Chapter 4

Construction of a Cooperative Network for the
Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage

THE PAST IS NOT A FOREIGN COUNTRY*
Strengthening of ICH Transmission Activities

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The launch of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia Pacific (ICHCAP) in the Republic of Korea is very timely for sustainable heritage development.[1] Several important events of the past few weeks underline the significance of community capacity building and the urgent

*_ This title is a play on the classic work on preservation of cultural heritage by David Lowenthal, The Past is a Foreign Country, Cambridge University Press, 1985. See also Amareswar Galla, '*The Past is not a Foreign Country, Reflections on the Post-Colonial Transformations of Australian and South African Museums*', Proceedings of the Constituent Assembly of the International Council of African Museums (AFRICOM), Lusaka, October 1999. The emphasis in the paper was that in Southern Africa the words for heritage usually referred to living heritage, such as Amasiko, Ditso, and Mflele. Legacy heritage from colonial practices focuses mainly on tangible heritage. AFRICOM calls for corrective action to recognise, assess the significance and appreciate/promote the continuity of intangible heritage; and then ensure the integration of both tangible and intangible heritage informed by a holistic conservation ethic and post colonial sustainable heritage development.

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1_ Sustainable Heritage Development, conceptualised through the Pacific Asia Observatory for Cultural Diversity in Human Development (PAO), assumes culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development (www. onsustainability.com). The concept brings together culture, heritage both tangible and intangible, and sustainable development into a holistic paradigm. The PAO was established at the request of UNESCO, Paris through the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue and the regional UNESCO offices in the Pacific and Asia. The PAO is a project acknowledged by the Australian National Commission for UNESCO. It is an integral part of the Action Plan of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2 November 2001) www.pacificasiaobservatory.org

need to ensure community cultural engagement and governance in safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage (here after ICH). Category 2 Centres of UNESCO could play a vital role.

Firstly, the Intergovernmental Committee for the safeguarding of ICH, chaired by Awadh Ali Saleh Al Musabi (United Arab Emirates), met in Abu Dhabi from 28 September to 2 October, 2009. The Committee inscribed the first elements on UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. It was a historical meeting that provided a significant platform for expert examiner inputs and participation of several NGOs, professional bodies and stakeholder community delegates.

Secondly, the Secretariat for Agenda 21 Culture in Barcelona, advocating with cities and local governments from all over the world to enshrine their commitment to human rights, cultural diversity, sustainability, participatory democracy and creating conditions for peace, launched its report entitled *Culture, Local Governments and Millennium Development Goals*.[2] The Millennium Development Goals (her after MDGs), adopted in 2000, provide an aspirational but critical framework to enhance quality of life and promote sustainable development in our global committment to poverty alleviation.

It is of serious concern that culture and local government are not embedded in the MDGs. International programmes and national policies are yet to recognise culture as an essential dimension in development . This is five years on from the launch of the Human Development Report in 2004, which for the first time underlined culture and its significance in sustainable development.[3] It draws on the final report of the UNESCO World Commission for Culture and Development, *Our Creative Diversity (1995); the Stockholm Action Plan (1998); and Stockholm Action Plan +5 (2003)* and strongly advocates for situating culture in integrated local area planning and sustainable development. It is acknowledged by this corpus of knowledge that local government is a key agency for change, progress and development.

Thirdly, the UNESCO World Culture Report was launched by the Director-General, to the attention of the Permanent Delegates to the 35th Session of

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2_ Report commissioned by the Committee on Culture of United Cities and Local Governments - UCLG, with the support of the Spanish Development Cooperation Agency – AECID, 15 June 2009. Launched in Barcelona in September. (English, French and Spanish) http://www.agenda21culture.net/

3_ *Cultural Liberty in Today's* Diverse World, United Nations Development Programme, New York, 2004.

the General Conference, on Tuesday 20 October.[4] This is a comprehensive analysis of challenges that all nations face in managing cultural diversity and reflects the most up to date understanding of the connections between culture, sustainability and human rights. It provides the cultural diversity framework for locating MDGs in sustainable development, thus stretching the canvas, at the local, national, regional and international levels, for safeguarding ICH.

