

# The Cultural Research Centre Museum



Main items in the collection – a catalogue

2012



# The Cultural Research Centre Museum in Jinja

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.

The Museum is run by the Cultural Research Centre, an initiative of the Catholic Diocese of Jinja established in 1997 to research, document, preserve and promote the tangible and intangible cultural resources of the Basoga in Eastern Uganda. The Museum has primarily been established to connect the young generation to their roots.

Although the Basoga number almost 3 million, their culture and language, the Cultural Research Centre emphasises, has for long been under threat of assimilation by the Baganda, for reasons dating back to the pre-colonial and colonial periods.



*The Museum is located at the Nile Garden, in the centre of Jinja town, 80km east of Kampala. For more information, contact:*

*Plot 5, Nile Garden  
P.O.Box 673  
Jinja- Uganda  
Tel: 256 434120133  
/256772844221  
Email: [crc2@utlonline.co.ug](mailto:crc2@utlonline.co.ug)  
/crc@crcjinja.org  
Website: [www.crcjinja.org](http://www.crcjinja.org)*

**1. Luserya (Lusoga) - Wooden food bowl**

*Wooden bowl with two compartments, 33 cm long*

(See detailed descriptions at the end of the catalogue)



**2. Ensaka (Lusoga) - Cooking pots**

*Clay pots, 18 cm in height,  
with sisal harness*



**3. Ndiita (Lusoga) - Milk pot**

*Clay pot, 17cm in height*



**4. *Ensuwa dh'eminwa esatu*  
(Lusoga) - Pot with three spouts**

*Clay pot, 19cm in height, with designs to  
enhance grip for carrying*



**5. Entamu (Lusoga) - Saucepan**

*Clay half-pot with designs, height 18 cm, diameter 33 cm*



**6. Olusai (Lusoga) - Milking vessel**

*Cylindrical wooden vessel,  
27 cm in height, with three legs*





**7. Olwendo (Lusoga) – Drinking gourd**

*Gourd with small, long,  
bent handle; length 21 cm*



## 8. *Omugwabi* (Lusoga) - Smoking pipe

*Smoking pipe from Busoga, with gourd connected to rod linked to container*



**9. Kasutamu (Lusoga) – Men's seat**

*Folding wooden chair with four legs,  
seat measuring 28x32cm*



**10. Ekisampa (Lusoga) – Mat**

*Dried banana fibre mat, 100cmx160cm*



**11. Ekisunsulo (Lusoga) - Wooden Comb**

*Wooden comb; length 19 cm;  
made from albizia coriaria ('musiita') wood*



**12. Amasinku (Lusoga) – Fishing spears**

*Set of metal and wooden spears  
tied with sisal rope;  
length 29 cm*



**13. Enkasi (Lusoga) - Oar**

*Wooden oar, 162 cm long, with 21 cm base. Made of timber from markhamia lutea (musambya) and albizia coriaria (musiita).*



**14. Namunsese (Lusoga) - Hunter's bag**

*Woven sisal bag, length 55cm*





**15. Embaire (Lusoga) - Xylophone**

*Musical instrument, with fourteen pieces of curved wood of varying sizes, placed on a rectangular wooden frame, 132x21cm*



**16. Entongooli (Lusoga) - Lyre**

*Musical instrument, with two wooden handles, eight strings and a wooden sound box covered with monitor lizard skin on top and cow hide ('empeewo') below. Length 52 cm.*



**17. Dewu dewu/Endongo (Lusoga) - Thumb piano**

*Musical instrument with wooden sound box  
and metal strips; 22cm x38 cm*



### 18. *Engoma* (Lusoga) - Drum

Wooden drum, with cow hide, 53 cm in height. Wood for the frame called *omuwulu*, usually a root of *milicia* (*muvule*) or *albizia coriaria* (*musiita*) trees.



