Participatory Inventories of Intangible Cultural Heritage

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So far...

Identifying and inventorying ICH is problematic:

- Costly and resource – consuming.
- The lists per se do not guarantee the safeguarding of ICH.
- Decontextualisation of cultural practices and expressions.

How can we move forward?
Outline

- Participatory inventory-making.

- Cultural Mapping: Concept and Methods.

- Participatory inventories in practice: Examination of case studies from Cameroon, New Zealand, Scotland, Australia and Vanuatu.
Best Practice in Inventory Making

2004 ACCU Meeting → Participatory inventories

I. Community inventory-making

It is important that communities themselves define and identify their own ICH, and governments, institutions and NGOs should be ready to support and assist them in doing this.

A. Community empowerment / Community “visioning”

- Communities need to be empowered to identify, define and assess their own ICH, as a prerequisite to making their own inventories.

- Ongoing training of community members in cultural documentation methods and in using appropriate technologies is important.

- Forums and spaces for communities to hold, represent, and access their ICH need to be created and supported.
B. Participatory methodology

It is important to develop participatory “bottom-up” methodologies that are able to accommodate the priorities of bearer communities.

- **Pilot workshops** on inventory-making should be conducted in bearer communities.

- Support communities to (a) select **elders as teachers/facilitators of ICH** in their communities and (b) create **new forums** to ensure the continued transmission of ICH (eg, “Schools for living traditions”).

- Formalise relationships between institutions and bearer communities, including recognizing community members with **official institutional status** (eg, as “fieldworkers”).

- Ensure the integration of the administration of ICH at all levels of government (national, provincial, prefectural, state, municipal) so that **bearers’ concerns are represented in all policies**.
COMMUNITIES?

ICH Participatory methods → working with communities, groups and individuals.

2006 UNESCO/ ACCU Meeting → Community Involvement and Safeguarding ICH

Communities are networks of people whose sense of identity or connectedness emerges from a shared historical relationship that is rooted in the practice and transmission of, or engagement with, their ICH
Cultural Mapping

A tool and methodology for collecting, processing, analysing and presenting information from different sources (oral traditions, field surveys, academic research etc) related to a particular place.

→ Mapping/ Inventorying the cultural resources of a community.

→ Field of action of UNESCO in empowering excluded groups and communities, such as Indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities etc.
More than a map

‘Cultural mapping is used in both a literal and a metaphorical senses, where it goes beyond strict cartography to include other cultural resources than land: anthropological, sociological, archaeological, genealogical, linguistic, topographical, musicological and botanical, which would be recorded by other more appropriate techniques and equipment than maps.’

(P. Poole 2003)
Cultural Maps

Different degrees of community involvement and technological sophistication of each map.

Form, content and presentation of map depend on its use:

- Land negotiations with governments on a national level.
- Internal use for cultural revival and transmission.
Content of Cultural Maps

The source information that is mapped is local and traditional knowledge (ICH), gathered during interviews, recording sessions, fieldwork activities and group discussions (ethnographic research methods).
Placing Local Information on Topographic Maps

Much of the traditional knowledge is gathered in conversation around a map and is then placed directly upon the map. This method also works well with aerial and satellite images – which are often more accessible to those who cannot read topographic map.
3D Landscape Models

These are physical three dimensional maps. All community members can contribute either information or construction effort. The result is a large, detailed stereo-model of community lands. The only limitation is that there is only one model.
Global Positioning System

For this, community teams are trained to gather the same kinds of information but each datum is identified by coordinates of latitude and longitude. Local teams are trained to use GPS receivers. The advantage of this is that it can be used by people who do not read.
Maps with Graphic Software

The mappers place their local data on an “empty” field map. This is extracted from topographic map either by manually tracing it and then scanning the trace, or by “tracing” it with a digitizing table/software. The results are similar: a virtual facsimile of the useful official cartography with new data.
Forrest Mapping in Cameroon

Development of methods and tools that enable local and Indigenous peoples of the forest, regardless of language and education, to engage in forest monitoring and planning.
Icon based GPS software

icons and methods were developed to assure that illegal logging could be recorded by even non- or semi-literate people.
Digital Repatriation as Cultural Mapping and Inventory Making

Te Aitianga-a-Hauti
Maori tribe that has initiated with support from the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa a digital repatriation process for inventorying their *taonga* (cultural treasures, heritage – tangible and intangible)
Electronic Database

- Cultural Objects of the tribe held in overseas museums.
- Songs.
- Oral history.
- Traditional knowledge.

→ Interconnectivities between the material and the immaterial.
Mapping/ Inventorying ICH in Scotland

http://ichscotland.org/the-project/

A national inventory is fully funded as a cost-effective and efficient repository of knowledge of ICH practices in Scotland. This should take the form of a wiki (collaborative websites).
ICH in Scotland

For the purpose of the inventory, ICH in Scotland should be considered to include as wide a range of practices as possible that fall within the scope of UNESCO definition. Thus practices that may not have originated in Scotland, but are now practiced there and those which are practiced in languages other than those indigenous to Scotland will be equally considered to belong in the inventory.

The national inventory of ICH becomes a key tool for safeguarding through identification and an important component of education and community development.
Mapping Australian Aboriginal Heritage

Byrne 2009 (New South Wales, Department of Environment and Climate Change)

→ Mapping the Oral History of Aboriginals in Forster, NSW (through interviews and reminiscence)
Cultural Mapping in Australia

Re-inscription of old Aboriginal paths and routes on modern aerial photographs of the city as a way for triggering memory and enabling transmission.

Figure 12.2 Map showing the coastal town of Forster, NSW, with overlay showing Aboriginal mid-twentieth-century walking tracks, fishing and swimming places, as well as three picnic spots (see symbol). Wallis Lake is visible on the left showing a jetty where Aboriginal people kept boats for use on the lake.
Language Mapping in Vanuatu

Linguists working in Vanuatu produced language maps identifying different communities according to languages spoken.

Subsequently, ‘language map’ has been overlaid with additional info collected by anthropologists and community fieldworkers.

→ Multilayered cultural map
‘Community fieldworkers provide their own perspectives as bearers of the languages on the map produced by academics. This has resulted in some changes to the map: some communities speaking different dialects of the same language consider themselves to be culturally distinct; boundaries between language groups have been more precisely located; and new names have been given to certain languages reflecting the perspectives of the bearers about how they classify their languages and relate them to each other.’ (Regenvanu 2004)
Film and Sound Unit

Complex form of mapping → new media, audiovisual technologies.

Rationalise and produce national inventories of ICH drawing on existing material collected in the course of the ‘Oral Traditions Project’ (1970s onwards)
Online Resources

Website of Sandroing → providing information and raising awareness about the practice.

Inventories: Educational Resources for Cultural Transmission.
To sum up...

The identification of ICH can be a highly formalised process.

Inventories are not final products, but need to be updated by practitioners.

The participation of communities is imperative for the viability of cultural expressions.

Participatory methodologies offer alternative frameworks for rethinking identification and inventory-making.
Cultural Mapping

- Empowerment of local communities and disenfranchised people.
- Rationalise and represent different forms of knowledge (academic, traditional, scientific, oral history, mythology etc).
- Process of making the map as important as the map itself (democratic activity).
- Important to consider the future use of the map (internal or external – negotiations with governments and international bodies)
What is the role of museums?

How can museums contribute to the development of resources and tools for identifying and mapping out ICH?

- Reconsideration of the tangible/ intangible divide = are museums only ‘palaces of collections’?
- Initiation of partnerships with communities to establish appropriate mechanisms for engaging with the task.