

EXPERT MEETING

ON INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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MUSIC FOR PEACE

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Introduction:

The Sudan, a country in the heart of Africa, is characterized by its striking size and diversity. Ethnic and linguistic diversity is quite remarkable. Associated with these characteristics is its geographic heterogeneity, which has a direct influence over the economic, social, political and cultural aspects of these ethnic and linguistic groups. In Sudan there is a high degree of mobility related to the utilization of the environment resulting in contacts and often conflicts among these groups due to competition over the natural resources. This mobility has recently been enhanced by the civil war in the South, the East, the Blue Nile, the *Nuba Mountains*, and *Dar Fur*, and also by natural disasters like draught and desertification.

Music in Sudan is also diverse. However, music can be looked at as a unifying element that is capable of recruiting the benefits of Sudan integrity. This degree of unity is particularly manifested in the *anhemitonic* pentatonic pattern of scale, which characterizes most of the musical culture of the different groups in the country. *MUSIC FOR PEACE* is a proposed project which can give voice to peace, compassion and hope, by sharing *MUSIC*, collected from different areas of Sudan and recorded on audio cassettes to be distributed freely among the target groups at schools and universities in conflicted areas; videos to be shown in-order to educate and inform children and youth how Sudan is rich and diverse in culture; Joined live musical performances from these diverse cultures to be conducted to bring the conflicting communities together; and peace speeches and discussions to be organized within the context of these conducted musical performance, in order to create peace advocators among youth and children. By doing so we hope that we can reveal surprising solutions to common conflicts in homes, schools, universities and communities and educate these people in issues pertaining to culture and peace through the magic of music, and prevent such communities from further security deterioration.

Justification:

To keep the intangible cultures vivid and alive is part of the promotion of human rights and democracy which is a noble objective that can be shared by all human beings around the world, but the ways to achieve such an objective can vary according to local - indigenous circumstances and cultural differences. Yet it is difficult to achieve such an objective and reinforce sustainable development in areas where war and ethnic conflict are pending. We think that in such cases, peace and community integration are regarded as a priority. But peace is an issue that can be tackled and looked at from different perspectives. We hope that our proposed *MUSIC FOR PEACE* project will be one of the successful devices in this direction.

At war time children have been abused and many of them were forced to carry guns and became fighters. The Sudanese have used music and other folkloric genres intensively to mobilize youth, who left their classes, for fighting (*Aghāni al-Jihād: Jihād¹ Songs and Aghāni al-Hakkāmāt*). This has been looked at negatively by many folklore scholars as the genesis of folk consciousness being political-ideological and primarily manifested in this way. But "it is not logical to assume that because something has been done 'very badly', it can not be done well"². We think that it is high time now to apply the same tool again, which has a tremendous effect on the masses, specifically youth and children, to call for peace and stability instead of war and disaster.

You can inform people about their rights and duties using different methods of education, but the most efficient method that has ever been used in such cases in Sudan where the percentage of illiterate citizens may exceed 70%, is through music. This fact has been discovered earlier by the Sufi leaders who adopted musical performances to conduct their *Dhikir³* and *Madih⁴* to attract their followers. The procedure succeeded in the wide spread of the so called "Public Islam"⁵, as virus Orthodox Islam, in Africa generally and also in Sudan specifically where the Sufi followers number in millions.

The *Hakkāma* or *Shakkāra*, a female singer who uses words to steer the community in whatever direction the moment calls for, and the *Haddāy*, a bard who composes and improvises songs, accompanied by a one stringed fiddle known locally as "*Um kiki*", both have the role of inspiring members of the group to go to war in defense of themselves against invaders or aggressors. In traditional communities a song, and in some cases a proverb or any other oral literature, can convey a message that other methods cannot begin to convey.

"If a child or a young man attends a festival of historical significance, the historical information wrapped up in this festival will not be passed down to him in a drab lesson, but in the form of a song, to which he acts as a chorus, or as a dance in which he participates, or as a dramatized folktale that captures all his senses. When he grows up, he sings, dances, and acts the history of his people"⁶.

