



ARTISTIC'S MANIFESTO FOR ICH VALORIZATION

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1. Preamble

The ARTISTIC Manifesto is aimed at social and economic dimensions of ICH and the diversification of resources required. The Manifesto highlights the mission of private and public funds and the role of crowdfunding for ICH valorization.

The aim of the ARTISTIC project is the valorization of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) assets for local, sustainable development in central European regions. Twelve partners from eight Central European countries worked together over the course of three years (from 2017 to 2020) to develop a strategy to valorize ICH assets for local, sustainable development in their regions. It is important to point out that all partner countries are distinct from each other and have different necessities and realities. The working process between the Lead Partners (LP) and the project partners was very productive and participative. Every partner contributed according to their experience and needs to the growth and improvement of the ARTISTIC project. We, as Universität Hamburg (UHAM), were able to observe that all partners learned from each other and together, the partners built a useful development strategy for the valorization of ICH and the sustainable local development of the different regions. At the conclusion of this project, UHAM hopes that the results of the ARTISTIC project can be disseminated and extended to other regions and partners to achieve the main aim of the project and its supporters.

Methodology for the creation of this Manifesto.

The online discussion of the “Set of Criteria to Define the Most Promising Dimension of ICH’s Valorization Projects” (D.T4.4.1) which were developed in this project with the Lead Partner (LP), the project partners (PPs) and associates during a Transnational Web Meeting on 30 January 2020, provided the foundation for this Manifesto for the UHAM. The ARTISTIC Manifesto is intended to be a best practice guideline for ICH valorization and local, sustainable development for every interested individual, community, group, and all partners who would like to work with and support ICH safeguarding and valorization. UHAM recommends the translation of the ARTISTIC Manifesto into all languages of the participating partner countries for its effective dissemination.

UHAM thanks the LP, the project partners and associates from the different countries for their constructive cooperation in this project in building and developing all necessary tools that make ICH safeguarding and valorization possible.



2. The ARTISTIC Manifesto

The relevance of Intangible Cultural Heritage for society as a whole

In our contemporary world, cultural values and knowledge that were inherited from generation to generation, from our parents and grandparents, run the risk of disappearing in their richness and variety. Economic development holds a high value in our society and it often ignores the compelling value of ICH thus contributing to its weakening.

By recognizing that community relevant ICH is beginning to fade away, we should start acting and supporting its valorization and safeguarding. However, due to a range of difficulties, only few are kept alive and can preserve what was learned from previous generations in different ways, for example traditional music, paintings, artisanship, architecture, medicinal knowledge, planting and harvesting methods. Therefore, it is time for us as society to realize that traditional knowledge in the form of ICH has a great value for society at large. It is crucial to bring ICH to light, make it known and visible to society as a whole and raise awareness for its relevance for a positive community life.

We need to value, support, and empower ICH for the benefit of society as a whole. By doing so, we will be able to find new solutions for social inclusion and integration, sharing culture, history and respect for different cultures and lifestyles, and for contributing to local economic development through ICH. By doing so, we shall not close ICH into museums but bring it closer to everyday life and make it accessible and visible to people's minds and hearts. We need to create spaces for the presentation of ICH because innovation is potentially infinite. It is necessary to open up a space for the reflection of and experimentation with new connections and to foster the birth of new concepts and new practices, which innovatively enrich the culture itself. This way, we will allow cultural heritage to last and thrive by being sustainably and properly transferred.

ICH as a source of good life

By safeguarding ICH and passing it on to future generations, we will contribute to the improvement of the overall quality of life since everything and everyone is interconnected. Unconsciously, wherever they are, ICH bearers and ICH valorization supporters contribute to our lives, wherever we live, in the whole world. For instance, traditional beekeeping or agriculture influences the lives of millions of peoples. Once such ICH is noticed, people start recognizing the non-monetary value of things and of intangible cultural heritage as well as their relevance for creating wellbeing and richness in respect to the five categories of ICH defined by the "UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage". These are:

“(a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;



- (b) performing arts;
- (c) social practices, rituals and festive events;
- (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- (e) traditional craftsmanship.” (UNESCO 2003)

Therefore, we need to work together, ICH bearers and different actors in society, to achieve the valorization of ICH assets and warrant local, sustainable development in Central European regions and beyond, in order to contribute to the prosperity and the empowerment of many groups that struggle to safeguard their tradition. ICH valorization and safeguarding should be part of school education so that ICH bearers are officially recognized as experts of their knowledge and actively pass it on, transforming it in a lifelong learning process throughout society.

Valorizing ICH and its bearers suitably

Safeguarding and valorizing ICH does not mean that it cannot be modified or adapted to modern ways of life. ICH is strengthened when it is carefully and respectfully adapted to the needs of our contemporary world, using available technologies and creativity to safeguard and valorize it sustainably. Valorizing ICH means to re-read it and to re-propose it in an innovative way and not to fix it in place as a mere conservation of the past.

