Mai Palmberg

AFRICAN CULTURE FOR NORDIC PEOPLE
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Africa as it is portrayed in the mass media is a continent of one catastrophe after the other, misery and mismanagement. The concern with this overwhelmingly negative imagery has been the subject for discussion for more than a decade. One of the main arguments behind the efforts to further what was called a “new international information order” was that Africa was not given a fair treatment by the Western-dominated mass media. That debate, which was sponsored by the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in the late 1970s nearly tore the organisation asunder, as there could be no agreement on the structural remedies that could rectify the imbalances in the news flow, and thereby, as it was believed, give more space to positive, development-oriented information.

The negative images of Africa persist, but the debate has changed. Perhaps development-oriented information is not the only or best alternative to these negative images? Both the conventional mass media images of misery, and the attempts at development information have a common starting-point in the premise that what is important about Africa is its problems. In the first case the implication is that the problems are catastrophic, in the second case that they are being surmounted.

The persistence of negative images of Africa, and their acceptance as a truth about Africa today by the general public, was one of the sources behind the initiation of a new research project on culture at the Nordic Africa Institute, which was planned as a three year project, beginning in July 1995. A second source of inspiration for the project was the feeling that in the emphasis on development problems and development paradigms a whole set of exciting processes in Africa was being neglected. The challenges of modern Africa have inspired a many-faceted cultural development, both in popular culture and in what is termed the “fine arts” of literature, theatre, and visual arts. This dynamic with its blends of old and new, rural and urban, indigenous and foreign, it was felt, deserves attention, acquaintance and study in its own right.

The two sources of inspiration for the choice to include cultural issues on the agenda of the Nordic Africa Institute, converge as an alternative to the images of misery. An idea behind the project formulation is that counterbalancing the negative images is not best done by replacing the negative with positive or glossy images, but by changing the focus and type of communication. There are problems, even of catastrophic dimension, in Africa, and certainly mass media reflect this. We can and should question the way problems in Africa are depicted, portraying Africans as helpless victims who can be helped only from the outside. But yet, engaging in a debate on whether mass media are falsifying reality does not go far in countervailing the negative images. The mass media reflection of the world, always mediated and therefore always biased, is and will remain selective, and that selection will always give priority to the crises, scandals, horror and catastrophes.

But, as Anders Ehnmark, a Swedish author and wise commentator on both Africa and the West, has pointed out, there is not only the main current of negative images of Africa, but running against this main flow a lot of counter-currents of quite different quality and content. These are the hundreds of ways in which committed people in smaller and larger numbers, in church and secular
communities, convey their encounters with Africa, and provide outlets for African voices and African culture.

A significant part of these cross-currents is represented by the efforts of various non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In the preparations for the cultural research project at the Nordic Africa Institute we thought it both interesting and fruitful to explore how these cross-currents work, and what reflections people working in them had on their role in this cultural communication. A questionnaire was compiled and sent out separately in 1994 and 1995 to NGOs in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland.

91 organisations have participated in the survey, among which 40 are working in Sweden, 24 in Finland, 17 in Denmark, and 10 in Norway.

The survey showed the variety and depth of these cross-currents. What makes it the more impressive is the fact that a large share of these activities is the work of a few enthusiasts and a lot of voluntary work. Few organisations can afford paid staff, and even those that do rely for their success on voluntary work as well.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to increase our knowledge of the actors in the cultural communication process, and share some of their experiences.

A secondary aim was to establish contacts with NGOs working with cultural questions in order to explore possible forms of co-operation. A third aim was to inspire the participating organisations to think and plan in terms of what aspects of African life and social processes they conveyed.

In order to make this a useful tool for the organisations involved in cultural communication with Africa, we include as a supplement an address list which also contains organisations which are not party to this survey, but which are nevertheless relevant.

Thanks are due to many persons who made this survey possible. Anne Johansson administered most of the distribution of the questionnaires including advance contact directly with each one of the NGO’s. Tomi Puranen made the contacts in Finland and translated the questionnaire to Finnish. Kjerstin Hemmingsson helped to construct the questionnaire, and structure the coding of the answers. Ulrica Risso who was then part-time assistant for the cultural project helped administer the survey. The present assistants, Susanne Östman and Petra Smitmanis, have typeset this summary. The latter has done the final editing and layout. The translation of the questionnaire to Danish was done by Pia Kaa Kristensen, and to Norwegian by Marit Arnesen.

Last but not least we must thank all those who took the time and trouble to fill in the questionnaire, and send us supplementary material. It is impossible to do justice to the wealth of information that they shared with us, but I hope they and others will find some value in this summary.

Uppsala
February 1997
Mai Palmberg
Co-ordinator of the research project “Cultural Images in and of Africa”
at the Nordic Africa Institute
Some claim that culture cannot be understood and communicated through exporting fragments of it. But the aim of cultural communication cannot be a full understanding of a culture in all its dimensions. The notion of a deeper understanding of a culture is often based on a static, functionalist thinking that there is a culture out there that can be grasped and understood as an organic whole.

There are certainly difficulties in conveying for cultural consumption in a distant land what is part and parcel of a dynamic context. The various ceremonial dances in Africa, for example, are an intrinsic part of the whole fabric of social life, as the Swedish dancer and Africa enthusiast Birgit Åkesson has explained from her own meetings with dance in different African cultures. In a similar way, popular music packaged and performed on a European stage is something different than the rhythms in a crowded dance hall in Zaire. Theatre in Africa is often conditioned and often constructed in the meeting with and active participation of the audience. Handicraft is not only the production of artefacts, but a social process both of creation and use in a particular social setting and so on.

The difficulties of bringing culture from one social setting to a distant and different social setting are greater in the case of cultural expressions which are intimately woven into the social life of the community than in modern Western culture which to a large degree is a case of commodity production.

Fine arts as they have evolved in Europe, have a specified space (a gallery, a concert hall, a theatre stage) in which they are displayed and enjoyed, and this can more easily be transferred over large geographical space than ceremonies which are lived out as part of the social life in a community.

Yet, the objections above must be rejected. Fully accepted they deny the possibility of any cross-cultural communication.

On the other hand, we have to see the limitations of any exercise in cross-country and cross-continent cultural communication. We cannot convey 'the whole culture', but only convey fragments of the cultural life of the communities from which the "cultural import" comes. But this is not a sadly admitted limitation. Perhaps an anthropologist can by participatory observation of long duration come close to understanding the cultural aspects of social life in a particular community in a particular period, yet this cannot be the sole goal of cultural understanding.

