



african digital heritage



SKILLS FOR CULTURE

A Toolkit for Cultural Heritage
Practitioners

Skills for Culture - A Toolkit for Cultural Heritage Practitioners

by

African Digital Heritage

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ABOUT AFRICAN DIGITAL HERITAGE

African Digital Heritage is a Nairobi based, non profit organization working to encourage a more critical, holistic and knowledge-based approach to digital solutions within African heritage. Through this, we hope to cement the place of African culture in an era of rapidly changing technologies and endless frontiers.

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ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit has been specially curated for cultural heritage practitioners working at community level. Informed by The Skills for Culture; Cultural Heritage in Kenyan Counties Report, the toolkit provides a step-by-step guide for practitioners looking to upskill on community engagement, fundraising, strategic partnerships, digitization, oral history and creating a county mandate.

We hope that the toolkit will help practitioners not only strengthen their programs, but also improve collaborations between major players at the county level.



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1. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

BY ANNE EBOSO

Anne Eboso is a cultural practitioner and festival director - keen on shifting narratives on culture and its policies. Her work revolves around promoting the creative economy through culture resuscitation, boosting cultural tourism and strengthening literacy. She founded the annual Rusinga Festival in 2012. The festival mainly takes place on Rusinga Island, and aims to resuscitate, preserve and promote the endangered Suba culture and heritage. She has moulded strategic partnerships with government departments, individuals and organizations that have become central in the festival's growth. Rusinga Festival is now one of the largest cultural celebrations in the country, offering music, fashion, film, food, artistry, literature, sports and games, and conversations around culture and heritage – providing an answer to the question 'Can a people die?' The Suba Language is currently listed in UNESCO's Red Book of Endangered Languages (2003). Anne has also directed some of the largest literary events/festivals in Kenya.

INTRODUCTION

The Skills for Culture - Cultural Heritage in Kenyan Counties Report (2022) noted a rise in the meaningful collaborations and strategic partnerships for the promotion of cultural heritage in counties of Kenya. These strategic partnerships happen between county government departments, national government administrations at county level, the private sector, financial institutions, civil society groups, development partners, and community-based organizations, among others.

In this section, Anne takes us through what it takes to bring together and work with several strategic partners for the seamless execution of cultural heritage projects.

Questions practitioners should ask themselves before considering bringing strategic partners onboard

Consider who a strategic partner is.

Most strategic partnerships are molded on mutual benefit. Mostly it revolves around money in the form of sponsorship, but then it is not always about the money but what the partner can do to enable achievement of your goal. Ensure that the strategic partner shares in your vision and mission, because without shared goals, it will be impossible to work together, or you may lose focus.

What long-term value does each partner bring?

You are looking for a partner who will be there long term, since most projects in the cultural heritage space are not one-off projects, but largely sustainable projects. Many times, if your working relationship achieves set goals, it is always easy to keep the strategic partner on board and even expand your partnership areas.

What is their reputation?

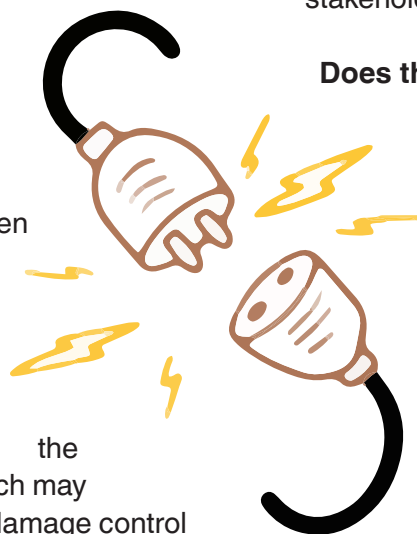
The reputation of the strategic partner matters a lot. Make sure to take into account whether they have been involved in a similar project before, what the outcomes of the project were, or if they have been involved in a project which may end up making your current partnership sound more of a damage control partnership. It is important to research about your partners, see what people are saying about them too, and if you'd love to associated with their reputation and cultures. How they have handled their previous partnerships matters a lot. In the case they are interested, you may want to know what they actually feel about your project and if they are willing to be active/passive participants.

Can they be trusted?

As we know, every relationship is built on trust – between persons first, then between the organizations they represent. Sometimes, as much as everything else between your organizations align, your personal relationship may jeopardize that. From your research and initial communications, you must be able to tell if your strategic partner can actually deliver what they promise, within reasonable timelines. Because the outcome of such promises affect beyond you two and your organizations – they affect every stakeholder who is part of your dream. So what happens if they won't deliver on sponsoring an event where various stakeholders have already signed up?

Does the strategic partner have the capacity to partner with you in terms of resources, or the ability to make such resources available from other partners?

Sometimes, partners may pull out because of other partners you have, whose goals may not align with theirs. There may be friction in communications, etc. You may even find yourself in a situation where you have to choose between partners – it is always your call. But at the end of the day, it should be about collaboration rather than competition.



Actionable steps towards successfully reeling in strategic partners to one's program.

