

SAFEGUARDING. WHAT and HOW.

Putting work into intangible cultural heritage

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*Since Belgium ratified the UNESCO “Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage” (2003) in 2006, the Government of Flanders has been gradually developing a policy for intangible cultural heritage.¹ This started by assigning wider recognition, acknowledgement and visibility to intangible heritage. The Flemish Inventory for Intangible Cultural Heritage was launched in 2008, and this was followed by a number of applications for inclusion on the UNESCO lists as well as subsequent recognitions.² In late 2010, the Vision Statement – A Policy for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Flanders³ appeared in this publication. This vision statement sketches out the broad outlines of a sustainable policy and proposes the use of the Dutch term ‘**borgen**’ (cfr. ‘safeguarding’). The government has since also created a digital database and interactive website (www.immaterieelerfgoed.be) for use as a tool for the **safeguarding** of intangible cultural heritage beginning in 2012.*

But exactly what does safeguarding entail? This is a question that is increasingly being posed, and it is time to provide an answer by way of an overview of everything that the practice of safeguarding involves, and could involve, in Flanders:

‘To safeguard’ is a verb

“Safeguarding suggests a broader approach than ‘protection’, whereby not only is the ICH protected from direct threats to it but positive actions that contribute to its continuance are taken.”⁴

By means of its policy for intangible cultural heritage, the Government of Flanders chose not to stray far from the application and the text of the 2003 UNESCO Convention.⁵ The term ‘safeguarding’ is central to the Convention’s text. In previous UNESCO conventions on tangible and World cultural heritage⁶, the term ‘protection’ was used consistently. Because of this, prolonged debates preceded the translation of the term ‘safeguarding’ into Dutch⁷ (as well as the design of the conceptual framework of the convention itself). The Dutch term ‘*bescherming*’ (usually translated as ‘protection’ in English) would carry too strong a connotation of ‘freezing’, ‘preserving’ or ‘reverting to a prior state’. These associations stand in stark contrast to the dynamic and evolving nature of intangible cultural heritage, which involves living cultural expressions such as oral traditions, social practices or traditional craftsmanship. Some translations that were considered included the Dutch terms for ‘nurture’, ‘protect’, ‘secure’ or ‘safeguard’. The choice was ultimately made for ‘*borgen*’ (‘safeguarding’), and with this a new heritage-related concept was launched that embodies the dimensions of both preservation and development.

In the 2003 Convention, UNESCO defines the term ‘safeguarding’ (Article 2.2.3) as follows: *“Safeguarding’ means measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage”.*

The Government of Flanders continues to expend effort on this. Among other things, ‘safeguarding’ means taking measures and organising activities to identify, inventory, document, research, raise awareness of and pass on intangible cultural heritage. The Flemish policy emphasises the **transmission** of intangible heritage. *“The emphasis is not so much on the specific element of intangible cultural heritage, but on the entire system; the methodology used to pass it on, as well as the process.”⁸* More than anything it involves the creation of opportunities for the continued survival and future development of living cultural practices and traditions.

And so 'safeguard' is the chosen verb, used in the imperfect present tense. As we focus all of our attention on creating future opportunities and supporting active and living heritage communities, we must not lose sight of the fact that there is heritage that is not as vital or visible - heritage that is smaller-scale, threatened or disappearing. Heritage associations can play a vital role in safeguarding these elements - from assisting with the documentation process (preservation) to helping to energise and update (development) existing intangible heritage practices.

SAFEGUARDING

What it involves. Guaranteeing cultural diversity with an eye to sustainable development⁹

*The development of an international policy concerning cultural diversity was the primary motivation behind UNESCO's "Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage" (2003). This was the first time that the international community recognised the need to provide support for the different forms of cultural expression of communities and groups which cannot be defined as tangible. The importance of intangible cultural heritage lies not so much in the cultural expression itself as in the wealth of knowledge and skills which underlie these expressions and which are passed on from generation to generation.*¹⁰ When we concern ourselves with a specific oral tradition, the performing arts, a festival, parade or procession, traditional knowledge or traditional craftsmanship, it is not always so easy to keep the broader application of a policy on intangible cultural heritage well-defined. With enthusiasm and pride we are quick to relate – and understandably so – how special our living culture is, how old the custom is, what the history behind it is or how unique our intangible heritage is. So it may seem a bit odd to hear that it is not so important how unique, old or extraordinary a tradition or practice is, regardless of how deserving it may be of appreciation and admiration. What is more important is the fact that these many and varied traditions and practices are with us *today*, and that they are dynamic and are sustained by large, and sometimes smaller, groups of people all over the world.

