

Final narrative report

Strengthening capacities at the national and local levels for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in the United Republic of Tanzania and contributing to sustainable development

Project information

Geographical scope/benefitting country	United Republic of Tanzania
Type of funding	Earmarked voluntary contribution to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund
Contributor	The International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO earmarked contribution to the Fund
Amount	US\$ 81,271
Executing field office(s)	UNESCO Dar es Salaam Office
Implementing period	2022 - 2025
Reporting period	End of Project Report (2022 – 2025)

I. Background & Summary

In line with the effective implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereafter ‘the 2003 Convention’) and its global capacity-building programme, this project sought to build the capacity of stakeholders at both national and local levels in the United Republic of Tanzania. Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is a national priority, fostering social cohesion and promoting sustainable development.



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Since ratifying the 2003 Convention in 2011, Tanzania has recognized the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage as a critical component of its cultural diversity and sustainable development strategy. The Ministries of Information, Culture, Arts, and Sports (in mainland Tanzania) and Information, Youth, Culture, and Sports (in Zanzibar) serve as the primary national bodies responsible for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. However, the need for further capacity building to ensure effective implementation and active community engagement remains a key challenge. This project aimed to address these gaps by providing technical and capacity-building support and fostering collaboration among communities, government institutions, civil society, and universities for the safeguarding of living heritage at national and local levels.

General Objective

To contribute to sustainable development in the United Republic of Tanzania through capacity building for the implementation of the 2003 Convention.

Specific Objectives

1. Raise awareness of the importance of Tanzanian living heritage and its crucial societal role as a vector of cultural diversity.
2. Build the capacity of institutions, civil society, and communities in inventorying, to ensure better documentation and more effective safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
3. Improve planning and monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the Convention.
4. Strengthen Tanzania’s capacity to request International Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund.

Expected Outputs

1. Increased awareness of the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage at both local and national levels.
2. Development of a national framework and methodology for community-based inventorying and safeguarding.

3. Improved knowledge and skills of intangible cultural heritage inventorying and documentation techniques by local communities, in collaboration with government bodies, universities, and civil society (through a community-based inventorying approach).
4. Establishment of a key group of resource persons at national level to support the formulation of International Assistance requests.

II. Implementation of the project

The project made significant progress in enhancing awareness, capacity building, and institutional development for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage at national and local levels in Tanzania under the framework of the 2003 Convention. Through targeted activities, the project has effectively strengthened stakeholders' ability to safeguard intangible cultural heritage and encouraged greater community engagement.



1. **Awareness raising & capacity building:** The Inception and Awareness Creation Workshop (November 2022) successfully introduced stakeholders to the Convention's key principles, emphasizing the urgent need for inventorying and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage at national and local levels. Over 40 participants, including government officials, cultural practitioners, and civil society representatives were introduced to key concepts of the Convention and the importance of intangible cultural heritage for society and sustainable development. In the discussion, they identified some intangible cultural heritage elements for documentation and future inventorying, such as the Mwakakogwa festival and Singeli music.
2. **Production of documentary on intangible cultural heritage:** The completion of an intangible cultural heritage documentary, including a full-length version and a trailer, has provided an essential tool for raising awareness. Despite challenges in sourcing high-quality archival footage, creative editing and expert collaboration ensured the film's effectiveness in presenting key arguments for the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The film also displays some of the rich heritage of communities in Tanzania. This film is also about underlining the importance of intangible cultural heritage in Tanzania. The documentary has been disseminated through digital platforms, cultural festivals, and educational institutions and was launched during a youth dialogue in November 2024 (see below).
3. **Pilot community-based inventorying activities:** The Capacity-Building Workshop (July 2024) in Bagamoyo trained 20 participants in community-based inventorying techniques for intangible cultural heritage. Subsequent pilot inventorying activities and

practical field exercises led to the documentation of four intangible cultural heritage elements, namely Vanga traditional dance, Unyago, Preservation of Saltwater Fish, and Making Chapati, equipping participants with hands-on experience in identifying and safeguarding cultural heritage.

