coral, that may be six years imprisonment without any fine, which is quite a serious fine for it and I, I, I fear that, em, unfortunately, maybe that might be discouraging to people who have not gone or their parents have been chiefs and did not gone to actually certify themselves, to come out

because they don't know if the Government officials might turn the book on them, to say you did not come to certify and you are claiming to be a chief and it's imprisonment and that, that's, you know, it's a serious, serious offence really, unfortunately, with the Government's edicts, which is correct. A chief from my kingdom, in Edo State, also was almost caught after his ceremony on that technicality, for giving an interview to a journalist before coming to, to get him Government documentation. The Government contacted him and was putting the edict on him. That was where I was really afraid of edicts."

Abdualle, Mende, Freetown, Sierra Leone, on leadership battles in his culture:

"It's like a battle. You might have two people the same age, so they might have to battle for that. The younger ones, you know, they are young so they know it's not their time yet, but when they go to people that're the same age, they go into battle for that, so the person that won will be the head of the town. So, he will be, you know, like he will be the chief that, you know, everybody come that reports to."

Chief Suliman Chebe, Sissala, Ghana, on how wisdom is gained in his culture:
"You see, in Sissali tradition, for example, wisdom is gained through, ehm, experience of life, you know… Wisdom is achieved by serving, so they served their time, they are old, so everybody looks after them."

Iko Prince Meko, Ohafia, Nigeria, on elderly people in his culture:
"Old people are like, we see them as gods in my culture. We respect them by, we take care of them, and we pay homage to them and then we keep them, help them, we support them."

Aya Rashid, Nigeria, on the elderly in his culture:
"To say they are respected is an understatement. They are worshipped. We adore them. People, elderly, even if they are not yours, you don't have to know them. Because respect and obedience has been embedded in your heart from your home."

Ali Abubakar, Zanzibar, on respect for your elders in his culture:
"You kind of automatically respected people that were older than yourself, not only from your family but throughout. Looking back, also, you probably, as a younger person, believe everything that the older person said. You would be at your best manners outside because of an older person, and a person could check you, even if he was a member of your family or not, and ehm, you have no reason to complain or to go and tell your Daddy (laugh), that that happened, because they would be double checking (laugh)."

Kwaka Amankwah Frimaponna, Kumasi, Ghana, on his family in Ghana:
"My family is a royal family, that's why my name is Nana. I am one of the king of the village in Ghana. We are all okay there… We are one of the community in Kumasi… We organise the schools, we do everything over there."

Alkalos in Gambia

Alkalos are the traditional Gambian village chiefs. They were traditionally taken as leaders from the founding family of a village. In modern times they are elected. They previously shared power with the religious leader of the village. They also (as today) acted as arbitrators in disputes.

Sarjo Koita, Mandinka, Gambia, on leadership in his culture: "In the village we have a compound and that compound is headed by the elders of the compound. And that hierarchy, chain, is the first. If the elders, like the father passed away. The eldest shall

become head of the compound. And if that one passed, the next one to him. But it has to be, like, for male, you know, male sides that look after. Even though the mum is there…but, when come to administration of the compound, you consult the mum. But the entire administration of the compound lie down on the head of the compound… So, the compound…we have what we call cabille or clan. You call it a clan. And that clan, also, there is a head of that clan. You can have...a clan can be comprised...it depend on the size of the village. It can be comprised of ten or more compounds. And that one…the elders of that clan. So, and what they will do, if there is a dispute between people in that…and the compound heads cannot resolve it…they pass it on to the clan head. The clan head will call the two and resolve the dispute. After that clan, you have what you call the village alkalo. And the alkalo is the administrative which have link with local government. That is called…that's the head of the village. So, if those clan heads cannot resolve anything. It is passed on to that alkalo. The village head, who will call them and resolve the problem. And that village head, also will be in an administrative area which comprises of different villages. And that different villages is headed by a chief. And that chief…all the alkalos will be answerable to that chief. So that chieftaincy also. There'll be different chieftaincy put together and they become a division. Then you have what you call a divisional commissioner. That divisional commissioner will also be…the oldest chieftaincies. These chiefs will be answerable to their commissioner also. All the divisional commissioners…There will be different divisions also. Like, Gambia, you have CRI, West Coast and Cal. And all these divisions will be answerable to the President. Before it goes through a family line, like, is my family are the chiefs. My father is the chief. If my father passed away and he has siblings, brothers or sisters. The one next to him will be the chief. Not his son. No, no sorry the brother of my father. That would be an uncle to me. Would be the chief. That one…if there's no one like that there. The next one…if there is nothing of that then the eldest son of the family will take it. But now that has changed. It has to go to a ballot. They've changed it to a

ballot now. It's open to anyone. That's the change from this regime. This last regime. Commissioners are selected by the President."

Sarjo Koita, Mandinka, Gambia, on leadership in Glasgow:

"Well, no, no. The only thing we compare is our homes. Like I explained to you. I'm the head of my family and my wife. So, the children…the eldest, my eldest child is my daughter. So, I make sure that the siblings, the youngest, is realised that these are their elders. If we are not there she is in charge. If she is no there, the one next to her, is their brother, is in charge. My children can all explain this to you."

Blandine Damsk, Bafoussam, Cameroon.

"We believe they are guardians of our culture so how do you treat someone who are keep your secrets? You should keep them like you hold an egg, so you should cherish them, you should respect them. Older people for us, they are, you shouldn't, you shouldn't speak back or fight them back, you should respect them so they are like should I say the most important person like councillors or presidents, they are very important."

Lydie Bere Flere Dossa, Akan, Ivory Coast, on leadership in Glasgow:

"In Scotland here, you don't have any chiefs here. You don't have it. You have only families. And, eh, families, you gather sometime together to have some meeting for us to discuss about the…any issue that you want to discuss. Like, eh, last time, last year, eh, all the Ivorian community and the neighbouring. You have the big meeting. It was discussing about the new law who is coming in for independence. Things like this, you know… And is some people have some problem with the council. They can't

read very well the letter. That doesn't understand it. So, sometime they call us. You can go and give them help by reading the letter to explain them, "No, you and I gonna go to the meeting and eh, I'm gonna be in charge" …and explain to them, and explain to you help each other this way. But there is no chief or somebody who is responsible. No, no you don't do that one here."

Gloria Oju Onyekwere, Kaduna State, Nigeria: on leadership in her culture:

"You have the king, then you have the chiefs, then you have the king makers. You have the elders and you have the old mother. It's kind of hierarchy. It climbs down… Old mother is more of the women that married. Are already married. They remain the old mother. When they have something very hard to tackle. Maybe something…maybe somebody is not listening. Or, a woman married into the village is just being heard. They get the old mother to come and speak. And once the old mother come and speak. If you don't do it hell is let loose."

Sean Thomas, Lagos, Nigeria, on respect for elders in his culture:

"Respect for elders is something that is innate, is taught the minute you come out the womb. Growing up in Africa, you have to be quite respectful to your elders. It's, it's a must. It's a responsibility. It's a social responsibility. It's a moral responsibility more. That. I think, I think uhm…respect for elders…both male and female, irrespective of sex. Irrespective of…as long as they're older than you. You're inclined to give them some sort of respect, uhm, hence the reason why in Africa we call people Uncles and Aunties. You don't just call people by name. You've got to always add Uncle this…Auntie that…and it all

matters as a sign of respect… Depending on where you come from, depending on the locality, sometimes are ruled by, ehm, Chiefs, or, or Kings, and they, they can make the rules and govern the way that community acts and relates with themselves. Ehm, in Lagos we have the Oba, who is, which is mean, Oba means King… In the North they have the sultans. In the East, I'm sure they have, ehm, the Igbo chiefs."

Rohay Conteh, Mandinka, Gambia, on Alkalo leadership in her community:

"We have chiefs, we have akalos for the community. Alkalo is more like a chief who represent that kind of community. When it comes to talking about anything in the community. Yeah, Mandinka's call it alkalo."

Rohay Conteh, Mandinka, Gambia, on respect in her community in Glasgow:

"Yeah, people respect each other. Especially younger children respect the adults most of the time. But, yeah, people treat each other quite good."

Kaddi Jatu Jobe, Mandinka, Gambia, on leadership in her culture:

"So, my towns got a mayor, yeah, so, so you have like mayors in Banjul and Serekunda. And in Brikama. No, in Brikama, I think they have councillors. So, from western division, all the way to the provinces, they have chiefs and they have councillors as well. But we've only got mayors in these two towns. Well, Banjul is a city and Serekunda is kind of like a big place as well… The chiefs are mainly in the villages."

The Gambian Association in Glasgow

The Gambian Association in Glasgow promote community events, such as Eid celebrations and cultural festivals, through networks and social media. They make it clear that everyone is welcome to attend their events, regardless of country of origin or religion. We have it anecdotally that in, Muslims and the Christian minority often attend one another's religious festivals. They also have close cultural ties with the Senegalese, which, we have it anecdotally, are continued in Glasgow. They perform community leadership roles, such as fundraising for a body to be repatriated when someone has passed away.

Kaddi Jatu Jobe, Mandinka, Gambia, on governance in Glasgow:

"Yeah, well usually they have the chairman of the Association. The Gambian's Association. So, it's the same everywhere. So, when I came here…my friend's dad is the chairman of the Gambian Association as well. So, they tend to, like, mobilise people and organise events. And we have a website. So, if something is happening

then everyone can know. Like the Eid celebration. Well, you cook what you can and we all kind of eat together."

The bantaba tree

The bantaba, which translates from the Mandinka for 'where to meet', is the meeting place in the village. It can now be a large concrete or wooden construction with no sides, thus resembling a gazebo. Traditionally it was a large tree that would be the meeting place and a focal point for the village.