Design an action plan

It is not easy to bring on board partners, especially when you are starting out. Nobody knows you, what you can achieve, and the impact you can create. You are basically a stranger to their plans, and asking them to trust you with their resources. Most of the time, you will start alone and put your program on track before anyone can buy into it. So you've got to have a well spelled out problem and an action plan to solve the problem, properly defined timelines (which should be both long term and short term), and how to make the program sustainable in the long run. That is what strategic partners in the cultural heritage space look for. The anticipated impact and the actual impact should be well measured. From this initial experience, you will actually know what to ask from partners because you will have discovered what you require. So the initial investment will heavily come from your own pocket.

Share your data with potential partners.

With the initial results and experiences, you can write your reports and proposals, which you will share with possible partners.

Network and reach out to potential partners.

From your report, you should know the kind of partners you require to achieve certain goals – that informs your research to identify such partners. If possible, talk to persons in organizations instead of sending blind emails and proposals. Such people will open the way for your proposal to actually be read.

Build your brand.

You may not reap much even at this stage, so be financially prepared to meet most of the costs. But at least you will have attracted interest from some people who may just come to see, and even volunteers who may want to be part of the project. Never underestimate the power of volunteers.

Publicize your partner.

If you are lucky to have won one or two partners, amplify their involvement – it doesn't matter whether they are coming in providing financial resources or resources in kind. For instance, a radio station may not give you money, but they may give you the exposure you so much require, without pay. Amplify the involvement of organizations run by the people who volunteered – that is their input. Let people know there are partners involved. And organizations love publicity.

Continue pitching to partners that you had identified at the onset.

Continue reaching out to the partners you had identified before, whether they came on board or not. Remember to always leave the door open for further communications, even if they are not in a position or haven't bought into the idea at the moment – they will come on board one day.

Document your wins and share them widely.

Send your impact report to organizations that participated and those you approached but didn't participate. Literally 'buy' their interest. I believe by this stage some organizations will start reaching out to you, some you had not possibly heard of or considered. Train yourself to finding alignment in working with such organizations. Create a relationship with people in the organizations. Create a relationship between your organization and their organization.

Challenges to expect when working with strategic partners.

It is not rare to see strategic partners changing the direction of your focus to suit their own goals. Make sure to keep your eyes on the main goal, even though you may allow room for modification to suit partner needs.

Anyone who comes on board is basically taking a risk, just like in business. Most of the time, partners may not entrust money to you. Be open to discuss possibilities. Remember that strategic partners shouldn't ask for more than they are giving.

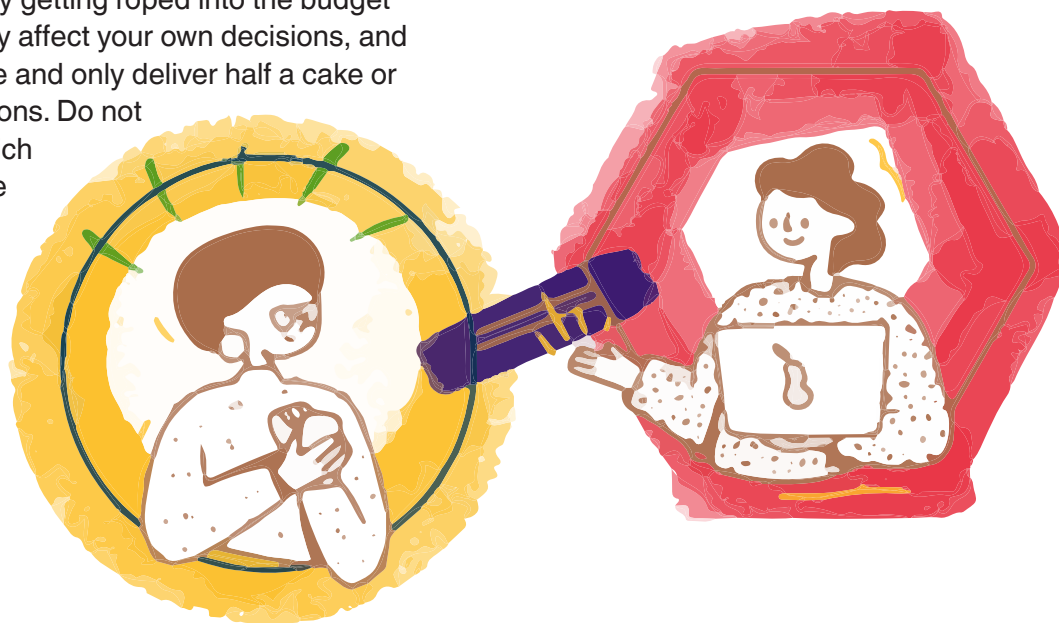
One of the toughest hurdles is probably getting roped into the budget of a strategic partner. Bureaucracy may affect your own decisions, and sometimes one can promise a full cake and only deliver half a cake or worse, none at all. Limit your expectations. Do not be afraid to ask for timelines within which such promises can be fulfilled because at the end of the day, the collaboration should be mutually beneficial.

