PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS

MAY-AUGUST 2026 EXAMS

EXAMINATION FOR DIPLOMA IN COMMUNICATION

DCM203 – FILM PRODUCTION

FINAL PROJECT (40%)

A. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Context

The world is facing unprecedented environmental, social, and economic challenges. In response, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a blueprint for a more sustainable future. However, the solutions to these challenges often lie in the wisdom of local communities, indigenous knowledge systems, and cultural practices that have sustained societies for generations.

The Kenya Film Commission, in partnership with UNESCO, has launched a national documentary competition titled *"Roots of Resilience: Culture, Sustainability & the SDGs."* The competition seeks to amplify local voices, showcase indigenous knowledge, and document how Kenyan communities are building resilience through cultural practices, traditional wisdom, and sustainable living.

In response to this competition, you are tasked with producing a 10-minute individual documentary that captures a unique perspective on how culture, sustainability, and resilience intersect in a Kenyan community or context. This project will test your skills in documentary filmmaking, research, interviewing, editing, and creative storytelling, with a special emphasis on language preservation, cultural representation, and ethical storytelling.

B. EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completing this project, you should be able to:

1. Conduct thorough research on a community's cultural practices related to sustainability and resilience.
2. Plan, shoot, and edit a short documentary using accessible equipment (including mobile phones).
3. Conduct original professional interviews in a local Kenyan dialect and integrate them into the story with subtitles or dubbing.
4. Combine personal footage with downloaded images or archival clips in a seamless manner.
5. Apply visual storytelling techniques such as B-roll, composition, and pacing.
6. Integrate audio elements (music, narration, ambient sound) to enhance the documentary.
7. Reflect critically on your creative process, technical choices, and ethical responsibilities when representing communities and cultures.
8. Demonstrate respect for linguistic diversity and cultural heritage.

C. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Documentary Overview

You are required to produce a 10-minute documentary exploring how *culture, sustainability, and resilience* intersect in a Kenyan context. The documentary must demonstrate how local communities are drawing on cultural practices, traditional knowledge, or indigenous wisdom to build resilience and achieve sustainability.

Thematic Focus (Choose ONE)

Theme	Description	Example SDG Link
1. Sustainable Agriculture & Food Security	Explore how traditional farming practices, indigenous crops, or local food systems promote sustainability and food security.	SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 15 (Life on Land)
2. Water Conservation & Management	Document traditional water harvesting, conservation, or management practices in a community.	SDG 6 (Clean Water & Sanitation)
3. Indigenous Knowledge & Climate Resilience	Show how communities are using indigenous knowledge to adapt to climate change.	SDG 13 (Climate Action)
4. Cultural Preservation & Sustainable Tourism	Examine how cultural preservation efforts contribute to sustainable livelihoods and tourism.	SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities)
5. Gender Equality & Community Resilience	Explore how cultural practices affect women's roles in sustainability and community resilience.	SDG 5 (Gender Equality)
6. Renewable Energy & Traditional Solutions	Document traditional energy solutions or community-led renewable energy initiatives.	SDG 7 (Affordable & Clean Energy)
7. Sustainable Waste Management & Circular Economy	Show how communities are using traditional knowledge to manage waste or promote circular economies.	SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption & Production)

Production Guidelines

Your documentary must adhere to the following requirements:

Element	Requirement
Duration	10 minutes (maximum ±30 seconds)
Interviews	Minimum of 3 different original interview clips with community members, elders, or experts
Language	Interviews **MUST** be conducted in a local Kenyan dialect (e.g., Kikuyu, Luo, Kalenjin, Luhya, Kiswahili, Kamba, Maasai, etc.)
Accessibility	All non-English dialogue **MUST** be either: (a) dubbed in English, or (b) subtitled in English
Voiceover Narration	The voice **MUST BE YOUR OWN** (in English or Kiswahili, with English subtitles if using Kiswahili)
Visual Material	You may integrate downloaded images or archival footage alongside your own filmed material
Cultural Sensitivity	All content must be ethically produced, respecting community norms, consent, and dignity
Credits & Attribution	All sourced materials must be properly credited and attributed

