

# QUALITY ASSURANCE STANDARDS FOR

## COMMUNITY MUSEUMS IN UGANDA



**2016**



The Uganda Community  
Museums Association



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## **1. BACKGROUND**

Over the past few years, a number of Ugandan groups and individuals have established Community Museums to preserve and promote culture.

These museums have formed an umbrella organisation, the Uganda Community Museums Association (UCOMA). The Association came into being because of the need for members to be heard with one strong voice, while articulating matters concerning community museums to Government and other partners. Forming this Association was first mooted during an exhibition held by 15 community museums in 2010. Thereafter, the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU) supported UCOMA to be registered as a Non-Governmental Organisation.

UCOMA currently (2016) counts 35 members from all five regions of Uganda. These museums are at different levels of development. Some are fully operational while others are partially opened to the public and can only be visited on appointment.

UCOMA appreciates the cooperation of its members in developing our quality standards. Thanks also go to CCFU and its staff for guiding and financing the whole process of making these guidelines and printing this booklet.

## **2. ABOUT UCOMA**

UCOMA is guided by the following:

### **Vision**

To inspire, nurture and sustain community museums in Uganda.

### **Mission**

To bring together all member community museums, to enhance their professionalism and protect their interests, so that communities in Uganda value and promote their culture.

### **Objectives**

- a. To preserve artefacts and cultures throughout the country through community museums.
- b. To expose to all generations, especially to the youth, Uganda's culture, artefacts and traditions.
- c. To share experiences, knowledge, skills and resources within and outside Uganda.
- d. To advocate for the common interests of member museums and create a conducive policy environment for their work.
- e. To provide members with professional growth in managing their individual museums, and to carry out research and documentation on African/Ugandan artefacts, cultures and their evolution.

## **3. WHY QUALITY STANDARDS?**

As in other fields or professions, the UCOMA quality assurance standards are generally acceptable levels of attainment that all members are expected to achieve; they are benchmarks or targets that need to be adhered to.

Our standards provide the means to measure the quality of services provided by a museum to its community and to ensure that the museums are accountable to each other, their stakeholders, the public and society at large.

If adhered to, the UCOMA standards will also help community museums to re-assure their clientele that they are credible entities, and to enhance a sense of unity among themselves. It is further anticipated that the standards will motivate community museums to work hard to attain professional levels and to offer quality services to their clientele.

#### **4. THE UCOMA QUALITY STANDARDS**

Our quality assurance standards are categorised into **mandatory** and non-mandatory. **Mandatory standards** are in **bold**. Every museum is however expected to find all possible ways to meet all standards in time.

##### **I. PURPOSE FOR EXISTENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

A community museum shall:

- a. **Ensure that its primary objective is to preserve and promote cultural heritage** (without excluding separate income generating activities, such as crafts shops, restaurants, coffee shops)
- b. **Have a mission and objectives that reflect its social role and responsibility towards local communities**
- c. **Engage in activities that highlight its social responsibility towards the community**, such as public exhibitions, providing spaces for community dialogue meetings, etc.

## II. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

A community museum shall:

- a. **Be registered as a legal entity with either the local government as a CBO, as an NGO with the National Bureau for NGOs or as a company with the Registrar of Companies**
- b. **Adhere to the laws regulating public spaces and provide the necessary facilities (security and safety, sanitary facilities, first aid box, fire escape, fire extinguisher, general hygiene, access for people with a disability)** as partly provided for by the Public Health Act and Statutory Instrument 281-1

## III. GOVERNANCE, FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

A community museum shall:

- a. **Have a Board, or management or advisory committee, with at least three members, 1 of whom shall be a female and 1 from the community where the museum is situated**
- b. **Have a bank account in the museum's name**
- c. **Maintain simple books of account, showing funds received and expenditure**
- d. Display the names of the members of the museum committee and registration certificates in the museum.
- e. Develop annual work plans and budget
- f. Use an effective information management system (paper-based or digital) for its activities and workers
- g. Assess risks and develop strategies to manage them as part of its strategic and financial planning
- h. Have security of tenure for its premises

#### **IV. CONSERVATION, COLLECTIONS AND RESEARCH**

A community museum shall:

- a. Strive to acquire and preserve artefacts that reflect its mission statement**
- b. Present artefacts with accurate and researched information and make efforts to document them in a professional way according to the International Council of Museums (ICOM) standards, including accession registers, catalogues, labels etc.**
- c. Make information about the museum collections available to visitors such as researchers, tourists and school children**
- d. Follow guidelines and ethics, as per the ICOM standards, while collecting and conserving artefacts**
- e. Strive to preserve and care for its collections in a sustainable way
- f. Aim to establish the legal status (ownership, loan, gift) of all items in its collections.
- g. Take necessary steps to promote research, relevant to the museum's mission, both locally and beyond

#### **V. VISITORS' EXPERIENCE AND EXHIBITING**

A community museum shall:

- a. Open its collections to the public without discrimination and on a regular basis – with opening hours publicly displayed**
- b. Meet the needs of the visitors, in terms of basic information, language fluency, shelter, signage, access to clean water, security, children's facilities etc.**



- c. **Have at least one person knowledgeable about the museum's collections to attend to visitors during the opening hours**
- d. Strive to offer the visitor a varied experience, including cultural events, trails outside the museum, nature walks, local food, etc.
- e. Keep a record of numbers and types of visitors and put in place strategies to attract potential visitors.

