

Contribution of the Working Group Research to the ICH-NGO symposium of Sunday 24 November on the role of accredited NGOs in the Implementation of the UNESCO 2003 Convention

The Working Group Research

The Working Group Research of the ICH-NGO Forum was established in Windhoek, Namibia, in 2015. Its aim is to encourage exchange of knowledge and information among the members of the ICH-NGO Forum and strengthening the cooperation between the heritage workers in the field and the researchers. Working Group Meetings always take place during the General Assembly and Intergovernmental Committee Meetings, where members of the ICH-NGO Forum can present topics which they have researched or want to discuss. The role of research in the inventorying process was discussed in Jeju. For the meeting in Mauritius the topic selected is 'participatory research', because it was felt the NGOs could play an important role in this.

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The role of NGOs in ICH research

- On a national and regional level (thereby implementing the 2003 Convention)
- On an international level (this is related to and serving the UNESCO 2003 Convention in its work: Intergovernmental Committee)

Introduction

Research is an important topic in the UNESCO convention with a view to effective safeguarding of ICH. Article 13 of the 2003 UNESCO Convention aims to 'foster scientific, technical and artistic studies, as well as research methodologies, with a view to effective safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, in particular the intangible cultural heritage in danger'.

In the Convention text research is most often presented in connection with inventorying and in connection with the development of safeguarding methodologies. Inventories should reflect the diversity of ICH and contribute to its safeguarding. The Inventorying process should be inclusive, respecting diversity, and supporting safeguarding by communities and groups. Research and documentation should contribute to safeguarding. Research findings are accessible and utilized. (Information session on the overall results framework for the 2003 Convention, Paris 2018). Communities should be involved in the research process as much as possible and should benefit from the research.

What could be the role of NGO's in ICH-Research

"Within the framework of its safeguarding activities of the intangible cultural heritage, each State Party shall endeavour to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate,

individuals that create, maintain and transmit such heritage, and to involve them actively in its management.” (article 15, UNESCO 2003 Convention).

“Research institutes should “develop joint approaches” and should “involve practitioners and bearers of intangible cultural heritage when organizing exhibitions, lectures, seminars, debates and training on their heritage” (Operational Directives, 2018 version, articles 80 and 88).

The role of NGOs would be especially

I. Strengthening community involvement in research:

1. Knowledge: sharing authority among scholars and community researchers and enabling community driven research;
2. the co-construction of new knowledge through participatory and interactive approaches, mutual construction of knowledge, while also involving both local and academic knowledge.
3. Inventorying: working on participatory ICH inventories
4. Safeguarding methodologies: working on participatory methodologies involving communities
5. Training / empowering communities: include field schools and workshops for training in technical use of documentary equipment, methods of interviewing and observation, ethics, etc.,
6. platforms for community members to present research including social media, the internet, public programs (exhibitions, performances and demonstrations) and activities in schools;
7. youth research projects, use of archives as a stimulus to research about current ICH, inclusion of multiple sectors of a community in research activities.

On an international level

Assisting the Intergovernmental committee in contributing to:

Assessing and reflecting on the working of the ICH convention

Focusing on grand themes, such as:

1. the development of new adaptive strategies in situations of political, social and natural crises. There has been important work done recently about cultural recovery following natural disasters and other humanitarian crises through narrative and other forms of ICH.
2. offer reflection on specific topics important for communities, topics such as:
 - Controversial heritage
 - ICH in urban contexts

- ICH and youth cultures
- ICH in connection with tangible heritage
- ICH and tourism

We will present these topics in the form of a panel discussion with Albert van der Zeijden (Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage - Coordinator Working Group Research of the ICH-NGO Forum), Laurier Turgeon (Titulaire de la Chaire de recherche du Canada en patrimoine ethnologique; Université Laval, Québec, Canada), Valentina Lapicciella Zingari (Ph.D. Cultural Anthropologist, Facilitator, UNESCO Convention on Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, **Simbdea** - www.simbdea.it - UNESCO ICH accredited NGO) and Robert Baron (Folk Arts Program, New York State Council on the Arts, New York, NY, USA, also representing SIEF).