The question whether we can at all succeed in conveying 'the whole culture' of another community presupposes that we can define the essence of a given culture. It implies a static notion of culture, the 'authenticity' and purity of which can be established. Against this I would like to propose that cultural communication should aim at, and perhaps can do nothing else but aim at, conveying not essences of cultures, but rather show in an artistic way how the human condition has been
formulated and expressed by other groups and creative minds than our own.

Seen from this point of view it is pointless to try to apply a yardstick to the degree of authenticity in what is transmitted in cultural communication. The real world is one where ethnic and cultural purity is a myth, in some cases a destructively manipulated myth, in other cases an understandable quest for a firm social identity in a changing world.

Culture is not a thing or set of ideas to be grasped, but a social process where new forms are constantly being recreated and transformed in the meeting of different traditions, materials and ideas. This was eloquently stressed in the conference in October 1995 on contemporary African art and artists entitled ‘Africa Medium of Change’, which was the academic input into the cultural manifestation of arts in Africa and the African Diaspora in London of ‘Africa 95’. The way that musical impulses from across the oceans and borders, sometimes inflows of impulses moving back and forth, has influenced contemporary African musicians was but one example cited.

‘Creolisation’ is a relevant concept here, advanced by, among others the Swedish social anthropologist Ulf Hannerz. But ‘creolisation’ presupposes that there is a definable dominant culture, in the periphery of which new cultural forms emerge in the meetings in the borderlands of cultures. Perhaps we should also advance a concept of ‘melangisation’, the creation of new blends of influences which are not necessarily hierarchically situated.

The value of cultural communication lies to a large part in the communication itself. Cultural communication is an encounter, and conveying culture from other communities is more than anything else the creation of meetings and meeting places, where new linkages, and indeed new cultural expressions can be formed.

The purpose of cultural communication is to whet the appetite for learning and meeting. In terms of international solidarity it is a way of strengthening the capacity for identification with others. I think this is the importance of the activities of which the survey has given rich examples.
PREPARATION AND EXECUTION OF THE SURVEY

This survey does not purport to give a complete picture of how African culture is conveyed to the Nordic countries. Certain actors fall outside the survey, for example importers of music, publishing companies, and state institutes for cultural exchange like the Swedish Institute, which from time to time invite African personalities.

Certain activities also fall outside the survey, although they do contribute to the awareness of and attitudes to the cultures of Africa. We do not capture the wave of interest in African dance, the listening to African music which sometimes appears as 'world music', the singing of African songs by amateur choirs, or the enjoyment of 'ethnic food'. Who knows whether the food shops selling African food are more important in conveying African culture to people in the Nordic countries than whatever is done in the three-year cultural research project run by the Africa Institute?

Most of the contribution by Africans living for a shorter or longer period in the Nordic countries to the understanding of and meeting with African culture also falls outside the survey.

Another type of cultural communication which falls outside this study is the production of written material such as reviews and magazines, which inform about Africa, and carry material from Africa itself. In those cases where they are published by organisations covered in this survey they are mentioned here, but they would be worth a special contents and reception study of their own. I am thinking of such magazines as Kontakt and Udkig from Denmark, Maailman Pyörä, MoniTori, Kumppani, Scandi-African and Kehitys/utveckling from Finland, Tredje verden magasinet X, Fredskorpsforum from Norway, and Omvärlden, Barnen och vi, and Kommentar from Sweden.

There are thus many more conveyor belts for African culture than what is covered in this survey. What this survey has intended to cover is the cultural contributions of the formally organised voluntary organisations.

The participating organisations
There are some regrettable absences in the survey. In the Swedish survey we regret, among others, the absence of the Africa groups, the solidarity movement with the people of southern Africa, and of Filmcentrum, a distributor of documentary and alternative films with a long list of films about and from Africa. The number of Norwegian answers to the survey does not give justice to the breadth of cultural communication with Africa there.

The organisations were selected from lists of NGOs with Third World activities compiled by the development authorities and co-ordinating bodies among the NGOs themselves, supplemented with information from the organisations that we contacted. All organisations were approached through telephone contact to inquire whether they did have relevant activities, to secure a contact person for the questionnaire, and to explain the intentions behind the survey. We also hoped that this procedure would increase the proportion of responses.
We sent out questionnaires to 47 Swedish organisations, out of which 40 answered. 42 Danish organisations received the questionnaire, but only 17 answered. The numbers for Norway were 30 recipients of the questionnaire, and 10 returns, and for Finland 40 organisations, out of which 24 answered. We thus registered a low percentage of replies except for the Swedish survey.

All in all, the survey gives important glimpses of the activities and considerations among NGOs constituting an important part of the cross-currents of alternative encounters with African culture, but it should not be read as a scientific and conclusive study.

The 91 organisations participating in the survey are of many different kinds. The typology presented here is subjective, but can still be of use. I have distinguished between 7 categories. Many categories of course are overlapping. The categorisation can serve as an illustration of the breadth of the NGO contribution to conveying culture from Africa. The year in parenthesis is the founding year of the organisation given in the questionnaire.

(1) A first group consists of 8 church and mission related organisations:

**Sweden:**
Helgelseförbundet/Fribaptistsamfundet (1890),
Svenska kyrkans mission/Svenska kvinors missionsförening (1875),
KyrkornasVärldsforum (1973),
Lutherhjälpen,
Individuell människohjälp.

**Finland:**
Suomen Kristillinen Ylioppilasliitto,
Suomen Evangelis-Lutherilainen Kansanlähetys (1967).

**Denmark:**
Sudanmissionen.

(2) A second group are 11 organisations working among students and youth:

**Sweden:**
Elevorganisationen,
Förbundet Vi Unga (1986),
Unga Örnar Blekinge (1988).

**Finland:**
AIESEC (end of 1950s),
ICYE, Kansainvälinen Vapaaehtoistyö – Eteläppohjoinen ryhmä (early 1980s?),
NNKY-Liitto,
Nuorten Kotkain Keskusliitto (1983),
AFS Intercultural Programs (1983),

**Denmark:**
Dansk AFS (1986).

(3) A third group consists of 12 organisations devoted to alternative trade with Africa or the Third World:

**Sweden:**
Stiftelsen Afroart (1967),
Swedecorp (1990),
Multi Kulti (1986),
African Corner (1986),
U-Landsboden Globalen (1984),
Sackeusbutiken (1992),
Alternativ Handel (1979),
Finland:
Maailmankauppa (1982),
Pohjois-Suomen Kehitysmaayhdistys
Svalor,na,
Turun Kehitysmaakappayhdistys.