Pa Ebou Ngum, Wollof, Gambia, talks about the bantaba tree:

"Well, in the village, you have, like, in villages you have sitting elders. Normally they are the elders of the town. They get together to make decisions or whatever problems that they have. There is what is called a bantaba. It's a tree. They all sit under the tree, to discuss or solve problems in the village. When something happen, they all come together… It's an age thing and sometimes it depends on how long you stay in the village. The longer you stay in the village, the more you are expected to be there among the elders."

Uncles and Aunties

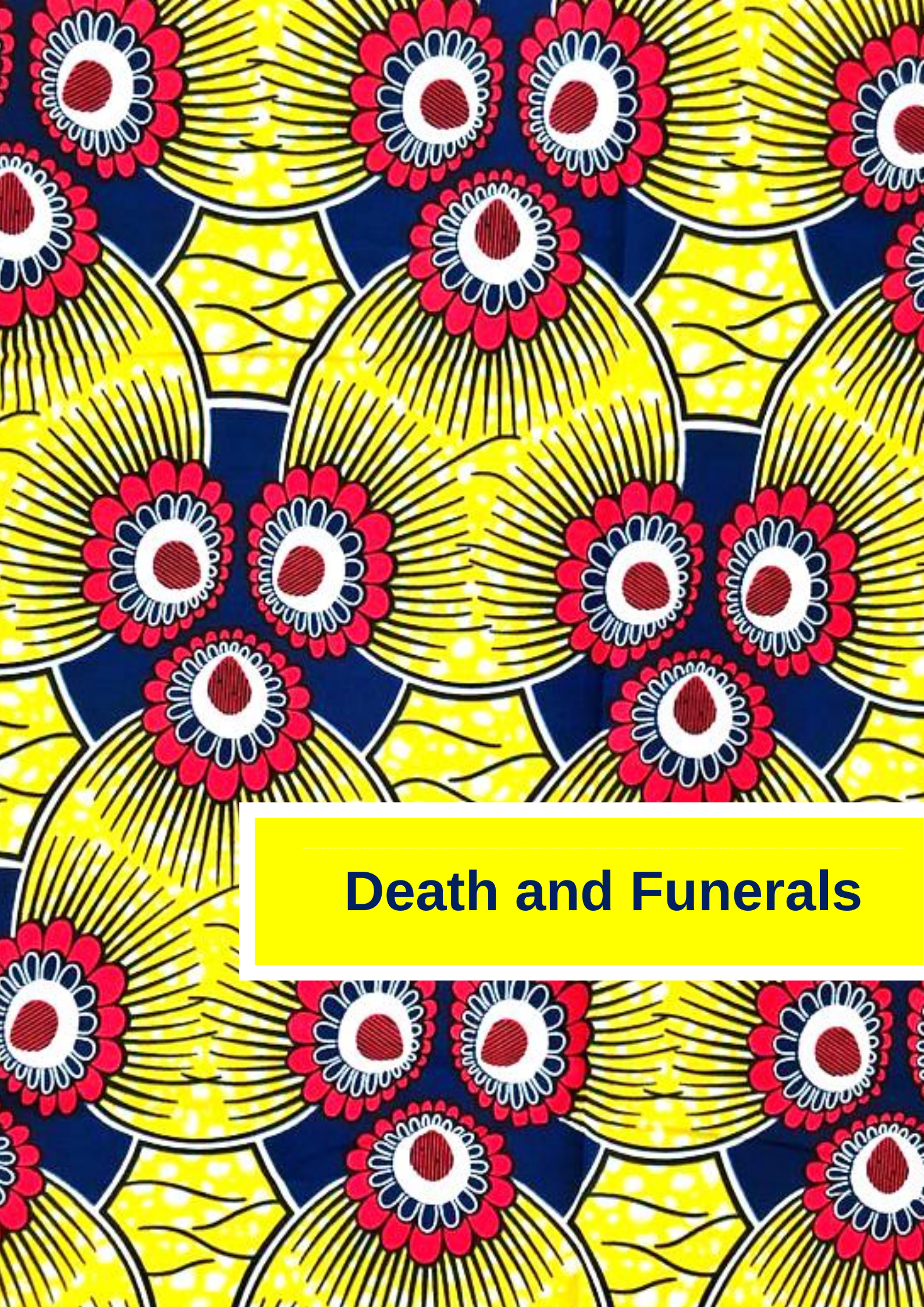
We have it anecdotally that, in many parts of Africa, people who are older than the person addressing them are known as 'uncle' or 'auntie' as a mark of respect. This is often regardless of whether they are a blood relation or not.

Mariarose Ngosi, Lilongwe, Malawi, on respect in her culture:

"I think, when it comes to respect, eh, as long as you are older, you get that respect. Because everybody is an auntie or an uncle. We hardly call anybody's names. I don't know now but then I never call anybody who is an elder a name."

Mariarose Ngosi, Lilongwe, Malawi, on teaching respect to her son whilst living in Glasgow:

"Not the kids, but we tell the kids. Because if my friends come to my house, I will say 'auntie'. So, I've transferred it…to everybody actually, whether it is a white person who is my best friend. My son calls auntie."



Death and Funerals

"When an old man dies, a library burns to the ground"

-African proverb

Muslim death and funerals

Under Islamic tradition, deceased people should be buried as soon as possible. Cremation is prohibited but embalming is allowed under certain circumstances. The body is washed by close family members of the same sex as the person who has passed away, and then wrapped in sheets for burial. The funeral service is led by an Imam. The body is buried without a coffin and facing towards Mecca. The mourning period lasts for forty days and the community will feed the family for three days after the funeral.

Sarjo Koita, Mandinka, Gambia, on death and burial in the Muslim tradition:

"Religion will tell you that nobody can die before their time. If your time comes up, you go, and that is the fate we are taught and we know. So, still will have their traditional belief that somebody has died because of this and this but if you are religious you don't think that way… If someone dies, depending on the time when someone dies, because as a Muslim, if somebody dies you have to bury the person as quickly as you can. A corpse should not be staying for that long. So, if a person dies, let's say in the morning, depending on what time, and depending on his body condition. Because normally, we don't take them to a mortuary. Unless they die from hospital, a bigger hospital, where there is mortuary. But, otherwise, if they die locally, you can't keep the body for that long. Because of the decay. So, what you do, you try to announce the death. People will gather together. They'll talk about the person. They'll wash the body. Clean it…dress him up. Put him in a coffin. People will come. After ceremony, talk about his good. And the family…consoling them and so. Then bury the person. Everyone is buried."

Sarjo Koita, Mandinka, Gambia, on death in Scotland:

"Well, in Scotland, here…to be quite honest, you know…we have few funerals here of our Gambian community who died. So, like, we have to do the same thing. Coz, normally when our people die here, unless it's not affordable, the parents back home want the corpse back. You know, we transport the corpse back to the family. Even, at that, you have to do it through a funeral service guy. Who will take the body from the hospital? Depending on his religion. You know, whether he is a Muslim or a Christian. If you are a Muslim, then you arrange it with the Central Mosque of Glasgow. To be

honest, I haven't witnessed here, where a Gambian die and buried here. So, since I came here to Scotland, we had only two deaths of Gambian. And both of them, their body get flown back to Gambia."

Serign Sanneh, Mandinka, Gambia, on Muslim burial:

"Burial is very simple. People are buried in white sheet and pretty much that's it, so everything else is left behind… In the Muslim tradition in Gambia, it's mainly, eh, a quick one and it's scary, before it used to be scary and it's something that people hardly really speak about and it's always a quick thing when somebody dies, unfortunately, but then within a few hours they're buried. If it's at night, then they say "Okay, we leave the body and burial passing in the morning.""

Death and burial amongst the Nuer of South Sudan

Men are often buried beside their huts but also out in the wild if they die there. If they are buried by a stranger, that stranger will later demand a cow in payment. Women are buried under their husband's house as they are seen as the property of the husband. Children do not attend burials.

Simon Koang, Nuer, South Sudan, on death and burial:

"If your father or your mother or young boys or lady die in the house, they put it behind the room, outside room, behind the room. Anybody die, they bury them there… Only the elders, the youngers they don't go to do that… No, because last time we don't have clothes. No clothes. But now we use the black clothes, when there is…somebody died. Because, last time when somebody die, we don't have clothes. But, all the elders, all the women…they will tie their stomachs with rope. They will tie their stomachs with rope. And not eat food for five day. All the brothers, all the fathers, all the mother. The big elders of the family. They will tie their stomach with rope."

Younis Odum, Ghana, on death:

"Ehm, it's feared in a way…no-one wants anyone to die so, for example, if someone dies in someone's family they would be like "Oh, come back, come back." If the person hadn't totally gone and they rose up again they would flee in an instant."

Gloria Oju Onyekwere, Kaduna State, Nigeria, on death:

"Yeah, yeah, there are so many ways, depending on your religion. You've got the Pagans, the Christians, the Muslims, so whatever religion you believe in, like, if somebody pass on, you can, if somebody a Christian, mostly they will recommend that you wear white attire on the person, and if you a Pagan you wear black attire on the person."

Ali Abubakar, Zanzibar, on Muslim burial:

"Funerals are conducted in your local mosque. You have three nights of mourning. Women will be gathered (like a wake). Say it was a death in my family, then you will have a lot of women who will come from nearby and literally spend three days in the home to mourn together and to help the mother or whoever in the home… In a mosque there is one coffin, and that's the coffin that is used for everybody, in such a way that the person is in coffin and is carried by people. You walk to the graveyard, and then bury in the graveyard, and then the coffin goes back to the Mosque and gets cleaned ready for the next funeral."

Ali Abubakar left Zanzibar in the early 1960s and converted to Christianity:

"My change to Christianity wasn't a chosen one, it wasn't, what's the word, it happened. I was on my own and it happened. I didn't discuss this with anybody and I had to start picking the right person to ask and I grew that way and there's no…any regret. Was a long time ago thinking that how could I possibly become a Christian, coming from my family you know, but that change took place."

