



Kuunganisha 2026

Embracing Communities Through the Arts

KUUNGANISHA which means "to connect" in Swahili, is a project in Tanzania by The

Itinerants, a global arts collective whose aim is to reach vulnerable communities

through the arts.

Local partner and project co-producer is the Tumaini Foundation in Dodoma.

In 2026, the project team will comprise several local artists and a team of 20 international artists from Brazil, Canada, Italy, Kenya, Malaysia, and the UK including musicians, puppeteers, theatre performers, singers, storytellers and visual artists.



2024: Come è cominciato



February

In early 2024, three artists from the UK, Cinzia, Gea and Silvio, worked with the Tumaini Foundation in Tanzania to reach vulnerable and isolated communities in Dodoma and Morogoro regions through the arts.

They did 10 intense days of storytelling, theatre and visual arts activities that impacted hundreds of school children, as well as widows, orphans, and children with special needs, all eager for a connection to the arts. But they felt it was not enough!

The artists imagined starting an Arts project that connected local artistic communities in Dodoma with national and international artists.

And the Kuunganisha project was born

Kuunganisha 2025



January & February

In January 2025, 10 artists from Canada, Italy, Malaysia, Nigeria and the UK gathered in Tanzania to run a 5-week community arts project in Ihumwa village, Dodoma.

They held storytelling sessions, conducted music, art and puppet making workshops, and ran various other activities for street orphans and vulnerable children at the Tumaini Foundation centre in Ihumwa.

Widows from the local community and nearby villages participated in art therapy workshops and attended live theatre performances in village streets.

Giant insect puppets created by the artists paraded through small villages and performed for hundreds of local children and members of the community.

Kuunganisha 2025 concluded with a 3-day pilot “International Children’s Community Arts Festival”



WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2025



Reached over 9,000 vulnerable people including thousands of school children from rural national primary schools with arts education and art therapy programmes.

Created a platform for local artists and cultural practitioners to showcase their work.

Encouraged collaboration among community members with over 100 people participating in the inaugural “International Children’s Community Arts Festival”.

Planted 19 fruit trees in local schools and colleges.

Sponsored the schooling for one year of a special needs girl, Malitha, from Brays Crown pre-primary school.

Kuunganisha 2026



January, February & March

In January 2026, some 20 artists from around the world will start the second phase of the Kuunganisha project in Tanzania that will run for six weeks.

To facilitate the shift of ownership of the project locally, this second phase will focus on training Tanzanian artists and producers.

The 6-week programme starts on 26 January 2026.

First week spent in Kenia Kisii Town, Kenya, collaborating and exchanging work with new project partner Newstar Drama Group.

Second week activities start in Ihumwa village connecting with the local community.

Two days of activities run in Gairo, working with special needs children.

One day school fair at the inclusive Brays Crown School

Two days with local community in Mayamaya, where the Kunganisha project is planning to build an eco-sustainable International Arts Village.

Activities comprise music, arts workshops and storytelling with children and widows.



Weekly micro-performances held with the inclusion of the community.

Performances in national primary schools in Dodoma & Gairo.

The project ends with the 2nd International Children's Community Arts Festival.

Kuunganisha International Community Theatre Festival

from 2nd to 8th March 2026

The Festival and preliminary activities leading up to it will include different forms of art, which will be created together with various local communities over four weeks.

VISUAL ARTS

Involvement of local fine artists in the Festival exhibition

Children's Art Exhibitions

River Paint Intervention: Arte in azione

A 42-metre artwork created by diverse communities around the world, uniting young artists through painting, from the Malaysian rainforest to children who have emigrated to Europe, First Nation People of Canada reaching young people in Tanzania.



PUPPETS & MASKS

Workshops on Puppet Making &
Shadow Puppet Techniques

Workshops in Mask Making



STREET INTERVENTIONS

Characters will disperse through the streets
interacting with local inhabitants creating
connections between participants.

THEATRE

Theatre Workshops for Youth
Theatre Performances for Children



STORYTELLING

Storytelling Circle

Storytelling Actions in Schools



MUSIC

Ukulele Workshops

Singing Barters

Drum Circles

CULINARY ARTS

Workshop on pasta making
Strozza Preti

Tea Cakes

Fruit Art/Cutting

Tea Party





FESTIVAL PROGRAM

The theme for the 2026 festival is **INSECTS & HUMANS**.

Inspired by the interaction between insects and humans we will find the connection with nature, our land, our planet and with all creatures living on it.

The six-day festival will include:

- Visual Arts Exhibition
- Storytelling Circles
- Drum Circles
- Street Theatre Performances (includes both Day and Night time activities)
- Street Parade involving the children from the National Ihumwa School
- Glove Puppet Shows
- Shadow Puppet Shows
- Performances by “Nina: The Tea Lady”
- “Olga” Performance
- “Laura e le Farfalle” Performance
- Closing Performance “Barter in the Community”

The ItinerAnts

The ItinerAnts is a group of independent artists comprising musicians, visual artists, theatre practitioners and dancers, living in different parts of the world that come together to reach underprivileged communities through their arts.

<http://theitinerants.org/privacy-policy/>

Members of the Kuunganisha 2026 team:

Isabella Azdo Irlandini , Brazil - Luigi Antonio Irlandini, Brazil - Cinzia Ciaramicoli, UK - Connor Hunter, UK - Gea Cimentti, UK - Silvio Cimenti, UK - Paula Mac, Poland/Canada - Oleh Nesterov, Ukraine/Canada - Nikon Miedviediev, Ukraine/Canada - Shanthini Venugopal, Malaysia - Susie Kukathas, Malaysia - Mary Maguire, Malaysia - Swit, Malaysia - ABRAXA TEATRO Emilio Genazzini, Italy - Massimo Grippa, Italy – Stefania, Italy - Antonio Merola, Italy - Giulia Genazzini, Italy – Giorgia Lunghi, Italy - Giovanna Conforto, Italy – NEWSTAR DRAMA GROUP Caleb Isiche, Kenya - Peter Joachim, Tanzania - Tumaini Raymond, Tanzania



TUMAINI FOUNDATION



The Tumaini Foundation is a registered NGO in Tanzania with the mission of improving the lives of vulnerable children and women.

Founded by Tumaini Kivuyo, an orphan who lived a very difficult life situation as a young girl, the Foundation is dedicated to providing hope and equal education for orphans, children with special needs, and widows.

Since 2008, it has served over 3500 children and more than 250 widows in Dodoma and Gairo.

<https://www.tumaini-foundation.org/about>



Kumasi University

