

Working group Research

Lively meeting in Paris

The Working Group Research was established in Windhoek, in November 2015. During the General Assembly in May 2016 we had our first regular meeting. The purpose of the working group is to facilitate more exchange between the practical work of the NGOs with the communities and the research of the researchers on themes like safeguarding, sustainability, diversity, ethics etc. The working group is coordinated by Albert van der Zeijden. During a lively meeting attended by several researchers and by several NGOs he presented possible aims and goals for the working group, that were put forward by the working group members in an email consultation after our meeting in Windhoek. The ideas included the organization of mini conferences and sharing ideas on specific subjects by way of Email groups. This last idea was put forward by Harriet Deacon of the ICH-Researchers of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies.

During the meeting in Paris it became clear that there is no clear-cut division between ‘researchers’ and practical workers. Research is part of the convention and should always be an engaged practice. Carley Williams, working at the University of Aberdeen, stressed the importance of public outreach. During the meeting there was already a lively exchange on the topic of over-commercialization, illustrated by the upcoming nomination of the pizza for the intangible heritage list. Chiara Bortolotto, one of the researchers present, researches Foodways across global heritage governance. Another topic discussed was intangible heritage in urban settings. In this discussion the concept of super diversity was introduced, to depict the situation in metropolises like Rotterdam, Barcelona or Djakarta and the consequences for intangible heritage in these conglomerates with so many different ethnicities. Albert indicated that in cooperation with Germany and Belgium his center is going to organize an international conference on this topic – in which others might join. Helena Drobna, of the secretariat, drew our attention to the upcoming Habitat III conference in Quito, in October 2016, about The New Urban Agenda.

Concerning a better exchange of information several possibilities were discussed, including online databases where you can find information on what is being done and researched. The Newsletter of the ACHS already provides us with information on new scholarly publications on intangible heritage.

On how to go ahead there will be a new email consultation within the working group. Others are also invited to join in the discussion. For one of the future Intergovernmental Committee Meetings we are thinking of organizing a mini symposium on a specific subject.

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