Denmark:

(4) A fourth group are 14 organisations whose activities centre on a specified development assistance project or on humanitarian assistance (this category includes organisations set up for a different purpose, but whose activity in culture transfer is connected to assistance projects):

Sweden:
Emmaus Björkå (1966),
Gävleborgs Biståndsgrupp (1986),
Karagwe-föreningen (1981),
Namunoprojektet,
IOGT-NTO-rörelsen (1967),
Röda Korset Dalarnas distrikt,
Röda Korset Gotland,
Röda Korsets ungdomsförbund (1990),

Finland:

Norway:
Norges Røde Kors.

Denmark:
AGORO i Danmark (1992),
Genvej til Udvikling (1978),
DGI (Idrotsorganisation).

(5) A fifth group are 26 diverse organisations primarily set up to disseminate information and culture:

Sweden:
Sydpunkten,
Afrosvenskarnas Riksförbund (1990),
Right Livelihood Award (1980),
Rikstställningar (1965),
Stiftelsen Fredshögskolan (1939),
Videocentrum för U-landsfrågor (1979),
Älvsborgs länsmuseum (1991),
Naturhistoriska riksmuseet (about 1700).

Finland:
Afrikan Tähti (1989),
Turun YK-yhdistys (1963),
Pyyninkinlinnan museo (1989),
Ex-kehitysjoukkolaiset (1992),
and Suomen Pakolaisapu-Finlands Flyktinghjälp.

Norway:
Rikskonsertene (1989),
Nordic Black Theatre (1986),
Film fra Sør (1991),
Third World Film Promotion (1991),
Høgskolen i Bergen avd pedagogikk (1986).

Denmark:
Fremtidsskoven (1972),
FNs og UNESCOs verdenskultur ti år (1990),
Danish Association for Promotion of African Music,
Drama & Art (1987),
Dansk Afrika Center (1988),
Dansk Børnefond (1982),
Danmarks biblioteksforening,
Images of Africa (1991),
A sixth group are 10 organisations set up as *solidarity organisations with people of Africa or the Third World*:

**Sweden:**
Lidköpings U-landsförening (1983),
Nybro U-lands och FN-förening (1979),
Föreningen Svenska U-landsvolontärer (1967).

**Finland:**
U-landsföreningen Svalorna,
Suomen Rauhanpuolustajat (1949),
Äetsän Kehitysmaaseura (1989).

**Norway:**
Fellesrådet for Afrika,
Norsk Fredskorpssamband (1967).

**Denmark:**
Mellemfolkeligt samvirke (1960),

A seventh group are 10 *friendship organisations* creating bonds between countries or regions:

**Sweden:**
Svensk-Tanzaniska föreningen (1968),
Vänskapsföreningen Sverige-Zimbabwe (1985),
Burkinas Vänner i Göteborg (1985),
Vänskapsföreningen Burkina Faso-Sverige (1986).

**Finland:**
Suomi-Ghana-Seura (1985),
Suomi-Namibia-Seura (1974),
The participation of Africans

One question concerned the participation of Africans in the cultural communication process. There were few comments on this question; it was a mistake not to ask explicitly for elaborated explanations of the answers. Some replies remain difficult to interpret. Out of 39 replies to this question in the Swedish survey 9 confirm that Africans are involved "to a large extent". In two cases collaboration with African groups are mentioned, in one case there is reference to collaboration with African exporters. In one case African representation on the steering committee is mentioned.

The intention had been to find out, among other things, the extent to which Africans living in the Nordic countries, were involved in the NGOs' cultural communication about Africa. Although the survey does not illuminate this clearly, information from other sources indicates that there is indeed a rather low level of African involvement. The Africans living in the Nordic countries remain largely an untapped source for cross-cultural communication. By and large, their cultural life is characterised by a rather high degree of social isolation. The reasons for this, and the possible ways of overcoming it, is a relevant subject for study and remedy.

Those African organisations that do exist, such as an organisation for Gambians in Sweden, and a West African students' association in Bergen, often tend to devote themselves exclusively to activities catering for their own members. On the other hand, for example, the Finnish-Ghanaian association has a cultural music and drumming group, which has performed in many schools for a number of years.
THE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES AND THEIR AUDIENCES

Some organisations we contacted initially claimed that they did not contribute to the conveying of African culture at all, because they defined culture as fine arts. Our working definition is broader than fine arts and more narrow than such broad definitions of culture that encompass all forms of social behaviour which contribute to maintaining the patterned social life of a community. Food habits, for example, are certainly part of the culture of a community, but fall outside our survey. The same is true of the various non-verbal modes of communication, which contribute to the cohesion and social expression in a group. These behaviour patterns which form the ‘glue’ of everyday social life naturally fall outside our survey, since we concentrate on expressions of cultural life which can be conveyed in a limited space and time to others, and thus can be itemised as ‘cultural export’.

We asked the NGOs to specify whether they included in their cultural activities the following forms of communication:

Visual art, theatre, music, dance, literature, handicraft, and films. We also asked whether they had organised exhibitions, and whether they organised their cultural activities in substantially verbal and instruction-like communication, either as seminars, courses, lectures or study circles. We also asked the organisations to indicate what form of activity was dominant.

Diagram 1. Forms of activities in which African culture is conveyed by Nordic NGOs
To some extent, the diagram illustrates the kind of organisations that answered the survey. It is natural that those who are engaged in alternative trade will indicate selling and exhibiting African handicraft as their main form of activity, and as this type of organisation has been better at responding than any other kind of organisation the diagram reflects this. It is not surprising, to illustrate the point, that handicraft from Africa is central to those organisations in the Swedish survey which are mainly alternative trade-oriented (8), but it can be noted that it is part of the activities of sixteen more.

It is striking that those forms of activities dominate which use traditional pedagogic techniques, with a heavy reliance on verbal communication, seminars, lectures and the like. It seems as if the spoken word is the most popular form of communication. Seminars and lectures are, however, probably more limited in their out-reach effect than those forms of communication which appeal to other senses than hearing, and where the emphasis is on more active partaking rather than on receiving information.

In all the countries lectures and seminars were the most dominant form of activity. In the Swedish survey 19 out of 40 replied that this was their most dominating or sole form of conveying African culture. In 35 out of 40 cases this kind of activity was included in their work. In the Finnish responses to the survey the same dominance is apparent, but it is notable that music plays a proportionately greater part here. Literature is remarkably high on the agenda of the Danish organisations.

Exhibitions were the second most popular form of communication in all four countries. 18 organisations replied that they used music, but it was dominant (together with literature) for only one, Multi Kulti in Stockholm.

