

# **A CULTURAL CENTRE FOR THE SOUTH SUDAN**

## **A home for the cultures of all Nationalities of the South Sudan**

A centre for promoting peace, understanding and  
co-operation  
amongst the many identities of the many peoples  
living in the South Sudan.

**Assembly of all Nationalities**

**A Peace-Centre and a Centre of Dialogue.**

**A Research-Centre .**

A place for preserving cultural values and  
for developing languages, arts and music.

## **A Mirror of Cultures:**

A centre for safeguarding, displaying,celebrating and  
enjoying  
the material and immaterial cultural heritage  
of the South Sudan.

## **A Conference-Centre.**

## **A Sport-Centre.**

## **A Park of Cultures to be shown to foreign visitors.**

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## Introduction

After over fifty years of war, the South Sudan hopes to have reached a new area of peace with its neighbours in the North of the country. The new nation will have to be built on the ruins of the war, has to heal the wounds opened by years of hatred, bloodshed and distrust and has to build a new identity based on the respect and the dignity of all citizens. Material wealth alone will not be enough to protect peace and to support harmonious development: peace must grow from within and make use of the strong, historic cultural values which govern traditional societies and which provide them with stability even during times of war. History has shown that lack of respect of culture and absence of active involvement of ethnic communities in the running of the state unavoidably lead to unrest and fighting: any planning of the future must learn the lessons of the past and respect the cultural sensitivities of the people, their customs, traditional values and rights. Traditional communities must have a voice and get an institution where they can make their voice to be heard: the Cultural Centre will be the self-consciousness of culture, the treasure of values and heirlooms, a meeting-point of all Nationalities and their source of inspiration for social justice, peace and harmonious development.

Though everybody recognizes the importance of culture and indeed the beauty of cultural diversity, though division along ethnic lines continue to pollute the political climate in many parts of the South Sudan and though all politicians are extremely proud of their own specific cultural identity and well aware of the importance of culture for peace, cultural identities appear to many to be an obstacle rather than the means leading to progress and harmony. In the different committees (known as JAM) in which South Sudanese intellectuals were preparing the plan of actions for the future, the whole issue of culture was curiously never addressed (perhaps with the exception of the question of customary law), and in consequence, concrete ideas in the cultural-political domain are still cruelly missing. This amazing neglect will have disastrous consequences for all people in the South Sudan: without the formal recognition of cultures and their integration into the national set-up, there will be no peace, no justice and surely no development.

Foremost, the following proposal of establishing a cultural centre must be seen in this light of the cultures' political significance for peace-keeping and harmonious development. The project of *establishing an institution where community-leaders could meet regularly in order to discuss issues of mutual concern* (of a political as much as of a purely cultural nature) is of such a vital importance for the nation that it *will have to* be established, even if the project of a Cultural Centre would not realize (such was indeed the conclusion of the 2004-conference of traditional leaders, kings and chiefs in Kamuto); but obviously, it would be an advantage if the traditional leaders' meeting-place could take place in an environment embedded in culture, in a *Cultural Centre* where one could not only witness the beauty of the past or discuss the present but even prepare for the future, where centres of artistic activities and of reflection, moments of sensual pleasure and academic work, would appear as different specters of a same body and spirit. The centre would document and stimulate culture on all levels, enhance cultural self-consciousness and produce feelings of *pride* while at a same time give space to *cultural*

*change and bridge the gap between traditional structures and the requirements of a more modern society.* By encouraging and working for the development and integration of the *women* and the *youth* through professional training and through a constructive dialogue with traditional leaders, the cultural centre would contribute to overcome problems linked to gender and age, allowing society to address lack of social justice without destroying the positive and essential values of culture. The cultural Centre would therefore be a meeting-place of cultures and people as well as of times and generations, it would help to *safeguard the deeds of the past* and enforce the consciousness of the positive role played by culture values while *preparing for a future* in which all nationalities, all ages, men and women would work together and eventually reach their shared vision of a peaceful, prosperous and just South Sudan.

*The concept is simple:*

Whoever is aware of the importance of culture and the need to respect the dignity of different human identities will understand, appreciate and give support to a project which is planned to strengthen the link between the past, the present and the future, which is to forge unity between people of different origins and which aims at development, justice and peace.

Because the project is well-structured (a main-center is surrounded by various sub-centres), the cultural centre can grow in stages and will therefore be easy to realize. Cost-sharing wouldn't be too difficult to negotiate and to organize.

*The project is important:*

Loss of the cultural heritage, languages and bearing social structures will never be recovered or compensated for. Fifty years of war have badly damaged and partly already destroyed culture, depriving people from harmonious development. Their cultural identity needs to be protected and supported when trying to build a nation of citizens. Without the participation of traditional leaders in the political process, ethnic harmony and political stability will be out of reach.

If the need for regular meetings between the Nationality-leaders got officially endorsed at the end of the Kamuto-meeting in 2004, there is still no place where the traditional chiefs could meet in a relaxed and ordinary way: the leaders of the Nationalities need a place where they are not mere guests but where they feel at home, which they own legally and where they can meet whenever they like. The Traditional Assembly at the Cultural Centre will provide them with such a home.

The project is to forge a unity not only between the different Nationalities but also between the various layers of society (namely women- and youth age-groups) in view of necessary, harmonious cultural change. It would be *the backbone of any democratic, progressive government*, would fill the empty space between the ruling authority of the government and the more direct authority of traditional leaders, kings or chiefs and would encourage all peoples to peacefully move, together with the government, towards ethnic harmony, respect of cultures and economic success.

*The project is urgent:*

The South Sudan is faced with the challenge to provide its citizens with a new national identity. This difficult task can only be achieved if the people's traditional, local

identities are respected and positively integrated in the process of nation-building. If the cultural dimensions of the South Sudan are neglected, new herds of conflict will enflame the country. Formal recognition of existing realities (such as ethnic identities) is the first step to unite the people. If, in the South Sudan, culture is of such a vital significance, it is urgent to recognise it and to plan accordingly.

*The project is practical and dynamic:*

The South Sudan will need all the institutions planned for the Cultural centre: a place for the Assembly of the Nationalities-leaders, institutes of research, centres for development and the integration of women and the youth, libraries, a museum, workshop-facilities and a hall for big meetings, an arena where major national events can take place, a centre for the development of sport etc. The practical interest of the Cultural Centre is the combination of different institutions at one single place: this will of course reduce costs but more importantly facilitate the inter-action between and mutual inspiration by different organs and institutes. The significance of the project lies moreover in the combination of centres of pure reflection (research, dialogue) with practical activities in the fields of culture and sports, with an opening for visitors from outside who would bring additional animation to the site. The planned popular 'traditional village' would make sure that the cultural centre is more than just an assembly of offices, buildings and training-centres.

