

# Concept Historic Living Museums



## Living Museums

The living museum is an open air museum with living actors in reconstructed clothes. The museum displays activities and equipment about a specific historical period of a particular tribe.

### The aim of the living museum:

1. To give members of the own tribe the opportunity to maintain and study their cultural background. (If you know your origins you understand your current lifestyle)
2. To let school children, students and every Namibian lay hand on Namibian history by seeing, touching, tasting and smelling the real thing.
3. To let tourists experience the beauties and culture of Africa in a gentle and sensitive way by meeting the people and finding time to make contacts and friends.
4. To provide a financial income to the local community and encourage economic regional development.

### Concept:

There are several different tribes in Namibia and nearly every one of them has been affected by the introduction of the European culture into Namibia. As a consequence they have changed in many ways, living today a mixture of their own and the European cultures. Much of the traditional customs and the environmental knowledge are on the edge to become extinct.

The **living museum** could be an instrument for each tribe to conserve their old tradition, to understand their own cultural background, to develop a sense of proud about their history and even to generate an income on their own.

Each of the different tribes from Namibia could build and run their own living museum in an easy and cheap way. Many of the older tribe members still have the skills to build the old homesteads using natural materials to be found in the surrounding areas. They have the knowledge to make traditional equipment like clothing, tools, weapons and pottery. They often still know the old ways of singing, dancing, story telling, hunting, herding and the art of traditional medicine. So any living museum could be implemented with little or no financial need from outside. Simple element such as craft could be made by the community under the supervision and aid of their wise elders.

The living museum should be run by the specific tribe itself and by their own way, although the actors should be trained in the basic principle of transferring and communicating their experience to visitors, including tourists, other tribe's members, school children and students. It would also be wise to involve a NGO (Foundations etc.) by letting them do the advertising and booking. The final aim is to have a 'win win' situation where all participant stakeholders benefit from the cooperation.

### Basic principles of each living museum:

#### **Human resources:**

1. One manager in charge of museum including buildings, personnel, material and finances.
2. At least two guides, each day speaking fluently English with a depth knowledge of the culture presented by the museum
3. Actors: At least two families including all ages and sexes. It is very important that there are always children, youngsters, adults and old people of both sexes present, as it was in the old times.

**Managing plan:** There should be a written managing plan concerning the personal cast, the rules within the museum, usage of incoming money, displayed activities, crafts to sell and everything else

concerning the smooth run of the living museum. A tourists code of conduct will also be encouraged.

### **Basic principles of a historic living museum:**

1. Wear only true traditional clothing and jewellery according to the epoch representing.
2. Only traditional activities displayed (e.g. no plastic, modern clothing, glass, cans, wires)
3. Only traditional materials to be used
4. Only traditional food openly displayed (Modern food could be hidden and eaten in a hut prohibited to visitors).
5. Only traditional music instruments, songs and dances to be displayed (e.g. no electrical or electronic equipments - radios, CD players, etc.)
6. During advertised opening times there must be always actors (at least two proper families ranging from children to grandparents of both sexes).
7. NO ALCOHOL consumption is allowed before and during performances.
8. NO BEGGING is allowed as this would push away your audience and could destroy the image of the project in very short time!
9. Agree on a fee with visitors at beginning of their visit. Provide visitors with a receipt for their payment. Tour operators need one!
10. Group members must always be friendly. If a member of the group is having a bad day let him/her rather go home than having a bad performance. While singing and dancing try to be happy and smile. This will catch your audience and will part of your success.
11. Actors should try to make contact with visitors by trying to include them in the activities, e.g. let them shoot an arrow at a target, grind seeds or play a drum ...
12. Provide a car guard to the comfort of the visitors. (He should also wear traditional clothing and weapons.)
13. Crafts should only be sold in a craft shop and entrance office. Never sell anything in the living museum village itself as this does not cope with the historical times.
14. Crafts sold in the craft shop should be unique to the specific culture represented in the museum.
15. Feel free to express your positive and negative feelings about tourist behaviour by communicating them to organizers / tour operators / guides.

### **Tips:**

1. Let the entrance office be the craft shop as well. Then you need only one person selling the entrance tickets and the crafts.
2. Let the entrance also be the exit to the museum. By that you give the visitors the chance to first see through the museum and then buy crafts.
3. Crafts should be labelled with the price.
4. Keep prices for entrance and crafts reasonable as then also backpackers and students will not hesitate to buy.
5. Never be obtrusive to sell crafts. Visitors get pushed off by that. Let them look and touch on their own time.
6. Keep the entrance office in a traditional look and let the **friendly** shop assistant (could be the museum manager) also wear traditional clothing. It creates a special welcome to visitors.
7. Let the manager or the guide greet the visitors a friendly welcome and make them comfortable to take part in activities.
8. Let the entrance fee include all activities for the normal day visitor.

Bwana Tucke-Tucke Touren  
Asterweg 4  
D- 25551 Hohenlockstedt

Carsten Möhle  
Steueramt Itzehoe  
Str.Nr. 1806312269

Fon: (0 48 26) 52 08  
Fax : (0 48 26) 33 71  
E-Mail: [d@bwana.de](mailto:d@bwana.de)

Hypo- und Vereinsbank AG Norderstedt  
(BLZ 200 300 00) Kto-Nr. 66 00 605  
Website: [www.bwana.de](http://www.bwana.de)

Bwana Tucke-Tucke CC  
P.O. Box 25392  
Windhoek, Namibia

Reg.No. A- 97-859  
Coetzeestreet 28  
VAT 0613946-01-5

Fon +264 61 23 96 02  
Fax +264 61 25 83 73  
email: [namibia@bwana.de](mailto:namibia@bwana.de)

Banking-Account: Nedbank (Br.-Cd. 461609)  
Account-No. 110 000 981 42  
Website: [www.bwana.de](http://www.bwana.de)