Finally, the latest Human Development Report draws our attention to the global patterns and transformations of population growth and movement that are shifting dramatically.[5] Irrespective of where you are, the demographic future will inevitably be more racially, culturally and religiously diverse. Recommendation 8 of the World Culture Report states that universally recognised human rights should be protected by policies which promote cultural diversity. Recognising the importance of safeguarding of ICH and the right to cultural liberty of carriers and transmitters of ICH has now, more than ever before, become critical for promoting global cultural diversity.

Global trade imperatives mean that we are facing an unprecedented pace of technological, economical and cultural integration with the rest of the world and we need policies that seek to promote cultural diversity and safeguard ICH – because such policies contribute to social cohesion and guarantee of human rights to us all. Most importantly policies and frameworks are needed for community engagement at the local government level where the carriers of ICH and primary stakeholders in such heritage are located.

The ICH Convention calls for (Article 11 (b) and Article 15) the facilitation of 'functional and complementary cooperation among communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals who create, maintain and transmit intangible cultural heritage, as well as experts, centres of expertise and research institutes.'[6] This calls for not only consultation and access to communities but significantly for the first time in the true spirit of cultural democracy, the active engagement and participation of stakeholder

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4_ *Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*. A copy of the Executive Summary of the report in several languages and the full report in English are available on the UNESCO website: www.unesco.org/tools/fileretrieve/115598f4.pdf ; www.unesco.org/tools/fileretrieve/1238a682.pdf

5_ *Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development*, United Nations Development Programme, New York, 2009.

6_ *Participation in the implementation of the Convention*, Operational Directives, Chapter III, UNESCO, Paris, 2008.

communities and groups through effective networking.[7]

It is worth reiterating that the 2003 UNESCO ICH Convention is significant for locating individuals, communities, research units and NGOs in the most democratic operational framework within the entire suite of UNESCO's cultural conventions. This is the result of significant debates and discussion on the participation of civil society in the drafting of the Operational Directives by the Inter Governmental Committee.

ICH is an important vector of cultural diversity, the linchpin for steering the sustainability and the future of languages (especially those that are endangered), education, communication and cultural contents, creativity and the marketplace, all of which are critical in the safeguarding process and the transmission of ICH. However, conceptual clarity and rigour are needed at every level of the process. For example, the very notion of what constitutes a community continues to be the focus of much debate.

One of the challenges for safeguarding ICH is to locate the elements of ICH within the complexity of the cultural diversity of the host community/s and the respective state party/s. Transnational ICH elements will provide the ultimate litmus test for the success of the community grounded approaches, mutuality and mutual respect among state parties. Multinational nominations could become platforms for exemplar engagement for cultural liberty beyond the containment of colonial delineations or post colonial boundaries.

Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen cautions us about focussing on civilisational or religious stereotyping of populations or community groups.[8] People and community groups have multiple identities. The complexity of their evolving and dynamic identities and the diversity of their location within cultural or civilisational groupings require critical research informing Listing processes under the ICH Convention. How does one safeguard an ICH element and minimise the stereotyping of carriers and transmitters of ICH as belonging to one group or community? The 'miniaturization' of ICH elements can encourage people to see 'themselves and others purely in terms of a singular identity'.

In the promotion of ICH how do we ensure that the elements in the various ICH Inventories and Lists are contextualised within the framework

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7_ Galla, Amareswar. 'First Voice in heritage Conservation', *International Journal of Intangible Heritage*, Volume 3, 2008, pp. 10-25. (www.ijih.org)

8_ *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 2006.

of community cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue at both the local and global levels? How do we build respect for and honour the elements of ICH within the broader socio-cultural context? In the promotion of ICH, what is the role of civil society, cultural and educational agencies?[9] In what ways can we understand and safeguard the ICH elements of cosmopolitan multiculturalism?[10] What about the ethics of our actions as facilitators and animateurs of safeguarding of ICH?

