

Promoting heritage education: African youth stand up for their heritage

1. Background and rationale

Across the African continent, there is a growing recognition that the preservation and conservation of heritage – and of culture more broadly – depends on ensuring that the younger generations are encouraged and facilitated to play an active part in learning about their heritage and their cultural background. Only then can they become the necessary recipients and later transmitters of knowledge that shapes our varied societies.

Reflecting this realisation, National Trusts and similar organisations in a number of countries have initiated and/or supported initiatives meant to bring youth ‘closer’ to their cultural heritage and to become ambassadors in its preservation and further development.

These initiatives, while diverse and quite successful, however tend to be nationally-bound, reflecting the local cultural context, and rather less a more global perspective on Heritage Education.

This leads to two shortcomings: first, the youth inevitably view their heritage from a narrow nationalistic perspective – missing an opportunity to acquire an increasingly necessary global view on heritage in its diversity, its preservation and how solidarity and cultural respect among young people across continents can provide energy and solutions to heritage preservation. A second missed opportunity stems from the lack of inter-country exchanges of experiences and learning, from which the promoters of heritage education initiatives could benefit.

This proposed two year collective initiative is meant to tackle these two shortcomings, bringing together the International Organisation of National Trusts (with its experience in facilitating exchanges for young people working in heritage conservation) and three Heritage-focused national organisations from three continents (the National trust of Zimbabwe, the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda and the Monuments and Relics Commission of Sierra Leone), which each have experience in managing Heritage Education initiatives.

2. Objectives and participating organisations

The programme “*Heritage education: youth linking minds across the continent*” has two connected objectives, both contributing to youth ultimately becoming more effectively engaged in heritage preservation:

- a. Ensuring that selected youth from the Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone and Uganda develop an in-depth understanding and appreciation of the diverse heritage across the continent and become more effective in its preservation, through a learning network related to heritage conservation.
- b. Strengthening the skills of four organisations involved in heritage conservation to deliver more effective Heritage Education programmes for youth in a globalised, but diverse world.

The programme will bring together:

- a. *The National Trust of Zimbabwe* (details of Heritage education initiative to add)
- b. *The Monuments and Relics Commission of Sierra Leone* (details of Heritage education initiative to add)
- c. *The Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU)* has managed a Heritage Education Programme for the past 6 years: it develops educational materials and supports 75 Heritage Clubs in secondary schools throughout the country. The Foundation also works with the Government’s National Curriculum Development Centre to integrate culture in the school curriculum.
- d. *The International Organisation of National Trusts (INTO)* brings together 62 National Trusts and similar non-governmental organisations involved in heritage preservation and runs a successful volunteer holiday placement scheme.

3. Main roles and activities

The roles of the four National Trusts (or equivalent) will be to:

- a. Facilitate / organise youth in their respective countries to link up with their counterparts in the 2 other countries through electronic means – social media – and help them develop and manage the contents of an international *Youth and Heritage learning and sharing platform*.
- b. Organise a national competition for youth, to recognise the best video clips on their own heritage-related experiences, to feature on the electronic platform
- c. Support one of their staff and one youth to travel to the two other participating countries on 10-day learning visits
- d. Host members of the learning teams while in-country.
- e. Incorporate learning points from the exchange visits into their Heritage Education practice

INTO's roles will be to:

- a. Promote and co-host the international Youth and Heritage platform
- b. Publicise the outcomes of the programme to other interested National Trusts

4. Expected outputs and results

The programme will lead to the creation of an international electronic platform, with at least 100 skilled and better exposed young participants in each country, the production of 3 collections of video clips made and shared by youth in three countries, and enhanced practice in relation to Heritage Education in the three countries. In the medium term, the programme will lead to:

- Increased understanding and appreciation of Cultural Heritage by youth across the 3 countries.
- Raised awareness of heritage education in the respective countries through a competition and electronic platform.
- Cross-fertilisation of ideas for the four initiating INTO members, thus strengthening their respective heritage Education programmes.
- The experience publicised throughout the INTO fraternity, for the benefit of its 62 members worldwide.

5. Summary of costs and sources of finance

- a. Youth and Heritage learning and sharing platform (see activities a and b above):
 - £ 2000 per National Trust/country
 - £ 500 INTO
 - Support to development of video clips (equipment hire) and national awarding ceremonies: £ 3000 per countrySub-total: £ 15,500
- b. Exchange visits (see activities c and d above)
 - Travel costs: 12 air tickets @ £ 800 = £9,600
 - Hosting costs: £ 60 per day x 10 x 2 x 3 = £ 3,600Sub-total: £ 13,200
- c. Coordination, reporting
 - £ 500

Total: **£ 29,200**

- Contribution by National Trusts (hosting costs) @ £ 1,200 per country = £ 3,600
- External funding sought: £ 25,600