The Convention ultimately revolves around sustainability, with diversity playing a key role. The cultural diversity that is stored and incorporated into our global array of traditions, skills and know-how bestows upon us a nearly endless source of man-made solutions, and carries within it an understanding of our natural and social surroundings. As our contexts, environment, economy, population, etc. have evolved over time, intangible heritage has continually evolved along with it. The global diversity of intangible forms of culture is a fascinating illustration of our human creativity. ICH can also be a rich source of sustainable development for any number of aspects of human behaviour: leisure time, economy, social contact, etc.

But at the beginning of the 21st century, we now find ourselves in an era in which the continuity of many elements of intangible cultural heritage will soon be threatened by large-scale and fast-moving processes such as globalisation, social transformation, etc. With the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, a global community, as it were, is at the same time expressing its hope and its ambition to make a sustainable, 'fair' and diverse future possible in the midst of global change.¹¹

SAFEGUARDING

but HOW?

***"Sometimes I feel like safeguarding is all that we do.
Sometimes I feel like nothing that we do is safeguarding."***

(Participant in the Safeguarding of the Elements info day at the Flanders Inventory of ICH, 2 June 2012)

Magic formulas, manuals, practical knowledge

There is no one single all-encompassing magic formula or heritage reference manual for the safeguarding of ICH, but we can provide a few general tips and pointers. Safeguarding measures are essentially designed to ensure viability, constant re-creation and transmission. Safeguarding must therefore above all be aimed at the process of transmission, i.e. safeguarding means making sure that ICH remains an active component of contemporary life.

A second principle of safeguarding is that it can only succeed when it is 'tailored' to the specific context (the specific community, evolution, scale, etc.) of a given ICH element. In principle, safeguarding is largely carried out informally, and springs from the dynamics surrounding the ICH phenomenon and its heritage community. Safeguarding can require all manner of things, and often consists of a multi-coloured palette or composition of actions and activities. But it can also involve very simple or small things - things which we might not (need to) be conscious of.

At the most recent researchers' forum for intangible heritage¹² held in Paris (3 June 2012), Chérif Khaznadar¹³, a major player in the international world of intangible heritage, dared to speak up and question "whether an element on UNESCO's Representative List genuinely requires a plan to safeguard it?! It's alive!" This same message should also be occasionally communicated to all bearers of intangible heritage who are working day-in-and-day-out, or year-in-and-year-out, on their traditions and practices in Flanders: 'Don't worry too much about all of the well-intentioned recommendations and theories that have been issued by the professional heritage sector recently. More than anything, just keep doing things the way you always have! And if you are reading this you are already well-aware of the heritage value that your living culture carries within it. Your ICH is alive and well, you are carrying forward your traditions from yesterday and putting them to use today, and you are passing them on to future generations. You are the first experts, the true experts by experience...'

Yet we would still benefit from the development of a keen vision for the safeguarding of our intangible heritage. There is a reason that a policy was formulated for this. Sustaining and passing on many ICH traditions and practices is by no means a simple task. There are a number of potential factors at work here: our society is changing very quickly, the composition of the population is changing (ageing, dejuvenation, new arrivals, etc.), there are plenty of leisure activities, there are high expectations concerning communication and the media, etc.

For these reasons, heritage work focuses on ensuring the viability of intangible cultural heritage and on ways of safeguarding diverse cultural practices. With their wide network and their knowledge of the heritage world in Flanders, cultural heritage organisations can play a role in this process. Though no single element of intangible heritage is exactly the same as any other, many of them share similar traditions and present comparable challenges, problems and successes. Some require similar safeguarding measures, while others are quite different. In short, there is a lot that these different elements can learn from each other. In the same way that the learning process for cultural heritage is often spontaneous and informal, we can likewise learn about how to safeguard it through 'learning by observing'; we can celebrate our diversity by freely exploring the range of possibilities on offer, by making contact and exchanges with others and by sharing experiences. When it comes to safeguarding, no one has a lease on ready-made solutions or facts, but by sharing our experiences we create one large learning network out of which many ICH practices will hopefully be able to emerge stronger. With their wider perspective on the overall situation, cultural heritage organisations serve as intermediaries in this regard. They can assist in exchanging a range of safeguarding information and can help to connect elements and people with each other.

Make a plan!