Boris Zamba, Cameroon, on death:

"But for the funerals, it depends who you were when you were living. If you were somebody, especially a man, that died without any kids, then they are going to bury you in a kind of normal way. So, it's just people come, they make the traditional things, they bury you. They don't allow people to mourn too much. If you are somebody that has a heritage, heritage is kids, then there is going to be a big ceremony for the funerals. The big part of it is four to five hours. [When asked if this happens in Glasgow], no chance, no chance."

Pa Ebou Ngum, Wollof, Gambia, on Muslim burial:

"Back home, we have a place where normally they do their special bath before burial. So, from the mortuary they took them there, he or she. Woman is bathed by woman, if it's a man is bathed by a man. After the bath, is a special way of dressing them and then to the, the burial, the grave."

Rohay Conteh, Mandinka, Gambia, on Muslim funerals:

"Mainly, because Gambia's got, eh, Muslims and Christians and other…there is some other people, as well. Like, different from Muslims and Christians. Yeah, who practise other things. But they're minorities. But, yeah, Christians do their normal burial…coffin, get dressed and stuff like that. And then also, you have the Muslims as well. Just get burial, the same way as Muslim way."

Rohay Conteh, Mandinka, Gambia, on death in Glasgow

"Yes, most people send their people back to Africa. Even though it's very expensive. But they try. It takes a long time sometimes. It depends sometimes on the family, financially. Some families will take their dead body quicker than others. It will take a while. And for some…I think they have to be buried here. They don't have any finance or any family."

Guy Ngansi Deyap, Bamiléké,

Cameroon, on death and financial contributions towards the funeral from Glasgow:

"Ceremony of death, we spend millions when somebody passed away. I'm trying, I say to myself, when somebody's ill like now, my mother's in hospital for one month, nobody even gave me a call to see how she's doing. Yeah, but if my mother passed away now, they will say "Oh, you going to be coming here to give me money, for what?" (laughs) That is what I'm asking, "For what? What will the money be used for, eh?" No, it will not make my mother come back. So, the African countries they celebrate the dead."

Sean Thomas, Lagos, Nigeria, on funerals in Lagos:

"Well, I know, in Africa, where I come from. Uhm, cremation was never a big thing. It was always, you know, dust to dust. It was what was believed. It, uhm, always starts from a wake keeping. There's always a wake. Which is normally two days before the internment. That's the burial. And, umh, if this person is an older individual, it's often celebrated. Older individual meaning anyone seventy, eighty. That has lived a long and fruitful life. Usually, it's more like there is a party after the body has been laid to rest. There is like a celebration of life. We'll put it that way. So, it's more lively, whereby people come together and they celebrate the life of this person that is gone. But, if it's somebody younger and it's a more tragic situation. It's often very quiet. And you know…the parents are never allowed to go to a child's burial in Africa. If, you know…it's something that's not really accepted widely, you know. If a child dies at a young age, in Africa, they don't expect the parents to go and bury the child. It's not something that any parent would wish for. I am guessing it's partly the same in this parts of Scotland as well."

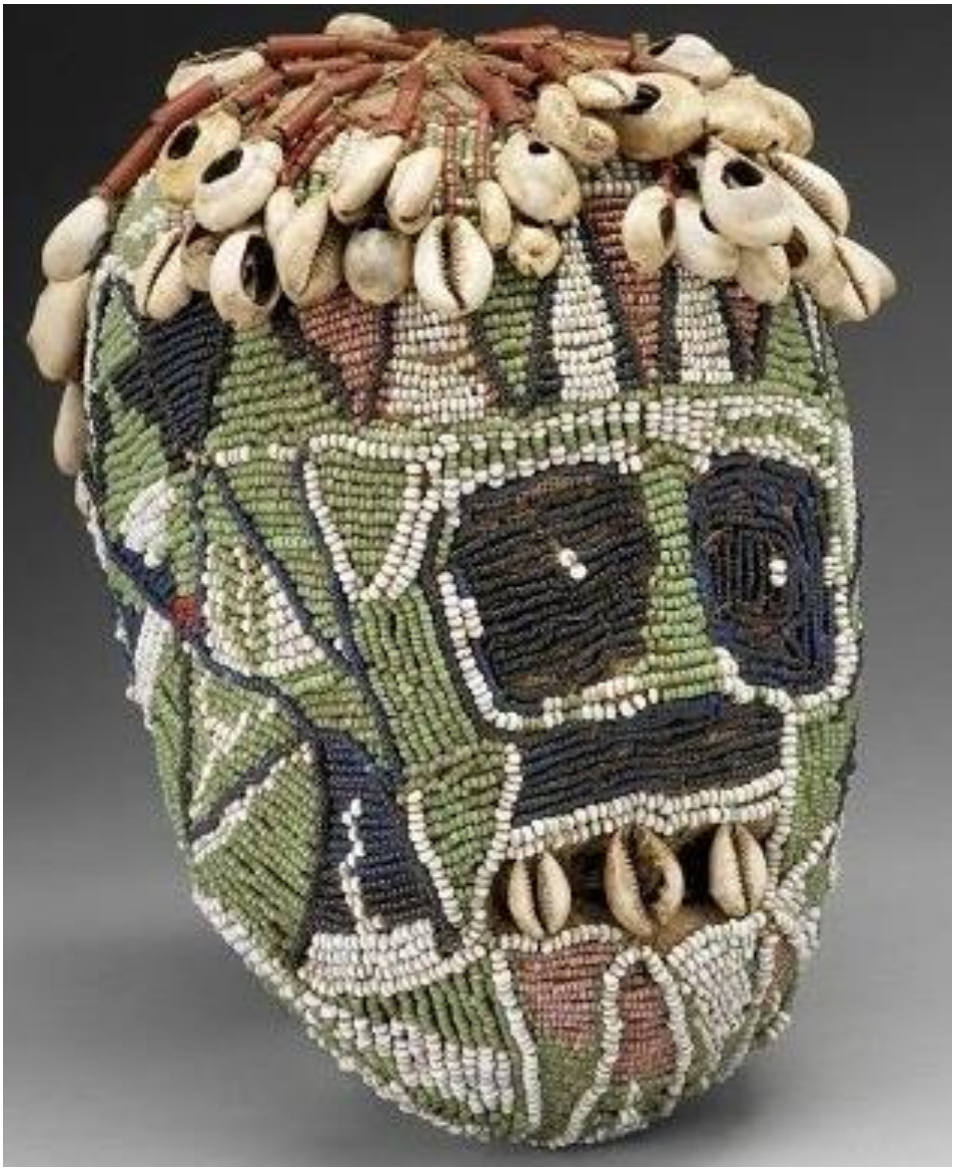
Nelson Sule, Benin City, Nigeria, on funerals in Benin City:

"Like in Benin, Benin City, what I know about it…I'll use my grandfather as an example. Ok, I'll start with…normally when someone dies, we don't…we celebrate the person's life. It's like a celebration. And, umh, even though you wear black. You can wear black during the day but during the burial proper, you don't normally wear black. You can wear black during the day. But, during the celebrations proper, you change from black to the African, eh, traditional wear… And ehm, like for the man…if it's his wife that died, he can't attend. Ehm, because, if you're older than the person that dies, you cannot attend that burial. Eh, the burial's usually done by the people younger… Then eh, like eh…or my granddad, when he died the celebration lasted for seven days. This is to symbolise his status in the community. The first day celebration was full. During

the seven days there was lots of feasting going on, eh, lots of drinking going on. And, uhm, basically that's it…"

The Bamiléké, Cameroon

In Bamiléké tradition, the skulls of the virtuous dead are looked after by appointed people with esoteric knowledge (who are sometimes identified in early childhood for the task). The ancestors are consulted for their wisdom and knowledge. People will often visit their family skulls every weekend when they come from the city to immerse themselves in nature. It is believed that people choose to be reincarnated.



Jean Albert Nietcho, Bamiléké, Cameroon, on how he hopes to have his skull preserved in Cameroon and become a divinity as an example to his children:

"Yeah, I believe in reincarnation. That's the base of, actually, my tradition. Because we believe that they come and speak to us. They look after us. They advise us. And you have to be in connection with them. If you are disconnected with them, you may not hear them. So, you have to believe in it, so you have to believe…you have to believe in it. That's why I believe… I also believe that…because what we did, where I came from, Bamiléké, in Cameroon, when you pass away, they bury you. When you stay maybe, for two years. When it's only, the, the skeleton. They will come and get the skull…they will come and get the skull. They will put it in the special house. Ancestor, they call it 'ancestor house'. They will put it by generation. But as I am talking, I can go back with my kid. But you will not see the skull. They will put it somewhere you cannot see the skull. They will put it somewhere you cannot see. Oh, how do you call it again? They will put a container, a vase, over, over, over it. With water, with water only. And then you go there and give the food as well. When we go there, we will go and feed them. Sometimes we just, we just feed them. It's a special food. Most of the thing that we do is the eyes bean (black eyed bean) and maybe the good meat, mix up. There's a special way of cooking that. It's not boiling. We burn it, like in the fire. We put it in the fire. We put it in the fire and they will have these insect that will come and eat it. Just like it's the ancestor… And to be…it's not everybody that will take the head off. The skull. It's not everyone…so you have to live by example. If you are someone in your living time, who is not living by example. We will not take that out. So, to be a divinity. So, if you are not doing that. That will be a shame for your family. So, you have to make sure that when you pass away, you live by example. So…I do believe that…that's why I'm very, very careful how I interact with people. What I do with people. Because I want to be a divinity. I want to be an example for my kid when I leave this world."

Twimukye Macline Mushake, Bakiga, Uganda, on death among the Bakiga:

"I think death from, uhm, a community level, I know that even from as long as I was a child, there used to be funeral co-operatives. So, each household is expected to contribute a certain amount of money…not much…towards a funeral budget. And when someone dies the community gets together. They buy the coffin. The people come and dig the grave and buy the food or collect food from the community. Because, for us, mourning is four days. Especially a key member of the household. Children, yeah, they could be ignored, but, for the head of family or an adult, there is four days mourning as a cultural practice. And I think I've found that useful. In the

sense that, you don't expect going through grief, to then go through the nitty gritty of arranging all that. Other members of the community do. And that is one valuable practice that, I think, we still have, even today, in the village where I came from."

