

International Conference: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Museums and Innovation

Intangible Cultural Heritage & Museums Project

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Museums, intangible cultural heritage and innovation through participatory methodologies

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Welcome to MEMORIAMEDIA e-Museum

A web museum to show and share videos, documentaries and studies related with cultural manifestations of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).

It is grounded on the need to identify, register, preserve and publicise tales, legends, proverbs, and any other form of oral culture: the skills of ancient artisans; the uses and rites prevailing in day-to-day professional, social and family circles.

In this e-Museum you can share all the videos, download documents and sound files. We ask that you always mention MEMORIAMEDIA when using our content.

The contents are organized in sections according to criteria based on the recommendations of UNESCO and national legislation for inventorying the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

MEMORIAMEDIA focuses on promoting community involvement in patrimonialization processes. The project associates the ICH concept to an *emic* approach, disseminating the idea that intangible culture patrimonialization processes should respect and value those who are directly involved in the production of cultural expressions.



Oral Expressions

Folktales, folksongs, legends, riddles, proverbs and other oral expressions, including language as a vehicle of the



Know-how

Traditional knowledge and ways of doing rooted in the daily life of communities.



Celebrations

Rituals and festivities that bear out the collective experience of work, religiosity, leisure and other social practices.



Performative Practices

Music, dance and theater as community performative practices.

Go to
MEMORIAMEDIA review

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE
e-ARCHIVES

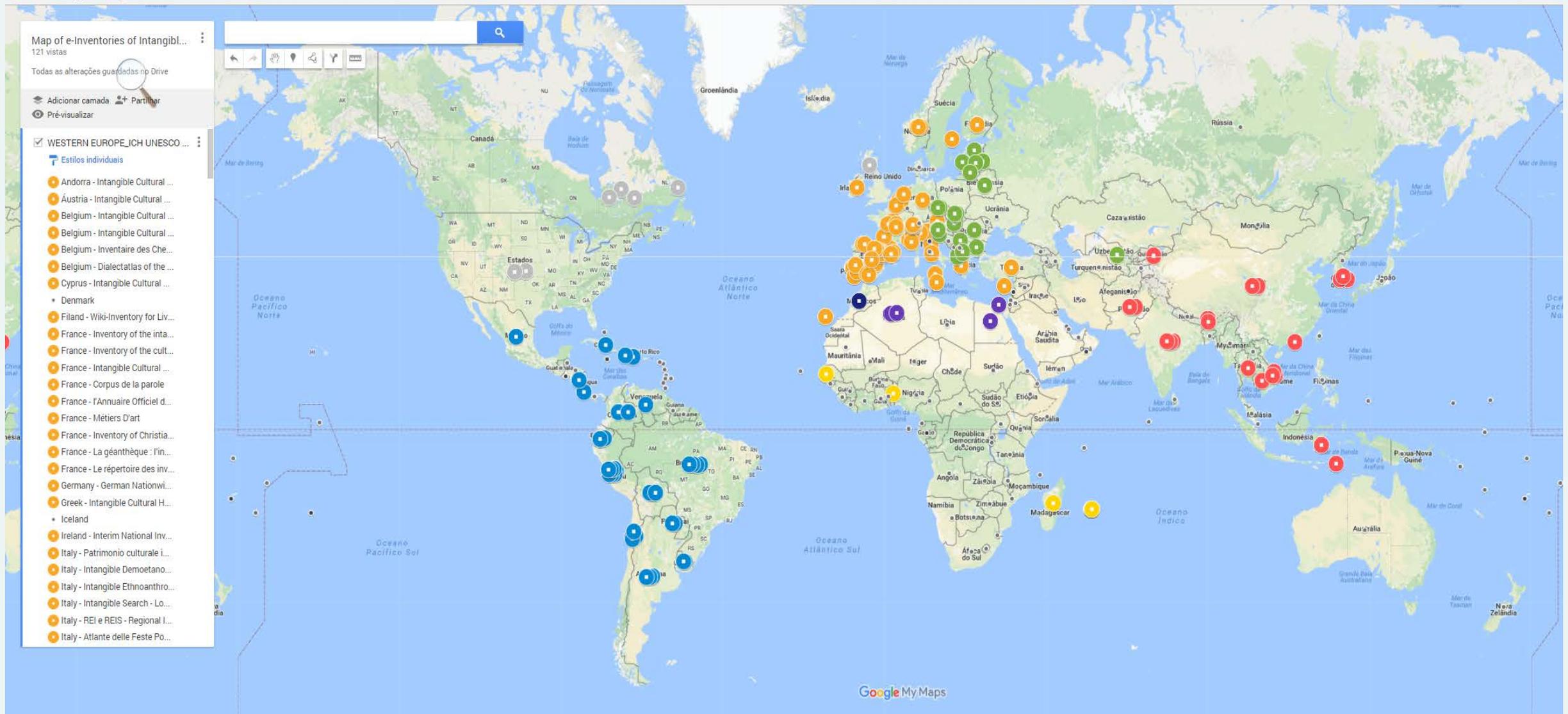


DOWNLOAD BOOK



INTANGIBLE CULTURAL

Map of e-Inventories of Intangible Cultural Heritage



<http://review.memoriamedia.net/index.php/map-of-e-inventories-of-intangible-cultural-heritage>