It is quickly becoming clear that safeguarding involves 1001 challenges and possibilities. Instead of getting right to work on this, it's a good idea to take the time to pull back, think ahead and make a plan. This need not and should not constitute a heavy burden on active heritage communities. Indeed,

it is sometimes correctly observed that maintaining and practising all that goes into expressions of living culture already involves plenty of work: neighbourhood meetings, rehearsals, set-building, communication plans, fundraising, environmental permits, safety coordination, etc. Volunteers and associations form the vast majority of those devoting their free time to ICH-related activities that are socially valuable and often serve to build communities. A smaller but no less important group of bearers of ICH – such as artisans or performing artists – often devote themselves to this effort in order to continue their craft and pass on their skills, often while contending with difficult economic circumstances. Short of enforcing an intensive and demanding exercise in total quality assurance, it could be helpful to give long-term, critical and common sense consideration to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats¹⁴: What's working? What's not working? Where do the threats lie? Where do the opportunities lie? This type of analysis can help people make decisions and set priorities regarding the safeguarding measures that are most pressing, most important, have the most chance of success or are the most appropriate. It is up to the heritage community to make these decisions. Professional heritage organisations that work within the framework of the Flemish Parliament Act on cultural heritage and are committed to working with ICH can provide guidance and support to heritage communities when developing this type of safeguarding plan.

In order to keep them transparent and easy to understand for all parties concerned (heritage communities, heritage organisations, etc.), the extensive range of aforementioned safeguarding options can be divided into five major types, groups or clusters of safeguarding measures. Beginning in 2012, these five safeguarding approaches have been employed in the ICH PLATFORM - the digital database and website www.immaterieelerfgoed.be that the Government of Flanders developed in 2011-2012 as a coordinating tool for this broad and diverse field. These are five approaches that a heritage organisation could use when working with intangible cultural heritage, though the heritage community does not need to pursue all five approaches to safeguarding by taking various measures or actions. If necessary, emphasis could also be placed on actions within one or more of the five safeguarding approaches, depending on the needs and priorities which the heritage community has identified for the ICH. The second part of this contribution examines each of the five safeguarding clusters in more detail:

- **identification/documentation**
- **research**
- **communication/awareness-raising**
- **transmission**
- **revitalisation**

SAFEGUARDING

Identification/documentation

With the exception of a few general references to the responsibility of a State Party to maintain an ICH inventory (Art. 12) and establish documentation institutions for intangible heritage (Art. 13, (d),(iii)), the 2003 UNESCO Convention provides very little direction on safeguarding by means of 'documentation'. For 'identification', reference is made to the responsibility of identifying and defining the ICH present in its territory with the participation of communities, groups and relevant associations or NGOs (Art. 11, (b)). The Operational Guidelines provide just as little guidance, but we are able to glean some things from the teaching material used for a capacity-building workshop¹⁵ that was held within the framework of the 2003 UNESCO Convention:

Identification involves naming and describing an intangible heritage element, and in so doing distinguishing it from other elements. In the spirit of the Convention, it is important that this be done with the participation of the heritage communities. The **Flemish Inventory** had already been launched

for the identification of intangible heritage in Flanders, but the ICH **digital platform**, launched in autumn 2012, will from now on be able to play a wider role. Heritage communities can also report their practice or tradition as ICH themselves, and by doing so indicate that they identify it as such.

Documentation consists of describing and/or making an audio-visual recording of the intangible heritage as it exists in its current state and diversity and to gather any related documentation. When documenting intangible heritage, it is important to never lose sight of the dynamic character of this heritage. The documentation process must never lead to freezing the heritage experience in time; it must be clear that any form of documentation will always represent a specific snapshot in time. Should an ICH element be endangered at some point or threaten to disappear, the documentation could make it clear what stands to be lost or what the risks to that element are. It can also serve as source material to help give the tradition a boost. If the heritage is no longer living, the documentation will at least leave behind source material or a memory, even though this is not an approach toward safeguarding per se. *“Documentation for its own sake, or simply to record something before it vanishes, is not safeguarding; research to satisfy the scientific curiosity of researchers or to determine the origin, contours or specificity of a given element of intangible heritage is not safeguarding unless and until it contributes directly to strengthening the viability of that heritage. The best-equipped archive, the most extensive database, or the most dazzling interactive website can only be considered to be safeguarding when it can be demonstrated that it supports the future practice and transmission of the heritage that is stored within.”*

Finally, we can formulate some tips that could help heritage communities in their efforts to document their own traditions and practices in the spirit of the convention (the importance of the heritage community; a focus on transfer). When preserving and ensuring access to this source material, the tools, organisations, competences and expertise that have been developed for documentation and archiving within the field of Flemish cultural heritage can be called upon.