Twimukye Macline Mushake, Bakiga, Uganda, on death in Glasgow:

"In Glasgow, we've got a few African people and I've seen…despite the fact that we come from different African countries. People have gathered together. Have contributed some money. Umh, to buy a grave. The community have contributed money to take the body home… I've already made my decision. If I die in Scotland. I don't mind being cremated. Which is something that would be contrary to my culture."

Mourning colours in West Africa

In West Africa, all the colours have similar meanings to those we are familiar with in Glasgow. The only exception is the colour red, which can also symbolise grief and mourning.

Lydie Bere Flere Dossa, Akan, Ivory Coast, on funerals amongst the Akan:

"You wear dark and red when you go to funerals. Dark and red or white and black. Or white or sometime all black. When it was young couple and one of them is departed. You wear black, because it's very painful. Eh, but normally is white and black or red and black. Or white only when they are elders…you wear white only because the person has live his life. So, it need to be white."

Chief Josephine Oboh-Macleod, the Esan, Nigeria:

"Eh, In Scotland I think some of them do get buried here, em, I don't know how many will allow to be cremated because a lot of our religion doesn't allow for cremation... I don't see any reason why someone should not be cremated because even our oral history that was passed down, there had not been anything that had been passed down that said don't cremate… The majority of us will have the burial but still, I believe that most of us will also send messages back home to let them know that the person is dead and whatever ceremony was to be done they will do back home and if they don't, then it is not officially recorded. You cannot have a person die here and if they're having contact with their roots and not tell them at home officially."

African Textiles, Clothes, Jewellery and Foods

"God makes three requests of his children: Do the best you can, where you are, with what you have, now"

-African proverb

Textiles and Clothes

Mariarose Ngosi, Lilongwe, Malawi, on sourcing African clothes for weddings in Glasgow:

"Normally, it's white dress. A normal white wedding dress and a normal suit. Ah, yes. But for the family sometimes, during the wedding time, they can pick a colour. An African colour. So, for the families they can wear that African colour. So, everyone will be in the same colour with that different design… It can be yellow, blue, green, whatever, but the African material cloth (wax cloth) you can also get here in Scotland as well. We have lots of them, as well, nowadays. So, you can wear that. They can say, ok, this is the colour for the wedding, so whoever can afford to buy that can buy and make a dress towards it…yes, the wax print cloth… Occasionally I do [wear African dress], yes. If I go to the…mainly it's if you are going to the function. If it's a Malawian function or a wedding or whatever, people tend to wear African outfits, yeah… Yeah, you can buy them in Scotland. We have girls who…some of them they travel to Malawi and they bring some. Or, you can even ask, like, my cousin's wife went to Malawi last month and she brought some materials from home. And I know a girl from Blantyre [in Scotland] and she sells things from Uganda. But it is the same type of material, so, yes, you can get them."

Ghanaian smocks

One of our male respondents, who is originally from the Sisaala people in northern Ghana, told us about the traditional smocks of that region. He said that they are light and airy and therefore pleasant for wearing when dancing. He also said they were good to wear to facilitate flirting. The smocks have been used as a symbol of Ghanaian unity by several presidents of Ghana. Their traditional manufacture is under threat (as a great deal of traditional cloth and textile production has been for a long time in Africa) from foreign imports of cheap cloth.

Female attire in Namibia

Namibia’s Herero women wear dresses that are based on the Victorian dresses of their German colonisers and oppressors and has come to symbolise their suffering and resilience. It is an important moment in a young Herero woman's life when she gets her first dress. However, the accompanying head dress represents the meaning of cattle to the Herero people. Modern versions of the dress and headwear are now available.

Kente cloth

The Kente cloth originates in what is now Ghana and is made by a number of different groups of people. One story goes that its patterns were invented by a wise spider called 'Anansi,' who passed the knowledge on to humans. In the past it was often woven out of the silk from European trade cloth. The Kente cloth has become known, very much, as an exclusive good, which is used for celebrations and also regarded as a symbol of both luxury and wealth. The patterns and colours all have specific meanings.

Chief Suliman Chebe, Sissala People, Ghana on Kente cloth:

"Every tribe, more or less, have some matching colours that depicts the spirit of the tribe. So, Ghana is a very traditional country. We're very open minded, yes…the culture is very vibrant. If you go to the Ashantis, for example, they have the Kente cloth. And Kente is like a kilt, but more colourful. More sweet. It actually cheers you up. When somebody is wearing Kente, you feel happy."

Chief Josephine Obo Macleod, Esan People, Nigeria, on African clothing and textiles:

"Clothing…and fabrics and style. It's all very important to the Africans. I find when I get to, I travel overseas and I get to Africa, the first thing that I see is the sights, the sound and the smell. But, it's elaborately dressed women and men. And you know, for me, I think they look very well. I wish I could dress as much as they can. But, some of them can just coordinate their clothes. Bright yellow, bright this…and it suits them

and it's so beautiful. So, that's our culture they've brought in…during the time they have naming ceremonies here. Or they have African day [in Scotland], here a lot of Africans will wear their traditional clothes. And I think that's also very good. And I think that we have to explore ways that we can incorporate that to our western clothes, and western clothes into the traditional clothes. Textiles and fabric means a lot to us, you know… And also, one thing also I find is, western people are now using more of our traditional fabrics for furnitures. Like throw pillows, beddings, tablecloths…but, most of Africans, although they dress well, with all these things they are looking down on it. And not exploring other uses of the fabric… Another sadness I had, was in my village. When my husband wanted to attend my chieftancy, I wanted him to wear my own traditionally handwoven…they call it igbu in Eshan land, and unfortunately, there was nobody else weaving it in my own particular village. My aunty used to weave it. And then the loom was thrown away by her children when she had arthritis. Because they thought that it was now beneath them to weave this stuff. And by the time I finished my research, I had to go to, actually, the Catholic church again…to go and order the traditional cloth that my husband wore. So, most of it is now being done by the Catholic church. The Catholic church, buying looms and trying to save the tradition for us. I feel that it is actually very sad that our people are not taking it seriously. They only remember the traditional wares when they are having a wedding or when there is a death. But, it's very sad I think that we should, yes…it's beautiful to dress all those colourful way that we do, but we should also try to help those people who have the skills, and let the skills be passed down to the children."

Kaddi Jatu Jobe, Mandinka, Gambia, on sourcing African clothes in the UK:
"In London, you can get them, and in Reading, where I came from. We have like a Wednesday market. We have like, uhm, people from London, who will come to the market and sell. So, we buy it from there and we've got a few tailors here as well, who do sewing. But if it's the embroidered ones, those ones are mostly from Gambia."

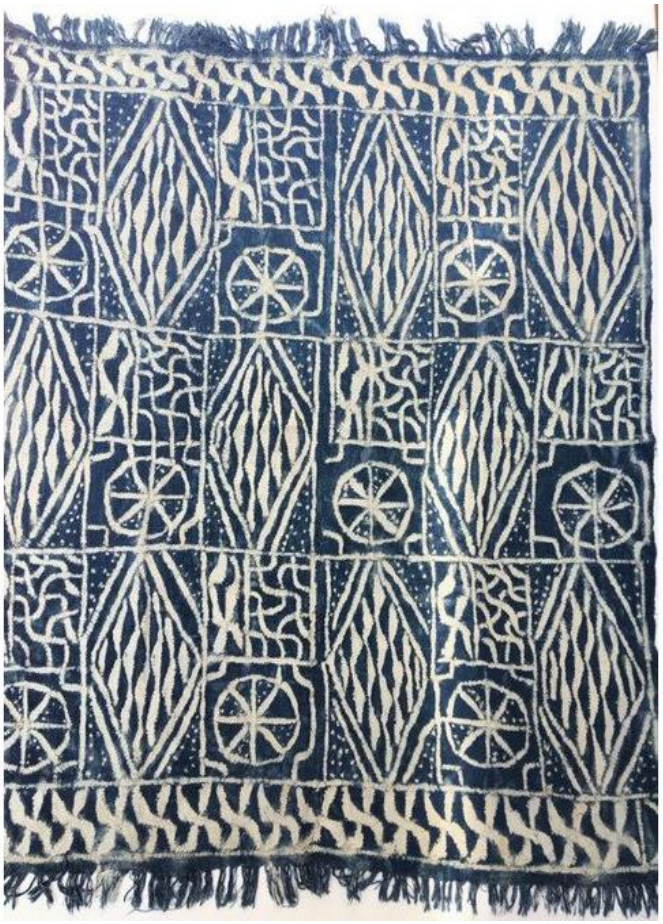
Ndop cloth

Ndop cloths are high-quality, blue-coloured resist-dyed cloths (a process in which the dye is forcibly resisted with stitching or wax, amongst other things), which were first imported to the Cameroon Grassfields from eastern Nigeria. Local production of the cloths by the women of the area began at the turn of the last century. The red wool along the fringe is made from material that is imported from abroad. Ndop display cloths are still amongst the most favoured gifts to be given amongst leaders in the area. Both the geometric symbols (circles,

lozenges, and meandering lines) and the depictions of animal (crocodiles, etc.) have royal symbolism. The blue colour of the cloth also denotes the **Bamiléké** elite.

Jean Albert Nietcho, Bamiléké, Cameroon, on Ndop cloth:

"People from the Ndé have their special colour. Sky blue and dark blue. We…it's some kind of design. We have a museum back home. When you go to that museum you will see something that we do… So, it's the blue…it's the blue sky. It's blue. It's a little bit of…trace of white. It's blue or blue sky. It's some shape on it… I can't really say that. Sometimes, it's just a line which come like this. Sometime it just…just like a triangle… or a pyramid shape. They got that with the symbol and also animals. Each village have kind of animals."