*The project is attractive:*

Through the combination of cultural elements (Museum/ traditional Village), political activities (Assembly of traditional leaders), cultural events, scientific research, professional training, workshops, women- and youth-activities, sport and festivities, the cultural centre will get its own, multi-cultural and multi-functional identity and lead an interesting, entertaining and exciting existence on many different (political, historical, cultural, academic, athletic, artistic, documentary) levels.

Because the Centre will contain the beauty and the cultural treasure of the South Sudan's people in a nutshell, it will be very attractive for all visitors, in particular to those foreigners who wish to discover more than leopards, snakes and giraffes but would like to combine their safaris with an exciting expedition into the cultural sphere of human existence.

*The project is affordable.*

The costs of the project are of course too high to be covered from one source only. Many sponsors and participating organisations will be needed. By dividing the responsibilities for the construction of the different parts of the centre amongst the donors, each sub-project will have its own budget which of course will be only a fraction of the total budget. This makes the project both realistic and affordable.

Though the government will have to include the running-costs of the centre in its annual budget, it will gain much from a centre which will contribute to the protection and development of cultures, to a constructive dialogue between the Nationalities, to the respect of human dignity and, most importantly, to peace and stability. The cultural centre will help the government to earn respect from its people while earning international prestige and fame for its good governance.

*The biggest practical challenge of the project*

lies in the field of planning and organisation. Professionals are needed to design the place and the buildings. Organisations need to be convinced and then linked together. The project's realisation depends on this co-operation between architects, artists, intellectuals, sponsors, governments and – last but not least – the different Nationalities.

The project is built on the bold presumption that it will be possible to bring the authorities of the South Sudan, the leaders of ethnic communities, different organisations, agencies and countries together, to make them share one vision and to let them participate in one big enterprise: this is a unique plan which has never be realised before and therefore presents a tremendous challenge to all the participating organisations and groups. On the background of expected difficulties, the project may appear as a kind of beautiful dream about the possibility of co-operation and understanding, a fantasy rather than a realistic programme. But if the project should realise, all the participating organisations would eventually feel proud of their common effort and final achievement.

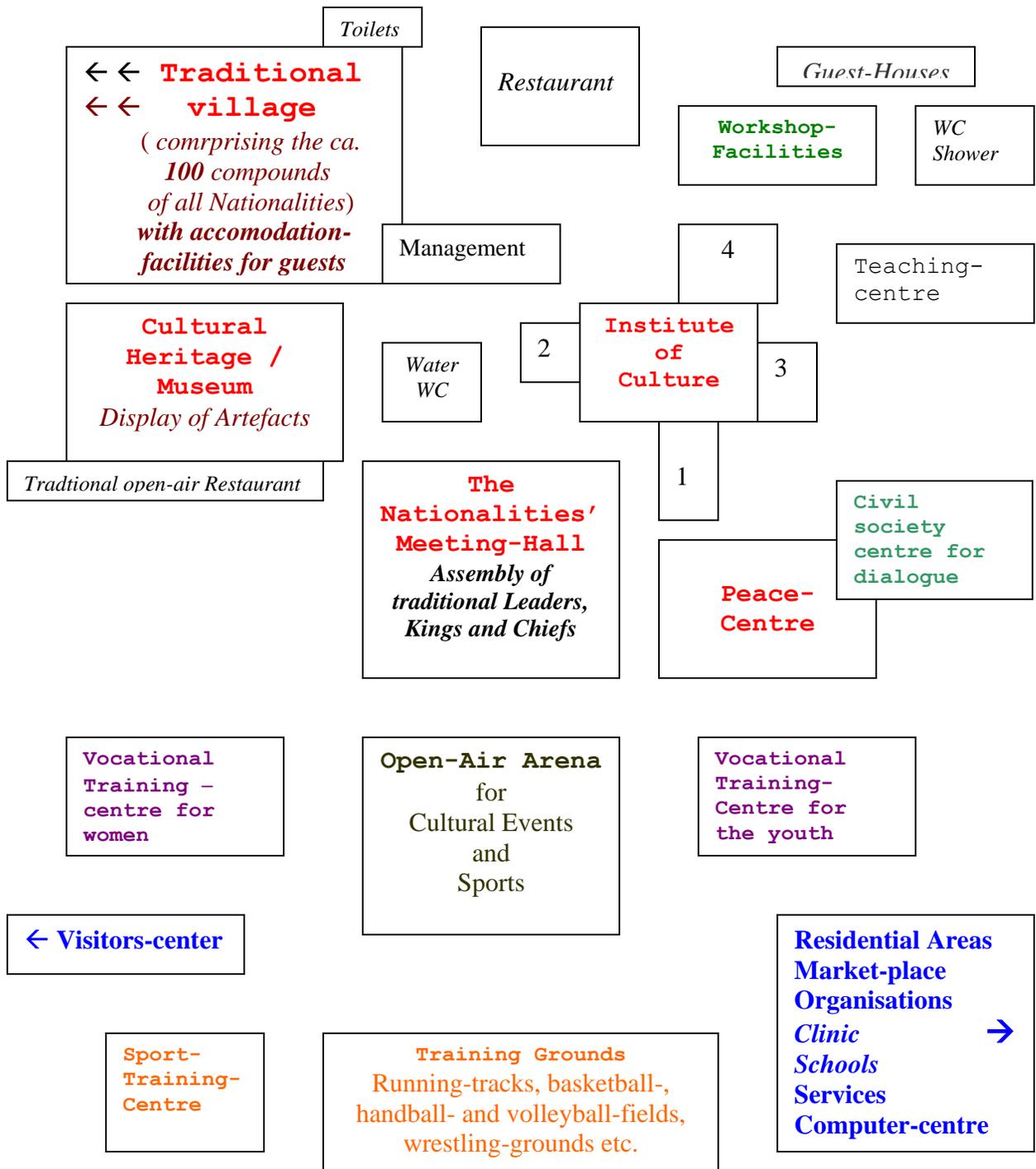
Once realised,

*the project will become the pride of the South Sudan and stand up as an example of peace, tolerance and progress for other countries in Africa and elsewhere.*

Through the institution of the traditional leaders' Assembly, embedded in a landscape impregnated by culture and a spirit of tolerance, progress and joyful self-consciousness, *the South Sudan would show political leadership for the whole of Africa*, demonstrating that cultural diversity is not a curse but indeed a divine blessing, that the roots of stability, peace, development, unity and collective national pride do not lie in the denial of cultural self-consciousness but in the proud recognition of the cultural identities of the citizens.

