

RESEARCH AGENDA 2021-2024

ENGLISH SUMMARY

TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE AND CULTURAL DIVERSE FUTURE WITH INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

DUTCH CENTRE FOR INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (DCICH)

As a society, we face two major challenges. The impoverishment of our natural environment calls for sustainability. And we need to pay more attention to the diversity of Dutch society. How might we ensure that intangible cultural heritage - living heritage, passed on from generation to generation - remains alive in the future, despite or thanks to these social challenges? And vice versa: what can The following is a summary of our research findings from 2017-2020, as well as our current and upcoming research agenda for the current period, 2021-2024.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH, 2017-2020

In 2017, we presented our first research agenda: 'Intangible Heritage as a Testing Ground for a Globalizing Society'. Between 2017 and 2020, we focussed on five areas of research:

- The challenges for intangible heritage in a new, "superdiverse" environment
- Safeguarding 'controversial' intangible heritage as changing society, new laws, values and standards apply
- Heritage in youth cultures

- The relationship between intangible and tangible heritage
- The role of tourism in keeping intangible heritage 'future-proof'.

We presented our work nationally at several webinars and internationally with conferences such as ICH in urban contexts. In 2019, we co-organised with the ICH NGO Forum a conference in Bogota, where we put the topic of intangible heritage in the urban environment on the international agenda. *The Dutch Centre* was also a partner in the multi-year international *Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museums Project (IMP)*, which explored the role of museums in safeguarding intangible heritage.

At the end of this research period in 2020, we published on all the areas explored. We also published practical brochures and tools, such as 'Keep your intangible heritage alive - Tips and ideas for successful collaboration: with whom and how?' and the 'Choice Compass', which practitioners can use to discuss your intangible heritage. Together with the *Rotterdam Museum of Natural History*, we organized the exhibition 'Animal, Human & Tradition'. The primary target readership for these publications was the heritage communities, but we also put together practical brochures

for policymakers and museums wishing to begin engaging with intangible heritage. These can all be read and downloaded from [our website](#).

RESEARCH AGENDA, 2021-2024

This Research Agenda provides an overview of the research program that the Dutch Centre's Research and Development team will conduct between 2021 and 2024. Our research focusses on the opportunities and challenges for practitioners and custodians of intangible cultural heritage in terms of sustainability and diversity. With the results of our research, we hope to aid in safeguarding intangible heritage: how do we support heritage communities in giving their heritage a future? Moreover, we want to explore explicitly whether intangible heritage can make an important contribution in tackling the great social challenges of our time: where can it make a difference in the field of sustainability and diversity? At the same time, we want to be reflexive and reflect on our institutional values and methods as the Dutch Centre: how do we work inclusively and where can we improve and develop our own inventory methods, namely the Inventory Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in the Netherlands and the Network?

THREE AREAS OF RESEARCH

Our new Research Agenda provides direction for our research and development activities for the period 2021-2024. In this agenda we will focus on the following themes:

• SUSTAINABILITY

How does intangible heritage contribute to ecological sustainability? How can heritage communities make their own heritage more sustainable?

• DIVERSITY

How do you involve young people or new groups in your heritage community? How can you safeguard your intangible heritage by paying attention to the diversity and multi-voicedness that society demands of you?

• INVENTORY METHODS

How does the system of inventory methods function in the Netherlands? How does the *Inventory Intangible Cultural Heritage* in the Netherlands work as a safeguarding tool in practice?

• METHODOLOGY

To answer our research questions, we use participatory research methods, such as field work and interviews. For the deepening and exchange of knowledge we develop several networks. Both networks with and between the heritage communities themselves, and with fellow scholars and heritage institutions

• PARTNERSHIPS

In our research we always cooperate directly or indirectly with heritage communities. The Dutch UNESCO Commission is also a partner. Furthermore, we will be collaborating with various other partners, for example, universities, research insti-

tutes and museums. This cooperation will take a multitude of forms, including knowledge exchange and setting up networks, joint research projects, collaborative publications and, running meetings.