Exhibiting and selling handicraft from Africa seems to be an increasingly popular form of introducing African culture. The Pyynikinlinna museum in Tampere, Finland deserves special mention. It was started on the initiative of one private person, Eila Kivekäs, and has arranged three exhibitions since its inception in 1989: one on Dogon way of life ("Behind the masks"), one on textiles from West Africa, and one on clay traditions in art and architecture in West Africa. An exhibition is planned for 1996 with art made of scrap metal. The same willingness to display modern African art with its influences from both the traditional and the modern world is shown in a Norwegian initiative to arrange an exhibition tour with works of contemporary artists from five countries in southern Africa. This exhibition, under the name *Sanaa Afrika* (art in Africa) is touring in a handful of towns in 1996.

There were a number of activity forms that were not covered by our alternatives. Attempts at forming bonds of friendship through "adoption" of communities in Africa were mentioned, as were visits to school classes, an art lottery, and complaints about unfair and incorrect coverage in public broadcasting and TV.

A somewhat different picture emerges when the organisations are asked to list activities 1990-93. They are first asked what direct import of African culture they have engaged in, i.e. what literature, music, art etc. created in Africa has been conveyed to their audience, including organised meetings with Africans where African
culture is conveyed (including both meet-
ings with guests from Africa, and with
Africans living in the Nordic countries).

In the Swedish survey ten organisations
have not specified any such activities.
Among the 30 which have given examples,
15 organisations mention meetings, semi-
nars, courses, and the like. 12 mention
dance and music performances, and festi-
vals. 11 mention exhibitions they have
organised, 6 have sold African handicraft,
4 have shown African films, and 3 have
organised Africa-centred fairs. In the
Norwegian and Danish answers theatre,
festivals, and dance were the most popular
activity forms. In the Finnish survey visits
by African guests were a type of activity
mentioned more often than any other direct
cultural transfer. African guests are part of
the activities in many of the activities in the
other countries as well. But one gets the
impression that meetings with African
guests are given more importance by many
Finnish organisations as a value in itself.

Secondly the organisations were asked
to give examples of the indirect cultural
communication in 1990-93 that they have
engaged in to convey culture from Africa,
transmitted by persons from the Nordic
countries. 7 organisations did not reply to
this question in the Swedish survey. Out of
the 33 which did lectures, meetings, study
circles etc. were mentioned by an over-
whelming 27. This then represents the most
prevalent form of cultural communication
utilised by the Swedish organisations in the
survey.

There is a great variety of forms for
indirect cultural communication: dance
performances, theatre, music, festivals,
exhibitions, and travel reports are the most
popular. Other activities include the pub-
lishing of books, reviews or study material,
information packages for schools, film,
video, and slide shows, and computer data
bases.

In the Swedish, but not in the other,
surveys many more examples are cited of
indirect than of direct cultural commu-
nication, as we have defined it. In the other sur-
veys the examples given are about half/half
direct and indirect cultural communication.
There is a possibility that examples of indi-
rect communication are not seen as equally
important to cite than the examples of
direct communication. Most if not all
organisations include people who have
been to Africa in one capacity or another,
and who are eager to tell their stories. As
members or staff of the organisations
engaged in the cultural communication
they are welcome resources. On the other
hand, we must perhaps also remind
ourselves of the risks involved in the
temptation to speak for the Africans, a
temptation that might be bigger and more
distorting in its effect than in our
relationship with other parts of the world,
given the history of a paternalist attitude
among Europeans towards African culture.

Africans living in the Nordic countries
are an under-utilised resource in cultural
communication. The Oplysningscenter om
den 3. verden in Århus, Denmark (called
03V) is an exception. Started in 1990 as a
co-ordinating body for local groups work-
ing with the Third World it soon started a
guest teachers programme, which involves
persons from the Third World as guest
speakers or performers in Danish schools.

Representation of culture from Africa
by Scandinavians is not necessarily a
second-best, nor is representation by
Africans a goal in itself. The goal of cul-
tural communication is not necessarily the conveying of ‘pure’ culture from foreign lands, but could also be the introduction of inspiring elements for the cultural mix produced here. I was reminded of this in a meeting with a Zimbabwean musician in London whose band consisted of Africans, Canadians, and British. He had attended the glorious opening of Africa 95, a series of events celebrating and portraying African culture in various fields. The opening had taken place in the venerable Albert Hall, and had been impressive indeed, with an exciting mixture of African music, all performed by African musicians. This last fact irritated the Zimbabwean musician, who pointed out that culture was about meeting and mixing.

The aspect of cultural communication which is about ingredients for new cultural mixes is not well documented in the survey, but is a powerful antidote to the negative connotations that the mass media images of misery bring. Africa-inspired clothing, African food, African dancing, and the ‘world music’ trend, which to a large extent consists of African music, are all examples of elements of African culture assimilated into our culture and life. This takes place in hundreds of different contexts, and forms a set of cross-currents that we must not forget while concentrating, for the time being, on the larger, more publicly organised events where African culture is presented.

Rikskonserter in Norway is worth mentioning as an organisation with a conscious view of culture as meetings which transform attitudes. The project also included a research component in collaboration with the Institute for Music and Theatre at Oslo University. Among the theoretical considerations behind this project was the assumption that prejudice changes much more effectively with participation and emotional involvement than with intellectual argumentation, and that music is particularly suitable to provide this emotional involvement, not least African music. As the evaluation report by Kjell Skyllstad puts it: “African music is connected to the body and involves all our senses. It is an art of contact - contact between human beings with the earth, with each other, and with the mystic forces that maintain life. The music mediates our contact with the sources of life and energy. All this makes African music contact-creating, socialising, and development-promoting, both physically and mentally.”

In the three-year project (1989-92) called Klangrikt fellesskap 6 schools in Oslo and Akershus were given intensive exposure to African, Latin American, and Asian music with pedagogic follow-up, while 6 schools were only visited for two ordinary concerts, and another 6 schools were a control group without this music exposure. When the results were compared it was clear that the tendencies to bullying had been markedly reduced in the first group. This success has been followed by further activities, among others a musical café in Oslo where non-Norwegian and Norwegian musicians meet for free musical evenings, an initiative supported by the Norwegian development agency, NORAD.

The audience

The most popular answer to the question of the types of audiences is the most diffuse: the general public. In the Swedish survey 37 out of 40 answered the question about
the type of audience that they had the general public in mind in their activity. The next in popularity, is the similarly vague category ‘youth’. In the Swedish survey 14 targeted youth. Since there are only 3 youth-based organisations in the survey, it is apparent that young people are seen as a particularly interesting and interested target group in general.

About a quarter of the organisations mentioned their own members as the target group. Only a very small number in the survey turn explicitly to decision-makers, to the development assistance authorities, or to importers.

