

Progress report on the development of a methodology for complementing the three UNESCO programmes - intangible, tangible and documentary heritage

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The structure of the progress report on the development of a methodology for complementing the three UNESCO programmes is to be presented in two parts. The first is answering the question about the development of a methodology and the second part is presenting a few examples.

The present focus is on the procedures for inscriptions on one of the inventories (lists). The three heritage programmes consist of two conventions one concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (WCH) and one for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and two operational guidelines that is one for WCH and the other the Memory of the World (MOW) - General Guidelines to Safeguard the Documentary Heritage. The ICH is working without operational directives which will only be presented by the Committee to the General Assembly in June 2008.

The procedures for inscription are thoroughly described and need no further elaboration for this progress report.

Methodology

The core question is “Why do we want a common methodology?” and the short answer is that we want to demonstrate a synergy between the programmes.

To clarify what we mean let us utilize a metaphor. A jigsaw represents a full picture but when we start playing the picture is scattered into multiple parts. One piece shows nothing but more pieces provide a glimpse of the full picture.

An idea is that by looking at one list (for example ICH) it can be linked up to either inscribed sites and items on the register, or it may suggest sites and documentary heritage which should be safeguarded according to these instruments. The same exercise can be done starting with any of the lists.

Before applying any idea we examine the three heritage programmes to learn about their complementing procedures which can create an effect which is greater than the sum by one of the individual representatives. We have chosen to employ three criteria that is the *perspective*, the *focus* and the *manifestation* of the programmes.

The three programmes set off from different *perspectives*. However, the various inventories all demonstrate “cultural diversities”. Even though the wording is “universal value” and “world significance” - what is being expressed is that ‘something is of importance to a culture’ i.e.

showing cultural diversity. Some representations may have become world famous expressed as of “universal value” or “world significance” but whether or not the perspective of the heritage programmes’ inventories symbolize a cultural identity in a larger or smaller region. See figure 1.

The *focus* of the WCH represents monuments etc. and natural features signifying values from different points of view that are historical, artistic, scientific, aesthetic etc. One can refer to it as the *product*. The ICH is focusing on the “practices, representations, ... as well as the instruments, objects, ... that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage”. The sum of the actions and targets can be referred to as *practice*. The MOW’s focus is that which “documents” or “records” something by deliberate intellectual intent. MOW is concentration on the *intent*.

The point of "deliberate intellectual intent" is key to the argument but many people may not have a good grasp of this concept. Just as many people think only of monuments when they think of tangible heritage; or performing arts when they think of the intangible. In his book “Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles” (UNESCO, 2004) Ray Edmondson wrote “The term “work” implies an entity resulting from a deliberate intellectual act, and it could be argued that not all films, video or sound recordings have deliberate intellectual content or intent – for example, a sound recording of a streetscape, whose content is incidental.”

He continues saying (writing) that if one creates a lot of random marks on a piece of paper or create an electronic document by just pressing lots of keys at random one is not creating a work – one is not trying to communicate anything or transmit knowledge – no “deliberate intellectual intent” are conveyed. All the documents around us – newspapers, TV programs, films, radio, books, websites – are deliberate intellectual attempts to transmit knowledge and/or information, however successfully or otherwise.

Obviously, if there is the intention to transmit tangible (including documentary heritage) or intangible cultural knowledge either horizontally or vertically, then there must be "deliberate intellectual intent" to do so. Otherwise, cultural expressions are nothing more than random occurrences and culture itself becomes something haphazard at best and by definition could not be the subject of systematic safeguarding efforts.

The focus of the heritage programmes inventories represent product, practice and intent. See figure 1.

The manifestation of heritage programmes is the story.

1. Manifestation

1.1 Story

- 1.1.1 [About cultural diversity] Monuments, natural features, textual, non-textual and AV items, virtual documents and practices
- 1.1.2 [About events] Monuments, natural features, textual, non-textual and AV items, virtual documents and practices
- 1.1.3 [About places] Monuments, natural features, textual, non-textual and AV items, virtual documents and practice

The denotative meaning of the word story is to describe the object. So, a story is basically an account or recital of an event or a series of events, either true or fictitious. The denotative

meaning communicates the objective semantic content of the represented thing. Any other meanings or implications will be connotative meanings. Connotation is a subjective cultural and /or emotional coloration in addition to the explicit or denotative meaning of the word i.e. emotional association with a word.

