Unit 49

Hand-out 8:

safeguarding action plan

***Safeguarding Action Plan for the Kayas of the Mijikenda (Kenya), inscribed on USL in 2009***

Between 2011 and 2013, the Kenyan Department of Culture worked in partnership with UNESCO Nairobi office, National Museums of Kenya (NMK), Coast Forest Conservation Unit (CFCU), Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Centre for Heritage Development in Africa (CHDA), local administrators and Kaya communities to develop and implement activities on a project for safeguarding the element.

The main elements of this Action Plan are set out below. You are asked to consider which areas present entry points for introducing more gender-responsive approaches to community participation in safeguarding ICH elements and what specific measures might be taken to achieve this.

#### Safeguarding Action Plan

**Project activities** **included**:

* Designing and initiating income-generating activities taking into account the specificities of each Mijikenda community and providing necessary equipment and expertise.
* Supporting traditional Kaya ceremonies and rituals enacted in the daily life of local communities around Kayas, including apprenticeship.
* Reviewing and integrating of information into the national inventory and holding a workshop for the Mijikenda communities to sensitize them on community inventorying.
* Distributing four thousand brochures in both English and Kiswahili to the community and other stakeholders to raise awareness about the project and disseminate information on Mijikenda traditions and practices.
* Organizing community cultural festivals, e.g. the Inter-community Cultural Festival held in 2012 at Kaya Rabai which showcased the diversity of traditional dances and cultural expressions of the Kaya traditional lifestyle, such as making makuti thatches, traditional foods and handcrafts.
* Organizing visits of elders, women and youth from three Kayas to each other to learn how they are progressing with projects and develop inter-cultural linkages, cooperation and networks for the promotion of activities related to the Kayas.
* Monitoring and evaluation activities at various levels.

**Results of the project**:

* Six out of the nine Mijikenda communities have received training for building capacity in project design and management.
* Income generating activities have been initiated (tree nurseries, bee keeping).
* Awareness raising among the community and other stakeholders and disseminating information on Mijikenda traditions and practices.
* Primary and secondary schoolchildren visited different Kayas to learn about the traditions and practices of the Mijikenda.
* Young members of the Mijikenda community underwent apprenticeships to gain knowledge and understanding of the practices as future members of the Council of Elders, e.g. conducting ceremonies and rituals in 2013 aimed at inducting ten young members.
* An inter-community cultural festival comprising of Kayas Rabai, Kauma and Duruma held.
* Exchanges of experiences and challenges in safeguarding the element and implementing the project between three Kayas.
* Continued enactment of the traditions and practices by Kaya communities is now becoming sustainable.

**Community participation in the project:**

The project’s activities have provided the Mijikenda communities with skills, knowledge and resources and contributed effectively in promoting transmission and viability of the element. They have also greatly improved the self-esteem and identification of the local people and awoken youth interest on the traditions and practices associated with the sacred forests of the Mijikenda. The following have been identified as important local actors/stakeholders in this:

The Council of Elders transmits knowledge about the traditions and practices to the young generation through apprenticeship. The County administration recognizes the role of the Councils of Elders and involves them in consultations pertaining to security and socio-cultural issues affecting the Mijikenda. The Councils of Elders contribute towards: a fused traditional-modern system of governance for property rights and allocation of resources; prevention and resolution of conflicts; and participation in decision-making process.

Kaya conservation groups have been involved in replanting trees in the Kayas and developing codes of conduct in the management of the Kayas and enforcing customary practices governing access to the element.

Women’s groups have been undertaking different activities for safeguarding of the element and have made visits to other kayas to share information and experience.

Youth groups have been undertaking different activities for safeguarding of the element and have made visits to other kayas to share information and experience. Since many of the elders are ageing, most Kayas have started recruiting young and energetic Elders for continued transmission of the element.