In such societies it is almost impossible for any individual to avoid music practice in any daily activity.

"The leader of any musical performance, especially a ritual expert who is also a performer of some sort, is very conscious of the correlation between items of the song repertoire and different stages of ritual and worship. ...Music is important because the gods are sensitive to it and sometimes ask for certain songs to be sung for them"⁷.

The binary relation between the performer and the audience, who is at the same time an active participant, enables the whole community to integrate in the process of musical creativity. This characteristic of African musical culture give rise to a number of distinctive artistically expressions, such as the linear musical structure known as the '*hocket-technique⁸*', the cross rhythms, and the poly rhythms. These group musical expressions minimized the role of the individual musician in the society, and consequently, the desire for musical professionalism does become of less importance. What one can say through music cannot always be said by word of mouth. Expressions of grief, Liberties that may be allowed, relative emphasis given

to individual status and interpersonal relationships, and even societal status are all different in a musical context than else where.

Targeted groups:

Accordingly, messages of peace that include commendation of individuals who interact with and help others, respect the beliefs and cultural identities of others, and even share water, food and shelter with others will have a positive impact on the group that we are targeting: Hundreds of children at schools and youth at the universities both in conflicted areas can be taught and educated in peace issues through audio-visual formats prepared specifically for this purpose. Also hundreds of community leaders and members in targeted areas can be encouraged to participate in joint musical performances where they can deliver speeches of peace and enjoy each other's cultural and musical variations.

Implementing body's abilities:

Such an activity can be implemented by the Traditional Music Archive, *TRAMA*, which is an affiliate of the institute of African and Asian Studies that becomes a famous documentation center locally, regionally and globally. Its well trained staff has established good rapport with most of the music makers in Sudan, and it has access to most community leaders in the areas where it has collected its musical data. For all the previous reasons we expect a good collaboration from the local officials, the community leaders, the musicians, the local universities, the schools staff, and the public.

TRAMA, beside its local relations, is an active participant in many regional and internationally relevant organizations: the international African Centre for Music and Dance, Ghana; the Cultural African Network, South Africa; the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives, *IASA*; the International Council for Traditional Music, *ICTM*; and the Society of Ethnomusicology, Indiana. It has also good relations with: the American Institute for Indian Studies, Delhi; the Ethnologisches Museum, Phonogramm-Archive, Berlin; and the Department of Folklore, Indiana University, USA.

Proposed program:

The program can start with children and youth at schools and universities because peace begins with them. It is our children and youth who may experience conflict and/or violence at a very young age - in their home, community, school or university environment. It is also our children and youth who will lead future generations to either achieve a world of peace, or a world of violence.

Then we move to communities, as tolerance and understanding are dependent upon the dissemination of information which destroys myths of the 'other' as well as promotes recognition of commonality between communities. Through critical dialogue and collaborative activities, conflicting or divided cultural/ethnic/racial groups, communities are able to understand the root causes of their divisions, to cultivate respect of each other's beliefs and traditions, and to seek reconciliation or healing of differences which may often harbour deep and violent feelings of bitterness, enmity and revenge. In facilitating such intercultural respect and ties of solidarity we can build societal harmony.

Communities, children, and youth are all highly affected by what they read, view or listen to through the media. We need to educate a group of journalist to be peace advocates and encourage peace attitudes and behaviors through their media agents by making use of the magic of music.

Two thousands audio cassettes which include songs, proverbs, and story telling about peace and good social relations can be produced by *TRAMA* technical staff and distributed freely among the target groups. Such format is an easy-to- use tool and widely known by an ordinary layman and it can be used later by the community members, the local media, the schools, and the universities for a further call to peace to cover areas that our limited time project cannot cover.

