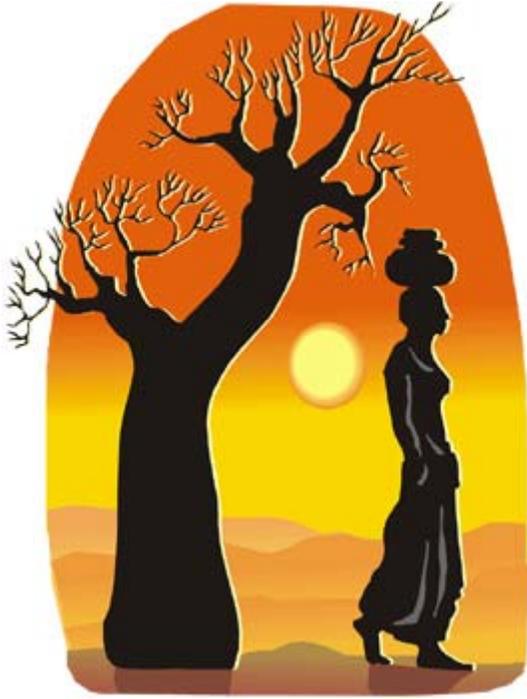


The People of Africa

Africa is a huge continent and has more independent countries in it than any other continent, over 50 countries. Since Africa extends thousands of miles from north to south and much of Africa sits on the equator, there is great variety in the climate and vegetation across the continent. All of these things influence the culture of people living in Africa. Unfortunately Africa is the world's poorest region and this



has a great impact on how the people of Africa live. Most people live in poor rural areas without roads connecting the villages and no electricity or clean water. Rural people who move to the cities to look for work end up living in terrible slums.

The cultures of Africa can be divided into North Africa and Africa south of the Sahara Desert. North Africa borders the Mediterranean Sea and these Africans, like those in Egypt, traded with Greeks, Romans and others thousands of years ago using the Mediterranean Sea for transportation of goods. Many of these people speak Arabic and share the ethnic and

religious heritage of the Mediterranean area.

Africa is home to a large number of tribal people. To give an idea of the diversity of African people, there are over 2,000 languages spoken by the people living there. For example, Nigeria has 500 languages and Ethiopia has 80. Africa also has many people of European descent who migrated there during the period of colonization. European countries colonized Africa like they colonized North and South America. But the countries of Africa did not receive their independence until the late 1900s. Namibia became independent in 1990 and Eritrea in 1993. The Europeans divided Africa into countries without considering old tribal territories and rival tribes continue to fight amongst each other. The people of Africa face many difficult problems to provide healthcare, education and a decent way of life for themselves and their children.