• RESULTS

Through this research, we aim to enhance knowledge and understanding of the challenges of sustainability, diversity and inventory methodology. As such, we will develop a set of instruments or practical tools for heritage communities to employ to manage these challenges, as well as articles and conferences.

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE & SUSTAINABILITY

Jet Bakels and Sophie Elpers

WHY THIS RESEARCH AREA?

Biodiversity is rapidly declining, and our climate is changing. The need for sustainable management of our natural environment is one of the great issues of our time. Intangible heritage communities hold many keys to a sustainable future, through local knowledge, and the high involvement and commitment of practitioners.

Innovations of the last hundred years have made many old skills seemingly obsolete, but practices like hedge braiding (instead of barbed wire) or grassland irrigation (rather than fertilizer) are taking on new roles as examples of sustainable landscape management. Millers have returned to the fore not only as artisanal flour grinders, but also as local water managers. River fishermen help eels over dikes to promote fish migration. Frisian bird catchers deploy their trapping methods to support migratory bird research. The role of shepherds in landscape management has gained public attention.

As part of this research program, we pay attention to communities that want to make their heritage sustainable.

In the coming period we want to investigate the work of these 'citizen scientists', support them in giving their heritage a

future, and bring their contributions to biodiversity and sustainability to the attention of both policymakers and the wider public.

RESEARCH AGENDA, 2021-2024

We distinguish five sub-themes, of which our preliminary research has shown that ecological sustainability plays a specific role.

• ANIMALS AND SUSTAINABILITY: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN TRANSITION

Influenced by declining biodiversity and climate change, a number of practitioners have transitioned from fishing, hunting and gathering to working for biodiversity. What forms of transition are involved and what does their contribution to biodiversity consist of?

• WATER AND LAND

Traditional knowledge of landscape and water management and biodiversity has been subject to renewed interest in response to climate change and the decimation of nature, and is being deployed for sustainable use and management. How is this organized and what do these contributions to a more sustainable landscape management consist of?

• URBAN AGRICULTURE-PLUS: FROM SOIL TO MOUTH

In and around cities, vegetables, herbs and other greenery are planted and grown for personal use but also to

support biodiversity and to help offset the negative effects of climate change. What forms does this involve and how does this contribute to a sustainable future?

• TREES AS FOCAL POINTS OF INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

While it is striking that numerous old and new customs around trees and forests are coming to the fore, we still have little insight in cultural practices and ideas connected to these developments. In what way do these new customs reflect our connection with nature, and the role of the tree within it?

• PRACTICING ICH MORE SUSTAINABLY

New insights and laws make certain that some forms of intangible heritage have to reflect on the possibility that current practice is negatively impacting the environment. How can heritage communities better make their intangible heritage (more) sustainable?

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE & DIVERSITY

Mark Schep and Susanne Bergwerff-Verburg

WHY THIS RESEARCH AREA?

Dutch society is becoming increasingly diverse. Young people are less likely to be committed to one group. This influences the safeguarding of intangible heritage.

When diversity is mentioned, race and ethnicity are often the first things that comes to mind. But we use diversity as a broader concept; diversity also includes differences in gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, area of residence, level of education and age. While intangible heritage can be a binding force for a particular group or community, processes of inclusion and exclusion are inherently involved, sometimes on the basis of these differences. In the Netherlands, social debate in recent years has focused on diversity, inclusion and accessibility: who can participate and who is excluded?

The diversity of Dutch society is a reality that creates challenges, but also offers opportunities. How do you involve new generations, groups and individuals in your intangible heritage, so that it continues to exist in the future? How do you move with the times, for example in the field of gender and inclusion? What can

the Dutch Centre do to help safeguard more heritage from migrant communities and young people? We look for answers to these and other questions in our research area 'Intangible Cultural Heritage & Diversity'.

RESEARCH AGENDA, 2021-2024

Together with heritage communities and academic partners, there are the seven main themes we investigate:

- **YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE GOVERNANCE OF YOUR HERITAGE**

Many heritage communities are seeking young people to serve on their boards. How do heritage communities who have succeeded in this do so? With our research findings we will produce a practical guide to youth involvement in governance.