Recommended Equipment

- **Recording Device**: Smartphone (modern phones are acceptable; ensure good lighting and clear audio)
- **Audio**: External microphone recommended but not mandatory (phone internal mic acceptable with careful placement)
- **Editing Software**: Free options like DaVinci Resolve, CapCut, or any available one

D. SCOPE & NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Focus Areas

Your documentary should focus on one or two key themes (see list above). Depth is preferred over covering everything. Consider:

- A specific community (e.g., *"How the Maasai community in Kajiado uses traditional grazing practices to combat drought"*)
- A specific practice (e.g., *"The role of traditional seed banks in sustaining food security in Western Kenya"*)
- A specific challenge and response (e.g., *"Community resilience to flooding through indigenous early warning systems in Budalangi"*)

Narrative Structure

Your documentary must demonstrate a clear narrative structure:

Section	Description	Approximate Duration
1. Introduction	Hook the audience; introduce the theme, community, and central question	1–1.5 minutes
2. Context & Background	Provide cultural, historical, or environmental context; establish relevance to SDGs	2–2.5 minutes
3. Main Content	Present findings through interviews, narration, and visuals; explore the theme in depth	4–5 minutes
4. Challenges & Resilience	Show the challenges faced and how cultural practices build resilience	1.5–2 minutes
5. Conclusion & Reflection	Summarize key insights; reflect on the broader significance; call to action or hopeful note	1–1.5 minutes

E. DELIVERABLES

Item	Description	Format
1. Documentary Video	10-minute documentary (±30 seconds)	MP4 (HD 1080p)
2. Script Outline	Detailed plan showing shots, interviews, narration, integration of external materials	Word
3. Interview Transcripts	Full transcripts of all interviews (original dialect + English translation)	Word
4. Source Acknowledgments	List of all sourced materials (images, archival footage, music) with proper credits	Word
5. Reflection Report	1–2 page reflection discussing challenges, creative choices, and lessons learned	Word

F. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Requirement	Specification
Video Resolution	HD 1080p (1920x1080)
Video Format	MP4 (H.264 codec recommended)
Aspect Ratio	16:9
Audio	Clear voiceover and dialogue; minimal background noise; proper use of music bed
Subtitles/Dubbing	All local dialect dialogue must be dubbed OR subtitled in English
Duration	10 minutes (+/- 30 seconds)
Frame Rate	24fps, 25fps, or 30fps (consistent throughout)
File Size	Reasonable size for LMS upload (compressed appropriately)

Subtitling Guidelines

- Font: Sans-serif (e.g., Arial, Helvetica)
- Font Size: Large enough to read on all screens
- Color: White with black outline/background for contrast
- Placement: Bottom center of screen
- Timing: Sync accurately with dialogue
- Language: English translation of local dialect

Dubbing Guidelines (Alternative)

- Voiceover artist should have a clear, neutral English accent
- Dubbing should sync roughly with original dialogue timing
- Maintain emotion and tone consistent with the original speaker
- Volume of original dialogue can be lowered but not completely muted (preserve authenticity)

G. IMPORTANT NOTE ON LANGUAGE & CULTURE

When working with communities consider:

Ethical Considerations

1. **Seek Informed Consent**: Explain the project fully; obtain permission from community leaders and individuals.
2. **Respect Cultural Protocols**: Follow community norms regarding filming, sacred sites, and traditional practices.
3. **Give Back to the Community**: If possible, share the final documentary with the community (screening or digital sharing).
4. **Avoid Exploitation**: Do not use communities merely as content; involve them respectfully and accurately.
5. **Preserve Dignity**: Do not sensationalize poverty, hardship, or cultural practices; present them with dignity.
6. **Accurate Translation**: Ensure subtitles/dubbing are accurate and culturally sensitive (consider working with a translator).