Therefore, it is time for us to transmit culture in a procreative sense rather than as a static image or a copy of the past. If we want to achieve ICH valorization and safeguarding, we must find innovative ways in which communities, and particularly young people, can live their values and traditions! We need to make ICH interesting for all ages. What before could have been perceived as something old-fashioned and useless should be now transformed into something worthwhile to be kept alive as an exciting and essential component of our culture, as valuable knowledge, as something to take pride in and something that shall not be forgotten. However, it is fundamental that we respect the needs and wishes of active ICH bearers, communities and groups to avoid the modification of ICH into a generic and banal product that could lose its importance, meaning and essential cultural value.

ICH as a collective source and capacity for action and exchange between people of all groups of society

In this whole process of ICH valorization, the future-envisioning quality of ICH, circulation and distribution of ICH knowledge, ICH bearers and supporters, from the youngest to the eldest, and of all genders, need to be included in the different initiatives and projects in all project phases, from planning until conclusion. Only then and only together, will we achieve ICH valorization



and local sustainable development to happen for all and not only for a few. To reach this goal, ICH bearers and communities need to be recognized as experts and advisers of this valorization and empowerment process because they are direct representatives of their heritage. Also, all representatives of society need to come together to accomplish it, from the farmer to the mayor, from the lawyer to the artisan, from the traditional musician to the businessperson. We need to offer incentives for the whole community to become engaged within the ICH projects and initiatives by volunteering, providing spaces and material resources, by considering it in the routines of public administrative or private organizational work. These measures are at least as necessary for local sustainable development as monetary support.

Responsibility of politics and public authorities for supporting ICH

We need to encourage a wide range of stakeholders such as political actors, policymakers, scientists, intermediaries, financial operators, and businesses to become actively involved in ICH valorization and safeguarding. For instance, individual investors need to be involved in local and regional ICH projects in order to raise their awareness of the fact that ICH assets generate profitability and are therefore worth investing in. Local small-and-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) need to be included in this process to support ICH locally and foster the company identity and engagement.

ICH valorization as a complex and manifold process with ethical implications

Within the entire ICH valorization process, it is necessary to not only involve the ICH bearers, community or group in all project phases, but also to accompany the development process of the ICH valorization project, supporting it in all possible ways. Inclusion and direct cooperation with the ICH bearers are a “*conditio sine qua non*” for local sustainable development, as we cannot forget: the greater the gap to the ICH actors is, the greater the risk of negative impacts because of a commercialization or trivialisation of intangible cultural heritage becomes.

Additionally, the intellectual property rights (IPR) of the ICH bearers, communities or groups must be respected. Partners need to support ICH bearers, communities or groups in this matter, always being ready to provide instruction on IPR matters. The different partners involved in ICH valorizing projects must correspondingly respect the ethical principles for safeguarding ICH and recognize the needs and reality of ICH bearers to build a partnership on equal terms and a prosperous and fair future for the communities, places and regions.

Regional and local ICH particularities and specificities

When working with ICH valorization and safeguarding, it is crucial to see ICH in its specific regional and local context, respecting its particularities and specificities. Each ICH is unique in terms of knowledge and expertise, which make up its essence that needs to be safeguarded. ICH



is not a commodity like any other. It deserves special attention and respect. By doing so, we will be able to adapt tools, methods and techniques that best suit the regional and local needs and realities to support local ICH actors to initiate or/and improve their initiatives and projects.

ICH as a driving force for sustainable development and peace

Society as a whole needs to recognize ICH as a driving force for economic development, encompassing a variety of powerful activities, with economic and noneconomic values. Many groups of society, as bearers of ICH, have much to offer to the rest of society. Through their traditional knowledge, ICH bearers enrich the life of others and contribute to its quality in different ways and spheres of life. For instance, ICH bearers should be motivated and empowered to introduce and transfer their ancestral knowledge, such as knowledge about natural medicines, which, through manageable and affordable techniques, transforms native plants into remedies that can be used and afforded by all groups of society. ICH bearers carry different valuable knowledge potentials that need locally available resources and do not need to be imported from distant regions. It leads to the valorization and visibility of the ICH bearers, groups and communities and ICH itself, valorizing local products and its producers, contributing to the sustainable use of the resources, local market growth and cooperation between all sectors of society. As UNESCO (n.d.) mentions, the four dimensions of sustainable development - society, environment, culture and economy - are intertwined, not separated.

By valorizing and safeguarding ICH, we contribute to social processes such as transcultural exchange and mutual human respect across cultural, social, political and even geographical boundaries. It helps to fight racial discrimination and promotes peacebuilding, remembering that peace and security are central prerequisites for sustainable development. By valorizing ICH, we as a society can achieve the survival of remarkable contents and aspects of our cultures, raising awareness of the importance of respect for one another. Also, we will avoid the danger of ICH falling into oblivion and avoid the risk that it disappears forever.

ICH, sustainable development goals, value systems and moral orders

When working with ICH and sustainable development goals (SDGs), the rights of ICH bearers, groups and communities need to be respected. Likewise, they need to be able to freely choose their value systems and be included in all decisions within the different ICH valorization and safeguarding projects.

