

SAFEGUARDING ENDANGERED ORAL TRADITIONS IN EAST AFRICA



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oral tradition is the passing of knowledge from one generation to the next orally (by speaking). Since time immemorial the indigenous communities in Kenya lived by knowledge that was passed to them through their oral tradition. The skills for survival such as hunting, building houses, making clothes, tools, medicine and religious practices were taught by telling and showing one another how to do these things. Singing, telling stories, and plays are also ways of passing knowledge through the oral tradition. The keepers of knowledge are the elders and they pass on the knowledge through oral traditions. Thus, the elders in the society are the most knowledgeable persons because of the knowledge they have accumulated over their lifetime.

With the arrival of the colonialists in Kenya many people learned to write. However, little of the knowledge within their oral traditions was recorded and used to create a written tradition that is meaningful in their own culture. Over time, communities have come realize the importance of having a written tradition alongside oral one for protection purposes. This means that many of their traditions can now be preserved and passed along to future generations in writing and recording.

A team of researchers carried out a study between October 2007 and January 2008 to investigate and record the oral traditions and related indigenous knowledge of three minority groups in Kenya – the Suba, Yaaku and Segeju. The Suba or Abasuba are Bantu speaking people who came from all over East Africa and settled around the East African Lake region, mainly in Mfangano Island. The majority of the Suba came from Uganda after the death of Kabaka Junju around 1760. The Yaaku or Mukogodo are people living in the Mukogodo forest west of Mount Kenya. They are said to have migrated from southern Ethiopia in the first millennium AD. The Segeju live in Kwale southern Kenya, mainly in the villages of Pongwe, Kidimu and Shimoni and spread across the Kenya –Tanzania border. The three communities have been assimilated by the more populous neighbours, the Luo, Maasai and Digo respectively. They have lost most of their cultural aspects including language. They are listed among Africa's 300 languages consigned to extinction by the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing, published in 2001. However, they have managed to maintain some aspects of their traditions handed down from generation to generation and which are discussed in this report.

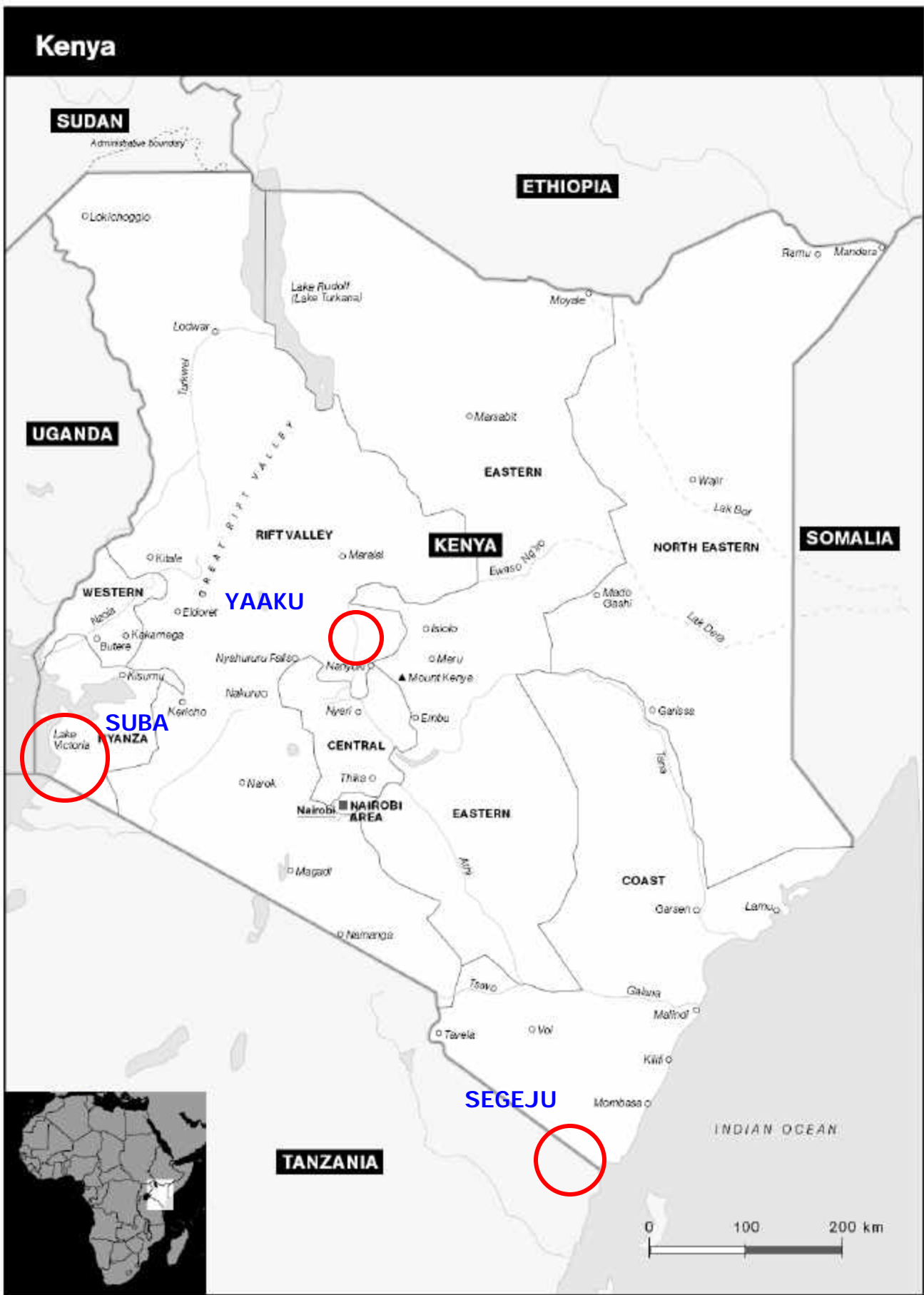
In realisation that the use of oral traditions like storytelling, poetry narrations and proverbs are gradually dwindling provided a strong case why there is an urgent need to undertake a pilot study to research and record oral traditions in Kenya. This was in response to a number of factors, i.e. the need to: strengthen protection of oral traditions in Kenya; protect indigenous knowledge forms and apply them to local development needs; and document, preserve, analyse and disseminate oral art forms of Kenyan communities. It was also anticipated that by undertaking this activity would be achieving the UNESCO's objective of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage as stipulated in the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003.

There was also need to undertake this study because oral traditions have an important role to play in preserving both languages and cultures of the people of Kenya. In societies where many, if not all, aspects of culture are transmitted orally from generation to generation, oral traditions form an important element of identity for the individuals and the community. The study was also undertaken because there is a lot of oral history of the minority groups in Kenya like the Yaaku, Segeju and Suba that are important but currently cannot be found in books or any written literature. This knowledge which is passed on orally can also show how their culture has changed over the years. Many people from these communities, especially elders, know a lot of oral history but have never had it recorded. From this study, it has come out clearly that the Yaaku, Segeju and Suba are rich in oral traditions.

The team made surveys in Mfangano Island in Suba District, Kidimu, Pongwe and Shimoni villages of Kwale District upto Mukogodo forest in Laikipia District. The research team gathered information on different aspects of oral traditions and revitalized the protection of the cultural heritage in the three regions. The team also identified the local leadership structures that could be used as an entry point in order to strengthen and protect the intangible cultural heritage of the three community groups. The study documented eight different modes of conveying messages through oral traditions. These are: riddles, narratives, songs, poems, plays, sayings, proverbs and parables.

More important, this activity has developed a draft format for inventorying intangible cultural heritage in Kenya. The format was used to document 11 forms of oral expressions, 5 different forms of knowledge and practices concerning nature and universe, and 4 different social practices and rituals (see appendix II). However, the inventory does not give a comprehensive study on each of these forms but rather aims at giving an overview of some of the known forms of intangible cultural heritages among the Suba, Yaaku and Segeju.

Therefore, this report provides the outcome of the survey and lays the foundation for a more comprehensive research and documentation of intangible cultural heritage in Kenya. The study also provides useful findings that will help to extend the study to other areas and also help safeguard the intangible cultural heritage in Kenya. A video documentary capturing elders narrating folk stories, beliefs and legends related to their cultural and natural heritage is provided separately.



Map of Kenya showing geographical location of the Segeju, Suba and Yaaku communities

INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Kenya

Intangible Cultural Heritage refers to the non-physical components of a people's culture, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, cosmology and traditional craftsmanship. The protection of this type of heritage is much more challenging than that of the physical heritage – the tangible heritage. Kenya ratified the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in October 2007. According to this convention, the intangible cultural heritage is manifested in: oral traditions and expressions; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and universe; and traditional craftsmanship. The role of local communities in safeguarding the intangible heritage is well articulated in the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003 which, among other issues, recognizes “that communities, in particular indigenous communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and re-creation of the intangible cultural heritage, thus helping to enrich cultural diversity and human creativity”.

Currently, there is no legislation in Kenya that addresses the protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Since 1975 Kenya has regulated folklore through the Copyright Act, which is administratively and legislatively effected through the Attorney General Chambers (Office of the Registrar General), which acts as a ‘secretariat’ of the Kenya Copyright Board. The board is empowered to register the rights of any individual or corporate person (such as a formally registered community or group) to a claim of any previous unregistered creation for a time. The basic problem with this is that a popular community expression can easily be appropriated to an individual or a group, and as popular culture is then easy to ‘commoditize’ and eventually obtain commercial capital from the same, with no obligation of compensation to the originators. For example, traditional dancers troupe and music bands in Kenya have made a name and career from traditional songs that were originally composed and sung by local communities during wedding, circumcision and initiation ceremonies.

Ethnic diversity of Kenya

The diverse ethnic groups in Kenya can be broken down into three main ethno-linguistic groupings, namely, Bantu-speaking, Cushitic-speaking and Nilotic-speaking peoples. They speak different languages and occupy diverse ecological zones. This ecological diversity disposes the various peoples to different forms of livelihoods. Most of these ethno-linguistic groupings can also be sub-categorized depending either on their settlement or migratory patterns. The Bantu-speaking peoples fall into three groups: Western, Central and Coastal (Eastern) Bantu. The Nilotic-speaking peoples are placed into three groups: Eastern (Plains) Nilotes, Highland Nilotes and River-Lake Nilotes. The Cushitic group is not sub-categorized. There are also other non-African groups, such as Kenyans of American, Arabic, Asian and European origin, plus a number of Africans who have become citizens of Kenya. There are about 55 distinct languages most of which have a number of dialects. Some of these groups, such as the Kikuyu, Luhya and Luo, comprise many millions of people, but others, like the Suba, Segeju, Yaaku, Malakote, Terik and Sanye are small and their languages are rated as near extinct or extinct.

Intervention – why inventory Intangible Cultural Heritage in Kenya?

Cultural heritage is disappearing from many Kenyan communities often due to rapid changes in their lifestyle which is also hindering the process of transferring knowledge from the elders to younger members of the community. There are four main factors that are contributing to the extinction of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Kenya: 1). Local communities have not been sensitized to know how important is the knowledge they possess as they consider their own cultural heritage as backward and as a hindrance to them in accessing economic wealth; 2). many communities do not know how to go about identifying and protecting their knowledge; 3). there are no specific national laws that help communities protect their knowledge in a way that reflects their traditions and customs; 4). the deterioration in the use of indigenous languages in everyday conversation, destruction of cultural spaces, and the lack of interest in the Intangible Cultural Heritage on the part of the institutions charged with the responsibility of protecting the cultural heritage in the country.

As signatory to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003, Kenya is now required by Article 12 (section 1) of the convention to undertake an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in the country, which should be regularly updated. For this reason, there is need to map out existing types of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Kenya to know their status and initiate measures for protection.

More significantly, Kenya's many ethnic groups have a well developed and sophisticated folklore which embodies their history, traditions, world-view and wisdom. Their legends recount the movement of people to and from the rift valley, into the highlands, the grasslands and the lake regions. For example, the famous historical figures such as the Kikuyu's Gikuyu and Mumbi or the Luo's culture hero Lwanda Magere are represented in myths and legends. Myths include accounts of how cattle were given to Maasai by God. Folk tales try to answer etymological questions, such as why the hyena has a limp and the origin of death. In many Kenyan cultures the message that men would not die was given to a chameleon, but he was so slow that a bird got to man before him and gave them the message that men would die. Folk tales also recount the adventures of tricksters. In Kenyan folk tales, tricksters are usually the hare or the tortoise. The ogre is another popular character in many Kenyan folk tales. The ogre devours whole communities but is eventually vanquished by the actions of a brother and sister. The brother then cuts the toe of the ogre and all the people it ate come out.

Each of the more than 55 ethnic groups in Kenya has a rich store of riddles, proverbs and sayings, which are still an important aspect of daily speech. Riddles were usually exchanged in the evening before a storytelling session. Riddling sessions are usually competitions between two young people who fictionally bet villages, or cattle, or other items of economic life on the outcome. Many cultures have a prohibition on telling riddles during daylight hours. Proverbs are social phenomenon and as such they can be defined as a message coded by tradition and transmitted in order to evaluate and/or affect human behavior. Proverbs reveal key elements of a culture such as the position and influence of women, morality, what is considered appropriate behavior, and the importance of children. For example the Luo have these proverbs: (1) The eye you have treated will look at you scornfully. (2) A cowardly hyena lives for many years. (3) The swimmer who races alone, praises the winner. Some Kikuyu examples includes: (1) Women and the sky cannot be understood. (2) The man may be the head of the home, but the woman is the heart. (3) Frowning frogs cannot stop the cows drinking from the pool. There are also several proverbs in Swahili and English that have become part of Kenyans' daily life. For example: *Haraka Haraka haina baraka* (hurry hurry has not blessing) and also, When elephants fight it is the grass that suffers.

The Swahili people on Kenya's coast have had a rich oral tradition that has been influenced by Islam, which need to be protected. For example, stories of genies (*Jinni*) were told side by side with stories of hare and hyena. There is also a very rich tradition of popular poetry that has been part of Swahili cultural life for over four centuries.

Even though most of the communities in Kenya want to safeguard their oral traditions and indigenous knowledge as a whole, many have seen their knowledge begin to disappear. The lifestyle changes have been a key player and in particular have hampered transmitting knowledge from the elders to the younger generation. As expressed during this research, the local communities have a sense of how important their culture and thus, would want to protect their knowledge for a number of reasons: Some communities have identified a range of economic benefits to be gained from sharing their indigenous Knowledge with others. For example, communities have realized that some aspects of their Knowledge can be turned into eco-tourism or cultural tourism for income generation. By protecting their knowledge will also contribute to the cultural and political goals of self-identity, self-reliance especially the ability to support traditional lifestyles as indicated by the Segeju and Yaaku elders during interviews. The two groups have been assimilated by their populous neighbours i.e. the Digo and Maasai respectively.

The crisis of losing oral traditions

Today in Kenya, most of the children's education comes from books rather than from elders. Children need to go to school because there are new skills to learn for survival. They need to learn skills such as reading, writing and using computers, because these will help them get a job or earn the money they need to do other things. Over time, less of their knowledge will come from the oral tradition of their own culture. The elders do not have a role as they used to in passing along their knowledge to younger people. In some communities like the Suba, Yaaku and Segeju the children do not speak the language of their elders, which makes it difficult for elders to teach them. These changes mean that much important oral traditions and generally traditional knowledge is being lost. When all this issues are combined, it is a crisis for many reasons. The knowledge that is being lost can provide people with a sense of identity because by knowing who you are can give you pride in your culture. Elders have knowledge that is needed for survival. They know a lot about the land they live in. They know where to find animals to hunt or trap because they know of places where animals will go to find food. They know how to find their way around the land because they know the landmarks. Traditional knowledge has many uses in our world today. In order to maintain traditions, we need to continue to use the traditions so that they can continue to be part of our lives.

Oral traditions

Whenever we talk about oral tradition, we generally mean a collectivity of oral narratives, oral poetry, proverbs, riddles and sayings. Oral traditions, therefore, refers to the works of art and culture that are transmitted verbally from earlier generations. It combines aspects of oral literature, folklore and oral history. Folklore like oral traditions is tradition based, collectively held, orally transmitted, and a source of cultural identity. Similarly, oral traditions are the repositories of all knowledge and history of communities from generation to generation. From the accumulated knowledge of elders, stories are repeatedly told for: entertainment and instruction; history is told to provide knowledge of the past; creation stories are told to reveal the origin of life; laws are told to guide behavior; and spirituality and beliefs are taught to instill morals in society. Through repeated communication of the oral tradition, the listener especially the young generation soon becomes the holder of that oral tradition. Sometimes oral traditions are recorded on physical objects to document important events, histories, stories, and laws, such as totem poles; designs on clothing, baskets, jewellery; rock paintings and carved rocks.

However, the term oral tradition can sometime be misleading. These traditions are not simply verbal but have features and characteristics that go far beyond simple story-telling, including gestures, masks and performance. Oral traditions have also been referred to by different terms: myths, fables, legends and stories. Each of these terms confuses and makes it difficult to understand the real meaning of the oral tradition. Since each oral tradition is unique, such categorization is misleading. For instance the term “myth,” has a derogatory sense and is associated with lies, imaginations or fictitious. Thus, when

documenting oral traditions it is assumed that these events did take place and that they are real in the minds of the story-tellers when communicating their stories to their audience.

Normally, oral traditions are communally shared. However, certain oral traditions are treasured family possessions that are not revealed to outsiders, while other oral traditions are sometimes shared openly at community meetings, weddings, funerals, cultural events and gatherings. The passing and sharing of oral traditions depends upon the context and situation. Songs, dances, ceremonies, and stories are some of the means by which the distinct identities of communities are preserved, extended, witnessed and expressed. The most crucial part of safeguarding oral traditions and expressions is preserving their social function, their role in everyday or festive life and the inter-personal nature of their transmission. This may mean creating an opportunity for elders to recount tales and legends to young people and encouraging the traditional festivities and events at which oral traditions and expressions are performed and recounted.

