

CONVERTING ORAL NARRATIVES INTO WRITTEN LITERATURE: LESSONS LEARNT FROM HERITAGE PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN IN THE MAKGABENG AREA, LIMPOPO, SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Many commentators argue that African oral narratives are on the verge of being obliterated as most knowledge sources die before transmitting the information to the next generation. Therefore, it is important that this knowledge be codified and recorded to be shared with the rest of the world. The purpose of this study was to capture and share lessons learnt from the heritage projects of converting oral narratives into written literature undertaken in the Makgabeng area, Limpopo, South Africa. This qualitative study utilised participant observation to gather data. The authors were involved in the projects and also drew from the project management methodology that was used to guide the successful implementation of the projects. The key lesson learnt from the projects is that ordinary people should be given the opportunity to document their own stories. It is argued that in this way, the lions will be able to tell their stories as opposed to the hunters having the best part of narrating the story. Moreover, as they will

be writing their own stories, ordinary people will feel honoured and will readily share their sacred knowledge, which they rarely do. Finally, the study suggests possible solutions by which oral narratives can be converted into written form in such ways as to be useful for future generations in Africa. One such way is to cautiously explore the possibility of storing converted oral tradition in the cloud or, as in the case of the Makgabeng projects, let the people write their stories and publish them.

Keywords: oral narratives, written literature, heritage projects, Makgabeng area

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of oral stories as a source for community history cannot be underestimated. Much of what is considered community history lives in people's memories and is predominantly orally communicated stories especially in the African context. While written sources tell what happened, oral sources tell how people felt about what happened (Rafapa 2011, 89). Indigenous communities boast of original arts, culture and heritage forms such as languages, legends, histories, folktales, riddles, proverbs, music, dance, crafts, as well as indigenous knowledge systems in politics, medicine, astronomy, economy and others (Setumu 2016). It is important that oral stories be converted into written sources in order to preserve them. The importance of converting orality into written sources is reflected in the quote from the Gospel of Luke (1: 1–4) in the New Testament, where Luke makes a disclaimer that implies that the gospel was written through second-hand experience. It can also be argued that even the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament was written from oral tradition, as Moses, who is credited with writing it, was not yet born when the events unfolded. This shows the importance of converting orality into written literature in order to preserve such information. However, Harris (2007) cautions that there is a worrying tendency to underestimate or simply not to grasp the problem of converting oral narratives into the material custody of archives repositories.

Historically, in the African tradition, since the pre-colonial period, most of Africa's knowledge was preserved orally, that is, by being transmitted from one generation to the next, as opposed to being written. Ngoepe and Ngulube (2014) emphasise that African societies rely on memory to store valuable historical information. The challenge with orality is that in most instances, chances are that the truth can be distorted to suit the narrator. As a result, this can compromise the reliability and authenticity of such knowledge as the oral evidence will be inconsistent due to different versions (Ngoepe and Ngulube 2014; Setumu 2010). However, it should also be noted that written records are open to alteration, manipulation and subjectivity and can be used to further the teller's own agenda as with their oral counterparts (Hatang 2000, 22). Nonetheless, institutions such as archives repositories exist to

preserve written records as opposed to oral narratives which exist in the minds of individuals. On the other hand, Hatang (2000, 27) argues that with oral tradition the advantage is that even after the story has been narrated, the storyteller still has control over his/her story. The storyteller can still share this story with others at his/her leisure.

During and after the colonial period, the situation changed, as orality was challenged by the advent of recorded information and new technologies. Although orality was not entirely obliterated, its credibility was cast in doubt in comparison to written literature. As a result, African stories were excluded from the formal mainstream education presided over by the colonial masters. This led to the loss of many interesting African knowledge and narratives because they were never recorded. Those that survived and were recorded were mostly written from the hunter's perspective, that is, the coloniser's worldview. In such circumstances, the hunters were dominant actors over the subservient hunted – the lions (Setumu 2014, v). As a result, in that unbalanced, biased power relation, in which the lions were underdogs, the dominant hunters usurped the role of telling the stories of the hunted lions. Therefore, the lions had no voice of their own; their stories were told by the hunters. This was the case with African stories. This is explained clearly in messages by Adolf Hitler directed at his nemesis, Winston Churchill, when he stated that 'the victors will never be asked if they tell the truth'.