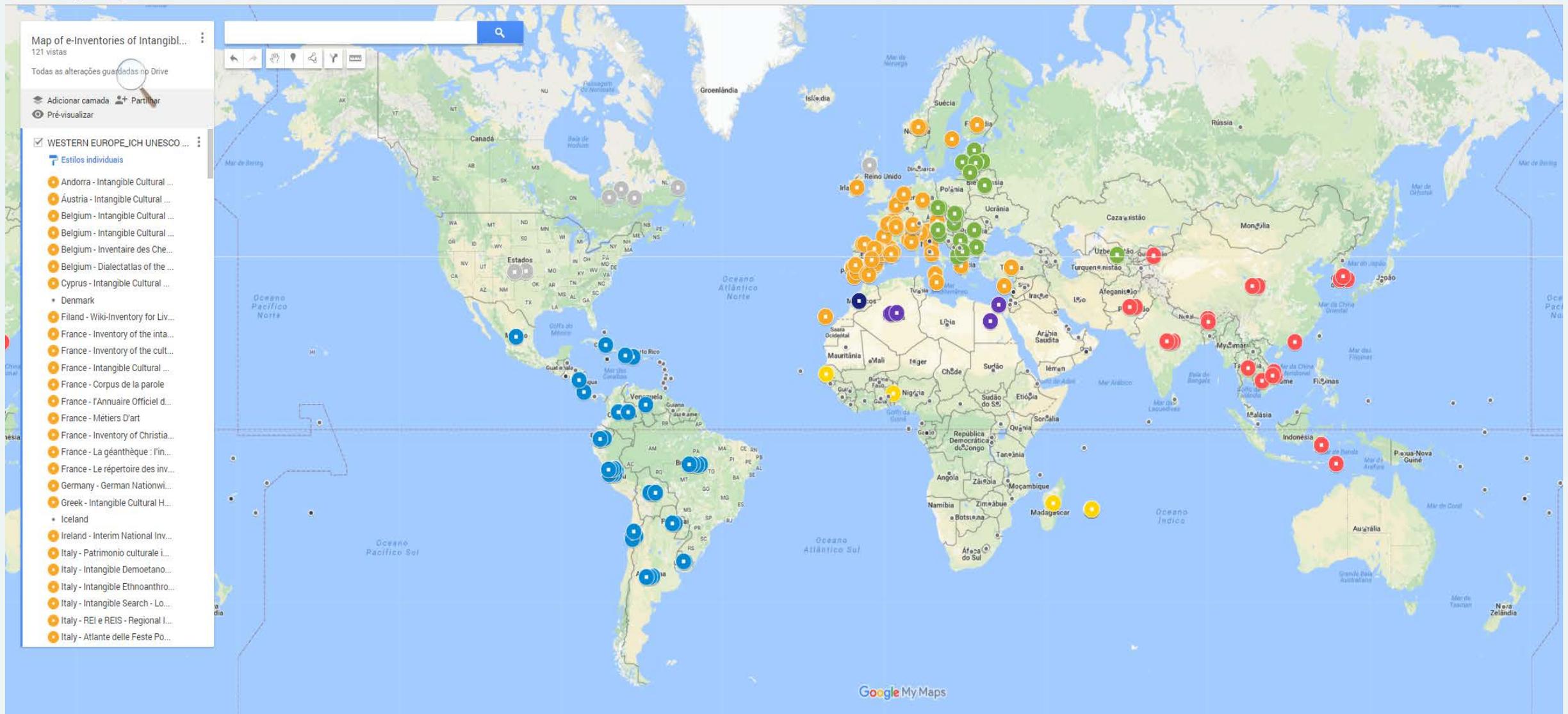
Article 12 – 2003 UNESCO Convention

Inventorying is a key tool for safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Other safeguard measures - Convention (Articles 2, 12, 13, 14, 16 and 17):

- identification;
- transmission (formal and non-formal);
- educational programs;
- training;
- capacity building;
- promotion;
- inscription on the UNESCO's Lists...

Map of e-Inventories of Intangible Cultural Heritage



<http://review.memoriamedia.net/index.php/map-of-e-inventories-of-intangible-cultural-heritage>

- in near 160 inventories -
only 22 inventories announce
the collaborative process

Domains of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) (UNESCO, 2003)

- oral traditions and expressions;
- performing arts;
- social practices, rituals and festive events;
- knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- traditional craftsmanship.