How practitioners

measure impact when running programs that involve different partners.

Once you bring partners on board, each partner has different responsibilities and at times different objectives. Measuring impact requires both human and capital resources, that is why most programs have difficulties measuring impact even though 'it can be seen'.

When involving different partners, each organization can measure impact and outcomes based on how their set objectives align to their organizational goals.





2. FUNDRAISING

BY GEORGE GACHARA

George Gachara is a creative industries expert, arts manager, and founding partner at [HEVA Fund LLP](#). George is leading development and business exploration of the creative industries in East Africa, providing leadership in creating long-term economic and cultural value in this dynamic sector.

As the managing partner at HEVA Fund, a finance and business support facility for creative industries in East Africa, George has raised over USD 10 million as well as invested in over 50 creative industry businesses in film, music, fashion, and gaming, and directly supported over 400 creative practitioners. George was also instrumental in the design and establishment of the USD 2 Million, Ford Foundation-backed Documentary Africa Fund – DocA (2018), which provides film development grants to documentary filmmakers from across Africa. His hands-on approach allows for an intimate understanding of the creative sector and has helped to focus his efforts on proactive planning, analysis, and client support.

INTRODUCTION

According to The Skills for Culture - Cultural Heritage in Kenyan Counties Report (2022), financing for culture remains low, making it difficult to bring about transformational change anticipated in the Kenya's Vision 2030 blueprint. Although this can be attributed to many factors, several practitioners pointed out the need to improve their skills on how to put together a funding proposal in order to raise capital and resources to support their work.

Gachara, in this section, takes us through the consideration one needs to be cognizant of as they put together a funding proposal.

Questions cultural practitioners should ask themselves before considering fundraising for their programs/projects.

The lead-up time period

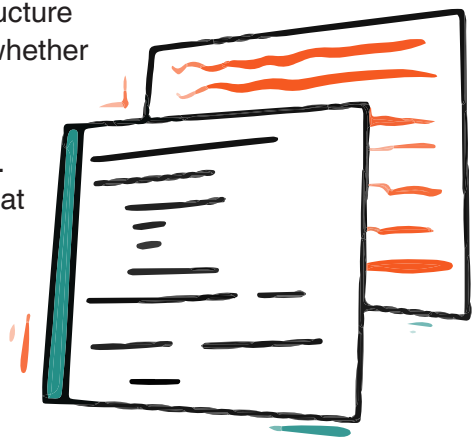
Think of the institution not from a project to project basis, but year to year. Ask yourself, what do I want to do this year? What do I want to do next year? Can I start raising resources for next year this year? This is essential especially because, when you're less connected into the industry, you need about six months to a year to build good networks for you to be able to make financial resources out of those networks. In this regard, if you plan a year out, you will have a higher chance of success. Additionally, look at numerous types of resources available to you and your proposed project, then work backwards to make sure that you are complaint and aligned.

The design and the sophistication of the organization you are applying with.

Most grant bodies will want to fund an institution that has existed for a while, one that is fully registered and compliant with their host country's laws, and has a definite team structure. In the team structure there is a heavy emphasis on financial sophistication, whether you have a finance team, HR manual, finance manual, procurement process, money handling and approval process, or guidelines if not manuals. These are critical. The reasoning behind this is one has to demonstrate that they can handle finances.

The idea

First, the idea has to be aligned with the criteria. Make sure you thoroughly study the criteria. Ask questions.



Some questions to ask include; how far does the fund stretch? Can you do sub granting? Ensure that you write to the funding body in time, and ask any questions that you might have. Majority of them will give you feedback. Based on that feedback, you know whether you can or cannot apply.

The strength of the idea

Courageous proposals (audacious projects) have an upper hand to secure funding (90% chance of success). It is therefore very important to put in extra effort, such as conducting extensive research, investing in product development, like hiring a grant writer.

Grant structures / competence to understand how to structure money.

A big percentage of how people are evaluated is how they arrange their budgets. It is important to understand budgets and conditions around budgets, and costing professionally.

For example, one cannot spend 70% of the money on themselves; 70% should go towards project implementation. **Remember, under budgeting is incompetence, while over budgeting is fraud. The narrative of the budget is also as strong as the narrative of the project.**

Non-grant resources

When looking for debt or equity, what is your own contribution towards your projects? People will not risk their money more than you will risk yours. One has to count their sweat capital and equity and put it in real figures and say 'I'm putting in this amount of work, amount of time, and it costs this much. I'm putting this in terms of cash, capital and assets and so that's my contribution.'

This is because you're asking for someone to use their savings, or the money that they keep for themselves, to give you for your projects. Show them that you're risking yours first. Have a structure that shows and guarantees that if the plan does not go according to plan, the returns will be sufficient for them to be paid back first. Therefore, when designing commercial instruments, think about the person you are asking for money first, then yourself.

Actionable steps for coming up with a fundraising application/pitch.

Intellectual property

Define how you will manage community intellectual property. Although mostly considered an ethical thing, but it's also a financial thing.

