

# St. Luke Community Museum



Main items in the collection – a catalogue

2012





# St. Luke Community Museum in Kiteredde - Kyotera, Rakai District

In many parts of Uganda, community museum owners, supporters and managers, passionate about culture and heritage, have collected artefacts, oral history, and other elements of the local culture. Community museums also link past and future through their collections, which are accessible to schools, local residents and those from farther away.

St. Luke Museum was initiated by Brother Anatoli Wasswa of the Bannakaroli Brothers of Masaka Catholic Diocese to preserve and showcase objects, mostly received from traditional medicine practitioners who have discarded their belief systems as being un-Christian. Through the museum, Bro. Anatoli

teaches healing methods that do not involve worshipping ancestral spirits. The museum is also linked to a 'hospital' where herbal medicine is prescribed and administered.



*The Museum is located along Masaka-Mutukula Road, 1 km before Kyotera town. For further information, contact:*

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**1. Ensumbi ya Lubaale Musoke (Luganda) -  
Pot for Musoke deity**

*3-mouthed black clay pot from  
the central region, 22cm*

(See detailed descriptions at the end of the catalogue)



## 2. Amasabo (Luganda) - Shrines

*Miniature shrines from the central region, 22cm and 40cm in height respectively, grass, bark-cloth and woven baskets*



### **3. Ebiteega (Luganda) - Charms**

*Cowry shells, chicken feathers and bark cloth,  
central region, 17cm and 32cm respectively*



**4. Enkata y'Abalongo  
(Luganda) - Ring for twins'  
umbilical cords**

*Bark cloth, sisal; 34 cm in  
diameter, Buganda*





**5. Engoma (Luganda) - Drum**

*Clay and goat skin drum,  
central region,  
27cm high*





**6. Muzaana tatuma (Luganda) -  
Coiled knife**

*Metal knife with wooden handle,  
45 cm, central region*



**7. Akambe ka Lubaale Nabuzaana (Luganda) - Knife for the Nabuzaana female spirit**

*Metal knife with wooden handle, 53 cm long, four-edged, central region*



**8. Ejjembe ekkuumi (Luganda) –  
Gourd for protection spirit**

*Gourd decorated with beads, bark-cloth, wood  
and animal skins, 52x 36 cm, central region*



**9. Ekyoto (Luganda) - Bowl for  
burning herbs**

*Brown clay bowl, with 7 holes,  
flat base, 14cm high*



**10. Ejjembe ly'amasanyalaze (Luganda) -  
Electrified spirit gourd**

*Gourd, 37cm high, decorated with beads; snail  
shell and cows' horn;  
with electric motor; central region*



11. *Lubaale Mukasa (Luganda) - God of the lake*

*Sea shell on basket; decorated with bark-cloth, beads and cowry shells; central region, 34cm*



**12. Entimbo ya Bakabona (Luganda) -  
Divining mat for spirit mediums**

*159cm, bark cloth, beads and  
cowry shells, from central region.*





**13. Entugga (Luganda) - Bracelet**

*Elephant tail hair,  
11cm diameter; central region*



**14. Emindi (Luganda) - Smoking pipe**

*Pipe, clay and wood, 21cm, central region*



**15. Endeke y'ejjembe eriragula (Luganda) -  
Gourd for foretelling spirit**

*Gourd, 50cm high,  
decorated with beads and cowry-shells;  
central region*



**16. *Effumu Iya Lubaale Mulengera (Luganda) –  
Spear for Mulengera spirit***

*Copper spear, 81 cm, central region*



**17. Ensawo y'omukulu (Luganda) – Bag  
for the family head**

*Bark cloth and cowry shells, 11x10cm;  
central region*



**18. Ekinu (Luganda) - Mortar**

*Wooden mortar, 85cm, central region*



**19. *Mpinnamuti* (Luganda) - Traditional  
medicine tree for diabetes and other  
diseases**

*Mpinnamuti* tree, at the St. Luke Museum  
herbal garden





**1.** This pot was only used for feeding *Lubaale Musoke* (god of rain). Because of the 'trinity' nature of Musoke (as in the three prominent colours of a rainbow), three straws were supposed to be used simultaneously. The pot was always kept in bedrooms and only handled by a possessed person or medium.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
2nd September 2012*

**2.** The grass used is the spear grass (*lusenke*) normally used for shrines; the baskets are used for offertories to thank the spirits, when one earns money or one has twins. With the advent of Christianity, new converts resorted to miniature shrines which they would keep under their beds, fearing ridicule from church-goers. These shrines, being portable, were also used by soldiers for protection during wars.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
2nd September 2012*

**3.** Charms, common in the central region, were used for several purposes, including self protection and debt collection from ones' creditors. It is believed that every time there was a new born child in the home, the charms would also increase by one. These charms are believed to have been brought by immigrants from Burundi in the 1920's and were thought to be more effective than Ugandan charms.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
2nd September 2012*