At least sixty youth journalists selected from different media agents can be gathered in four technical workshops organized by *TRAMA* to discuss issues concerning the use of music for peace. Much present day journalism leaves out the most important part of the story -- how a conflict might be transcended. Besides reporting the immediate facts of a conflict, the task of the peace journalist is to look beyond the question of who wins, to how the situation might be gradually transformed. Focus on the violence, for instance, only serves to emphasize the underlying conflict and nourishes more violence. The peace journalist needs to report on those who are working to prevent further destruction by asking about their visions of conflict outcomes, their methods, and how they might be supported.

Methodology:

The method of applied folklore which will be adopted in this action is the most recent one. Folklorists at the beginning of the discipline engaged themselves with the issue of origin, diffusion and meaning of folklore. Later they gave attention to the problems of classification, form, structure and function of folklore. Recently folklorists are more concerned with the uses and applications of the findings which are resulting from the study of folklore⁹.

To apply folklore means to use it for a concrete problem needing to be solved; i.e. to put folklore genres in practical use in order to contribute to unify and mobilize the people who are found by it. Historically the social and political movements have often made use of this fact to gain internal unity and solidarity. "In the 1930's and 1940's leftist-wing social movement utilized the potential of folk traditions, especially music in urban areas to inculcate communist's ideologies such as class consciousness"¹⁰. The question which springs is this: if the application of folklore has been misused in the past, why shouldn't we use it correctly? No body is opposing the application of folklore as a matter of principle, but people may criticize the manner in which it has been applied.

These methods of implementation have been chosen in order to build the current action on previous action experiences. Musical data collection and editing, workshops, educational sessions and discussion meetings, live musical performances, field-work where interview and observation techniques are applied, and book editing and publication, have all been executed and practiced by *TRAMA* and *IAAS* for at least twenty years. Such a wide range of experience will help a lot in the success of our new experiment concerning applied folklore.

Expected impact on target groups:

To activate civil society associations to contribute in conflict resolution, the project will help them, in collaboration with the local universities, to establish similar action plan for youth depending at the beginning on our contribution and supervision. Such an activity will make this action vivid and continuous, and at the same time will enlarge the contribution of the academic institutions in community development and stability.

Educated youth journalists in peace and conflict resolution issues will be trained in how to conduct field trips to the intended areas in order to observe and interview reliable informants before they sit down and write their reports or broadcast their Radio/TV programs. Such articles and journalism programs should be built on reliable information and be a positive factor in conflict resolution.

The majority of the nowadays youth and university students have their own personal communication devices. The mobile telephone has the ability to convey written messages, musical tunes, and even in certain situations and specific technical capacity, part of a song to another person. The *MUSIC FOR PEACE* project can spare no effort in order to change the habit of at least some number of these students to convey messages about its objectives to each other. The project can help and supervise such groups to establish "Peace Music Associations" at their universities for the activity continuation.

Multiplier effects:

The issue of peace is a continuous one and highly needed anywhere and at any time. The issue of ethnic conflict is also a continuous headache to many countries, like Sudan, that are characterized by their striking size and diversity. The ability of music to bring people together and to reduce tension is a characteristic imbedded in the magic of music. The *MUSIC FOR PEACE* project can be designed in a way that makes it easy for replication and youth can gain a new knowledge that will help them create a positive behaviour resulting in building a new generation of good attitude and peaceful manner.

Short- and long-term impact

The *MUSIC for PEACE* project can be designed in such a manner that makes it partially self-dependant and has the ability to continue its activities when any grant or financial support does not exist. From the beginning the project can be designed not depending totally on such grants, and the proposed implementing agent, *TRAMA*, has its own infrastructures and technical resources and working facilities that can be improved to the degree that enable it to conduct at least 30% of such an activity. The proposed project also can educate and train youth to be active participants and advocators of peace through music in their communities. The efforts of these persons which they offer do not need any financial support because they are built on their own capacity and professionalism.

The academic courses at the folklore department of the *IAAS* include subjects on applied folklore and fieldwork methodology, a situation that can make its post-graduate students discuss the experience of the peace music project and write comments as part of their academic activities. This will

maximize the number of educated people in the subject matter and enforce the project and its continuity.

