

**SUPPORT TO THE EFFECTIVE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF 2003  
CONVENTION**  
*For The*  
**SAFEGUARDING OF INTANGIBLE  
CULTURAL HERITAGE IN NIGERIA**

**PARTNERS:**



Intangible  
Cultural  
Heritage

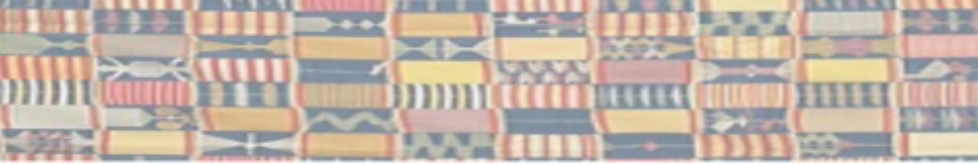


**JAPAN**

Official Development Assistance



**SUPPORTED BY JAPANESE FUNDS-IN-TRUST TO UNESCO**



## BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

**T**he purposes of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003 are:

- (a) to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage;
- (b) to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned;
- (c) to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof;
- (d) to provide for international co-operation and assistance.

Intangible Cultural Heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills - as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith - that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

Intangible Cultural Heritage as defined above, is manifested inter alia in the following domains:

- (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;





- (b) performing arts;
- (c) social practices, rituals and festive events;
- (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- (e) traditional craftsmanship.

Like many other countries, Nigeria with a population of over 160 million people has recognized the importance of culture for sustainable development. This recognition is reflected in Nigeria's ratification in 2005 of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003 which is explicit about the benefits of living heritage for sustainable development and the role it can play for social cohesion and mutual understanding. With over 250 ethnic groups and over 500 languages, Nigeria is home to many and diverse cultural expressions and practices that are important for the identity and continuity of its numerous communities.

Nigeria actively participated in the preparation of the 2003 Convention, and has been elected twice to serve on its Intergovernmental Committee (2006 – 2008 and 2012 – 2016). Since 2013, the country has also been a member of the Subsidiary Body in charge of evaluating the nomination files submitted by States Parties for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Despite its various commitments and initiatives, Nigeria has encountered a series of challenges relating to the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). The obstacles are related to the inadequacy of legal and institutional frameworks, lack of funding, weak co-ordination amongst



institutions, and lack of sufficient expertise in the field of intangible cultural heritage and understanding of the scope and mechanism of the 2003 Convention. The large number of communities in Nigeria is the reason any capacity building efforts cannot cover the whole country at once; hence the need to plan and concentrate first on a selected number of communities, with a view to allowing further replication in other areas in order to ensure sustainability and coherence across the country. In addition, adequate institutional mechanisms need to be developed at the national level together with legal and policy frameworks to support and facilitate the efforts of communities to safeguard their Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).

## DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The project is designed to achieve the following overall objectives:

- To contribute to sustainable development in Nigeria through the effective implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, recognizing the importance of living heritage as a mainspring of cultural diversity and human creativity.
- To promote better visibility of Intangible Cultural Heritage, awareness of its significance and functions in society, and mutual respect for the heritage of others, thereby bringing human beings closer together and ensuring exchange and understanding among them by fostering cultural diversity, inter-cultural dialogue and a culture of peace.





## IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES

- i) To assist beneficiary countries to meet their national obligations under the 2003 Convention, in particular with regard to policy and legal frameworks.
- ii) To build a critical mass of national capacity, both in government institutions and in communities, that the beneficiary country will have a sustainable framework for inventory-making and other safeguarding measures.
- iii) To assist Nigeria to benefit from the mechanisms of international co-operation established by the Convention, including International Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

The project aims to achieve the following results:

- a) A sustainable institutional mechanism for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage with adequate policy and legal frameworks developed;
- b) An inventory methodology and mechanism tailored to the needs of Nigeria, established and tested with the participation of communities in Cross River, Niger and Oyo States;
- c) Increased capacity for Nigeria to benefit from the intergovernmental mechanism of the 2003 Convention such as inscription of elements of intangible cultural heritage on the Lists and the International Assistance requests through the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund.



## THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT

**T**he project intends to enable an integrated capacity-building strategy that will systematically cover the core concepts of the Convention and provide the country with a thorough understanding of its obligations at the national level, and a substantial knowledge of the mechanisms of international co-operation established by the Convention. The project will help demonstrate to government officials and stakeholders how implementation of the Convention can be done in practice; including undertaking such activities as policy development, community-based inventorying, enhancing capacities to request international assistance and to elaborate nomination files for the Lists of the Convention. The revival of the National Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage shall also serve to ensure the sustainability of the expected results beyond the completion of the project planned to be conducted over a substantial period of 36 months. This integrated capacity-building strategy to be utilized in Cross River, Niger and Oyo States respectively would have a real and lasting impact and equip Nigeria with human resources and technical know-how necessary to continue the implementation of the Convention effectively.





