

The Games of Malawi – Appendix I – The Games of Small Children

How to Make a Chigirigiri (Pumpkin Wheel)

Mr. Samson Phiri holds a chigirigiri that is the work of his son Brian (aged 11)...

The chigirigiri has been modified by the substitution of a rim for a pumpkin. Otherwise it is similar to the one recorded at Chakwanira Village for The Games of Malawi.

Although zigirigiri have been discovered elsewhere at Mua Mission, Dedza District, these two examples from Kasungu are distinguished by an innovative acoustic resonator, which allows the driver to imitate convincingly the sound of the engine of a motorbicycle.



A thread is attached by a loop to the axle so that the axle turns within the loop...





The thread passes through the base of an empty milk tin, where it is secured by a knot...



The milk tin is suspended by two threads from the handlebars, which consist of maize cobs...



Tension may be applied to all three threads by rotating the handlebars back toward the driver...



The loop around the axle is moistened with water (to reduce friction) and water is added to the milk tin.

The driver pulls back on the handlebars of the chigirigi and sets off...

The milk tin serves as an effective acoustic resonator, which turns the vibrations passing along the taut thread from the axle into audible sound waves. The water that has been poured into the tin deepens the 'engine tone'.

It would also be possible to think of this device as a modified tin can telephone.

R. L. Hewitt and Samson Phiri
Kamuzu Academy, Malawi

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