Oral traditions and communication

Oral traditions convey messages and ideas in eight different modes. These are: riddles, narratives, songs, poems, plays, sayings, proverbs and parables. These eight modes consist of words connected in a way a speaker chooses and the words are made of sounds to mean something.

Riddles

Riddles are simple puzzles that quote a natural phenomenon or reactions to man's environment. In a community, a riddle exercises the mind, teaches how to reason, enables one to relate life to nature, offers training of the mind and offers entertainment or recreation. The respondent answers by equating a phenomenon to day to day life. Riddles take their shape according to how the society usually conceives nature and day to day life in a given community. Riddles are usually influenced by their valuation of nature. For example, the moon, mushroom and riddles associated with animals are common among African communities i.e.

Puzzle: I live in a big house that has one big lamp that allumites the whole of it at night.

Answer: Moon.

Puzzle: I built one house that has one pillar.

Answer: a Mushroom.

Puzzle: I have a friend but when we visit together he is not given a chair to sit on. Who is this friend?

Answer: a dog.

Narratives

A narrative or story telling tells the audience what happens and why, forces responsible for the situation. Narratives can be real or fictitious. A real narrative is about something that actually happened. For example one may narrate about an epidemic, diseases, and catastrophes that culminated into in famine and the way it languished people, floods and the havoc, war and its miseries. Fictitious narratives are creative i.e. a narrative of imaginary things. The whole narrative is fabricated by the narrator and creates a narrative using his imaginations. However, real or fictional narratives are equally educative and entertaining. Real and fictitious narratives communicate messages to members of the society about environmental behaviour. There are different kinds of narratives which include; folktales, fables, myths, legends, autobiographies and travels. Myths are narratives handed down from generation to generation and contain beliefs of early history of a community. A legend praises ones acts and whose performance is remembered in the entire society. Travel narrative accounts travelling or migration experiences and the encounters by a community.

Proverbs

Proverbs are short popular sayings with words containing a message of advice or warning. A proverb is made of two situations but when they are compared and contrasted one gets the message. If that message is contemplated with the matter or situation being treated in a speech one gets a message of advice or of a warning e.g. “A stitch in time saves nine” or “look before you leap”. Proverbs are both new and old. New ones are being invented all the time and old ones are falling into disuse. At the same time, they are not oracles for every proverb said, there is another asserting the opposite point of view.

Parables

It is a short clear narrative designed to teach a moral lesson. It has characteristics of sayings though not being only a statement but a narrative with a message from which the audience construes an advice to do or not to do something. It also explains a certain situation by using a message that is contained in it.

Songs

Singing is a poetic way of communicating messages by words put in a melody. It is generally done for entertainment where they serve to communicate certain messages to members of the community. They also serve as forms of communication about the environment. Singing is one of the oldest forms of communication that man invented. In early times, ancestors used bones as their musical instruments and horns of animals as flutes to make noise or sound. There are different types of songs which communicate different messages in different ways and on different occasions. This include: songs of praise; songs of invitation; songs of prayer; songs of thanksgiving; Lyric songs (songs expressing grief, sorrow, anxiety, hope, love); heroic songs; folksongs; traditional songs; mourning songs; songs for babies (lullabies); songs for children; songs expressing criticisms; songs expressing complaint; and songs expressing advice. Physical singing is purely oral and sometime accompanied by string instruments, wind instruments and drums.

Poems

Poems are pieces of creative monologues in verse form or pieces of well thought prose in an elevated style, expressing a deep feeling or a noble thought composed to the desire of communicating messages of an experience in an enticing language. Poetry like any other forms of communication are able to communicate all kind of oral messages and more so have the ability of using and do use more of narratives techniques than narratives themselves because of the nature of presentations. Poems express: narratives – narrating an experience or thought; Legends – about people and animals; praise - of good deeds; prayers - to God and gods; thoughts – about mans feelings nature life and death.

THE SUBA

Background

The Suba or Abasuba are Bantu speaking people who came from all over East Africa although the majority came from Uganda after the death of Kabaka Junju around 1760. The name "Suba" itself is a name that was given by the Luo to the people who fled Uganda. In actual fact, these people are called "Abakunta." Some were professional fishermen from the islands of Lake Victoria, who extended their fishing into Tanzania and proceeded onto South Nyanza in Kenya. The non-Luo groups who came and settled in these areas, covering the present day Rusinga, Mfangano, Gembe, Kaksingri and Gwasi locations first came to be known as Abasuba and later became Luo-Abasuba, after they had acquired some Luo customs and practices. They speak Suba language (*Olusuba*). Olusuba is a Bantu language which is a mixture of Luganda and Lusoga dialects largely spoken in the lake region of East Africa.



Map showing the location of the Suba in Mfangano and Rusinga islands.

The Abasuba land stretches along the gulf of Nyanza from Ruri Bay to the southern end of Matara Bay and includes the Islands of Rusinga and Mfangano. The Suba people were highly influenced by the neighbouring Luo community to a point where there was a language shift. Today, the Suba people are bilingual and they speak both Olusuba and Dholuo. Their language (Olusuba) is mostly spoken by the older generation though few younger people can speak it especially at Mfangano and Muhuru Bay. The suba language is strongly spoken in Mfangano Island along the Kasarani, Kitenyi and Wakinga beach. However, the younger generations speak Luo fluently and quite majority of the youths do not speak olusuba but are able to understand.

The Abasuba consisted of 3 groups which were formed after amalgamation of the Abakunta, the Rieny and Bantu splinter parties. They evolved in 3 ways: 1). the flight to the Abakunta, who formed the backbone of the group from Uganda to Mfangano, Rusinga and Gwasi after the murder of Kabaka Junju; 2). the northern trek of the Tanzanian groups, collectively known as the Rieny, consisting of fishermen from southern Uganda who came to Kenya through Tanzania and including the modern Kaksingri and Kasungu; and 3). Bantu splinter parties from central Nyanza who came and lived alongside the Abakunta and Rieny people. Abakunta spoke Luganda and the Rieny group also originated from southern Uganda, where Luganda and Lusoga were the means of communication, the Luganda dialect was used widely in the area. The Bantu groups who spoke this language the Abakunta, the Rieny and central Nyanza splinter parties became jointly known as the Abasuba and evolved as a separate community. Most of the Abasuba spoke either Luganda or Lusoga.

By 1960, many Suba people had succumbed to external pressures which threatened their language, culture and identity. In spite of this fact, a new revitalization trend set into the Suba community, beginning with the Islanders, who had fought assimilation pressure from the dominant language and cultures of the Luo. As result of these efforts many people have taught themselves to read and write in the language and to perfect their ability to speak. The Suba language has about six dialects spoken in Kenya alone: *Olwivwang'ano* spoken on Mfangano, Rusinga, Takawiri, Kibwogi Islands, Ragwe and Kisege; *Ekikune* dialect spoken in Kaksingri, *Ekingoe* dialect spoken in Ngeri, *Ekigase* dialect spoken in Gwasi Hills, *Ekisuuna* dialect spoken in Migori and *Olumuulu* dialect spoken in Muhuru Bay.



Mr. Tembo - one of the few remaining elders who can fluently communicate in Suba language (Olusuba).

Today, Language experts consider Suba as endangered, while others classify it as severely endangered or even extinct. The language shows considerable variation concerning the degree of competence of speakers. Three types of Suba areas can be distinguished: 1). Strong areas (Mfangano, Muhuru), where there is a strong communication in Suba language; Median areas (Gwassi, Kaksingiri, Suna), where the standard of Suba competence is not uniform, on average lower, and where Suba language is not strongly used; 3). Weak areas (Rusinga and Gembe) where Suba is the "secret language" of a few old people.

The Suba of Tanzania live in Tarime District, Mara Region speak varieties of the Suba language. The groups commonly listed as being part of the Suba community are the *Hacha*, *Kine*, *Rieny*, *Simbiti*, *Surwa* and *Sweta*. There are about eighty thousand ethnic Suba living in Tanzania, most of who are still speaking the Suba language although some, particularly the Rieri, are shifting to Luo dialect. It is unclear as to whether the language spoken by the Suba of Tanzania is in fact that same as that spoken by the Suba in Kenya.

The Suba of Mfangano Island

Mfangano Island derived its name from the term '*okuwangana*', which means to unite in Suba, or a place where people united. As discussed latter in this document, the name might have originated due to the fact that Mfangano Island provided refugee to groups that were conquered in the mainland by the more populous Luo. Mfangano Island was chosen as the study site for this research because it is predominantly occupied by the Suba clans. Mfangano Island has quite a few elders who could give a full account of the Suba Oral traditions and history very well unlike the Luo –Suba living on the mainland. Between four and eleven generations ago, the following groups lived in Mfangano Island: the Wagimbe, Wisokolwa, Kakimba-Wiramba, Wasamo, Wagire, Wakula, Wakinga, Wakisori, Wakisasi, Waozi, Walundu, Wiyokia, Walowa, Waganda and Wakiaya. The following is an account of their Oral traditions, migration and settlement of some of the groups as narrated by elders.

Oral traditions and history

According to the Suba Oral traditions, Mfangano Island served as a place of refuge for hard pressed people from both Central and South Nyanza and for those from Uganda and Tanzania who reached the island and were not strong enough to protect themselves against the stronger tribes who were colonizing the mainland. These smaller groups decided to settle permanently on either Mfangano or Rusinga Island. The founder of the Kikamba and Wiramba arrived on the Mfangano Island about

eleven generations ago and was followed by Abakunta. Both groups were hosted by the Wisokolwa who latter introduced the Abakunta to the Wagimbe.

The Kakimba – Wiramba and also the Abakunta claim that the Wisokolwa and Wagimbe were the earliest groups to have occupied the island permanently twelve generations ago. However, the oral traditions do not tell clearly which group arrived on the island first although the Wagimbe claim to be the earliest group to arrive on the island. They also claim that they came from Uganda and descended from three brothers Mugimbi, Kiriwo and Rindo. These brothers according to Wagimbe traditions, sailed from Sigulu to different islands until they reached Imbo. Mugimbi and Kiriwo proceeded to Mfangano Island and to the mainland of South Nyanza to the modern Kaksingiri. The traditions continues that on the mainland of South Nyanza, Mugimbi and Kiriwo found that all land along the lakeshore had been occupied by the Luo and the Maasai and fighting broke between the two groups. Mugimbi and his group were pushed back and found refuge in Mfangano Island. Likewise Rindo and his family were also being suppressed in Central Nyanza by the Luo and also decided to follow his brothers Mugimbi and Kiriwo to Mfangano Island. They all settled in the north western end of the island where they became known as the Wagimbe adopting their leader Mugimbi's name.

The Wasokolwa tradition versions claim that they inhabited the Island before the arrival of the Wagimbe. However, the Wasokolwa are not consistent about the direction they came from. Some Wasokolwa claim to have come to Mfangano Island by way of South Nyanza and to have originated from Tanzania. Some trace their journey through central Nyanza to the mainland regions of South Nyanza where they were attacked by the Maasai. They claim that when they were pushed back to the lake shore they were forced to retreat and seek shelter in Mfangano Island.

The Wagimbe tradition claim to have witnessed other groups coming to the island but the groups did not make themselves known immediately for fear of attack. As more and more people continued to invade the island, the Wagimbe power was undermined and the glory ended with the arrival of the more powerful group of Abakunta. The Wagimbe last notable leader was Magerenge whose daughter was Nyamaino married Muse, the son of Witewe. Most of the Wagimbe left the island and the remaining were assimilated by the Abakunta. Today, there are only a few Wagimbe homesteads on the Island surrounding the Magerenge's shrine (*Ekiwaga*).

According to the Suba oral traditions, when there was no rain in Mfangano Island in the past, the Wagimbe elder was asked to perform a sacrifice on the shrine having first found from the diviner which kind of animal had to be slaughtered. Through the diviner Magerenge would say if he wanted a cow, a goat or a cock. According to his wish the animal was taken to the shrine with bushes thrown allover it. At the shrine through the diviner Magerenge was asked to accept the animal by making the animal pass urine. If the animal passed urine it was slaughtered but if it refused to pass urine, then it was understood that Magerenge had not accepted the animal. The diviner was to be consulted once more to find out what was wrong. Today, the Wagimbe still perform sacrifices on Magerenge's shrine but its significance is today confined to their clan. Wagimbe elders recounted that the site holds supernatural powers and that people coming unexpectedly onto it would see old men and women, seated on stools in the shelter, drinking



Traditional shrine in Mfangano Island (Ekiwaga) – the shrines still feature in Suba oral traditions even though most of them are now neglected or have been converted to other uses such as farming.

beer amid hens and their chicks scratching the ground. Some elders said that if people visit the site to see the ancestors, they must abstain from sex, tell no one where they are going and never name the site, otherwise they will see and hear nothing.

There are other important shrines in Mfangano Island which include: Nundu, Likungu, Muse, Tutu, Utende and Itewe. Most of the individuals who invaded the island first joined the Wisokolwa. When the Wagimbe power declined in Mfangano Island, the Wasokolwa who were comparatively few in number became powerful by allying with the Abakunta and other groups who had joined them. The leadership passed for a while from the Wagimbe leader Magerenge to Mugambageza of Wisokolwa. The Wisokolwa could not maintain the island which had come to be the centre of Abakunta aspirations.

The third group which settled in Mfangano Island was the Wasano who came through Central Nyanza. They give Samia as their original home and claim to have been led to Mfangano Island by Lombro, Lusige and Serwe. They first landed in Rusinga Island but later migrated to Mfangano Island and for a brief settled at the modern Masisi. Later they moved to their present home in the southern end of the Island. According to the Wasamo elders, they claim that they found the Wisokolwa and Wagimbe on Mfangano Island. According to Wasamo oral traditions they claim that when they came to Mfangano Island they left their god, Atego, in Samia. He later decided to follow them. When he came (their god), he first landed at Masisi and found that the Wasamo had first lived there but moved on to the northern part of the Island. Atego left some of his white rocks at Masisi where he first landed. The white rocks can be seen at Masisi upto this day.

According to the oral traditions, Atego came at night and was first seen in the morning by Lugure of the Wagosia sub clan of Wasamo who was living in the home of Yagra from the Walusige sub clan. Since there was no Island there before the white rocks appeared, Lugure was perplexed and called Yagra. When Yagra saw Atego, he was not surprised for he realized that their god had come. He told Lugure not to be worried; he, Yagra was going to perform a sacrifice on the Island. When Lugure complained that since he saw the Island first he was the one who should make the sacrifice, Yagra told him that he could not allow him to do so because Lugure saw the Island from Yagra's home. Yagra then performed the sacrifice on Atego Island; after the sacrifice, it rained very heavily. When Yagra went to see the diviner he was advised to go and prepare himself, because Lombro their forefather who was living on Atego Island was impressed with the sacrifice and wanted to come to his home and show him the art of rain making which he had not revealed to his children before he died.

When they were leaving, Lombro asked Yagra to walk with them out of the home so that he could show the herbs he could use to make rain. Since he refused to go with them, Lombro and his party showed Yagra's wife how to stop and start rain and also gave her a knife for cutting the necessary herbs. After the demonstration the three men advised Mugesi to return home without looking back. She then became a rain maker and was therefore referred to as Mugimbi. The knife which was given to Mugesi has passed through generations to whoever was blessed with the art of rain making in Wasamo clan.

The way one becomes a rain maker in the Wasamo clan is not through desire or training but through luck. The future rainmaker usually found ashes placed in a gazelle's horn sticking up from the ground in a field or a bush. All the Wasamo youths were told that if they found such a thing they were not to destroy it; instead, they had to run home and inform the elders. However, before they did so they had to pick up leaves, spit on them, and throw them on horn saying "*wait for me here while I go to call for elders*". The finder was not supposed to touch it. After informing the elders, a formal welcome to the art of rain making was given to the finder by slaughtering a goat. After skinning a goat, the elders take its skin and make a case for the horn. The meat is eaten and Lombro's knife which was first given to Mugesi is first given to Mugesi, is placed in the hand of person who found the horn; he then formerly becomes a rainmaker. The ceremony is usually interrupted by rain.

When the rain failed in Mfangano, the rain maker in Wasamo was normally consulted. Among other things he did on the day appointed for rain making was to take the horn filled with ashes from its case very early in the morning and placed it on the top of the granary roof. A long soft feather of a bird called *mbugaunga* was placed in the horn so that when the wind blew, it carries the ashes to the sky through the feather. The same day at about 8 o'clock, the rain maker led the elders to Atego Island carrying Lambro's knife. They took with them a goat, a cock and some beer which they gave to Atego as thanks giving. Sometimes Atego himself provided them with a goat of cock which they found grazing and slaughtered in which case they left their own goat and cock a life. Yagra and his wife also from Wasamo were the first rain makers in Mfangano Island. Through Yagra, the art of rain making became very important among the Wasamo and the rain maker was always their chief elder. Eight sub clans of the Wasamo have evolved, jointly forming the fourth largest group in Mfangano Island. They still live in their traditional home at the southern end of the Island. The Wasamo would have been more numerous if their numbers had not been seriously reduced by sleeping sickness about two generations ago.

The Waganda clan is said to have entered Mfangano Island from Bukoli in Busoga, Uganda. The oral traditions of the Suba refer to them as Waganda simply because they came from Uganda. They originally came to Mfangano Island to catch their favourite fish *semutundu* and decided to settle on the island permanently. They settled on Soklo hill where the Wisokolwa and the Wakula were living. The Waganda fought with Wisokolwa over the occupation of Soklo hill. At this time most of the Wisokolwa were driven out of Mfangano Island, however some remained behind. When the power of Wisokolwa and the Wagimbe declined, the Uganda groups of the Abakunta and the Waganda remained to dominate the Island.