- **INVOLVING NEW GROUPS IN YOUR HERITAGE**

Because new growth is crucial for keeping intangible heritage alive, we will investigate what experiences heritage communities, groups and individuals have with involving new groups and individuals. How can you recruit new groups? What opportunities does this offer? And, what should you consider when engaging new audiences?

- **WORKING MORE INCLUSIVELY AS THE DUTCH CENTRE**

Why do some communities know how to find us and others do not? What obstacles are there for heritage communities to sign up for the Network? What value is there in signing up with *the Dutch Centre*? Are there other methods we can develop to make an application more accessible?

- **YOUNG PEOPLE AND IDENTITY**

We see a trend in which young people of mixed cultural backgrounds show interest in their parents' and grandparents' roots. For example, young people of Moluccan heritage getting the same tattoos as their grandparents. How does such a process work? Do the young people see themselves as a heritage community and how do they safeguard the heritage? Do they experience safeguarding challenges? In what way could the Dutch Centre play a role in safeguarding their heritage?

- **INTANGIBLE HERITAGE AND COLONIAL HISTORY**

In six forms of intangible cultural heritage that are on the Dutch Inventory or Network, the history of slavery plays a role. Together with these communities we explore how these pasts shape contemporary practice of the intangible heritage. What are the safeguarding challenges for these communities, especially when the views of generations differ?

- **INTANGIBLE HERITAGE AND GENDER ROLES**

Some forms of intangible heritage are exclusive to women or men, and operate within the gender binary. Several heritage communities have made adjustments in the inclusiveness of their heritage practice in recent years. With an exploratory study we want to make visible the state of gender inclusiveness and get a picture of the safeguarding challenges.

- **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Heritage communities often work together and in some cases with communities in other countries. Within this research theme we will undertake exploratory studies to see what international cooperation means for the safeguarding of heritage and what role *the Dutch Centre* could play in this.

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE & INVENTORIZATION METHODS

Sophie Elpers and Susanne Bergwerff-Verburg

WHY THIS RESEARCH AREA?

In 2022, it will be ten years since the Netherlands ratified the UNESCO Convention. Additionally, in 2022, we will reach another great milestone: the 200th form of intangible heritage will be added to the Inventory Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Netherlands. This is a milestone that highlights a challenge for the DCICH: how can we support the large and ever-growing number of intangible heritage communities that are connected to the Inventory? How will the Inventory remain organisationally feasible? Furthermore, this is a good moment to reflect on the inventory methodology of *the Dutch Centre*: how does the Inventory work as a safeguarding tool in practice? And what can we learn from the approaches of other European countries? This reflection is necessary in order to optimally support the practice and safeguarding of intangible heritage.

RESEARCH AGENDA, 2021-2024

Within the research area 'Intangible heritage & inventorization methods', four main themes are central

- **IMPACT OF THE INVENTORY AND THE QUESTION OF 'RECOGNITION'**

How does the Inventory work in practice? What effects does it have? In addition to the meaning of 'recognition', we investigate what advantages or disadvantages an entry in the Inventory has had for heritage communities. How do heritage communities experience inclusion in the Inventory or the Network?

- **EVALUATION OF SAFEGUARDING PLANS**

How can *the Dutch Centre* effectively organise and secure digital access to the evaluation of safeguarding plans by heritage communities? The evaluation of safeguarding plans is part of the functioning of the Inventory. One of the challenges in this area is manageability. The growing number of entries in the Network and the Inventory also means a growing number of evaluations.

- **INTANGIBLE HERITAGE AND VALUES**

How are personal, social and economic values, as well as other values, related to intangible heritage experienced by heritage communities? And how are these values related? Demonstrating the economic value and economic networks can strengthen heritage communities, and at the same time make policy makers aware of the importance of intangible heritage. Mapping the societal values around intangible heritage can also strengthen heritage communities.

- **CLUSTERS**

How can the formation of clusters of similar intangible heritage contribute to the safeguarding of intangible heritage, and at the same time to the controllability and management of the rapidly growing Inventory? Which clusters can be formed and what is needed for clusters to function as a self-learning network? After an earlier pilot, we are doing further research into the possible role of clusters.

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VORMGEVING

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MET DANK AAN

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