Make sure to stipulate how you will share the benefits of the exploitation of intellectual property owned or communally produced, and if the owners of this heritage will be involved in determining the decision.

Community Participation

Culture and Heritage projects require that you demonstrate a big level of community participation, involvement and ownership. This is because heritage is owned by communities, and we've seen adverse effects of outsiders coming with projects to communities. You have to demonstrate your linkage, your history, your work with that community, your own nexus, whether you are part of that community, or you are considered an expert in that community.

There are some development considerations like gender safeguarding and safety of children, and data privacy and protection. The ideas and projects also ought to be respectful to the groups and cultures of the communities.

Challenges and opportunities practitioners should expect when fundraising.

Unsuccessful applications:

When you make applications, and you're not successful, and that happens many times, there is a high chance that you will feel demoralized. Then how does one you continue to raise resources? It is important for practitioners to go in knowing that their application might not be successful, and find easy to energize themselves and motivate themselves to make other applications.

Additionally, reach out to the people and places you applied and ask for feedback on what made your application unsuccessful. Turn this feedback into an opportunity, and use it to improve your future applications.



How to measure impact on grant funded programs.

Start by defining why the funders are giving you money. They're not giving you money for the activities, but rather, they're giving you money for the outcomes of the activities. For them to know that their money was appropriately utilized for the set objectives, one has to demonstrate that they have, to the extent of their promises, contributed to the set outcomes.

It is therefore important to ensure that you have budgeted for an internal monitoring and evaluation team that will continuously demonstrate, using standard tools, that the outcomes or the impact is being achieved.



Recommended resources/tools around fundraising for cultural heritage programs

Although every fund is different, the organizations behind the fund always ensure that they outline guidelines and FAQs. Some even give the opportunity to host Q&A sessions prior to the application, as part of the support for understanding the opportunity. Utilize all these available tools. They have been specially curated to guide you in your application.



3. DIGITIZATION

BY CHAO TAYIANA MAINA

Chao Tayiana Maina is a Kenyan digital heritage specialist and digital humanities scholar working at the intersection of culture and technology. Her work primarily focuses on the application of technology in the preservation, engagement and dissemination of African heritage. She holds an M.Sc. International Heritage Visualisation (distinction) and a B.Sc. Mathematics and Computer Science. Her research work explored the possibilities of embedding intangible histories in 3D digital environments. She is a recipient of the Google Anita Borg scholarship for women in technology.

She is the founder [African Digital Heritage](#). She is also co-founder of the [Museum of British Colonialism](#) (MBC) where she leads digital engagement, and co-founder of the [Open Restitution Africa](#) project.

INTRODUCTION

The Skills for Culture - Cultural Heritage in Kenyan Counties Report (2022), pointed out that a majority of actors in the art, culture and heritage space adopting digital methods of promotion and preservation practice largely by self-initiative, observation, reading, trial and error and continuous improvement.

To help improve the digitization and archival management capacities of practitioners, Chao Maina gives us a step-by-step introduction course on what it takes to digitize collections and the opportunities that come with it.

Questions practitioners should ask themselves before considering digitizing their artifacts/collections.

Time - how much time do you have to do the project?

Resources - what resources do you have available to get you started?
What financial, technical resources do you have?

Skills - do you have the expertise and personnel to implement, monitor and evaluate the project? These include technical skills such as camera, computer, scanner operation, collection and conservation handling, curatorial thinking and documentation skills such as metadata entry.

Why are you digitizing? Have a very clear purpose and intention on what digitization is and why you are doing it.

What are you going to digitize? You'd have to prioritize in one way or another based on your resources, your time and your skill. For example, if your aim is to digitize a collection, you will prioritize let's say photographs before newspapers or newspapers before photographs because of different reasons.

How am I going to digitize the different products such as the newspapers, photographs? This question helps practitioners decide on the kind of infrastructure to use.

Access - who is going to access this data and where?

Dissemination - how do we curate, share and present digitized data?

Actionable steps to take in order to successfully digitize your collections.

Asset mapping - involves mapping out what cultural assets need to be digitized; these could be tangible or intangible assets. Thus, identify and come up with an actual document that outlines the material (nature), quantity and condition of the assets. Make sure to also determine what mode of digitization would be best and identify any information gaps you might have in your collection.

Identify the modes of digitization - Different cultural assets require different modes of digitization. The method you use to digitize collections is based on the nature of cultural assets and availability of equipment, finances and skills.

Project planning and budgeting - At this point, you should be able to conclusively state how much time the process/project will take. Create a list of the assets you have. Having a project plan will further help with project management and budgeting.

Dissemination - There are several ways of disseminating the digitized data. These include building a dedicated website or making material available on social media sites. The choice of a dissemination platform is guided by first, the resources available - these include competent staff, time, and financial resources. The second determining factor would be your audiences.

Audience Mapping - Participation in digital spaces is not just about the immediate gratification of a response or a like, it could have a direct impact on how audiences perceive their cultural pasts and identities. Identifying the audience that will use digitized data enables you to tailor content to specific user groups.

