Unit 34

Workshop on Community-based inventorying: concluding session

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Lesson plan

Duration:

1 hour

Objectives:

Participants will be able to discuss lessons learned during the workshop, and how the community-based approach fits into existing or future systems or strategies of inventorying.

Description:

This unit is intended to provide reflection on some of the broad lessons learned during the workshop. The quiz exercise is designed to verify participants’ understanding of key concepts and methods of community-based inventorying, and to identify and cover areas where queries and questions still remain. The discussion points are meant as starting points; each group will likely have specific points that they wish to focus on in the concluding discussion. The facilitator may adapt to these needs depending on the group, the logistics and aims of the field practicum, and the current state of inventorying (e.g. adapted from the UNESCO framework or revised from the existing State inventorying framework).

Proposed sequence:

* Facilitator leads a reflection activity on lessons learned
* Quiz exercise on community-based inventorying (Unit 34 Hand-out)
* Facilitator makes a list of main topics to discuss
* Final discussion covering remaining queries concerning concepts and methods in community-based inventorying

Supporting documents:

* Unit 34 Hand-out quiz

Notes and suggestions

Based on this concluding discussion the facilitator may wish to make adjustments to the evaluation form in the next unit to follow up on topics discussed and provide an anonymous venue for participants to share additional thoughts.

The facilitator may also wish to carry out this discussion in the form of a brainstorming session to help elicit full participation and a high level of constructive contributions (see exercise below) in terms of the discussion points.

Unit 34

Quiz

#### Question 1

What are possible reasons to opt for a community-based inventorying approach in the context of implementing the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage?[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Because involving communities in intangible cultural heritage identification and definition is a requirement under the Convention and its Operational Directives (Articles 2.1 and 11(b), OD 80).
2. Because intangible heritage does not exist independently from the people who create and enact it, any safeguarding attempt (including inventory-making) will fail without their consent, involvement and commitment.
3. Because community-based inventorying can be used to build relationships between communities, the State and other agencies for the future promotion, management and safeguarding of ICH.

All of the above options are correct. It is important to ensure community participation in ICH inventorying, not only because it is a legal obligation but also because it is an essential condition to the success of the inventorying exercise.

#### Question 2

What is the relationship between safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and inventorying in the context of the Convention?

1. Inventorying is not an end in itself, but a key step in establishing a dialogue for safeguarding ICH.
2. A safeguarding plan is a prerequisite to drawing up an inventory of intangible cultural heritage.
3. There is no direct relationship between inventorying and safeguarding. Inventorying can be a standalone exercise.

Option (a) seems to be most in line with the Convention. Indeed, Article 12 stipulates that ‘to ensure identification with a view to safeguarding, each State Party shall draw up, in a manner geared to its own situation, one or more inventories of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory’.

Option (b): in some cases a safeguarding plan exists prior to the inventorying exercise, but this is not always the case. The inventory can be the first step towards designing a safeguarding plan or strategy.

Option (c) is not correct in light of Article 12.

#### Question 3

Which one of the following is NOT a characteristic of community-based inventorying?

1. Community-based inventorying is a creative process of generating and systematizing information with and within the community.
2. Community-based inventorying recognizes external experts and researchers as central actors in the process; documentation in the context of community-based inventorying primarily builds upon academic literature.
3. Community-based inventorying recognizes diversity within a community regarding their ICH; it values divergent and different opinions.

Options (a) and (c) are characteristics of community-based inventorying while option (b) does not seem to be in the spirit of the Convention. In community-based inventorying, non-community participants are first and foremost co-facilitators, learning about the ICH in question and assisting communities in the process of self-documentation.

#### Question 4

In developing their inventorying frameworks, States Parties:

1. are required to use the UNESCO sample framework in its entirety.
2. may organize ICH inventories in whatever manner seems most appropriate to their situation.
3. may organize ICH inventories in whatever manner seems most appropriate to them; however, the Convention and the ODs contain a number of requirements that shall be taken into consideration, notably regarding the participation of the communities concerned; customary practices concerning access to the ICH; and free, prior and informed consent.

Option (c) seems to be the best answer. State Parties are free and encouraged to design their own inventories and to develop their own questionnaires. The UNESCO framework simply offers a few suggestions, reflecting categories of data that are typical of many inventories and can be adapted to the specific needs of each State or each institution responsible for inventorying. However, while Article 12 of the Convention leaves considerable leeway to State Parties, the Convention and ODs also foresee a number of requirements that must be respected.

