

GO BLUE TOURISM AND CULTURAL HERITAGE COMPONENT NEWSLETTER

News from a component of the Go Blue Project Kenya



An elderly volunteer at the Kijumwa Cultural Centre working on a new reconstructed traditional Swahili harmonium instrument from recycled materials

ABOUT US

The Tourism and Cultural Heritage is a component of the Go Blue project, a partnership between the European Union and the government of Kenya to advance the blue economy agenda through coastal development.

Camões, I.P., the Portuguese Cooperation agency, is the Tourism and Cultural Heritage component Implementing Partner responsible for contributing to strengthening the value chains of these sectors in an inclusive and sustainable way in Kenya.

More specifically, with the funding entrusted by the European Union, Camões IP is contributing to advancing inclusive employment in the Tourism and Cultural Heritage cross-sector in Jumuiya ya Kaunti za Pwani-Kenya's coastal counties economic bloc by:

- Increasing JKP's capacity to plan inclusive Tourism and Cultural Heritage through Integrated Governance, which should result in one Regional blueprint approved, implemented and monitored by relevant stakeholders
- Generation of new employment and new dynamics in value chains cross-sector through innovative small projects and businesses in Tourism and Cultural Heritage, by awarding around 17 small grants to private, public and civil society entities, resulting in the creating of 50 new jobs, targeting specially youth and women
- Support young job seekers to become social entrepreneurs through the flagship project Ubuntu Leaders Academy, where at least 100 are able to create their business or find jobs

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The invited officials posing for a picture after the launch of the blueprint

CAMOES' INSTITUTE SUPPORT IN TRANSFORMING THE NARRATIVE OF TOURISM AND CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE COASTAL REGION

by Camões, I.P.

In a significant stride towards advancing the blue economy agenda in Kenya's coastal region, the Go Blue project, a collaboration between the European Union and the Government of Kenya, is making waves. At the forefront of implementing the Tourism and Cultural Heritage component is Camoes IP, a Portuguese entity dedicated to fostering sustained, inclusive, and sustainable blue economy value chains.

Camões I.P. is a public institute, whose main organizational goal is centered on the modernization of services based on sound management working towards fixed objectives and results in line with a culture of collaboration and shared values. Camoes' IP role in this transformative initiative is articulated through the Go Blue Growth, which strives to create long-term job opportunities, particularly for young people and women. The objectives include fostering regional government policy development, facilitating integrated governance meetings, and supporting civil society and private sector projects.

The coastal tourism sector has faced challenges around the coastal beach product that struggled to attract a diverse range of tourists. Through a substantial investment of EUR 550,000.00 grants to 16 small businesses engaged in tourism and cultural heritage, particularly those involving youth and women, Camoes is catalyzing a positive transformation., contributing to the advancement of the blue economy.

The impact of the grants on the small businesses has been significant, resulting in the creation of a total of 94 new jobs. Notably, 45% of these new positions have been filled by women, showcasing a commitment to gender inclusivity.

Moreover, an impressive 83% of the newly generated employment opportunities have been secured by youth aged between 18 and 35 years. Some grantees have also sub-granted other small businesses dealing with tourism and cultural heritage.

Under the Go Blue project, Camoes, in collaboration with the Jumuiya Economic Development Secretariat, has developed a Kenya Coast Tourism and Cultural Heritage Blueprint. This blueprint which was launched in October 2023 serves as a guide for the development, management, marketing, and promotion of the region's rich diversity of tourism and cultural heritage. Its specific aim is to create inclusive opportunities for income and employment, particularly for vulnerable individuals and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Camoes demonstrates its dedication to empowering the youth through initiatives like the Ubuntu Leaders Academy (ULA). Here, young individuals are gaining skills in social entrepreneurship, enabling them to establish their own employment opportunities.

Undoubtedly, the collaborative efforts of the European Union, the Government of Kenya, and Camoes IP in the Go Blue project have sparked a positive transformation along Kenya's coastal region, painting a promising picture for the region's future that will leave a legacy of progress.



Youth in the Ubuntu Leaders Academy (ULA) participating in an activity



Modesta preparing a chapati

WEAVING UBUNTU INTO CULINARY TRANSFORMATION: THE MODESTA'S CUISINE AND UBUNTU LEADERSHIP ACADEMY BY MODESTA MNYAZI, MOMBASA - KENYA

by Camões, I.P.

The concept of Ubuntu, the belief that "I am because you are," resonates deeply with my journey in the realm of culinary creativity and enterprise. My introduction to Ubuntu was facilitated through my association with Jumuiya Ya Kaunti za Pwani, a gateway that led me to Ubuntu Leadership Academy in the [Go Blue Kenya](#) Project —an institution grounded in nurturing holistic human development.

