

ROADS TO INDEPENDENCE

The African Liberation Heritage Programme



1. INTRODUCTION

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'Roads to Independence in Africa: The African liberation Heritage' is a multi-country programme to be hosted by Tanzania in collaboration with African Union (AU) member countries and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization (UNESCO). This programme includes the construction of a museum, library and archives and aims at recognising the spirit of solidarity and cooperation amongst Africans in the context of the liberation movements. It is an acknowledgement of the importance of liberation movements to the process of decolonization of the continent as well as the role played by Tanzania in providing material and moral support to the liberation movements which led to the struggle for independence in Southern Africa. A significant aspect of this history of African countries as such stands to be lost unless it is collected, documented and made accessible to the public. For this reason, this programme aims to document and to recognize the contribution of people and institutions to the liberation of the continent. Many of the personalities who were instrumental in the liberation struggles are no longer alive and those who are still alive have not documented their experiences in detail. There is a gap due to a lack of transmission of information and knowledge to the young generation. This programme can serve as a vehicle to bridge that information and knowledge gap.

The formulation of the programme was spearheaded by Tanzania within the context of UNESCO. The programme forms an important part of the Dialogue of Civilisations which is an initiative to appreciate the significance of intercultural exchanges and the multi-cultural heritage of humanity. The independence of Africa which took place in the last part of the 20th century has created space for a possible dialogue between cultures. Indeed, Dialogue of Civilization would have been meaningless if 10% of humanity would have been denied rights and treated as subjects as was the case for Africans under colonial rule. Independence of African countries has therefore set the stage for the celebration of human freedom and cultural diversity in the 21st century. To this end, the dedication of resources to the development of Africa and for ensuring her active and vigorous participation on the global arena is important. **Tanzania in partnership with other SADC countries is spearheading heritage development in Africa which will ensure that the past is celebrated and safeguarded for the benefit of future generations.**

While recognizing the role of liberation movements in the struggle for independence in Africa, the role of civil society organizations and liberation movements shall also be highlighted. Many ordinary citizens contributed in often unrecognized ways to the achievement of independence in various countries on the continent. For this reason, the significance of this programme goes beyond simple acknowledgment of the role of liberation movements to a broad recognition of the role of African people and institutions in the attainment of freedom for the continent. It is this broader vision that informs the programme and positions it as a key element in the realization of the African Union's vision.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The programme will focus first on Tanzania and the SADC countries whose liberation movements were based in Tanzania during the liberation struggle. Those countries are Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. This concentration on what were known as the Frontline States is related to the historical and geographical context. However, other African countries, especially those which played a leading role in the liberation such as Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Libya, Nigeria, and Sudan are strongly encouraged to join the programme at this initial stage.

Tanzania is significant in the conceptualization of this programme for a number of reasons. Tanzania was the base for the African Liberation Committee which was established by the Organisation of African Unity in 1964 and dissolved in 1994 when South Africa gained independence. The archives of that Committee will serve as a critical resource to start with. Tanzania's contributions to the liberation struggles of Africa included the provision of bases for several of the liberation movements, provision of training for cadres and other forms of military assistance rendered to the movements. Through Mwalimu Nyerere's leadership, Tanzania was the material, political, philosophical and spiritual base for many liberation movements, Tanzania ensured that a generation of Africa leaders was ready when the countries gained their independence. Through the "Dar School", intellectuals at the University of Dar es Salaam provided future African leaders with a philosophy of African unity (Pan - Africanism) which is still today the vision of the African Union (AU).

Tanzania's recognition of her role as custodian of many tangible and intangible heritage resources provides an important dimension to this programme. Tanzania already has substantial experience in the development of heritage resources being home to some of the world's unique cultural heritage sites which are on the UNESCO World Heritage List, such as the Ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara and the Stone town of Zanzibar.

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3. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

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Broadly, this programme is to collect, document, conserve and commemorate the mosaic of Africa's heritage accumulated during the struggles for independence. Moreover, it will recognise, document and appreciate the support the liberation struggle enjoyed from countries which had achieved independence earlier. Tanzania also provided base for liberation movements of countries including Comoros, Seychelles and Uganda. Also noteworthy are the contributions of countries like Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (BOLESWA countries) where there are already a number of places which have monuments and sites that can be recognized via the respective national legislation. Moreover, countries like Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo-Brazzaville, Ghana, Nigeria, Algeria, Egypt, Senegal and Libya also played a major role that deserves recognition. By celebrating the regional liberation heritage the programme will contribute to the promotion of peace and unity on the continent. It will also foster dialogue among the region's citizenry because heritage is a powerful communication tool.