**1.** Used in Busoga to serve food to chiefs, heads of families and other people of high social status, as opposed to clay bowls used for serving commoners. It was considered inappropriate to serve food to prominent members of the community in bowls made of clay. One compartment was used for the staple food, the other for stew.

Collected by Joel Kigenyi, December 2009, Ndolwa village, Buyende District  
Source: F. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 9th February, 2012  
Accession number: 2009.4.1

**2.** Used for cooking, especially beans and meat, and particularly during festive seasons in Busoga. The *ensaka* is known for saving firewood and adding flavour, as opposed to contemporary aluminium utensils. They also maintain high temperatures once put on the fire and keep stew warm and fresh for some time thereafter. The harness (*omuteeko*) was used for storage and for protection, especially from small children and domestic animals. Traditionally, women were in charge of maintaining the *ensaka*.

Collected by Fred Oloka, March 2010, Lwaba village, Bugiri District  
Source: F. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 9th February, 2012  
Accession number: 2010.1.1

**3.** Common in cattle keeping areas of Busoga, following a design from Bunyoro, and specific to milk pots. Used for storing and preserving milk. Women were traditionally in charge of maintaining the *nditta*.

Collected by Francis Ssekiwoga, September 2009, Namaganda village, Kamuli District  
Source: F. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 9th February, 2012  
Accession number: 2009.3.4

**4.** Among the Basoga, this pot signifies the respect and importance accorded to triplets in society, with each spout representing a child. The pot was used to celebrate the birth of triplets and related ceremonies in a family, and to ferment beer consumed during these ceremonies. Beer fermented in this pot was consumed by family members and friends who also have twins or triplets.

Collected by Oloka Fred, March 2010, Lwaba village, Bugiri District  
Source: F. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 9th February, 2012  
Accession number: 2010.1.4

**5.** Used for steaming food, including cassava, potatoes, plantain and yams, on three-stone hearths. The designs and ring on top enhance grip for carrying. Always maintained and kept by 'senior women' and grown up girls, for fear of breakage by younger girls.

Donated by St. Jude Holy Cross Primary School, Bugembe, December 2010, Source: F. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 10th February, 2012  
Accession number: 2010.10.2

**6.** The Olusai could only be carved from the *markhamia lutea* (*musanbya*) and the *albizia coriaria* (*musita*) trees, both hardwood. The three legs support the olusai firmly on the ground while milking, and distinguish it from mortars used for pounding foodstuffs and herbs, whose base is flat. The sound of milking is attenuated by the wood, hence reassuring the cow and maximising the milk flow.

Collected by Francis Ssekiwoga, September 2009, Namaganda village, Kamuli District  
Source: F. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 9th February, 2012  
Accession number: 2009.3.2

**7.** Used to draw water from a well or pot; as drinking vessel; or to serve drinking water, especially to important visitors in a home, including in-laws. The bent handle was useful to hang the olwendo on a rack. Size-wise, it fits easily in the mouth of a pot when drawing water. During traditional marriage ceremonies, modern glasses are still commonly referred to as 'olwendo'.

*Collected by Fr. Richard Kayaga, October 2004, Nawampiti village, Luuka District.  
Source: F. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 9th February, 2012  
Accession number: 2004.1.1*

**8.** Designed to avoid inhaling smoke directly, this pipe is uncommon in other parts of the country. It was used for marijuana smoking and for relaxation by adults only, as young people were not allowed to smoke marijuana.

*Collected by Joel Kigenyi, February 2009, Ndolwa village, Buyende District  
Source: F. Oloka Fred, Museum Research Assistant, 9th February, 2012  
Accession number: 2009.1.2*

**9.** Reflecting social status, such a seat was used in the homes of rich and prominent individuals, only by the family head or special guests. It could be folded and carried from place to place or from one function to another.

