



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Intangible
Cultural
Heritage



The Republic of Uganda



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REPORT OF THE PROJECT ON INVENTORYING THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN FOUR COMMUNITIES IN UGANDA

1.0 Introduction

This is a progress report covering the period of August 2013 to January 2014. During this period, various activities were implemented covering community consultations, procurement of the equipment for inventorying ICH in four communities, meetings of the project management committee, development of the National Strategy on inventorying Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and conducting National capacity building for the trainer of trainers.

1.1 Background of the Project

Uganda ratified the 2003 UNESCO Convention on the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage in 2009. Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is defined as the practices, the expressions, the knowledge, skills, instruments, representations that communities recognize as their cultural heritage.

Article 11 and 12 of the Convention mandates State Parties to carry out inventorying of the intangible cultural heritage in a manner geared to its own situation. It is now four years since Uganda ratified the Convention. With financial assistance from UNESCO, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in partnership with Uganda National Commission for UNESCO is implementing a project entitled "*inventorying of the intangible cultural heritage in four communities in Uganda*". This project focuses on inventorying ICH of the Alur community in Nebbi District, the Alur of Nebbi District, Acholi of Gulu district and the Basongora of Kasese district. The project shall be for a period of 19 months August 2013 - February 2015.

In the spirit of the Convention that seeks to promote ownership and enjoyment of ICH, emphasis is put on the widest involvement and participation of communities in the safeguarding of their ICH. Though communities were involved in the initial stages of the development of the intervention, the project also emphasized more consultations of the same communities to ensure that they are fully involved at all stages of implementation.

2.0 IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES

2.1 Project management committee Meetings

Establishment of the PMC

The project management Committee (PMC) was established on August 16 2013. It is comprised of 14 members as indicated below.

1. Four Local Coordinators,(Gulu theatre artists, Nebbi Cultural troupe, Busongora Cultural trust and Ik Development Agenda Initiative)
2. Four District Culture Officers, (Nebbi, Gulu, Kasese and Kaabong)

3. One from Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities
4. One from Ministry of Education and Sports
5. One from National Curriculum development centre
6. One from Uganda National Commission for UNESCO
7. Two from Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

The project management committee was established to manage the project and give support in the overall implementation and to ensure that participation of all stakeholders is realized. Since the project implementation started, 4 meetings of the PMC have been conducted as planned and this has helped to not only keep the implementation on course, but also making sure that all relevant sectors are informed, involved and participating for effective implementation and sustainability of the project.

Notable among the key issues fronted by the PMC include the following as presented below.

- i. Guided on avoiding political interference which would otherwise have negatively impacted on the project success. As a result presentations on the project were made to District Councils and other politicians in the participating Districts and communities to help them understand the project and solicit for their support to the project. As a result District Councils were brought on board and their understanding of the project and support has contributed tremendously in the smooth implementation so far.
- ii. It was also agreed that sustained efforts be made to enhance the understanding the project and intangible cultural heritage at all levels. This has seen efforts being directed to schools and churches. In effect teachers, the religious leaders and school children have been brought on board hence making them aware of the project, appreciate culture and the need and responsibility of safeguarding of intangible heritage.
- iii. Community participation has been promoted at all levels. All stakeholders have been mobilized including the traditional bearers, custodians of culture, the women and the youths.
- iv. For sustainability purposes and scaling up of the project, the PMC made recommendations to Local governments in the participating Districts to mainstream culture in their plans and particularly focus on Safeguarding ICH. As a result of this, Local governments have started on this process and allocation of funds for ICH safeguarding will be reflected in the budget of the subsequent work plans in the coming Financial Year. of now, District should prioritize cultural activities
- v. Media partnerships have been established in three of the participating Districts. This has helped in the dissemination of information on the project and safeguarding of ICH in general to a wider community beyond the project targeted communities.

- vi. Members observed, agreed and they have made it a practice to ensure effective reporting. Each member therefore reports to their respective institutions and also shares those reports with the staff of their respective institutions. This has helped to a number of key policy makers appreciate the need to put in place comprehensive mechanisms of safeguarding ICH through education, inclusion of aspects in the curriculum and making the school children and their teachers involved.



The 3rdPMC meeting in session, November, 2013 at Ridar Hotel Mukono- Uganda

2.2 Procurement of Project Equipment

To facilitate the inventorying funds were set aside to procure equipment. These equipment included:

1 desktop computer, 5 UP backups(APC 650VA), 4 Lab tops, 5 laser jet printer, 12 Digital cameras, 12 Handheld recorders, 12 Microphones and accessories, 4 Anti- Virus soft ware(AVG)

All these were procured as planned in October 2013 and used for the practical sessions both at the national and community training workshops from 19- 26 January 2014 at Esella Country Hotel. All these have been handed over to the four communities to facilitate the systematic inventorying of ICH in voice, in pictures and in video.

2.3 Community Consultations

In the spirit of the Convention that seeks to promote ownership and enjoyment of ICH, emphasis is put on the widest involvement and participation of communities in the safeguarding of their ICH. Though communities were involved in the initial stages of the development of this intervention, the project also emphasized more consultations of the same communities to ensure that they are fully involved at all stages of implementation.

