

NAME OF THE ELEMENT: TRADITIONAL FOOD OF GHANA: “KOKO”

DOMAIN: SOCIAL PRACTICES, RITES AND RITUALS

COMMUNITY: COMMUNITIES WITHIN MOLE DAGBANI

REGION: NORTHERN REGION

The ICH element is known as “Koko” (Porridge), a traditional food made by the indigenous people of Gambaga, Karaga, Nalerigu, and other Northern communities of Ghana. This dish is classified under the domains of Social Practices, Rites, and Rituals, as it holds cultural significance in the community.

Koko is a staple food associated with the Mole Dagbani communities, particularly in Liman Fong, Gambaga, where it is a popular beverage consumed regularly by locals. The preparation process of Koko involves several ingredients, such as millet, ginger (Kakadro), mosoro, pepper, and karafri. The millet is soaked for about 12 hours, then milled with the spices and filtered to extract the liquid. The liquid is left to ferment overnight before being boiled with water and petre salt (Kawu) to achieve the desired texture. The result is a nutritious and culturally rich porridge.

The primary practitioner involved in the preparation of Koko is Madam Alhassan Afisa, who is an experienced and knowledgeable member of the community. She plays a key role in preparing the porridge and passing on the traditional methods to others.

Other community members, including Madam Alhassan Afisa’s daughters Asana, Mamunatu, and Sherifa, are also involved in the practice, helping with various stages of the process and contributing to the transmission of knowledge.

The language used in the practice of Koko is Mampruli, the language of the Mole Dagbani people. This language plays an essential role in preserving the cultural context and passing on the techniques and traditions associated with the dish.

The tangible elements involved in preparing Koko include cooking pots (cauldrons), tripod stoves, firewood, basins, buckets, stirring sticks, cups, sieving cloth, and calabashes. These tools are vital for preparing and serving the porridge.

Intangible elements tied to the practice include the sense of community interaction, as the preparation of Koko often involves collaboration and sharing. Additionally, indigenous knowledge passed down through generations helps ensure the continuity of this cultural heritage.

The practice of preparing Koko is currently not under significant threat within the community. The continued enactment and transmission of the element are not facing major challenges, and the sustainability of access to the tangible elements involved in the preparation remains stable.

There is low risk to the viability of other intangible heritage elements related to the preparation of Koko, such as the traditional methods and community involvement. The cultural significance of Koko remains strong, and the knowledge is actively shared across generations.

Safeguarding efforts to ensure the continued transmission of Koko include collaborations with organizations such as the National Folklore Board (NFB), the National Commission on Culture (NCC)/Centre for National Culture (CNC), and UNESCO. These partnerships help promote and preserve the tradition.

Verbal consent was obtained from the community members before collecting data to ensure respect for local customs. There are no restrictions on the use or access to the information gathered about Koko, allowing for its widespread sharing.

The resource persons involved in documenting Koko include Madam Alhassan Afisa, her daughters Asana, Mamunatu, and Sherifa, and Chief Yussif Adams, who assisted as a translator. Data collection occurred on 26th November 2023 in Liman Fong, Gambaga, from 9:15 AM to 12:30 PM.

CONSENT: COMMUNITIES WITHIN MOLE DAGBANI

SUBMITTED BY: NATIONAL FOLKLORE BOARD