Therefore, it is necessary that ICH supporters, at all levels, work unceasingly together with ICH bearers, communities and groups by providing information and frequently offering training courses on technical skills and knowledge, such as different funding methods or intellectual property rights. In this way, ICH bearers, groups and communities will be able to start, develop and improve ICH valorization projects, initiatives or enterprises, contributing to the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform 2015).



In addition, we need to look at and be aware of the wide variety of cultural traditions ranging from oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature to traditional craftsmanship to identify suitable funding methods. ICH is embedded in historically grown social contexts, entangled with the local environmental circumstances. Therefore, it demands specific, individually tailored financing, social and political solutions according to region, group and reality.

ICH valorization envisioning future sustainable development of communities across social boundaries

In order to achieve local sustainable development of communities across social boundaries, ICH supporting partners need to constantly accompany the ICH actors along with the development of their ICH initiative or project. Supporters need to coach ICH bearers, groups and communities in different skills such as business plan creation, communication improvement, marketing strategies, different funding methods, and intellectual property rights. It is necessary here to underline the important mission of public and private funds in supporting and enhancing ICH, in all suitable ways, such as crowdfunding as a socially inclusive method to financially support ICH initiatives and projects. By doing so, supporters will be experiencing a substantial knowledge exchange across boundaries, learning from the ICH bearers, groups and communities at different levels, with different skills and in different circumstances.

Sustaining and highlighting ICH as a source of local development and potential for trans-local cooperation

We need to be aware of networking as a crucial point in the support, development and accomplishment of ICH valorization and safeguarding projects. It is necessary to build and sustain local, regional, national and transnational networks of cultural operators to empower ICH projects and initiatives, thus providing sustainability to ICH valorization projects and local development. Cooperation with local, regional, national and transnational institutions is decisive to promote the local ICH, contributing to its social recognition and dissemination to other places and public groups. Therefore, networking needs to be encouraged, improved and fostered between all involved actors. Also, all committed partners need to develop strategies to coordinate the regional network efficiently, which is an essential criterion for sustaining the ICH valorization process. This approach helps to avoid the risk that ICH initiatives do not become visible due to an inaccurate interaction of the actors with each other.

It is also essential to support and make ICH visible to help ICH bearers, groups and communities to recognize and name their values and motivation so that they are able to identify their own potentials. In this way, they will be able to inspire other ICH bearers, communities and groups to identify their ICH and to establish a future ICH based enterprises with their vision and mission. When a group or community identifies with ICH and gathers other community



members to be part of its valorization, ICH becomes a valuable matter and starts being safeguarded and promoted.

Valorization of ICH as a bottom-up approach for the benefit of people supported by local and regional institutions

At a local level, it is crucial to approach associations and informal groups that already run ICH projects but could benefit from doing so in a more coordinated or efficient manner to support them in raising their potential. Therefore, it is essential to track or identify where local, regional, national or transnational support can be sourced, such as chambers of commerce, trade associations, foundations, local, regional and state governments. This identification must happen in order to attract the attention and earn the trust of individuals and the public in general and to convince different stakeholders to become supporters of and investors in ICH initiatives.

Regional commitment to ICH is indispensable. It helps ICH bearers, communities and groups to find local, regional and national supporters. Once the region officially recognizes and understands a practice or a craft as ICH, citizens will pay attention to it and will be motivated to be part of it. People and groups involved with ICH need to feel respected and recognized. The recognition of ICH leads to greater involvement with it, increases its support, and contributes to local sustainable development. Additionally, official local, regional and national labels should be created to advertise and give visibility to the ICH beyond the local context.

Initiating legislation for safeguarding and valorizing ICH

ICH needs to be recognized as something worthy of conservation that valorizes regional history and its bearers, communities and groups, its market potential, its products and their cultural value. We need to place ICH in broader contexts to preserve, tell and re-write all information and stories connected to it. In this way, we will strengthen the relevance of an ICH and be able to safeguard the knowledge for its preservation. The effort of ICH valorization projects also depends on the support of national legislation. Therefore, we demand that relevant local public actors and governments propose and approve local, regional or federal regulation, developing and implementing regional specific laws that support and facilitate ICH initiatives for local and regional development. To this end, it is indispensable to promote the topic of ICH valorization within regional and national programs and activities related to territorial strategic planning.

We need to link ICH to the marketplace and public policies, connecting ICH related initiatives with specific and appropriate skills for future-oriented occupations, thereby also creating links and synergies with other public policies to optimize efforts and resources. Only by following all these recommendations will we be able to achieve an efficient ICH valorization process and to promote local economic sustainable development for Central European countries and elsewhere.



ICH as an opportunity to investigate, rediscover and revive

The ARTISTIC project, by valorizing ICH assets for sustainable local development, gives us precisely these opportunities to investigate, rediscover and revive ICH in the different regions and countries. Through it, we are contributing to the opening of the minds of individuals as well as societies as a whole, in diverse fields of our everyday lives, to an environmentally friendly, equitable and sustainable local and regional development in Central Europe and beyond.



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