MUSEUM DOCUMENTATION: CAPTURING DIMINISHING CULTURES: A CASE STUDY OF ZIMBABWEAN TRADITIONAL ASPECTS

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The Mutare Museum
The documentation of the ICH of the Eastern Shona people was done under the following categories of National inventories which are

- traditional medicine
- knowledge about nature eg indigenous knowledge system
- social practices
- ritual, ceremonies, myth and beliefs
1. The functional, social and religious meaning of the traditional hut has been documented.
The traditional hut has been constructed in the museum for visitors to rest and recreate in the hut in a traditional way while listening to the intangible heritage associated with it.
Traditional dances
Home screen showing the types of dances that can be played on this flat screen TV for visitors to enjoy.
Rituals and ceremonies, traditional beliefs, myths and religious practices

- Rain making ceremonies
The documentation was done out of the realisation that amongst the Eastern Shona people belief in witchcraft is still prevalent despite the advent of Christianity and the law suppressing its practice.

In the documentation process the museum held several talk shows with the members of the public and conducted interviews with self confessed witches and their stories were captured.

As a result of the documented stories of witchcraft, a flip book was designed in the museum which shows several stories, videos and contemporary newspaper articles that visitors can read in order to understand the belief in the Eastern Shona society.
Display of part of the objects which are associated with the Witchcraft act in the Museum.
Traditional healing.
This documented information has been used partly in the development of traditional healing exhibition in the Museum and some of the documented objects are on display.
Religion

- It constituted the central basis of the African tradition as all their traditions, rituals, and ceremonies were deeply ingrained in it.
Great Zimbabwe site which was once a centre of religious activity
Traditional games

- Traditional games like Tsoro and Nhodo which have been practiced for generations as part of recreational and entertainment purposes for both children and adults has also been documented.
The presentation has shown that the capturing of fading cultures by Mutare museum has been done as an effort to safeguard traditions that are slowly dying due to foreign cultural influences.

These documented cultural values, beliefs and norms will serve as future reference and help communities connect with their ancestral roots.
Acknowledgements

- I would like extend gratitude to the CIDOC 2017 committee for organising this workshop for us and I would also want to thank the Getty Foundation for providing funding for me to attend this crucial workshop in my career. May God bless you all

Thank you for listening.