Jean Albert Nietcho, Bamiléké, Cameroon, on African clothes at events:

"Even when I go to civil marriage, me and my wife, we wear African clothes. The smart ones. Not the traditional…(laughs). Mostly in the summer. Well you've seen the weather in Africa…"

Lydie Bere Flere Dossa, Akan, Ivory Coast, on cinnamon on wedding clothes:

"It smell a little bit like cinnamon when I make it there. So, there is this one and they put it in a burner. And when they burn it, they'll put it in a house and all the dress who are around smell it. You know, it smell it as well. So, this one, especially when there is a wedding. We like to burn it in a corner, so all the dress gonna have that smell."

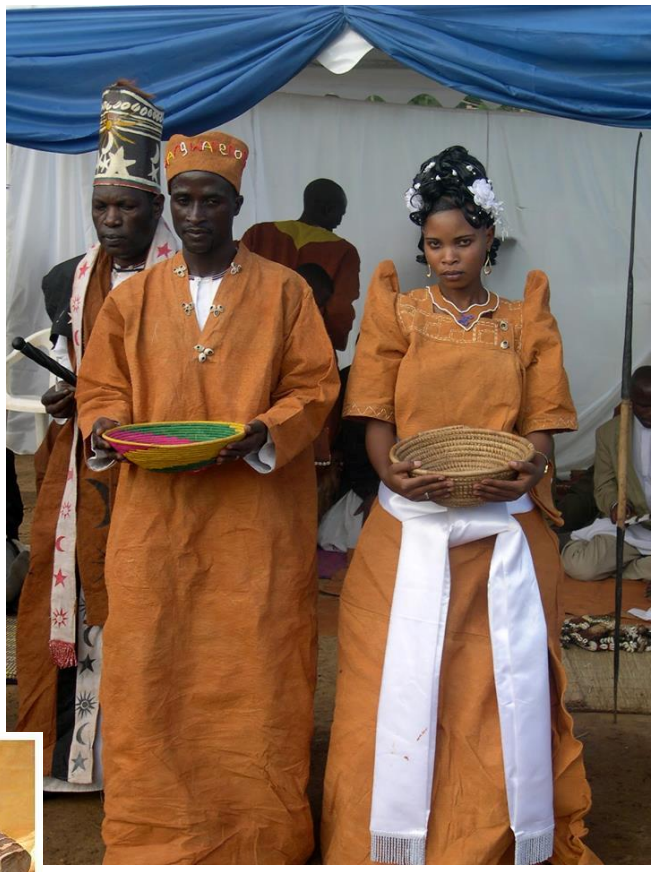
Bark cloth

One of our respondents from the Baganda group of people of Uganda talked of his great pride in the traditional dress of his home area and how he wears it when he can in Glasgow. 'Bark cloth' is made from the inner bark of the mutuba tree, which is a kind of ficus (a plant you may have in your living room). According to UNESCO, the process for making it is older than weaving. The United Nations body named Ugandan bark cloth manufacturing part of

the world's ‘intangible cultural heritage’, in 2005. Examples of the cloth can be seen in the National Museum of Scotland.

Lule Nassar, Baganda, Uganda, on wearing bark cloth in Glasgow:

“It’s the skin of the tree. They take the skin of the tree, then they hammer it, maybe a thousand time, and they stretch it, stretch it and it become real clothes… Yes, yes, I have some here. It can’t go away with me…everywhere I go (laughs). If today I was not working to come to see you, that’s the dress I’d dress, every time if I go to any occasion. I feel so special to wear that. And, eh, everywhere I go here in Scotland, the people they love it…people they love it here.”



Sean Thomas, Lagos, Nigeria, on wedding clothes:

"So, if we say, doing the marriages, the families will have different colours. The bride's family might choose blue, the groom's family might choose grey… Ceremonies are often very big by the way, you might have five or six hundred people coming, so out of all those people you would be easily able to identify who belongs to what family."

Grace Maneka, Malawi, on Africans wearing traditional clothing in the UK:

"The way people use African dress here in Scotland is different from the way they'll use it in England. In England we wear it more than it's worn out here. Not sure whether it's lack of events or just, uhm... but, it's not worn as much as I would think…or, I would like to see it being worn. Maybe there is no supply. That's why I'm coming up with, uhm, something to try and supply these things. Fabrics, fashion and something traditional. It's alright to wear now and again, just like you [Chief Amu] are wearing. So, it just gives that nice authenticity, just like the Asians do. They go around wearing their own cultural clothing. And I think, Africans, we ought to be comfortable doing the same."

Kanga Cloth

Ali Abubakur, **o**ne of our respondents who is originally from the Zanzibar archipelago, showed us a Kanga cloth when we visited his home to interview him. These cloths are ubiquitous in East Africa and come in an array of different patterns and colours. They are worn day to day and play a part in all the main life-event ceremonies. Their key feature is that they contain a saying or proverb in Kiswahili. These can be used to pass on wisdom and to express thoughts that the wearer feels cannot be expressed verbally.

Jewellery

Glass beads

It is unclear how long glass beads have been used by Africans, though there is evidence to suggest that an ancient city in southwestern Nigeria may have been one of the first places in West Africa to master the fine art of glassmaking. There is corroborated evidence to show glass beads production in African nations such as Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Krobo dating back to the 12th century. The initial method used in the production of these beads is referred to as wet-core powder method. Africans started using glass beads as currency in the 4th century, possibly brought into the continent from Portugal, though bone beads and cowry shells were used for that purpose before then. Some communities used and continue to use them as a symbol of identity, whilst many Africans enjoy wearing them as adornments. Glass beads are also widely used in African artworks. The present-day trend is to make beads from recycled glass, though fine glass beads are still produced by African artisans.

Coral beads

Coral beads have been a symbol of status and royalty in many West African cultures since the Portuguese introduced them as a trade item in the 15th century. The Mediterranean Sea being abundant with coral at that time and beads having been a popular trade item then. It may also be that the coral arrived as a raw material and was fashioned into beads in Africa, as there is a long tradition of bead making on the continent. One of our respondents, who holds 2 chieftaincies in her native country of Nigeria, showed some of the team the coral beads she holds for these offices when we interviewed her at her studio. Although there are some styles of beads which are still reserved for chiefs and kings, they are used more

generally now and are frequently worn at weddings. Plastic beads are sometimes used as substitutes, these days, due to obvious environmental concerns.

Cowry shells

Cowry shells are one of the oldest forms of money in the world. In Africa they certainly date back to the infiltrations of the Arab traders along trade routes in the 8th and 9th centuries AD. It is thought by some that they may date as a form of trans-African currency to the time of the ancient Egyptians. The colonial powers (as they were to become) brought cowry shells in large numbers, from production centres in the Maldives, to West Africa, where they caught on very successfully. They were still in use in trade there up until the 1940s. Cowries still hold great significance in many parts of Africa. One of our respondents talked of their use in divination amongst the Mandinka of Gambia. Another respondent from the Ivory Coast came to the interview with cowries adorning her hair. They are also used in jewellery and crafts.

African Foods

"Eat when the food is ready; speak when the time is right"

-African proverb

Source: https://www.boredpanda.com/taste-atlas-food-map/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=organic

Zanzibari food

Food in Zanzibar is influenced by African, Asian and Arab cuisines, amongst others, due to being situated along a trade route. Cloves, which are grown there, and other spices feature strongly on the menus.

Ali Abubakar, Zanzibar, on Zanzibari food:

"[We eat] mostly vegetables, like, green bananas, peas, rice and curry, rice and fish and then in the evening you have like supper. Evening comes in very, very early, in that you have twelve hours of daylight, ehm, because we were pretty close to the equator…"

Ali Abubakar, Zanzibar, on food in Glasgow:

"Everything, ah, food was absolutely terrific when I first came here…apart from things like apples, cause we didn't have apples in Zanzibar. I could not eat fruit and I went through many years without being able to eat fruit. Because every fruit (laughs) tasted like, horrible. So, I don't know how others like me felt. That was the thing, it was full of fruit. Everything was sweet… See my wife buys loads of fruit and it's only recently that I'll get up and get an orange and eat it and now I find it really sweet. But before (laughs) I couldn't. I used for a long time before I lost my vision. I used to do most of the cooking and I did that, yes. Well, I cooked both. Back then I'll cook curry, I'll cook vegetables, close to the way we cooked at home… Yes, now it's pretty easy, it's not all that difficult to get things from Africa."

Peanuts

Dishes featuring peanuts, such as peanut soup and peanut stew, are immensely popular in West Africa and can be found in other places in Africa as well.

Chief Amu Logotse, Ewe, Ghana, on how he learned to cook:

"Oh boy, my grandmother makes me peanut butter soup and rice, delicious. That's the Gambian national dish. I didn't even know that, but I like that. I, I don't drink, I don't smoke, but if the food is good, I'll eat it, but if it's got chicken in it, forget it, I'm not having it. I used to breed them… Yes, again, my grandmother had a rule, which we all had to adhere to. See, if you're not home by 6 o'clock for the communal meal, you cook your own food. Now, because of my grandmother's rule, and she kept to it very, very rigorously. When you come home, there's no food but there's a lot of raw material. So, you have to learn to cook. But, all the boys in the extended family, we all cook and when we cook the girls laugh at us and they tell us that we will never get married. And they say that a lot in Ghana. That, if you are a man and in the kitchen, your wives will run away. But it didn't scare us, we went ahead. But the they realised that we cook different from them and they want us to cook."