Some tips and options:

*** Enter your element into the ICH PLATFORM (digital database & website)**

*** Launch your own initiatives aimed at making audio and/or video recordings of your ICH as it is currently practised: appeal to the public at large, work with a photography club or amateur filmmakers, organise photo contests, make audio recordings of productions, set up a photo and video blog, etc.**

INSPIRATION: Aalst Carnival in sound and image

In 2008, the population of Aalst was called upon to submit their photos and films so that they could be archived. Since then, 't Gasthuys – The Aalst Municipal Museum – has been receiving fascinating material on the Aalst Carnival on a regular basis. Large quantities of photos have been digitised, and films have been transferred from celluloid (8 mm in particular) and tape (at no charge to the owner, who also receives a DVD of the material). Inventorying and storing this material is an ongoing process. The Documentation Centre for the Aalst Carnival (DAK) also organises the annual 'Carnival in Colour' national photo contest for photos that are taken during the Aalst Carnival. DAK also publishes books and CDs on carnival every five years, and people can learn all about Aalst Carnival on their website (www.dak.be). A private initiative to document Aalst Carnival can also be explored via this photo/video blog: <http://carnavalaalstkoentje.blogspot.be/>.

INSPIRATION: let the bells ring

As part of the effort to safeguard (the ritual act of) the **ringing of clock tower bells by hand** in Flanders, professional audio recordings are being made of the various ringing methods in

cooperation with the Flemish Public Broadcaster, after which the material is made available via the website of the Roeselare Guild of Bell-Ringers and the heritage bank of the TERF heritage cell.

- * **Have participants or working groups keep a journal of the preparations as they are made**
- * **When planning an event, create a project plan for the preparations and organisation of the event**

INSPIRATION: journals documenting preparations for the Virga Jesse Festival in the city

The Virga Jesse Festival, held every seven years in Hasselt, is a major event. The climax of the festival is the procession. The entire city is involved in the preparations. Hundreds of activities are organised by the street committees as well as associations based in Hasselt: pageants, (choir) performances, stage shows and the tradition of decorating the streets. When the application dossier for inclusion in the list of recognised Flemish intangible heritage was being drawn up, it turned out that very little documentation existed on the preparations that are made within the street committees and parishes. The Virga Jesse Committee and the Hasselt Heritage Cell hoped that, by distributing journals, this gap could be partially filled. Almost half of the journals distributed (about 30 copies) were brought back, and they can now be perused in Hasselt's Municipal Archive.

www.virgajessefeesten.be

INSPIRATION: crossbow builder Miel Van Beeck documents his production process

By combining his technical knowledge with his experience as a shooter, Miel Van Beeck was able to develop a technique for building high-tech weapons for use in traditional shooting practices as they are pursued in the Campine region and other places. Now approaching his eightieth year, Miel is aware of the need for a successor. For this reason, he took the initiative to learn how to use AutoCAD 2009, a software application used to create technical drawings on a computer which allows the user to design 3-D models. This enabled Miel Van Beeck to import detailed technical drawings of each step of the process into the computer. He attached explanations and instructions to each drawing. The entire manufacturing process was recorded on video.

INSPIRATION: audio-visual recording of the installation of a krulbol track

The traditional sport of *krulbol* is popular in Belgium's Meetjesland region. *Krulbol* tracks are being installed here and there - in neighbourhoods, gardens and sports centres. In 2011 the Meetjesland Heritage Cell, in cooperation with the Belgian *Krulbol* Society and the Meetjesland Rural Centre, recorded the techniques that are used to construct a *krulbol* track along with the specific terminology and conventions that go with it. You can find all of the stages of the construction of a *krulbol* track at www.erfgoedbankmeetjesland.be.

- * **Set up an oral history project**

INSPIRATION: the BETWEEN THE PEOPLE project

The city of Geel is well-known both in Belgium and abroad for its unique tradition of host-family care. In Geel and surrounding communities, families open their doors to patients that have chronic psychiatric disorders. This system of host-family care is rooted in a rich tradition, yet it is more contemporary than ever. There was much to learn about the 20th century-history of host-family care, and a long-term project was launched in 2007 to address this. During the first two years of the project, former staff members, cafeteria workers and 'ordinary' residents of Geel were interviewed in a scientifically-sound way **in order to gain insight into the workings of host-family care** in the not-so-distant past. A working group composed of **volunteers** devoted themselves to this effort. Students from two schools in Geel

were also brought in to help question these individuals. A total of 150 witnesses were interviewed.