For the above reasons, option (b) is only partially correct and (a) is not correct.

#### Question 5

True or false? Free, prior and informed consent in the context of community-based inventorying of ICH:

1. should always be demonstrated in writing.
2. must be sought preferably at the earliest stage of the process.
3. must be based on an awareness of the risks and unintended consequences of the inventorying exercises on behalf of community members.
4. should be granted by the appropriate State or municipal authorities (such as elected officials) on behalf of the community concerned.

Option (a) is false: the Convention and ODs currently give no guidance on the procedure to be followed by States Parties in obtaining consent. The manner in which consent is reached may thus differ from one case to another. States Parties may, for instance, submit nomination files with written consent, or consent given via audio or video materials. The latter mode of consent may be preferable when the communities concerned feel more comfortable with verbal consent.

Option (b) is true: ‘Prior consent’ means that it is necessary to allow sufficient time for consultation and deliberation.

Option (c) is correct. Informed consent means that people must understand exactly what they are consenting to. Thus it is essential to incorporate awareness of the potential negative outcomes of an inventorying project in the process of obtaining informed consent.

Option (d) is false. The question of who may legitimately provide consent in the name of a community or group is a highly complex one and the answer will vary from one case to another. In most cases, there is no one single representative for an entire community, thus it is important to be as inclusive as possible in community consultations.

#### Question 6

You are part of a team working on the inventory of a certain form of oral expression present in country A, with a small budget and no access to a computer. There are customary restrictions on who can have access to the element. Which of those documentation techniques would be most appropriate in this context?

1. Audio-recording
2. Interviewing
3. Note-taking
4. Participatory video
5. Direct observation

Options (a) and (d) would not be well suited to this particular context, since they require a larger budget and generally need to be stored electronically. The issue of customary restrictions may also be more sensitive when it comes to audiovisual materials.

Options (b), (c) and (e) are inexpensive methods of information generation and are therefore well suited to this project. Moreover, they do not require computer equipment for implementation. However, in this case having only written documentation for an element manifested in oral form would prove disadvantageous. The issue of customary restrictions should neither be neglected in determining who will have access to the documentation on the element.

#### Question 7

Country B intends to develop an inventory for all the ICH present in its territory. The Minister of Culture needs to choose a name for the inventory. Which name would be most in line with the spirit of the Convention?

1. The national inventory of the ICH of Country B.
2. The inventory of ICH from Country B.
3. The inventory of ICH in Country B.

Option (c) seems to be most in line with the Convention. However, the Convention does not impose strict guidelines for inventories, and the State Party is free to choose any of the three solutions.

Option (a): nowhere does the Convention mention national inventories; a national inventory might exclude sets of ICH present in Country B that do not fit in with present or future ideas about who and what constitutes the nation. The Convention talks of ‘communities, groups and individuals’, not ‘nations’. The Convention is meant to contribute to cultural diversity, including the diversity of ICH expressions and practices within States Parties, not to the homogenization that often comes with nation-building.

Option (b): this option no longer qualifies the inventory as ‘national’ but shares with option (a) the idea of ICH ‘of the State’. Nowhere does the Convention speak of the ICH of a State, but instead of the ICH of communities, groups and individuals. Communities of immigrants might be excluded (or feel excluded) by virtue of this name.

Option (c): this might be the best solution, from the point of view of the Convention. It does not exclude from the outset any ICH present in the territory of the State (such as the ICH of immigrant communities) from being inventoried; nor does it make any claims for State ownership of, or authority over, the ICH that will be inventoried.

#### Question 8

Country C is deciding how to organize an inventory covering a specific region of the country that is particularly rich in musical traditions. How should the inventory process deal with the associated musical instruments?

1. Information about the instruments should not be included in the inventory, as this is an inventory about ICH expressions and practices, not material objects.
2. Information about the instruments should be included in the inventory entries for the associated musical traditions.
3. A separate section in the inventory should be created for information about objects and instruments associated with the inventoried ICH elements.

Option (b) is the closest to the spirit of the Convention, although the Convention does not impose strict guidelines for inventories.