The differences between the ‘two orders’ of signification are not clear-cut, but for descriptive and analytic purposes we can distinguish them along the following lines. The first (denotative) level of signification is seen as primarily representational and relatively self-contained. The second (connotative) order of signification reflects 'expressive' values which are attached to words in certain cultures.

The general manifestation is the story embracing all inventories of heritage programmes. See figure 1.

The perspective of all heritage programmes is about cultural diversity. Some are about royalties other about commoners. Further one can claim that heritage programmes are focusing on different domains. As a consequence we can show an effect which is greater than the sum by one of the individual representatives. All heritage programmes have story as a manifestation but the viewpoint of the story may differ. Again we can show an effect which is greater than the sum by one of the individual representatives

There are two points to the above arguments. One is epistemological. Any expression of culture is composed of diverse parts, some tangible some intangible. Without the full picture, we don't have a complete understanding of what it is we are trying to safeguard. Not to force the metaphor, we can concede that some expressions may not have all three components in equal proportions of significance; and indeed sometimes one or another component may be missing entirely (which would indicate that we might not ever have access to a complete understanding of the significance of that particular expression).

Heritage programme	Perspective	Focus	Manifestation
World Cultural Heritage (WCH)	Universal value	<i>Product</i> i.e. Monuments etc. Natural features etc.	Stories i.e. representational and expressive values
Memory of the World (MOW)	World significance	<i>Intent</i> i.e. Documentary heritage	Stories i.e. representational and expressive values
Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)	Communities and groups - their interaction with nature and their history. Showing something distinct for that culture -	<i>Practice</i> i.e. Practices, representations etc.	Stories i.e. representational and expressive values

*Figure 1*¹.

The second is operational. Safeguarding action requires a holistic approach if it is to be successful in the long run. While for analytical purposes we might need to compartmentalize our units of knowledge, these units must be synthesized during "treatment" (read safeguarding). In fact this synthesis could be said to be the objective of safeguarding, in order to give the heritage "... a function in the life of the community...". Article 5 1972 Convention².

Some examples

Based on the above provisional conclusion we test the idea about synergies among the heritage lists. We utilize the Oral and Intangible Masterpieces Proclamations (ICH) which might serve as example.

Bhutan

2003 ICH Convention: Mask Dance of the Drums from Drametse (inscribed in 2005)
 No WCH site yet, but this monastery should be, for the very reason that it is the home to and indispensable for the safeguarding and continuation of this Masterpiece (among other reasons).
 No MOW site, but as the Dance is dedicated to Padmasambhava and his work should be included in the MOW or MOWCAP regional list.

Cambodia

Angkor

1972 WCH Convention: The monuments (inscribed 1992)
 2003 ICH Convention: the Royal Cambodian Ballet (inscribed in 2003)
 No MOW: The corpus of Khmer inscriptions from Angkor

Thailand

Sukhothai

1972 WCH Convention: The site (inscribed in 1991)
 No ICH Convention: Loy Krathong festival which originated at Sukhothai (not yet declared or inscribed)
 2002 MOW: The King Ram Khamhaeng Inscription (inscribed in 2003)

¹ The figure, which is a bit reductionist, can be made more sophisticated in a future version of the methodology.

² Article 5

To ensure that effective and active measures are taken for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory, each State Party to this Convention shall endeavor, in so far as possible, and as appropriate for each country:

(a) to adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes

Looking at the ICH inventory (the Oral and Intangible Masterpieces) it can be linked up to either inscribed WCH sites and items on the MOW register, or it can suggest sites and documents which should be safeguarded using these instruments. The same exercise can be done, as we already indicated, starting with either the WCH List or the MOW Register. In fact, the importance of the comparison is in its ability to identify important expressions, places, or documents to which international protection should be extended.

This is a progress report and for further testing and evaluation we propose a systematic study to compare the official inventories (lists) of the three instruments. This can be done on-line. The CI and the Cultural units in Bangkok volunteer to do it for the Asia Pacific region.