The cultural centre would be outstanding in combining purely cultural elements with questions of highly political, and social relevance: the peace-centre, the vocational training centres and foremost the Assembly of traditional leaders would open the whole sphere of culture to the demands of a modern society without hurting the people's self-consciousness and without destroying their ethnic identities. By changing what is known as 'negative cultures' through a constructive dialogue between women, the youth and the stakeholders of traditional communities, the centre would prove that there is no contradiction between the old and the new, past and future, traditional and modern, that change achieved by peaceful means will lead to social stability, economic growth, cultural harmony and peace.

The cultural centre would forcefully demonstrate that Africa is not a 'dark continent' anymore, an impenetrable rain-forest, an infertile desert or a museum of a purely anthropologic interest: it would shed light over the continent and chase the dark shadows of tribalism, misconceptions, hatred and violations of human rights. *The cultural centre would be an opening to the world, a blessing for the South Sudan and a sign of hope for the whole of Africa.*



1) Sudan-Library 2) Institute for Language 3) Research-Centre 4) Academy of Arts & Music

## Site-Map of the Cultural Centre

Our outline of the cultural Centre is obviously nothing but a schematic and theoretical sketch, meant to help the visual understanding of the concept. In reality, the buildings will fit into the given conditions of nature and, for example, make use of open plains, forests, small hills and other natural features.

The outline shows a centre (the big Meeting-Hall) which is supposed to be the soul and the spirit of the site, with the open heart and the lungs (the Arena) situated just next to it. Near to the Arena is the Sport-centre with its various training-facilities. The mind and the historic consciousness of the centre is on the other (here upper) side of the centre, where the Institute of Culture (with the Academy for Arts and Music, the Research Centre, the Institute of Language and the Library) and workshop-facilities are situated. The documentary part is – on our map - situated opposite to the Institute of Culture: it consists out of a Museum (where the most beautiful and spectacular artifacts are displayed) and the ‘traditional village’ with its one hundred compounds (one spacious compound for each Nationality); this latter part is supposed to be a lively space, with families living their normal life. People attending different events (such as the sessions of the House of Nationalities, music-, sport- and other festivities etc.) would feel comfortable in the ‘traditional village’ and in their respective compounds.

In order to allow children from all over the South Sudan to benefit directly from the activities at the Cultural Centre, it is important to train teachers in the field of culture and to make them advocates for tolerance and respect: a ‘Teachers’ Training-Centre’ would make sure that the lessons learned at the centre would reach other parts of the country and bear fruits in the schools all over the country.

In addition, the Cultural Centre may be enriched by vocational training-centres (for the women and the youth), focusing on the women’s need for integration in the social and political life of the male-dominated Sudanese nation and preparing the youth for their important role in the development of society. The Peace-Centre is directly linked to the Traditional leaders’ Assembly, preparing its agenda and working on solutions for conflicts and on cross-cultural programmes; it would furthermore prepare for the important dialogue between the women, the youth and the Nationality-leaders. All these tasks would find the support in the Civil Society Centre for Dialogue where a number of peace-oriented NGOs or foundations (such as the *Gurtong-Peace-Project*) would have their offices and prepare their specific activities, at a same time linking the Peace-Centre with international organisations.

The centre will have all the necessary facilities (including a restaurant), and the whole site should look like a big, beautiful park: different trees could be planted there and a variety of animals would contribute to the peaceful, relaxing and inspiring atmosphere which is expected to govern the whole site.

On one side of the site and at some distance from it would be the commercial centre, with a market-place, restaurants, permanent residences, service-providers, buildings of NGOs and donor-agencies, a clinic, a school, eventually a church etc. On this side, temporary

accommodation (tents) could be offered to visitors at the occasion of huge popular events.

Outside of the Cultural Centre but not too far away would be the Visitors'-centre, consisting out of some comfortable lodges and the necessary modern facilities; it should be situated at a particularly beautiful or interesting spot in the area, at the edge of a Natural Game Park, if possible near a pool or a river. It would be linked to the airstrip, to the roads leading to neighbouring towns and to the Nile.

The cultural Centre should be kept free of private traffic, the 'traditional village' (which stretches far) excepted.

The Cultural Centre would need to be managed professionally.

The internal security at the Centre would be assured by *a police-force composed out of members of all (or most) Nationalities*. Besides of its practical importance, this force would of course have a strong symbolic character. Its duties would consist in the protection of the objects in the museum, in the security-arrangements for the other centres and for public order at the occasion of big cultural festivities and sport-events. The members of this police-force would stay in the 'traditional village'. Members of the Nationalities-Force would get a salary by the government.

The external security of the place should be guaranteed by the Army, reason why vicinity with an army-station is not negative; tribal armed forces should not get involved.

## Ownership and Responsibilities

The Cultural Centre would formally and legally belong to all Nationalities of the South Sudan. The ownership should be enshrined in the Constitution, where the centre's various functions should be specified.

The Nationalities would have an office which would make the link between the Nationalities and the Center, preparing for meetings of the big Assembly and for the dialogue which is expected to take place between the traditional leaders on one side and the women and the youth on the other site.

The relationship with the present legal owners of the site will be regulated by a contract (it could be donated, released for free use or hired at a symbolic price). If the site should lie in a no-man's-land (outside of the borders of communities), the government should formally hand over the site to the Nationalities; even this should be memorized through a binding contract and eventually get enrooted in the constitution.

# The Site

The site of the Cultural Centre is to be chosen very carefully. A good number of criteria have to be fulfilled:

- geographical criteria: ideally, the centre should be in the middle of the country, accessible from all parts. Vicinity to bigger towns (Yirol, Rumbek) would be an advantage, accessibility from the Nile even more important (links to Juba, Bor, Malakal). However, in order to avoid possible conflicts, the Cultural Centre should not be built near to any existing village. If only possible, it should be situated on a yet empty site, big enough to allow the creation of a new and eventually quite spacious village.  
If the site could be established in the vicinity of a Game-Park, foreign visitors would have an additional reason to choose that park for their holidays. The possibility to satisfy their intellectual and artistic curiosity would certainly be a tempting attraction for people who want to take home something else than just pictures and other souvenirs.
- anthropologic criteria: ideally, the site should be situated in a 'border-area' between different ethnic communities. The place would then not get identified with one people alone, and foreign visitors would be able to meet with different cultures.
- political criteria: the site should be 'empty land', not yet occupied or used by other people, this in order to prevent conflicts with the local population and in order to attract people from other communities (a Nuer would perhaps hesitate to go to Dinka-land). The smaller the tribe to which the land belongs traditionally, the less problems should be expected. Naturally, the site can only be constructed if the owners of land agree and support the idea (should be easy to get such a permission, the project helping the people to develop their place).