Option (a): in order to present the element in a clear manner, any indispensable instruments or objects should be mentioned in the inventory. Article 2.1 of the Convention explicitly includes associated instruments, objects, etc. in the definition of ICH, which encourages the inclusion of such objects in an inventory of ICH. Therefore, they should not be excluded.

Options (b) and (c): an inventory of ICH should in principle focus on ICH elements (expressions, practices, skills, knowledge), so it is preferable not to have separate entries for associated instruments, objects, persons or so-called cultural spaces. Option (b) therefore seems better than option (c). If an inventory of ICH is digitally accessible, it would be useful to have search functions: this would make it possible, for example, to identify which musical instruments are used in the enactment of ICH expressions inscribed in an inventory.

#### Question 9

Country D will soon start the process of inventorying the ICH in its territory. Accordingly, its Ministry of Culture has produced a list of categories to be considered for use in the inventory. Which of these categories might cause concern when the Committee examines the periodic reports submitted by the State Party?

1. ICH that is no longer practised.
2. ICH that is endangered.
3. ICH that is not in conformity with generally accepted international human rights instruments.
4. ICH to which there is limited access because it is considered secret or sacred by the communities and groups concerned.
5. ICH that was not identified with the participation of the communities concerned.
6. ICH practices that the communities concerned did not want to be inventoried.
7. ICH that is linked to tangible heritage, such as musical instruments or specific places.
8. ICH that is linked to sites inscribed on the World Heritage List.

States Parties may draw up their inventories in ways that are adapted to their situation. They may therefore use definitions and domains of ICH that differ from those used in the Convention. This may lead to the inclusion of elements in inventories prepared by States Parties that cannot be successfully submitted for nomination to the Lists of the Convention. When the Committee reviews States Parties’ reports on the implementation of the Convention, it may formulate comments and recommendations; it cannot enforce actions at the national level.

Categories (b), (g) and (h) would not be considered problematic as they fall within the definition of ICH in the Convention (Article 2.1; see also Article 3(a) on World Heritage). Nor would including ICH elements under category (d) probably be considered problematic, as long as the communities concerned agree to the ways in which information about the elements concerned will be presented in the inventory and made accessible to the public. The communities concerned might not want secret or sacred elements to be inventoried, or want them only partially inventoried; they may wish public access to the inventory data to be limited.

When evaluating the periodic reports that States Parties submit regarding their inventorying and other activities, the Committee may consider the inclusion of ICH that conforms to categories (e) and (f) as less desirable, since it is a requirement for States Parties to identify and define inventoried ICH with the participation of the communities concerned (Article 11(b)) and to try to ensure their participation in the management of their ICH (Article 15). If communities do not want their ICH to be inventoried, but it is inventoried nevertheless, this may have negative impacts on safeguarding of ICH, and it runs contrary to the idea that inventorying contributes to safeguarding (Article 12).

Category (a) does not comply with the definition of ICH in the Convention. However, if the elements in question are placed in special sections of an inventory, they can be clearly distinguished from living ICH elements that do comply with the definition in the Convention and can be nominated to the Lists of the Convention.

Explicitly mentioning ICH elements that are contrary to human rights in the inventory (category (c)) might have a positive effect: it might lead to discussions and negotiations aimed at the mitigation of problematic aspects of the elements concerned. Such elements cannot be taken into account in the implementation of the Convention at the international level.

#### Question 10

Can States Parties to the Convention adopt their own definitions of intangible cultural heritage for national or local inventories?

1. Yes, as they are allowed to draw up their inventories in ways geared to their own circumstances.
2. No, they must comply with the Convention’s definition of ICH.
3. No, they must comply with the Convention’s definition of ICH, but a special case can be made if they ask permission.

Option (a) is correct: States Parties have the freedom to draw up national or local inventories in manners geared to their own situation and, consequently, also using their own definitions of ICH. Of course, if they wish to nominate elements to the Convention’s Lists, then these specific elements must comply with the criteria listed in ODs 1 and 2. As far as classification of elements in an inventory is concerned, there, too, States Parties have complete freedom, especially since the list of domains in Article 2.2 of the Convention is not exhaustive.

#### Question 11

How can you ensure that a diversity of perspectives on an ICH element is reflected in a community-based inventorying process?

1. By collecting information in a gender-sensitive way, with due consideration for women’s and men’s perspectives.
2. By actively involving young people in the process of generating information.
3. By consulting with traditional leaders and government officials who will speak on behalf of their communities.
4. By reading a variety of academic literature on the element.
5. By undertaking an online consultation to which all community members can contribute.

