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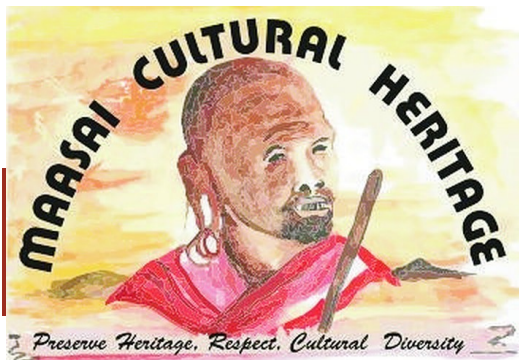
ANNUAL REPORT

2019/2020



MAASAI VOICES OF HERITAGE

“Documenting and
protecting the Heritage of
the Laikipia Maasai”



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WHO WE ARE

Maasai Cultural Heritage (MCH) Foundation is a community-based organization legally constituted under the laws of Kenya. It is also registered as a people's self-help organization under the auspices of the Ministry of National Heritage and culture and social services within the office of the Vice president, Republic of Kenya.

MCH has been operational for the last 12 years and it undertakes a variety of activities ranging from human rights, civic education, cultural preservation peace building and livelihood support.

OUR VISION : We envision a world where the indigenous cultures, communities and diversity are recognized respected and protected against commercial exploitation and abuse.

OUR MISSION : We exist to facilitate, strengthen, promote and preserve indigenous cultures and cultural diversity.

OUR SCOPE : On a broader front, we are working in four Kenyan counties occupied by different pastoralist communities namely; Laikipia, Samburu, Isiolo and Marsabit. The communities living in these areas are; Laikipia Maasai (30,000), Samburu (350,000), Borana (215,000) and Rendile living on the southern lowland of Marsabit (50,000).

OUR PARTNERS

- WIPO
- UNIVERSITY OF DUKE
- AMERICAN FORLIFE CENTRE
- ILO
- NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA
- KENYA COPYRIGHT BOARD

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Thanks to your support, so far, we have:

- ⇒ Recorded and produced 20 different songs and ceremonies by the Laikipia Maasai
- ⇒ Organized 5 Maasai cultural days in 5 schools
- ⇒ Organized 5 intercultural exchange visit for primary schools
- ⇒ Conducted community-awareness workshops in 18 villages, seminars on women's rights, and spoken out against female genital mutilation. (Funding: IWGIA)

- ⇒ Trained over 50 community-based indigenous human rights monitors from Samburu, Laikipia, Isiolo and Marsabit. (Initially supported by the Amnesty International (Kenya chapter), and currently by IWGIA).
- ⇒ Participated in various conferences and United Nations work groups, and brought attention to the plight of Kenyan indigenous communities with specific focus on Laikipia Maasai and Samburu. (Funding: IWGIA and UN voluntary funds)
- ⇒ Worked with land owners to secure and reclaim 500 acres of Maasai land

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Maasai Cultural Heritage (MCH) is a platform where the indigenous MAA community are free to express their culture, traditions, indigenous talents and livelihood in a more free, unique and authentic way. It is a platform that allows us as the MAA community to document, link, amplify and scale up our voices of heritage not only in our community, worldwide and even for our future generations. Our main goal is to make sure the inter-generational gap is not huge and that our cultures and traditions are not long forgotten or extinct. Documenting and filming cultures' traditions, indigenous skills and technologies ensure the information will be visible to the future generations coming.

I am calling upon anyone and everyone who believes that our roots shape us to join the Maasai Cultural Heritage fraternity to help us preserve, strengthen, promote our indigenous cultures and traditions. All are welcome to get to know us by visiting not only our offices but also get to interact one on one with our people.

Thank you so much!



With gratitude,

Handwritten signature of Linda Laissa.

Linda Laissa,
Programmes Coordinator.



Respect & Recognition

We promote the respect, recognition, and fulfillment of human rights for marginalized indigenous communities and using culture as a foundation for human rights activism. This is through training indigenous rights monitors.