Language Preservation

- By using local dialects, you contribute to the preservation and celebration of linguistic diversity.
- Consider including a brief explanation of the dialect's importance or regional significance.
- If possible, include transliterations or cultural context in subtitles.

Cultural Sensitivity in Subtitling

- Some cultural concepts may not have direct English translations; use contextual translation.
- Consult with community members or translators to ensure accuracy.
- Avoid oversimplifying or misrepresenting cultural concepts.

H. GRADING RUBRIC (TOTAL: 40 MARKS)

Criterion	Marks	Expanded Descriptors
1. Research & Content Accuracy	**6 marks**	**0–2 marks:** Minimal research; factual gaps or inaccuracies; weak connection to theme, community, or SDGs. **3–4 marks:** Adequate research; mostly accurate facts; some depth but may lack contextual richness or SDG integration. **5–6 marks:** Excellent, rigorous research; high factual accuracy; strong relevance to culture, sustainability, and resilience; demonstrates deep understanding of community context and SDG connections.
2. Interview Quality & Integration	**6 marks**	**0–2 marks:** Poorly framed or inaudible interviews; superficial questions; interviews feel disconnected from narrative; does not meet 3-interview requirement or exceeds clip length; does not use local dialect. **3–4 marks:** Competent interviews in local dialect; generally clear questions and responses; moderate integration into story; meets basic technical and time requirements; subtitles/dubbing functional but basic. **5–6 marks:** Highly engaging interviews in local dialect; well-researched, culturally sensitive questions; excellent framing and audio; seamless narrative integration; creative use of interview insights to drive story; subtitles/dubbing professionally executed.
3. Cinematography & Visual Techniques	**8 marks**	**0–3 marks:** Basic or inconsistent camera work; poor composition; weak or problematic lighting; limited use of B-roll; downloaded footage poorly matched or irrelevant; shaky, unstable footage.

Criterion	Marks	Expanded Descriptors
		4–6 marks: Generally good composition and lighting; stable camera movement; effective B-roll; reasonable visual coherence between shot and downloaded material; demonstrates basic cinematographic awareness. **7–8 marks:** Cinematically strong visuals; thoughtful composition; excellent lighting; purposeful camera movement; highly effective blend of original footage, interviews, B-roll, and downloaded archival material; visually engaging throughout.
4. Audio & Sound Design	**6 marks**	**0–2 marks:** Frequent audio problems; unclear dialogue; disruptive background noise; poor music choices or mixing; voiceover unclear. **3–4 marks:** Mostly clear audio; reasonable control of ambient sound; good but basic sound layering; some inconsistencies in mixing; voiceover functional. **5–6 marks:** Professional-grade clarity; excellent ambient control; creative and appropriate use of music and sound effects; polished mixing and balance throughout; voiceover is clear and compelling.
5. Editing, Color Grading & Post-Production	**8 marks**	**0–3 marks:** Rough or choppy edits; pacing issues; weak transitions; little to no color correction; minimal use of graphics; technical mistakes noticeable; subtitles/dubbing inconsistent or poorly timed. **4–6 marks:** Generally smooth editing; adequate pacing; proper transitions; basic color grading; functional graphics and titles; subtitles/dubbing are present and functional. **7–8 marks:** Highly polished post-production; seamless pacing; purposeful transitions; professional color grading consistent across footage; strong, well-integrated graphics and titles; subtitles/dubbing are flawless, well-timed, and professionally presented.
6. Narrative Structure & Storytelling	**4 marks**	**0–1 marks:** Confusing or weak structure; lacks clear introduction or conclusion; story feels disjointed; weak connection to culture, sustainability, or resilience.