www.tussendemensen.be

*** Collect and care for any potential archive materials such as documents, photos, videos, promotional material, press clippings, etc. which tell something about the preparations, the organisation and the progress of your activities.**

*** Check to see whether or not your archive can be centralised and inventoried. Is it possible to collaborate with the municipality, an existing archive foundation, a museum or a local folklore society?**

*** Publicise your archive on www.archiefbank.be**

INSPIRATION: inventorying and recording the Leuven Age Set Society

At Leuven's Age Set Society, a friendship network is established on the sole basis of having a common birth year. Well-known dignitaries, prominent politicians and merchants join blue-collar workers and white-collar employees to form a single friendship network. The celebration of the fiftieth birthday is the main goal. It begins on the fortieth birthday and is followed by ten years that are full of meetings and the organisation of/participation in various activities. The 'men of the year' have their own unique collection of flags, emblems, costumes and archive materials. The first steps toward the creation of an inventory were taken in the autumn of 2010. A volunteer began inventorying and recording this collection in the Heritage Register of Erfgoedplus.be, while arrangements were made with Archive Bank Flanders for the society's archive. In 2011, further consultations were held with the municipal archive and the M Museum regarding the inventorying and preservation of the collection.

www.leuven.be/verbodderjaartallen/

INSPIRATION: website for the inventorying of traditional restoration techniques

Intangible heritage is not always a goal in and of itself. It often maintains a social purpose or takes on new functions. Examples of this are the highly specific traditional craftsmanship skills that are necessary for the successful restoration of historical objects or monuments. There remain very few practitioners who have mastered these ancient techniques. The Flanders Heritage Agency, the Centre for Agrarian History and numerous project partners are joining hands to record this knowledge and expertise on the website www.restauratieambacht.be.

SAFEGUARDING

Research

The primary aim of conducting research into intangible cultural heritage is to better understand an element or a group of elements through an exploration of its forms, social, cultural and economic functions, practice, modes of transmission, artistic and aesthetic features, history and the dynamics of its creation and re-creation.¹⁶

Research is encouraged by the convention (Art. 13 (c)). As is the case with documentation, research can only be considered a safeguarding measure when it is intended to keep the ICH viable and to provide it with (increased) opportunities for the future.

Emphasis should moreover be placed on intangible cultural heritage that is in danger and in urgent need of safeguarding. The Convention also encourages States Parties to educate and train (members or associations within) the heritage communities so that they may conduct scientific research on their own (Art. 14 (a) (iii)).

Research on intangible cultural heritage has a long way to go in Flanders. Generally speaking, a range of (professional and amateur) historical research into the different areas of intangible heritage can be found. Numerous publications concerning the history and evolution of elements exist, especially when those elements are local and enjoy broad-based support from society, as with festivals, parades and processions. Frequent efforts have been made in the past to record, document and research folk songs, folk stories, dialects, etc.¹⁷ through folklore and research into language variation. Some research institutions also work in the area of historical musical heritage.¹⁸ Unfortunately, there is very little research that sheds light on the current situation of intangible heritage or which is capable of strengthening the process of safeguarding intangible heritage, whether by investigating participative processes, conducting economic or viability studies, supplying supporting technical or materials research, etc. There is still hardly any ethnological and anthropological discipline to speak of in Flanders - a scientific approach that is crucial for research into intangible heritage in terms of both substance and methodologies (fieldwork, participative observation, audio-visual anthropology, etc.). On the other hand, the importance and the application of the oral history method have increased over the past decade, and can often be a rich source of research into ICH.

One piece of research in Flanders which is worth noting is that of Noel B. Salazar into the links between intangible heritage and tourism. A number of new research initiatives have been planned since the advent of the Flemish Inventory which will deliver results in the coming years.¹⁹

A few tips:

*** Put pressing questions, challenges or intriguing subjects stemming from your experience with an ICH element on paper and advertise them to universities, colleges and research institutions as possible research topics.**

*** Work with heritage organisations, journalists, schools, universities, and local folklore associations in order to investigate and fully explore all the different facets of your ICH.**

INSPIRATION: interdisciplinary research into processions held every seven years in the Maas-Rhine region

In order to study the living heritage of the festivals which are held every seven years in the Euregio in depth, a research project was started on 1 November 2008 at the initiative of the heritage cells of Hasselt, Sint-Truiden and Tongeren in cooperation with the KU Leuven's Documentation and Research Centre for Religion, Culture and Society. This project took a close look at the flourishing tradition of the processions held once every seven years in the Maas-

