LANGUAGES OF AFRICA,
Bridges of Culture and History
Being aware of the severe development challenges facing most of African countries due to COVID-19 pandemic; seeking to make use of the unique language diversity of African societies to strengthen their cultural immunity; and in a bid to support the efforts of raising awareness and preventing against the outbreak of the pandemic in these societies, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) has launched, under its “ICESCO Digital Home” project, a new initiative called “Languages of Africa: Bridges of Culture and History”.

The initiative covers educational, scientific and cultural themes in addition to a social and awareness theme under which ICESCO aims to raise health awareness and disseminate prevention culture in sub-Saharan communities in their local languages. The initiative forms part of a joint project with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) intended to use the Arabic script in the transcription of local languages of the African Muslim communities.

**Objectives**

- Highlighting the ties between Arabic language and sub-Saharan languages
- Protecting African societies against COVID-19
- Establishing media outlets in African local languages
- Universalizing literacy programmes in local languages
- Ensuring that local languages keep pace with computing technology
- Promoting the roles of local languages to address emergencies
- Renewing links between African peoples and their heritage written in the Arabic script
**LANGUAGES:**
- Hausa
- Swahili
- Mandingo
- Fulani (also Fula)
- Wolof, Fur, Nubian, Beja, Beni Amer, Yoruba, Comorian, Somali, Zaghawa, Luganda, and Songhay

**BENEFICIARY COUNTRIES:**
Uganda, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Togo, Rwanda, Senegal, the Sudan, Sierra Leone, the Gambia, Guinea, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d’Ivoire, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Nigeria.

**PROGRAMMES:**
- **Prevention for everyone**
  - Publishing infographics in African languages on the protection against COVID-19;

- **Computerizing African languages**
  - Developing special software for computerized Arabic script;
  - Designing computer keyboards for 15 languages.

- **System of Transcribing African Languages in the Arabic Script**
  - Educational tools and materials;
  - Training sessions for experts in the Arabic script;
  - Reading textbooks, teachers’ guidebooks and teaching media.

- **University chairs**
  - MA in the History of Arabic Script in Africa;
  - MA in African Heritage Written in Arabic Script

**PARTNERS:**
International University of Africa
(Yousif Alkhalifa Center for Writing Languages in Arabic Script)