

Title:

Documenting Intangible Cultural Heritage in Zambia: A Case of Lusaka National Museum

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INTRODUCTION

Intangible Cultural Heritage(ICH) 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. ICH is manifested inter alia in such domains like oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe and traditional craftsmanship.

Zambia is a multi- cultural and ethnic society with a rich cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible that is shared among the recorded 73 ethnic groups. These ethnic groups are mainly of the Bantu Speaking lineage. With a population of 14.08 million people out of which 60.5 percent reside in the vast country sides and 39.5 percent in urban areas, the country has also a sizeable immigrant population comprising mainly Europeans and Asians. The cultures of these diverse groups have criss-crossed from time immemorial, and more

especially since the turn of the 19th Century. This shared rich heritage has been passed on from the older generation to the younger generation marking a distinguished tag of national identity and continuity. Furthermore, the shared cultural heritage has also helped in enhancing development goals and activities for the betterment of the ordinary peoples. On this premise, and at different levels of national development, the planners have worked to ensure that there is at the bottom, the binding operational framework that meets the aspirations and hopes of the general populace in relation to their developmental needs.

Museums in Zambia

Museums generally derive their prominence and importance from their collections. These collections, whether works of Art, artefacts, or specimens constitute the primary difference between Museums and other institutions, as these form an essential part of the collective cultural fabric.

Zambia has four national Museums under the umbrella of the National Museums Board of Zambia, a statutory body that was created through an Act of Parliament, Chapter 174 of the laws of Zambia. The Mission Statement of the National Museums Board of Zambia is to establish and develop Museums on a sustainable basis for the benefit of present and future generations. The Four National Museums are the Livingstone Museum in the southern Province. This is the oldest and biggest Museum having been opened in 1934. It specialises in diverse fields of natural and cultural history. Moto Moto Museum in the Northern Part of Zambia was opened in 1940 with rich collection of Ethnographic, Archaeology, Historical, and Ethnographic materials of the Northern region. In 1974, the Museum was declared a national Museum. The Copperbelt Museum located on the Copperbelt Province was established in 1962 and houses the material culture and natural resources material of the Copperbelt region.

Lusaka National Museum was established in 1996 as a cultural history Museum. Its collections range from Archaeology, Historical to Ethnography. The Museum is located in the Central Part of Zambia in Lusaka Province and in the Capital city Lusaka.

The National Museums Board also supports two Community Museum, The Choma Museum and Crafts Centre in the Southern Province, in Choma town and the Nayuma Museum in the Western Province in Mongu. Both Community Museums have sustainable tradition crafts making projects, especially weaving.

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Lusaka National Museum like any other Museum the world over has been known to function as an institution that houses the cultural heritage and historical materials of its society for purposes of preservation, research, documentation and Education so as to foster identity and posterity.

The Cultural Heritage of Zambia comprises both the intangible and tangible forms, both of which must be preserved in the diverse media. The nature of Intangible Cultural Heritage, while unique thematically and specific geographically, exhibits a range broadly consistent with the generic UNESCO typology on the Convention of the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Accordingly, Intangible Cultural Heritage means practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills that communities, groups and in some cases individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage.

Realising the importance of preserving Zambia's intangible heritage as outlined in the Zambian Government's development plan, Lusaka National Museum has taken an active role in achieving this objective. The main aim for undertaking this activity has stemmed from the need to create a National Intangible Heritage Inventories and Registers.

In reference to the documentation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Lusaka National Museum has been using both Hard copies (paper documents) and digital (Audio and Video Formats respectively). Hard Copies were devised as in the ***Handbook of Museum Documentation System in Zambia***, produced by the National Museums of Zambia. This is derived from the ICOM Documentation Manual.

The Paper documents have been used to record preliminary information about the type of Intangible Cultural Heritage being documented. For instance the Ethnography and History Sections have been using the Ethnography/ History Collection Forms and Cards. Both the Forms and Cards are used to record collected information related to Folklore, Photographs, Fine Art and Audio-Visual materials. For instance, information collected on folklore includes name of collection, history of collection, performer, place of performance and place of production. This information is then copied to the Card and stored as documentation evidence.

Digital technologies (Audio and Video) have been adopted in documenting Intangible Cultural Heritage. This has been based on applying the outline provided by UNESCO for inventorying elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Outline provides the stages which enable the user to note the following; *Name of element, Title, Community involved, location of the element, short description, Associated Tangible and intangible elements including the language used, Persons involved and customary practices involved.* One such successful project was the pilot project to create a national register on intangible Cultural Heritage of Zambia. Through this project selected traditional ceremonies and festivities were documented. All the identified elements were taken into consideration when video and audio recordings were been carried out. These ceremonies and festivities are held annually. The urgency to document these living forms of heritage has arisen out of the fast changing trends in society where issues of heritage if not well safeguarded are at risk of disappearance. With a record of over 70 Traditional Ceremonies and festivities held annually held annually, there are observations of the changing trends that have taken place over time.

The aim of the Pilot Research Project

The aim of this research was to provide an overview of current trends and activities that constitute the major elements of scope of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Zambia. The research provided some analysis and commented on findings which would inform future research. The research took place within the context of UNESCO's Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage and its priorities for preservation of ICH.

The Traditional Ceremonies and festivities covered were;

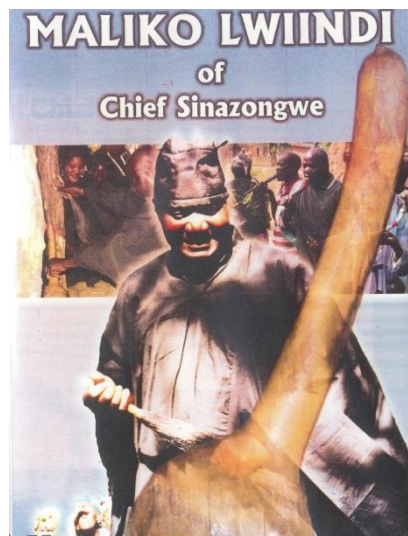
- *Mutomboko(Dance of Conquest)*



- *Chisemwa Cha Lunda(Traditions of the Lunda Speaking peoples)*



- *Maliko Lwiindi (First Crops Harvest Ceremony)*



- *Ukusefya Pa Ng'wena(Historical Celebration of Migration and Conquest)*



➤ *Chakwela Makumbi (Rain Ritual Ceremony)*



The main elements recorded and transcribed were;

- Traditional Music and dance
- Musical instruments
- Folklores and Riddles
- Ceremonial Attires
- Ritual expressions
- Oral Salutations

CONCLUSION

Cultural identity and cultural consciousness have become particularly s in this age of globalisation more crucial than ever. The Intangible Cultural Heritage has provided communities with a sense of identity and belonging by linking the past through the present

with the future. Because ICH is transmitted from generation to generation and is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, provides communities with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, and human creativity.

Lusaka National Museum has been working with community members to ensure that ICH is safeguarded. This has been achieved through sensitisation talks and formally organised programmes where identified community members are requested to share in knowledge and skills transmission with their communities.