In safeguarding ICH, we need to consider human development as a process that occurs locally, but within a total global environment. Furthermore, planning for development is not just a function of economics, social or political change, health advancement, human and cultural rights, the absence of physical violence, or sustainable physical environments. Rather, it is achieved within, and through, the interplay of all these functions.

These processes, inter-related, iterative, and necessarily achieved through collaborative and simultaneous endeavour, have been recognised for many years. They were first comprehensively yet succinctly described in a document that distilled much of the earlier thinking: the UNESCO *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, November 2001 (UDCD). The UDCD came into being in a 'post-September 11' world – its significance was at the same time displaced (in the environment of global shock that then existed) as well as reinforced, by demonstrating the compelling need for an articulate and rational vision for global collective action and shared values, rather than reactive violence and oppositional politics.

The UDCD argues for a new understanding of the value of human difference. It is designed to protect and enhance the international intellectual, economic, spiritual and moral value of cultural diversity. UDCD affirms this diversity as the vital resource to protect cultural rights, bio-diversity, individual self-value, social harmony, cross-cultural communication and to 'humanise globalisation.' As an international policy framework, the UDCD can be adapted to national purposes to help transform civil society. It has the potential to improve our community harmony, our relationship

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9_ For a critical refection on civil society and its role in education and community cultural development see, *Civil Paths to Peace*, Report of the Commonwealth Commission for Respect and Understanding, Amartya Sen (Chairperson), John Alderdice, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Adrienne Clarkson, Noeleen Heyzer, Kamal Hossain, Elaine Sihoatani Howard, Wangari Muta Maathai, Ralston Nettleford, Joan Rwabyomere and Lucy Turnbull. Commonwealth Secretariat, London, 2007.

10_ Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2005.

with the environment and the way we develop economies through a new understanding of the physical and human world, notably the nexus between cultures, physical environments and sustainable development. Hence, the place of UDCD in the preface to the ICH Convention, and its significance in community networking and the empowering environment for transmission of ICH.

Culture is now recognised as one of the four pillars of development along with environmental conservation, social and economic development.[11] In the quest for best practices and methodologies for poverty alleviation, many models have been brought in from an 'outsider' context using international expertise. However, without thoroughly understanding and integrating the 'local' cultural context and the diversity of cultures, such 'one size fits all' models are bound to fail. In order to be genuinely sustainable, poverty alleviation projects must be customised to specific cultural contexts. In this context the promotion of community networks and the transmission of ICH elements need new and innovative tools as an integral of community cultural development and capacity building. Ecomuseology is one such tool that has been scoped and applied in Vietnam.

Ecomuseology has been used as a methodology in Vietnam for safeguarding ICH through community driven approaches to mapping, planning and sustainable heritage development and at the same time addressing MDGs.[12] For example the Ha Long Ecomuseum concept has caught the imagination of Vietnam through extensive interest among the various conservation agencies and the media. It is a flexible project driven by the simple principle that the conflicts between conservation and development could only be dealt with by bringing people and their environment together into productive partnerships. ICH is the vital driver in this project.

The Ecomuseum concept views the entire Bay as a living museum and employs an 'interpretive' approach to its management. Interpretive management sees the components and processes of nature, culture, intangible and tangible heritage as continuously interacting with each other in a constantly changing equilibrium. By intensive research and monitoring, managers and stakeholder community groups seek to 'interpret' what is

11_ www.onsustainability.com

12_ Galla, Amareswar. 'Cultural Diversity in Ecomuseum Development in Vietnam', *Museum International* No 227, Volume 57, 2005, pp.101-109.

happening to that equilibrium and to make carefully planned interventions to change the balance of the components when necessary. An important feature of this approach is that it views human activity, past and present, as fundamental components of the total environmental resource. The culture, history, traditions and activities of the human population on and around heritage sites are as much a part of the heritage as the natural landscapes and are in continuous interaction with it.

