AN ORGAN OF THE ZANZIBAR INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

ZIFF Journal is a forum for dialogue on the nature and contemporary significance of the Dhow Culture. It seeks:
"To nurture an awareness of the historical and cultural interactions that have shaped the cultural memory of its peoples;
"To highlight the culture of mutual respect, understanding, tolerance and sharing, and the celebration of difference that are its hallmarks;
"To bring out the significance of this dialogue between civilisations in the contemporary discussions on globalisation;
"To provide a forum for discussion and debate between all the stakeholders in this world heritage, through all the media of human expression.

The Journal presents a selection of activities sponsored by ZIFF, including conferences, workshops, the Women's, Children and Village Panoramas, and of course the film festival itself. It will publish in both English and Kiswahili.

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Cover illustration: Replica of a double outrigger sailing from Indonesia to Madagascar, 1984.
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Preface

This is the second issue of the ZIFF Journal. ZIFF (Zanzibar International Film Festival) which holds the Festival of the Dhow every year in Zanzibar has been attracting a large body of local, regional and international knowledge, information and contacts in its quest to develop further the concept of dhow culture. Since its inception ZIFF has undertaken to provide a forum for discussion and debate among artists, filmmakers, scholars, intellectuals and professionals. This year was the 8th Festival of the Dhow Countries with the theme of "Monsoons and Migrations". Our purpose through the film festival is to continue to explore and create a multi-arts focal point of conversations on dhow culture. As ZIFF continues to move into institutional development it is our hope that concepts which we adopt continue to shape and impact the rich history and experience of Zanzibar within the Swahili culture of diversity and living together.

By adopting the Dhow as a symbol of this ancient means of travel to the contemporary world of globalisation it embraces the rich and dynamic cultural diversity and creativity of the region. Professor Abdul Sheriff, renowned historian, stalwart supporter and editor of this journal, has ably put together a collection of some of the diverse papers that were received and debated. His review of the conference captures the essence of what transpired during the conference. In this issue, we also decided to include some specimens from the Children’s, Women’s and Village Panoramas. It is our hope that this modest beginning will flower into a more comprehensive depiction of next year’s 9th Festival of Dhow Culture on "Sails of History" and beyond.

‘Living together - Who matters, What Matters?’ which was asked by Prof. Abdallah An-Naim at a previous workshop remains an issue just as the former festival director, Imruh Bakari’s, question ‘when does difference become a problem?’ leaves us with a sobering thought in the present ‘globalised’ world as we know it.

We encourage you to sail with us on this dhow with contribution so as to enrich our knowledge of an unwritten history. In our living presence what do we do when our stories are not told? ZIFF has chosen the path of dancing to music of the living and depicting the stories of the dead through literature and films, and within it we hope to find our way home through the culture of the dhow.

This preface will be incomplete if we do not thank and acknowledge the tremendous work and commitment of all our staff, volunteers, well-wishers, the ZIFF Board of Directors and support from the people of Zanzibar in our quest of culture of dhow. We also take this space to give our deepest condolences to Laura Fair, one of our ardent supporters conceptually, who tragically lost her son at the time of the festival. Her presence was definitely missed, and may the Almighty rest his soul in peace. Amen.

We also acknowledge The Prince Claus Fund Networking Partnership and thank them for opening up an innovative and exciting discourse and linkages within our region and beyond. This partnership formed a strong bond when the Board of the Fund from the Netherlands decided to hold their board meeting during the festival of dhows in Zanzibar. For us it was an honour.

Lastly, the Board of ZIFF commits its self to the vision and mission set out jointly with our partners in the Prince Claus Fund, and wishes to thank the efforts of Prof. Abdul Sheriff to keep the dhow sailing through high and low tides.

Fatma Mohamed Alloo - Vice Chairperson - ZIFF
September 2005