Infrastructure - the physical equipment such as the cameras and capacity building on how to use the equipment. Please note that training on equipment is very important for all the personnel involved in the project/program.

Write down the specifications and the quality of data that you're aiming for. Have something that informs for instance the quality, size, dimension of the images to be taken.

Challenges and opportunities practitioners should expect while digitizing their collections.

Challenges

Time - you should budget enough time or just know that the project might overrun the timelines you have set because of the time that it takes to get used to working with equipment. Ensure you factor enough time for trial and error.

Quality of data - when you have not clearly outlined the specifications, your data may not be of the same quality. Other factors such as environment, lighting and weather may affect the quality of the data. It is important to carry out periodic quality checks during, and at the end of the project.

Data archiving - due to migration of data from one of equipment to another, also termed as the changing nature of legacy hardware.



Data engagement and dissemination plan - because you have digitized something, it does not mean that it is accessible. You have to make the effort to structure of how you're going to engage audiences with this data, and how it can be disseminated to your target groups easily.

Staff turnover and lack of institutional memory, especially when dealing with very specific skills. What happens when they leave? A way to mitigate this challenge is to document the digitization process in manuals or videos such that when new staff come in, they can easily follow the procedures.

Opportunities

Audience engagement - Digitization provides a platform for engagement with audiences such as content creators, researchers, archivists, and filmmakers, among others. It also creates an opportunity to engage new audiences, and bring up new narratives to collections so that they can be used and seen in a different light.

Accessibility - digitizing collections makes them accessible to a greater audience as a way to challenge colonial methods of interpreting, documenting and disseminating African heritage.

Digitization helps safeguard the collections for future generations, in the event they are damaged physically, lost or stolen.

Digitization gives us the freedom to work with collections in multiple ways, while inviting us to challenge, reframe, reimagine and represent the past. We are also able to strengthen and explore alternative sources of history like oral history and indigenous knowledge systems.

How to measure impact on digitization programs.

Quantitative data analytics - understanding how many website visits, likes, downloads were done of your work/project.

Going back to the goals you set in the beginning - have you achieved the things that you wanted to digitize?

Audience or user feedback - especially qualitative feedback from the various groups. Are you interacting more with your audiences? Have the digitized collections invited more visitors to your physical space?

Note:

Impact doesn't have to be external, internal feedback is also very important. For example, how has the digitization work influenced the internal operations of the institution? Has it made work easier for conservators, marketing departments, and curators? Has digitization influenced or made certain processes in the museum, community, library?

What are the resources around digitization for cultural heritage programs would you recommend for fellow practitioners?

- Digitisation – African Digital Heritage
- The Digital Imperative: Envisioning The Path To Sustaining Our Collective Digital Heritage
- Sustaining Digital Heritage Initiative launch-ICCROM





4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

BY RAPHAEL IGOMBO

Raphael Igombo is the Head of Education and Public Programs Department of Fort Jesus World Heritage Site, where he is in charge of public programs and temporary exhibitions that give community members opportunities to showcase their craft for economic benefit.

Raphael's community engagement skills have been instrumental in the execution of several cultural heritage projects including the Mombasa Old Town Modern Heritage project; in collaboration with University of Cape of Good Hope - South Africa, face-lifting the exhibition and interpretation of Fort Jesus in partnership with the Sultanate of Oman, Permanent Exhibitions in Rabai Museum, the KPA Maritime Museum, The Baluchi Exhibition, The Omani House and Mazrui Hall, the upcoming National Mashujaa Museum in Uhuru Gardens, not to mention several environmental conservation projects on plastic and other waste management initiatives where local CBOs have benefited a lot from capacity building and waste disposal techniques. Raphael holds a Masters of World Heritage Sites and Cultural Projects management from ITC-ILO University of Turin, Italy.

INTRODUCTION

Culture belongs to the community. In this regard, it is important to involve the community at all stages of implementing cultural heritage programs. Well executed participatory methods ensure the successful implementation of programs.

In this section, Raphael takes us through how to co-create and co-implement successful cultural heritage programs in the counties. Programs that the communities will revere, and in some cases, benefit economically from.

Questions practitioners should ask themselves before considering engaging community members.

Is there existing goodwill/rapport with the community?

Community participatory projects have higher chances of success, thus there is need to ensure that the project implementors work on creating a good relationship with the community. In order to create good rapport, it is important to understand what group would be instrumental in pushing your project towards success. Is it the elders, youth groups, or CBO's that have done this before?

What are the social structures of this community?

Understanding the setup and hierarchy of the community that you will be working with is necessary because it ensures that your project has the go ahead, representative of the community. If it is the council of elders or the office of the MCA, ensure that they understand the actualities of the project just so when they talk about your project to community members later, they present it accurately. It is also important to take note of the values and cultural activities that ought to be practiced during your project implementation, just so you do not step on anyone's toes.

Who are the key players in the community that will be influential in the project implementation?