4. **Development of a National Framework for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage:** Three stakeholder consultation workshops (June, and July 2024) facilitated the drafting of a National Framework for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. At least 20 stakeholders participated in each workshop, including representatives from NGOs, media, youth, academia, culture officers from the regional and local administration, and representatives from the UNESCO National Commission. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of integrating intangible cultural heritage into national development plans, strengthening legal frameworks, and establishing a National Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee, once the National Framework will be finalised. The framework aims to enhance coordination, documentation, and community participation in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. It was further refined through follow-on review and consultation throughout 2024/2025.
5. **Documentary launch and Youth Dialogue on intangible cultural heritage:** The documentary was launched during a Youth Dialogue on 20 November 2024 at the Bagamoyo Institute of Arts and Culture. Following the official screening of the documentary. Young participants engaged in discussions on the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and its role in strengthening cultural identity. This interactive dialogue focused on the role of youth in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage for current and future generations. At least 55 people participated in the documentary launch and screening including from the government, community leaders, academia, youth, NGOs, media and representatives from the private sector, such as companies working on heritage-based creative programmes. The documentary is open access and available on the UNESCO [YouTube channel](#).



6. Validation workshop for the National Framework for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage: A validation workshop for the National Framework for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage took place on 18-19 November 2024 in Bagamoyo. This workshop was a crucial milestone in

the development of Tanzania's National Framework, bringing together key stakeholders, including government officials, cultural practitioners, NGOs, researchers, and community representatives. The workshop focused on reviewing and refining the draft framework to ensure it is inclusive, practical, and reflective of Tanzania's diverse cultural landscape. Participants provided valuable feedback on the framework's objectives, strategies, and implementation mechanisms, emphasizing the need for community-driven safeguarding approaches, government policy alignment, and integration with educational and economic development plans. Further review and refinement continued in 2024/2025 to align it fully with the 2003 Convention.

7. **Session on preparing International Assistance requests:** An online session to provide further information and training on preparing International Assistance requests under the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund was conducted on 21-22 November 2024 in Bagamoyo. The session provided an overview of UNESCO’s International Assistance mechanism, including funding opportunities, technical and capacity-building support available for States Parties to support the implementation of the 2003 Convention at national level. Participants were guided through the application process and requirements for making requests. The session emphasized the importance of well-documented proposals, community involvement, and alignment with national and global heritage priorities to secure international funding. Participants gained practical knowledge on developing proposals for intangible cultural heritage projects, ensuring that Tanzania is better positioned to leverage existing resources for future safeguarding efforts to support the sustainability of project results.



Testimonials:

” This project has helped us recognize the urgent need to document and safeguard our traditions before they disappear. It has given us the skills and motivation to safeguard our heritage for future generations.” – Workshop Participant, Community-based Inventory

“The documentary is a powerful tool for raising awareness among youth and communities, ensuring that our cultural practices are valued and protected.” – Cultural Expert, Launching of the Documentary

III. Key Implementation barriers and strategic solutions

Despite the significant progress made in raising awareness, capacity building, and institutional development, the project encountered several challenges during implementation. Adaptive strategies and innovative solutions were applied to mitigate these challenges, ensuring the successful achievement of project objectives.

1. **Limited awareness and engagement of stakeholders:** At the initial stages, there was limited awareness and engagement among some government officials, cultural practitioners, and community members regarding the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and the principles and mechanisms of the 2003 Convention. **Solution:** The Inception and Awareness Creation Workshop (November 2022) provided an opportunity to introduce stakeholders to the principles of the 2003 Convention and the documentary supported efforts to raise awareness.
2. **Difficulty in accessing high-quality archival footage for the documentary:** The production of the documentary faced challenges in obtaining high-quality archival

footage to represent historical aspects of Tanzania's intangible cultural heritage. Many records were not digitized or were scattered across different institutions and communities.

Solution: Alternative approaches were adopted, including expert interviews to fill gaps in missing archival footage and emphasize the living nature of intangible cultural heritage. Furthermore, the project collaborated with Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports to source additional materials. The final documentary was successfully screened and disseminated through digital platforms, cultural festivals, and educational institutions, raising awareness and engaging diverse audiences.