Diagram 2. The types of audience

We asked the organisations to estimate how many people they reached in the year preceding the survey in those activities in which African culture in some form was transmitted. Many found it difficult to answer. Among those that did reply most organisations say they reach an audience of less than 5,000 people (17 in the Swedish survey, all but one among the Norwegian organisations, 7 out of 10 of the Danish, and two-thirds of those which replied in the Finnish survey).
Two organisations that estimate an audience larger than 100,000 people are worth special mention.

In Denmark ‘Images of Africa’ estimate that they reach perhaps 200,000. This is due to the special form of their activities, as a highly publicised festival whose main idea is to provide bustling meeting places, and make a difference through variety and audience impact. Their idea has also been to bring African artists and cultural personalities directly to Denmark for the festival, which has made an appealing programme possible. It is the kind of effort which is designed to, and probably does, make a difference in the public mind, but which is of a magnitude and cost for which most organisations do not have the resources.

In the summer of 96 the third ‘Images of Africa’ festival was arranged. The theme this time was Africa and the world and the festival included contributions from more than 20 African countries as well as the Caribbean, Latin America, United States and Europe.

An idea similar to that of ‘Images of Africa’ in Denmark is the fairs sponsored by the Finnish and the Swedish development authorities. The Swedish ‘Biståndet behövs’ (‘Assistance is needed’) is, however, differently organised, with its emphasis on development projects. Organisations engaged in development projects are offered stands. Their activities and, only to a smaller extent, African life and culture are in focus. One idea behind this fair has been to bring awareness about the various forms of development assistance to various medium-size cities in Sweden.

The Finnish equivalent to this development agency-sponsored fair, called ‘People in Development’ comes closer to ‘Images in Africa’, in that it is organised as a carnival-like event in the centre of the capital, Helsinki, and most participants put more emphasis on those parts of the Third World which are in focus in their activities than on their own development projects. Many of the organisations participating in this survey mentioned their participation in ‘The Marketplace of Variety’ (‘Moninaisuuden Tori’) at this fair as one of their most important out-reach activities.

‘Afroart’ in Stockholm is one of the Swedish organisations with a large audience impact. In the SIDA-sponsored fair in 1992 in Örebro they provided one of the direct links to African culture by organising a visit by a Zimbabwean sculptor. Their main activity, however, is the displaying and selling of high-quality handicraft from groups of people in Africa and other parts of the world, which they in many cases have direct contact with. In connection with this they give information about the source of their handicraft, for example by showing pictures from the Bombolou workshops in Mombasa, Kenya and by an exhibition of Kiganda carpets from Uganda. In their present location in the Peoples’ Museum (formerly the Ethnographic museum) in Stockholm they are well placed to reach an interested audience.

We also asked the organisations whether they receive feedback on their activities, which helps them evaluate their activities. Most who replied said they did, but only a small number had made systematic attempts to survey the response. The most common form of feed-back was occasional articles about their work.
The geographical coverage

We asked about the regional and country origin of the cultural elements presented in their activities. Not surprisingly the emphasis was heavily on East Africa, with southern Africa not far behind. The distribution shows that the countries which receive Nordic development assistance get more coverage than others, but there is a wide spread which includes many other countries as well.

Diagram 3. Area of interest of the Nordic NGO's in the survey

The division of countries into areas is based on the division in the OECD Macrothesaurus for Information Processing in the Field of Economic and Social Development, used by most libraries. The diagram is based on the table in Appendix 1.

The diagram must be read with caution. It does not give a complete picture, since many NGOs are missing in the survey. It does not say anything about the intensity of contact. Some countries which are mentioned, might be poorly represented in the activities, while countries with which contacts are intense can be represented by a small number of organisations. For example, in Finland, the Finnish-Namibia society is a strong organisation covering a large part of the Finnish NGO activities,
and only two other organisations have mentioned Namibia as a country of origin in their cultural transfer.

Some African countries are obviously more popular than others. Where do the contacts and ties originate? Generally speaking, there can be five main explanations for the choice of a country in cultural communication: Contacts based on missionary work, on development assistance, solidarity with liberation movements, Africans in the Nordic countries, and tourism to selected African countries. In some cases, like Namibia for Finland, many factors co-exist: missionary tradition, solidarity, development assistance, and the presence during the liberation struggle of a fairly large number of Namibians in training in Finland.

The most striking convergence is between development assistance recipients and countries from which NGOs convey culture. It is difficult to say whether this is caused by the links created by assistance, or whether they coincide. The latter can be assumed to be the case, for example, in Ethiopia, where missionary activities from Sweden preceded development assistance.

The language pattern also follows the development assistance pattern. African countries with French as the official language are very poorly represented. In development assistance, Tunisia was the only Francophone country in Africa in the list of major recipients of Swedish assistance, and this assistance was discontinued after a few years. No Swedish NGO participating in this survey has mentioned connections with Tunisia, from Denmark, Norway and Finland only one each.

The Francophone countries are clearly underrepresented. This is particularly the case among the Swedish organisations. Out of altogether 115 countries mentioned as the source of cultural import by the 38 organisations that responded to this question in the Swedish survey, a mere 12 were Francophone countries: Burkina Faso (4), Cameroon (2), Mali (2), Madagascar (2), Morocco (1), Togo (1).

If the language seems to be a barrier to countries with other than English as the official language this has not prevented contacts with the Portuguese-speaking countries of Mozambique, and Angola.

Some of the largest countries in Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, and Zaire are clearly underrepresented.

Yet, without the NGOs there would be a much narrower selection of countries represented in the ‘Africa’ conveyed to the general public in the Nordic countries. The spread is impressive (see the table in Appendix 1). 43 countries are mentioned in the survey out of the 53 states of Africa.
WHAT IMAGES OF AFRICA ARE CONVEYED?

In an attempt to approach the question of what images of Africa the NGOs conveyed, we put a question as to whether the culture conveyed could be termed 'traditional' or 'modern', whether the countryside or cities were dominating, and whether men or women were in the majority. We also asked whether ethnic variety is being reflected in their activities.

These questions were deliberately formulated as 'leading questions'. What we wanted to learn was really what kind of awareness there is about the kind of images that are conveyed. Presenting an 'ideal type' of a country's culture will fall short of giving life to the people involved. Behind the dichotomies hid many larger questions. Do we want to offer possibilities for identification between different groups, give an overall factual information package about different countries? Is the Africa we want to convey something exotic and romantic? Is there a recognition of the fact that men's worlds and women's worlds are in many respects very different?

Some Finnish organisations got the point when they confessed that if ethnic variety was expressed it was a happy coincidence, and admitted that awareness about these matters was very low.

To really penetrate the question of what images are portrayed, one would need to look at specific cultural events and their presentation. The survey can only give contours.