The Waganda fled Mfangano Island after when most of their people died of a mysterious disease. Some of them went to Wagasi, Kaksingiri and Kasungu on the mainland of South Nyanza and some of them went to Uyoma and Central Nyanza where they can be traced today. The remnants of the Waganda still live on Soklo hill where they use the Luganda dialect as their medium of communication. The Waganda are known to be specialists in diverting army worms, a skill they inherited from Omugure, a Waganda elder who led them to the Island. A Waganda elder was consulted whenever the army worms invaded the island. The elder would take an army worm with a dark chicken to Omugure's shrine after which the Waganda believed the army worms would leave.

Oral traditions and cultural practices

The historical process of assimilation of the non-Luo groups by the Luo took place between 1850 and 1900 in the Suba area of modern Gwasi, Kaksingiri, Kasungu and the Islands of Rusinga and Mfangano. The process of Luo assimilation of the Suba was accelerated from 1850 by which time the Suba were surrounded by the Luo speaking people. The absorption of the Luo practices and customs was further accelerated by Luo girls who were married into the Suba community and carried Luo traditional ways of life with them. On the other hand, the Suba girls who were married by the Luo were forced to adopt the Luo culture and give up their own.

Currently, the Suba have entirely stopped practicing their culture and adopted the Luo traditions. For example, they have stopped circumcising their sons like what is done in most Bantu communities, and opted for the removal of the lower six teeth, as is common in most nilotic groups. Also gone is their naming system that was based on animals, plants, and natural phenomena; in came the Luo version based on time and objects. The Suba, known to be agriculturalists, have also ditched the hoe for the rod, since fishing is the main economic occupation in Luoland.

The Luo referred to anybody whose six lower teeth were not removed as a foreigner and such people were not treated with great respect in the community. Therefore to be fully accepted by the Luo, the Suba adopted the practice of removing the six lower teeth. There were two reasons why the lower

teeth were removed: (i). It was the only means of identifying a Luo, especially during traditional wars with the Bantu who removed fewer than six teeth; (ii).when one was sick and could not open his mouth he could easily be fed or be given medicine or some liquid through the gap, especially if he had lockjaw. It was also a form of initiation into adulthood. When an adult died before his lower teeth were pulled out he was not allowed to be buried until one was removed and this called for a penalty of a cow. Thus, the Suba removed their children's teeth at an early age of between 12-16 years. Between these ages teeth were pulled out for the price for a chicken or a small basket of grain. The practice was carried out by *Janak* or specialist and gradually became widespread among the Suba. The Suba girls also acquired the Luo practice of tattooing their stomachs (*kedo*) as a symbol of beauty and sign of readiness to get married. For those days people walked naked and the woman with greatest number and unique marks on her stomach and back were most admired. This body art is also closely linked to the Suba oral traditions.

Names and expressions

As the Suba continue to live among the Luo, they began to adopt the Luo names and the Suba traditional names which they had brought with them from Uganda began to disappear significantly. Naming of children after the time of the day or night and season was very popular among the Luo – Abasuba. Children who were born very early in the morning were named Okinyi if male, and Akinyi if female. When a child was born late in the morning when the sun was shining, he was named Onyango; however, if it was cloudy he was named Oluoch; Children born around noon were named Ochieng; those born from two o'clock to six o'clock in the evening were named Odhiambo; those born between five and eight o'clock in the morning were named Ogweno because this is the time the cocks grow.

The Suba also acquired the naming system in relation to the season of the year. Okomo-born during planting season; Odoyo-born during weeding season; Okeyo-born during harvesting season; Okoth-born during rainy season; Achola -born when father died and left the mother pregnant or to a first born when a widow remarried after death of her former husband. The Suba adopted the Luo system of naming children after events such as famine or after an epidemic which killed many people or animals and which was widespread in Luo land. These were usually given common names; so that incase the sex of the child was not very clearly established by name alone.

The other naming system which was adopted by the Suba related to physiological processes which all had meaning and traditional values. They include names such as Okumu-born when mother became pregnant before menstruation since the Luo believed that menstruation must precede pregnancy; Orwa-Child who gave his mother a lot of problems during pregnancy such as longer gestation period than normal or considerable bleeding; Opiyo-first child to arrive after mother gave birth to twins; Odongo- second child of the twin. In case of triplets, there was no special name for the child; Okelo-child who was named immediately after the twins; Owino-child with an umbilical cord around his neck. This cord is referred to as wino among the Luo. The Suba did not like to have twins because of the restrictions Luo people placed on them. When one twin was punished the other had to be punished too even if he had not done anything.

The other final method of naming children among the Luo which has been acquired by the Suba is when a baby kept crying after its birth. The parents of the baby consulted the diviner, who would tell them whether there was a dead person whose spirit wanted the child to be named after him. The Suba believed that if such names were revealed the baby stopped crying. Likewise, if the pregnant mother or father kept on dreaming about a dead relative during pregnancy or immediately after delivery of a baby, the baby was automatically named after that person.

Marriage ceremony

Both monogamy and polygamy are a common practice among the Suba people with the latter taking the upper hand. They married many wives and also practiced wife inheritance (*okuswakra*) to take care

of the children and woman left behind. The wife could get a second wife for her husband or the husband could get one for himself. The wives stayed in the same compound but in different houses with the first wife's house facing the gate indicating that she was the first wife. The bride price was 18-20 cattle or sometimes men who came from far areas could pay bride price in terms of food. The men who paid bride price in terms of food e.g. sorghum left with the girl to their home and started staying together as man and wife. The girl did not know her husband till she reached the man's home and began to live with her. A girl was married at 16 years of age. She had to be a virgin (*omwala okyariokugeniya*) before getting married as this meant high bride price and respect to her family.

The ceremony

When a girl or a man wanted to marry, the aunt (*senge*) looked for a suitable person. Old women from the girl's homestead had to check whether the girl was a virgin (presence of the hymen) before getting married so that she could not a shame the family. On the wedding day she was taken to her husband to be by her friends and some few older women. They escorted her while singing songs. When they reached the man's home the girl-friends were left outside the house while the wife-to-be and the few older women move into the man's house. The bride and bride groom had sex while the older women (from both parties) were watching. The man penetrated the girl and pierced the hymen (*owugima bwaye*) once and removed his penis immediately. The blood (sign of virginity) was wiped with a white cloth by one of the old women. The women busted into praise songs when they found that the girl was a virgin. They kept the white cloth which wiped the blood in a container called '*akadida*'. The cloth was taken to the girl's home by the old women while they were singing and praising the girl's mother for the good work she had done by protecting and educating her daughter.

Death and burial ceremonies

Among the Suba, funerals are occasions for social interactions where family members meet to bury the dead. When a man died before and after his burial his wives poured ashes on themselves to indicate that they had been married to him. In some Suba and Luo groups, the wives of a dead man went naked however, this practice became unpopular and was rejected. In all Suba groups most of the people especially women, cried out loud in their grief while the children and some people played drums. If the deceased was a man, some of the people danced with shields and spears. Among the Suba, when rich people died they were wrapped in fresh skin of a bull slaughtered for the ceremony.

A poor man was placed in an older skin which he had used to sleep on when he was alive. The Suba preferred to bury their dead naked, except for the skin, without ornaments on their bodies, since they maintained that human beings came into the world naked and should be buried naked. The Suba adopted the Luo practice of guarding over the grave for the first few days after the burial. To keep the watchmen warm, the young men made a bonfire in front of the dead man's house. The morning after the burial of a man, the Suba (both men and women) marched towards the place where their traditional enemies lived with several head of cattle. If the dead person was a woman, the women assembled together with small children and marched towards the traditional enemy's home while wailing and singing with branches and decoration all over their bodies usually without cattle. This practice was referred to as *tero buru*. Its significance was to chase death away to the enemy's side and to pay their last respects to the dead man. The *tero buru* ceremony is also widely practiced among the Luo.

Three days after burial, the centre roof-stick from the dead man's house was removed to indicate that the owner of the home had died. For the first few days after the burial the Suba watched the grave claiming as the Luo did that they did this to prevent the medicine man who might have caused the death of the deceased from getting soil from the grave and to ward away the ghost of the dead who could come back in the form of a spirit to avenge his death. They also believed that the night runners could exhume the dead body if it were not watched, and use it for making medicine to cause more deaths to other people. During this period, the young people and in-laws came and entertained the mourners with traditional songs.

On the fourth day, the entire family of the dead had their hair completely shaved off with a razor bade, and a bull was slaughtered as part of the formalities. Suba shaved their hair on the 4th day for a man and 3rd day for a woman. After shaving and feasting on the meat, some relatives dispersed, although close relatives remained. The entire mourning period is about three months or more during which all ceremonies were completed. However, most of the urgent funeral customs were considered fulfilled when the wife or wives of the dead man were remarried by their in-laws.

The Suba had different burial sites of deceased person depending on the status in the community. Infant (not teethed) was buried just next to the verandah or doorstep. One who has teethed was buried besides house. *Omugogo*-lady who is not married was buried next to the fence. *Omusumba* - man who has not married is buried besides his parents' house. *Omukazi* (wife) was buried on the left side the house. *Omusaaza* (husband)-is buried facing his house main door. A polygamist was buried in the first wife's compound or facing the door of the first wife if other wives lived in the same compound.

Beliefs and cosmovision

The religious beliefs among the Suba originated before the coming of Christianity and Islam. The medicine men, wisemen (*jabilo*, *ajuoge*) and heroes were very important in the daily life of the Suba because they held life in their hands. Among the elders there was need for ritual act referred to as *dolo*, a sacrifice given to the dead. Sacrifice to the dead helped to restore order in the family once that order had been disrupted. An animal or a chicken had to be slaughtered and the departed, especially the spirits of the forefathers were invited to come and accept the offering. All creatures including the departed, all human beings were linked together in the sacrifice. To achieve this, the elder had to see a diviner who prescribed what had to be offered.

In their concept of deity the Suba did not believe in one god whose was responsible for the whole universe and for punishing those who had done evil during their life. They believed that if an individual had through evil practice, caused death to many people, he escaped punishment once h was dead. The spirit of the dead could only haunt the evil- doer when he was still a live. Therefore, in life he would suffer for his action but when he died he automatically received protection from his ancestors, relatives and friends who had died before him.

The Suba also believed that once a person died he went into unity of all things and it became his responsibility to give protection to his descendants especially against the evil spirits. They strongly believed that the departed visited them either in dreams or through a diviner which called for a sacrifices and offerings. Sacrifices and offerings were taken as a means of reunion and communication with the dead. The Suba also communicated with the departed through dreams, by means of diviners known as *ajuoga* and also through *juogi* both of whom were possessed with power to act as a bridge between the dead and the living.

Moreover, the Suba believed that the spirit of the dead came back to the living in the form of mammals or other forms of animals known to them as *juogi*, for example, snakes, army worms and in many other forms of living creatures. *Juogi* were sacred and as such could not be killed or thrown out of the house without consulting the diviner who interpreted the real meaning and the purpose of their coming. The spirit of the dead could also enter a man or woman who would then be possessed with the spirits and become a bridge between the living and the dead.

The departed according to the Suba also visited his relatives when something bad was going to happen to them. He thus warned the members of the family and suggested through the diviner what had to be done to rectify the situation. The Suba also believed that the gods lived very far away and could not be reached by ordinary people and infact did not involve themselves directly with the daily life of the people. The only people who could reach the gods were the departed. The ancestors or the spirits of the departed acted as mediators between god and man. When sacrifice was offered, the elders evoked the spirits of the dead or passed the message to the gods to come and receive the sacrifice. If the sacrifice was accepted the threatening situation was averted. However, the deity in the Suba

community was approached through a human hierarchy. For minor problems affecting a family, a dead grandfather or grandmother were consulted through a diviner and sacrifices. A more complex problem affecting a sub – clan was taken to the founder of the sub-clan. The founder of the clan was consulted for a bigger problem which affected the entire community thus it was only the founder of the clan who could reach the Suba gods.

Traditional music and oral expressions

The Suba used traditional music in most of their events and ceremonies, both happy and sad occasions. For example, in funerals there is drumming and music to entertain mourners. Besides funeral rites and marriage ceremonies, they were also used in initiation rites, soothsaying, hunting, and fishing and during war. Musical instruments were also used to send specific messages as well as to transfer knowledge and skills, and to motivate action through praise singing. The following musical instruments were mentioned as the most important: Owukano (kamba nane), Engoma- (drum), *Ibu* (calabash pieces held together and attached to the horn), *Nyatiti*, *Orutu*, *Enkuyo* and *Omutembe* which is made from a skin of a monitor lizard. Many of these instruments were identified in Mfangano Island. Although some of the instruments can be played solo, a combination conveys much more meaning with regard to the sort of messages transmitted to meet the requirements of each occasion. *Nyatiti* rhythms stimulate the audience to participate fully in different social occasions by dancing and singing. However, the skills to construct and play the traditional musical instruments are slowly dying out. This is because the younger generations appear unconcerned to acquiring these skills, while the aged who can make and use the instruments are also passing away without transmitting their valuable skills.



Suba musical instrument – (Owukano)

Transmission of oral traditions and knowledge

Narratives, songs, proverbs and riddles played a very significant role in the education and socialization of children. They were used as tools to among other things, inspire, encourage, rebuke, congratulate, advise, warn, scorn as well as sharpen the mind and deepen the knowledge of language and important skills and also entertains. Occasionally there would be interplay between a proverb and a story. A story might be narrated to expound on the wisdom summarized in a proverb. A proverb might be found in a story acting as one of the devices employed by the narrator.

At night among the Suba, children gathered together in their grandmother's house where they received moral instructions through stories and proverbs. The stories conveyed moral and spiritual training to the youths and the stories had their own significance. Most of the stories originated from the grandmother's own experiences in life, although some of them had passed down through generations. Every child in the grandmother's hut had also to recount a story which he or she had learned.

A part from being a moralist, the grandmother also acted as a historian to the children, acquainting them with stories of the important events about how they came to settle in their traditional homes, the wars they fought, the great heroes of those wars. The grandmother told the stories of proud people whom they had seen fall, and the poor ones who progressed through hard work. Past heroes were praised through the children who were named after them. The grandmother ended their stories with a word of advice that they (children) should not laugh at unfortunate people because they do not know when their turn comes. The children were therefore entertained, educated and given a philosophy of

life. Another method of imparting knowledge to the youth was through proverbs. Proverbs were practical education which added more knowledge to the understanding of things. However, proverbs were additionally meant to make children think faster and more creatively about their environment

Finally, we can conclude that the adoption of the Luo names, the Luo system of marriage and way of life of life, the Suba eventually became Luo in practice. The Luganda which had been accepted as language of communication among the Suba was disregarded by all except the older people. Dholuo Suba which began in about 1850 was completed two generation ago. The British intervention in 1903 which brought in new system of administration, education and religion further accelerated the assimilation of the Suba into Luo way of life between 1903 and 1940.

THE YAAKU

Background

The Yaaku or Mukogodo are people living in the Mukogodo forest west of Mount Kenya (see figure.1). 'Mukogodo' means people who live in rocks. In this section of the report, the name Yaaku and Mukogodo are used interchangeably to refer to the same group. The original Yaaku speakers migrated from southern Ethiopia. They were probably food producing herders and cultivators who settled among hunter gatherer. The hunter gatherers in whose localities they settled adopted their language, while the Yaaku speakers were assimilated by other food producing people. The original Yaaku speakers then were herders and cultivators. The contemporary Yaaku speakers are turning or returning increasingly to herding, but for along time between this period of food production the people who had adopted the Yaaku speech were hunters and gatherers. The name Yaaku is the southern Nilotic term for hunting people. A turn to cattle husbandry by the hunter gatherers was the result of a few centuries exposure to the influence of surrounding and dominant Maasai speakers. Nevertheless, beekeeping has been retained as a traditional pursuit. Contemporary Yaaku speakers, the Mukogodo, continue to maintain that Eastern Cushitic language in the same manner the Dahalo of the hinterland have maintained many of the elements of the southern Cushitic Dahalo.



Saronei Johanna Matunge, 89 years old is one of the few remaining Yaaku elders.

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The Yaaku land is characterized by hills and plateaus. The hill forms a series of roughly parallel ridges running southeast to northwest. The easternmost ridge rises dramatically from the surrounding plain and is marked by series of striking peaks: *Lolkurugi*-whose name means "crow mountain"; Oldoinyo Lossos, with its distinctive pyramidal shape; Oldoinyo Loo Llbang'i, the thickly forested Kiapei, the cliff-faced Oldoinyo Sang'a. To the west is a prominent ridge marked by Oldoinyo Lengileng'i in the north and Wandiki, which, at more than 7,000 feet (about 2100 m) is the highest peak in the range. Between the two ridges lies the Siekuu River. At the southern end of the Siekuu valley where the ridges meet is Anandanguru plain. West of Wandiki and Kuri-Kuri, is the Ewuaso Nyiro or "Brown River", the only permanent flowing water in the area. The Ewuaso Nyiro forms the western boundary of Mukogodo administrative boundary. To the east and north, are the hills which the Maa speakers call *Purkei*, a flat area of sandy alluvial deposits and rocky outcroppings. The lowlands are crossed by drier river beds such as the Kipsing to the north and the Enkare Ntare, which means "water of the small stock," to the east.

Mukogodo forest is dry and cool. The dominant species are cedar (*Juniperus procera*), wild olive (*Olea africana*) and reflecting the fact that the area is prone to drought, cactus like candelabra trees (*Euphorbia* spp.). Below the forests are grasslands, such as those found in the Anandanguru plain. At lowlands altitudes, mainly in Siekuu Valley and in Purkei, the dominant species are thorny Acacia trees.

Animals

The distribution of wild animal species is determined largely by altitude. The lowlands to the east and north of the forest contain a great number of large games, including Zebra, giraffe, and a wide range of antelopes including the elands and the dik-dik. In the forest there are found antelopes and leopard. Some large animals including elephants and impala live at all altitudes in the Mukogodo area. A wide variety of smaller animals also live in the area including snakes, birds and the rodent like hyrax. The main primates are baboons and vervet monkeys. Nocturnal animals include aardvarks and honey badgers. Most of these animals species are utilized by the Yaaku as source of food.