3. **Limited youth involvement in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage:** Engaging youth in safeguarding efforts was challenging, as many young people lacked awareness of its importance or saw it as detached from modern life.

Solution: The Documentary Launch and Youth Dialogue on Intangible Cultural Heritage (20 November 2024, Bagamoyo) created an interactive platform for young participants to discuss their role in safeguarding cultural heritage.

4. **Strengthening policy & governance for intangible cultural heritage Safeguarding:** Stakeholders emphasized the need for stronger legal backing and financial support for intangible cultural heritage initiatives to ensure long-term sustainability.

Solution: The project advocated for the integration of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding into national policies and development plans. The National Framework for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was developed and refined through stakeholder consultations, ensuring alignment with governance structures and enhancing legal recognition of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding efforts.

IV. Direct beneficiaries, key partners and other stakeholders

1. **Direct beneficiaries:** Communities from Bagamoyo have benefitted directly from the project, including youth who were part of awareness-raising dialogue ensuring transmission of intangible cultural heritage from one generation to another. In addition, national authorities and other stakeholders benefitted from the capacity-building activities.

2. **Key partners and other stakeholders:** The project has been supported by multiple key partners who have played pivotal roles in policy development, capacity building, and advocacy. These include:

- **Government Institutions**

- Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Sports (Mainland)
- Ministry of Information, Youth, Culture, and Sports (Zanzibar)
- Local Government authorities

- **Cultural institutions & Experts**

- National Museums of Tanzania
- Cultural Officers at local levels
- Researchers and Academics

- **Civil society & Community organizations**

- Non-governmental organizations
- Community members & traditional practitioners

- **Youth**

- **Private Sector**

- **Media**

- Media professionals (Tanzania Media for Community Development, Daily News)

V. Risk Analysis and Preventive Mitigation Measures

Challenges/Risks	Mitigation Measures (Tasks)	Deliverables	Timeline/Frequency
Limited coordination and engagement from national stakeholders (line ministry and local authorities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducted regular meetings to reaffirm project alignment with national priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organized capacity-building initiatives in collaboration with the Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular meetings with the Ministry to discuss progress on the project and engagement of other stakeholders.
Limited community participation in inventorying and documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Government Authorities ensured communities are aware of community-led inventorying initiative. - Strengthened collaboration with traditional knowledge holders and youth by sharing information and inviting them to participate in other capacity-building or knowledge sharing initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased number of community-led documentation initiatives. - Training reports and participation records. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness-raising sessions organized by the Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports (ongoing annually)
Policy and legal gaps in intangible cultural heritage safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitated stakeholder consultations to draft a national framework. - Engaged legal experts in the drafting of national framework to share gaps in existing policies for intangible cultural heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft National Framework for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholder consultations (2024). - Draft framework submission (2025).

Limited involvement of youth in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage	- Conducted dialogue with youth to ensure their meaningful engagement and transmission.	- Youth Dialogue reports	- Youth dialogue (once, 2024)
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VI. Exit strategy and sustainability

Exit Strategy

1. Finalization of the National Framework for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
 - Ensure the draft National Framework is submitted to the Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports.
2. Capacity building and community engagement
 - Continue providing technical support to institutions and communities as well as provide them with training materials, guidelines, and toolkits for continued capacity building.
 - Support youth, communities and cultural organizations in leading safeguarding efforts at the local level.
3. Integration into national policies and budgeting
 - Advocate for the inclusion of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in national development policies and government budget allocations for long-term sustainability.
 - Facilitate partnerships with private sector actors, donors, and cultural institutions to secure future funding and technical support.
4. Establishing a long-term monitoring and evaluation mechanism
 - Develop a monitoring framework to track the progress of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding efforts beyond the project's completion.

Sustainability

The project has established a solid foundation for ongoing safeguarding initiatives through:

- Institutional strengthening – Government agencies and cultural institutions have played a key role in drafting a policy guidance and capacity-building support to continue safeguarding efforts.
- Community engagement and ownership – Local practitioners, youth, and cultural groups have been empowered to ensure intangible cultural heritage inventorying, documentation, and awareness activities.
- Policy and legal integration – The continuing process of finalization of the National Framework for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage ensures intangible cultural heritage safeguarding remains a national priority beyond the project's duration.