In 2019, The Modesta's Cuisine was born with humble beginnings, offering a menu comprising only Mahamri, Vishete,

and Samosas. As my passion intertwined with the teachings of Ubuntu, a transformative journey commenced. The focus gradually shifted towards chapati production, which evolved into an extraordinary phenomenon.

The fame of our chapatis extended far beyond the Kenyan borders—tourists and international guests visiting Kenya carried our flavors to the USA, Germany, Norway, the UK, Uganda, and Portugal. This marked the realization of a dream that sprouted within the heart of Ubuntu's philosophy: shared growth, collaboration, and community empowerment.

The turning point arrived when I collaborated with fellow chefs—an Ubuntu-inspired partnership that became a catalyst for expansion. Together, we propelled The Modesta's Cuisine to new heights. Today, the array of our offerings is a testament to Ubuntu's essence. Private Chef Services and outside catering have become integral to our culinary portfolio.

Beyond culinary achievements, The Modesta's Cuisine stands as a vibrant example of social entrepreneurship, a cause that Ubuntu Leadership Academy champions. By offering employment and support to local farmers, we have sowed the seeds of positive change. Our journey resonates with Ubuntu's call to uplift communities through entrepreneurship, resonating with our vision to create a better world through exceptional culinary experiences.

The story of The Modesta's Cuisine, intertwined with Ubuntu's philosophy, stands as a testament to the power of shared growth and interconnectedness. Our legacy isn't just culinary—it's a celebration of humanity's potential to foster change. Guided by Ubuntu Leadership Academy, we've not only expanded our business but also created ripples of transformation. The spirit of Ubuntu lives within each dish, each connection, and every life touched—a reminder that our growth is a reflection of our collective journey toward becoming better individuals and a better world.



Modesta alongside her fellow chefs



Daniel speaking to local women

MANA HAVEN CULTURAL CENTRE - KENYA

by Daniel Ngugi

I am Daniel Ngugi a graduate in the field of Horticulture from Taita Taveta University. In 2021 I was privileged to attend the Ubuntu Leaders Academy in the [@Go Blue Kenya](#) project and got enlighten of what it means to be a social entrepreneur and a leader through effective communication resulting to building bridges communities.

Through the social entrepreneurship skills in Tourism and cultural heritage that I received in the academy, I managed to established a cultural centre called “**Mana Haven**” (a Taita word that means a good shelter to connect with earth) that seeks to educate tourist/students and culture enthusiast on how the people of Sagalla community in Kenya lived, dressed, slept(on animal skins, sisal beds) what they ate(cassava, cowpeas, sweet potato leaves, stone grinded maize)and the medicines(elephant dung to treat allergies, snake bite herb kidonga to extract poison, the long life traditional medicine charms) they used, how alcohol was brewed naturally , how the lighted their homes using sticks, communal activities done as well different songs sung. We offer a Taita massage called Charuka done with herbs and hot water that helps rejuvenate the body. Plans are underway to add more traditional cottages so as to give guests a unique and a purely cultural experience.



Visitors at Mana Haven Cultural Centre

The centre is located 5 minutes' walk to Tsavo East wild life park bordering Ngutuni Lodge where game drives are conducted everyday and it is easy to spot the big 5 on morning and evening walks, there also many species of birds and other wildlife at the centre.

Am also happy because through the numerous trainings organized by Ubuntu Leaders Academy I have learnt about Airbnb and how it will add value to my cultural enterprise.

Thanks to IPAV tour guiding training program that has empowered me as a local tour guide now offering professional service to my clients around and beyond the region.

I also offer agribusiness training to the community especially to women and youth. Guest visiting the centre and who have passion to support the community are always welcome to join us for community agribusiness outreach activities so that they can interact with the community.

Please book with us to experience pure Taita culture that takes you back to before modernity took toll.

Find us on google maps as mana haven cultural centre as well on Facebook and Instagram

Social media pages are [@mana haven Instagram](#), [google maps](#) and [Facebook](#)



Daniel Presenting cultural items



Marieanne showing some of her wares

BLOSSOMING FROM WITHIN: A STORY OF SELF-DISCOVERY WITH UBUNTU LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

by Marieanne Mbale

I am Marieanne Mbale and my Transformational Journey of Empowerment and Growth began in June 2021 when I was just an individual seeking direction and purpose in life, unsure of my potential and the impact I could make.

That all changed when I discovered the Ubuntu Leadership Academy in the [Go Blue Kenya](#) project, a place that would forever alter the course of my life.

From the moment I stepped foot inside the Ubuntu Leaders Academy, I sensed a palpable atmosphere of positivity, support, and growth. It was here that the philosophy of Ubuntu truly began to take root in my soul – the idea that "I am because You are," and that true leadership involves empowering others.