Climate

Due to the altitude, the area occupied by the Yaaku is much cooler expected from a place so close to the equator. Humidity is very low and temperature is strongly affected by altitude. The temperatures drop to about 5 -10°C in the lowlands surrounding the Mukogodo forest. Rainfall varies a lot with altitude, with more rain usually falling in the forested highlands than in semi-arid lowlands.

Yaaku lifestyle

The Yaaku lifestyle revolved around hunting, beekeeping, trapping and gathering. They occasionally hunted and trapped both small and large animals besides their day to day foraging activities. Their activity simply focused on providing food for their families in the easiest and most reliable way. Even though Mukogodo hunters did pursue a wide variety of species, the main source of meat in their diet was the rock hyrax because it was simple to capture. Other important food species were mainly antelopes, ranging in size from the tiny dik-diks that are so common in the lowlands to huge. The largest game routinely eaten was buffalo, which are said to taste like goat. Rhinoceros were also hunted, but mainly for the horns, which could be



Yaaku traditional homestead.

exchanged with non-Mukogodo for livestock, crops and manufactured goods like beads and iron. Rhinoceros meat was not prohibited but they were not deliberately hunted for meat because their flesh has a strong smell and some elders indicated that Rhinoceros meat has great healing powers. Elephants were also hunted but mainly for ivory trade rather than meat which is prohibited by Yaaku food culture. The exception to this rule was the Sialo clan who had no taboo against eating elephant.

The main tool of a Yaaku hunter was his bow and arrow. Bows were simply curved pieces of wood and arrows were carried in wooden quivers with leather lids and shoulder straps. Arrow shafts were made from the reedy stalks of a plant locally known as *labaai* (*Psidia punctata*) and fitted with iron points. The Mukogodo had no blacksmiths of their own, but because iron has been smelted in East Africa for many centuries they were able to trade for it.

The fact that the Yaaku delineated territories reflected the importance of bee keeping to their way of life. A typical Yaaku hive is about one meter wide and about a third of a meter wide. It is made of a hollowed log, with lids in the ends and a small opening so that bees can enter and leave. Often they are made from a crotch of a tree so that they are shaped like a “Y”. A finished hive would be placed in the branches of a tree. When harvesting honey the Yaaku smoke to make the bees docile so that the honey comb could be extracted. Mukogodo men also seek out naturally occurring hives in hollow trees and crevices in the rocks. As described latter in this report, they are aided by honey guide. They are called

Ino, which have a distinctive chattering voice. When the bird is followed it leads to a bee hive that has already located. The importance of honey for Mukogodo as foragers is reflected in the seriousness with which they treat honey thieves. The thief was to pay several heads of cattle.

Assimilation of the Yaaku

Former hunter-gatherers and bee-keepers, the Yaaku were assimilated to the pastoralist culture of the neighbouring Maasai in the first half of the twentieth century (1920's and 1930's), although there is still some occasional bee-keeping going on today. The reason for this transition is mostly one of social prestige. The Maasai look down upon hunter-gatherer peoples, calling them Dorobo (the poor folk without cattle), and many Yaaku consider the Maasai culture to be superior. As a result of the assimilation the Yaaku almost completely gave up their Cushitic language *Yaakunte* for the Maasai language. The Maasai variant they speak nowadays is called Mukogodo-Maasai. The Yaaku language



Yaaku man hunting – most of the Yaaku have abandoned hunting and turned to keeping livestock.

has been classified by UNESCO as being extinct. The Yaaku's existence has not been acknowledged in official documentation, including the national census, because they are grouped with their more populous neighbours, the Maasai.

The beginning of the end of the Yaaku culture is attributed to the tribal conflicts between the Yaaku and their neighbours which led to killings of many Yaaku people. The few who had remained disintegrated and settled in blocks according to families and clans within specific territories. A war broke out a few years later between the Yaaku and Ameru at a place called Oldoinyo esarge, or blood hill where hundreds of Yaaku were killed. Within the same time, the Ilturjo from the north riding on horses (*nyumbui*) attacked the Yaaku, further killing many of them.

The coming of Europeans in 1890's also impacted negatively on the Yaaku lifestyle. The colonial administration disrupted the Yaaku way of life by banning Africans' game hunting to stem competition with commercial sport hunters. The Yaaku, a hunter-gatherer community, was badly hit as most of the Yaaku men became herders for the Maasai. Similarly, many of the Yaaku intermarried with the Maasai, who latter were assimilated into Maasai culture thus abandoned their language and started speaking Maa (the Maasai language). Like the Suba who were assimilated by the neighbouring Luo, Yaaku social life was badly affected as a result of the assimilation into Maasai culture. For example, the Maasai who were rich in livestock used the opportunity to entice the daughters of Yaaku. Since the Yaaku had no livestock to pay dowry for the Maasai girls, the Maasai girls were out of their reach. Therefore, many of the Yaaku men died without a family. Similarly, the Yaaku used the hind leg of a giraffe as crucial part of bride price and outlawing giraffe hunting meant that young men could not marry.

Oral history and traditions

According to Yaaku oral traditions, the Yaaku are divided into 4 major clans: Oldoinyo Lossos, Luno, Orondi and Sialo clans. The clans can further be broken down into thirteen lineage groups and identified by hills and localities in which they settled (see table below). The Sialo clan migrated into the region between eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Lentolla lineage whose territory included the large mountains of Oldoinyo Lossos and Lolkirugi are said to be the earliest known inhabitants of the Mukogodo forest. Until the middle or late nineteenth century they lived in the lowlands east of the Mukogodo hills around a small hill now called Oldoinyo esarge or 'blood mountain'. There they hunted, kept bees and gathered plants. According to the elders, the Sialo are relatively a recent addition to Mukogodo which is supported by the fact that their territories they occupy are relatively small and clustered on the slopes of the hills facing Oldoinyo Esarge. Furthermore, the Sialo have different customs, particularly food taboos than other Mukogodo. For example most of the Yaaku groups do not hunt or eat elephant because the elephants have mammary glands that are arranged like a woman's breasts rather than like an adder and thus, eating elephants is tantamount to eating people. However, the Sialo clan had no such prohibition.

The formation of some lineages among the Yaaku was as a result of natural disasters and wars. Two families started this way when drought struck the neighbouring pastoralists Maasai community. The impoverished Maasai men adopted the Yaaku way of life, including hunting beekeeping and even speaking Yaaku language. The first to arrive was a man named Kimbai. He founded the lineage around 1840 called Leitiko which means zebra in Maa. He was adopted as part of Orondi clan, who taught him Yaaku and how to hunt and keep bees. The second to arrive was Mairoi Ole Matunge who formed the Matunge lineage. Mairoi was a Laikipiak, a section of the Maasai that was defeated in a war with other Maasai in the 1870's. He was adopted in the Orondi clan and. His lineage occupied Sepeyo, Kiapei and Itaikan. The Luno clan occupied Norpanga, Waakumpe, Nkaimuruya, Parmasai and Lentile territories.

The Yaaku strictly observed territorial rights during hunting, beehives placement and gathering wild resources and water. All these were limited to members of lineage that owned a particular territory. It was considered bad to travel uninvited in another lineage's territory because seeing another family's flowers, which are crucial for honey production, might breed envy. The Yaaku customary law also held that it was best to hunt on someone else territory only if invited to do so and such invitations were quite common.

<i>Yaaku clans and lineages</i>	
Clans	Member lineages
<i>Orondi</i>	<i>Matunge</i>
	<i>Leitiko</i>
	<i>Pardero</i>
	<i>Losupuko</i>
<i>Sialo</i>	<i>Sakui</i>
	<i>Parmashu</i>
	<i>Moile</i>
	<i>Nantiri</i>
	<i>Lioni</i>
<i>Ol Doinyo Lossos</i>	<i>Lentolla</i>
<i>Luno</i>	<i>Liba</i>

Age sets

The traditional method of utilizing generations has been used for dating events which took place in Yaaku history. The average length of Yaaku generation is estimated at fifteen years. An age-set system among the Yaaku is like an age grading system but in addition to marking the stages in the live of individuals, it also takes people who are going through life's stages at more or less the same time and gives them a group identity. The Yaaku have been following the age set system of the Maasai since about the middle of the nineteenth century, making it one of the first aspects of Maasai culture to be adopted by the Yaaku. The key event in this system is circumcision, which begins the transition of a male from a boy to warriors (*murrān*) - the first stage of adulthood. Afterwards the *murrān* will become an elder.

About every fifteen years a new age set is named at which men are circumcised to identify themselves as part of the same age set. The age sets are further subdivided into the "right hand" (*tatene*), meaning those circumcised earlier in the fifteen year period and "left hand" (*kedianye*), meaning those circumcised later in the period. The Yaaku do not choose the names of the age sets or the timing of the transitions between age sets themselves. Women go through a ceremony similar to circumcision in men, though more extreme in terms of the surgery involved, but they are not organized into age sets in the same way as men. In this case, a woman is associated with the age set of her husband, regardless of the difference between their ages.

<i>Yaaku age set</i>		
<i>Approximate circumcision dates</i>	<i>Yaaku age set names</i>	<i>Corresponding Maasai age set names</i>
c.1850	<i>Nyankusi</i>	<i>Nyankusi</i>
c. 1865	<i>Peles, Marikuni</i>	<i>Merisho, Aimer, Peles</i>
c. 1880	<i>Talala, Terito</i>	<i>Talala</i>
c. 1895	<i>Merisho, Nyankusi</i>	<i>Mirisho, Tuati</i>
c. 1912	<i>Meruturot, Tareto</i>	<i>Meiruturut, Tareto</i>
c. 1921	<i>Tiyeki, Kileko</i>	<i>Tiyeki, Terito</i>
1936- 1947	<i>Mekuri, Nyankusi</i>	<i>Kalikal, Nyankusi</i>
1948- 1959	<i>Kimaniki, Kirimat</i>	<i>Kiramat, Terekeyiani, Seuri</i>
1960- 1975	<i>Kishille, Kiyapo</i>	<i>Keruti, Kiseeyia, Kitoipi</i>
1976- 1989	<i>Kiroro</i>	<i>Kishili</i>
1990	<i>Meoli</i>	

Source: Lee Cronk, 2004. From Mukogodo to Maasai, Ethnicity and cultural change in Kenya.

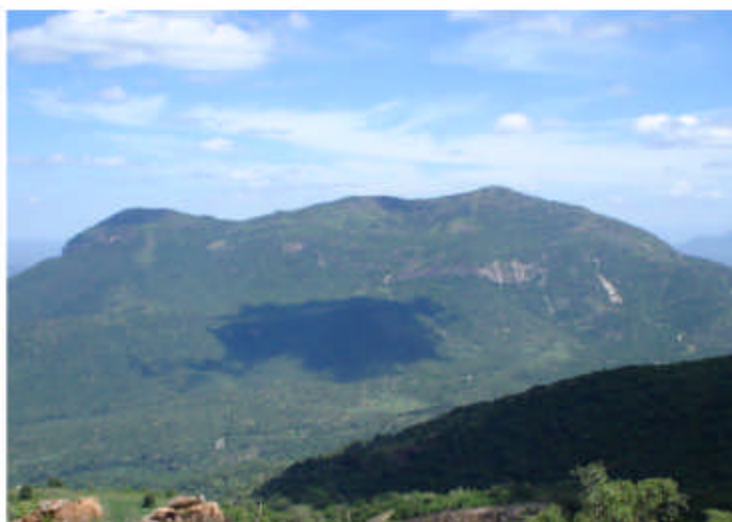
<i>Yaaku historical events</i>	
<i>Approximate date of historical event</i>	<i>Yaaku name for event and meaning</i>
1898	<i>Lameyu Loo Lonito</i> - This is when a major drought was experienced among the Yaaku. They were forced to feed on dry hide which they used as beddings due to lack of food. They were also forced to feed on donkey meat.
1906	<i>Naimin</i> - Eclipse of the sun occurred. It was during the same time that the first evacuation of the Maasai from the highlands by the white settlers occurred.
1926	<i>Ntoror</i> - This is the time when the Maasai (neighbours of the Yaaku) were greatly affected by drought and sought refuge among the Yaaku in Mukogodo forest.
1934 -36	<i>Lameyu le Nadotolit</i> (drought of the red marrow) -

	Rinderpest attacked Maasai cattle killing thousands of livestock. The Yaaku, who had abandoned their way of life to pastoralism, resorted back to hunting and gathering after losing most of their livestock.
1963-64	<i>Lari Loo Nkariak</i> (Year of floods). This is remembered because there was a land slide which killed destroyed the home of Lesootian, the Samburu leader.
1965	Bandits invaded the Yaaku and took away most of their livestock.
1984	<i>Olameyu</i> – (Yellow maize famine) Great famine of was experienced in the region.

Religion and practices

The Yaaku elders give conflicting accounts of the existence of their god whom they refer to as *Yecheri*. Some believe that their God live on top of the nearby Mount Kenya and insisted that if one was to climb to the top of the mountain he would be swept down by strong winds. The holiest place in the Mukogodo area was the top of

Oldoinyo Lossos, the most visually striking if not quite the highest peak in the region. The leader of a family would climb to the top of Ol Doinyo Lossos and make offerings to God of honey, blood, fat, and milk. Some elders indicated that offerings were made simply by leaving the food at the peak, while others said that sometimes honey and water mixed and then shaken onto the ground. Sheep were sacrificed on top of Ol Doinyo Lossos. In addition to the top of Oldoinyo Lossos, there were other, less important holy places in the forest, including a particular water source, a small hill in the Siekuu Valley, and particular trees locally known as *Hindadai*. At *Hindadai*, the contents of a slaughtered animal's stomach could be rubbed on the tree as an offering.



Oldoinyo Lossos hill: The hill is regarded as the holiest among the Yaaku.

Similarly, prayers and worship took place during famine, flooding, times of war and after unsuccessful hunting and gathering seasons. The ceremony was held under sacred trees (*Warbugia ugandensis*, *Juniperus procera* and *Sinandet*) deep in Mukogodo forest. A mixture of honey and water from a sacred rock called *loitip* is sprinkled around the trees by elders as they ask god for intervention. As they leave the site they sing songs of worship and praise as they walk back home. Most of the time when rain ceremony is performed, it would be followed by heavy rains as the elders walk back home.

When the Yaaku fail to capture any animal after a hunting expedition, they feel threatened because this was their only source of food. Therefore, intervention to address the menace is sought by performing a blessing ceremony called *sheetu isheepi*. Elders call all hunting groups within the clan and are asked to bring along their hunting materials. Elders go round sprinkling honey beer, water mixed with honey and spitting saliva to the hunters while they are uttering words of blessings and prayers asking *yechere*, God to intervene and rescue the situation.

Names and expressions

Naming of children was done after relatives, mainly elderly relatives. For example girls were named after their grand and great grand mother while boy after their grand and great grand fathers. Generally, names of great leaders, brave warriors, great hunters and other close relatives were used. Plants and animals, landscapes i.e. hills, water point's birds were as well used to name children and families. For example *Morijoi*- named after *Acokanthera schimperi* plant (cactus species); *Leitiko*- named after the Zebra; *Looltarakwa*- named after *Juniperus procera* plant; *Loruko Imotonyi* - meaning trail of vultures; *Matunge* – meaning refugee from the purko (the neighbouring Maasai clan). Women known as *Damati sirgen* (elderly women) were responsible for naming were elderly women. Sometimes parents were given chance to suggest names for children after which they discussed and blessed by *damati sirgen*.

Traditional music and oral expressions

As forest dwellers, the Yaaku devised ways of communicating across the vast territory. There were different means and ways of communicating. For example: Horns (*Mailog*) – there were different styles of blowing horns to convey specific messages e.g. *lokol mailog* made from Impala or Kudu horn was played to alert people to migrate incase of pending attack or war. The same horn was blown differently to inform people about village meetings and ceremonies; Flutes (*Saarian*) – the flute made from bamboo stem, was played to excite animals like giraffes during hunting. The melodious sound of *saarian* calms the giraffe thus easier to shoot.

Bird chirping and behaviour relay some information which the Yaaku are able to interpret e.g. to tell the presence of an animal, snake, predator or enemy. Honeyguide (birds) locally known as *Ino* are able to communicate and guide honey harvesters to beehives by making prolonged sounds while the hunter whistle along to keep track. When it goes silent then one knows that within the vicinity there is a beehive. When Wood peckers (*Kitilo*) chirp continuously near a homestead, it is interpreted as a visitor is coming with important information. The Wood pecker also tells the invasion by enemies by making a different sound thus members of homestead are alerted. Pied crow (*Kirrianga*) leads hunters to where an animal has died by perching on a tree near the carcass and make specific sound. It also leads the hunter by flying to the direction of the dead animal. Yaaku warriors have their own way of communicating. For example, *ngoron nasaarian* sound is made by warriors to alert others about their presence. Similarly, *saarian shukinyieeinga aeku* are war cries made by worriers to alert other worriers of the impending attack from the enemy.

Songs

Songs play important roles among the Yaaku. They can be categorized according to their social functions and application i.e. songs for circumcision which are sung before and during circumcision; war songs sung in preparations for war, song sung by men when they victoriously return home from war; work songs which are sung during work especially when it is done communally. The workers use them to entertain themselves and by doing so make their work more interesting. Wedding songs are composed and sung by women both young and old. They are sung to celebrate weddings which mark entry into the highly valued institutions of marriage and family. There are also special songs which are sung during and after delivery. The chorus is led by blood relatives of the woman who has given birth. Story songs are sung during oral narratives to children. They are sung by the narrator who at the instance of singing represents a character singing during the happenings in the story. Singing games are games that employ song and drama. The children dramatize actual phenomena as they sing. Lullabies are also common among the Yaaku. They are sung to calm down babies especially when they are crying or uneasy. They are sung by adults or by children baby sitting their young brothers and

sisters. When Yaaku men successfully killed a giraffe (*shangito keru*) the women celebrated by singing a song called *nakureeny*. However, most of these songs are hardly sung because of the assimilation of the Yaaku by the Maasai. The elders could only remember a few lines of the songs as shown below. We could not get a translator for the songs because the present young generation does not understand either speak or write fluent Yaaku.