**4.** The umbilical cord of a twin is preserved in each node. The process of 'tying the twins' and related ceremonies were used to introduce the twins into the clan. 'Tying' or making the twin's object, is the chief medium's (*'Lubuga'*) responsibility. Twins' ceremonies are held to avert calamities such as famine, lightning, poverty, as well as vitiligo (skin discolouration, thought to result from 'burning by twins'). In Buganda, twins are a source of unity and are believed to provide wealth if well treated. In Ganda culture, twins do not die, but disappear in the sky (*Okubuuka*). The size of the object reflects the wealth of the family.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
2nd September 2012*

**5.** Only beaten during traditional family rituals and traditional marriages among the Bakiga communities of Mawogola in the central region. The drum was used to call upon their gods. Only a person selected by the gods was allowed to sound the drum and it was normally placed in the middle of the shrine.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
2nd September 2012*

**6.** Normally used by female servants or prisoners of war in the Kings' Palaces in Buganda. Daughters of chiefs or prominent people in society used a different knife (inset), less effective to bring items closer (because of the lack of hook), but compensated by the presence of servants!

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
2nd September 2012*

**7.** Knife solely owned by the medium of the Nabuzaana spirit. The knife signified the responsibility of women to prepare food and feed people. The U-shape indicated the Nabuzaana's desire to take care of all the family members.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
2nd September 2012*

**8.** This object was meant to guarantee protection for family members. Before handling the *ejjembe ekkuumi*, one had to sleep on a bark-cloth for 9 days, to have visions of what was likely to befall the family and how to handle any danger.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
2nd September 2012*

**9.** Used to burn traditional medicines to heal or charm someone. Feathers, animal bones, red pepper are normally burnt. The fire bowl is only lit by a chief medium (*Kabona omukulu*). A woman in her menstrual period had to refrain from using the *Ekyoto*. Men intending to use *Ekyoto* had to abstain from sexual relations for some days.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
2nd September 2012*

**10.** Used by unscrupulous people to fleece other people's money through intimidation. Batteries are wired to an internal electric vibrator to make the gourd rotate, making people believe that the spirits have come and opening their purse strings.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
2nd September 2012*

**11.** Worshipped as the god of the lake, especially among fishing communities. Travellers and fishermen on lakes, especially *Nalubaale* (Lake Victoria), used to pray to *Lubaale Mukasa* for safety, protection and success. Fishermen believed that this god could control the lake and its strong winds.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
2nd September 2012*

**12.** Used as a divining mat for spirit mediums. It is decorated to please the spirits and was placed in shrines.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
2nd September 2012*

**13.** Normally worn around the arm or leg as a bracelet. The nodes contain traditional medicines (charms) for protection. *Entugga* was popular, especially among Baganda and Banyoro, because it was well decorated and easy to carry, particularly at times of war. One was supposed to remove it while taking a bath or during sexual intercourse, as it was thought that water or sexual intercourse would render the charms less effective

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
2nd September 2012*

**14.** Used to smoke herbs to invoke spirits for favours and protection.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
2nd September 2012*

**15.** Believed to contain the spirit (*ejjembe*) for foretelling (*okulagula*). The number of beads indicates that it was made for a rich person.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
3rd September 2012*

**16.** Believed to represent *Lubaale Mulengera*, the spirit who can detect all dangers from far. The two heads reflect the low status of the person owning the spear (more than two heads would be for wealthier people). The spear would usually be placed in dark corners of the house and away from the reach of children; it had to stand in an upright position for the spirit to detect dangers.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
3rd September 2012*

**17.** Contains cowry-shells, a medium of exchange and sign of wealth among the *ganda* communities. Such a bag was used to keep money in the absence of modern banks and encouraged savings as only one person (the bag owner) could withdraw money from it. Money withdrawn from this bag was never used to buy fish and pork, as these were considered unholy.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
3rd September 2012*

**18.** Made out of a rare tree species locally known as *akabalira* this mortar was used to pound herbal medicines into powder.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
Museum Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa,  
3rd September 2012*

**19.** The leaves of the *mpinnamuti* are dried and crushed into powder form and are used to treat diabetes and high/low blood pressure. The tree is also believed to bring bad luck among the hunter communities, especially if one comes into contact with it while on a hunting trip. It is also believed to cause 'bad' rain (rain with thunderstorm), having originated from Bunyoro, long considered a hostile region.

*Collected by Brother Anatoli Wasswa, Museum  
Initiator  
Source: Brother Anatoli Wasswa, 2nd September  
2012*



Throughout Uganda, inspired individuals, families and groups of people have established *community museums* open to the public to preserve and promote the local cultural heritage.

This catalogue, one of a series for 11 community museums across Uganda, highlights the most important items held by the St. Luke Community Museum in Kyotera, Rakai.

It is meant to publicise and record the collection, as well as to act as a reference point, reflecting Uganda's cultural diversity.

The catalogue was produced by the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda, an organisation dedicated to promoting the recognition of culture as vital for human development that responds to Uganda's national identity and diversity. As part of its cultural heritage programme, the Foundation supports community museums in Uganda.

The Foundation gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of community museums operators and managers throughout the country. It also thanks the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development for the financial support that made this documentation of our heritage possible.

[www.crossculturalfoundation.or.ug](http://www.crossculturalfoundation.or.ug)