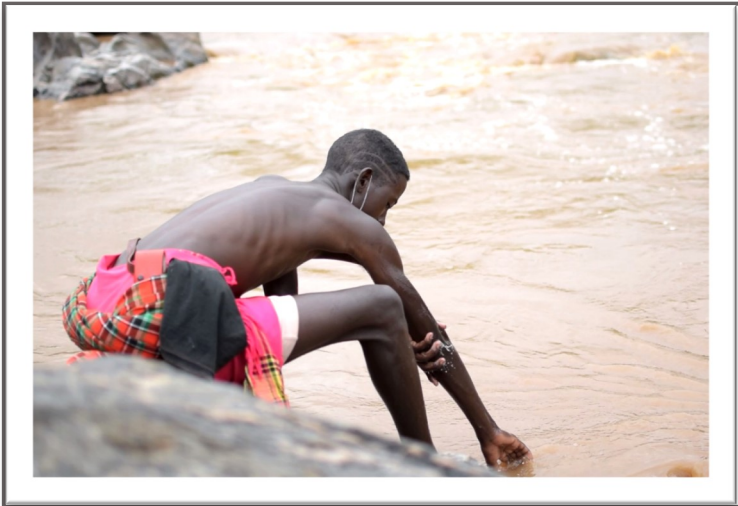
Cultural Diversity

We promote cultural diversity through documenting, recording, and sharing the heritage of the Laikipia Maasai (i.e. Voices of Heritage).



Peace and Unity

We promote peace and conflict resolution among different indigenous groups and neighboring communities using Maasai folklore, music and poetry (we train community-based peace mediators and leaders).



Natural Resources Heritage

We strive to promote and protect Maasai cultural heritage and resources.



Indigenous Women Rights

We work to eliminate all forms of violence against indigenous women. We are undertaking a joint project with Coalition on violence on Women, creating awareness of women rights and providing legal aid for affected women. The Maasai heritage is a very important asset in terms of promoting women rights.

Filming & Documentation

We document procedures, traditional cultural expression and knowledge with information that can be passed from one generation to another to ensure perpetuation and continuity of Maa Cultural Heritage.

THE BLACKSMITH (ILKUNONO) OF THE SAMBURU AND RENDILE

MCH, with support from the Nia Tero Foundation, has been working to document Maasai Voice of Heritage in counties of Laikipia, Samburu, Marsabit and Isiolo. This has been conducted through writings, photography and videography so as to make sure these knowledge is available for generations to come and to prevent extinction and generational gaps.

The team set out to look at the blacksmiths' life in the tribe of Samburu and Rendile of Northern Kenya with the objective of finding out and documenting their origin, past sources of livelihoods, past technologies and linkages with the modern technologies, and the importance of blacksmiths in the larger Maa communities, as well as their interactions.

The Ilkunono skills and works are very highly respected in their communities since almost all of the items they make are cultural requirements for the passage of their rights. . In respect of their skills, no one can go through a traditional ritual without their items and blessings. Their work also supports a wider livelihood in northern Kenya such as the hunters and

gathers, women enterprises such as making of calabashes, tools of work and weapons for community protection. Some of the tools are also used to predict the future and are able to prepare for these events such as war, rains and drought as a community.



Figure 2: A blacksmith at work

To find the link to the Blacksmith (Il Kunono) documentary, click [here](#).



Figure 2: Some tools used and made by the Ilkunono (photo by Ramson at Wamba)

“Lkunono is one of the nine recognized Samburu clans, they practice artisan blacksmith (originally, they were called **Lkurucho** by Samburu). They are a small population of people living among the Samburu and Rendille, currently scattered around the villages within Samburu and Marsabit counties. The Rendille people call them **Tumal.**”

THE ILNGWESI (ILMEIRISHARI AGE SET) CULTURAL MANYATTA

In the principle of our core values that ***“Self and Cultural identity is the foundation of development”***, human beings cannot live in isolation; from others, our existence is affirmed by the existence of others or indeed by being recognized by others. Thus, it is our intentions to encourage and motivate the pastoralists (our primary target group) to interact with other Kenyans as a way of enabling them to achieve their

full potential. Pastoralists’ culture and identity forms an important part of the nation’s national heritage. The ceremony is a cultural process to graduate a certain age set of men into junior elders where they undergo trainings on responsibilities on community issues and advisories to the entire community and their juniors. This cultural event takes place within a period of 3 months. However, it was met by

the COVID-19 pandemic where all measures had to be taken and one of them was to reduce the event to a one-month period. MCH/IMPACT attended the 5-day cultural manyatta ceremony with the main aim of documenting the procedures, traditional cultural expression and knowledge with information that would be passed from one generation to another.



Figure 1: Shows official suffocation of the cow for blessings and blood taking.