Nakureeny - Sung after a successful hunt.

ketu-lehen lah ti sialo x 4
kha hani in - nchan loyoni iltujo x4
mailog orse samandera x4
Naa-mailog olgiso ti-ene-aureeche x4
loorte risin nianyeso, raure okiri nianyesio x4

Rhimboti - Circumcision song.

Rhimboti ekh-ani nyamari lataashe nakuetie kuteishe x2
Yaaku- Laati te kutei eleitiko ke-nanduele yiee oo hooyie
x2

Naigisi - Leisure time/socialization or wedding ceremony song.

Maigisi nenete tengou monkoi, tetini eneenete
ngomongoi atate tok euesomek sikito enegasauti
kinyaligwa yioo enetohe shuupi hani kedeute misa x2
Ita – kheti neneeta, ene- hani shiipei enghaen shuuk x2

Praise of brave warriors

Meeta apanikijoki enkaputaniai, amu maaitieu
enkingodlae malangume, mira loitiewua
enkingodia emuny x3
Kemuto kilimau, sakuta olbor x2
Soito ole moite naingora kilimaa sakata oibor
times x 3
Malanchoi nadaru, nelo sioki x3
Keipira sekenge, serengwenyi x3
Partiloo loldepe, melotie ina x3
Ngari oltaliani, neratooyie x3

Songs to praise bees

Lep – lepo pohone x 3
Naritaat kikeehen kuso x3
Keloe laapi titi waaghahe eok x 3
Sakamasi titi iki kehenu ongoku isese pupu uti x3

Lullaby song

Oooh, nairorie ai, nosim eyieyio kini ai x 2
Nalili neropil, kini ai x 2
Kenare nkukurto, nkediennyaa x2
Nenare asampulal, ironyi x 2

Proverbs and Parables

The Yaaku, who were cave dwellers people were not as social and lived quiet life in caves. Much of their time was spent hunting and gathering. However proverbs and riddles played a very significant role in the socialization of the children. For example, *Kuteei tikuisi* (every body with his own thing). It's derived from a story where two men went harvesting honey but refused to share with his friends. That evening as they rested in the cave, his friends had to leave to find honey because they were hungry. Later when they came back to the cave with a lot of honey they told his friend 'kutei tikuisi'. To the Yaaku children, they were being reminded to be mindful of others and share the little that is available. *Asikai tilo duuru tikui kole ti rodo kwele* was used to refer to someone who forgo small things to achieve a lot. *Togoro ti laingisa te teneiga lentei* (end it like the ear of ole *Ntoika*). This proverb was used by the Yaaku to end an argument or final statement after a meeting.

We can conclude that since time immemorial the Yaaku were cave dwellers hunter-gatherers. However, today they have settled in six villages located in a wide area around the forest where they supplement their traditional beekeeping with the raising of cattle and goats. In their social life, they are greatly attached to their surroundings that comprise their natural environment and cultural heritage i.e. trees, hills, animals, and caves. Because they were initially cave dwellers and without livestock, the Maasai branded the Yaaku as "ontorobo," meaning "poor people."

Similarly, colonialism in the nineteenth century brought unprecedented tribulations to the Yaaku. Game hunting was banned and the colonial government attempted to settle the Yaaku outside their forest. Coupled with a high rate of assimilation into Maasai culture, such external onslaughts left the Yaaku weakened and disoriented, both culturally and socially. But perhaps the worst that befell them was when in 1937 the government of Kenya declared Mukogodo forest as a protected area, which in turn led to their eventual relocation into villages and their transition toward a more pastoral lifestyle

THE SEGEJU

Background

The Segeju live in Kwale district of southern Kenya, mainly in the villages of Pongwe and Kidimu and Shimoni and spread across the Kenya –Tanzania border. The history of the Segeju has been the subject of lengthy published debate.' The discussion has been based almost entirely on interpretation of oral traditions as recounted by Segeju informants to various scholars.

The Wasegeju, or, as they were formerly called, the Wakilio, claim they descended from Somalia. The name, “Segeju”, is derived from *kusega*, to draw up the clothes, and *Juu*, high i.e. *kusega juu*. This name was given them, owing to their wearing of the skins around their loins higher than usual. The name was given to them when they came in contact with the Shirazi during the migration around 17th century.



Map showing Segeju settlements - southern Kenya and northern Tanzania. Source: Bethany World Prayer Center.

According to the version of Segeju traditions they affirm that they came from *Shungwaya*. *Shungwaya* is a legendary place thought to have been located in some place to the north of Pate Islands. Another version says that they came from Yemen. The Segeju were attacked by the Galla in the second half of the seventeenth century. One of their groups fled to Lamu Islands where they intermarried with the local people and gave rise to the Bajun. The second group fled to Mwangeta hills while the third group went to the lower Tana. Because of the long droughts in this area, their ancestors moved further south to occupy the present areas of northern Tanzania and southern Kenya. The segeju are struggling to maintain their identity among the more dynamic groups that surround them. They have closely integrated with the Digo and the Shirazi peoples, and have adapted to the agricultural setting. The Segeju formed an alliance with Vasco da Gama's Portuguese settlers and helped to drive away the Zimba from Mombasa. In the seventeenth century, the Segeju were forced out of their territory into towns that became important centers of caravan trade and most of them were employed as porters with the caravans.

Kisegeju as a language was never written and surprisingly their history also was never documented in any script. This is attributed to the Arabs who conquered the East African coastal region and were known for writing in Arabic and Swahili. Today there are Segeju who speak only Swahili, others who speak mixture of Segeju and Swahili, and others who have totally shifted to speaking Digo language (*Kidigo*). Segeju, as a language, is almost but not quite identical to Digo. Therefore Segeju as a language exist though different from Digo, which is closely related to other Mijikenda dialects.

Segeju lifestyle

Today the Segeju live in villages spread along the Kenyan and Tanzania Coast. The main social grouping of the Segeju is the *mlango*, or clan. Their total population is estimated to be between seven to eight thousand and the majority live in Tanzania. The Segeju live mostly in settlements that show a great deal of Arab influence. Segeju traditionally live in big villages. Their square huts (*Nyumba*) are built with mangrove poles and thatched with coconut leaves (*Makuti*). The whole compound or village constitutes a *boma*. It is common for a village to be inhabited by people with a common



Mr. Mtoso Mbaulo Mtoso - Segeju elder. Today, only a few elders can speak fluent Kisegeju.

ancestor. Among the Segeju, like other Bantu tribes, clans were named after their ancestral founder. The Segeju who settled in Kenya belong to the *Wakamazi* clan. On the other hand, the Segeju of Tanzania belongs to Daiso clan.

The Segeju were traditionally hunters and their staple diet included meat and honey. Later on when the Segeju settled down, they intermarried with the populous Digo and embarked on land cultivation. They plant subsistence crops such as maize, sorghum, rice, groundnuts, millet and cassava. They also harvest coconuts, cashewnuts and mangoes both for domestic consumption and as cash crops. Unlike the Segeju of Kenya, the principle occupation of the Segeju who live in Tanzania is fishing. The entire population of the Segeju tribe is Muslim and unlike their counterparts in Tanzania they speak mostly *Kidigo*. *Kidigo* is a language spoken by the Digo (southern Mijikenda sub-group) who are found south of Mombasa along the coastline.

In addition to subsistence farming, forests and the ocean act as sources of income. The Segeju also involve themselves in iron smelting and making of handicrafts. There is also division of labour according to sex and age amongst the Segeju. In general, young boys stay and work with their fathers and grandfathers while girls stay at work with their mothers and grandmothers. Young boys help in climbing and tapping tall coconut trees for palm-wine and felling down ripe coconut fruits. Fishing is mostly done by the Segeju living along the coastline. Fishing is mostly the work of men and boys. The art of rain making is done by elderly men and is hereditary. Boys from certain families sit at the feet of their fathers or grandfathers to learn the rain making skills. Women and girls activities are centered on handicrafts production and farming.

The Segeju are well well-known for making special drums and having famous drummers that would perform in the event of important ceremonies such as: weddings, funerals and coming of age. Also, they were used as a form of communication from village to village. However, today the art of drum making is lost. According to my informants, no one in any of the Segeju villages of Kidimu



Segeju women dancing in a wedding ceremony at Kidimu. Most of the oral traditions are passed over to young generations through marriage ceremonies.

and Pongwe can make drums anymore. Some of the elders could still remember the specific drum beats that were used for weddings. The only remnant of this drumming tradition ever existed is a broken drum that is now kept at one of the homesteads in Kidimu village though it is used primarily for storage purposes now.

Oral traditions

The Segeju people acquired and accumulated knowledge through stories (*N'ngano*), riddles and proverbs. As one grew up, the knowledge gained was applied on the basis of sex roles. The teaching was undertaken by elders and emphasis was put on good virtues and respect for elders. Mothers had the greatest role in education as they started to impart knowledge to children at a very early age. They were assisted by men when the role for boys and girls had to be differentiated. Learning took place at home where in the evenings fire was lit and people sat around listening to stories narrated by the old folk. The stories touched on various issues ranging from the society's accepted moral values to cherished heroes. In telling of the stories a lot of idioms (sayings) were used to show the youth the richness of the Segeju language and culture. Animal characters were used in story telling to depict certain virtues. For example, kindness was symbolized by the sheep, bravery by the hare, and unity and hard work by bees. On the other hand, greediness and jealousy was portrayed by the hyena. Stories were not only for education and entertainment but also for foretelling the future as well. Proverbs were used in most cases when squabbles erupted between women and children. Riddles were exchanged between youths and their grandparents. Their main aim was to test the ability of reasoning of the young people. Poetry was used to mock, praise or ridicule one another.



Segeju drum (Ngoma kuu) displayed at fort Jesus Museum. The drum was used in most of the Segeju ceremonies. The drum was also used as a communication tool.



The Segeju women are well-known for their handcraft skills in making traditional carpets (Mkeka) from coconut leaves.

When imparting knowledge to the young generation, boys were taught by the elderly men the importance of defending their community from enemies. They were also taught about the society's secrets and how to behave as husbands and fathers when married. On the other hand, Mothers were responsible for imparting the accepted societal morals to children. Girls were taught by their mothers and elderly women the importance of being good wives and mothers in their married lives. Boys and girls were taught various skills and crafts which included ornaments, pottery, basketry (*kurichinana*) and traditional carpets (*Mkeka*) for sleeping on made from coconut leaves. They dye palm leaves in various shades of purple and mauve, braid them into narrow strips, and sew them together to make attractive sleeping mats.

Beliefs and attitudes

Like other coastal tribes, the Segeju explain accidents and disasters using the supernatural. Some ancestors may be so angry that they cause havoc in the society. Other illness may be caused by witches and sorcerers. There are many ways of dealing with witches and sorcerers. The most common is that the dead elder who guards the people left behind haunts the evil person. The spirit of the dead will stop haunting when he sacrifices a goat to the same spirit. Ancestral spirits do not just surface to punish the evil but it is believed that spirits are the grand ancestors who check and regulates the behaviour of children, male and women. Among the Segeju it is also widely believed that sometimes ancestors just feel lonely and would like to visit the living. In such cases the ancestors visit their kin and folk through dreams and visions in the form of strange animals or sudden unexplainable fire. In whatever form the ancestor appears he has to be appeased. His needs are investigated through a diviner and the appropriate ritual is performed. If the ancestor feels cold and naked and needs a dress, a shirt or a blanket, the diviner will know the secret corner where the gift is to be placed for the living dead ancestor to pick.

The Segeju also have periodic cleansing ceremony – chasing of evil spirits (*Sherehe ya mwaka*). They go round the village to chase away evil spirits and welcome the new year. They believe that if this ceremony is not performed, then illness and natural calamities will persist. In most cases, it is elders who preside over the cleansing rituals and specific songs are used to invoke the spirits.

Segeju and *Shetani* cult

Segeju belief that demons or *shetani* may enter the bodies of people and cause all manner of mischief therein. This belief is common to the whole Swahili coast and is also found among the coastal Arabs. *Shetani* cult features are derived from orthodox Islamic theology, according to which the devil (*ibilisi*) rules over a host of demons (*sheitan*). It's an ancient semitic concept; the word "satan" is cognate with "sheitan" from which comes the Swahili word *shetani*. The Bantu word *pepo* is also used synonymously with *shetani* and the belief as it exists among Africans is a blend of pagan and Islamic elements.

There are various trends of *shetani* which reside within striking distance, but occasionally a *shetani* from a more distant tribe wanders into Segeju tribe and seizes on one of the inhabitants. A tribe known Nyari which is found in Boma area of Tanzania are responsible for most of the sickness among the Segeju. The Pemba tribe is frequent visitor of the Segeju. A minor tribe of *shetani* called the *Kimasai* is believed to have been left behind by the Maasai when they were raiding the coastal area. One tribe in the name of *jinni* (from Arabic *jinn*) dwells in the sea and are of great importance in the lives of the Segeju fishermen. The *shetani* of one tribe are by no means the same in character; they differ in the same way that the members of a human tribe do.

Shetani are capricious in temperament, and their relations with humans are generally harmful but not always. They can be even be helpful on some occasions, but such help is considered to be harmful and would not be openly solicited. *Shetani* are invisible but are thought to be of human form. The Segeju belief that *shetani* harm people by external action – by tripping them, pushing them so that they fall from coconut trees. Usually, the *shetani* annoy a person by entering into his body, residing in his head most of the time, but also wandering to other organs which they may tamper with and cause disfunction of the body. In this way they may cause a variety of symptoms and if the victim is not treated may become seriously sick.

Shetani ritual dance – Exorcising demons

The *shetani* dance is performed by women when a diviner or witch doctor (*mganga*) is exorcising demons from the affected person. The dance last almost seven days which is the usual custom though some minor dances are done for three days. The dancing is organized into two sessions per day i.e. from 2 – 4 pm in the afternoon and from 8 – 10 pm at night. The victim spent the entire period of the ceremony at a thatched shelter built in front of the diviner's house. At the commencement of the ritual, the dancers gather inside the house of the diviner who chant an invocation. This is a signal for the drummers to tune up their drums by warming the heads of the drums with handfuls of blessing grass.

The drummers sing songs from time to time during the ritual with themes of praise for the shetani. The chanting of the *mganga* and some of the singing are exoteric terms. The diviner himself, and also his assistants also join the dance at intervals during the ritual. The diviner will lead the group in starting each new dance, and then drop out. The climax of the ritual is on the sixth day with the rite of inducing the demon (shetani) to reveal his name referred to as *kutoa jina*. The name is extremely long and goes back many generations.

On the material day before the afternoon session starts, the group of participants dance through the village in procession, led by a sacrificial goat decorated with coloured ribbons. When they reach the dancing place the goat is tied on the front post of the shelter to await its fate. A ritual feast is organized and constitutes rice cakes, coconuts, bananas and bottles of honey. The dancers form a circle around the victim in the shelter. The diviner recite words followed by squeaky voice which is believed to be the voice of the shetani that everybody was waiting for and goes on for about five minutes. This is then interpreted to mean the shetani has been impressed by the dance. When the shetani is completely satisfied with the dance it moves out the victim at the completion of the dance.

At the final stages of the ritual the participants broke into a frenzy dance and the goat is slaughtered. The dancers feast on the food while the diviner bring a bowl of blood from the slaughtered goat which he mix with honey and feed the dancers. On testing the goats blood women become wild. It is said that this women have been temporarily possessed by their old shetani who were unseen attendance at the dance.

Divination

Divination plays a significant role in Segeju culture. This responsibility falls mainly within the domain of the diviner – *mganga wa pepo* literally meaning healers who are inspired by spiritual or unforeseen forces. The word *pepo* stems from the verb *kupepea* meaning “to wave about in the air” , whereas *upepo* means “wind”. The *waganga wa pepo* have gained knowledge on rituals and medicinal plants in part by training but foremost upon instructions of the spirits. They know how to apply protective means against the intrusion of spirits or witches inform of amulets, charms or medicine. In contrast to the sorcerer who uses rites and magic charms for illegal purposes, the



Coconut trees – the Segeju lifestyle revolve around the coconut tree. Coconut products feature mostly in ceremonies and diet.

mganga wa pepo will do so for legal ends and for the benefit of the community. As a specialist of unseen forces he or she deals often with symptoms caused by spirits, known as *ugonjwa wa pepo* or pepo illness. Due to a great variety of spiritual forces, each *mganga wa pepo* will have different qualities and skills so as to handle particular type of spirits. The Segeju look at these specialists as the ones to take care of the social relations, physical and emotional wellbeing and to act against any practice of black magic.

Mganga wa pepo whose main function is to diagnose illness and misfortune and explain their cause. The *mganga wa pepo* will do the same, but in addition he or she with the help of magical remedies counteract bad medicine, witchcraft practices and spirit afflictions. Musical and ritual ceremonies may be needed to enhance communication with the spiritual world whereas physical complaints may be treated with herbal medicines. To diagnose a *mganga wa pepo* can go at will in a dream state and obtain messages from the spirit world and communicate with spirits or have one or more spirit speak through him. More often specific songs are used to invoke the spirit. To discover the cause of and the solution for a problem or sickness, diviners sometimes use oracles consisting of sticks, shells or stones that are thrown on the ground. Oracles may be used as a means of inspiration and guidance.