In South Africa, for example, prior to 1994, history was written from the point of view of the ruling white elite. That is why 1652 is stated as the beginning of South African history, with the focus being on whites' activities in South Africa (Lekgwathi 2014). As Setumu (2015, 34) observes, the current archival records preserved in South Africa's mainstream archives largely consist of documents that were generated after the arrival of Europeans in this part of the world. These records, which are stored in archival repositories in paper, electronic, audio-visual and microfilm formats, reflect very little about the indigenous communities. Therefore, it is important that ordinary people document their stories to share with the rest of the world. This will also help to close the gap that exists in terms of archival holdings in public archival repositories, especially in South Africa where the holdings mostly reflect white privilege (Ngoepe and Ngulube 2011). This study captures and shares lessons learnt from the heritage projects of converting oral narratives into written literature undertaken in the Makgabeng villages of Limpopo, South Africa. According to Rafapa (2011, 89), these kinds of narratives include, among others, 'myths of genesis about families, dynastic histories, family histories, proverbs and family praises'. Du Bruyn (2009, 128) views these as life stories, traditions, customs and experiences of the individual members of the community. The sum total of the life stories of these individuals make up a community history and thus contribute to national history. Therefore, recording such community experiences offers an opportunity for the life of ordinary mortals to contribute to the history of the nation.

2. CONTEXTUAL AND CONCEPTUAL SETTING

This section provides a brief background of the Makgabeng area, which was the context of the study. Setumu (2010, 2011), Ngoepe and Thoka (2008), and Ngoepe, Ngoepe and Setumu (2014) have written extensively about the Makgabeng area and the people.

2.1. Background to Makgabeng

Makgabeng is situated north-west of Polokwane (formerly known as Pietersburg), near Senwabarwana (formerly Bochum), in Limpopo – one of the nine provinces in South Africa. On the northern side of Limpopo there are three important mountain ranges, namely, the Soutpansberg, Blouberg and Makgabeng (Setumu 2010, 1). The Makgabeng area referred to is made up of communities that surround this third mountain range. There is no definite unanimity regarding the origin of the name ‘Makgabeng’. Some people say it refers to *makgaba*, which are the young green sorghum plants before they start to produce grain stalks. Others say that Makgabeng is named after *mogaba*, a potato-like plant which produces edible underground bulbs, or that it simply means ‘people’ (Setumu 2011).

Although there are different explanations, according to Northern Sotho grammar, the name is a word that indicates the place (adverb of place) because of the ending ‘-eng’, which indicates location. Therefore, the original noun – before adding the location suffix – would be ‘*makgaba*’. Many different interpretations exist about what ‘*makgaba*’ actually is. But apparently the name itself – Makgabeng – has been used from a very long time ago. It is difficult to determine precisely when it was first used, mainly because of the lack of written records by the earliest occupants of the area, namely, the Khoikhoi, the San and the Bantu speakers. The earliest literate groups, such as the German missionaries, referred to the name in their earliest records and documents, and in some of such documents the name was spelt as ‘Makchabeng’. Some of the earliest German documents date back as far as 1868 (Setumu 2010, 2), which indicates that the name had been used for a long time before the arrival of Europeans in that area in the second half of the nineteenth century. Regardless of its origin and meaning, it is a well-known name (Setumu 2011).

