

a travelling exhibition on Kenyan Peace Cultures

Vision

To empower and transform communities through the use of cultural heritage in the realization and respect of human rights, peaceful co-existence and sustainable human development through a traveling exhibition.

Mission

A society that uses cultural heritage to promote peaceful co-existence and respect for human rights and sustainable human development .

Objectives

1. Promote peaceful co-existence in the family and community through promoting conflict resolution skills, inter-generational dialogue and human rights
2. To provide a forum for active participation and dialogue geared towards realization of sustainable peace and human development
3. To promote understanding, appreciation and use of cultural heritage in peace building in Kenya

INDIGENOUS PEACE MAKING INSTITUTIONS



Konyeki (Tharaka)



African Peacemaker



Ndata (Akamba)



Ngome (Aembu)



Ngome (Aembu)



Lkindongoe la malasin (Samburu)



Tenta(Pokot)



Ti Koppi (Yaaku)



Lorika dapash (Samburu)



Kiangi (Akamba)

Supported by:



CH
WB
Cultural
Heritage without Borders
KULTURNYI UTAH GRANICE

Si.
Swedish Institute.

Introduction

Kenya, (as well as other post-colonial states in Africa) is at a crossroad in managing her religio-cultural heritage. On one hand, this heritage has become subject to the ravages of economic developments that often fail to take into consideration the tangible and intangible benefits that can be accrued from mobilizing these resource as assets for livelihoods, democratization, truth telling, peace building, nationhood and identity. To make matters worse, many development projects consider this religio-cultural heritage as a nuisance and regard traditional objects, crafts and practices as outmoded and a hindrance to progress. On the other hand, the increasing poverty has led to some of the valued religious sacred sites being sold or turned into commercial sites, hence denying the rest of the community an opportunity to visit and use these sites. Many African religio-cultural artefacts have also been exported or smuggled outside the country, thus denying the younger generation an opportunity to learn about their heritage.

In a sense, we are in the process of losing our religio-cultural heritage of peace and conflict resolution. This is because of the failure to give more visibility to this valuable heritage hence leading to its suppression and obliteration. Neither modern school education nor the modern State has the capacity to give or replace the quality of this heritage. Once disinherited and disconnected from this heritage, we lose a cognitive and emotional bond with our history of non-violence, reconciliation traditions, compassion and humanistic values. We lose touch with living in a socially healthy community that sustains peace and describes our relationship with nature, the Supreme Being and order of things.

Community Peace Museums Heritage Foundation (CPMHF)

The Community Peace Museums Foundation (CPMF) is an umbrella group for a network of community-based peace museums in different parts of Kenya and representing many different communities. Among the communities represented in this network include: Abasuba, Abagusii, Aembu, Agikuyu, Akamba, Akorino, Dorobo, Idadho, Isukha, Keiyo, Maasai, Tharaka, Pokot, Samburu, and Yaaku.

The Foundation was initiated in 1994 by a Kenyan ethnographer Dr. Sultan Somjee as a material culture project sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee of Kenya. The museums aims to celebrate and conserve the religio-cultural heritage of particular communities while also using peace traditions and artefacts associated with peace to unite different communities. Hundreds of artefacts derived from local communities have been collected and displayed at the peace museums. Environmental symbols such as peace trees are also found in nurseries of the peace museums or in environment around the museums. These objects and symbols are tangible manifestations of human beliefs and culture and are embedded with peace narratives. They are therefore an entry point into understanding a people's worldview. They ensure that our religio-cultural values and narratives are well preserved and successfully transmitted to successive generations. In addition they express important narrative concerning our religious, social and political life. It also reinforces the narrative about our basic structure of leadership and endorses important traditional values.

CPMHF sees cultural heritage knowledge as a resource for conflict resolution and sustainable development. They work with many volunteers across their member organizations including young people and notably women who have traditionally played a strong role in peace activities. CPMHF has proved to be pivotal in grassroots peace and reconciliation processes, using traditional peace cultures and also safeguarding cultural heritage of specific groups who experience greater vulnerability at times of greater political activity. Several of the peace museums contain historical artifacts relating to 'difficult history' in modern Kenya. For example, the Agikuyu Peace Museum exhibits artifacts relating to the Lari massacres (1953) and the detention and torture of Mau Mau suspects. For many in contemporary Kenya these historical events remain contested and potentially divisive. During times of intense political activity, like elections, this history is manipulated to divide peoples who for generations lived in peaceful co-existence.

CPMF have worked extensively with outreach approaches to education and dialogue between seventeen ethnic groups within Kenya. Their 'peace programme' is aimed at young people (both primary schools and young adults) and they work with volunteers. In 2008 they coordinated a 'beaded peace tree project' that reached over 30,000 people in 22 communities. Their strategic plan highlights the necessity to safeguard East Africa heritage approaches to reconciliation and peace-building.

About the project

Journeys of peace aims to empower and transform communities through the use of cultural heritage in the realization and respect of human rights, peaceful co-existence and sustainable human development through a travelling exhibition. This will occur at two levels.

Firstly, there will specific sessions for school children which will focus on strengthening a long-standing commitment to peace-education. Secondly, there will be dialogue sessions within communities at specific sites or museums associated with historical events. These sessions will foster listening, empathy and understanding of multiple perspectives and experiences with a clear purpose of reclaiming the peaceful co-existence at the root of Kenyan society. As the exhibition visits different communities it will acquire new layers of voice, knowledge and experience.

A key outcome of this exhibition will be the acquisition of new knowledge and understanding about Kenyan peace cultures.

We are looking forward to you partnering with us in this journey.

For more information about the Journeys of Peace, please contact:

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3. To promote cultural heritage in peace building

Kenya



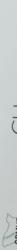
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