

**QUESTIONNAIRE OF RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE
MÉXICO**

GENERAL

- 1. Please briefly describe the general awareness in your country about the importance of intangible cultural heritage (as defined in Article 2 of the Convention).**

Levels of visibility

- Youths
- Minorities
- Academic world
- Others

Or well by domains

- Music
- Oral traditions
- Art (performance)
- Rituals
- Festival events, etc.

For Mexico it is very important that the Intangible Cultural Heritage is recognized in the local, state and national environments as a source of development of the cultures.

Mexico is characterized by its cultural and natural diversity, the institutions that grant attention to the identification, appraisal and safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage are in a first process of training and after diffusion at national level, involving all those that participate: creators, bearers, independent and institutional cultural promoters, organizations of the civil society and state and municipal culture instances.

Mexico has a very important institutional trajectory regarding the cultural heritage and in particular to the investigation work of what today is called intangible cultural heritage. For many decades several institutions have been devoted to the topic: the National Institute of Anthropology and History, INAH, for more than 60 years; the National Indigenist Institute (INI), the National Commission for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples (CDI) also for more than 60 years; the Center of Investigations and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology, (CIESAS) more than 35 years; the General Direction of Popular Cultures, for 30 years.

In this context, our country ratifies through the Chamber of Senators, the adhesion to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2005 that goes into effect on April 20, 2006. From then on began to implement public policies in a more explicit way and a rector axis on heritage and cultural diversity was incorporated in the National Program of Culture 2007-2012.

In 2006 was created the Group of Work for the Promotion and Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage; in it are summoned efforts of different cultural instances of Mexico, with the objective of building, initially the bases of the Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the country and as a consequence of this work, to create the appropriate mechanisms for the promotion and protection of the cultural manifestations that constitute the Mexican heritage.

AWARENESS-RAISING AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

- 2. How can practitioners and bearers of the intangible cultural heritage be effectively involved in raising awareness about the importance of their heritage, while respecting customary access to it?**

Making them participants in the process of identification, safeguarding and promotion; explaining them in a simple and didactic way the importance of safeguarding the cultural manifestations, making stress in the identification of their practices, representations, expressions and traditional knowledge.

- 3. What role can formal and non-formal education play in raising awareness about the importance of intangible cultural heritage? What kind of educational materials could be developed for that purpose?**

At present a proposal of strategies and actions is being elaborated with diverse instances of culture of the country and one of the proposed axes is the development of materials for children, either to be worked in schools or with cultural promoters at houses of culture, museums, public squares, etc.

Some models of attention have been developed mainly through the Direction of Indigenous Education; the Coordination of Intercultural Bilingual Education; the General Direction of Popular Cultures and the National Commission for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples, these models of attention are focused so much to the attention in the environment of the formal education as not formal, and they have a great quantity of support materials; the conceptual axis is centered in the cultural diversity and as complementary topics are found the immaterial cultural heritage, cultural identity and interculturalism.

- 4. What role can community centres, museums, archives, and other similar entities play in raising awareness about intangible cultural heritage?**

They are the natural centers of diffusion and consultation of the national Intangible Cultural Heritage; in them one can make patent the importance of the ICH at national level. In the case of Mexico, in them work both promoters hired by institutions, as well as independent promoters and of organizations of the civil society.

- 5. How can various types of media contribute to raising awareness? (television, radio, films, documentaries, Internet, specialized publications, etc.)**

To understand and to be identified with this heritage it is necessary to know it previously. In occasions, the bearers of the cultures and the creators don't have access to the media to transmit to the population in general their ideas, beliefs and knowledge; it is common that the media don't look for sources of information in the popular, urban cultures or originators, but rather in the reinforcement or creation of stereotypes that facilitate the production, circulation and diffusion of the culture. This way, it is usual that what is considered as popular by the media, in fact refers to the environment of the culture of masses. Therefore we should lay a bridge between these two worlds, it is required to communicate the contents of the heritage in an attractive way and to endow with contents to the media for the impact that they have in the population.

On the other hand it is necessary to design more horizontal communication models, participative outlines where the own holders of the heritage can produce their messages and to give the focus that they consider.

6. Can commercial activities related to intangible heritage contribute to raising awareness about its importance?

Yes, every time the own creators and bearers of the cultures participate in the processes of production, distribution, commercialization; otherwise would only achieve the exploitation of their knowledge and there is no care neither is fomented to show the traditions in an authentic way.

7. Can enhanced visibility and awareness of the intangible heritage lead to income-generating activities?

The recognition of the Intangible Cultural Heritage will certainly strengthen its transmission to the following generation and it will grant continuity to the cultural manifestation that is being safeguarded.