The villages that surround the Makgabeng Mountain and are therefore part of the Makgabeng area, are: Bays Water, Disseldorp (Mothakgale), Cracow, Calsruhe (Khala), Harrietswish (Garaweshi), Ketting (Lehwaneng), Goedetrouw (Kgat), Norma A and B, Uitkyk No. 1, 2 and 3, Schoongezicht, Early Dawn and Millstream, Rosamond, Groenpunt, De La Roche, Devilliersdale, Mont Blanc, Bonne Esperance, Nieuwe Jerusalem, Too Late, Milbank (Ga Monyebodi), Langbryde, Old Langsyne, Lamonside (Ga Lekgwara), Baranen, Gemarke, Rittershouse (Mokumuru), Normandy (Madibeng), Kirtenspruit (Sadu) and Non Parella (Ngoepe et al. 2014). The first indigenous inhabitants of the Makgabeng area appear to have been the

San (known as the Bushmen in colonial literature). This is evidenced by the rock art paintings in the rock shelters in the area. The Khoikhoi (known as Hottentots in colonial literature), apparently followed the San in occupying Makgabeng and their rock paintings indicate that, at times, they co-existed with the San. The San and the Khoikhoi rock paintings make Makgabeng one of the richest areas in culture and heritage (Setumu 2010).

The next communities to arrive in Makgabeng after the San and the Khoi were the black communities, the Bantu-speaking farmers who originated in central Africa a few thousand years ago. These groups were mostly the Venda and other Shona-related communities from across the Limpopo River. The Sotho groups of Bakone, Bahananwa, Batšhadibe, and so on, were the last black communities to arrive in Makgabeng. The European travellers, hunters and explorers then followed. Those European groups and individuals did not settle in the area – they just passed through on the way to their various missions. The Western missionaries, who came from the Berlin Society, with the aim of preaching the Holy Gospel, arrived during the mid-nineteenth century. They began to work among the black communities in that area and established mission stations in their desire to convert blacks to Christianity (Setumu 2010). It was important to provide this background of Makgabeng in order to outline the context of the study and relate to the heritage projects undertaken in the area.

2.2. Conceptual setting

Lekgwathi (2014) identifies the key sources of evidence for African narratives as archaeological evidence, accounts of literate observers, commissions of inquiry, anthropological evidence and oral traditions. Oral history refers to the method that uses oral traditions and/or oral testimony as a form of historical evidence (Lekgwathi 2014). On the other hand, Hatang (2000, 23) asserts that oral history comprises recollections of the past that are not universally known and are recent events. Oral histories are usually gathered by historians/researchers through interviews, often using a tape recorder (Schneider 1998, 94). Oral testimony and oral traditions are mainly used for gathering evidence. While oral testimony refers to an eyewitness or a first-hand account of an event or a situation that occurred during the lifetime of the person interviewed, hearsay or reminiscences about contemporary events, oral traditions refer to stories or narratives that have been transmitted by word of mouth beyond the generation that gave rise to them. These accounts are no longer contemporary, for example, folktales, epics, genealogies, praise songs, and so on (Hatang 2000, 22). Oral traditions, therefore, are passed on from generation to generation, retold by the narrator who heard the stories from older people. In order to give meaning to the story, the narrator needs to understand the community from which the story comes, and know the history, traditions, customs, values and roots

of the community (Keakopa 1998, 87). Although oral history draws on the tenets of oral tradition the two are not the same.

Thompson (2006, 97) contends that oral history relating to time beyond the reach of living memory becomes oral tradition after it has been consolidated and repeated for a long period of time. Yet, consolidation and repetition do not make it immutable as the main story can be twisted and eroded. Furthermore, there is a notion that the stories that are worth telling and worth recording are those of chiefs, or rather people in power, without acknowledging that there are sub-narratives that are not famous and universally known. This article contends that the stories of ordinary people should be told and recorded by ordinary people and shared with the world. Traditionally, as alluded above, histories in Africa were passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. Ritchie (2003, 13) acknowledges the importance of oral tradition in this kind of situation when he points out that the 'inadequacy of written documents from previous regimes and colonial powers has accelerated the new-and even demand-for oral tradition'. Therefore, oral tradition as a means of discovering written documents and visual archives which would have otherwise remained obscured is important.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Most scholars have shown little or no interest in documenting the lives of ordinary people. Du Bruyn (2009, 128) observes that ordinary people rarely attract the attention of the media and thus escape the scrutiny of historians. This was even the case during the colonial and apartheid eras (Du Bruyn 2013, 154). As a result, little is known about the histories or heritage of such neglected communities. In the cases where historians or archivists show interest in recording the narratives of ordinary people, such projects, especially in South Africa fail to materialise. For example, Harris (2014, 92–93) contends that orality recording projects are common in South Africa, but are both random and undertaken in modes that are profoundly problematic in relation to voice and power. Furthermore, the huge potential of digitisation in support of preserving and also recording these histories has not been harnessed. However, heritage projects such as the ones undertaken in the Makgabeng area do offer hope. Despite its popularity and richness in heritage, Makgabeng is a predominantly rural area with no infrastructure. The area is marginalised as the voices of communities around it are not adequately captured in official sources, as was the case with the rest of the black societies. Even where such perspectives existed, they were marginalised or simply suppressed, for example, mining and metallurgy, and involvement in international trade in precolonial societies in Mapungubwe (Lekgwathi 2014). The growing emphasis on community history in schools and the broader society is based on a genuine effort to recover silenced voices and offers an opportunity to capture and share heritage such as that found in the Makgabeng area. This will help to correct