Identify people in the community who are going to play a key role (s)

- by inviting a representation of the different groups that make up the community of your future/current project. Share with them the draft ideas, involve them in defining what success in the project looks like to encourage co-creation. In regard to the roles, be very culture-sensitive as a way of showing respect and value to the community members.

Actionable steps to follow in order to successfully engage community members.

Mobilize the community

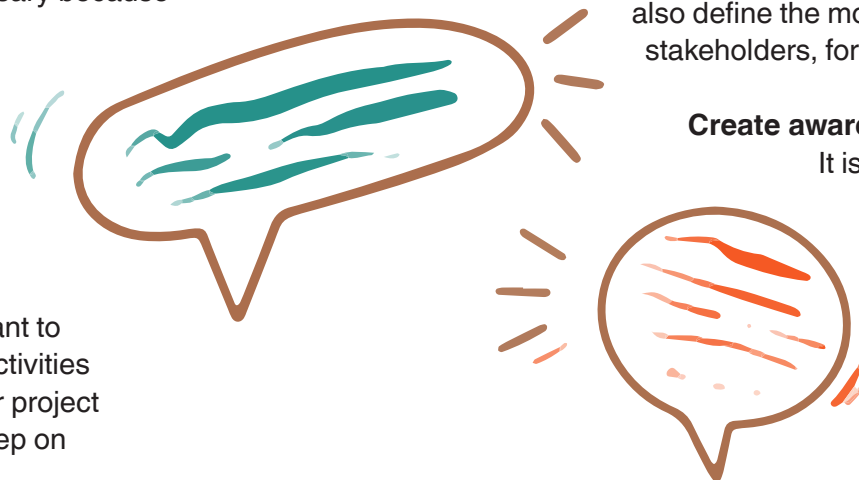
Find a strategic way of mobilizing the community. Find out who to invite and what are successful methods of engaging them. One should also define the mode of communication to the prospective actors/stakeholders, for effective and efficient implementation of the project.

Create awareness

It is important for project implementors to create awareness of what benefits their interventions would bring to the community. The awareness platforms also give an opportunity to community members to raise their concerns, ask questions, and chime in ideas of what they think would work. It is in these awareness sessions and forums that rapport for projects is built.

Communicate the terms of engagement

Make sure to communicate if the engaged groups will be compensated, whether financially, or in kind. In the event you are unable to offer finances as a way of motivation, find other ways to motivate their participation. Sometimes, without some form of incentive, the projects will not give best results.



Challenges and opportunities practitioners should expect when engaging communities in their programs

Challenges

Attitudes - may come up or develop; such as loss of trust to the project managers and personnel, others questioning why they aren't involved in the project, while some are involved. In this regard, one has to be cognizant to stipulate the terms and extent of community involvement during the awareness sessions. This can be done by ensuring all the prospective stakeholders in that particular community have been invited to participate, so that if they fail to join the project at the beginning for their own reasons, there's no way they're going to blame you.

It is also important to **take into account the different attitudes that come out** after introducing the community to the project - how the different actors view the projects, their roles of engagement, and the extent that they will participate.

Involvement - In the case that your project is bringing together different groups, make sure to address the terms of engagement. Additionally, one needs to make it clear to all interested parties as to why they chose to go with certain groups and not others. Make sure to also carefully stipulate how the involved parties will benefit from the project.

Resources - Though some projects may be funded, the finances might have been stipulated for specific activities only. One therefore has to ensure that the community members are aware of this, so that they do not feel like there is mismanagement of funds or pilferage, or that they are being exploited.

Bureaucracy - It is important that all involved parties understand the processes and stages that the proposed project has to go through before approval and implementation.

Opportunities

Whenever you engage the community, there is a very high possibility of realizing another potential opportunity of action. For example, during the project implementation, organizers can utilize the skills of women groups in basketry, and the youth groups in environmental conservation to bring about income generating activities for the groups.

Most projects are as a result of recommendations from pre-existing projects. Having already set up working structures with certain communities, it is easier to apply for funding for future projects. Donors also have great interest in funding projects that have already been tried and tested.



How cultural practitioners and county governments can measure impact when running community engagement programs.

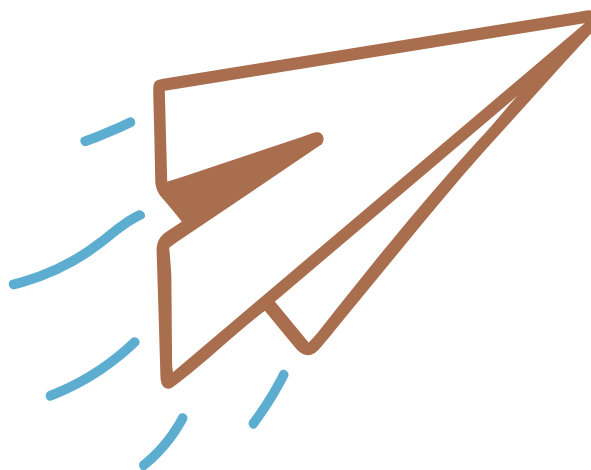
Impact is measured by looking at how the project has influenced the community. In what ways has the community changed that can be directly attributed to your project/intervention? However, it is important to note that impact can only be measured after a long time because it tells the story of the effect of change.