The assumption of this methodological tool is that all human and natural ecosystems are living, developing organisms that cannot be 'preserved' in a particular isolated state:

- human and natural ecosystems are interdependent,
- the ultimate goal of conservation and safeguarding is the sustainable development of the resource,
- to sustainably use and develop the resource it is necessary to understand it,
- to understand the resource it is necessary to interpret its nature and processes, and
- effective interpretation must be based upon a holistic view of the resource which recognises the interdependence of its elements, systems and processes.

In practice ecomuseology means different things to different stakeholder and participant groups – hence the importance of genuinely integrating cultural diversity, women, youth, indigenous communities and various interest groups. The research and development for the ecomuseum concept is conducted with a focus on three issues that are of growing concern for developing community-grounded heritage projects the world over. These are: integrated and holistic approaches to heritage management that are local in context and global in professional orientation; capacity building for all the stakeholder groups that are critical for sustainable development initiatives; and quality heritage interpretation as means to intercultural dialogue that is informed by the demographic and psychographic profile of diverse participants and audiences.

In promoting the human face of globalisation, a commitment to the framework of integrated heritage management has been adopted by Vietnam through the National Cultural Heritage Law and its regulations in 2001 and the amendments of 2009. It is within this context that the

ecomuseum concept is informed by a holistic approach to natural and cultural environments and to movable and immovable heritage resources, tangible and intangible elements. Intercultural dialogue through Ha Long Ecomuseum has been situated within this holistic context that brings together people and their environment, focusing on both natural and cultural resources. For example, effective presentation and interpretation can be a significant force for changing attitudes towards the environment and its conservation and especially the safeguarding of ICH. Interpretation can legitimise or challenge particular ideas and viewpoints. It can inform public awareness of key issues in society, such as the environment, sustainable development and cultural understanding.

This is certainly so in Vietnam in as much as it clearly shows the conflict between conserving a rich, but fragile, heritage whilst simultaneously promoting the industrial, economic and tourism development that is essential to alleviate the severe poverty and impoverishment of large sections of the community. Traditionally, this has been treated as an 'either/or' issue and therefore frequently results in an impasse. The greatest challenge has been to bring together the management and all the stakeholder groups into a participation framework that is facilitated by the Ha Long Ecomuseum development. It is heartening to see that both the UNESCO World Culture Report of 2009 and the Local Agenda 21 Culture 2009 reports profile Ha Long Ecomuseum within the context of MDGs and culture in poverty alleviation.

The Vietnam project approach is exemplary and could inform the development of the Category 2 Centre, ICHCAP, focussing on new meanings of networking and provide us an opportunity to rethink community heritage practice, especially in the Pacific and Asia.

Some of the following concerns call for your attention:

• Institutions and agencies managing heritage have struggled to address the processes of consultation with, and participation by stakeholder communities and groups. In some countries the promotion of cultural democracy is gradually introduced through consultation and participation as part of the access and equity discourse. Safeguarding of ICH requires a paradigm shift from access to active engagement and empowerment through appropriate capacity building for all stakeholders to participate to ensure meaningful outcomes. Sense of ownership by the carriers and transmitters of ICH is critical for the

sustainability of ICH elements.

- The governance processes for safeguarding ICH require more democratic participation by carriers and transmitters of ICH and primary stakeholders in management bodies, councils and trusts. These mechanisms need to demonstrate transparency and accountability, once again in the interests of sustainability of ICH elements.

- In the past oral history and folklife studies were often appendages to the object and site centred approaches in heritage management. The principal focus has been on the tangible heritage with a bias towards middle and upper classes, metropolitan and male interests in several countries. The heritage of the indigenous, immigrant and minority populations was largely contained within the imagination of a colonial 'other' discourse.