Spirit possession

The Segeju believe that a person is sometimes possessed by spirits. It may be inherited, it may simply like a person and want him as its associate, it may possess anyone who passes by its haunt for example, large trees, rocks, caves, seashore or it may be sent through witchcraft to harm someone. More commonly, the spirit manifests itself indirectly through illness (both physical and mental), bad luck, bareness, loss of family members and the like. In either case, possession is manifested by all kinds of abnormal behaviour, such as running off into the bush, hysteria, trends, or distorted speech. The distinction between true possession and mere hysteria can only be made by *mganga wa pepo* who invites the spirit to expose itself. He does so with the help of prayers, specific songs or incense that attracts the spirit, which will then “mount into the subject head”, referred to as *pepo anapanda mtu* whereas to exorcise or liberate the powers of the spirit force is called *kupunga pepo*. These spirits are approached by means of specific acts and gifts (these may include recitations, songs, music, odours, colours, foodstuffs, drinks or plants as a part of ritual procedures).

Once possession of spirits is ascertained a ritual is performed in which food drinks and objects are offered to the spirits of the patient. In general spirits desire food or juice of an unripe coconut - *madafu*. The food may consist of a loaf of bread or porridge made of cereals but for the strong and severe spirits fresh blood of an animal is often required. Healing spirits usually require some fruit or juice which they share with the participants. More important to them are the gifts or items that give expression to their healing capacities. After this ritual the patient may become a member of the healers club in which he can control the spirits.

Healing session songs

The healing ritual is accompanied by rhythmic singing session which is combined by rituals to appease spirits. Through the use of songs, the music can open a gateway to altered state of consciousness. The songs that are sung during a group session contain a lot of information about the emotional, social and religious aspects of *pepo*. The type of song and text depends on the situation, the emotional state or the trance behaviour of one or more patients. Many of the songs relate to the worries, the fears and the pain that reinforce the “ill” state of *pepo*. They also reflect how pepo is set free by the singing and how it takes control of the body and mind. Most important is the total opening upto the song by just concentrating on the singing. For this purpose the singers gather around the patient and sing next to his ear.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The transmission of every aspect of peoples' lives is almost exclusively through oral traditions. Despite the negative effects of colonialism, oral traditions have survived and flourished because they are repeatedly recounted at gatherings, feasts, and ceremonies and by retelling as part of everyday living and activities. Oral tradition in Kenya continues to attract interest of researchers and scholars because of its value and relevance to the society. Myths, legends, parables, proverbs and rituals reflect community's life, the spirit of our ancestors and the process of development in our society. However, they remain embedded in the mouths, hearts and memories of oral artists, traditional healers and community leaders waiting to be reactivated, performed, recorded, studied and spread to the entire society. The more we record, study and learn our oral traditions, the more we understand ourselves and the less we are likely to recklessly ape foreign cultures.

The finding of this study shows that intangible cultural heritage can only be protected by the communities that produce and use them. The role of local communities in safeguarding the intangible heritage is well articulated in the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The new approaches of protecting cultural heritage emphasize that indigenous people themselves should record and collect the variety of cultural activities in their communities although researchers from outside the communities can provide assistance in planning the methods for observing, collecting and recording data. In this study, the informants were given an opportunity to take lead in data collection, hence they were able to choose and select the information, expressions and rituals that they perceive as important and wish to preserve and pass on. This was done deliberately so as to encourage them to value their own cultural heritage as being worthy of preserving and passing on to future generations.

But why are we currently concerned about the endangered oral traditions?. At foremost, oral traditions are the reservoirs of a community's culture. It is the granary of the entire body of knowledge of the community thus, there is need for concerted efforts to enhance the protection of endangered oral traditions such as storytelling which in turn aid in the protection of our indigenous knowledge. The cultural experts are worried that due to the spread of formal education, industrialisation and development of information communication technology, the future of oral traditions is bleak. In addition, oral traditions like storytelling, poetry recitals and witty proverbs are gradually dwindling. Secondly, the very last generation of traditional story-tellers and poets are dying and that soon we may not have any oral narratives, oral poems or proverbs to talk about. From this research I can also conclude that oral traditions have been rendered irrelevant by modern society and that it is just a matter of time before they die completely. Furthermore, oral traditions when shared between communities can contribute to unity, peaceful co-existence and development. When groups of people cherish the same oral narratives, landscapes, rituals and songs as elements of a past remembered, they construct a shared heritage that is crucial in creation of a nation

Where then should we begin? From this pilot study, there is a clear indication that before any meaningful attempt to safeguard endangered oral traditions is initiated in Kenya, we need to map out how to protect them and who benefits from their use. There is also need to train cultural heritage professionals in modern ways of collecting, documenting, preserving, analysing and disseminating oral traditions of Kenyan communities.

While conducting research among the Segeju and Yaaku, most of the elders could not remember most of the stories because of serious memory lapse. However, after discussion amongst themselves they were able to recount some of the traditions. They had to transport themselves back to those gone days in order to remember the information well. From this, I can conclude that

memory loss is a major challenge to the protection of oral traditions in Kenya. The Yaaku informants (elders) admitted that they were unable to remember so many things because of advancing age. For example, they did not know when most of the songs were sung, who sang it first, where and in which season. They tried to sing other songs but sang only one line and admitted that they had forgotten the rest. From this observation, I can conclude that when proverbs, stories and poems are not performed regularly, they are stored in the inner chamber of the elder's memory. They stay in the memory for a given time before they are forgotten completely. It is therefore urgent that our oral traditions be revived, performed and preserved in their most natural form.

It is also important to note that sometimes local communities themselves often do not see the importance of preserving their oral traditions, their indigenous knowledge and their languages as they consider their own cultural heritage as backward and as a hindrance to their ability to access "modern society" and economic wealth. It is essential, therefore, not only to create a political environment that values and respects minority cultures but also to encourage communities to become aware of their own cultural treasures and to help them find ways to preserve those treasures.

While it is agreeable that oral traditions can be protected through recordings such as in print and electronic media for storage and wider dissemination, they can survive best in their original form i.e. through performance. Therefore, Researchers and Institutions trusted with protection of cultural heritage should focus their attention on some of the indigenous strategies which are yet to be fully exploited in the protection of oral traditions. This include the use of participatory research methodologies, formation of local artists associations, promoting the use of local languages, supporting local cultural festivals and strengthening the link between researchers, oral artists and members of community.

Language is the most significant vehicle for communicating and preserving intangible heritage and Indigenous Knowledge. From the findings, I can also point out that there is a strong link between protection of oral traditions and local languages. This is because the loss of languages means the loss of unique and unusual linguistic features, which inevitably results in flat uninspiring oral performances. This finally leads to loss of indigenous knowledge. Languages not only carry the historical experience of a people group, they also codify, preserve and express distinctive bodies of knowledge. This calls for necessity for revitalizing and preserving indigenous languages through recording oral traditions e.g., story telling, songs, rituals, everyday life. It has already been mentioned that recording oral tradition can help to maintain cultural knowledge contained in traditional stories and songs. The recording (audio and video) of rituals and dances is also a valuable means for preserving records of cultural activities and expressions and offers an alternative means for passing them on to future generations.

It can also be argued that Indigenous Knowledge is rooted in and transmitted through oral tradition thus, when recording oral traditions, the cultural knowledge contained within stories and songs is also recorded as discussed in the findings of the three communities. In societies where the loss of Indigenous Knowledge is imminent, recordings can help to maintain knowledge that has been collected through generations.

In conclusion, like any other forms of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Kenya, oral traditions are threatened by mainly modern life as rapid urbanization, migration to multicultural urban centers, industrialization and environmental change. Oral traditions and expressions often take place during leisure moments but the leisure times are increasingly being replaced by other forms of entertainment programmes offered by media channels such as televisions and radio thus, there are fewer opportunities for oral expressions. Poems that were once performed for days rarely get chance in the modern lifestyle or if any in the rural areas, the hours are very few. Courting songs that were once a prerequisite for marriage have been replaced by hip-hop songs or digital music.

The extended family system has been broken as a result of socioeconomic strain in which the custodians of oral traditions like grandparents have been replaced by a television which serve as a babysitter for young children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Extensive preliminary surveys should be undertaken in all communities in Kenya (both minority and larger groups) to ascertain the status of all forms of Intangible Cultural Heritage. On the basis of such information a plan for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage can be developed.
2. There is urgent need to develop national strategy and methodology concerning inventory of intangible cultural heritage in Kenya. Kenya which has just ratified the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003 (October 2007). There is need to enforce the convention in collaboration with relevant government organs and institutions like the National Museums of Kenya and the Department of Kenya.
3. Intangible Cultural Heritage is one of the well known basic pillars of knowledge and also an important heritage resource in Kenya. Therefore, this resource should be documented and protected for future reference and use in development programmes such as cultural tourism.
4. The relevant cultural heritage institutions in Kenya should develop operational guidelines for research and documentation of intangible cultural heritage. The guidelines should be based on UNESCO Convention on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003. The National Museum of Kenya being the custodian of the national heritage should be responsible in drawing up such guidelines.

APPENDIX I

Data collecting guidelines

1. Date
2. site (village, geographical/administrative location)
3. Names of persons being interviewed
4. Knowledge of history
 - Origin, migration and settlement.
5. Indigenous creation stories linked to the people through genealogy
6. Local languages
 - Status of their language- extinct?
 - Any efforts to revive the language
7. Rites of passage
8. Ceremonies (birth, name, marriage, death);
9. Naming systems,
10. Place names and their significance
11. Historical calendars
 - Historical calendars to point out major events among the communities.
12. Cultural spaces (sacred sites) in which the ceremonies are performed
13. Traditional games and competition
14. Economic practices (traditional economy)- hunting, trapping and fishing practices and places
15. knowledge about sacred places and historic sites
16. Traditional governance system (leadership and authority)
17. Traditional music and instruments
 - Circumcision songs– songs sung before and during circumcision.
 - Death - Song sung by men/women during mourning period and after burial ceremony
 - War – songs sung during preparations for war, sung by men when they victoriously return home from the war.
 - Work songs – songs sung during work especially when it is done communally. The workers use them to entertain themselves and by doing so make their work more interesting.
 - Wedding songs – They are composed and sung by women both young and old. They are sung to celebrate weddings which mark entry into the highly valued institutions of marriage and family.
 - Birth e.g. of twins- They are sung by the blood relatives of the woman who has given birth to twins.
 - Story songs – these are songs that are found within oral narratives. They are sung by the narrator who at the instance of singing represents a character singing during the happenings in the story.
 - Singing games – These are games that employ song and drama. The children dramatize actual phenomena as they sing.
 - **Lullabies** – lullabies are sung to soothe babies especially when they are crying or uneasy. They are sung by adults or by children baby sitting their young brothers and sisters.
18. Material culture and artifacts e.g. musical instruments and hunting tools.
19. Use of plant and animals material.

APPENDIX II:
INVENTORY FORMS (DRAFT)

Summary of an inventory on oral cultural heritage as described in the above report.

1

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 16th November 2007

1.2. **Place of recording (Administrative Location)**

Village Ramba **Location** Mfangano **Division** Mfangano

District Suba **Province** Nyanza

1.3. **Ethnic group** Suba

1.4. **Language classification** Bantu speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Naftali Mattah **Age** 55 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status in community:** Project leader-Bible Translation Literature - Mfangano

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded Social practice

3.1. **Genre** Ritual

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** Tero buru

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** Sending the ash

3.4. **Origin:** The Suba acquired the practice after assimilation into Luo culture between 1850 and 1900.

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Suba – Kenya

3.6. **Context of application** Burial ceremony

3.7. Place (where) Deceased home

3.8. By whom Both Men and Women. Children participate if the deceased person is a woman.

4.0. Instruments used (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

Spear, Shield, Leopard skin, and headgear made of bird feathers

4.1. Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available) Yes No

4.2. If Yes, where? (Custodian)

In all the villages visited by the research team in Mfangano Island

4.3. If No, Give reason _____

5.0. Methods of transmission Through actual participation in the ritual dance ceremony

6.0. Current status

6.1. Endangered? Yes _____ X _____ No _____

6.2. If yes, How? Currently, very few young Suba generation participate in the ceremony. Some villages burial ceremonies are undertaken without performing the ritual.

7.0. Safeguarding methods

7.1. Local level (Community) A local working group has been set up to help in reviving Suba language and cultural practices.

7.2. National level (Agency) The National Museum of Kenya and Department of culture are working towards safeguarding endangered languages.

8.0. Comments by the recorder/collector _____

9.0. Details of the recorder/collector

Name Ruth Adeka

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ Date 16th November 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 16th November 2007

1.2. Place of recording (Administrative Location)

Village _____ **Location** Mfangano **Division** Mfangano

District Suba **Province** Nyanza

1.3. **Ethnic group** Suba

1.4. **Language classification** Bantu speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Naftali Mattah **Age** 55 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status in community;** Project leader-Bible Translation Literature – Mfangano Island

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded Oral expression

3.1. **Genre** Legend

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** Okuwangana

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name:** To unite, or a place where people united.

3.4. **Origin :** The name originated due to the fact that Mfangano Island provided refugee to groups that were conquered in the mainland by the more populous Luo.

3.5. **Ownership (clan/village)** Suba

3.6. **Context of application** Suba oral history

3.7. **Place (where)** _____

3.8. **By whom** _____

4.0. Instruments used (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

4.1. Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available) Yes_____No_____

4.2. If Yes, where? (Custodian) _____

4.3. If No, Give reason _____

5.0. Methods of transmission _____ Oral/verbal _____

6.0. Current status

6.1. Endangered? Yes_____X_____No_____

6.2. If yes, How? The young Suba generation do not either speak or understand the Suba language

7.0. Safeguarding methods

7.1. Local level (Community) A local working group has been set up to help in reviving Suba language and cultural practices.

7.2. National level (Agency) The National Museum of Kenya and Department of culture are working towards safeguarding endangered languages.

8.0. Comments by the recorder/collector _____

9.0. Details of the recorder/collector

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ Date 16th November 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 17th November 2007

1.2. Place of recording (Administrative Location)

Village Ramba **Location** Mfangano North **Division** Mfangano

District Suba **Province** Nyanza

1.3. **Ethnic group** Suba

1.4. **Language classification** Bantu speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Patrick Lumumba **Age** 51 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status in community:** Elder and local administrator – Mfangano Island

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded Social practice

3.1. **Genre** Ceremony/ritual

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** Dolo

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** Unusual happenings

3.4. **Origin:** The Suba acquired the practice after assimilation into Luo culture between 1850 and 1900.

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Suba – Kenya

3.6. **Context of application** Sacrificial ceremony

3.7. **Place (where)** Sacred forest (Ekiwaga)

3.8. **By whom** Medicine men and wisemen (Jabilo and Ajuoge)

4.0. **Instruments used** (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

4.1. **Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available)** Yes ___ No ___

4.2. **If Yes, where? (Custodian)**

4.3. **If No, Give reason** _____

5.0. **Methods of transmission** Hereditary – It is usually inherited from family members

6.0. **Current status**

6.1. **Endangered?** Yes _____ **X** _____ **No** _____

6.2. **If yes, How?** Currently, only a few families perform the ritual

7.0. **Safeguarding methods**

7.1. **Local level (Community)** _____

7.2. **National level (Agency)** The National Museum of Kenya and Department of culture are working towards safeguarding Kenya's rich cultural heritage.

8.0. **Comments by the recorder/collector** Most of the Suba people have turned to christianity as their religion, hence has had negative impact on most of their cultural practices.

9.0. **Details of the recorder/collector**

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ **Date** 17th November 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 17th November 2007

1.2. **Place of recording (Administrative Location)**

Village Ramba **Location** Mfangano North **Division** Mfangano

District Suba **Province** Nyanza

1.3. **Ethnic group** Suba

1.4. **Language classification** Bantu speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Patrick Lumumba **Age** 51 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status in community:** Elder and local administrator – Mfangano Island

3.0. **Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded** Oral expression

3.1. **Genre** Music/rhythm

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** Thum Nyatiti

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** Music of Nyatiti

3.4. **Origin:** The Suba acquired the music from the neighbouring Luo community.

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Luo/Suba – Kenya

3.6. **Context of application** Played in social occasions to stimulate the audience to participate fully in the event.

3.7. **Place (where)** In funerals to entertain mourners, marriage ceremonies and initiation rites.

3.8. **By whom** Men

4.0. **Instruments used** (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

A combination with other instruments conveys much more meaning with regard to the sort of messages transmitted to meet the requirement of each occasion.

4.1. **Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available)** Yes No

4.2. **If Yes, where?** Ramba village

4.3. **If No, Give reason** _____

5.0. **Methods of transmission** Hereditary – there are families in Mfangano island who are well known for playing and composing songs using *Nyatiti* as an instrument. The skills are usually transferred to fellow family members by older generation.

6.0. **Current status**

6.1. **Endangered?** Yes _____ X _____ No _____

6.2. **If yes, How?** Very few members of Suba community can play *Nyatiti*.

7.0. **Safeguarding methods**

7.1. **Local level (Community)** Suba Peace Museum is reviving the use of *Nyatiti* among the Suba.

7.2. **National level (Agency)** National Museum of Kenya has collected and preserved *Nyatiti* as artefacts.

8.0. **Comments by the recorder/collector** Most of the Suba people have turned to christianity as their religion, hence has had negative impact on most of their cultural practices.

9.0. **Details of the recorder/collector**

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ **Date** 17th November 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 30th November 2007

1.2. **Place of recording (Administrative Location)**

Village Kuri Kuri **Location** Dol Dol **Division** Mukogodo

District Laikipia **Province** Rift Valley

1.3. **Ethnic group** Yaaku

1.4. **Language classification** Southern Nilotic speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Stephen Leriman **Age** 80 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status in community:** Village elder

3.0. **Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded** Oral expression

3.1. **Genre** Song

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** Nakureeny

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** Praising

3.4. **Origin:** Yaaku hunter gatherers

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Yaaku

3.6. **Context of application** Sung by women after a successful hunt by Men

3.7. **Place (where)** At the *manyattas* (homesteads) or caves as they share the meat.