Two rounds of consultations were carried out in September and October 2013 in all the four project area i.e. the Ike of Kamion sub-county, Kaabong District; The Alur of Nyaravur sub-county of Nebbi District, the Acholi of Gulu District, and the Basongora, of Nyakatonzi Sub county of Kasese District. The targeted groups for the consultation included the District Councilors, Technical Planning Committees, Social Services Committees, teachers and pupils in schools, religious leaders, traditional bearers of various ICH elements, Cultural leaders and the general community.

The purpose of the consultations was to raise awareness amongst the community on the importance of the intangible cultural heritage in the sense of the 2003 Convention; emphasize the roles and responsibilities of the communities in the safeguarding of ICH and consult communities on the methodology for inventorying the intangible cultural heritage with a view to developing a strategy for inventorying ICH in Uganda.

During the consultations, the linkage between the project and the Constitution of Uganda, the Uganda National Culture Policy and the Local Government Act which specify the role of culture in development and its promotion and preservation were discussed. Other issues included the clarification on the role of Council members, community representatives, traditional bearers and individual practitioners in the promotion, safeguarding and preservation of ICH. All districts pledged their involvement and support to the successful implementation of the project and its sustainability and rolling over to other communities and sub-counties.

The teachers, religious and cultural leaders appreciated the intervention and noted that a lot has been done in the past without necessarily knowing they were safeguarding ICH. They noted the urgent need to identify, define and safeguard ICH especially elements in danger before they disappear.

Community members also made contribution on the ways acceptable to them regarding the whole processes of inventorying ICH. Their proposals have since been incorporated in the methodology for inventorying as stipulated in the National Strategy on ICH inventorying.

Some Photos of community consultations in Nebbi



Some Photos of community consultations among the ik of Kaabong below



2.4 Developing the Strategy on Inventorying ICH

One of the key activities as per the work plan mainly focused on the establishment of a national strategy for inventorying intangible heritage in Uganda. A national expert was engaged to conduct a desk study on previous work undertaken in the field of intangible heritage in Uganda and in East Africa from August, 2013.

He conducted interviews in all the four participating communities and carried out desk literature review as methods employed for generating of relevant information to formulate a draft national strategy.

Several drafts of the strategy were produced and reviewed by key stakeholders for further improvement. A revised version was presented and discussed during the National Workshop on capacity building which took place from 19th- 26th January 2014. After all these process, a final version was approved by the Project Management Committee. 1000 copies of the strategy have been printed and distributed to various stakeholders including the community workers trained to inventory ICH of the four participating communities.

2.5 National Capacity building workshop

Another important activity implemented within the specified timeframe is the National Capacity building workshop for the trainers of trainers on inventorying Intangible cultural Heritage. A capacity building workshop was held for 20 people and ten other stakeholders who are involved in the promotion of culture for seven days. The twenty participants comprised of the participating institutions and Districts plus four culture officers from the four neighboring districts of the participating Districts. The Neighboring Districts were Maracha , Moroto , Bushenyi and Oyam. The workshop on inventorying Intangible Cultural Heritage comprised of both paper presentations and field work experience by the participants.



The seven-day National Capacity Building workshop was officially opened by **Hon. Rukia Nakadama**, the Minister of Gender, Labor and Social Development. Other remarks were received from the Secretary General UNATCOM- and **Ms Juliana Kuruhira**, the Commissioner Culture and Family Affairs. They all thanked the Government of Uganda, for ratifying the 2003 UNESCO convention on ICH and for safeguarding ICH in Uganda, and UNESCO for the continued technical and financial support towards the implementation of the 2003 ICH Convention.

The **Overall Objective** of the workshop was to build capacity of key implementers to safeguard ICH in Uganda and **specifically**: to raise awareness on the importance of ICH; to impart key skills to stakeholders on inventorying ICH in their respective communities; to carryout fieldwork on inventorying an ICH element; to train participants on the use of digital cameras and audio recorders for inventorying ICH.

The **Expected Outcomes** were participants being able to: *articulate the 2003 UNESCO Convention on safeguarding ICH; use digital cameras and audio recorders for inventorying the ICH; apply knowledge on the steps of inventorying; identify the ICH elements.*



The **methodology** for the workshop included four days of instructor-led training by subject matter specialists; two days of field work among the Buganda communities of Mukono district; and one day of end-of-workshop reviews interlaced with peer reviews and targeted group assignments.

Several thematic based issues were discussed during this workshop including the draft **Uganda National Strategy on Inventorying ICH** among others. Participants were taught practically how to design an inventory, the structure of an inventory, how to enter the community and how to use the cameras while in the field.



Participants at one of the field venues during the field work activities



Hon Minister of State Gender and Culture Affairs (centre in grey) after opening the National Workshop in Esella Country Hotel 20 January 2014

3.0 Challenges

- i. Accessibility of some project areas is a challenge due to impassable roads. The challenges is even greater during the rainy season

4.0 Conclusion

As much as these activities have been implemented within the period of accountability, other activities have been implemented namely, the 5th PMC, four community workshops. The field work to run from April – September 2014, in all the communities is on going.