
Dr Marilena Alivizatou
University College London
m.alivizatou@ucl.ac.uk

‘Now is the time to record. An infinitude has been irrevocably lost, a very great deal is now rapidly disappearing; thanks to colonisation, trade, and missionary enterprise. The change that has come over the uttermost parts of the world during the last fifty years is almost incredible.’

A.C. Haddon, 1898. The Study of Man
Salvage Ethnography

- Traditional and Indigenous cultures as *dying races*
- *Threats:* modernisation, urbanisation, acculturation
- *Urgency* to save/document the disappearing (collecting objects, documenting social practices and traditions)
- *Duty:* Western responsibility/skills and knowledge to document, record culture

![E. Curtis, Crow's Head, Mandan, c.1908](image)

UNESCO Activities

1989: *Recommendation for the Protection of Traditional Culture and Folklore*
1993: *Living Human Treasures* (Inspired by Japan & Korea)
1993: *Red Book of Endangered Languages*
1998: *Traditional Music of the World*
2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Living Heritage

Heritage in Danger

Community Participation

Preamble – ‘communities, in particular indigenous communities, groups and in some cases individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and recreation of intangible cultural heritage.’

2003 Convention: Definition

‘Intangible cultural heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage.

This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation is constantly recreated by communities and groups, ... and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.’
Oral traditions and expressions

Eschuvo, sung prayers of Huachipaire people, Peru

Performing arts

Kumiodori, musical theatre from Okinawa, Japan
Rituals & festive events

Yookwa, ritual dance of Enawene Nawe peoples, Brazil

Knowledge nature & universe

Cosmovision of Kallawaya, Bolivia

Novruz, New Year celebrations, Azerbaijan, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan
Traditional craftsmanship

Woodcraft Knowledge of Zafimaniry, Madagascar

Aubusson Tapestry, France

2003 Convention: Obligations

State parties to the Convention should take measures to ensure safeguarding of ICH in their territory (legal, administrative & financial).

Prepare inventories of ICH through collaboration with communities, groups and NGOs (and appropriate documentation institutions: museums, research centres etc).


How are ICH elements identified?

International Identification (Lists)

↑

National Inventories

↑

Local agencies, NGOs

↑

Communities, groups and individuals

‘We are the second Machu Picchu of Peru!’
Creative Destruction

Idea derived from Marxist theory → economic development arises out of destruction of previous economic order

T.Cowen (2002) *Creative Destruction: How globalisation is changing the world’s cultures*

Cultures are not homogenous (untouched by influences of other cultures)

Out of the ‘destruction’ of a status quo arises the ‘creative’ that transforms social and economic structures into new status quo

Cultural preservation by governments and elite is top-down and artificial and does not allow people to make free choices and cultures to change and develop

Goh, national costume, Bhutan
Adaptation - Survivance

Navajo blanket used as door, late 19th c.

Navajo weavers, c.1875

Contemporary Navajo rug

Vanuatu
Vanuatu Cultural Centre, Port Vila, Vanuatu

Vanuatu Cultural Centre, Museum displays and stores
Oral Traditions Project

Ni-Vanuatu Women Fieldworkers

Kastom Economy

Large money mats, North Pentecost
Self-Determined Development

Conclusions

2003 Convention: State-driven preservation → fixing culture: fossilisation

Community-driven initiatives: transmission of cultural practices and language as flexible and changing

Intangible heritage: cultural preservation, adaptation and development