Chief Amu Logotse, Ewe, Ghana, on bringing his culinary skills to Scotland:

"But when you go to boarding school you have to cook for yourself, there are no women, there are no wives, there are no girlfriends. And we used to cook. And we used to cook in the bucket. On the iron we used for…you put charcoal, we all contribute charcoal, we put it in, you fan it with your book. You put it on, it boils. We eat communally. That is cooking… I was asked to devise a cross-curricular activity. So, I devised one. So, I go into schools and I introduce…to geography, I introduce a cash crop. Talk about it how it grows, you know, the conditions. The fact that it cannot grow in Scotland is an exciting one. And then you show it to them and we take it into home economics and we eat it. So, I had to cook it for them… Everything, tubers, you know, yams, plantain. You know, black eyed peas, garri from cassava. You know, we even substituted some of the leaves that we normally make stew with. I mean I love spinach, so we make spinach stews. Fried peanut butter and rice is popular but, of course, I do it with fish. And once we did it in Selkirk and they broadcast it on the local radio and the queue just went around the block."

Couscous

Couscous is the staple of food of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. It Is used both day to day and ceremonially.

Bouhadjar Mourad, Algeria, on his national dish:

"The food, the food, yeah nice. We've got like, traditional food anyway, so we've got the couscous. We make the couscous with fish, with chicken, or couscous with the meat, so different type of couscous we are doing."

Stockfish

Stockfish is an unsalted cod that has been dried and can last for years. It is one of the oldest preserving methods in the world. It is said to be perfect for the Nigerian palate as it has a big bold flavour.

Chief Josephine Oboh-Macleod, Esan, Nigeria, on the availability of African food in Scotland:

"Most ingredients we can get but a lot of it…sometimes you wish you had somebody coming from home and it's a specialist ingredient. You like them to bring…like my sister brought a lot of specialist ingredient for me. So, I now, obviously, kept it in the freezer and in a special box and use very sparingly, so it can last me for a long time. You have one [African food shop] on Sauchiehall Street. Particularly in the Savoy Centre. She sells some good selection of foods across western Africa. And I notice

across from her, there is an Iranian or Moroccan also selling the Northern type ingredients. So, I think they said there's one in Maryhill also that does the African shop. But I've not been to that one. But I use the one in Sauchiehall Street. The one in Aberdeen, just off Union Street, because I feel she has actually a good selection. 'Cause stock fish…funny enough stockfish came from Norway. They brought it to Nigeria, to the eastern part of Nigeria, called the Igbo area. And they got hooked on and now the rest of us are now hooked on it. So, if we cook, there are certain things you don't put together. Like not stew, but, if you cook some of these traditional things, like ogbono with stockfish. The smell of it, sorry this dried stockfish, the house…it takes days and days to air it out but for me I feel it's delicious."

Yam

The New Yam Festival happens every harvest time in many areas of West Africa. It is carried out as a thanks for a successful harvest. The Igbo people of south central and south eastern Nigeria are particularly famous for their New Yam Festival. Yams are a staple in West Africa featuring in many dishes that include pounded yam and fufu.

Ogbono Soup

Ogbono soup is a Nigerian dish made with ogbono seeds (from a tree), which darken the mixture. It often also includes bitter leaf, chilli, fish or meat and tomato sauce.

Melon Soup

Nigerian melon soup has melon seeds and fish, or meat and stockfish, and crayfish, pumpkin leaves and pepper as ingredients.

Ofomu Clark, Edo State, Nigeria, on food in Nigeria and in Glasgow:

"[We eat] pounded yam and different type of soup to go with them. Then we have the staple food, which is the rice. The jollof rice or fried rice and chicken, beef and drinks are valuable as well. We've got different types of soup. You know our traditional soup. We've got the melon soup we've got the ehm, ogbono soup… I still prepare traditional foods, ehm, I still wear my traditional attires… I'm trying to get my sons to know the traditional way and they love traditional food as well."

Bananas

Green bananas are used in a lot of meals in East Africa. Respondents from Uganda and Zanzibar have talked about them. Bananas are generally very popular and are used to make traditional beer in the region.

Guy Ngansi Deyap, Bamiléké, Cameroon, talks about the green banana-based meal that he cooks at home in Glasgow:

"We call it banane malaxe. In our region, we got so many different speciality we prepare. And it's difficult to say, "The main speciality is this." Because we've got taro, we got banane malaxe…just so many. We are the farmers… It's banana. So, that is something for poor people. Because if you don't have money, you can cook that easily. Because you'll get just the banana and the peanut and some greens,

vegetables and that's it. It tastes nice. Or you can get some dried fish into it or whatever. So, it's easy to prepare. No complication and people love it because it tastes so good. Even, it's a poor person food (laughs)… The palm wine is our main drink, you know. And, eh, you can't do anything without the palm wine. Even you get the nice food. You need the palm wine to go with."

Okra Soup

Okra soup is cooked with red palm oil and crayfish (a staple of West African dishes) and meat, sometimes tripe, and green leaves.

Banku

Banku is chiefly a Ghanaian dish and is made from fermented corn and cassava dough, mixed into a paste.

Anani Fiado (Joe), Ewe, Togo:

"We have okra soup with red oil. We have palm soup, we have banku and we have rice and beans. Rice and beans with the black pepper with the stew. It's very nice. And, eh, they will fry the meat with cow meat. But they will fry it before putting it inside the stew. Yeah, and sometimes they will fry the fish and put it on the side. Yeah, they will cook different food, jollof rice. Jollof rice…you will make a stew with tomato stew, then you put the rice inside. Then they will have rice with egg. Rice with tiny, tiny meat with egg is like Chinese rice. There are the things they will cook different and they will have the traditional drinks. Then they will have traditional juice. Those who don't drink. They have also drinks for them. And they have a traditional whisky called schnapp… Yeah of course, you can get anyone here… Yeah, the palm wine some shops sell it but I don't think it will be like the one (laughs). The pitou, the pitou is difficult to get here, yeah, because it's very strong drink."

Makayabu

Makayabu is dried salted saithe fish, which is a very popular element in the cuisine of the Congo. The siathe is a fatty fish and therefore produces a unique taste when cooked.

Lydie Bere Flere Dossa, Akan, Ivory Coast, on food at home and in Glasgow:

"Wow, wonderful. Ivorian food…most of African food, there's a lot of taste on it. The typical African food, the central thing is the taste. It is never tasting bland, whatever the region. It always have its unique taste, yes. Some places have common taste and some people have unique tastes. You know? Like, eh, West Africa, most of the dishes have similar tastes. And it different from Central Africa. In Central Africa, like Cameroon, Congo. The way they are cooking it, the taste…the ingredients they are using in it. They don't use this in Ivory Coast. You know? When I was in Ivory Coast. I didn't know it. But when I came abroad here, I notice it. Because when I want to eat, my friend from Ivory Coast is doing the ndole. Is peanut. Peanut is from Ivory Coast. Bitter leaf is from Ivory coast as well. You know? But the way she blend it and do it. I never knew that this is the way, it was lovely and put the gan in. The gan, in my country…you use it to clean ourselves when you are not feeling well. Like a medicine. They ground it down and you drink it, but she use it in food, to eat. I like to…I'm very curious in food…It was a pleasant one to eat. You know? So this was different. I went to Congo they was eating the salty fish, makayabu, that I never eat in my country. I said, "How come salty fish you can eat it?" But they salt it first before to cook it. So, this is another

experience as well. So, the way she does it, it was very lovely. So, if I go today in Ivory Coast, I can cook makayabu as well. Say my friends this is from Congo. Who say, "Wow, it's lovely. This ndole, oh, it's lovely." So, them too, they eat from my country, like attiéké. They really love it. It's really lovely. The way you make it, it's like a couscous, the way you make it with fish or chicken… The ingredients are quite expensive here. Because there is some shop whose selling it. Because people ship them from different countries, like I say, and bring it there… So you have some shops here. African shops, Pakistani shops. They are selling African food. It's expensive, but we are trying our best. And when you travel like this as well. We are just trying to make our stock last forever before you go again and bring it. This is the way it is."

Iko Prince Meko, Ohafia, Nigeria, on the differences between food in Nigeria and in Glasgow:

"I'm missing a lot like food, are lot of leaves, that I can't find here… Seafood here is quite different from I had, because ours is very, very organic. Tropical."

Attiéké

Attiéke is made from cassava pulp to produce a paste similar in consistency to couscous. It is part of the cuisine of the Ivory Coast.

Urhobo Soup

Urhobo soup is a Nigerian soup, which can have shellfish, beef, tripe and other meats, and seafood and fish as components. It has a stockfish and spicy pepper base.

Gloria Oju Onyekwere, Kaduna State, Nigeria, on food in Glasgow:

"Yes, my food, I'm not letting go and, ehm, my kids love it, which is urhobo and pounded yam. I remember when my son went to school the first time, nursery, three, you know, because I've always made him urhobo soup and that's his favourite, so the nursery teacher said to him, "So, we've got soup, what kind of soup do you want?" And my son said, "Can I get urhobo, please?" Then when I came to pick him up, they were asking what it was (laughing)."

Nsima

Nsima is a form of thick maize porridge, which is very popular in Malawi and eaten with many types of food.

Maria Rose Ngosi, Malawi, on her favourite food and why it is not difficult to cook here:

"Eh, my favourite food is nsima, with tilapia. In Malawi we call it chambo… Malawians, mainly the spices are just coming from all over. But if I go to my grandmother's house, if they want to cook for me, they will only use water and tomato and onion. Yes, maybe no oil and the food taste delicious. But because nowadays things are integrated, we have also integrated. So, we have loads of spices but from other countries."

Nassar Lulu, Baganda, Uganda, on food in Glasgow:

"In Uganda, we don't eat so many animals, we don't eat sheep, but here, there is no way you can get goat here either. For me if I go to by meat. I just buy the half sheep here… For me, in my culture, for me, Baganda, we don't eat sheep, we eat goat… We do our own porridge, we grind the corn, we boil the water, we mix them, that's the porridge we do… For me I am a grown-up person but I still struggle to eat prawns here. I just take them on the side and I leave them (laughs). This guy says, "This is just a prawn." I say "No, they never told me to eat this. I never seen it before.""

