

4th National Cultural Heritage Awards, 2021

Awardee profiles

Intangible Cultural Heritage

1. Dr. Grace Nambatya

The reluctance by most Ugandans to use herbal medicine in favor of Western medicine was due to a colonial residual mentality. The negative perception about herbal medicine in the past would have been the same.

The first nominee of this category has changed perceptions on the use of herbal medicine through her research and education. Many Ugandans, especially those infected with chronic illnesses, are turning to herbal medicine and supplements for relief due to her contribution.

For about 20 years, Dr. Nambatya has taught communities about the importance of traditional and indigenous medicine. She was also the main brain behind the Indigenous and Complementary Medicine Bill of 2015.

Dr. Grace Nambatya is a Director of research, Natural Chemotherapeutics Research Laboratory.

2. Haruna Walusimbi Nsibambi

In the face of modernity many of our cultural skills are being eroded, diluted or merged with other cultures and it is becoming increasingly difficult to preserve traditional ways of life and the meaning attached to them.

The Nominee in this category is using his knowledge and skills to promote performing arts. 30 years ago, Haruna founded the Nile Beats Artists, a traditional dance group in Jinja that trains young people and teenagers in performing arts such as folk songs and dances. He has contributed to the preservation and promotion of the Kisoga Dance known as Tamenaibuga.

Haruna is also a royal drummer in the Busoga Kingdom.

3. Walabyeki Magoba

One of the most effective ways of preserving cultural heritage is through documentation of knowledge which can be used as a reference for many generations.

Magoba has authored up to 86 books some of which document traditional values of the Kiganda culture and are used to teach children about their traditional values, beliefs, customs as well as history. For about 20 years, He has been the brain behind the Ekyooto radio programme on CBS radio through which traditional values and customs such as traditional stories and proverbs are transmitted to young people.

He is also a former chief editor of the CBS Magazine commonly known as Entanda ya Buganda.

Tangible Cultural Heritage

1. Former Archbishop Livingstone Mpalanyi Nkoyoyo (post humus)

The former Archbishop is recognised for establishing the Uganda Martyrs' Museum in Namugongo. The museum is the site where the first seed of Christianity in Uganda was sowed. It is the site where Christian convents (13 Anglicans and 12 Catholics) were martyred on the 3rd June 1886 on orders of Kabaka Mwanga. The bones and ashes of these 25 martyrs were buried in the chapel that was built by Owekitiibwa Tefero Kisosonkole in 1935. The tourist and pilgrimages are now able to see the road to martyrdom to reflect on their Christian beliefs in order for them to recommit strongly to their faith.

Despite being a religious leader, Nkoyoyo was instrumental in the restoration of the Buganda Kingdom, and eventually, the coronation of the King of Buganda.

2. Nyakasura school administration

In modern times the school has lacked investment and fallen into disrepair. Collapsed ceilings, leaking roofs and many broken windows are commonplace as you wandered the grounds.

Thanks to a renewed enthusiasm among staff and support from UK friends of Nyakasura a series of refurbishments were initiated and completed. In spite of the modernised renovation works, the school worked around the original architecture of the oldest classroom block to ensure that it maintains its surroundings, successfully adapting the oldest classroom block into a modern, bright structure that will serve generations to come.

The school was initiated in 1926 by a retired Scottish army officer, Ernest Calwell. Calwell had taught at the elite King's College Budo near Kampala until he went to Tooro where King Kyebambe III gave him land to start a similar school in Western Uganda. The school was the first to produce electricity, thanks to a small dam built in 1930. Calwell also had the students wear kilts as part of the school uniform, as it can be seen today

The block was also fitted with water harvesting offering long term savings to the school for resources. The ground around the building were reshaped and a stone wall added to help alleviate water ingress that was causing so many problems on the original block.

3. The Muntu clan in Arua for preserving the tree of honest which is located within the Arua city.

The Saka tree is located 3 km east of Arua City, near Ediofe Cathedral (Catholic). Saka is a big tree with a trunk diameter of more than 3 meters and it casts a very cool shadow of more than 150 square meters. It is under the shade of this tree that the people of the Muntu clan sit to resolve their issues. Nobody commits an abomination or tells lies under the shadow of the Saka tree as one otherwise risks a calamity. This why it is called the "tree of honesty". Today, the local customary court sits under this tree because it is believed that nobody will tell lies here. The Saka tree is however, threatened by the proposed expansion of a feeder road