It is important to safeguard ICH because:

- dialogue and cultural diversity;
- sustainable development;
- undervalued (compared to tangible and natural heritage);
- endangered - globalization and social transformation.

- **ICH is always subject to cultural, social, economic and political conditions.**

- **ICH is a social construction**

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) (UNESCO, 2003).

- **Intangible Cultural Heritage is what communities, groups and individuals (CGIs) define as such.**

Participatory methodologies

Communities, groups and individuals - not "passive informants", but "active" in collaboration with experts, researchers, States Parties...

- ICH is what communities, groups, and individuals decide, **but considering that the cultural expressions:**
- are transmitted through generations;
- exist in the present day;
- shouldn't be removed from their original context;
- shouldn't be understood as "fixed";
- shouldn't be imposed on other communities;
- shouldn't be manipulated for commercial, touristic, political or religious reasons;

- should respect human rights;
- should be considered in relation to tangible and natural heritage;
- have key elements and locality that must be respected and safeguarded;
- give a sense of identity and continuity;
- contribute to promote cultural diversity and human creativity.

- **positive aspects of the ICH discourse of museums**

Assimilation “New Museology” assumptions + 2003 UNESCO Convention:

- stops to focus only in what is tangible;
- highlights the importance of the ICH;
- the importance of democratic approach of the heritage;
- the holistic perspective of heritage;
- the importance of local action;
- the importance of communities’ participation in the museum activities.

- **positive aspects of the practice of museums on ICH safeguarding**
- More ICH activities - e.g., exhibitions and inventory projects;
- The use of participatory methodologies – e.g., training actions, workshops and debates in the museum;
- More visibility of the practitioners and cultural expressions;
- museum as a "contact zone"⁽¹⁾ - relationship between ICH actors;
- activities that cross different ICH domains;
- activities that cross ICH with "new traditions", new technologies, pop culture, modern art,...;
- The production of knowledge on ICH.

What can be improved?

- Direct contact with living heritage (*in situ*);
- ICH safeguarding in its own context, with practitioners, in its place and time (again, *in situ*);
- Reduce misunderstanding on conceptual definitions;
- Promote information among CGIs and be informed by them;
- Improve teams/networks with different ICH actors;
- Work with professionals of participatory methodologies.

About the conceptual confusion:

Namely in the definition of "intangible cultural heritage" and in the definitions of "participation" and "community".

We know that these concepts are diverse and don't have just one definition.

But if we are working on ICH we have the Convention and other documents as reference, documents that help us about the concepts.

misunderstanding on conceptual definitions

- the concept of “Intangible Cultural Heritage”
 - Activities about elements that are not "living heritage - do not really fit in the ICH definition;
 - Activities that don't value the context of practices;
 - Activities that cross different types of culture and art without a clear goal or result, regarding the ICH safeguarding.

misunderstanding on conceptual definitions

- the concept of “community”

(Even if **the concept of “ICH community”** shouldn't be understood as unique, it's a tricky and complex concept - sometimes in museums, this concept assumes some confusion)

- Usually museums don't define the community as recommended for the ICH – don't define the community as a network of people and institutions who are related to ICH and want to safeguard it – and usually they don't identify themselves as part of this "community". As if they were an external actor to the community;
- Often, refer to the concept of "local community" – only the territory covered by the museums (the community doesn't need to be restrict to that territory);
- confusion between the "ICH community" and the "visitors of the museums”.

misunderstanding on conceptual definitions

- the concept of “participation”
 - It's not just the way visitors enjoy an exhibition (should be considered the involvement in ICH safeguarding process);
 - It's not just the way that local community participate in the activities of museums (should be considered the involvement in ICH safeguarding process);
 - Tendency for museums to overvalue the participation in the space of the museum.

- In the “spirit of the 2003 Convention”, “participation” means, not only, but mainly:
 - safeguarding *in situ*;
 - the support to a network of ICH actors (highlighting the role of practitioners);
 - and the promotion of a **collaborative process that defines and implements a safeguarding plan**.

in theory = not new / in practice = innovation:

- intensify the relationship between museums and CGIs in ICH context;
- If working ICH – work the “spirit of the Convention”;
- The concepts must be similar to everyone. Decode the Convention;
- Mobilize teams and professionals of participatory methodologies - the mediators, facilitators...

Considering ICH

**Innovation is important but
will not be relevant
if the practice and the meaning of the tradition is lost
in the original context,
for their communities.**

(1) CLIFFORD, James (1997) "Museums as Contact Zones" in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth. Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: pp. 188-219.

Presentation based on:

Sousa, Filomena (2018), "Museums, ICH and Participatory Methodologies" in *The Participation in the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage - The role of Communities, Groups and Individuals*, Alenquer: Memória Imaterial. pp. 27-32.

http://www.memoriamedia.net/pci_docs/The_Participation_in_the_Safeguarding_of_the_ICH_Filomena_Sousa.pdf