Against that broad aim, the programme will be pursuing three specific objectives which are consistent with the strategic objectives of UNESCO. The three objectives emerging as central to this programme are:

- To galvanise and sustain research into the liberation heritage of southern Africa with a view to establishing the diversity of heritage resources in the SADC region
- To develop processes and identify means of valorising the heritage of Africa's "roads to independence" and foster ownership of the liberation heritage among all stakeholders in the programme region
- To build the capacity of heritage professionals in the strategic management and presentation of Africa's liberation heritage

To this effect, the components of the programme, as a heritage resource, comprise of, but are not limited to:

- > A museum
- > A library
- > An archive
- > A research centre
- > A cinema hall and theatre
- > An inventory and public visibility of the historic sites to be celebrated

3.1. MUSEUM

The museum shall have an important role as collector and keeper of memory, of artefacts and objects and of protecting places and spaces at risk of destruction from development. The museum shall have space for artists to express themselves in respect of Africa's liberation through exhibitions and performances. As custodian of liberation heritage, the proposed museum is relevant to Africa's development and shall become a window into the future in contexts where change is often accompanied by loss. As place of learning, the museum shall provide an avenue for fostering dialogue and cultural interaction. It is therefore relevant in the discourse of Africa's roads to independence. Moreover, the museum will also be a means of telling the story in other forms than through books.

3.2. ARCHIVES

In Africa where cultural heritage is largely oral, oral history and oral traditions serve as archives in their holding of cumulated experiences and knowledge of people. For the purpose of this programme, **the opportunity to explore a variety of media through which archives can be presented is important because it will be strategic to consider several types of archives for purposes of collecting, documenting and presenting information.** With the programme proposed as a multidisciplinary and multi-country initiative, the appeal of virtual archives is their ease of access, potential to hold large volumes of information and instantaneous access to information.

This media provides an exciting avenue for the engagement of African communities in this domain of heritage. In addition, the recognition of indigenous and traditional knowledge systems also provides an avenue for the harnessing of the rich Data base of Africa's intangible heritage particularly the documentation of the living histories of former liberation heroes and communities who lived through various episodes of the struggles for freedom. Every African country is concerned in this process.

3.3 RESEARCH CENTRE

The research centre shall be a place where further research on the liberation of Africa shall be undertaken. The research shall seek to throw more light not only on the liberation struggle itself but also on the aftermath of the struggle. The centre should help researchers to dig up the story or stories yet untold regarding Africa's complex road to liberation. Moreover, the centre shall become the platform for trying to understand the present socio-economic and cultural conditions of Africa. The findings of the research centre shall feed into the museum, library and archives. This research centre shall also be instrumental in developing a think tank centre for major contemporary issues in Africa.

3.4 CINEMA HALL AND THEATRE

The cinema building shall incorporate a theatre so that there shall be space for continuous viewing of films and a variety of artistic expressions on the liberation struggle and related themes. The theatre shall provide artists with an opportunity to express themselves on the liberation struggles in a more interactive manner and from an African perspective. The African film industry is very young though the potential is high. By working together on the programme film makers and artists from the different countries will rally around a common theme and tell the African liberation story in an unprecedented way. The cinema and theatre shall allow visitors to get a glimpse of what the freedom fighters had to go through, the way in which different countries supported the struggle and reflect on what that experience means to the development of Africa.

3.5 SITES INVENTORY AND VISIBILITY

Many buildings and sites that were used by combatants and their supporters during the liberation struggles remain undocumented and even those that are documented lack public visibility. The programme shall undertake surveys that will see to it that the sites and buildings are documented, clearly demarcated and marked and, as much as possible, accessible to the public. Documentation and demarcation will facilitate the determination of accessibility levels and maintenance needs.

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4. KEY ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

The Programme is a comprehensive and evolutive undertaking involving several major activities including: research and tracer studies, publication of books, documentary films, library, collection and exhibition of museum objects, and works on a number of monuments to commemorate places where the leaders of the liberation struggle stayed or operated. These activities are not exhaustive and it is anticipated that more activity areas will be identified in the course of the programme. Resultant activities shall be preceded by consultation with the stakeholders.

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The programme is to be developed as a multi-resource facility fully equipped with the use of state of the art technologies located at the main headquarters in Tanzania. The programme would rely on the institutions in the different countries to develop activities, on the national chapters to oversee such activities and for the international steering committee to coordinate the various regional activities.

Though located in one country the programme would have a consolidated heritage resource and program operating as a multi-country, multi-resources facility through collaboration with existing institutions responsible for sites and monuments in the different participating countries. By using the latest technologies the programme would still be accessed virtually through the web thus enabling the other countries to benefit from the resources at the main programme office. Through a network facility of institutions like museums and archives and a shared strategy of resources development, the programme could function effectively with one composite programme location but with programs and activities carried out in the other participating countries. The exchange of staff and resources such as the use of travelling exhibitions could enhance joint program development within and between countries.

- Inspire writers to continue more vigorously to document the biographies of liberation heroes such as Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Nelson Mandela, Augustino Neto, Samora Marcel, Kenneth Kaunda, Robert Mugabe and others who have not yet been celebrated.