## **VI. EDUCATION AND NETWORKING**

A community museum shall:

- a. **Make every effort to invite, reach out and inform the younger generations and the wider community about their collections and the relevance of cultural heritage to development**
- b. Document and share their experiences in education and outreach work
- c. Actively seek to network with other educational and cultural institutions, both governmental and private.
- d. Hold (or take part in) special/temporary exhibitions from time to time (e.g. tourism expos, cultural galas, art shows, school exhibitions, etc.)
- e. Seek other opportunities and register with other relevant bodies such as district NGO networks, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the African Council of Museums (AFRICOM) to benefit from sources of support, information, etc.

## **5. MANAGEMENT OF THE UCOMA QUALITY STANDARDS**

The UCOMA Quality Assurance Standards shall be administered as follows:

- a. UCOMA shall cluster all member museums in Uganda according to region
- b. Clustered museums shall form peer groups that shall meet and evaluate museums in their regional cluster
- c. Upon evaluation, they shall fill and sign the UCOMA Quality Assurance evaluation form (see Appendix)
- d. Where possible, the District Community Development/ Cultural Officer shall be part of the evaluation
- e. The evaluation form shall be signed and forwarded to the UCOMA secretariat, where a certificate of compliance shall be issued if all mandatory standards have been met
- f. A certificate will be issued for a period of 3 years, after which a 5-year certificate may be issued upon re-evaluation, and thereafter every 5 years
- g. Museums that shall be found not to be compliant shall be so advised and given 6 months to meet the required mandatory standards after which they will be subjected to re-evaluation
- h. Museums that fail to meet the mandatory quality standards, even after the re-evaluation exercise, shall cease to be members of UCOMA
- i. These quality standards shall be reviewed every 5 years by UCOMA and its members

## 6. ANNEX

### UCOMA QUALITY ASSURANCE EVALUATION FORM

*(This form is to be filled in by both the museum seeking accreditation and by the evaluating committee, at the museum premises. It can be taken to the District Community Development Officer, for endorsement.*

*The form can be photocopied or downloaded from our website: [www.ucoma.or.ug](http://www.ucoma.or.ug))*

#### I. PURPOSE FOR EXISTENCE & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

	Quality standard	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Remarks/ comments
a	<b>Primarily preserving and promoting cultural heritage</b>			
b	<b>Mission and objectives reflect social role towards the community</b>			
c	<b>Engaging in activities reflecting social responsibility</b>			

#### II. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

	Quality standard	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Remarks/ comments
a	<b>Registration</b>			
b	<b>Adherence to legislation on public space</b>			

#### III. GOVERNANCE, FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

	Quality standard	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Remarks/ comments
a	<b>Board or Committee in place</b>			
b	<b>Bank account held</b>			
c	<b>Books of account kept</b>			
d	Committee members' names and certificate displayed			

e	Budget and workplan in place			
f	Information management system in use			
g	Risks assessed and mitigated			
h	Security of tenure for premises			

#### IV. CONSERVATION, COLLECTIONS AND RESEARCH

	Quality standard	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Remarks/ comments
a	<b>Artefacts reflect mission</b>			
b	<b>Artefacts presented and researched professionally</b>			
c	<b>Information on artefacts accessible</b>			
d	Artefacts ethically acquired and preserved			
e	Artefacts cared for in a sustainable way			
f	Legal status of artefacts known			
g	Efforts to promote research			

#### V. VISITORS' EXPERIENCE AND EXHIBITING

	Quality standard	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Remarks/ comments
a	<b>Open to everyone at appointed hours</b>			
b	<b>Visitors' essential information needs met</b>			
c	<b>Knowledgeable person in attendance</b>			
d	Varied experiences on offer			
e	Record of visitors kept			

**VI. EDUCATION AND NETWORKING**

	<b>Quality standard</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Not satisfied</b>	<b>Remarks/ comments</b>
a	<b>Measures to reach out in evidence</b>			
b	Experiences shared			
c	Networking with like-minded institutions			
d	Participation in exhibition/ other events			
e	Efforts to register with other related bodies			

To be filled by the evaluation committee:

General comments: .....

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Evaluation Committee:

1) Name .....

Signature.....

Museum .....

Date.....

2) Name .....

Signature.....

Museum .....

Date .....

3) Name .....  
Signature.....  
Museum .....  
Date .....

4) Name.....  
Signature.....  
Museum .....  
Date .....

Community Development Officer:

Comments/Remarks

.....  
.....  
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.....  
.....

Name .....

Signature.....

Stamp and Date

For official use only

Action taken:

.....  
.....

Name .....

Signature ..... Date .....



In almost all parts of Uganda, Community Museums have been established by individuals, families or groups who are passionate about culture and heritage. They have collected artefacts, oral history and other elements of the local culture.

Community museums have made an effort to capture our vanishing heritage and to link the past to the future through their collections, which are accessible to schools, local residents and those from far away.

Visit and support a community museum near you!

## ***MY CULTURE MY HERITAGE***



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