Formulating the question in terms of dichotomies invited many organisations to answer that they covered both countryside and town, traditional and modern, and men and women.

'Traditional' or 'modern'?

The word 'traditional' is not a very successful term, as it implies something static. The intention here was to ask whether there were conceptions about 'pure' and 'authentic' African culture as opposed to the mixed cultural expressions in a modern, and urban context.

Many did not reply to this question (a third in the Swedish survey, a few in the others). Perhaps they thought that the question was not relevant to their kind of activities, or the answer difficult, either because it was something they had not thought of, and/or a distinction that was difficult to apply. Less than 25 per cent of those who replied said that the culture they conveyed represented both traditional and modern culture, while 44 per cent said that traditional culture was given the emphasis. Only 25 per cent emphasised modern culture.

The emphasis on traditional culture was markedly stronger among the Swedish organisations than among the others. 60 per cent said their emphasis was on traditional culture.

Some questioned the relevance of the distinction. A definition of the two types of culture should perhaps have been offered, but in fact the distinction is difficult to define. The question was intended to evoke answers that revealed the connotative thinking.

Interestingly enough, the only organisation in the Swedish survey that is
dominated by Africans, the National Association of Afro-Swedes (Africans of the second generation), devoted their cultural activities almost exclusively to ‘modern culture’. The reply by the Finnish-Ghana Association is interesting as a contrast. Ghanaians in Finland are very tradition-conscious, we are told, and therefore the emphasis is heavily on traditional culture, although a high-life band with electric instruments has also been co-operating with the organisation.

Town and countryside

One would expect a parallel to the traditional-modern dichotomy in the replies to the question whether the culture conveyed represented town or countryside.

There was a slightly smaller proportion of organisations which said their emphasis was on the countryside than had stated an emphasis on traditional culture. As with traditional culture, the emphasis on countryside was most marked in the Swedish survey. Almost half of all replies said culture from the African countryside was in focus, while almost 40 per cent answered both. The cities are in the minority in all the country surveys, although less so among the Finnish organisations. Only 12 organisations altogether said they emphasised culture from the cities.

The pattern here is not surprising, as the majority of the population of Africa does live in the countryside. There is also an ideological tendency to regard the cities as not representing something “purely African” but rather a foreign element on the African continent, despite the urbanisation rate. Surely the ideological factor must be part of the explanation why organisations in the Nordic countries, which are to a large extent centred in towns of varying size, do not look for their ‘counterparts’ in similar circumstances in Africa. Perhaps a romantic and exoticist notion of African culture contributes to this. Another explanation to the favouring of the countryside culture is found in the fact that a large part of the cultural activities are related to assistance projects. Most such projects where NGOs are involved are situated in the countryside. This again can have ideological reasons, as expressions of the view of the cities as being economically favoured, in some views even seen as exploitative. It also relates to the favouring of small-scale projects.

In Fredskorpsforum (No. 2/94) Jørn Eskildsen argues that development assistance to a very large degree is city based, and that the volunteers represent a necessary alternative, with experiences from the countryside and village life. The NGOs on the whole seem to provide such a balancing force in their cultural activities.

Ethnic variety

A question was put whether the culture conveyed witnessed to ethnic variety. The intention was to find out to what extent the contents were country, or generally development-oriented, and to what extent it did reflect the various ethnic groups. We also wanted to find out whether recognition was given to the ethnic coexistence of many different groups which is so characteristic of Africa (with a very small number of exceptions such as Somalia). In the ‘misery syndrome’ of the Africa images dominating established mass media the existence of many ethnic groups is almost invariably put forward as a ‘natural’ source of
conflict, whereas in real life in Africa ethnic coexistence is both an accepted fact of life and an enriching feature of social life.

In a few cases the responses were that ethnic variety was not expressed since the activity concentrated only on one country. The library association in Finland, for example, which has a project in Tanzania, say they do not display ethnic variety, since they work with only one country “which itself is striving to unite”. There is a trace here of the nationalist ideology evolved in Africa in the 1960s and 1970s, and which set unity against ethnic loyalties, which were seen as tribalist and divisionist. Recognition of cultural variety could also be a recognition of the multiple identities that we all have, and build on the fact that so much of everyday life and expressions of art are culture-bound.

It is interesting to note in which ways ethnic variety was expressed. The sale of products from various ethnic groups, and accompanying information, was the most common form. A few organisations said they showed ethnic variety through the participation of Africans, often refugees, who told about their own cultures. Fashion shows were another example.

A fifth of the NGOs in the survey did not answer this question, but among those who did almost three quarters replied that they did reflect ethnic variety. A fifth said they did not.

Men and women
We also asked whether the people represented were men or women. This was a rather crude way of asking whether gender mattered in the cultural communication. This question is interesting in itself, and perhaps even more so since social life, particularly in the countryside in Africa, is clearly gender-specific.

More than half say that both men and women are represented. This answer is not very easy to interpret. It is difficult to know whether they mean that both women’s and men’s lives were portrayed, or whether they thought that the division hardly mattered.

20 organisations out of the 71 that replied to this question said that men dominated among the people represented, and 16 said that women dominated. In some cases the emphasis on women was deliberate strategy.

Four organisations wanted to add as a special category young people, and one organisation added the category ‘handicapped’.

The popular images of Africa
An open ended question was put as to what the respondents think that people in their country spontaneously associate with Africa. The purpose was to pave the way for the reflective part of the survey, which contains questions about what images of Africa are promoted when conveying culture from Africa.

I have grouped the answers into negative, positive, and neutral connotations. Some categorisations can be discussed, for example the value given to ‘animal life’. When I was a child African wildlife certainly was a positive asset, it was something that made Africa exciting — although one can well argue that it was negative to the degree that there was not a comparable positive interest in African people. Children’s books are still often populated by the large African mammals. Even for
grown-ups who get the opportunity to travel to Africa, wildlife is one of the most attractive ingredients of the trip. I have, therefore, placed ‘wildlife’ in the category of positive connotations.

The rule I have tried to apply is that connotations are categorised as positive if they are things that awake curiosity and cause joy or admiration. Although ‘sports’, for example, could be a neutral, purely descriptive connotation, most likely it is something that has entered the stock of connotations with Africa because of the successes of African men and women athletes.

Some replies are hyphenated, sometimes with two positive connotations (like music-rhythms) in which case they are counted as one, in other cases with a neutral term coupled with a negative term (like drought-heat), in which case they are counted as a negative connotation.

Diagram 4. Connotations with ‘Africa’ assumed by the general public in the Nordic countries.

Total numbers of replies (each with 1 to 6 connotations) Sweden-31, Finland-23, Norway-10, Denmark-14. This diagram is based on the table in Appendix 2.