- While oral history and folklife studies contribute to efforts towards safeguarding ICH, they are often misunderstood as areas already dealing with safeguarding ICH.

- Heritage conservation and public education and have had a low priority for planning and budgetary appropriations in several countries until recently. Safeguarding ICH is yet to be mainstreamed in the budgetary profile of most countries in the Pacific and Asia.

- The general public rarely has had quality access and interpretation to heritage resources in several countries of the region. Safeguarding of ICH and access to transmission activities to the public needs new standards of interpretation to ensure quality control and minimise the negative impacts of globalising forces such as tourism.

- A range of heritage material such as documentary heritage, material culture, built environment and shipwrecks have been irretrievably lost due to the lack of clear conservation guidelines and absence of public education. Development of systematic standards for safeguarding ICH needs to take into consideration the inadequate guidelines in other areas of heritage activity. While there are economies of scale in taking integrated management approaches to tangible and intangible heritage, there is the danger of imposing existing practices of preserving tangible heritage on safeguarding ICH.

- Indigenous heritage has been poorly addressed and rarely included in cultural heritage curricula in most countries despite two decades of advocacy by agencies such as ICOM, ICOMOS, IFLA, ICA, ICCROM

and UNESCO.[13] The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples (2007) call for action to redress this imbalance. Leadership through exemplary museums is beginning to emerge integrating ICH and creativity of indigenous peoples in the heart of mainstream heritage institutions such as the Smithsonian.[14]

- Cultural heritage management is yet to be integrated into the local contexts and planning processes in several countries of the region, although cultural planning is becoming an integral part of local governance. *Agenda 21 Culture* provides a viable framework.

- Resource distribution for heritage activities has often been uneven and irregular at the community level. This has been an area of public debate and collaborative effort at various levels of governments. Community capacity building for safeguarding ICH requires adequate resourcing at the local government levels.

- Few agencies and state parties have addressed the ICH elements derived from historical social movements and multicultural hybrid formations of the 20th century. The promotion of ICH of indigenous and multicultural communities and the importance of social history discourse could contribute to the recognition of the much of the endangered ICH elements in the region.

In view of the above points, advocacy and networking with appropriate supporting research needs to be considered and resourced to facilitate community capacity building in the region. The following is a preliminary listing of points for consideration.

13_ Galla, Amareswar. *Heritage Curricula and Cultural Diversity*, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra, 1993; http://icom.museum/diversity.html; www.onmuseums.com

14_ *The Native Universe and Museums in the Twenty-First Century: The Significance of the National Museum of the American Indian*, Eds. Mark Hirsch and Amy Pickworth, Smithsonian Institution Press, New York, 2005.

Advocacy	Networking
• Promotion of stakeholder community membership interests in the safeguarding of ICH and sustainable heritage development • Access to IGO/INGO cultural agencies by the stakeholder community membership and to stakeholder community membership by the IGO/INGO cultural agencies • Use of the diversity of media including diversity of regional resources for ICH education in different languages • Formation of pressure groups for lobbying with government and non-government agencies on critical issues: e.g. ensuring effective and ethical participation, intellectual property concerns and cultural diversity promotion. • Promotion of principles of participation by membership • Locally/Community-grounded post-colonial heritage practice	• Sharing human and infrastructure resources • Enhancing communication channels through newsletter, workshops, forums, symposia and the internet • Working towards equitable cultural practice • Forming collaborative strategic partnerships • Providing mechanisms of support for delegates on policy-making bodies • Articulating local, regional, state and national networks with international agencies
Research	**Resources**
• Enabling cultural control and copyright • Developing ethical and negotiated standards of professional practice and research • Promoting ethical standards of consultation, participation and negotiation • Inventories beyond the surveys and mapping concerns that provide standards for safeguarding ICH • Respecting language diversity • Cross cutting themes of gender, youth, faith and aging concerns • Environmental concerns, sustainable development and climate change • Regional linkages (Eg. Asia and Pacific) • Input into policy papers of IGOs and INGOs • integration of tangible and intangible heritage	• Access to infrastructure development • Making training accessible • Incentive funding – fund raising • Use and development of regionally based resource centres, eg. Category 2 Centres • Promoting corporate support for sponsorship and so on • Maximising on available resources through cooperation and coordination