*Collected by Zachariah Isabirye, June 2008, Nabikuuyi village, Luuka District  
Source: F. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 10th February, 2012  
Accession number: 2008.2.4*

**10.** Still used as bedding material especially by children and among rural communities in Busoga.

*Collected by Alex Kitamirike, March 2011, Nsuube village, Jinja District  
Source: F. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 10th February, 2012  
Accession number: 2011.3.1*

**11.** Reflects the importance of grooming and a sense of neatness among women in Busoga.

*Collected by Zachariah Isabirye in 2008 from Nabikuuyi village, Luuka District  
Source: Fred Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 10th February, 2012  
Accession number: 2008.2.2*

**12.** Used to strike fish in swamps and streams, especially mudfish, with a single stroke. The spears reflect the importance of fishing among the Basoga. Before going out to fish, the spears would be smeared with herbs (Acacia Senegal - Katasubwa - "one who does not miss") to increase one's chances of catching fish.

*Collected by Fred Oloka in June 2010 in Bunafu village, Luuka District  
Source: Fred. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 9th February, 2012  
Accession number: 2010.5.2*

**13.** Used by fishermen to propel canoes. With canoes being displaced by engine-driven boats, the *enkasi* is disappearing because of the risks and labour involved in canoeing.

*Collected by Alex Kitamirike, January 2011, Wamala village, Mayuge District  
Source: F. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 9th February, 2012  
Accession number: 2011.1.1*

**14.** Used to carry wild meat. While hunting was a communal activity in Busoga, each hunter had a separate bag, where meat would be transported and kept clean. The weaving pattern was designed to allow air to circulate and preserve the meat. Women were barred from touching the *namunsese*, as this was believed to bring bad luck.

*Collected by Alex Kitamirike, January 2011, Wamala Village, Mayuge District*  
*Source: F. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 9th February, 2012*  
*Accession number: 2011.1.1*

**15.** Used to play traditional Kisoga music, mainly by men in a pair, especially during marriage ceremonies, coronation anniversaries or when an important person visits. In the rural areas of Busoga, the *embaire* is still a source of entertainment, especially when the day breaks. Made from the *albizia coriaria (musiita)* tree, but, in the absence of a wooden base, the stems of banana tree can be used.

*Collected by Fred Oloka Fred in 2010 from Bugabula village, Luuka District*  
*Source: F. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 9th February, 2012*  
*Accession number: 2010.6.1*

**16.** Used by men to play Kisoga music, especially during special traditional ceremonies such as coronations. The *entongooli*, important in Busoga culture, was also played to communicate essential messages through music, including marriage tips, food security advice and message regarding harmony and peace in society.

*Collected by Fr. Richard Kayaga, April 2009, Kalalu village, Bugweri, Iganga District*  
*Source: F. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 9th February, 2012*  
*Accession number: 2009.2.1.2*

**17.** Used for entertainment by different ethnic groups in eastern and north-eastern Uganda. Said to have been imported to Busoga from Teso; the name *dewu-dewu* is corrupted from Ateso (*adewudewu*). The *dewu-dewu* was played only during leisure time; and also by herdsmen while grazing their cattle. It required extensive training to achieve proficiency.

*Collected by Fr. Richard Kayaga, October 2004, Navampiti village, Luuka District.*  
*Source: F. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 9th February, 2012*  
*Accession number: 2005.2.1*

**18.** The drum could be sounded differently depending on the purpose, message and intended audience. Traditionally, it was only to be used by men and only when a need arose. It could be used as a musical instrument, for communication, for mobilising for community service, to warn against danger, and for announcing the death of a community member. As a ritual item, it could be used for communicating people's clan beats and anthems. Its shape - with a narrowing base - makes the Kisoga drum distinct from that of other ethnic groups' drums.

*Collected by Fr. Richard Kayaga, June 2008, Kalalu village, Bugweri, Iganga District, a village known for the Ndhote family, drummers for generations*  
*Source: F. Oloka, Museum Research Assistant, 10th February, 2012*  
*Accession number: 2008.3.1*

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 Cultural Research Centre Museum in Jinja.

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.

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