As my time at the Ubuntu Leadership Academy training neared its end, I realized that my transformation wasn't just confined to the academy's walls; it was a lifelong journey of continuous growth. Armed with a newfound sense of purpose and equipped with invaluable leadership skills,

I was ready to step out into the world and make a difference through the Community-Based Organization "Bright Coast Vision Kenya (Bricov Kenya)" that I run.

Bright Coast Vision Kenya (BRICOV KENYA) is a youth platform that aimed at empowering the youths through dialogues, career guidance, trainings, team cohesion and by engaging in various activities and projects positively build our society to have a brighter future.

The most valuable thing I learned from the training was Ubuntu Spirit.

Overall, the Ubuntu spirit emphasizes unity, togetherness, and the notion that "I am because we are." Now our organization's leadership embodies this spirit, instilling a sense of purpose and shared responsibility among team members, partners, and beneficiaries.

By embodying Ubuntu leadership principles, I have created a positive organizational culture, strengthened partnerships, and achieved meaningful outcomes for society. I inspire others to adopt a more compassionate and collaborative approach to social impact.

Ubuntu Leadership Academy also played a transformative role in my journey as an entrepreneur in the tourism and cultural sector. By instilling the principles of Ubuntu and responsible tourism, the Academy empowered me to create a business "Cultural Curiosities" that not only celebrates the richness of my community's heritage but also generates positive impacts on its members. Through community engagement, cultural preservation, and sustainable economic growth, my business now stands as a testament to Ubuntu's enduring philosophy of interconnectedness and compassion. As I continue to be guided by these values, I am confident that my business will thrive, leaving a lasting legacy of positive change for generations to come.



Marieanne displaying several items from her business



Students being trained in classical and contemporary Islamic calligraphy

KIJUMWA CULTURAL CENTER

by Camões, I.P.

Nestled within the historic walls of the Lamu Fort, the newly established Kijumwa Heritage Hub is poised to become a beacon of cultural preservation and youth empowerment using digital technologies within the Lamu County. This initiative, born out of a shared vision to safeguard Lamu's rich heritage is being implemented by the National Museums of Kenya – Lamu Museums Sites and Monuments with support from the Go-Blue Project under the TCH component which is funded by the European Union in Kenya and the Portuguese Government. The Kijumwa Heritage Hub is driven by a steadfast mission of reviving the indigenous cultural knowledge on heritage conservation and protection while celebrating the Lamu's diverse cultural legacy and forming the sense of ownership and pride between community and its shared heritage. It aims in addressing societal challenges among the youths and women such as capacity building for human capital, environmental sustainability in maritime conservation and introduction of STEAM, as a link between ICT and cultural heritage.

At the heart of Kijumwa lies a commitment to empowering the youth. Through mentorship and education programs,



The Portuguese ambassador to Kenya Embaixadora Ana Filomena Rocha during her visit to the centre

workshops and leadership opportunities, young individuals are expected to actively help in the shaping of Lamu's heritage narrative. The hub will serve as a catalyst for creativity, innovation and a deeper understanding of cultural identity among the younger generation.

Kijumwa is guided and coordinated by a steering committee that was nominated from the local stakeholders who deal with matters of cultural preservation, the committee is chaired by the Lamu County CEC Member for Tourism, Culture, Trade and Investment and other members from various cultural based CBOs and NGOs.

In its one year of establishment, the hub has seen numerous phases and activities that has contributed to its transformation and development. In February 2023, ICCROM's Programme Officer for the Youth.Heritage.Africa program paid a visit to the hub, it is from his visit that some members of the steering committee were invited to the Heritage.Hubs.Connect forum organized by ICCROM in Mombasa, a program that helped coming up with practical and strategic approaches to harness Africa's heritage as a means of creating economic and social opportunities for the youths through heritage hubs. The forum helped in establishing meaningful partnership that enhanced the



Participants of Heritage.Hubs.Connect forum



A local artist using Arabic Calligraphy to paint the Raudha Mosque

hub's impact and creating a network dedicated to the sustainable preservation of Lamu's cultural treasures.

The hub was also able to conduct several community workshops to educate on the importance of cultural preservation and promotion as well as igniting a passion for preserving the unique history of Lamu. While collaborating with various schools and artists, the hub was able to bring together about 20 students from 7 schools and local madrasas who were trained by 3 local artists, over a 4 week period, in classical and contemporary Islamic calligraphy and its practical use in real life situation. The hub also empowered local artists in the use of Arabic calligraphy to paint on mosques and open spaces including the Raudha mosque.

The hub was also delighted to be visited by the ambassador of Portugal to Kenya, who gave her insights and contributions towards the project, collaborative endeavors between the hub and her office were discussed regarding the promotion of youth driven approaches especially in the promotion of tourism within Lamu County.