biases and distortions in the official archives and other sources, and will help to open new areas of inquiries which are often overlooked and remain obscured. Therefore, the objectives of the study were to:

- Identify heritage projects undertaken in the Makgabeng area.
- Capture and share lessons learnt from the projects undertaken in the Makgabeng area.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study utilised participant observation to gather the data. The researchers were involved in the projects and also drew from the project management methodology that was used to guide the successful implementation of heritage projects in Makgabeng. The researchers participated as overt full members of the group as their status as researchers was known. The projects were undertaken between 2006 and 2016. Some projects were undertaken on an individual basis while others were executed by groups. As a result, further data for the study was collected through interviews with two other project managers from Makgabeng heritage projects who were not part of the current study.

During the execution of the projects, a number of limitations as identified by Lekgwathi (2014) were encountered, including: unreliability of memory and remembering from the narrators; memory of narrators often triggered by interest; incorrect translation; manipulation of oral sources and deliberate distortion of facts; problem of chronology; and silence or refusal to discuss certain topics, such as the rainmaking process. However, these limitations were dealt with through identifying contradictions in stories; cross-checking the informant's recollection against other oral accounts and archival sources in cases where they were available; and questioning the informant's identity and agendas (both public and hidden) in giving their accounts.

5. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This section presents the results according to the objectives of the study.

5.1. Heritage projects undertaken in the Makgabeng area

Numerous heritage projects have been undertaken in the Makgabeng area in order to uncover the pre-colonial past that had been neglected in the colonial and apartheid literature that was regarded as the mainstream South African history (Setumu 2015,

40). These projects, as well as groups' and individuals' initiatives were conducted at various periods and spots to varying extents. Some of the efforts were scattered and their outputs were never really collated and consolidated into tangible results that could be referred to. However, despite this type of limitation, professional and academic institutions researched the history, heritage and culture of the Blouberg-Makgabeng-Senwabarwana (BMS) area variously. In some instances, communities were engaged in such initiatives (Setumu 2015, 40), including the: Makgabeng Career Expo and Heritage Celebration; Blouberg, Makgabeng and Senwabarwana Cultural Festivals; Malebogo-Boer War documentary and historical drama; Dikgaatwanetša Makgabeng (rock art paintings); and Makgabeng-Setlaole Heritage (folktales, clan praises, conducting funerals, beliefs, and interpretation divine bones). The long-term goal of the Makgabeng heritage projects is to develop a heritage centre in the area, with a view to harnessing the area as a tourist destination. In that regard, the specific objectives of the projects are to:

- Educate learners about career choice.
- Share interesting stories in Makgabeng.
- Collect and document indigenous knowledge in the Makgabeng area.
- Encourage preservation of heritage by community members.
- Take heritage to marginalised communities.
- Employ storytelling as a means of income generation.
- Promote heritage as a means of poverty alleviation.

Similar projects as reported by Du Bruyn (2013, 154) have been executed in the Free State, South Africa. These projects are listed as:

- Local heritage hero competition honouring living and departed heroes.
- Oral history project.
- Local history corners which involve permanent displays that focus on certain local heroes, oral histories and community history in selected libraries.
- Heritage events.