The negative connotations dominate. Among the 31 answers to this question from the Swedish NGOs an overwhelming 27 gave lists with more negative connotations than positive ones. A typical list is: “starvation, drought, overpopulation, poverty, disease, wars/conflicts”. Only in two cases did the positive terms dominate. Mostly the positive connotations are connected to nature and wildlife, but in a
few cases to admirable traits in people (endurance, joy of life, strength). On the other hand, the negative connotations do not contain specified individuals or movements, nor character traits. The negative connotations are either examples of Africa's unhappy fate, things that Africa and Africans are victims of (hunger, drought, AIDS, poverty) or what one could call negative characteristics of the political system, like wars, ethnic conflicts, and corruption.

There is hardly any blatant racism here. Only one of the answers, from Finland, believes that the general image of Africans is that of “stupid, and simple-minded people”. Generally, though, Africa just seems to be a not very nice place to be in, according to this indirectly conveyed general picture. But one can suspect that there is a more subtle racism involved, in that Africa does not seem to have the capacity to handle its crises.

In one of the Finnish answers there is a striking absence of any social conflicts or problems. This is the “innocent” image of exotic Africa: “Sand-deserts, dark people, savannahs, elephants, lions, sun”. But this is an exception, in almost all other answers we see reflections of the images of misery and suffering that dominate what we see and hear of Africa on the television screen and the radio, and in the papers.

The negative overall picture invites a discussion on whether it reflects an objective reality. Surely there are problems in Africa? One answer is, yes, there certainly are, and so there are on all other continents as well – but Africa most probably comes very low in an imagined comparative rating. There are reasons why only the negative aspects are given the limelight.

“Any objective account of successes at the community and national level in sub-Saharan Africa must begin by acknowledging that the balance at the moment is overwhelmingly tilted in favour of disaster”, Michael Chege tells us in a leading article in Current History (5/1994).

However, in the general characterisation of a whole continent that we asked for in the questionnaire (not an assessment of the social development), I would maintain that there is no objective truth to be found. It is all a question of what we choose to focus on, and in what context we put the topics we choose.

Michael Chege continues with a reminder: “It [an objective account] must also reckon with the hard fact that both in Africa and the Western world, the stories of civil strife and famine of unprecedented dimensions receive more publicity than those about events and institutions that have reversed social catastrophes and given ordinary citizens an opportunity to improve their lives in a peaceful environment.”

In the questionnaires, only South Africa, the ANC and its leader Nelson Mandela are mentioned as positive examples and role models. The democratisation process in other parts of the continent is absent from the list.

In two other cases the names of countries are mentioned, once Somalia (in a Finnish reply), and once Rwanda (in a Norwegian reply). Most probably the thought is that these countries represent chaos (but I find it repugnant to put whole countries under the heading ‘negative’ and therefore leave them off the list).

One answer is interesting in its contrast to the others. The Nordic Black Theatre from Norway write that they think people
perceive Africa as being exciting, exotic, naïve and intense, not so negative as the mass media depict it, not so traditional.

But the overall perspective is grim. Even the climate is put into the context of misery and difficulties.

This is the subjective reality which provides the backdrop for the activities of the NGOs, or at least the way they see the images of Africa in the public mind.

The cultural activities as factors of change

We asked whether the organisations thought the images of Africa actually had changed through their activities. Relatively few have answered that they think their activities have changed the images of Africa in their audience (for example, 7 out of 38 replies in the Swedish survey, while 28 say they think it has done so to some extent, while only 3 deny any importance for their activities).

Among those who confidently answered that they did think their activities mattered in changing the image of Africa were the AIESEC-Suomi association in Finland, which specialises in youth exchanges. The pattern is that direct meetings and personal experiences make for more confidence in attitude-changing.

Those organisations which exhibit or sell handicraft, here exemplified by ‘Afroart’, often want to change the popular image to some degree, by showing the knowledge and skill in African handicraft.

When asked about what attitudes they want to influence, a whole range of alternatives emerge.

Many say they want to show something positive about Africa. This was the most frequent explanation in the Swedish answers, while a majority of the Danish organisations said they want to convey a more nuanced or many-faceted image of Africa. Other aims were:

- To combat ignorance
- To eradicate negative stereotyping
- To counteract racism
- To increase tolerance
- To show that we are all part of one world
- To further fair trade practices
- To offer explanations and contexts
- To create direct contacts with Africans
- To tell about successful developments
- To show that there are local solutions and local knowledge, that Africa has its own resources
- To counteract the view of Africa as primitive
- To show what we can learn from Africa
- “To show that you can live a good life elsewhere and differently than in Finland”
- To show the richness of cultural life.

One question was: Do you think you have been successful? Those who said they had been unsuccessful explained this by poor or adverse media coverage, too few economic and staff resources, low interest in the surrounding community, and the tenacity of prejudice. Some claimed they could not change the public image because of their small size.

An interesting answer comes from Maailmankauppa (The Global Shop) in Helsinki, whose representative says that while they are successful because of a number of persons who faithfully support their activities, they have noted a considerable decrease in interest and eagerness to learn about Africa. Some customers
presuppose that the food items from Africa are non-hygienic. They trace these attitudes to the economic depression in Finland, the partly nasty debate about refugees, and the cuts in the assistance budget, all contributing to negative attitudes.

Let us conclude this survey of the survey on a positive note. Among those who said they had been successful the following reasons for the success were given:

- Committed participants
- The power of African music
- Media coverage
- Person-to-person links
- The existence of many skilful African handicraft producers
- The possibility to reach many teachers
- Long experience in organising.
ORGANISATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE SURVEY

We have up-dated the addresses changed since the survey where information has been available to us.