Criterion	Marks	Expanded Descriptors
		2–3 marks: Logical and coherent story; clear intro and conclusion; flow is generally smooth but may lack emotional or thematic depth; demonstrates basic understanding of documentary structure. **4 marks:** Compelling, well-crafted narrative; coherent flow; strong hook and impactful ending; story demonstrates insight, creativity, and meaningful engagement with the theme; clearly connects culture, sustainability, and resilience.
7. Cultural Sensitivity & Ethical Storytelling	**4 marks**	**0–1 marks:** Lacks cultural sensitivity; ethical concerns (e.g., no informed consent; exploitative representation); misrepresentation of community or cultural practices. **2–3 marks:** Adequate cultural sensitivity; basic ethical practices observed (consent obtained); respectful representation; some minor issues with cultural nuance or dignity. **4 marks:** Exemplary cultural sensitivity and ethical storytelling; clear informed consent; collaborative approach with community; respectful, dignified representation; demonstrates deep understanding of cultural protocols and ethical documentary practice.
8. Reflection Report & Documentation	**2 marks**	**0–1 mark:** Minimal or vague reflection; little explanation of decisions; lacks depth, honesty, or critical engagement. **2 marks:** Clear, thoughtful reflection; articulates technical, creative, and editorial choices; shows awareness of strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement; demonstrates critical engagement with the documentary process and ethical considerations.
TOTAL	**40 marks**	

I. SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Before submission, ensure your group has:

- Documentary video (10 minutes ±30 seconds) – MP4 format, HD 1080p
- All non-English dialogue is subtitled or dubbed in English
- Script outline (planned shots, interviews, narration, external materials)
- Interview transcripts (original dialect + English translation)
- Source acknowledgments (all downloaded images, archival footage, music credited)
- Reflection report (1–2 pages)
- Credits included at the end of the documentary
- Consent obtained from all interviewees and community leaders
- Video exported correctly and playable
- All files uploaded to LMS by the deadline

J. REFLECTION REPORT GUIDELINES

Your reflection report (1–2 pages) must address the following:

1. Creative Process
   - How did you choose your theme, community, and angle?
   - What was your creative vision for the documentary?
   - How did you approach storytelling?
2. Technical Challenges
   - What technical challenges did you face (filming, audio, editing, subtitling)?
   - How did you overcome them?
   - What would you do differently with more time or resources?
3. Ethical Considerations
   - How did you ensure informed consent and cultural sensitivity?
   - What challenges did you face in representing the community?
   - How did you approach the use of local dialects and subtitling?
4. Lessons Learned
   - What skills did you develop or improve?
   - What did you learn about documentary filmmaking, community engagement, or cultural representation?
   - What did you learn about the theme (culture, sustainability, resilience)?
5. SDG Connection
   - How does your documentary connect to the relevant SDGs?
   - How does it contribute to awareness of sustainability and resilience issues in Kenya?
6. Self-Assessment
   - What are the strengths of your documentary?
   - What are its weaknesses?
   - If you were to redo it, what would you improve?

K. IMPORTANT REMINDERS

1. Start Early: Research and community engagement must begin early to allow time for filming, translation, and editing.
2. Respect Communities: This is a privilege – you are a guest in the community. Respect their time, culture, and knowledge.
3. Language is Key: The use of local dialects is not just a requirement – it's an opportunity to celebrate linguistic diversity and preserve cultural knowledge.
4. Subtitling Takes Time: Subtitling or dubbing is time-consuming; allocate sufficient editing time for this.
5. Back Up Your Work: Save drafts on cloud storage and external drives.
6. Seek Feedback: Show your work-in-progress to peers or the instructor for feedback.
7. Ethics Are Non-Negotiable: Any fabricated content, false representation, or unethical treatment of communities will result in a zero for the entire project.
8. Creativity is Encouraged: Think beyond the obvious – find unique angles, compelling characters, and powerful visuals.
9. Be Honest in Your Reflection: The reflection report is an opportunity to demonstrate self-awareness and learning.
10. Enjoy the Process: Documentary filmmaking is challenging but deeply rewarding. You are documenting living history, cultural wisdom, and resilience.