3.8. **By whom** Sung by women

4.0. **Instruments used** (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

Kudu Horn (*Maiog*)

4.1. **Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available)** Yes No

4.2. **If Yes, where?** Kuri Kuri

4.3. **If No, Give reason** _____

5.0. **Methods of transmission** The song is passed to the young girls by the elderly women. They are taught how to sing and dance through participation..

6.0. **Current status**

6.1. **Endangered? Yes** _____ **X** _____ **No** _____

6.2. **If yes, How?** Most of the songs are rarely sung because of the assimilation of the Most of the songs are rarely sung because of the assimilation of the Yaaku by the Maasai. Change of lifestyle- The Yaaku have also abandoned hunting and gathering and adopted livestock keeping.

7.0. **Safeguarding methods**

7.1. **Local level (Community)** The Yaaku have formed an association (Yaaku Peoples' Association) to help them revive their language and cultural practices

7.2. **National level (Agency)** There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya to document information about the Yaaku by involving the few remaining elders. This is aimed at safeguarding their cultural and natural heritage

8.0. **Comments by the recorder/collector** The Yaaku lifestyle and cultural practices have completely changed in favour of the Maasai lifestyle.

9.0. **Details of the recorder/collector**

Name Henry Saitabau

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ **Date** 30th November 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 30th November 2007

1.2. **Place of recording (Administrative Location)**

Village Kuri Kuri **Location** Dol Dol **Division** Mukogodo

District Laikipia **Province** Rift Valley

1.3. **Ethnic group** Yaaku

1.4. **Language classification** Southern Nilotic speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Stephen Leriman **Age** 80 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status in community:** Village elder

3.0. **Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded** Oral expression

3.1. **Genre** Song

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** Rhimboti

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :**

3.4. **Origin:** Yaaku hunter gatherers

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Yaaku

3.6. **Context of application** Sung during circumcision ceremony

3.7. **Place (where)** In secluded place(sacred shrine) within Mukogodo forest.

3.8. **By whom** Sung by initiates (young initiates)

4.0. **Instruments used** (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

Horn (*Mailog*)

4.1. **Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available) Yes** **No**

4.2. **If Yes, where?** Kuri Kuri and Anandanguru

4.3. **If No, Give reason** _____

5.0. **Methods of transmission** The song is passed to the initiates by the elders.

6.0. **Current status**

6.1. **Endangered? Yes** _____ **X** _____ **No** _____

6.2. **If yes, How?** Most of the songs are rarely sung because of the assimilation of the Yaaku by the Maasai. The Yaaku have also abandoned their circumcision ceremonies and adopted the Murran system of initiation practiced by the neighbouring Maasai.

7.0. **Safeguarding methods**

7.1. **Local level (Community)** The Yaaku have formed an association (Yaaku Peoples' Association) to help them revive their language and cultural practices

7.2. **National level (Agency)** There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya to document and record information about the Yaaku by involving the few remaining elders. This is aimed at safeguarding their cultural and natural heritage

8.0. **Comments by the recorder/collector** The Yaaku lifestyle and cultural practices have completely changed in favour of the Maasai lifestyle. Today they are referred to as Yaaku –Maasai or Mukogodo Maasai.

9.0. **Details of the recorder/collector**

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ **Date** 30th November 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 1st December 2007

1.2. **Place of recording (Administrative Location)**

Village Kuri Kuri **Location** Dol Dol **Division** Mukogodo

District Laikipia **Province** Rift Valley

1.3. **Ethnic group** Yaaku

1.4. **Language classification** Southern Nilotic speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Stephen Leriman **Age** 80 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status:** Village elder

3.0. **Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded** Oral expression

3.1. **Genre** Song

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** Naigisi

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** To jump

3.4. **Origin:** Yaaku hunter gatherers

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Yaaku

3.6. **Context of application** Sung during leisure time/socialization and in wedding ceremony.

3.7. **Place (where)** At bridegrooms' homestead (for wedding).

3.8. **By whom** Men and Women

4.0. **Instruments used** (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

4.1. Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available) Yes ___ No ___

4.2. If Yes, where? _____

4.3. If No, Give reason _____

5.0. Methods of transmission _____ Through circumcision ceremonies _____

6.0. Current status

6.1. Endangered? Yes _____ X _____ No _____

6.2. If yes, How? The Yaaku have adopted the Maasai initiation rites (*Murran*)

7.0. Safeguarding methods

7.1. Local level (Community) The Yaaku have formed an association (Yaaku Peoples' Association) to help them revive their language and cultural practices

7.2. National level (Agency) There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya to document information about the Yaaku by involving the few remaining elders.

This is aimed at safeguarding their cultural and natural heritage

8.0. Comments by the recorder/collector The Yaaku lifestyle and cultural practices have completely changed in favour of the Maasai lifestyle.

9.0. Details of the recorder/collector

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ Date 1st December 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 1st December 2007

1.2. Place of recording (Administrative Location)

Village Kuri Kuri **Location** Dol Dol **Division** Mukogodo

District Laikipia **Province** Rift Valley

1.3. **Ethnic group** Yaaku

1.4. **Language classification** Southern Nilotic speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Lambert Supuko **Age** 65 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status:** Village elder

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded Oral expression

3.1. **Genre** Proverb

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** *Kuteei tikuisi*

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** Everybody with his own thing

3.4. **Origin:** It is derived from a story where two men went harvesting honey but refused to share with his friends.

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Yaaku

3.6. **Context of application** In social gatherings and when discussing important issues in the community or when settling disputes over resources.

3.7. **Place (where)** In social gatherings

3.8. **By whom** Men

4.0. **Instruments used** (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

4.1. **Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available)** Yes ___ No ___

4.2. **If Yes, where?** _____

4.3. **If No, Give reason** _____

5.0. **Methods of transmission** Through socialization – Young men are usually encouraged to attend social gatherings where they listen to the proceedings of the discussions thus, they are able to learn from the elders.

6.0. **Current status**

6.1. **Endangered?** Yes _____ **X** **No** _____

6.2. **If yes, How?** The Yaaku have adopted the Maasai language (Maa) and very few can speak fluent Yaaku language (Yaakunte).

7.0. **Safeguarding methods**

7.1. **Local level (Community)** The Yaaku have formed an association (Yaaku Peoples' Association) to help them revive their language and cultural practices

7.2. **National level (Agency)** There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya and department of Culture to document Yaaku language.

8.0. **Comments by the recorder/collector** Currently, the Yaaku speak Maasai language (Maa) and only speak Yaaku language (Yaakunte) when prompted.

9.0. **Details of the recorder/collector**

Name Henry Saitabau

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ **Date** 1st December 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 1st December 2007

1.2. Place of recording (Administrative Location)

Village Kuri Kuri **Location** Dol Dol **Division** Mukogodo

District Laikipia **Province** Rift Valley

1.3. **Ethnic group** Yaaku

1.4. **Language classification** Southern Nilotic speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Lambert Supuko **Age** 65 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status:** Village elder

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded Oral expression

3.1. **Genre** Proverb

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** *Kuteei tikuisi*

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** Everybody with his own thing

3.4. **Origin:** It is derived from a story where two men went harvesting honey but refused to share with his friends.

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Yaaku

3.6. **Context of application** In social gatherings and when discussing important issues in the community or when settling disputes over sharing of forest resources.

3.7. **Place (where)** In social gatherings

3.8. **By whom** Men

4.0. **Instruments used** (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

4.1. **Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available)** Yes ___ No ___

4.2. **If Yes, where?** _____

4.3. **If No, Give reason** _____

5.0. **Methods of transmission** Through socialization – Young men are usually encouraged to attend social gatherings where they listen to the proceedings of the discussions thus, they are able to learn from the elders.

6.0. **Current status**

6.1. **Endangered?** Yes _____ **X** _____ **No** _____

6.2. **If yes, How?** The Yaaku have adopted the Maasai language (Maa) and very few can speak fluent Yaaku language (Yaakunte).

7.0. **Safeguarding methods**

7.1. **Local level (Community)** The Yaaku have formed an association (Yaaku Peoples' Association) to help them revive their language and cultural practices

7.2. **National level (Agency)** There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya and department of Culture to document Yaaku language.

8.0. **Comments by the recorder/collector** Currently, the Yaaku speak Maasai language (*Maa*) and only speak Yaaku language (*Yaakunte*) when prompted.

9.0. **Details of the recorder/collector**

Name Henry Saitabau

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ **Date** 1st December 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 1st December 2007

1.2. **Place of recording (Administrative Location)**

Village Kuri kuri **Location** Dol Dol **Division** Mukogodo

District Laikipia **Province** Rift Valley

1.3. **Ethnic group** Yaaku

1.4. **Language classification** Southern Nilotic speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Lambert Supuko **Age** 65 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status:** Village elder

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded Oral expression

3.1. **Genre** Proverb

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** *Asikai tilo duuru tikui kole ti rodo kwele*

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** Forgo small things to achieve a lot.

3.4. **Origin:** Derived from their hunting practice whereby they prefer hunting big animals such as buffaloes which could sustain them for long than small animals.

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Yaaku

3.6. **Context of application** When Yaaku are hunting.

3.7. **Place (where)** Mukogodo forest

3.8. **By whom** Men

4.0. Instruments used (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

4.1. Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available) Yes ___ No ___

4.2. If Yes, where? _____

4.3. If No, Give reason _____

5.0. Methods of transmission _____ Through socialization _____

6.0. Current status

6.1. Endangered? Yes _____ X _____ No _____

6.2. If yes, How? Currently, the Yaaku have abandoned hunting and associated practices and adopted livestock keeping.

7.0. Safeguarding methods

7.1. Local level (Community) The Yaaku have formed an association (Yaaku Peoples' Association) to help in reviving their language and cultural practices

7.2. National level (Agency) There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya and department of Culture to help minority groups in Kenya revive their cultures.

8.0. Comments by the recorder/collector Most of the Yaaku have adopted the Maasai cultures.

9.0. Details of the recorder/collector

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ Date 1st December 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 2nd December 2007

1.2. Place of recording (Administrative Location)

Village Kuri Kuri **Location** Dol Dol **Division** Mukogodo

District Laikipia **Province** Rift Valley

1.3. **Ethnic group** Yaaku

1.4. **Language classification** Southern Nilotic speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Stephen Leriman **Age** 80 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status:** Village elder

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded Knowledge and practice concerning nature and universe

3.1. **Genre** Knowledge/Historical events

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** Lameyu Loo Lonito

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** Drought of the skin

3.4. **Origin:** This is when a major drought was experienced among the Yaaku. They were forced to feed on dry hide which they used as beddings due to lack of food. They were also forced to feed on donkey meat and skin.

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Yaaku

3.6. **Context of application** When there was drought in 1889.

3.7. **Place (where)** Yaaku territory

3.8. **By whom** _____

4.0. **Instruments used** (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

4.1. **Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available)** Yes ___ No ___

4.2. **If Yes, where?** _____

4.3. **If No, Give reason** _____

5.0. **Methods of transmission** The historical events are repeatedly narrated to the young by the Yaaku elders.

6.0. **Current status**

6.1. **Endangered?** Yes _____ X _____ No _____

6.2. **If yes, How?** The knowledgeable elders are passing on with the valuable information.

7.0. **Safeguarding methods**

7.1. **Local level (Community)** The current Yaaku generation is struggling to re-write their history with the help of researchers and cultural experts.

7.2. **National level (Agency)** There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya – through the Indigenous Knowledge section to document indigenous knowledge of the minority groups in Kenya.

8.0. **Comments by the recorder/collector** _____

9.0. **Details of the recorder/collector**

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ **Date** 2nd December 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 2nd December 2007

1.2. Place of recording (Administrative Location)

Village Kuri Kuri **Location** Dol Dol **Division** Mukogodo

District Laikipia **Province** Rift Valley

1.3. **Ethnic group** Yaaku

1.4. **Language classification** Southern Nilotic speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Stephen Leriman **Age** 80 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status:** Village elder

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded Knowledge and practice concerning nature and

universe

3.1. **Genre** Knowledge/Historical events

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** *Naimin*

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** Darkness

3.4. **Origin:** This was the first time when the Yaaku experienced the eclipse of the sun.

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Yaaku

3.6. **Context of application** Eclipse of the sun 1906.

3.7. **Place (where)** Yaaku territory

3.8. **By whom** _____

4.0. Instruments used (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

4.1. Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available) Yes ____ No ____

4.2. If Yes, where? _____

4.3. If No, Give reason _____

5.0. Methods of transmission The historical events are repeatedly narrated to the young by the Yaaku elders.

6.0. Current status

6.1. Endangered? Yes _____ X _____ No _____

6.2. If yes, How? The knowledgeable elders are passing on with the valuable information.

7.0. Safeguarding methods

7.1. Local level (Community) The current Yaaku generation is struggling to re-write their history with the help of researchers and cultural experts.

7.2. National level (Agency) There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya – through the Indigenous Knowledge section to document indigenous knowledge of the minority groups in Kenya.

8.0. Comments by the recorder/collector _____

9.0. Details of the recorder/collector

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ Date 2nd December 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 2nd December 2007

1.2. Place of recording (Administrative Location)

Village Kuri Kuri **Location** Dol Dol **Division** Mukogodo

District Laikipia **Province** Rift Valley

1.3. **Ethnic group** Yaaku

1.4. **Language classification** Southern Nilotic speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Stephen Leriman **Age** 80 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status:** Village elder

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded Knowledge and practice concerning nature and universe

3.1. **Genre** Knowledge/Historical event

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** Ntoror

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name:** Great famine

3.4. **Origin:** This is at the time when the Maasai (neighbours of the Yaaku) were greatly affected by drought and sought refuge among the Yaaku in Mukogodo forest.

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Yaaku

3.6. **Context of application** When there was drought in 1926 which affected mostly the neighbouring Maasai.

3.7. **Place (where)** Yaaku and Maasai territory

3.8. **By whom** _____

4.0. **Instruments used** (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

4.1. **Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available)** Yes ___ No ___

4.2. **If Yes, where?** _____

4.3. **If No, Give reason** _____

5.0. **Methods of transmission** The historical events are repeatedly narrated to the young by the Yaaku elders.

6.0. **Current status**

6.1. **Endangered?** Yes _____ X _____ No _____

6.2. **If yes, How?** The knowledgeable elders are passing on with the valuable information.

7.0. **Safeguarding methods**

7.1. **Local level (Community)** The current Yaaku generation is struggling to re-write their history with the help of researchers and cultural experts.

7.2. **National level (Agency)** There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya – through the Indigenous Knowledge section to document indigenous knowledge of the minority groups in Kenya.

8.0. **Comments by the recorder/collector** _____

9.0. **Details of the recorder/collector**

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ **Date** 2nd December 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 2nd December 2007

1.2. Place of recording (Administrative Location)

Village Kuri Kuri **Location** Dol Dol **Division** Mukogodo

District Laikipia **Province** Rift Valley

1.3. **Ethnic group** Yaaku

1.4. **Language classification** Southern Nilotic speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Stephen Leriman **Age** 80 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status:** Village elder

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded Knowledge and practice concerning nature and universe

3.1. **Genre** Knowledge/Historical events

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** *Lameyu le Nadotolit*

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** Drought of the red marrow

3.4. **Origin:** Rinderpest attacked Maasai cattle killing thousands of livestock. The Yaaku, who had abandoned their way of life to pastoralism, resorted back to hunting and gathering after losing most of their livestock.

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Yaaku

3.6. **Context of application** During the prolonged drought between 1934 -1936

3.7. **Place (where)** Yaaku and Maasai territory

3.8. By whom _____

4.0. Instruments used (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

4.1. Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available) Yes ___ No ___

4.2. If Yes, where? _____

4.3. If No, Give reason _____

5.0. Methods of transmission The historical events are repeatedly narrated to the young by the Yaaku elders.

6.0. Current status

6.1. Endangered? Yes _____ X _____ No _____

6.2. If yes, How? The knowledgeable elders are passing on with the valuable information.

7.0. Safeguarding methods

7.1. Local level (Community) The current Yaaku generation is struggling to re-write their history with the help of researchers and cultural experts.

7.2. National level (Agency) There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya – through the Indigenous Knowledge section to document indigenous knowledge of the minority groups in Kenya.

8.0. Comments by the recorder/collector _____

9.0. Details of the recorder/collector

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ Date 2nd December 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 2nd December 2007

1.2. **Place of recording (Administrative Location)**

Village Kuri Kuri **Location** Dol Dol **Division** Mukogodo

District Laikipia **Province** Rift Valley

1.3. **Ethnic group** Yaaku

1.4. **Language classification** Southern Nilotic speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Stephen Leriman **Age** 80 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status:** Village elder

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded Knowledge and practice concerning nature and universe

3.1. **Genre** Knowledge/Historical events

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** Lari loo nkariak

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** Year of floods

3.4. **Origin:** This is remembered because there was a land slide which killed destroyed the home of Lesootian, the Samburu leader.

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Yaaku

3.6. **Context of application** During the floods of 1963 and 1964

3.7. **Place (where)** Yaaku and Maasai territory

3.8. **By whom** _____

4.0. **Instruments used** (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

4.1. **Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available)** Yes ___ No ___

4.2. **If Yes, where?** _____

4.3. **If No, Give reason** _____

5.0. **Methods of transmission** The historical events are repeatedly narrated to the young by the Yaaku elders.

6.0. **Current status**

6.1. **Endangered?** Yes _____ X _____ No _____

6.2. **If yes, How?** The knowledgeable elders are passing on with the valuable information.

7.0. **Safeguarding methods**

7.1. **Local level (Community)** The current Yaaku generation is struggling to re-write their history with the help of researchers and cultural experts.

7.2. **National level (Agency)** There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya – through the Indigenous Knowledge section to document indigenous knowledge of the minority groups in Kenya.

