

Inventorying of Proverbs of Lala community of Luano District of Zambia

Project Testimonial

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The Role of Teachers in ICH Transmission

“The role of education in the transmission of culture cannot be over emphasized. The function of education is to transmit social values and ideals to the young and capable members of the society. In order to achieve the project’s objective, a meeting was held for school culture club patrons and matrons at Twikatane School in Luano District. The purpose of the meeting was to promote the safeguarding of ICH in schools through various measures such as transmission. The meeting resolved to set up culture clubs in schools where they did not exist previously and to revamp cultural activities where the clubs existed.”

“Teachers were urged to be creative and hold various activities among them competitions in traditional games, quizzes in oral traditions, have exercises that promote knowing their environment and making use of things from the environment. They were urged to encourage learners to exploit the environment to their own good and to realize that their future children would need these resources later in life and so should be used sustainably.”

Project Successes in the District Schools

“Following the successful completion of the project, some of the schools have revamped their cultural activities. The district has undertaken various activities such as debates, quiz, poems, reading and storytelling competitions. Besides the usual club meetings, inter-school competitions have been organized on certain days such as [International Mother Tongue Day](#) and [World Day for Cultural Diversity](#).

The project has seen some cultural activities being incorporated in the National Schools Arts Association of Zambia at district festivals such as debates in local languages. A good number of schools have also heightened their participation in the performing arts. Most of the schools have formed dancing groups both for entertainment as well as in appreciation of their heritage.”



Figure 1. Inter School quiz in proverbs, storytelling, and riddles at Chikupili School in Luano District. The quiz in local language was one of the activities done to commemorate the International Mother Tongue Day as well as appreciating the cultural heritage. Photo Credit: Wilmur Simatimbe



Figure 2. School Cultural group pose for a photo after performance. The picture was taken during the district Schools Art Association Festival in Luano District. Photo credit: Tinku Sera Miti.

Community Engagement during the Project

“During the project, a meeting for community members to promote the use of proverbs was held in Ching’ombe. Prior to this, the team had a meeting with three traditional leaders in the area where the importance of safeguarding their ICH was discussed. The community greatly appreciated the idea of safeguarding ICH such as proverbs, which they agreed to reinforce through the use of traditional huts commonly known as ‘Insaka.’ These places are important loci

of nonformal education such as traditional marriage counselling and informal education during evening fires and labor activities.”

The meeting stressed the importance of ICH to community members:

1. ICH promotes identity - it is one of the ways that people use to identify themselves.
2. ICH improves their social economic status in the community.
3. Socially, ICH is useful in molding and regulating the behavior of the children and the community. Various standards and rules of the community are passed on to the next generations orally during evening stories around the fire, at in Insaka during work.

“**The community proposed several ways of safeguarding their ICH**; such as, through writing, traditional ceremonies, the creation of community-based cultural groups, and holding meetings in Insaka. They resolved that the traditional counselling in the Insaka among men was going to be revamped as it provided a platform for the exchange of ideas. One of the traditional leaders appealed to the community that the team were only present to remind them of their neglected duties and that the cultural heritage to be safeguarded was theirs. He also challenged them to start the evening story times in the area as people were too busy with their daily activities during the day to focus on teaching unless through apprenticeship. The women were also challenged to take up the counselling issues seriously.”

The Role of Non-formal and Informal Education in Safeguarding ICH

“From the project outcome, **I have realized that one of the effective ways of transmitting culture in the community is through the family**. Children internalize the norms of their culture from a very young age. They learn various things through imitation of their parents, grandparents and close relations. The evening activities in Luano District are still practiced, although done unconsciously making it difficult to monitor. Most of the rural households sit around the fire as they wait for their evening meals as well as before bedtime and tell various stories and eventually pass on the oral heritage to the next generations.”

“I have also observed that in Zambia, **the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is very strong**. The grandparents are the people that one can confide in and most of the oral traditions are passed through that channel, especially for teaching stories and proverbs accompanied by secrets. Children of primary school age love stories, and they trouble the grandparents to tell stories, riddles and proverbs, which they treasure.”

“In the Lala community in Luano, Insaka exist in most of the households. The men rest in these huts as they wait for meals and to use as a general resting place. Generally, in the evenings, the males and females sit in separate fireplaces. It is at this moment when proverbs are shared, usually attached with some teaching. The communal Insaka are centrally located and used as a place for general community meetings. Such meetings may also be held under a tree. These are meeting places for settling disputes, community development programmes and for agriculture purposes. In all these meetings, proverbs are used in order to communicate ideas effectively.”



Figure 3. Insaka with a man and a boy at one of the households in Luano District. This is a shelter where the males sit and chat and share information informally and in some cases organized learning occurs and eventually the cultural heritage is passed on. Photo credit: Wilmur Simatimbe.

“Proverbs in Luano are also passed on in a non-formal way; for instance, among initiates prior to marriage. In line with the project, a few practitioners who participated in the training and inventory activities have taken an active role in preserving cultural heritage in the district. One has made a collection of riddles and their meaning as well as proverbs. Another has mobilized groups and is actively training marriage counselors in various aspects of heritage and safeguarding activities. A third has engaged in transmitting blacksmith skills to the younger generations.”

Ongoing Challenges

1. **Lack of resources and administrative support in the schools:** Most of the school patrons and matrons engage in cultural activities on a voluntary basis and most schools have no budget lines for such.
2. **Little time for teachers to allocate to cultural programmes:** Cultural activities are not formally included in the school curriculum, making it difficult for the matrons/patrons to find the time to accommodate such activities (beyond music and fine art).
3. **Gaps in teacher training:** New teachers being deployed are young and may not understand nor value culture. They likely have not been trained in creating linkages between culture and development.
4. **Lack of promotion and linkages between community and school:** The school alienates the learners from their environment. The learners are taught their community is

backward and has nothing to offer. A proper link is required to promote harmony and appreciation of the community's roles in culture. Currently, the schools seemingly paint community as old fashioned instead of complementing each other through educational and festival activities.

5. **Difficulty in access:** It is not easy to access the project area owing to its mountainous terrain and poor road network. This has made it difficult to carry out routine monitoring activities or offer support to the practicing community.