

## **Bridging the gap between scientific and local knowledge through participatory community-based heritage research in Africa**

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### **Abstract**

Participatory community-based heritage research is a spreading perspective that has taken deep root amongst groups in many continents, particularly in Australia, Europe, and North America. It arises from members of the local communities who want to control (their) history-making and heritage representations. Unfortunately, many academic researchers and government agencies in Africa are yet to realizing that community-based heritage research leads to full collaboration, with communities designing research plans, conduct research, and engagement in interpretation and dissemination of research results. This participatory community-based heritage research strategy challenges 'colonial approaches' long favored by researchers and government agencies that initiate projects, conduct fieldwork and finally interpret data often without consulting 'local people'. In this paper, I will present how co-creation and developing trust among researchers and local community members can bridge the gap between 'scientific' and 'local' knowledges throughout Africa. I argue that the 'local people' know more than academics do, hence, we (academics) should be ready to be challenged and learn from them (local people). This argument will be supported by three themes namely 'archaeology of trees' 'musicalizing heritage', and Maasai's perceptions on makers of hominid footprints aged 3.6 million years.

### **Biography**

Dr. E. Ichumbaki (Ichu) is a Senior Lecturer in Heritage Studies and Leader of *Urithi Wetu* (Our Heritage) project at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. He obtained his BA (Culture & Heritage) and MA (Archaeology) from the University of Dar es Salaam in 2008 and 2012 respectively. His doctoral research, completed in 2015, was conducted within a 'sandwich model' between the University of Dar es Salaam and Roskilde University (Denmark). Ichu's research and publications focuses on monumentality, spirituality and indigenous heritage of eastern Africa.