Options (a) and (b) are relevant to any community-based inventorying process: it is crucial to include gender and youth perspectives at every stage.

Option (c): it is important to consult with authorities (whether traditional or governmental), however, they should not be the only provider of information. Community-based inventorying is an inclusive process and shall also consider those who are less empowered.

Option (d): academic literature is a secondary source of information in community-based inventorying. Communities must always be the primary providers of information.

Option (e) cannot be used as a standalone method to collect information. Certain communities, or member of the community, may not have internet access or sufficient computing skills. However, an online consultation may be a good idea to reach out to certain audiences (e.g. youth and/or urban audiences).

#### Question 12

Which of the following statements are true?

1. Safeguarding measures must be developed for an ICH element before it can be inventoried.
2. An ICH element must be inventoried before any safeguarding activity can be undertaken.
3. Safeguarding measures must be implemented for an ICH element before it can be nominated to one of the Lists of the Convention.
4. An ICH element must be inventoried before it can be nominated to one of the Lists of the Convention.

Option (d) is the only correct answer.

ODs 1 and 2 specify that an element proposed for inscription on one of the Lists must first have been included in an inventory. Therefore, nomination is preceded by inventorying and, by implication, identification.

Safeguarding itself may precede nomination, but that is not obligatory: safeguarding measures must be elaborated before the submission of a nomination file for one of the Lists of the Convention, but they do not need to have been implemented. Nothing in the Convention or ODs requires that an element be inventoried before safeguarding can start.

#### Question 13

The Ministry of Culture of Country E wishes to include on its national ICH inventory only some of the numerous elements of ICH in its provincial inventories. The Ministry needs to decide on the most appropriate criteria for choosing ICH elements to include in the national inventory. Which of the following criteria would NOT be in the spirit of the Convention?

1. ICH elements that are most widely known and practised within the country should be included in the national inventory because more people can associate with them.
2. Only outstanding and beautiful ICH elements should be included in the national inventory because this will foster national pride.
3. ICH elements from each province should be chosen for the national inventory to ensure that it is representative of the whole country.
4. ICH elements that are not found in other countries should be selected for the national inventory to demonstrate the uniqueness of the nation.
5. ICH elements that are most in need of safeguarding should be chosen for the national inventory.

The Convention does not prescribe how States Parties should compile their inventories, but it does require: (a) community participation in identification and inventorying (Articles 2.1, 11(b) and 15); (b) that inventories contribute to safeguarding (Article 12.1); (c) that the ICH in the territory of the State is inventoried (Article 12.1); and (d) that inventories be regularly updated (Article 12.1). Inventorying should not violate customary practices concerning access to ICH and any associated places, persons and materials (Article 13(d)(ii)).

In principle, inventories should cover the ICH present in the territory of the States Parties; it is understandable, however, when there are many elements to cover, that States Parties make choices about where to start, especially in the initial phase of the inventorying process.

Options (a), (b) and (d) are not in the spirit of the Convention, which does not distinguish between ICH elements on aesthetic grounds, their relationship to national identity, or the size of the communities concerned.

Option (c) is not a necessary criterion, although it would be understandable if a national inventory were to cover only a representative sample of ICH in the territory (i.e. if did not aim to provide a full overview of the ICH within the territory). There is no obligation for States Parties to have a national inventory, or indeed a tentative list of possible nominations to the Lists of the Convention. The provincial inventories by themselves would comply with the requirement of ‘drawing up one or more inventories of the ICH present in the territory’ of the State.

#### Question 14

What is the purpose of an inventorying framework?

1. To organize information on intangible heritage elements in a systematic manner.
2. To provide comprehensive information on the historical and technical dimensions of an intangible heritage element.
3. To popularize the intangible heritage of a given community.

Option (a) is the best answer.

Option (b): Historical and technical information on an element can be included in the inventorying framework, but since the Convention focuses mostly on the significance of ICH for the life of communities today, it cannot constitute the main dimension or purpose of the framework.

Option (c) is not correct: popularizing the intangible heritage of a community is not the immediate purpose of an inventorying framework.

1. . Frequently referred to as the ‘Intangible Heritage Convention’, the ‘2003 Convention’ and, for the purpose of this unit, simply the ‘Convention’. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)