AWARENESS-RAISING AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

8. What kind of actions and tools do you expect the UNESCO Secretariat to develop in order to assist the States Parties in enhancing awareness about intangible heritage?

- To generate reports of the current state of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in the world, by country, region and continent.
- To give to know the successful safeguarding measures to apply them in other countries.
- To motivate the formation of groups of specialists of the Intangible Cultural Heritage that offer national and international punctual advising.
- To generate forums of exchange of information among States parties with the purpose of strengthening the world Immaterial Cultural Heritage.
- To publish in the web site certified tools such as: shops of file-filling, identification of the ICH, among others.

9. The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity is established under Article 16 of the Convention “in order to ensure better visibility of the intangible cultural heritage and awareness of its significance, and to encourage dialogue which respects cultural diversity”. What kind of specific measures should be taken to achieve these objectives?

Mexico considers that once concludes a cycle of inscriptions in the Representative List, a diffusion campaign in electronic and printed media should begin, in which the objective is not only to list the inscribed elements, but also to explain what each one of them consists of, which their importance is and how they contribute to the social-cultural development of the community that practices them; to this last point in particular more importance should be given so that the world population takes awareness and meditates on his own immaterial heritage, the affinities that can exist with regard to other communities and the necessity of preserving them. In the files there is photographic material and video of quality, with which a video can be edited and an art book can be published.

10. How can the programmes, projects and activities that best reflects the principles and objectives of the Convention, as referred to in Article 18, contribute to raising awareness about the importance of the intangible heritage?

The development and application of programs, projects and activities that contribute to increase the awareness on the importance of the ICH are indispensable so that the text, the objectives and scope of the Convention can be accessible to the bearing communities.

In a first approach and priority, these programs, projects and activities will have a local dimension so that a greater number of people and communities acquire the necessary knowledge on the importance of the recognition and the safeguarding of their ICH.

The realization of programs, projects and activities focused to the bearing communities might also help to the elaboration of safeguarding plans.

11. Through what means can the Committee disseminate best practices, as referred to in paragraph 3 of Article 18?

Over more than 50 years of existence, the UNESCO has developed a cooperation structure with its different States parties, what has allowed the realization of great variety of programs. An example of this is constituted by the Plan of Schools Associated to the UNESCO that has worked as means to inform the youths about the importance of the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage; in this sense, Mexico considers that it is moment of using the net of available resources such as diffusion means especially focused to the youth, high-priority sector of the society to ensure the transmission and safeguarding of the ICH.

It is also important to diffuse in a wider way the electronic bonds in which the communities, groups and individuals can consult the activities, programs and best practices related to the ICH in the world, and to apply a system of access restriction to the specificities of this practices only directed to the States Parties of the Convention.

THREATS RELATED TO AWARENESS-RAISING

12. When applying awareness-raising measures, what aspects or elements of the intangible heritage should be excluded?

In first place it is indispensable to develop workshops and work seminars directed to the bearing communities in which explain in a detailed way the definitions, scope and purposes of the Convention. With this, the bearers would be under conditions of sharing their ICH under their own rules and conditions; they would decide what can be shown and what cannot.

On the other hand, and with the purpose of avoiding an undesirable commercialization by external agents to the bearing community and the entities in charge of safeguarding the element, it is suggested to avoid diffusing aspects related to the detailed description of handicraft and ritual procedures.

13. When attempting to raise awareness about intangible heritage, what kind of measures should be taken to avoid inappropriate use or access to it?

Besides the measures enunciated in the answer to the question 12, it is suggested to continually update a directory of people and institutions of each State Party directly involved in the safeguarding and preservation of the ICH to the interior of their country, in order to give pursuit to the measures that are carried out in this sense and to monitoring any activity external to those that are announced by the official and authorized channels.

14. What kind of precautions should be taken to avoid possible effects resulting from enhanced visibility of certain forms of intangible heritage?

It is intended that, besides the presentation of periodic reports, a commission is conformed for follow-up, evaluation and constant monitoring of the safeguarding plans so much in the Intergovernmental Committee as to the interior of the States Party in whose territory is some element of the ICH inscribed in the Lists of the Convention, in order to be under conditions to foresee and to solve any negative effect resulting of the increment of the visibility.

15. What ethical questions do you think need to be raised when promoting the intangible heritage of certain communities?

It has been specified that every safeguarding plan should be centered in the bearing communities so that it allows them to continue with the transmission and preservation of the element of the ICH, placing them together with the pertinent government authorities as the main fellows to achieve the safeguarding of the cultural manifestation; therefore, proposed safeguarding plan should foresee ethical questions such as the respect for the copyright (with or without official recognition), as well as the specification that the main beneficiaries of the profit activities of the safeguarding plan shall be the bearers.