5.1.1. Makgabeng career expo and heritage celebration

One project executed through the Department of Information Science at the University of South Africa is identified as the 'Makgabeng career expo and heritage celebration'. The aim of this project is to preserve heritage resources in the Makgabeng area. According to the project manager, 'The project has two legs, that is, career expo

and heritage celebration. The short term goal of the project is to help learners in Makgabeng area to decide about their future.’

The first part of the project targeted school learners at Bodiela High School in Early Dawn; Kgerepi High School in Goedetrouw; and Legwaneng High School in Ketting. This has been an annual event since 2013 at which invited guests (mainly students who attended schools in the area and graduated from universities) make presentations on different career choices. The second part of the project targets learners and community members. In this regard, learners and members of the community are requested to narrate stories they were told by their parents. Some of these stories were selected and included in an anthology of stories about Makgabeng with the narrators as authors. In this regard, people were allowed to tell their stories the way they liked. Experienced authors assisted them in converting their stories into written literature. The stories covered topics and themes, such as origins of clans, burning of witches in the areas, rainmaking, chieftainship, and so on, from the voice of community members. The outputs included production of books, family trees and collections of old family photos for the purpose of creating community archives in the future. Two books were published in Northern Sotho, namely, *Bakone ba Makgabeng* (a history of the Bakone from Makgabeng – see Figure 1) and *Bohwa bja Makgabeng* (a collection of stories from Makgabeng – see Figure 2). Community members contributed stories to the anthology.

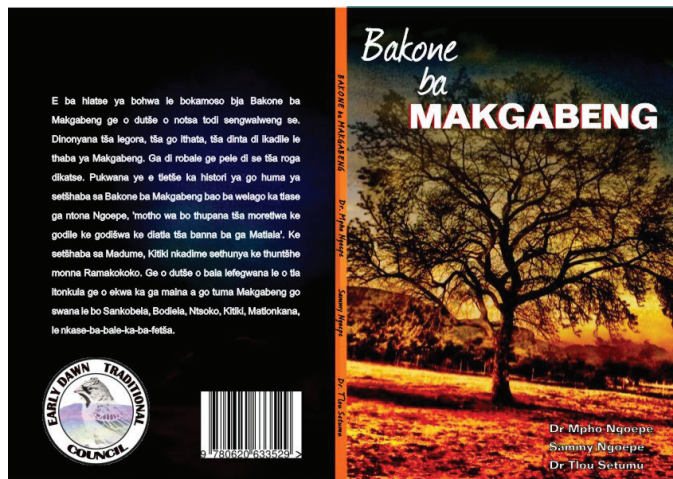


Figure 1: History of the Bakone from Makgabeng

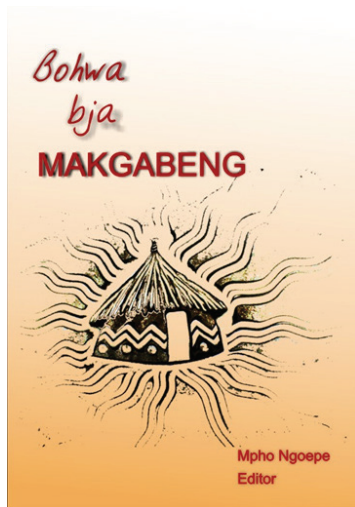


Figure 2: Collection of short stories (Heritage of Makgabeng)

5.1.2. Rock art paintings (2001–2004)

In addition to those archaeological surveys and rock art documentations, there were also oral history initiatives in which local communities were interviewed about their past histories. In 2002, under the auspices of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) managed by Ron Viney in Limpopo, one of the authors of the article led the Makgabeng Oral History project in which more than 50 interviews were conducted. The project yielded valuable data which ensured that communities participated in the documentation, and ultimate archiving, of their histories and heritage. As a result, a PhD thesis was another form of documentation which resulted from that project. The Limpopo Heritage Resources Authority (LIHRA), which was established in 2004, built on the earlier archaeological surveys, rock art documentation and oral history programmes. The LIHRA continued research in the Makgabeng area, which included community participation, and the result was the declaration of the Malebogo-Boer War Battlefields as a Provincial Heritage Site in 2007 in accordance with the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999) (Setumu 2015, 43).

