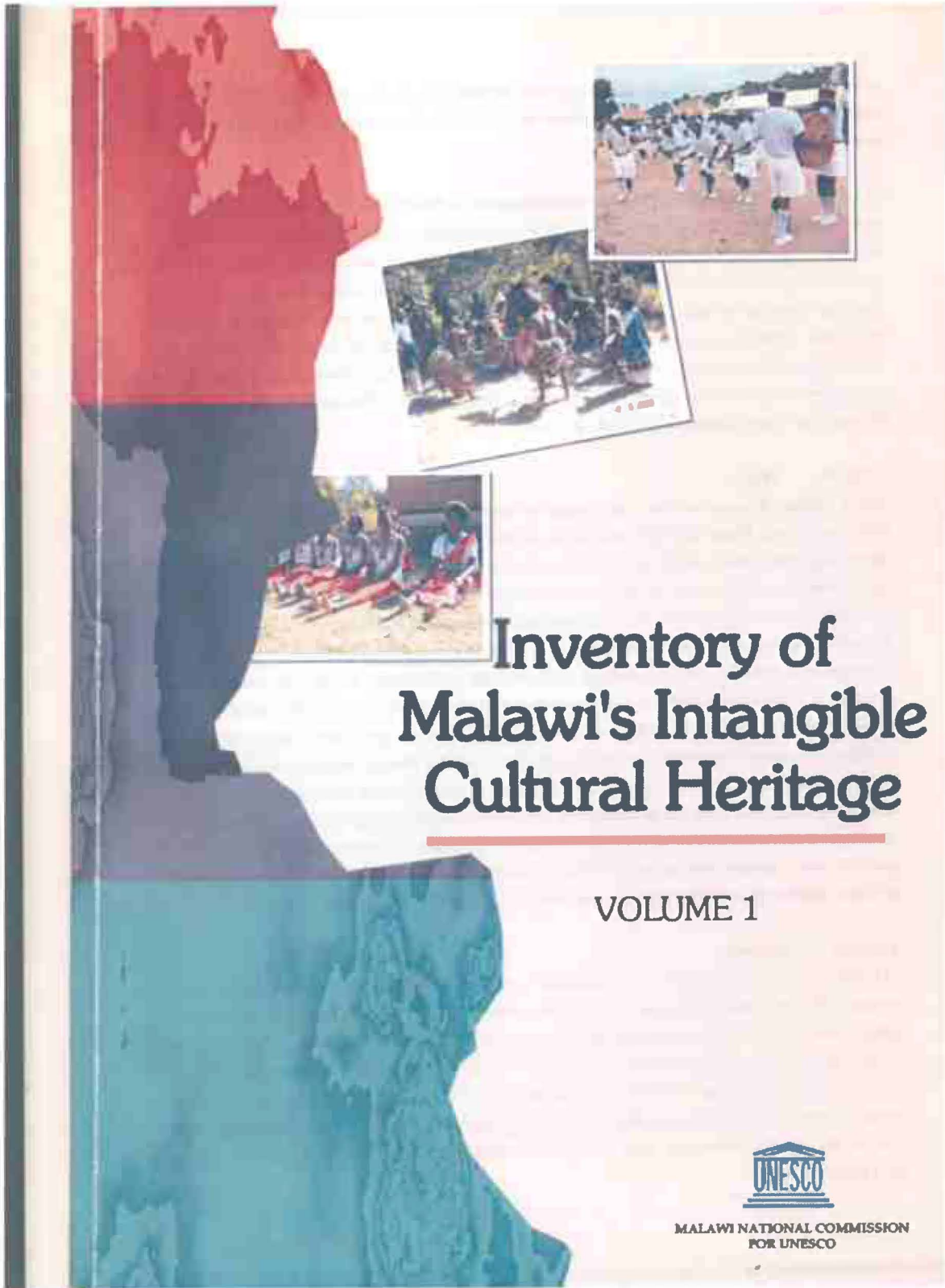


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Le 28 SEP. 2016  
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# Inventory of Malawi's Intangible Cultural Heritage

VOLUME 1



MALAWI NATIONAL COMMISSION  
FOR UNESCO

actual process of preparing beer consists of the fermentation of a thin gruel made of flour or maize bran with the help of malt (*Chimera*). The latter has also the function of sweetening the brew. Very large amounts are brewed each year.

During hoeing season, which is normally from November to March, beer parties are held continuously in most parts of the country. Beer is brewed for a variety of other reasons such as for mere pleasure of drinking and giving to one's friends, for work such as building hut or grain stores, for feasts or as tribute to the spirits of the ancestors or to the living, and most important of all for selling to enable the women earn cash. Beer can be made from flour of any of the cereals or from cassava. Malt can be made from any of the cereals but throughout the country finger millet is preferred for this purpose. The most commonly used beer is probably one made from maize flour with finger fillet as malt. There is another form of beer which is in the slightly fermented form. This is known as *Thobwa*. *Thobwa* is basically non-alcoholic and even children are allowed to partake.

#### 5.4.2.14 Nsima

This is traditional staple food for most people in Malawi and indeed all Bantu people which is made from maize meal. There are slight variations on how the food is prepared but the method most commonly used is that a pot is first half-filled with water and then it is put on the fire. When the water has warmed (not boiled), one or two handfuls of flour are added and well stirred in to make a thin porridge known as *Phala*. This is allowed to boil and thicken-up for about five to ten minutes. The bulk of the flour is now added a handful at a time, accompanied with vigorous stirring by means of the long porridge stick, (*Mthika*), until the mixture is of the right consistency. If *Phala* has previously been removed it is now added and this helps to ensure that the product is of suitably soft and smooth texture. The final consistency differs considerably from tribe to tribe, some preferring a harder product than others. The whole cooking process from the time that the water is added takes about twenty minutes but time varies depending on the amount of *Nsima* to be cooked. Serving of *Nsima* is done by dividing it out using a large wooden spoon known, as *Chipande*, into the food bowls or baskets. Its surface is very carefully rounded and smoothed over by means of a wetted spoon and immediately covered with a second bowl or basket. *Nsima*, if well prepared, is almost tasteless and of a slightly granular consistency. It is taken together with *Ndiwo* (food used for the side dish).