Garden egg

One of our respondents from the Edo group of people of Nigeria talks of cooking garden egg and mint stew here in Glasgow. She tells us that both plants are considered to be beneficial to the digestive system. Garden eggs are from the same species as the aubergine or eggplant but unlike an aubergine they are actually shaped like the eggs of hens and ducks. They are popular throughout many parts of Africa for their bitter taste and for

their ability to be stored well. Some people prefer them white and fresh whereas others prefer them ripened and yellow.

One of our respondents has very kindly given us the recipe for one version of garden egg stew (see post from a few weeks ago). She has also told us where she gets garden eggs in Glasgow. She said that this recipe is both simple and tasty. Happy cooking!

Garden Egg Stew (Serves 4 Persons)

Garden eggs (6 to 8) pieces
Onion - 1 bulb chopped
Tomatoes - 2 large size, chopped
Chile pepper - 1 -2 pieces or use a sprinkle of a grounded one to taste
Crayfish grounded - 1/2 cup
Stock cubes 2
Boiled pieces of meat (optional)
Smoked fish washed and deboned (optional)
Smoked big prawns washed in hot water (optional)
Palm or vegetable oil
1/2 cup of salt to taste

Method:
Boil garden eggs in water. Remove the skin and mash lightly making sure you do not mash the seeds otherwise it gives off a bitter taste. Sauté the onion in oil add the garden egg for a few minutes. Then add the other ingredients and cook for about 5 to 10 minutes. If too thick you can add a bit of water. Season with salt to taste.
You can serve with boil yam or boiled plantain especially unripe plantain or pounded yam or grain mix, fufu, garri, or boiled rice.
In Glasgow, garden eggs can be bought from the African shops in The Savoy Centre and next to Tesco in Maryhill, amongst other places.

Jollof Rice

Jollof rice is popular all-over West Africa and is often served at events. It consists of rice with chunks of vegetables and meat or fish. There is some controversy over which group of people in West Africa invented the dish, as it is a beloved dish which everyone wants to claim as their own.

Kaddi Jatu Jobe, Mandinka, Gambia:

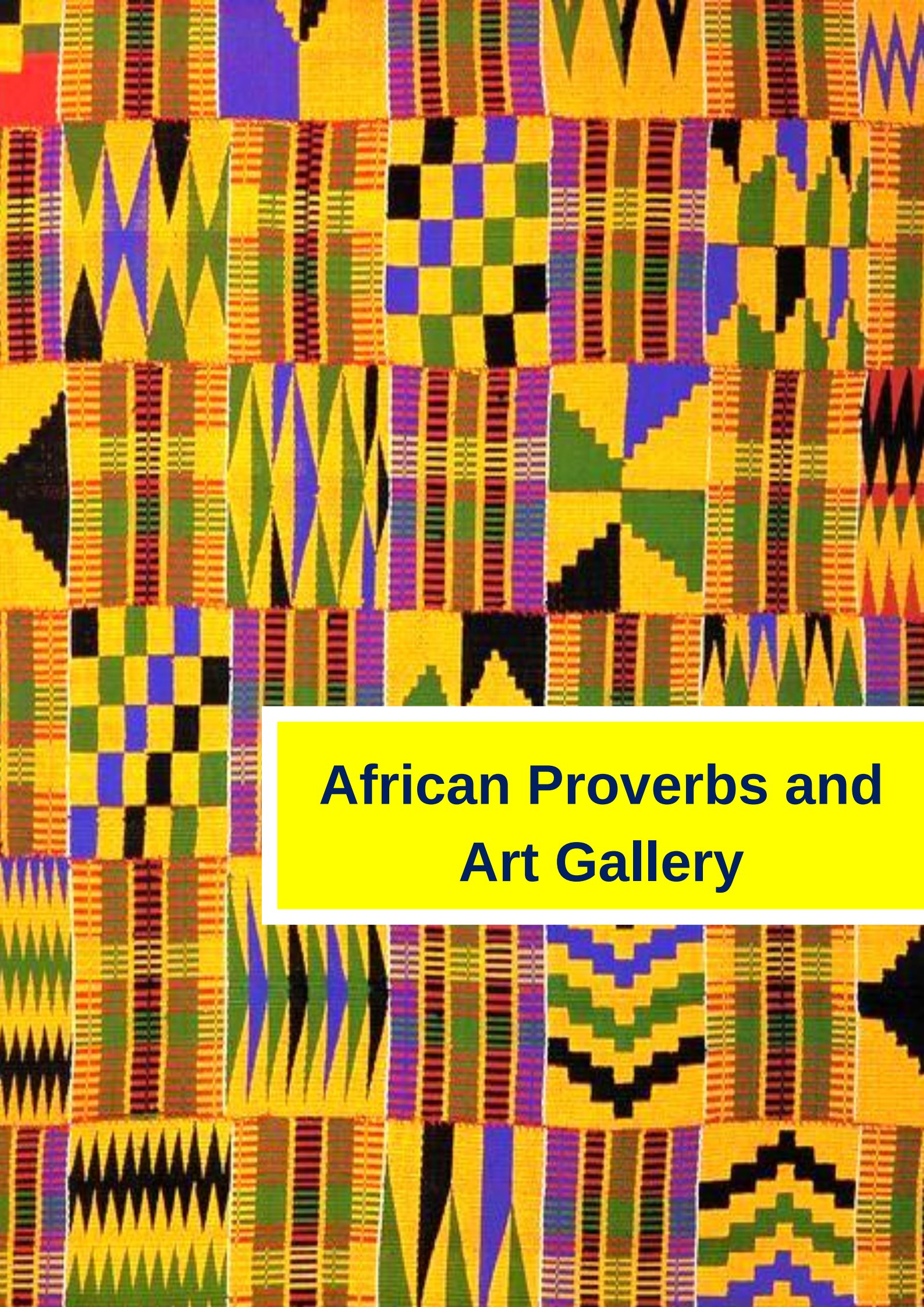
"Yeah, jollof rice, spring rolls, fish fry, grilled chicken, grilled chops, pasta, couscous… Drink, you mix ginger and pineapple together, soak in water, with sugar for flavouring. It's a really nice flavour."

Rohay Conteh, Mandinka, Gambia, on food used at celebrations in Glasgow:

"Benechen, jollof rice, that is like a fried rice, peanut butter soup. Oh yeah, we have quite a few of them. Quite nice, we cook them with loads of vegetables, and they cook it, sometimes in only one pot and serve in a big bowl."

African beer

Many Africans were using traditional techniques to brew beer long before Europeans introduced their systems for the process during the colonial era. In many parts of East Africa, banana beer is used during traditional ceremonies and can be one of the few sources of revenue for local economies. It is made with a particular type of banana (which is not so good to eat) and mixed with a locally sourced yeast, such as sorghum. Internationally produced beers are rare and usually different from local varieties, which have been described as tasting like "unfiltered apple juice combined with a hefty dose of vodka!"



African Proverbs and Art Gallery

African Proverbs and Art Gallery

- ∞ If a donkey kicks you and you kick back, you are both donkeys (Gambia)
- ∞ An adult squatting sees farther than a child on top of tree (Gambia)
- ∞ A fly that has no one to advice it, follows the corpse into the grave (Gambia)
- ∞ Giant silk cotton trees grow out of very tiny seeds (Gambia)
- ∞ However black a cow is, the milk is always white (Gambia)
- ∞ The disobedient fowl obeys in a pot of soup (Benin - Nigeria)

- ∞ The crocodile does not die under the water so that we can call the monkey to celebrate its funeral (Akan)
- ∞ When two elephants fight it is the grass that suffers (Uganda)
- ∞ The frog does not jump in the daytime without reason (Nigeria)
- ∞ One goat cannot carry another goat's tail (Nigeria)
- ∞ The family is like the forest, if you are outside it is dense, if you are inside you see that each tree has its own position (Akan)

- ∞ It is the woman whose child has been eaten by a witch who best knows the evils of witchcraft (Nigeria)
- ∞ The hunter does not rub himself in oil and lie by the fire to sleep (Nigeria)
- ∞ The hunter in pursuit of an elephant does not stop to throw stones at birds (Uganda)
- ∞ If all seeds that fall were to grow, then no one could follow the path under the trees (Akan)
- ∞ Even the mightiest eagle comes down to the tree tops to rest (Uganda)
- ∞ A tiger does not have to proclaim its tigri-tude (Wole Soyinka - Nigeria)

- ∞ Before you ask a man for clothes, look at the clothes that he is wearing (Yoruba, Nigeria)
- ∞ As long as there are lice in the seams of the garment there must be bloodstains on the fingernails (Yoruba, Nigeria)
- ∞ If a blind man says let's throw stones, be assured that he has stepped on one (Hausa, Nigeria)
- ∞ Until lions have their own historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter (Igbo, Nigeria)
- ∞ When you are eating with the devil, you must use a long spoon (Igbo, Nigeria)

- The fowl digs out the blade that kills it (Somali)
- Although the snake does not fly it has caught the bird whose home is in the sky (Akan)
- One should never rub bottoms with a porcupine (Akan)
- Fowls will not spare a cockroach that falls in their mist (Akan)
- You do not need a big stick to break a cock's head (Akan)
- Marriage is like a groundnut, you have to crack them to see what is inside (Akan)

- The rain wets the leopard's spots but does not wash them off (Akan)
- If crocodiles eat their own eggs what would they do to the flesh of a frog (Nigeria)
- A man does not wander far from where his corn is roasting (Nigeria)
- Rat no dey born rabbit (Nigeria)
- When man pikin dey piss, him dey hold something for hand. Woman wey try-am, go piss for her hand (Palmwine Drinkards, Nigeria)
- Those who get to the river early drink the cleanest water (Kenya)
- Hurry has no blessings (Kenya)