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A more compelling reason for this programme is clearly its answer to the joint call for the AU and UNESCO to advance programmes which foster the integration of Africa and help affirm a Pan African identity that promotes development for Africans. As an Africa-focused programme, it fits well within the vision of NEPAD to harness the resources of the continent in its development efforts.

It should also be noted that like other programmes under the UNESCO "Routes" banner, the African Liberation Heritage Programme can "... encourage positive convergence between cultures through the presentation and recognition of a common heritage and plural identities" for the people of Africa. When presented through the metaphor of "roads" and "journeys", the lived experiences of liberation heroes and their communities gain new life and create more potential for recounting which are critical for sustaining the programme. This is because they enable others to join in along the way and these are envisaged to compromise communities, development partners, governments and private sector entities. Like African roads which lead those journeys through them along uncharted terrain with diverse environments, so too this programme promises to provide a vibrant and dynamic process for building, protecting and celebrating the vibrant heritage of the attainment of freedom by the continent. **Beyond political freedom, there are many freedoms which have been celebrated by Africans over the last fifty years and it is these untold and undocumented stories which this programme can bring to fore.**

6. CHALLENGES

The proposed programme is not without challenges. Clearly, a regional programme provides logistical challenges both in its design and implementation. For example, human and financial resources are needed not only for the setting up the necessary infrastructure but also for keeping the same running. There has to be sufficient human and financial resources to maintaining the buildings and equipment and ensure that the different components of the programme are active and focused. Certainly, some of the challenges can be mitigated so that the best advantages are optimised. In that context, there are three critical factors which need to be given serious consideration.

Given the fact that many people in the generation of independence heroes and heroines are dying without leaving recorded memoirs, there is some urgency in documenting as much as possible this knowledge. For example, **it is worth noting that many women in the liberation movements have not had their stories documented and this would be an opportunity to make visible the critical role women played in the struggles for independence in Africa.** Further, as many sites and places in the landscape become vulnerable to destruction, it is important that they are marked or given protection to mark their association with struggle heroes and events. As the continent strides forward in search of peace, development and justice, it will be a fitting tribute to past heroes and heroines to etch them into our histories and to use them as instruments of building tomorrow's just, peaceful and equitable societies. The support of the continent's leadership for this programme is welcomed and should be seized.

7. STAKEHOLDERS

This programme has many stakeholders and counts on their support for success and sustainability. These stakeholders include:

A. Government Ministries and agencies:

1. Ministries of Culture
2. Antiquities or Heritage Resources Agencies
3. National Archives
4. National Museums
5. National Library Services National Library Services
6. Universities and related tertiary institutions
7. Ministries of Defence
8. Ministries of Information
9. Ministries of Education

B. Non-government and civil society organisations

1. Private museums
2. Museum associations (local and regional)
3. Arts Associations and related Cultural institutions
4. Liberation movements and veterans' associations
5. Family and community trust associations
6. Foundations (e.g. Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation, Mandela Foundation and educational foundations)

D. International Organisations

1. African Union
2. U.N. agencies (esp. UNESCO, UNDP)
3. SADC
4. African Development Bank (ADB)
5. International heritage agencies
6. AFRICOM
7. ICOM
8. ICCROM
9. International Museum Associations and Networks
10. International NGOs

E. Diplomatic Missions and international relations institutions

F. Private Sector

1. Local private sector companies
2. International and trans-national companies

This list of institutions is not exhaustive and it is anticipated that as the programme develops it will leverage the support of many other sectors. Located as it is within the culture sector, it is anticipated that the role of cultural practitioners and cultural industries will be a significant one. The participation of civil society organisations particularly liberation movements, youth associations and community based organisations cannot be over emphasised. The programme's main aim will be to foster the promotion and commemoration of Africa's road to independence and it is important that people identify with it at all levels and see it as creating opportunities for their creative expressions.

7. FUNDING

This multi-stakeholder and multi-disciplinary programme is an African undertaking primarily depending on African governments and institutions for long term sustainable funding for the core components of the programme. From that standpoint, the programme can learn from other initiatives under the UNESCO "Routes" particularly the Slave Route Project which mobilised a lot of support from government, private sector, non-government and civil society sectors in Africa. Although UNESCO, the African Union, SADC and other African regional groupings are the core institutions identified to champion this programme the responsibility for its success squarely rests with Africa.

8. BUDGET

The budget of the Programme is made up of two main components which are: the installation component and the running/operation component. The installation budget, which is of immediate concern, is the amount of money needed to put the major components of the African Liberation Heritage Programme in place. This budget is made up of the cost of the following:

- a) Documentation and research activities (identification and documentation of liberation heritage sites, collection of oral texts from liberation leaders and war veterans etc.) US\$ 3,000,000
- b) Construction of Programme infrastructure (buildings, and installations), US\$ 4,000,000
- c) Acquisition and installation of professional tools and equipment, US\$ 1,000,000

The estimated costs add up to eight million dollars (US\$ 8 million).