On a national level, it will be important to keep the place out of politics. It should belong to the peoples in the South Sudan as a whole, non-regarding their political views and sympathies. This is why the conference-hall, workshops etc. should never be used for party-assemblies, at least not before the South Sudan has definitively overcome all its internal differences.

- Ecological conditions: the site must be on high grounds to make sure that it does not get inundated during the rainy season and times of flooding.  
Husbandry (cattle!) being a dominant part of many cultures in the South Sudan, the site should be suitable for the keeping of cattle (the cattle would be kept in the byres which are part of the 'traditional village').  
It would be an advantage if the season of mosquitoes and the periods of really hot weather at the site do not last for a long time.

- Practical criteria: As many buildings and huts will have to be built, there is need to find construction-material on the ground: trees, grass, sand, water in sufficient quantity etc.  
Besides of this locally found material, a lot of material will have to be brought from outside. Good connections by road will facilitate the transport, and a short distance to the Nile with its river-transport would of course save much money. Air-transport should be avoided.
- logistic criteria: the site should be accessible by all-weather-roads, by air and – indirectly – by steamer (the Nile should not be too far away).
- security criteria: the Cultural Centre must be an absolutely safe place, and its *internal* security should get guaranteed by all Nationalities: *a police-force consisting out of members of all Nationalities* would regulate the life at the site and protect places and belongings..  
In fact, the *external* security should be guaranteed by a neutral force which has to be the Army. Vicinity to (existing) Army barracks would be desirable.
- tourist criteria: Though the Cultural centre is not planned for tourists but conceived as *an active place of reflection and dialogue for the South Sudanese*, the centre should be open for visitors from abroad, especially for persons who are more deeply interested in African cultures and who rarely get the opportunity to find more than vague impressions and superficial entertainment. The centre would be a place where foreign visitors could learn about Africa, forget their prejudices and return home with a new idea of Africa and the expected cultural backwardness of the peoples living in the South Sudan. By allowing visitors to discover the beauty and richness of Sudanese culture and to let them witness the different intellectual activities at the site, the centre could become a significant contribution to a better understanding of African cultures abroad, creating lasting feelings of sympathy and respect. Opening the cultural centre to the outside world is surely an important aspect of the whole project, even though *one will have to be careful that the centre is not taken over by tourists and governed by the financial interests of the ministry of tourism*.  
When average tourists visit a country, they have, most of the time, relatively high demands. Their first demand is the physical comfort they expect and without which they have no pleasure. The second one is excitement and beauty of the place and the friendly reception they receive from people: they must feel welcomed and get all the services they need. The third one is to receive what they have come for: nature in general and wildlife in particular. The fourth and the last of their expectancies is to feel that they are in Africa and with Africans: they love folklore, music and are sometimes sincerely interested in the people's culture – provided only that such interest does not require much physical effort from their side...  
Because tourism will be the only source of income and surely the best means to render the site popular, it is important to make sure that the visitors' interests are satisfied; this means that the whole site must be planned like a park and that the

museum with its village must be beautifully designed, made entertaining and attractive in many ways. Great attention must be paid to the display of artifacts and the design/outline of the related buildings (museum, 'traditional village'), reason why it would be worthwhile to ask the help of an experienced specialist for designing this documentary part of the cultural Centre.

Tourists of course need all kind of facilities, such as a good accommodation, entertainment and easy transport, ideally access to a clinic. For different types of accommodation, Kenya or South Africa can provide a variety of alternatives; for entertainment, the National Park will fill the days while the afternoons and evenings can be filled with live-music and dances at or near to the centre; transport-facilities will be comfortable cars (air-conditioned!) and reasonably good roads with direct access to the air-strip, towns and the river Nile (where boats would transport the tourists to other places).

## The different parts of the Cultural Centre:

### THE ASSEMBLY-HALL (The 'HOUSE OF NATIONALITIES')

This will be the central piece of the cultural Centre: a solid building made out of bricks will be able to provide sitting-space for up to 500 people.

The hall will be used for different events; it would have a flexible inner structure and be equipped with chairs, microphones and loudspeakers:

a) Assembly of traditional leaders, kings and chiefs

Once a year, traditional leaders, kings and chiefs from all the ethnic groups or communities will assemble here to discuss issues of common concern: problems, conflicts, worries, reforms, change, cultural values and traditions, language-issues, questions of customary law and whatever comes up.

This annual meeting will enhance dialogue, not only between the leaders themselves but also between the traditional leaders and the government and between the traditional leaders and the women and/or the youth: the meetings will be organized through the *Peace-Centre* which is focusing on harmonious cultural change, development of women's rights and the preparation of topics (background-papers, proposals) to be discussed during the HoN-assembly or in the framework of an institutionalized dialogue between chiefs and women (*see below*).

- b) Congresses  
The Assembly-Hall would also be used for other major meetings, provided that they are not meetings held for party-interests.
- c) Cultural events  
The hall could also be used for cultural and even sport-events (such as wrestling), especially during the rainy season: music, dancing, singing, poetry and theatre would find here an ideal platform. Occasionally, films of cultural significance could be shown here as well.
- d) Ceremonies  
The Assembly-hall will be the ideal place for celebrations and ceremonies of all kind.

## THE PEACE-CENTRE

- a) Office of the Assembly of traditional leaders  
Situated in vicinity to the Assembly-Hall or House of Nationalities, the Peace-Centre is to prepare for the discussions of the traditional leaders, providing background-papers, information and proposals. As such, it is a kind of office for the House of Nationalities, responsible for the organization as well as for the documents prepared for the kings and chiefs before and after the meeting.
- b) Civil Society Centre of Dialogue  
This part of the Peace-Centre is to focus on the dialogue between the different players in society, such as the dialogue between women and traditional leaders, traditional leaders and the youth, traditional authorities and the government etc. It is to develop concepts on how to improve the present situation and facilitate harmonious change of bad or out-dated traditions and customs. This centre would be the home of various *Civil Society Organisations* and offer them with the opportunity to remain in direct touch with the so-called ‘grass-roots’, that is the people on the ground which they supposedly present.

