

Abeingo Community Network

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PRESS RELEASE

An interactive online portal for the Luhya of East Africa has been commissioned. The internet address is <http://www.abeingo.org> for those on high speed connection. However, if you are on dial up especially in Africa, use <http://www.abeingo.org/site.html>. The overriding aim of the website is to provide an online window that can link villages to the world community.

The website has been compiled by Abeingo Community Network, a UK-based community organisation which seeks to empower the Luhya people to take control of their own destiny.

The website is packed with information about the history, culture, economics, hopes and aspirations of the Luhya people who are scattered across Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and possibly beyond. It has a directory of most Luhya professionals and profiles of prominent personalities. The objective is to get all Luhya professionals and prominent personalities listed and any input and/or feedback from the readership will be welcome and appreciated.

Although Luhya as a tribe is populous, very little is actually written about it with the only authoritative source of information being a book written in 1967 by Prof Gideon Were (originally a Phd dissertation at the University of Wales in Cardiff) and John Osogo in 1965.

In the case of Prof Were for instance, most of the information he derived through extensive research and interviews by elders or spokesmen of the various clans and sub tribes. Clearly a lot of this information needs to be checked and corroborated. The website hopes to provide a focal point to engage the minds of intellectuals and the ordinary people in the quest of finding the true facts about the Luhya.

For instance, although it's generally assumed that the Luhya in Kenya consist of 18 sub tribes, a lot of people would be hard pressed to name all of them. It's also not easy to tell which of the Ugandan tribes are Luhya. Apart from the obvious ones like Samia, some like the Bagweru are like a lost tribe for not even Ugandans know they are of Bantu stock.

One striking fact that came to the fore as I journeyed into our ancestral past was how mixed the Luhya people are. The ancestors of the Kisii and Maragoli for instance are said to have been brothers while the ancestor of the Kisa (Abasisha) is said to have been a

Masai. The Tachoni, Tiriki and a host of clans in Mumias are descended from Kalenjin while several clans in Wanga, Marama and Bunyore were originally Luo. By the same token, several Luhya clans were also Luonised (assimilated into Luo).

In Tanzania, the Haya tongue is very close to Kinyore (it's said some sub clans of Abamutete moved to Tanzania; notice the lexical link with Emuhaya) while in Zambia, a cluster of Nyanja-speaking tribes are closely related to the Luhya.

Although the website is now commissioned and uploaded, Abeingo Community Network realises that work is on going and welcomes contributions and constructive criticisms in order to improve and make it a true gateway linking villages to the global online community.

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