

# THE EXCHANGE PROJECT

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## Veterans: Photographs of the Veterans of the Anti-Apartheid Struggle in South Africa by Vanley Burke

### Project Description

#### Introduction

The proposed project forms part of an overall strategy to develop partnerships between curators of public photographic archives, ethnic minority and other professional photographers and marginalised community groups. The proposed project uses participatory methods to create socially inclusive images of history and culture, and seeks to develop this work within the framework of UNESCO 'Memory of the World' programme by engaging with documentary heritage of universal value. It also seeks to promote access to one such resource through technologies which allow widespread access and cultural exchange to occur and develop. The project seeks to build on the programme of work already acknowledged within the framework of UNESCO's Cultural Diversity and Citizenship programme.

#### Background

In 1996 the Black British photographer, Vanley Burke, undertook a self-funded trip to photograph in South Africa. Whilst there, the African National Congress commissioned Burke to photograph veterans of the anti-apartheid struggle attending a series of special events organised to recognise their contribution to the struggle to create a new South Africa. A portfolio of these photographs was subsequently presented to President Mandela, and a book of photographs (Veterans of the Struggle) was also published in South Africa.

#### However:

1. neither the images in the portfolio or the book named the individuals photographed.
2. the images have not been displayed publicly in South Africa (a small selection were included in the exhibition Nkunzi: Photographs of Birmingham and South Africa by Vanley Burke, shown at Soho House Museum, Handsworth, Birmingham in 1998)
3. no public institution in South Africa or the UK holds a set of these most important photographic and historic documents

#### Project Proposal

This project seeks to build upon the efforts to bring peoples and cities together through the twin city links established between Birmingham and Johannesburg by creating a series of cultural partnerships based around photography. This project would initiate a rolling programme of exchanges in personnel, knowledge, training and cultural products.

The project will therefore seek to:

1. to produce 2 sets of archival black and white prints of these images: the first to travel to South Africa as an exhibition to be shown in Museum Africa, Johannesburg and to be subsequently deposited and preserved in that that institution; the second to be deposited in the Vanley Burke Archive, held in Birmingham Central Library, England so as to ensure public access to these important historical documents in both Africa and Europe
2. to use the exhibition and subsequent deposit in South Africa to publicise a project which seeks to record the names and other details of all those represented in the photographs
3. to use the internet to form links between participating institutions/personnel in South Africa and England to facilitate the subsequent captioning of the photographs
4. to organise a series of practical photography workshops by Vanley Burke in conjunction with Museum Africa and the Market Theatre Photography Workshop, aimed at training/encouraging young photographers to carry on this important historical work
5. to undertake a monitoring and evaluation programme that maps the process and outcomes of this project so as to establish a model of best practise for future virtual and physical exchanges of cultural projects based around the photography collections in the partner organisations

6. to initiate the wider programme of projects outlined in the 'Developing Participatory and Inclusive Images of History and Culture' project proposed by Birmingham University and Birmingham Central Library
7. to submit the two archives of fully catalogued collections to the 'Memory of the World Register'

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