## WORKSHOP FACILITIES

- a) Workshops and Meetings  
Workshops often suffer of a lack of infrastructure. Because the cultural centre is expected to have a lot of accommodation-facilities in the ‘traditional village’ and in the guest-house, it would be the ideal place for conducting workshops of all kind. The workshop-building would be fully equipped with modern facilities; this would allow a professional execution of programmes and help to attract the organizers of meetings, training-sessions etc. The rent of the workshop-space would undoubtedly help to reduce the normally high costs of workshops.

b) Cultural Orientation-workshops

At a time when many people return from outside of the South Sudan, such workshops could be interesting for the members of the Diaspora who are very much in need of knowledge and cultural awareness, many of them having grown up outside of their country. Besides of increasing the awareness of the nature of cultures and their importance for self-understanding, these workshops could serve as a promoter for cultural activities in different places and inspire the participants to start cross-cultural programmes. Surely, this would contribute to peace-making and thus to nation-building, would enhance a feeling of togetherness.

Cultural orientation-workshops would of course be extremely useful for aid-workers, companies and foreigners in general; aid- and development-programmes fail often because workers ignore the cultural environment in which the project should get enrooted.

The *Rift-Valley Institute* has started to conduct high-profile cultural orientation-workshops and could be requested to continue their activities at the cultural centre. Another or additional (and cheaper) option would be the kind of orientation-workshop *Kwacakworo* used to organize for Unicef in the 1990<sup>th</sup> where South Sudanese men and women from different Nationalities rather than foreign specialists would provide information on their cultures. Possible, both conceptions could be considered.

c) Professional courses

The exchange of information and knowledge could also be organized for South Sudanese professionals (veterinary, farmers, doctors, teachers etc.) and help them to refresh or update their skills.

## THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURE

The Institute of Culture is the scientific part of the site. It consists out of research-facilities, a library and a number of institutes (to be extended progressively).

a) The Library

The library will have a full documentation on books and studies related directly or indirectly to the South Sudan. Though the emphasis will be put on books and studies on cultural issues and history, all other topics of interest (ecology, geology, geography, resources, wildlife etc. etc.) will get covered as well, even though in a less exhaustive manner. It is hoped that other libraries (especially the one of *Durham-University*) will provide expertise and make donations, either through donations or through making copies of important publications.

b) The Institute of Languages

This Institute will concentrate on the written and oral documentation of languages and work for the protection, preservation and development of the many languages found in the South Sudan. The Institute will also look for ways how to harmonize

related languages in view of making the publication and the teaching in local languages financially possible.

The Institute will have its own specialized library.

The details regarding the different activities will have to be discussed by specialists (such as Prof. *Bureng Nyombe* or the *Centre for advanced Studies of African Society* in Cape Town). Existing institutes (in Khartoum or Nairobi) may be moved to this centre.

c) The Research-Centre

This centre will provide working-space for different scholars and research-fellows which will find all the facilities for their studies, having direct and easy access to the other institutions in the Institute. The topics of research will be limited to the South Sudan but cover all possible aspects (anthropological, historical, biological, ecological, medical, veterinary, development etc.) related to the country, its nature, people, animals, resources etc.

Leading scholars with an international reputation should get invited to the Centre. Co-operation with the *Institute of Afro-Asian Studies of the University of Khartoum* should be looked for.

d) The Academy of Arts and Music

As the Academy will have to grow slowly, it will take some time until it will reach its full functionality. Though traditional arts may stand in the centre of learning, the development and display of more recent and modern art-works and music will be part of the programme.

The Academy would organize popular events and expositions.

At the early stage, there would be no separation between the different arts; this will change once one specific art is developing and taking space.

- *Music*  
Recording
- *Poetry, Literature and Drama*
- *Decorative Art, painting and sculptural work*
- *Home of artists*

The artists will share compounds in order to get mutually inspired, to discuss and to learn from each other. At a later stage, artists from outside the South Sudan could come and work together with local artists.

## the VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES

a) The Vocational Training Centre for Women

This centre is expected to provide practical support of all kind to women: it would aim at teaching simple skills in the field of handicrafts and practical know-how, could teach accounting, provide computer-skills and even train the women in leadership, organizational tasks, management etc.

The centre could also become the leading agency for adult-education (and especially women's education), preparing curriculums and other programmes for the inclusion of women in the development of the country. In this aspect, the centre would co-operate with the peace-centre which is also working for the integration of women in the active life of society, though more on a political level and in direction of cultural change in the position of women.

b) The Vocational Training Centre for the Youth

The Youth' vocational training centre would be both a think-tank for preparing and organizing different activities. The main-focus would lie on the *dialogue between the youth and the traditional leaders* (chiefs, kings and other stakeholders of traditions, beliefs and customs): it would stimulate and enrich the discussions in the leaders' Assembly, eventually opening the way to a closer integration of the youth in all spheres of their most urgent concern (education, HIV/Aids, employment, negative cultures, sports, music and other cultural events) and to the participation of the youth in the political life on the local and the regional or national level.

The youth would also learn about social and cultural responsibilities and be trained in leadership, administration.....

## The teaching-centre

The cultural Centre has been conceived as a spacious place where young and old people, men and women, artists and intellectuals, chiefs and sportsmen meet and exchange experiences, all working together for the protection of cultural values, for respect, tolerance, human rights and harmonious development; it is a place of research, a source of knowledge and a centre of reflection as much as a space for various cultural activities and sport. The centre thus may appear as a kind of closed universe where all aspects of culture are concentrated and interlinked, as a network of self-consciousness twisted collectively by all Nationalities of the South Sudan. Beautiful and captivating as the centre with its multiple facets will appear to its inhabitants, to visitors and observers, the Cultural Centre may look to outsiders like a remote island of peace, as a blooming paradise which is in great contrast and quite remote from the harsh political and cultural realities of life in other parts of the country. Surely, such critical observation would not take account of the fact that most activities in the Centre are actually organized in view of the situation in the whole of the South Sudan, meant to improve the situation there: this holds true for the Assembly of traditional leaders as much as for the peace- and for the vocational training-centres which will all have a direct or indirect impact on the socio-political situation in the country, enhancing there a spirit of tolerance, protecting cultures while facilitating cultural change.

Yet, the centre needs an additional opening, must extend its network of consistent knowledge and values to all the peoples of the Sudan, and in particular to their young generations: because education stands at the doorstep to any development, it is necessary to provide the children with the basis for success, that is with a strong cultural self-

consciousness built on tolerance and respect for communities of different origins, customs and beliefs. Education needs peace! If the cultural centre wants to have a direct impact on children and their future behaviour, it will be crucial to bring young teachers to the centre, to teach them concrete knowledge, provide them with facts about other people, to make them understand the significance of culture and the need for dialogue and peace.