The world-class rock art paintings of Makgabeng have been on the radar of the SAHRA for declaration at national level, in which the ultimate goal would be a possible declaration of the sites at international level by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Much work has been done to identify, study and document the rock art paintings in the Makgabeng plateau. Ed Eastwood, a renowned rock art specialist, has studied, documented and exposed the Makgabeng rock art paintings arguably more than anyone else. Eastwood worked closely with local ‘foot soldiers’, such as Jonas Tlouamma and

Elias Raseruthe, to uncover and record hundreds of the San, Khoikhoi and Sotho rock art sites in Makgabeng (Setumu 2015, 43).

At academic level, Eastwood wrote many papers about the rock art paintings of Makgabeng as an individual, but he sometimes collaborated with his colleagues, such as Dr Johny van Schalkwyk of the National History Museum, as well as Prof. Benjamin Smith of the University of Witwatersrand (Wits). As a result, the National History Museum and the Wits School of Rock Art became extensively involved in the research and documentation of the rock art of the Makgabeng. The earlier 2002 project implemented by one of the authors in that area drew heavily on such research works, and to a large extent it involved local communities who were exposed to the rock art paintings. According to one of the project managers,

because the local communities were involved in these projects they began to value and appreciate their heritage and the rock art paintings, which they came to fondly refer to as '*dikgaatwanetša Makgabeng*' (lizards of Makgabeng), because the paintings, to them, looked like lizards on rocks.

The appreciation of the local communities was essential because they could understand the importance and significance of their own heritage, and therefore they were prepared to protect and preserve that heritage.

5.1.3. Malebogo-Boer War documentary (2007)

Another initiative worth mentioning in the BMS area is the Malebogo-Boer War documentary, which was funded by the National Heritage Council and implemented by one of the authors in 2007. The activities around this particular project, especially the interviews, ensured that local communities participated in documenting their histories and heritage to a point where the end product was archived. The documentary was based on one little known – but highly significant – historical event, namely, the 1894 war between the Bahananwa under Kgoši Seketa Ratšhaatšhaa Lebogo (Malebogo) and the Boers of the Transvaal Republic (ZAR) under President Paul Kruger. The Bahananwa put up a very brave fight, but were later defeated owing to various factors.

The 2007 documentary project involved professionals in various fields, such as history and heritage, as well as professional film makers. The ordinary local communities, including the Bahananwa royal family, were involved in the narration of the stories around the war. The completed documentary was later circulated among the local communities in the BMS area, and it was well received as it highlighted the local content, which many people, especially the young ones, did not know about. The fact that such a very significant piece of history was largely unknown could be attributed to the fact raised earlier that most of the stories of the indigenous African communities were deliberately and systematically suppressed and marginalised during the rules of colonialism and apartheid.

5.1.4. BMS cultural festivals project (2015–2016)

Music and dance forms of the indigenous African communities have proven to be some of the most resilient aspects of culture. These forms of intangible heritage survived centuries of missionary and colonial assaults, which failed to totally annihilate such indigenous cultural aspects, even if they applied all the powers they had at their disposal. As a result, such cultural forms have remained intact up to this day.

In the BMS area, traditional music and dance are still part of the communities' ways of life, where the people sing and dance during various social gatherings, such as weddings, ancestors' thanksgiving ceremonies, and ordinary beer-drinking sessions. The artists take their singing and dancing so seriously that they form groups in which they wear colourful uniforms and create sets of musical instruments such as *meropa* (drums) and *dinaka* (flutes).

The 2015–2016 BMS cultural festivals project, funded by the Department of Arts and Culture under its Mzansi Golden Economy Programme, was intended to develop the music and dance forms of the local communities within the BMS area. Those art forms were identified and recorded on music CDs so that the artists could benefit from the sale and broadcasting of their works. As a result, 14 traditional music groups were recorded and produced on 2 and 3 January 2016, at the Blouberg Municipality offices (see figures 3 and 4 for examples of the CDs of some of the groups). Furthermore, video footage of all the events was packaged into DVDs. It is worth mentioning that most of the groups were the youth. Local communities welcomed that project as they fully participated during the elimination stages of the project, in which the best artists were selected and recorded.