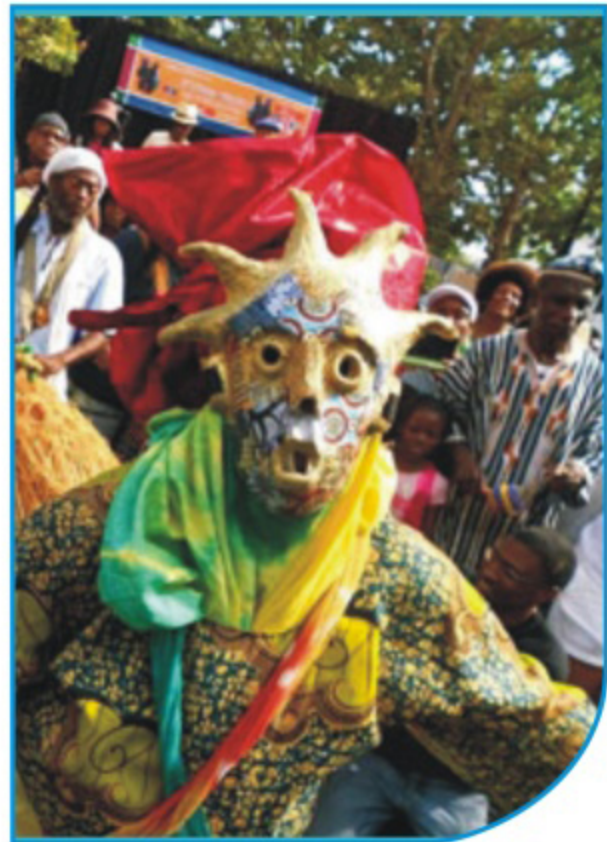
## Elements Nigeria has on Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity



← *Ifa Divination System*  
(2008)

*Oral Heritage of Gelede*  
(a Multinational nomination  
by Nigeria, Togo and  
Benin, 2008)

*Ijele Masquerade* (2009).





It is therefore the responsibility of the Culture Sector to sensitize Nigerians on the importance of the know-how, from which crafts and monuments are fashioned. Our unique cultures must not be lost and that is why we need to promote Arts and Culture in Nigeria, even as it will help to diversify the Nigerian economy from crude oil to a culture based economy. When Artists, Master Craftsmen and other 'Living Libraries' gain official recognition and support, better care can be taken to ensure the transfer of their skills and other techniques to the next generation.





## ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LIVING HUMAN TREASURES SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

The National Committee on Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage evaluated all the nominees that were presented from all parts of the country as potential Living Human Treasures Awardees and the following individuals were proclaimed in 2007. Below is the list of the Awardees and their areas of expertise:

### *Traditional Craftsmanship*

- **Wushibwawyi Byibangbe - Pottery**
- **Prof. Bruce Onobrakpeya - Printmaking**
- **Alhaji Hamidu Uba Zango - Textile Dyeing**
- **Prof. Lamidi Fakeye - Traditional Carving**



## Performing Arts

- Mr Chieze Okwa (Ijele Masquerade Troupe)  
**Master Masquerade**
- Sir Vincent Nwachi - **Choreographer**

## Oral Traditions And Expressions

- Alhaji Adamu Waya Danmaraya Jos  
**Traditional Music**
- Baba Ogundare Foyanmu  
**Traditional Music**





## *Knowledge and Practices Concerning Nature and the Universe*

- **Mallam Homa Aliyu Danwal Argungu**  
**Custodian of Argungu Fishing Festival**

## *Social Practices, Ritual and Festive Events*

- **Ekpe Masquerade - Troupe**



Nigeria has also submitted the following nominations for likely inscription into the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:



Eyo Masquerade Festival (Lagos State)



Argungu International Fishing Festival (Kebbi State)



Ekpe Masquerade (Cross Rivers State)



Kwagh - Hir Puppetry Theatre (Benue State)



Ijala, Hunters' Poetry (South-West)






## THE PRACTITIONERS AND COMMUNITIES

Intangible Cultural Heritage belongs to the individuals, practitioners, groups and various communities where it is in existence. These practitioners and communities play a prominent role in the sustenance and revitalization of this heritage from generation to generation. It is therefore important for custodians of Intangible Cultural Heritage to partner effectively and efficiently with all stakeholders towards ensuring full and proper institutionalization of this activity nationally.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Recognizing the importance of living heritage as a mainspring of cultural diversity and human creativity, the expectations are that this project would contribute to sustainable development, engender peace and mutual understanding through the effective domestication/ implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Nigeria.



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