In the Teaching Centre, young Sudanese could both learn about cultures and languages while taking advantage of (and perhaps participating in) the Centre's various institutions and activities (arts, music etc.); the Sport-centre with its facilities would moreover be an ideal place to provide teachers with concrete training in physical exercises, providing them with the theoretical and physical means to instruct their future pupils in sports.

Practically, the Teaching Centre could be a full-time training-centre for teachers, or it could be a branch of other, already existing teaching-training-centres and provide the future teachers with a one- or a two-semester-course, but even a one-monthz-course could be fruitful.

*The Teaching-Centre would also offer refreshing-courses for women and men who are already engaged in teaching but would like to increase their knowledge and to widen their understanding of cultural issues.*

*The Teaching-Centre could moreover get linked to universities, providing diplomas in those academic fields which are situated at the Centre (arts, music, language, sport etc.). Students would of course have a different curriculum than the future school-teachers and be more directly linked to the research-centre and its scientific institutes.*

## THE MUSEUM-TRACT

The Museum will display the material culture, pictures and music of the South Sudan; it will possess a collection of films which will be shown occasionally in an audiovisual room.

*The artifacts will have to be collected systematically in all communities.* If the leaders of the communities are made aware of the importance of safeguarding and documenting their material culture, it should be possible to acquire objects quickly and at reasonable prices.

If the Assembly-Hall is the mind and the spirit of the Cultural Centre, the Museum is its body, an oasis of peace and beauty, a pleasure for the eye, a place for contemplation, discovery and understanding: the South Sudanese will look at it with pride while foreigners will get amazed by the high quality and intense beauty of simple objects and the spiritual dimensions of utensils, tools and decorations. Paintings, sculptures and other objects of art will also be documented by photographic pictures, while traditional music and dances would be presented in a special audio- and film-room.

A museum can be boring or exciting, can look like a heap of assembled objects or it can be moving, providing a vision of time and space, of life and death, of inner beauty and material density. All depends on the way a museum is conceived and organized: this is why it will be crucial to organize the museum in the most entertaining way possible, why a specialized architect will be needed (one could, just for example, also imagine a relatively small central Main-Museum and a number of museums situated in different parts of the 'traditional village', showing regional particularities or concentrating on specific objects, possibly even activities: pipes, neckrests, pots and pot-making, etc.).

Besides of the permanent exhibition, the museum would organize temporary exhibitions, focusing on different themes, on particular arts or on a specific ethnic group.

A shop would allow visitors to buy souvenirs (handicrafts, pictures etc.) and other items (batteries, films etc.) usually in demand by tourists.

The museum would co-operate with other Museums; the aim would be to get back as many cultural objects and documents as possible, to "bring the culture back home". This may be possible only once the Museum is well-established and the country has stabilized politically; it will nevertheless be an aim right from the beginning, good relationship with other countries and museums being the key to realize this progressive 'repatriation'-project.

## THE TRADITIONAL VILLAGE

This will be the life-show-case of the Museum-tract, allowing visitors to discover all types of settlements found in the South Sudan, huts, byres, fences and other constructions, pots, tools and utensils while at a same time getting the occasion of meeting people from different communities and cultures.

As the 'traditional village' is the mirror of all cultures found in the South Sudan, one can expect that the Nationalities do their level-best to make sure that their Community is presented in the most beautiful and attractive way. The co-operation between the Nationalities and the Centre will be the key to the success of the 'traditional village'. The big challenge linked to this 'traditional village' lies in the economic sphere, as the inhabitants will also need to gain their life, possibly even this in a traditional way. This aspect will need careful consideration, especially in what concerns the cattle-keeping communities, their movements to grazing grounds and potential conflicts with more agriculture-oriented households.

The organization of the village will consider the economic needs of the people; it will probably reflect the *regional* set-up, communities from Equatoria, Bahr-el-Ghazal and Upper Nile regions staying together.

The 'traditional village' will be able to accommodate the participants of various events, meetings (namely the traditional leaders, kings and chiefs who are attending the 'House of Nationalities'-assembly), of workshops, sport- music- or dancing-festivities.

## THE ARENA OF NATIONALITIES

This will be an open-space where cultural activities such as dancing- or music-festivals and major sport-events will take place. If the site has got hills, the arena should make use of these natural features, using such places for accommodating spectators.

## THE SPORT-TRAINING-CENTRE

Because, in many parts of the South Sudan, *sport is a part of culture* (and in some cultures sometimes its biggest pride), it is important to help sport to develop, not least because it brings different cultures together and thus can contribute to peace-making and the building of a national identity.

Sport is also important for the nation, as it allows a country to participate in international events. At present, South Sudanese sport is spontaneous and not developed but there is no doubt that the peoples in the South Sudan could become excellent competitors in many types of sports. Besides of wrestling, it is basketball, land-hockey, volley- and football which are the most popular sports; however, other sports could get developed, especially running (it is likely that the South Sudanese would be as good - or even better! - in running long distances than are Kenyans and Ethiopians).

It is obvious that the centre would accommodate *both male and female* athletes.

What will be most costly are the professional coaches who could give advice and training to the South Sudanese sportsmen; without coaches, the centre would fail to reach its aim (of being competitive on an international level) and would be mere luxury.

In the absence of the proposed training-centre with its training-grounds, regional or international sport-events would of course find in the Arena ideal competition-grounds.

## THE TRAINING-GROUNDS

In the early stage, the training-grounds comprise a football-field (also to be used for landhockey), fields for playing sports like basketball, volleyball or handball and a place for wrestling. There will also be a 400m-running-track.

As soon as funds are available, an indoor-training-hall would be erected, turning the site into a real professional sport-institution.

## Practical aspects / facilities:

### Accommodation:

- Visitors from other Nationalities (chiefs, dancers etc.) would find accommodation in the 'traditional village', each compound having two or three huts ready for receiving guests. The 'traditional village' would be able to accommodate up to 600 persons!
- Attendants of workshops would find accommodation in a guest-house situated at a separate place, - or they could stay in the 'traditional village'.
- Visitors of particular events would find temporary accommodation (tents or shelters) near to the market-place.
- NGOs may offer accommodation for their staff-members and visitors.

### Food:

- There would be two restaurants, a traditional one and a more expensive one of a higher standard. Visitors would thus either eat in the Centre's restaurant or in the 'traditional restaurant' (on the map close to the Museum).