Conclusion

In conclusion I submit to you the following critical challenges for furthering community networks for the strengthening of ICH transmission activities:

- Coordination of the expression of and access to the heritage values and significant ICH elements from diverse cultural backgrounds;
- Promotion of agencies for safeguarding as an integral part of cultural policies for sustainable development – Integrated Local Area Planning, a step beyond mapping cultural resources;
- Achieving a balance between globalisation and localisation – requiring far more rigour that the term glocal has elicited;
- The fostering of an integrated professional approach through cooperation and coordination between all the agencies managing heritage resources, tangible and intangible, movable and immovable, natural and cultural, so that the outcomes are determined by best practice for sustainable heritage development and community empowerment;
- The development of strategies for heritage management linked to economic development, heritage tourism and employment creation. Perhaps the establishment of local government and regional and pan-Asia and Pacific standards for harnessing cultural and heritage tourism and in the process ensuring the safeguarding of ICH with a community benefit analysis framework (For example see the Phnom Penh Vientiane Charter on Heritage Tourism. Source. www.icom.museum);
- The new found vibrancy in the cultural industry with the UNESCO 2003 and 2005 Conventions could lead to the profiling of demonstration projects and best practices in safeguarding ICH elements;
- Promotion of a fuller representation of the heritage of diverse Asia and Pacific peoples, through new initiatives, infrastructure and capacity with a focus on the historically disadvantaged communitie;
- Advocating the complex nature of trusteeship of both documented and undocumented living and intellectual heritage with a focus on broadening responsibilities to the Asia and Pacific histories and cultures that have also been neglected in the past;
- Promotion of ICH safeguarding mechanisms at an arm's length from government funding so as to achieve autonomy and manage a non-partisan heritage discourse;

- Develop and disseminate a tool-kit for safeguarding ICH, including the role of ecomuseology as effective empowerment methodology ensuring a strong sense of community ownership and transmission of ICH;
- Promoting heritage management institutions such as museums, galleries, libraries, archives, heritage councils, World Heritage Areas, parks and conservation areas - as civic spaces for safeguarding ICH, as hubs for bringing together people and their heritage together within the framework of Integrated Environmental Management embedded in Agenda 21;
- Addressing intellectual and cultural property rights so as to prevent the exploitation of ICH elements - bio-diversity and cultural diversity;
- Coordinated approaches to advocate legal frameworks that will enable safeguarding ICH with emphasis on stakeholder participation and transmission of ICH elements;
- Maximising on limited resources to create hubs for appropriate capacity building and making the best use of UNESCO Category 2 Centres and professional NGOS such as ICOM, ICOMOS, ICA, IFLA, ICTM and so on.

In conclusion I submit to you that the Asia Pacific configuration is an anomaly in the 21st Century, especially with more than half the world's population living in the region. The Pacific Island countries have formed their own post-colonial organisation, Pacific Islands Museums Association, dealing with museums and cultural centres. Cultural Centres are the mechanisms for Pacific Island countries where 90% of populations are indigenous peoples who demand ICH as a central concern is all developmental activites. The South Pacific Forum, South Pacific Commission and UNESCO Apia Office are relevant regional INGO support structures. Similarly the countries of Southeast Asia, have been working on an effective ASEAN networking; countries of South Asia under the SAARC umbrella and so on. The operationalisation of Category 2 Centres for safeguarding ICH in the Asia and Pacific can consider the sub regional formations and their significance for safeguarding ICH in the post-colonial context of the 21st century. In order to do this we need to learn to listen to the First Voices of the region. In deed the past is not a foreign country to the carriers and transmitters of ICH.