Connectivity is now one of the strongest tools of globalization. It can also be used successfully as a tool to serve local intentions, support stability and community integration. The idea of recorded musical data that promotes and encourages peaceful behavior and attitudes can be implemented by any body that can send such a message to another person through his own personal communication device. *TRAMA* through its on-going *music for peace* project can encourage individuals and supply them with essential data that will help them to connect with the 'other' in that manner. The idea can theoretically be passed to the youth at the university level, asking them to apply it and report on its feed back so as to be subjected to evaluation.

The students at the folklore department have a weekly regular forum, and many issues of Sudanese folklore are discussed in that forum as part of their academic activities. *TRAMA* is playing a major role in activating that forum by contributing in the dialogue and presenting articles. The issue of using applied folklore in conflict resolution can be one of the constant topics to be discussed annually with the newly registered students. The trained peace journalist can be asked to attend such discussions and convey the outcomes in their news papers or Radio/TV broadcasting corporations. Such an activity will keep these journalists and their agents in a continuous contact with the project, and makes the idea vivid.

Funding:

Since the end of the Ford Foundation funds in 2000, *TRAMA* is entirely dependent on the *IAAS* financial resources. The *IAAS* major financial resources are coming from the University of *Khartoum*, which is supported mainly by the central government. Since such resources are very limited, *TRAMA* has been keeping a low profile in the last three years and was participating or implementing a limited number of activities. Such a proposal can be submitted to interested funding agents, or to the UNESCO Intangible Heritage Section, who can be asked to cover the 80% of estimated budget, and the project can start with an initial period of two years.

Evaluation and Follow up:

The *TRAMA* implementing team will first depend on its management board for evaluation, where a semi-annual report can be delivered. Then an annual meeting can be held for *TRAMA* technical committee to monitor the annual activities that have been accomplished. At the same time the Folklore Department and the *IAAS* academic board can both be involved in the action evaluation. By the end of the project period, the University of *Khartoum* administrative body can be informed of the findings of the action.

This action is designed in a manner that allows many other bodies to be involved, especially in the regions where we conduct our field trips. Our pre-fieldwork preparations can be targeting regional universities, regional media, regional officials, and community leaders to ask them to be active participants in action organizations and implementation, because it is always impossible to implement such an activity without the help and support of the mentioned bodies.

Due to the wide support expected from the mentioned bodies in the areas or action's activities, the proposed team for the direct implementation of the action can be formed of: a Musicologist as researcher and coordinator, a Computer editor for visual sessions, and an audio technician for audio playing and recording. Other *TRAMA* committee and folklore department staff can assist and help the implementing team, at the same time; the project can make use of all the facilities available at the *IAAS* and the University of Khartoum.

¹ Jihad (جِهَاد) is an Islamic term, from the Arabic root jhd ("to exert utmost effort, to strive, struggle"), which connotes a wide range of meanings: anything from an inward spiritual struggle to attain perfect faith to a political or militant struggle to defend or further Islam. Jihad is repeatedly used in the context of Holy War by Islamic militants and some religious leaders throughout the Middle East: <http://www.yourart.com/research/encyclopedia.cgi?subject=/jihad>.

² David Hufford, in Sayyid H. Hurreiz (1986), *Studies in African Applied Folklore*, Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum, Khartoum, p. 15.

³ *Madih*: Prophetic Eulogy.

⁴ *Dhikir*: a Sufi ritual. A performance combining bodily movement with chant and drum beats.

⁵ See: J. Spencer Trimingham (1949), *Islam in the Sudan*, Frank Cass and company limited: London.

⁶ Sayyid H. Hurreiz (1986), *Op.Cit*, p.64.

⁷ J. H. Nketia (1988), "The Intensity Factor In African Music", *Journal of Folklore Research*, Vol. 25, No 1- 2, the Folklore Institute, Indiana University, p. 54.

⁸ Nketia, (1970), "The Musical Languages of Sub-Saharan Africa", a Meeting in Yaoundé: (Cameroon).

⁹ Hurreiz (1986), *Op.Cit*, p. 9.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 11.