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NUFF Nybro U-lands & FN-förening
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2401 Elverum, Norge
Tel: +47-62413622
Fax: +47-62413042

Nordic Black Theatre
Postboks 4621 Sofienberg
0506 Oslo, Norge
Tel: +47-22-381262
Fax: +47-22-382397

Norges Røde Kors
Postboks 6875 St. Olavs plass
0130 Oslo, Norge
Tel: +47-22-943030
Fax: +47-22-206840

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Postboks 220 Sentrum (Dronningens gate 10)
0103 Oslo, Norge
Tel: +47-22-333053
Tel: +47-22-333051

Rikskonsertene
Postboks 7613, Skillebekk
0205 Oslo, Norge
Tel: +47-22-838350
Fax: +47-22-831610

Vennskapsforeningen Bergen-Beira
Gårbitz gate
5035 Bergen-Sandviken, Norge
Tel: +47-55-317292
Fax: +47-55-317292

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Fax: +47-22-362280
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Tel: +45-42-353444 (dag) 42-371387 (kväll)
Fax: +45-42-351410

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Telegrafvej 5
2750 Ballerup, Danmark
Tel: +45-44-681466,
Fax: +45-44-681403

Dansk Afrika Center (DAC)
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Tel: +45-98-430475

Dansk AFS
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Fax: +45-38-346600

Dansk Børnefond
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4640 Faxe, Danmark
Tel: +45-53-710078
Fax: +45-53-710130

DAPAMDA - Danish Association for
Promotion of African Music, Drama & Art
Nørrebrogade 13, 1th
2200 København K, Danmark
Tel: +45-35-362009
Fax: +45-31-351196

DGI Idratsorganisation
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Fax: +45-79-404080

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Tel: +45-33-925512,
Fax: +45-33-925524

Foreningen Butik Salam
 Østre Stationsvej 48

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Fremtidsskovenu
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Fax: +45-31-100110

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Tel: +45-86-132994
Fax: +45-86-413617

Images of Africa
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Tel: +45-33-151564
Fax: +45-33-328182

Mellomfolkligt Samvirke
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Tel: +45-33-326244
Fax: +45-33-156243

Morsø U-landsforening
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Tel: +45-97-724800
Fax: +45-97-720780

Sudanmissionen
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6070 Christiansfeld, Danmark
Tel: +45-7456-2333
Fax: +45-7456-1334

Utamaduni Dance Troupe
Emmelev Krævej 9
8500 Grenå, Danmark
Tel: +45-86-387292
Fax: +45-86-387292

Venskabsforeningen Danmark - Burkina Faso
Overdrevet 3
8382 Hinnerup, Danmark
Tel: +45-86-912104
Fax: +45-86-912104
MAGAZINES

Fredskorpsforum.
A quarterly magazine published by Norsk Fredskorpssamband.
Address: Postboks 220 Sentrum, 0103 Oslo, Norway. Tel 22 33 30 53, Fax: 22 33 30 51.

Kehitys/Utveckling
Finnida’s quarterly magazine.
Address: Katajanokanlaituri 3, 00160 Helsinki, Finland Fax 9-1341 675. Tel. (to the chief editor) 9-1341 6350 or (to the other editors) 9-1341 6348.

Kontakt: internationalt magasin
Eight issues by the year published by Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke.
Address: Borgegade 14, 1300 København, Denmark. Tel: 33 32 62 44, Fax: 33 15 62 43

Kumppani.
A quarterly magazine published by Kepa, Kehitysyhteistyön palvelukeskus (the service centre for development co-operation), whose members are a large number of the Finnish NGOs involved in development projects and information).
Address: Fredrikinkatu 63 A, 00100 Helsinki. Tel. 9-694 4233. To the chief editor: 9-694 2745, fax 9-694 1786.

Maailmanpyörä.
A quarterly magazine published by the Finnish UN league (Suomen YK-Liitto).
Address: Unioninkatu 45 B, 00170 Helsinki. Tel. 9-135 1402 or 135 1747. Fax. 9-135 2173.

MoniTori.
A quarterly published by the refugee division of the Finnish Ministry for Social Affairs and Health.
Address: PL 267, 00171 Helsinki. Tel. (exchange) 9-1601. Fax. 9-160 3826.

Syd.
A quarterly published since 1995 by Forum Syd.
Address: Box 17510, 118 91 Stockholm, Sweden. Tel. 08-702 77 00, Fax 08-702 90 99.

Tredje verden magasinet X.
Six issues by the year produced as an independent magazine jointly sponsored by the Latin-Amerika gruppene i Norge, Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpesfond (SAIH) and Fellesrådet for Afrika.
Sources to NGOs

Sweden:

Finland:

Norway:

Denmark:
Country origin of the cultural elements in the survey
(Regional division based on the OECD Macrothesaurus)

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<th>NGOs in</th>
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<td>North Africa</td>
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<td>Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)</td>
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<td>Zimbabwe</td>
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Note: S stands for Sweden, F for Finland, N for Norway, and D for Denmark.
Connotations with 'Africa' as assumed by the NGOs in the general public in the Nordic Countries

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
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<td><strong>NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS</strong></td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>Starvation, undernourished children</td>
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<td>War, unrest, instability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
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<td>Drought, water shortage</td>
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<td>Catastrophes, misery</td>
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<td>AIDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diseases</td>
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<td>Slums, primitive housing</td>
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<td>Ethnic conflicts, tribal war, civil war</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
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<td>Hopelessness, powerlessness</td>
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<td>Apartheid, race oppression, poor blacks/privileged whites</td>
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<td>Low literacy</td>
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<td>People needing aid</td>
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<td>Oppression, dictatorship</td>
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<td>Ignorance, stupidity</td>
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<td>Snakes</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL NUMBER OF REPLIES</strong></td>
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<td>(EACH WITH 1 TO 6 CONNOTATIONS)</td>
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Note: S stands for Sweden, F for Finland, N for Norway, and D for Denmark.
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<th>F</th>
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<td>Animals, wildlife, safari</td>
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<td>Music, dance, rhythms</td>
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<td>Beautiful nature</td>
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<td>ANC, Nelson Mandela</td>
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<td>Patience, endurance</td>
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<td>Joy of life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural variety</td>
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<td>Exoticism, colourfulness</td>
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<td>Intensity</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
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| NEUTRAL CONNOTATIONS                   |    |    |    |    |
| Tribes, blacks                         | 4  | 5  | 1  |    |
| Countryside                            | 3  |    | 1  |    |
| Huts, primitive buildings              | 1  | 1  |    |    |
| Heat, sun                              | 1  | 9  | 2  | 2  |
| Aid, development projects              | 3  | 1  |    |    |
| Desert, sand                           | 2  | 1  | 1  |    |
| Savannah                               | 1  |    |    |    |
| "The Tarzan jungle"                    | 1  |    |    |    |
| Bananas                                |    |    |    | 1  |
| **Sum neutral connotations**           | 12 | 20 | 3  | 6  |
| **TOTAL NUMBER OF REPLIES** (EACH WITH 1 TO 6 CONNOTATIONS) | 31 | 23 | 10 | 14 |

Note: S stands for Sweden, F for Finland, N for Norway, and D for Denmark.
This document is an analysis of how African culture is conveyed by Nordic non-governmental organisations, based on a survey conducted by the Nordic Africa Institute.

The Cultural Letters are published by the research-project "Cultural Images in and of Africa". This is one of the research projects at the Nordic Institute of African Studies, a research and documentation centre on contemporary African development. Coordinator of the cultural project is Mai Palmberg.

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