Presentation 2

Network of Higher Education Institution for ICH Safeguarding in Southern Africa

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INTRODUCTION

- The Southern African Intangible Cultural Heritage Academic Network (SAICHA-Net) is an association of academics & non-academics who work in and with higher education institutions and communities in some countries in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region.

- Members are drawn from seven member states that make up the Southern African Intangible Cultural Heritage (SAICH) Platform.

THE SAICH PLATFORM

- The SAICH Platform was formed in 2015.

- Seven countries in the SADC region: Botswana, Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe make up this consortium that was funded by the Flanders Government of Belgium.

- Since its formation it has trained members in community based inventorying.

- Again with funding from the Flanders Government it has also carried out a survey on the presence, depth and breadth of ICH in higher and tertiary institutions in member states and in South Africa.

- It is the survey that spawned SAICHA-Net in 2018.

SAICH PLATFORM (CONTINUED)

- **Findings**: very little on ICH teaching and research in Southern Africa's universities.

- The little was spread under African Languages and Literature, Heritage Studies (but with a major emphasis on the tangible especially in Archaeology and management of monuments, museums).

- At postgraduate level, it was noted that CUT had some students undertaking studies that were in line with ICH.

SAICH PLATFORM (CONTINUED)

- At undergraduate level the main exception was the University of Zambia – an undergraduate program was to commence in 2019.

- At a discussion on research findings in Harare, Zimbabwe, members agreed to set up an academic network to share ideas and develop programs of study in ICH.

- The network borne out of these deliberations was SAICHA-Net

SAICHA-NET

- The idea behind SAICHA-Net is that higher and tertiary institutions, especially universities and teachers' colleges are better placed in incorporating ICH issues into their curricula.

- It also notes that through universities and related institutions, SAICHA-Net has the potential to continuously participate in ICH inventorying activities through working with communities since universities have research and outreach budgets.

SAICHA-NET (CONTINUED)

- SAICHA-Net has noted that ICH programs can be developed through community engagement and working with other stakeholders, especially government ministries and agencies.

- Among the common objectives of the Network are some of the three given below:
    - ❑ to support academic mobility and intellectual and intercultural learning;
    - ❑ to encourage academic participation in safeguarding ICH;
    - to foster complementarity between tertiary education institutions and community ICH practitioners (also including other non-academic players such as government agencies).

SAICHA-NET (CONTINUED)

- It is for the promotion of SAICH Platform's activities in academic institutions in the region & has potential to grow beyond the SADC Region.
- SAICHA-Net promotes academic growth among academics.
- It promotes career growth and collegiality for both academics and non-academics.
- SAICHA-Net is more than about individual academics, it is also a platform for inter-institutional interface.
- It creates space for collaboration between both individuals and institutions.

SAICHA-NET & THE COVID 19 EXPERIENCE

- The plan was that SAICH-Net was to hold its first Conference in either Malawi or Lesotho this year, 2020.
- These plans have been scuttled by Covid 19.
- The pandemic has made travel outside and within countries impossible due to lockdowns.
- What it has meant is that members of SAICHA-Net have been made to rethink on how they have to engage.

SAICHA-NET & COVID 19 (CONTINUED)

- The main challenge has been that of connectivity.
- For most people access to the internet is a challenge.
- Where it is accessible, at times the costs are prohibitive.
- This has meant that communication has been intermittent.
- This has left the internet as the best option but it is accessed only after long intervals due to travel restrictions and costs of data.

SAICHA-NET & COVID 19 (CONTINUED)

- Despite the challenge of connectivity, plans are underway to have the planned conference underway.
- The planning has been left to the Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) SAICH coordinating team to work on.
- The SAICH coordinating team at CUT is working with the university IT Department on how best the conference can be done without technical hitches.

SAICHA-NET ACTIVITIES

- While members wait for a vaccine to be found or herd immunity to develop, they have been encouraged to find and document through online means local histories relating to:
  - ❑ How communities in the past have dealt with pandemics.
  - ❑ What sanitizers, if any that communities are developing from the local flora.
  - ❑ Supplementary herbal teas/drinks that boost immunity that people are taking in their communities to minimize the Covid 19 effect if they get infected.

SAICHA-NET ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

- The SAICHA-Net team at CUT has learnt that a community in Makonde District has developed a sanitizer that members are using.

- It has also gathered that the act of quarantining the infected has always been part and parcel of Shona culture – those suffering from *gwirikwiti* (rubeola) were quarantined because there was no vaccine against the disease

- Those suffering from leprosy (*maperembudzi*) were also quarantined.

NB: See some proposed conference themes below.

SAICHA-NET ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

- In higher education institutions in Zimbabwe & member states, academic activities are almost at a standstill.
- At CUT a postgraduate program in Indigenous Knowledge, a key component of ICH has been developed and is being assessed by the statutory body.
- Research at MPhil and DPhil levels is under way and two students will graduate this year.
- In other countries as in Zimbabwe, teaching is continuing online.
- Members say as a result of changed circumstances, they will attend to program development issues related to ICH once the pandemic is under control.

SAICHA-NET ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

- In addition to the activities given above, SAICHA-Net plans that its intended online conference now focuses on some of the following:
  - Inventorying Covid 19 stories
  - Inventorying in pandemic situations
  - Forms of ICH useful in the Covid 19 shadow
- There are other themes that will be handled, and not all will be on Covid 19.

PROPOSED CONFERENCE THEMES

- Innovations in Safeguarding ICH in the 21st Century
- ICH and Social Responsiveness under Covid-19
- Oral histories and indigenous responses to pandemics
- Challenges and Opportunities in ICH Regional Activities
- ICH and the African Development Agenda: Lessons from Current Activities
- Redefining and activating the African Ethos through ICH.

NB: Themes courtesy of Mr Moffat Moyo (University of Zambia), Ms Temahlubi Nkambule (Eswatini), Ms Freda Tawana (Namibia), Dr. Lovemore Mazibuko (Malawi) and other members.

RUONEKANO

THANK YOU AND STAY SAFE

NDINOTENDA, MUZVICHENGETEDZE
MUMAZUVA ANO