In October, the hub was represented in South Africa following an invitation by Iziko Museums at the 87th SAMA National Conference, the knowledge exchange program saw the hub presenting on the collaborative endeavors for sustainable solutions: Museums partnership with a youth oriented heritage hub at Lamu World Heritage Site. Concurrently, the hub also



The Raudha Mosque painted with Arabic calligraphy

invited an elderly man who used to construct traditional Swahili harmonium musical instrument, through the hubs support, he was able to reconstruct a new harmonium from recycled materials, he has now volunteered at the hub to teach the young generation on its construction, whom they shall further work using modern technologies to advance the instrument.

In consideration with the evolving technologies, Kijumwa is collaborating with local stakeholders in the creation of a virtual twin of the heritage site which will be displayed in the VR-Chat, with the hub acting as a production center, the output will impact in the raise of tourism in Lamu County as well as increase in the socio-economic forums for the local residents while increasing the literacy level in the use of advanced tools for documentation.

Looking ahead, Kijumwa envisions expanding its outreach, diversifying programs and strengthening collaborations. The establishment of the hub, thanks to the Go-Blue project under the TCH component, marks a pivotal chapter in Lamu's ongoing journey to preserve its cultural heritage. As Lamu Fort becomes not just a relic of the past, but a living testament to a vibrant, evolving heritage, Kijumwa stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of community driven cultural preservation.



Employees of the centre



GO KENYA COAST FEATURE DESTINATIONS

Mombasa – Port City & Leading Events Destination

Mombasa is known for its stunning beaches, diverse wildlife, and vibrant nightlife. The city is home to the historic Fort Jesus, an iconic heritage site that offers a glimpse into the region's rich history. Visitors can also enjoy sailing in traditional dhows or swimming with dolphins and turtles. The city is also a leading events destination, with a variety of festivals and cultural celebrations taking place throughout the year.

Kwale, Diani – Ultimate Destination for Families and Newlyweds

Diani is a popular destination for families and newlyweds, thanks to its beautiful beaches and active beach holidays. Visitors can enjoy kite surfing, snorkeling, and other water sports or relax and soak up the sun. The town is also known for its vibrant nightlife and cultural experiences.

Kilifi, Watamu – Leading Destination for Marine Ecology and Family Activities

Watamu is a popular destination for families and marine ecology enthusiasts. Visitors can explore the beautiful coral reefs, swim with dolphins and turtles, or take a biking tour of the region's unique landscapes. The town is also known for its traditional sailing experiences in dhows and stand-up paddleboarding.

Kilifi, Malindi – Fully Integrated Destination for Multigenerational Travelers

Malindi is a fully integrated destination that caters to multigenerational travelers. The town is home to the historic Vasco Da Gama Pillar, which offers insights into the region's colonial past. Visitors can also enjoy sailing in traditional dhows or experiencing the vibrant nightlife and cultural celebrations.

Tana River – Ideal Destination for Adventure Experience along the River Tana

Tana River is the perfect destination for adventure seekers. Visitors can enjoy river rafting, explore the unique Tana River Mangabey, or take a tour of the ancient swahili port city of Ungwana. The region's landscape is also dotted with majestic sand dunes and unique delta ecosystems.

Tana River, Hola – The Melting Pot of Tana River County Cultures

Hola is a unique destination that celebrates the diverse cultures of the Tana River County. Visitors can explore the historic Hola GK Prison or pay their respects at the MauMau Memorial, which honors the memory of those who fought against colonialism.

Tana River, Kipini – Historic Swahili Settlement and Burial Site of Fumo Liyongo

Kipini is a historic Swahili settlement that is home to the burial site of the legendary Fumo Liyongo. Visitors can also explore the ancient swahili port city of Ungwana or take a tour of the Tana River delta ecosystem.

Lamu – Prime Destination for Tourists Wanting to Slow Down and Experience Culture

Lamu is a prime destination for tourists who want to slow down and experience the region's unique culture and heritage. Visitors can explore the historic Minaret or take a traditional dhow sailing experience in the Indian Ocean. The town also offers yoga and kitesurfing experiences for those seeking wellness and adventure

Taita Taveta - Tsavo - Destination for Wildlife and Nature enthusiasts Taita Taveta –

Tsavo is a prime location for unforgettable safari experiences that combine the best of both worlds: beach and bush. This iconic destination boasts breathtaking sunsets and a wide variety of wildlife, including cheetahs, buffaloes, red elephants, and the infamous "Man Eaters of Tsavo" lions. The area also has historical significance, as it was the site of battles during World War I and II. Additionally, visitors can immerse themselves in the rich culture of the Taita people through performances by traditional Taita drummers.





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