Through strong institutional ownership, community-led initiatives, and policy integration, the project ensures its impact continues beyond its formal closure, fostering sustained intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in Tanzania.

VII. Communication and Visibility

The implementation of the project ensured effective engagement with stakeholders, enhanced the visibility of project results, and promoted public awareness of Tanzania's intangible cultural heritage. The project used multiple communication channels to reach direct beneficiaries, key partners, and the broader public.

1. Stakeholder engagement and targeted communications

Key Engagement Activities:

- High-level stakeholder consultations
 - Regular meetings with government ministries, cultural institutions, and UNESCO representatives facilitated alignment with national policies.
 - Two Stakeholders Consultation Workshops (June & July 2024) helped integrate recommendations into the National Framework for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- Community awareness and participation
 - Local community members, youth, and living heritage practitioners were actively engaged through workshops, dialogues and documentation process.
 - The Community-Based Inventorying Workshop (July 2024) provided hands-on training and encouraged local ownership of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding efforts.
- Media and public engagement
 - Interviews were conducted with government officials, cultural experts, and community representatives to raise awareness.
 - Media professionals were invited to document project activities and share articles/stories/news through print, TV, digital and radio broadcasts.

2. Visibility of project results

To maximize visibility, the project used a combination of traditional and digital media platforms to highlight achievements and amplify the project results.

Key communication channels & outputs:

- News articles (digital and print)
 - Articles featured project milestones, including the launch of the documentary, community inventorying workshops, and policy development meetings. Linked to the development of the national framework for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage
 - The project's key milestones were featured on government social media to maintain long-term visibility.
- Documentary and audio-Visual materials
 - A ten-minute documentary and a short trailer were produced to serve as an educational and advocacy tool.
 - The documentary was distributed via the Ministry through cultural festivals, academic institutions, and online streaming platforms to reach diverse audiences. The documentary is currently available on the [UNESCO YouTube channel](#).

VIII. Lessons learnt

The following key lessons were identified during the implementation of the project:

1. Importance of early stakeholder engagement

- Effective intangible cultural heritage safeguarding requires early and continuous involvement of stakeholders, including government agencies, cultural practitioners, community elders, and youth.
- The Inception and Awareness Creation Workshop played a crucial role in mobilizing support and ensuring a shared understanding of the project's objectives.

2. Adaptive strategies enhance project success

- Flexibility and adaptability were essential in addressing challenges, such as limited archival footage and low youth engagement.
- The use of expert interviews and collaborations with institutions helped fill content gaps in the documentary.

3. Integrating digital technologies is key to enhancing accessibility of living heritage

- The use of digital platforms (YouTube) for the dissemination of the documentary broadened audience reached and increased public engagement.
- Digitization and online inventories are critical for ensuring long-term safeguarding and easy access to cultural materials.

4. Youth engagement requires tailored approaches

- Many young people initially viewed living heritage as disconnected from modern life. However, targeted initiatives, such as the Documentary Launch and Youth Dialogue, provided interactive opportunities for engagement.
- Future projects should incorporate youth-friendly communication methods, including social media campaigns, digital storytelling, and creative arts-based initiatives to bridge generational gaps in living heritage safeguarding.

5. Strengthening policy and governance is crucial for ICH sustainability

- While raising awareness and capacity building are vital, policy integration ensures long-term institutional commitment.
- The development of the National Framework through multi-stakeholder consultations demonstrated the importance of aligning living heritage safeguarding with national development plans.

6. Multi-sectoral collaboration strengthens sustainability and impact

- Multi-sectoral collaboration is key to ensuring living heritage safeguarding is embedded in various sectors including education, tourism, and creative industries. Engagement from different sectors would be important in future safeguarding projects to ensure sustainability.

7. Public awareness campaigns play a central role

- The documentary served as an effective advocacy tool, demonstrating the power of media and storytelling in promoting and safeguarding cultural heritage.
- Future projects should invest in creative communication strategies, such as short films, exhibitions, social media campaigns, and community events, to increase awareness and appreciation of living heritage.