- A person changing his clothing always hides while changing (Kenya)
- A donkey always says thank you with a kick (Kenya)
- Nobody gathers firewood to roast a thin goat (Kenya)
- Having a good discussion is like having riches (Kenya)
- Many births mean many burials (Kenya)
- The important things are left in the locker (Kenya)
- A boy isn't sent to collect the honey (Kenya)

- If you don't wish to have rags for clothes, don't play with a dog (Nigeria)
- No sane person sharpens his machete to cut a banana tree (Nigeria)
- If a monkey is amongst dogs, why won't it start barking? (Nigeria)
- An elephant's tasks are never too heavy for it (Zimbabwe)
- It is the soil that knows that the mouse's baby is ill (Zimbabwe)

- A man who doesn't know his or her family is like a lion wounded while trying to make a kill for lunch (B. Audifferen)
- If you can walk, you can dance; If you can talk, you can sing
- Greed loses what it has gained
- The house-roof fights with the rain, but he who is sheltered ignores it (Wolof)

- ∞ To love the king is not bad, but a king who loves you is better (Wolof)
- ∞ Allah does not destroy the men whom one hates (Wolof)
- ∞ If nothing touches the palm-leaves they do not rustle (Oji, Ashanti)
- ∞ He is a fool whose sheep runs away twice (Oji, Ashanti)
- ∞ The man who has bread to eat does not appreciate the severity of a famine (Yoruba)
- ∞ Because friendship is pleasant, we partake of our friend's entertainment; not because we have not enough to eat in our own house (Yoruba)
- ∞ When your neighbour's horse falls into a pit, you should not rejoice at it, for your own child may fall into it too (Yoruba)
- ∞ The pot-lid is always badly off: the pot gets all the sweet, the lid nothing but steam (Yoruba)
- ∞ His opinions are like water in the bottom of a canoe, going from side to side (Efik)

- ∞ You lament not the dead, but lament the trouble of making a grave; the way of the ghost is longer than the grave (Efik)
- ∞ For no man could be blessed without the acceptance of his own head (Yoruba)
- ∞ If you don't sell your head, no one will buy it (Yoruba)
- ∞ The bell rings loudest in your own home (Yoruba)
- ∞ No one can uproot the tree which God has planted (Yoruba)
- ∞ Where you will sit when you are old shows where you stood in youth (Yoruba)
- ∞ Nobody knows the mysteries which lie at the bottom of the ocean (Yoruba)
- ∞ If we stand tall it is because we stand on the backs of those who came before us (Yoruba)
- ∞ When you stand with the blessings of your mother and God, it matters not who stands against you (Yoruba)
- ∞ After we fry the fat, we see what is left (Yoruba)

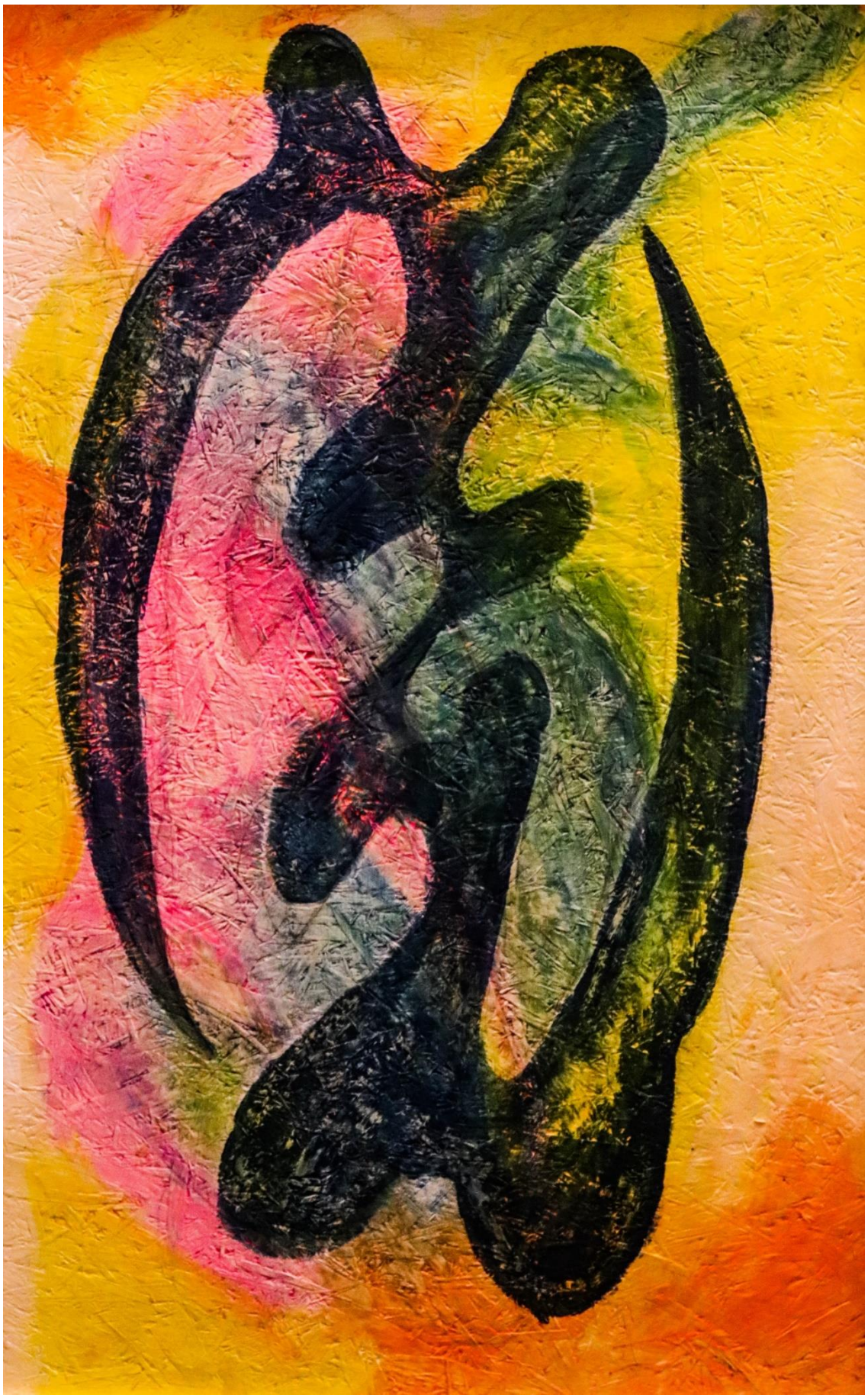
- When the door is closed, you must learn to slide across the crack of the sill (Yoruba)
- `You must be willing to die in order to live (Yoruba)
- What you give you get, ten times over (Yoruba)
- Stretch your hands as far as they reach, grab all you can grab (Yoruba)
- If you are on a road to nowhere, find another road (Ashanti)
- You must act as if it is impossible to fail (Ashanti)

- Do not follow the path. Go where there is no path to begin the trail (Ashanti)
- The ruin of a nation begins in the home of its people (Ashanti)
- Do not let what you cannot do tear from your hands what you can (Ashanti)
- True power comes through cooperation and silence (Ashanti)
- Force against force equals more force (Ashanti)
- Two men in a burning house must not stop to argue (Ashanti)
- One falsehood spoils a thousand truths (Ashanti)
- The one who asks questions doesn't lose his way (Akan)
- You must eat an elephant one bite at a time (Twi)
- It is a fool whose own tomatoes are sold to him (Akan)
- You must live within your sacred truth (Hausa)
- Strategy is better than strength (Hausa)
- When elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers (Kikuyu)

- A child who is to be successful is not to be reared exclusively on a bed of down (Akan)
- The rope for a long life, is pooled by oneself (Ghana - Ewe)
- Treat your guest as a guest for two days; on the third day, give him a hoe! (Swahili)
- Wisdom is not like money to be tied up and hidden (Akan)
- The friend of a fool is a fool. The friend of a wise person is another wise person (Husia)
- You cannot pick up a pebble with one finger (Malawi)
- Two hippopotamuses cannot share the same hole (Cote d'Ivoire)
- One bean does not make a whole meal (Morocco)
- An axe does not cut down a tree by itself (Burkina Faso)
- The tortoise is friends with the snail: those with shells keep their shells close together (Benin)
- People helping one another can bring an elephant into the house (Rwanda)
- Nobody mourns an unnoticed death (Burundi)
- The river may be wide, but it can be crossed (Cote d'Ivoire)
- He who eats well speaks well or it is a question of insanity (Yoruba)

- No matter how long a log may float in the water, it will never become a crocodile (Gambia)
- The blacksmith in one village becomes a blacksmith's apprentice in another (Ghana)
- If a child's hands are clean, he can eat with elders (Gambia)
- A child who denies their mother a night's sleep will also remain awake (Gambia)
- He who has been bitten by a snake becomes scared by the sight of a rope (Hausa)
- One rotten bean is enough to spoil the entire sauce (Dan wake daya ke bata miya) (Hausa)
- Famine strikes the adult as much as the child (Yunwa cadi yaro cadi baba) (Hausa)
- One hand washes the other (Isandla siya kezane) (Zulu)
- "Boto kensengo buka lo no" (Gambia - Mandinka) - An empty bag cannot stand
- Mix yourself with the grain and you will be eaten by the pigs (South Africa)
- The same heat that melts ghee, hardens the egg
- When you grab the head of a snake, the rest is mere rope (Ghana - Akan)
- The wandering child does not see the corpse of his dead mother before burial (Manden - West African)

Proverbs Source:
http://resourcepage.gambia.dk/proverbsall.htm



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Glasgow's African Tales

Actively encouraged by Britain to ease the post-war labour shortage, it is now more than 70 years since African migrants began to arrive on our shores in relatively large numbers. They accepted jobs in hospitals, transport and hospitality and quickly became part of Britain's post-war social history.

Focusing on migrants who settled in Scotland's largest city, 'Glasgow's African Tales' explores memories, stories and artwork of African cultural traditions and the ways in which migrants sometimes struggled to keep those traditions alive in a new land.

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