8.0. **Comments by the recorder/collector** _____

9.0. **Details of the recorder/collector**

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ **Date** 2nd December 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 3rd December 2007

1.2. Place of recording (Administrative Location)

Village Kuri Kuri **Location** Dol Dol **Division** Mukogodo

District Laikipia **Province** Rift Valley

1.3. **Ethnic group** Yaaku

1.4. **Language classification** Southern Nilotic speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Yapanoi Nkilelengi **Age** 82 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status:** Village elder

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded Social practice

3.1. **Genre** Ritual/ceremony

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** Sheetu isheepi

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** Blessing ceremony

3.4. **Origin** When the Yaaku fail to capture any animal after a hunting expedition, they feel threatened because this was their only source of food. Therefore, intervention to address the menace is sought by performing a blessing ceremony - *sheetu isheepi*.

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Yaaku

3.6. **Context of application:** After unsuccessful hunting expedition. Elders call all hunting groups within the clan and are asked to bring along their hunting materials. Elders go round sprinkling honey beer, water mixed with honey and spitting saliva to the hunters while they are

uttering words of blessings and prayers asking *viechere*, (God) to intervene and rescue the situation.

3.7. **Place (where)** Under sacred tree within Mukogodo forest

3.8. **By whom** Elders

4.0. **Instruments used** (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

4.1. **Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available)** Yes ___ No ___

4.2. **If Yes, where?** _____

4.3. **If No, Give reason** _____

5.0. **Methods of transmission** The young generation were initiated into elderhood where they were taught how to conduct the ceremonies.

6.0. **Current status**

6.1. **Endangered?** Yes _____ **X** **No** _____

6.2. **If yes, How?** The Yaaku have adopted Maasai lifestyle.

7.0. **Safeguarding methods**

7.1. **Local level (Community)** There are efforts to rewrite the Yaaku history which is championed by the local group – Yaaku peoples’ Association.

7.2. **National level (Agency)** There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya – through the Indigenous Knowledge section to document Indigenous Knowledge of the minority groups in Kenya.

8.0. **Comments by the recorder/collector** _____

9.0. **Details of the recorder/collector**

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ **Date** 3rd December 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 22nd December 2007

1.2. Place of recording (Administrative Location)

Village Kidimu **Location** Pongwe - Kidimu **Division** Msambweni

District Kwale **Province** Coast

1.3. **Ethnic group** Segeju

1.4. **Language classification** Coastal Bantu speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Mtoso Mbaulo Mtoso **Age** 55 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status:** Village elder

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded Oral expression

3.1. **Genre** Legend

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** Segeju

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** *Kusega Juu*

3.4. **Origin** The name, "Segeju", is derived from *kusega*, to draw up the clothes, and *Juu*, high i.e. *kusega juu*. This name was given them, owing to their wearing of the skins around their loins higher than usual.

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Segeju - Wakamazi clan

3.6. **Context of application:** The name was given to the Segeju when they came in contact with the Shirazi during the migration around 17th century.

3.7. **Place (where)** When crossing Tana river - north coast

3.8. **By whom** Shirazi

4.0. **Instruments used** (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

4.1. **Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available)** Yes ___ No ___

4.2. **If Yes, where?** _____

4.3. **If No, Give reason** _____

5.0. **Methods of transmission** Through oral traditions.

6.0. **Current status**

6.1. **Endangered?** Yes _____ **X** _____ **No** _____

6.2. **If yes, How?** The Segeju have adopted the language and lifestyle of the neighbouring group – the Digo.

7.0. **Safeguarding methods**

7.1. **Local level (Community)** No effort at the local level to revive the Segeju language and cultures. The main reason is that the Segeju are very much engrossed into Digo culture.

7.2. **National level (Agency)** There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya – through the Indigenous Knowledge section to document Indigenous Knowledge of the minority groups in Kenya.

8.0. **Comments by the recorder/collector** The Segeju of Kenya are estimated to be less than 200 and are grouped together with the populous Digo ethnic group.

9.0. **Details of the recorder/collector**

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ **Date** 22nd December 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 22nd December 2007

1.5. Place of recording (Administrative Location)

Village Kidimu **Location** Pongwe - Kidimu **Division** Msambweni

District Kwale **Province** Coast

1.6. **Ethnic group** Segeju

1.7. **Language classification** Coastal Bantu speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Mtoso Mbaulo Mtoso **Age** 55 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status:** Village elder

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded Oral traditions

3.1. **Genre** Folklore

3.2. **Local name (Genre):** Ng'ano

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** To tell stories

3.4. **Origin:** Animal characters were used in story telling to depict certain virtues.

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Segeju - Wakamazi clan

3.6. **Context of application:** The stories were narrated by the elderly and touched on various issues ranging from the society's accepted moral values to cherished heroes.

3.7. **Place (where)** The young gathered around bonfire in the evening to listen to stories.

3.8. **By whom** Elders (both men and women especially grand parents).

4.0. Instruments used (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

4.1. Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available) Yes ___ No ___

4.2. If Yes, where? _____

4.3. If No, Give reason _____

5.0. Methods of transmission By listening to stories the young generation was able to master the stories and recount the same to others.

6.0. Current status

6.1. Endangered? Yes _____ X _____ No _____

6.2. If yes, How? The elderly are more pre – occupied with other socio – economic issues which take much of their time leaving very little time for story telling in the evenings.

7.0. Safeguarding methods

7.1. Local level (Community) No effort at the local level to revive the Segeju language and culture. The main reason is that the Segeju are very much engrossed into Digo culture.

7.2. National level (Agency) There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya – through the Indigenous Knowledge section to document Indigenous Knowledge of the minority groups in Kenya though nothing so far has been documented in regarding Segeju ethnic group.

8.0. Comments by the recorder/collector The Segeju of Kenya are estimated to be less than 200 and are grouped together with the populous Digo ethnic group.

9.0. Details of the recorder/collector

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ Date 22nd December 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 22nd December 2007

1.8. Place of recording (Administrative Location)

Village Kidimu **Location** Pongwe - Kidimu **Division** Msambweni

District Kwale **Province** Coast

1.9. **Ethnic group** Segeju

1.10. **Language classification** Coastal Bantu speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Mtoso Mbaulo Mtoso **Age** 55 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status:** Village elder

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded social practice

3.1. **Genre** Ritual and dance

3.2. **Local name (Genre):** Ngoma ya shetani

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** Dance of the Devil

3.4. **Origin:** The Segeju belief that the Devil or *shetani* may enter the body of a person and cause all manner of trouble which calls for a ritual to be performed – *ngoma ya shetani*. The belief is common at the Swahili coast of East Africa and is also found among the coastal Arabs. The *shetani* cult features are derived from orthodox Islamic theology according to which the devil rules over a host of demons (*sheitan*).

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Segeju - Wakamazi clan

3.6. **Context of application:** The *shetani* dance is performed by women when a diviner or witch doctor (*mganga*) is exorcising demons from the affected person. The dance last almost seven

days which is the usual custom though some minor dances are done for three days. The dancing is organized into two sessions per day i.e. from 2 – 4 pm in the afternoon and from 8 – 10 pm at night. The victim spent the entire period of the ceremony at a thatched shelter built in front of the diviner's house.

3.7. **Place (where)** In a shelter in front of diviners house .

3.8. **By whom** Diviner (*mganga*)

4.0. **Instruments used** (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

Drums (*Ngoma Kuu*),

4.1. **Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available)** Yes No

4.2. **If Yes, where?** Kidimu and Bodo villages, Fort Jesus Museum (Mombasa, Kenya)

4.3. **If No, Give reason** _____

5.0. **Methods of transmission** By participating in ritual dance. However, the witchdoctor (exorcist) gets his powers through inheritance from the elders.

6.0. **Current status**

6.1. **Endangered?** Yes _____ No _____

6.2. **If yes, How?** Currently, the ritual dance is rarely performed.

7.0. **Safeguarding methods**

7.1. **Local level (Community)** No effort at the local level to revive the Segeju culture. The main reason is that the Segeju have adopted Digo culture.

7.2. **National level (Agency)** There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya – through the Indigenous Knowledge section to document Indigenous Knowledge of the minority groups in Kenya though nothing so far has been documented in regarding Segeju ethnic group.

8.0. **Comments by the recorder/collector** _____

9.0. **Details of the recorder/collector**

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ **Date** 22nd December 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.1. **Date of recording** 22nd December 2007

1.11. **Place of recording (Administrative Location)**

Village Kidimu **Location** Pongwe - Kidimu **Division** Msambweni

District Kwale **Province** Coast

1.12. **Ethnic group** Segeju

1.13. **Language classification** Coastal Bantu speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Mtoso Mbaulo Mtoso **Age** 55 years **Sex** Male

2.2. **Status:** Village elder

3.0. **Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded** social practice

3.1. **Genre** Ritual and dance

3.2. **Local name (Genre):** Ngoma ya shetani

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** Dance of the Devil

3.4. **Origin:** The Segeju belief that the Devil or *shetani* may enter the body of a person and cause all manner of trouble which calls for a ritual to be performed – *ngoma ya shetani*. The belief is common at the Swahili coast of East Africa and is also found among the coastal Arabs. The *shetani* cult features are derived from orthodox Islamic theology according to which the devil rules over a host of demons (*sheitan*).

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Segeju - Wakamazi clan

3.6. **Context of application:** The *shetani* dance is performed by women when a diviner or witch doctor (*mganga*) is exorcising demons from the affected person. The dance last almost seven

days which is the usual custom though some minor dances are done for three days. The dancing is organized into two sessions per day i.e. from 2 – 4 pm in the afternoon and from 8 – 10 pm at night. The victim spent the entire period of the ceremony at a thatched shelter built in front of the diviner's house.

3. 7. **Place (where)** In a shelter in front of diviners house .

3.8. **By whom** Diviner (*mganga*)

4.0. **Instruments used** (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

Drums (*Ngoma Kuu*),

4.1. **Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available)** Yes No

4.2. **If Yes, where?** Kidimu and Bodo villages, Fort Jesus Museum (Mombasa, Kenya)

4.3. **If No, Give reason**

5.0. **Methods of transmission** By participating in ritual dance. However, the witchdoctor (exorcist) gets his powers through inheritance from the elders.

6.0. **Current status**

6.1. **Endangered?** Yes **X** **No**

6.2. **If yes, How?** Currently, the ritual dance is rarely performed.

7.0. **Safeguarding methods**

7.1. **Local level (Community)** No effort at the local level to revive the Segeju culture. The main reason is that the Segeju have adopted Digo culture.

7.2. **National level (Agency)** There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya – through the Indigenous Knowledge section to document Indigenous Knowledge of the minority groups in Kenya though nothing so far has been documented in regarding Segeju ethnic group.

8.0. **Comments by the recorder/collector**

9.0. **Details of the recorder/collector**

Name Jacob Mhando

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature **Date** 22nd December 2007

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Inventory Format (Draft)

1.0. Background Information

1.5. **Date of recording** 3rd December 2007

1.6. Place of recording (Administrative Location)

Village Kuri Kuri **Location** Dol Dol **Division** Mukogodo

District Laikipia **Province** Rift Valley

1.7. **Ethnic group** Yaaku

1.8. **Language classification** Southern Nilotic speakers

2.0. Informant Data

2.1. **Name of persons interviewed:** Yapanoi Ngilelengi **Age** 82 years **Sex** Female

2.2. **Status:** Elderly Woman

3.0. Intangible Cultural Heritage Domain recorded Oral expression

3.1. **Genre** Lullaby

3.2. **Local name (Genre)** Nosim eyie yio

3.3. **Literal translation of the genre name :** My companion

3.4. **Origin:** Among the Yaaku crying babies or stubborn babies were usually thrown away in the valleys to die. They believed that a crying baby would cause the death of his father.

3.5. **Ownership (Group/clan/village)** Yaaku

3.6. **Context of application:** Baby sitting /soothing

3.7. **Place (where)** _____

3.8. **By whom** Women and young girls

4.0. **Instruments used** (Associated tangible elements -Material culture/objects and their local names)

4.1. **Presence of instruments (Are the instruments still available)** Yes ___ No ___

4.2. **If Yes, where?** _____

4.3. **If No, Give reason** _____

5.0. **Methods of transmission** Young girls learn from their mothers

6.0. **Current status**

6.1. **Endangered?** Yes _____ **X** **No** _____

6.2. **If yes, How?** The Yaaku have adopted Maasai lifestyle.

7.0. **Safeguarding methods**

7.1. **Local level (Community)** There are efforts to rewrite the Yaaku history which is championed by the local group – Yaaku peoples’ Association.

7.2. **National level (Agency)** There is an initiative by the National Museum of Kenya – through the Indigenous Knowledge section to document Indigenous Knowledge of the minority groups in Kenya.

8.0. **Comments by the recorder/collector** Currently, the Yaaku can only remember very few lullabies.

9.0. **Details of the recorder/collector**

Name Henry Saitabau

Contact Address P. O. Box 40658 Nairobi

Signature _____ **Date** 3rd December 2007

APPENDIX III: PHOTO STORY

Segeju



Segeju women reviewing recorded interview.



Segeju women during a focused group discussion at Kidimu.



A Seventeenth-Century *Ngoma Kuu* displayed in the Fort Jesus Museum in Mombasa.



Neglected *Segeju* drum *Ngoma kuu* at Kidimu village.



Kinu – used for pounding maize and rice. It is estimated to be over 80 years old.



Segeju homesteads



Coconut trees



Cashewnut trees



Mwanaisha Simba – a fluent Segeju speaker.



Story time - Segeju elder narrating stories to the young.

Suba - Mfangano Island



Lake Victoria - at the background is Mfangano Island.



Mfangano Island



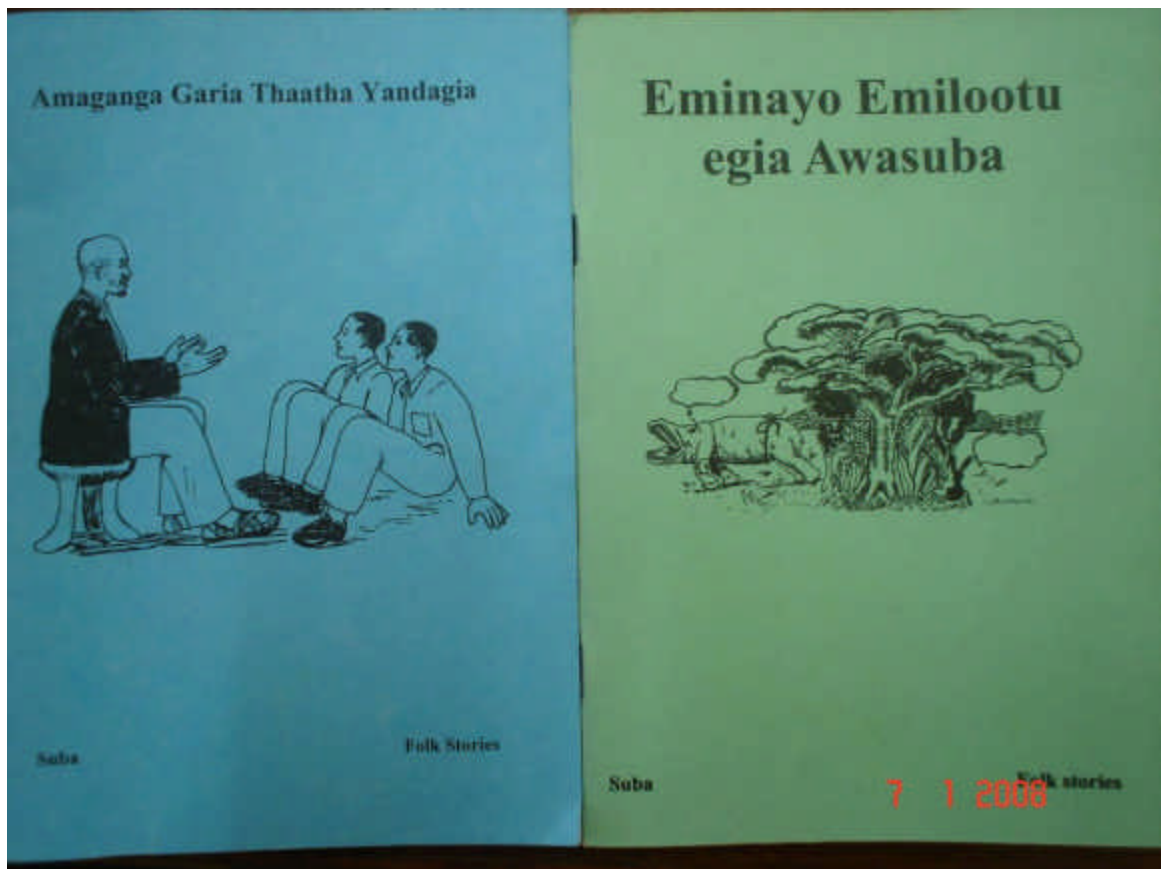
The young Suba generation has abandoned Suba language and adopted Dholuo (language of the neighbouring Luo).



Documenting oral traditions in Mfangano Island – most of the elders could not remember most of the stories because of serious memory lapse. However, after discussion amongst themselves they were able to recount some of the traditions.



Traditional grinding stone - the stone is used by Suba women to grind maize. Preparation of maize flour is associated with certain traditional songs.



Suba folk stories

Yaaku photo story



Mr. Lambert Supuko - the Yaaku elder. Today there are less than ten fluent Yaaku speakers .



In search of the Yaaku – Research team going through Mukogodo forest



Yaaku guide describing their territory.



Yaaku research assistant taking notes and describing plant use. Though the young Yaaku generation has completely adopted the Maasai cultures they still have some knowledge on Yaaku traditions.



Hindadai sacred tree (*Acacia* species) - the contents of a slaughtered animal's stomach is rubbed on the tree as an offering.



Yaaku women



Yaaku boy



Yaaku hunters



Traditional Beehive

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