### Water:

- There would be a good number of wells from where water for drinking or for taking bath can be fetched (local showers).
- There would be two or three wells in the 'traditional village' and at least one well in the market-place.
- Drinking-water would be for sale at a reasonable price.

### Electricity:

- to be provided by generators for all places used by night (including the 'traditional village'!) and during day-time for places in need of computer-facilities (Institute of Culture, hospital etc.).

### Medical facilities:

- in the commercial quarter, a clinic or health-centre would be built, for assisting sick tourists, workshop-visitors, athletes and residents. A competent nurse or a doctor would be in charge of the clinic.
- The clinic could be expanded when needs are growing.

### Schools:

- The children growing up in the 'traditional village' as well as the children of permanent residents will need to go to school: a primary school is therefore required; competent teachers could make the site attractive for new settlers.

### Computer- and telephone-Services:

- Tourists and residents will need to have access to computer-facilities. An Internet-Café may be opened for that purpose.

- The Internet-café may even provide some repair-service, re-charging of batteries and sell of material, etc.
- At this place, satellite-telephone-services (Thuraya) could also be provided.

#### Market-place and Shopping-Centre

- There would be a local market-place where residents could buy their food-stuff, clothes etc.
- There would also be shops for tourists (souvenirs, however, could also be sold at the entrance to the Museum) where they could buy whatever they may have forgotten or lost (sunglasses, hats, mosquito-spray etc.).

## Financial considerations

The total costs of the *construction* of the cultural Centre will, without doubt, be expensive, especially if one does not aim at cheaply and quickly erected buildings and if architects and other specialists get involved. However, this aspect of the programme/budget should not be over-emphasized: as the costs will have to be shared by a great number of sponsors (assuming responsibility either for the construction of specific buildings or for entire programmes), the project should be quite affordable for each of the sponsors. All what is needed are the *co-operation of donors* and *competent people* to execute the project. By binding *institutions* and *organizations* to different parts of the project, the project will be long-lasting and steadily developing.

The *running-costs* of the centre is the part of the budget which would need serious consideration. Though most sponsors will retire after the completion of the buildings, some of them may assume responsibility over some years, especially those supporting the Institute of Culture with its different programmes (arts, music, language, research). Basically, the *government* which is constitutionally bound to care for cultural issues will have to assume financial responsibility for the running of all official parts of the project, namely the Assembly of traditional leaders and chiefs, the Museum-part, the Centre's facilities, its administration and logistics (links to the airport, the Nile, the tourist-centre and towns). The running-costs of the Centre will be part of the annual national budget.

As the Cultural Centre is not really a business-centre, the Centre will not produce much income and will always have to depend on private or official contributions. For the government and the country as a whole, the Cultural Centre will produce great benefits, even if these benefits cannot be measured in financial terms: because the centre will bring peace and stability to the country, it will help all projects of development and through peace-building amongst the Nationalities save money and lives.

There may be possibilities to cover some running-expenses from occasional income from *Workshops, conferences* and *meetings* (the Centre providing all needed facilities) and from major *sport-events*.

*If* a Tourist-centre gets established in vicinity of the Cultural Centre, some small income could be expected from foreign visitors to the Museum and the 'traditional village'.

Before the concept has been accepted, there is no real need for making a budget-proposal. At a later stage, budget-estimations should be established for each part of the centre as well as for the organization and the supervision of the project.

## Potential Donors and Sponsors:

There may be donors willing to contribute to the whole project or only to specific aspects of it, and there may be sponsors of entire projects and programmes, providing a long-term support. While the donors would not get directly involved, the sponsors (normally organizations or institutes) would take some responsibility in the execution and the follow-up of the projects.

The contribution of donors would perhaps best be used for general projects while the sponsors would rather deal with concrete programmes.

The main-donors should be the UN with its different organizations (Unesco, Unicef, UNDP, WFP etc.), governmental development agencies (such as USAID, SIDA, CIDA etc.), governments (US, European Union, different countries), NGOs, universities and institutions, sport-organisations (such as FIFA) etc.

The following list is in no way exhaustive but just an enumeration of a few possible sponsors.

### 1. THE MEETING HALL

*UNDP, Life&Peace, peace-building institutes, Switzerland  
WFP (Food for Work-programme)*

### 2. THE OPEN-AIR ARENA

*UNDP, WFP (Food for Work-programme)*

### 3. THE DOCUMENTARY TRACT

This tract includes the Museum and the 'traditional village'. Financially, the costs for the collection of artifacts and the transport of local material must be included.

#### 3.1 Collection of utensils

*UNESCO*

*Possible support by the Ford Foundation (for the collection of artifacts, plants etc. related to peace and conflict-prevention, as it has done in Gulu/Uganda)*

#### 3.2 Collection of ethnographic documents

*UNESCO*

- 3.3 The Museum (the building)  
*UNESCO, Museum of Osaka, Musée de l'Homme*  
*WFP (Food for Work-programme)*
- 3.4 The 'traditional village'  
*UNESCO, Governments/Embassies (such as Japan, China, Malaysia, Philippines, European Countries, USA, Canada, Australia etc., each country sponsoring one or more of the 'traditional compounds')*  
*WFP (Food for Work-programme)*
4. THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURE
- 4.1 The Library  
*Dunham-University, Universitet Bergen, Rift Valley Institute*  
*WFP (Food for Work-programme)*
- 4.2 The Institute for language  
*Centre for advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS)in Cape Town*  
*Summer School of Linguistics,*  
*Possible support by the Ford Foundation*  
*WFP (Food for Work-programme)*
- 4.3 The Research Centre  
*Rift Valley Institute*  
*Possible support by the Ford Foundation*  
*WFP (Food for Work-programme)*
- 4.4 The Academy for Arts and Music  
 ?...  
*Possible support by the Ford Foundation*  
*WFP (Food for Work-programme)*
5. VOCATIONAL TRAINING-CENTRE FOR WOMEN  
*UNICEF, UNIFEM*  
*Possible support by the Ford Foundation*  
*WFP (Food for Work-programme)*
6. VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE FOR THE YOUTH  
*Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*  
 ...
7. THE TEACHING CENTRE  
 Government of the South Sudan; Africa Educational Trust, USAID,  
 Unicef

8. THE PEACE-CENTRE  
*Ford Foundation,  
Life&Peace,  
Heinrich-Böll-Foundation,  
UNDP  
WFP (Food for Work-programme)*

9. SPORT- AND TRAINING-CENTRE  
*UN-Sports, FIFA,  
WFP (Food for Work-programme)*

#### 10. NEEDED FACILITIES

10.1 Water  
*UNICEF, SDC (Switzerland)*

10.2 School  
*UNICEF,  
WFP (Food for Work-programme)*

10.3 Clinic  
*UNICEF / WFP (Food for Work-programme)*

## Priorities and Time-table:

The work on the Cultural Centre is divided into different phases:

- preparation of a project-proposal (first without budget)
- addressing the authorities re: discussion and approval of the idea, selection of the site,
- identifying and addressing potential sponsors / participants, seeking support
- discussing the idea with kings, chiefs and other traditional leaders
- identifying suitable sites
- meeting of sponsors and representatives of the governmental and local authorities: discussion of the project, organization, responsibilities, financial aspects (budgets)
- selection of the project's executive committee
- discussions with the architects, visits of the site
- meeting and decision-making
- planning of the project's execution on the ground
- start of the construction-work

The collection of artifacts and other documents which are to be displayed in the museum will be a permanent process, starting once an organization (such as UNESCO) has

endorsed such a programme. It will be executed in close co-operation with the community-leaders, museums in Europe and private collectors.

The centre will, for obvious reasons, get constructed in different phases. While the centre *must* grow around the two most vital parts, the Assembly Hall and the Museum-tract, the construction of the remaining parts will much depend on the practical requirements (some parts, such as the arena, can be build with not much more than simple man-power), on the costs (both building-and running-costs) and the readiness of sponsors. This is why the time-table should not prioritize one or the other of the institutes and centres but rather adopt a practical approach, realizing any project which has found a sponsor and which could start its activities without delay.

All parts of the centre will of course be *growing* entities, and the planning of the buildings should follow the principle of continuous expansion and development: for this reason, the planning of the centre should not be left to amateurs but be given to professional architects with experience in the field (especially in the field of building a museum in a rural and traditional environment).

Some parts of the centre may be easier to get established than others because they can build on existing institutions elsewhere and find support from them; this will hopefully be the case for the Institute of culture with its different parts. In view of such co-operation, it is again important to find qualified, respected and well-linked personalities to support the project and build up a relationship with other institutions of the kind.

In the light of what has been said, the following outline is only indicative, some of the steps being executed at a same time; the first two steps, however, should be taken simultaneously.

Step I:            **Construction of the Assembly Hall**

This is a priority, because it is the very spiritual soul of the whole centre, providing all other parts with their particular sense. The hall is the place where all cultures of the South Sudan meet and find their common identity, a place of dialogue, peace and cultural self-consciousness.

As the ‘House of Nationalities’ has here its home (with meetings of traditional leaders once a year), the construction of the building is urgent. The building itself should be constructed out of bricks, have electricity and all equipments and facilities needed for such big meetings.

Step II:           **Organising and Building the ‘traditional village’**

Because this village is to solve the problems of accommodation at the occasion of the big meetings in the Assembly-Hall or in the Arena outside of it, it needs to be outlined right from the beginning: each Nationality should be given a space large enough to build a good number of traditional huts (at least five), each of them having the necessary sanitary facilities (toilet and shower). Particular attention should be paid to those Nationalities who most probably would keep livestock and erect byres.

In the beginning, *tents* may be erected for accommodating the people, but the compounds should already be designed in preparation of the huts’

construction. Perhaps that the first meeting of traditional leaders could be used for shaping the ‘traditional village’.

Step III:

**Building the Museum / Collection of artifacts**

The museum is to make the beauty of the site and it will be the main-attraction for tourists. It is therefore important to ask an architect (experienced in this field) to design the museum which probably will consist out of different parts/rooms/buildings.

There must be a concept right from the beginning, the awareness of the type of material culture to be exposed being the guide for the plans.

The museum will have all necessary sanitary facilities, a show-room, a shop for tourists and a room for temporary exhibitions.

*During the construction of the Museum (for safety-reasons, it must be a brick-building though with a traditional ‘look’), the **collection of artifacts** will take place in all parts of the South Sudan. The time of collection may be used for informing the different communities about the project and for sensitizing the people of the importance of safe-guarding their cultural richness and of displaying it to other people.*

Step IV:

**Preparation of the Arena**

This step is hopefully the least problematic and time-consuming, as it consists merely in the preparation of a suitable ground which can be easily leveled and transformed into an arena for dancing, singing and major sport-events.

Step V:

**Building the Workshop-Centre**

This project is reduced to the buildings with the necessary infra-structures. Participants in the workshops should first find accommodation in the ‘traditional village’ before possibly getting other accommodation-facilities (in the hotels or the guest-houses which may be built privately).

Because workshops should be one of the two major sources of income (the other one being the museum), its construction is an urgency.

Step VI:

**Building the Institute of Culture**

The different parts situated inside the institute of culture would be built in different stages, each of them depending on the sponsors and supportive foreign institutes. If there are the necessary funds for it, the central part (the research-centre) and the library should be built first as they will be of interest not only to scholars but even to visitors and participants of workshops.

Step VII:

**Building the Peace-Centre**

The peace-centre being directly linked to the Assembly of traditional leaders and their deliberations, it should be organized quickly. However, there will be need to establish a concrete programme of the centre before

starting any activities there. As the issue of women in traditional societies is a delicate and sensitive one, it is important to address the leaders' assembly in a constructive and thoughtful way.

Support from many NGOs for this centre can be expected.

Step VIII:

**Building the Vocational Training-Centre for Women**

This centre is of a long-term interest, allowing women to acquire skills which will enable them to participate in activities presently reserved to the male population. It should not be build before the other parts of the Cultural Centre exist, otherwise it would be lost in a no-man's-land and not be able to fulfill its ambitious tasks.

Step IX:

**Building the Vocational Training-Centre for the Youth**

This centre is to prepare the Youth for their participation in the cultural and political process of nation-building, training them in leadership and providing them with knowledge and skills in other public domains. The centre will work for a constructive dialogue between the youth and the leaders of Nationalities, focusing on the most burning problems faced by the youth.

Step X:

**Building the Teaching-Centre**

This centre is extremely important as it gives knowledge and training to teachers who will transmit the message of cultural tolerance to the schools in all parts of the South Sudan.

Step XI:

**Establishing the Sport-Training-centre**

The sport-centre with its training-grounds will need accommodation-facilities for the sportsmen and one covered training-hall, but otherwise not much construction-work is required. The more costly part of the project concerns the salaries of the coaches, some of the equipment and the feeding of the sportsmen.

It will be seen if sponsors are interested in a situation which is still to develop and which will take time to become successful. International sport-bodies should be approached in this matter.

At a later stage, the sport-centre could also include a health-centre, to be used by all visitors and residents of the Cultural Centre.