Practitioners can measure impact by documenting stories from the community members who benefitted from the projects. These stories will point to how successful or unsuccessful the project has been. Another method would be to set performance measures/indicators before the project implementation that will measure whether things are getting better or worse.

Recommended resources / avenues on community engagement

Resource center at the Fort Jesus

This library holds resources and books on projects that have been implemented in partnership with National Museums of Kenya - Fort Jesus, and neighboring coastal communities. They touch on history, archeological findings, confirmation of the findings, and scientific research.





**african digital
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5. ORAL HISTORY

BY AFRICAN DIGITAL HERITAGE

African Digital Heritage is a non-profit organization working to encourage a more critical, holistic and knowledge-based approach to digital solutions within African heritage. They work to cement the place of African culture in an era of rapidly changing technologies and endless frontiers. One of their focus areas is the use of oral histories to re-imagine and re-define archives. Examples include the use of [oral histories to map and reconstruct detention camps from Kenya's emergency period](#), and [using audio archives to re-document how Africa is portrayed in books](#).

In this section, ADH takes us through how to build an audio archive, and things to consider before, during and after the process.

Questions practitioners should ask themselves before carrying out oral history programs/projects?

How is oral history **defined by the people** you are interested in researching?

How are you positioned in relation to the research process?

Make sure to explore how the focus on the individual contributes to an understanding of the general issues because all knowledge is socially rooted, and intellectual life at any given historical moment, is related to the existing social and political forces.

How does the program highlight the relationships between you and others? It is also important to state the similarities and differences between self and others within the research and writing process.

Analytical reflexivity - once you have done an interview, there are certain things that you need to think about. First, provide a description of your reflections. Second, theorize subjectivity. This involves critically interrogating your own intellectual personhood within the knowledge production process, in order to resist slipping back into conventional mainstream notions of objectivity.



Actionable steps to successfully carry out an oral history program.

Work out your **topic of discussion**

Find and engage potential interviewees. It is important to make them see why they should agree to be interviewed by you, and how the interview will benefit them or their community.

Build trust with people and communities. Meeting the involved individuals and groups and give them a chance to get to know you.

Define what the end point of the oral history project looks like.

Think about the output that you want to achieve at the end of your project. Consider the roles that interviewees can play in the dissemination of that material.

Produce a participant information list/document that outlines information the participant actually needs to know. For example, a description of the research project, the name of the institution/organization conducting the project so that they have an informed decision whether they want to be aligned with the organization or not, the length the interviews/projects will take etc.

Free, prior and informed consent - ensure that you get consent from all participants to do the interviews. Remember that consent can be withdrawn at any stage.

Challenges and opportunities to expect when carrying out oral history programs.

Challenges

Longevity of the recordings - Most of the time people don't think about the long-term preservation of the oral histories because you haven't thought about proper storage, the sound quality, or even the type of equipment they are recording it on, or the format it is recorded.

Environmental factors such as sound interference and/or noise -

Think about where you are going to record these stories. Places like cafés, hotels, sometimes homes may not be the best places to do the interviews, as one may end up with recordings that are full of noise and interference. You do not want to give yourself additional tasks of editing out the noise from the recording.

Mistrust from their respondents - Mostly happens when previous researchers used the material against the community by portraying them in a negative light, or that the community felt exploited after the research. The process of regaining the trust of the community may make the project drag longer than was expected in then project timeline.



Opportunities

Grows the library - Oral history adds to the archived research stored in books, papers and reports written in that particular community or group.

An opportunity to re-document history. The clear description of how an event(s) occurred allows us to fill in existing gaps, and also gives us a chance to question previous documentation of the subjects.

How to measure impact on oral history programs

Check the frequency of the use of the material (s) - whether by fellow researchers, or interested audiences.

Citations - How much have your compilations been cited in papers, journals, or referred by news organizations or even re-shared on social media?

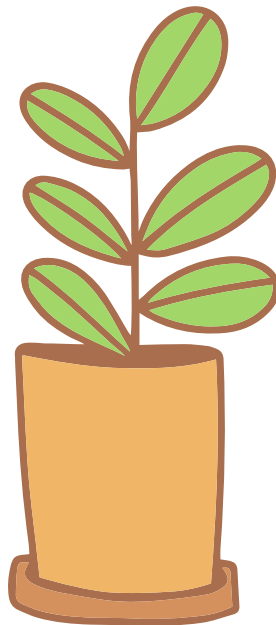
Feedback forms from the respondents and audiences where the material is used for presentations/workshops. Consider conducting public engagement forums on the project. The forums will give people who have interacted with your material a chance to express how the oral archive has been beneficial to their lives/projects. Make sure to document this qualitative data.

What resources around oral history for cultural heritage programs would you recommend for fellow practitioners?