#### 5.4.2.15 Nsomba

This refers to fish and a great variety is available in the lake but only a few kinds are caught in large amounts. The most commonly eaten are the many different kinds of *Tilapia* species, *Chamba*; *Clarias* species, *Milamba*; while other common kinds are *Sanjika* and *Mpasa* both species of *Barilius*, *Ntchile* (*Labeo* spp.), *Kampango* (*Bagrus* spp) and the small fish known collectively as *Matemba* or the still smaller whitebait-like *Usipa*. Fresh fish are boiled till very soft leaving sufficient liquor to serve as gravy (*Msuzi*). When fish is caught in abundance some of it is smoked, or dried and is taken to villages in the rest of the country. There is a body of traditional knowledge associated with different ways of preparing *Nsomba*.

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MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CULTURE



MALAWI NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

INVENTORY OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF MALAWI

VOLUME 2



September 2012 – April 2013

## 2.8 Sukwa and Chewa Communities, Chitipa and Kasungu Districts

### 2.8.1 Ukupiya Ubughali/Kuphika Nsima

#### IDENTIFICATION OF THE ELEMENT:

**Name of the element as used by the community, groups or individuals concerned:** Ukupiya Ubughali/Kuphika Nsima

**Short informative Title:** Preparation of Ubughali/Nsima, the Dietary Tradition of the Sukwa of Northern Region and Chewa of Central Region of Malawi

**Community (ies) concerned:** Sukwa

**Physical location(s) of element(s):** South of Chitipa District, Northern Region of Malawi and North of Kasungu District, Central Region of Malawi

**Short description:** To prepare Ubughali/Nsima, gather maize flour, a pot, a cooking stick, plates, serving spoon, water and fire. We put a pot of water on the fire and let it boil. Thereafter, add handfuls of maize flour whilst stirring until the mixture becomes porridge. Let the porridge boil further for some time. When the porridge has boiled enough, add handfuls of maize flour while stirring until the porridge thickens to one likes. It is then served in plates and taken together with the relish.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ELEMENT:

**Associated Tangible Elements (if any):** Fire/heat, water, pots, maize flour, steering stick, serving spoon.

**Associated Intangible Elements (if any):** Knowledge of preparation of Ubughali/Nsima, Chisukwa and Chichewa languages used in instructions on its preparation

**Language(s) involved:** Chisukwa and Chichewa languages.

**Perceived origin:** It is perceived that the knowledge originated from within the Sukwa and Chewa communities and passed on through generations.

#### PERSONS AND INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED WITH THE ELEMENTS:

**Practitioners, performers:** Sukwa and Chewa households

**Names:** Tamala Kayuni, Joyce Mazibuko

**Ages:** from 12 years upwards

**Gender:** Men and women

**Social status:** married or single

**Professional category:** culinary

**Other participants:** na

**Customary practices governing access to the elements or to aspects of it:** There are no limitations to access.

**Modes of transmission:** The culinary traditional knowledge is transmitted within the community through participation and observation during meal times and other occasions.

**Concerned Organizations:** Department of Nutrition, Office of President and Cabinet

#### STATE OF THE ELEMENT:

**Threats to the element:** The introduction of new and diverse dietary recipes is providing a wider range of choices of foods and the demands on a modern working household is making people prepare and take less and less of Ubughali/Nsima particularly in urban areas.

**Threats to transmission:** Young generations are more interested in the contemporary recipes than the traditional ones.

**Availability of associated tangible elements and resources:** Associated tangible elements are readily available in stores and in villages.

**Viability of associated intangible elements:** The knowledge of preparing Ubughali is still relevant today as households still take Ubughali/Nsima as staple diet in most Sukwa and Chewa households.

**Safeguarding measures:** Continued practice is the best safeguarding measure for this element. Households still take Ubughali/Nsima as staple diet in most Sukwa and Chewa households. Children are taught informally in the households on how to prepare the staple diet. The tradition is also taught in formal education system at tertiary level.

**DATA GATHERING AND INVENTORY:**

**Involvement of the Community/Groups in, and consent for data gathering and inventorying:** Tamala Kayuni of Kapoka 1. Village Headman Mwenemisuku, Chitipa and Joyce J.B.O Mazibuko participated in interviews for the inventory. Consent for data gathering was provided by Chief Mwenemisuku and Sub Traditional Authority Mphomwa. Anthony Simovwe, a Bandy himself was a member of the data gathering team and Lovemore Mazibuko, a Chewa himself, was a member of the data gathering team.

**Restrictions, if any, on use of inventoried data:** None

**Date and place of data gathering:** 27 January, 2013

**Date of entering data into an inventory:** 2 April, 2013

**The inventorying entry compiled by:** Christopher Magomelo, Harrison Simfukwe and Lovemore Mazibuko

**REFERENCE TO THE LITERATURE AND VISUAL MATERIAL ARCHIVES:**

Pictures



Pic. No.1. Green maize in the garden



Pic. No.2. Maize cob after harvesting



Pic. No.3. Maize flour



Pic. No.4: Cooking Ubughali/Nsima



Pic. No.5: Human treasure Tamala Kayuni serving Ubughali



Pic. No.6: Ubughali/Nsima and accompaniments



Pic. No.7: Eating Ubughali/Nsima is a communal tradition