“Culturally, this is a very big and important occasion where all people from that community attend from elites, students of various levels and community members come together for educational purposes about the culture and passing of information to the coming generation”.

Furthermore, the event being in the midst of a global pandemic, MCH/IMPACT intervened to establish how the community was coping with the challenges, and one of them was pressure from the government to stop the ceremony.

MCH/IMPACT managed to mobilize elders for a dialogue meeting with the administration to allow the event to take place within a shorter period taking into consideration all the COVID-19 precautions.



Figure 2: Shows elders blessing the youth.

COVID - 19 RESPONSE

The COVID 19 pandemic came during a crucial moment for the Maa speaking Communities. COVID hit during the season of circumcision, which is a very important moment that marks a significant rite of passage to Maa community. MCH with the help of County Public Health Officers visited these communities to share awareness and information on COVID 19, as well as providing essential food

supplies due to shortage occasioned by partial lockdown by Kenyan Authorities which include closure of livestock markets as a precautionary measure. All these was made possible through support from Nia Tero, which ensured that the communities were able to continue with their livelihoods amidst the pandemic. IMPACT accompanied by public health personnel took on a 3-day activity aimed at reaching about 100

households with a pack of assorted foods and essentials within Mukogodo East Ward (Chumvi area). The sections visited within the ward include Lotasha, Lochaki, Ositat, Nkusero, Loruko and Lokirisiai; targeting mainly the aged, People with Disabilities (PWDs) and widows. Also, 6 water tanks were purchased and allocated to Chumvi and Lotacha centres, which operate small retail shops, serving about 700 & 400 people respectively.

Item	Quantity—Kgs/ltrs	People issued	Total (Kgs/ltrs)
Maize flour	5	100	500
Rice	5	100	500
Cooking oil	3	100	300
Beans	2	100	200
Porridge flour	3.5	100	350
Hand-wash soap	1	100	100



Figure 1: A staff taking records during distribution

Table 1: Table illustrating foodstuffs distributed

Villages	Aged	Widows	PWDs	Directly reached	Pax/HH	Total indirectly reached
Lotasha	24	6	0	30	6	180
Loruko	15	1	0	16	6	96
Ositat	13	0	1	14	6	84
Nkusero	20	0	0	20	6	120
Loruko	8	2	0	10	6	60
Lokirisia	10	0	0	10	6	60
TOTAL	90	9	1	100		600

Table 2: Table with direct and indirect beneficiaries of food stuff and hand washing soap.

“The Nia tero support has supported 11,200 persons directly in Samburu East sub-county and part of Mukogodo East ward and over 103,600 people indirectly which is a significant number as a rapid response to combating spread of Covid-19.”

CAPACITY BUILDING

THE RIVER OF BROWN WATERS

With the support from DOCUBOX, Comic Relief and the communities along the river, Linda Laissa, shot a documentary “The River of Brown Waters” that tells the story of Ewaso Ng’iro River life across generations, through the voices of pastoralists. The river’s ecosystem supports a lot of lives (both human and wildlife), livelihoods, cultures and traditions of the communities living along it.

The documentary outlines the changes and threats to the river ecosystem, creating awareness on the urge to protect, conserve and promote sustainable use of the river and its resources.

If the river dies, most pastoral cultures and livelihoods may die with it.

The documentary has been aired on various platforms:

- ◆ DOCUBOX, Kenya
- ◆ Comic Relief, Wales
- ◆ Safaricom—Mandala Tv

Screened by:-

- ◆ Manyatta screenings, Kenya

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES/WORKSHOPS

The Programmes Coordinator, Linda Laissa, got the opportunity to participate in the second meeting of the Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, 24th - 29th February 2020, in Rome, Italy.



The submissions on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework are accessible [here](#).

FINANCIAL REPORT

LIST OF MAA CULTURAL HERITAGE (MCH) PARTNERS/ FUNDERS 2019/2020

MCH received funds support from the following partners:

FUNDER	AMOUNT	DURATION
NIA TERO	USD 20,000	2 YRS
7TH GENERATION	USD 10,000	1 YR
FIMI-AYNI (INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS WOMEN’S FORUM)	USD 9500	1 YR



We are on the web!

<https://mch-kenya.org/>

MAASAI CULTURAL HERITAGE

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B U S I N E S S T A G L I N E O R M O T T O

**YOU CAN HELP DOCUMENT,
PROTECT, PRESERVE AND
PERPETUATE MAASAI
CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Support our work and help
amplify indigenous voices!**