[Oral History Society](#)

[Amazon.com: The Oral History Reader \(Routledge Readers in History\): 9780415707336](#)

Oral history and digital humanities (book) www.digitaloralhistory.net





6. COUNTY MANDATE

BY MUTUA MULONZYA

Mutua Mulonzia is the Director, Culture, Music and the Arts, County Government of Makueni. A published poet and writer, Mutua is passionate about stimulating a vibrant cultural and creative industry sector in the County and is keen on the urgent documentation and digitization of heritage for posterity.

INTRODUCTION

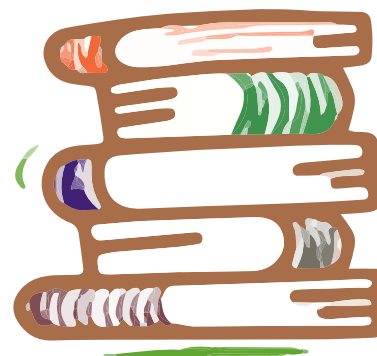
One of the main themes that emerged from The Skills for Culture Cultural Heritage in Kenyan Counties Report (2022) was a lack of expertise on how to come up with a county cultural mandate. In this section, Mutua Mulonzia takes us through how Makueni County came up with one; ensuring that there is continuity in cultural programs, irrespective of who is in office. He spotlights what resources to take account of and possible challenges practitioners may face, while trying to successfully implement their county cultural mandate.

Questions practitioners should ask themselves before coming up with a county cultural mandate?

What institutional policy, legal, and regulatory frameworks exist at the International, national and sub-national level. These will provide the foundation for the county cultural mandate.

They include:

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights
- The UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972
- The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003
- The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 2005
- Convention on Biological Diversity
- The Nagoya Protocol is key for genetic resources related to traditional knowledge
- The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
- African Union Agenda 2063



- The African Charter on Human and People's Rights
- The Constitution of Kenya-Articles 11, 7 (3), 32 (2), 33, 44 and Schedule Four, Part 2
- The draft national cultural policy done by the State Department of Culture
- The National Museums of Kenya Act
- The Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Expressions Act, 2016
- The protection of Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Expressions Regulations, 2022 (Draft)
- National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS)

Have we mapped the cultural and creative industries in the county and established their priority needs? Because when we map them, we will understand how they are organized, whether they have associations or they link to relevant national or traditional level associations. This is because it will help us define the priority programmatic interventions. Some possible programmatic interventions/areas include: arts and culture promotion and development; performing arts development and promotion; music development promotion and preservation; heritage development, preservation, promotion and protection and language and literature development and promotion. The digitization of archival collections is really critical.

Actionable steps to ensure that the county cultural mandate is a true reflection of the county's heritage space and reflects the needs of the practitioners in the county.

Map out the stakeholders in the cultural and creative industry sector in the county. It is important that you understand all the practitioners; the different artists, and their priority needs. Make sure to maintain a real-time database so that whenever you have projects that you want to collaborate with them, you know who will be the best fit.

Map out the county heritage sites and monuments. This will ensure that while defining your mandate, all the sites have been considered and that there is an action plan for protection, promotion, and preservation.

Engage with the various sub sectors of the cultural and creative industries in the county. The county mandate will not just serve the county government, but all cultural heritage stakeholders in the county. It is important to engage them so that they feel like they own this mandate too and that it addresses their programs.

Challenges practitioners should expect when coming up with a county cultural mandate & implementing it

The cultural mandate is domiciled among other competing sectors, particularly the social protection sector, gender, children and sometimes in some county governments, they have also included it together with sports and youth. All these sectors are competing for resources. As a result, it leads to very limited budget allocation for the cultural sector.

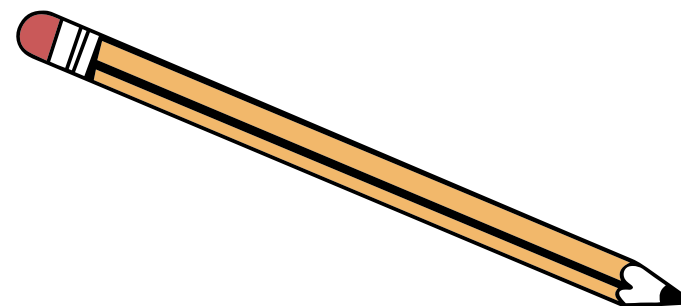
There is also a tendency in the counties to prioritize infrastructure projects that relate to water, roads, education, and to overlook the importance of culture, in urban development and even in sustainable development.

How county governments can measure the impact of their mandate

Monitoring and evaluation - It is critical to adopt a performance management framework, where you have targets drawn from the key indicators of the mandate. This ensures that you are able to monitor and evaluate what you have been able to do, how you have been able to meet your key indicators at the end of the financial year.

Baseline survey - Make sure you undertake a baseline survey before you embark on your mandate.

Customer satisfaction survey in different sub sectors of the cultural and creative industries. This will guide you to see the results of what you have done. Where there are gaps, you will be able to correct them as you plan for the future. Customer here refers to cultural and creative industry practitioners.





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