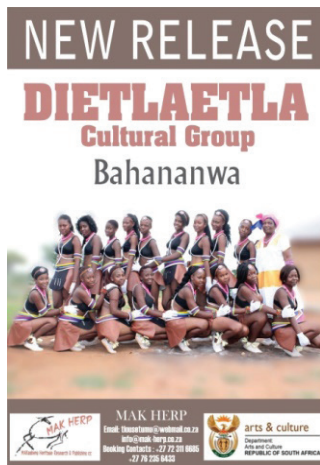


Figure 3: Ditlaetla Cultural Group (Setumu 2016)



Figure 4: Sekamonyane (Setumu 2016)

5.2. Lessons learnt from the Makgabeng heritage projects

A number of lessons were learnt from undertaking these projects, but the most important lesson was that ordinary people should be given the opportunity to document their own stories. Setumu (2014, ii) states that in this way the stories of Africans will be given validity and prominence by Africans themselves as the ‘lions’ and ‘lionesses’ will be determining and writing their own stories as opposed to the story coming from the hunter’s perspective. However, this should be done with caution as the lions and lionesses do not necessarily speak on behalf of the duikers and the ant-eaters. Therefore, there must be a way of ascertaining from the community whether their story has been told as they told it themselves, as the hunter’s perspective remains when it is the researcher’s interpretation of people’s perceptions that largely takes the day. With regard to the Makgabeng projects, this happened through feed-back to the community, for example, a book launch where the books were distributed and people were asked to submit their comments; as well as the launch of CDs. As people write their own stories, they will feel victorious and be willing to share their sacred knowledge, which they are usually reluctant to share, as was the case with one story about rainmaking. However, it is not advocated that all the stories told should be shared with the rest of the world as some of their knowledge is sacred to the community and should not be traded. Disadvantaged communities can be encouraged to preserve their own heritage only if they are part of that process.

The Makgabeng heritage projects were able to achieve one of the objectives, namely, to preserve heritage through recording documentary, music and books. This

in turn helped to revive the previously suppressed cultural practices. As a result, the community were aware of their unique heritage.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recording community history through oral narratives is not a panacea for addressing historical distortions and exclusion of African voices, but can play a pivotal role in reclaiming and preserving African heritage. It can also help to close the existing gaps in public archives repositories in South Africa. Therefore, oral narratives should be seen as key, but not exclusive, sources in the project of documenting African history and heritage (Lekgwathi 2014). There is a need to assist communities in documenting their oral stories. Du Bruyn (2013, 156) recommends that for the project to be successful, it is essential that the approach adopted should be holistic, including community history, storytelling and oral history. The communities should be involved in the process and it is also important that the project should be communicated to and buy-in sought from the community. In this regard, the benefits for the community should be outlined and local people with skills should be involved.

One way of executing the project of converting orality into recorded information can be based on the model of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission where each province captures the oral tradition in previously marginalised communities where official records do not exist and preserves it in the respective archival repositories. In the case where storage space is not available, possible solutions in which oral literature can be converted into written form in such a way as to be useful to future generations in Africa are to cautiously explore the possibility of storing converted oral tradition in the cloud or, as in the case of the heritage projects in Makgabeng, let the people write their stories and publish them in books and documentaries. In this way, archival repositories will be used by previously marginalised groups as their stories will also be told and preserved in archival holdings. Furthermore, the community can consider establishing a multipurpose centre that consists of a library, archives and a community heritage radio station. These will be platforms to play and preserve the cultural music produced, as well as the knowledge generated. Alternatively, the projects can be handed over to the Blouberg Municipality thereby sustaining the projects as economic spin offs, for example, holding the annual cultural festival, selling music and books, as well as screening local documentaries during the festival. A further study on the role of national and provincial archives repositories in the collection of oral narratives to close the gap in archival holdings is recommended.

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