Rhine region from an interdisciplinary perspective. An historic analysis of the various seven-year traditions formed the basis for a comparative and contextual synthesis, which is designed to reveal both the cultural-historical significance as well as the dynamic flexibility of this shared religious-cultural heritage.²⁰

www.zevenjaarlijksefeesten.be/zevenjaarlijksefeesten.html

INSPIRATION: research into the future role of host-family psychiatric care

In an extensive study published in 2010, Prof. Chantal Van Audenhove (KU Leuven) researched the role of host-family psychiatric care within future mental health policy. The researchers also make a number of proposals for expanding the type of host-family psychiatric care as it is practised in Geel to other regions.

*** Conduct environmental analyses, needs and wants analyses, etc. with the contribution of the heritage community**

INSPIRATION: needs and wants analysis on processions with a statue of the Virgin Mary

This research forms the first part of the programme created by the Belgian National Expertise Centre for Everyday Culture (LECA) and 'Carrying the Virgin Mary through Flanders', which is intended to improve the future prospects of the processions. The results provide insight into the needs and wants of the procession organisers. This is designed to make it possible in a subsequent phase to search for solutions which are tailored to the organisers of a specific procession. The research report is available in pdf form via the website.²¹

INSPIRATION: research into the variety of shooting traditions

In 2010, Folklore Flanders (now LECA) documented the variety of traditions maintained by the guilds of the High Guild Council of the Campine region by way of a written survey. The results of this research were presented at the 16th Guild Convention of the High Guild Council. A publication is currently being prepared that will delve deeper into the research results. This survey was just the beginning of an extensive 'thinking and doing process' in which the three Campine heritage cells also participated.²² The main question is "How can guilds protect the future of their heritage?" In this case, transmission is linked to dynamism: the challenge probably lies in reinterpreting centuries-old traditions so that they may remain relevant today, but doing so without harming the rich history of the guilds.

INSPIRATION: Research: 'The Tree on the Roof: Explorations into Puppet Theatre Heritage'

Puppet theatre is the centuries-old art of staging theatrical performances with the use of puppets. Between 2005 and 2009, Het Firmament, (t)Huis voor figurentheater (The Firmament, House for Puppet Theatre), in collaboration with the Flemish Interface Centre for Cultural Heritage (FARO), carried out in-depth research into the potential for protecting the until now little-known heritage of puppet theatre and to provide it with a contemporary interpretation. The movable puppet theatre heritage in Flanders was recorded and inventoried, as were the skills and accounts of innumerable (mainly older) key figures – 'living bearers' or, in UNESCO terms, living human treasures. The crowning achievement of the research is the book 'De boom op het dak. Verdiepingen in het figurentheatererfgoed (The Tree on the Roof: Explorations into Puppet Theatre Heritage)'. The book describes dynamic ways of approaching this heritage.

www.hetfirmament.be/content/view/302/267/

SAFEGUARDING

Communication/awareness-raising

Communication and awareness-raising

This group of safeguarding measures focuses on awareness-raising and is a primary objective of the 2003 UNESCO Convention. The aim of these safeguarding measures is to ensure respect for ICH, to promote the importance of ICH and to increase appreciation for it. In contrast to the two previous groups of safeguarding measures, UNESCO provides more specific information and guidelines on the measures that can be taken (Convention Art. 14 (a)(i),(ii) & Operational Directives chapter IV).²³ The Convention puts strong emphasis on awareness-raising, information and educational programmes for children and young people, given that they are the practitioners, bearers and policymakers of the future.

Promotion and ensuring access can help increase the value of the heritage, both within and outside the heritage communities concerned. Promotion increases the visibility of ICH by drawing the public's attention to it in any number of positive ways. Information and ensuring access increases awareness of the significance and function of ICH.²⁴

The government, the media, educators, the private sector and a whole range of associations and organisations can play a role in raising awareness of ICH. Mass media, government institutions and cultural organisations can address the visibility of ICH and the general public's familiarity with it via TV programmes (such as the recent series *Weg van de Wereld* (Way of the World) or the children's show *W@=D@* from a few years ago), festivals, exhibitions and all sorts of public activities, workshops, etc. This can in turn affect heritage communities in such a way that they come to see their own traditions and practices in a new light and gain renewed or increased appreciation for them.

Education

Educational initiatives form a special set of safeguarding measures within this cluster. We explore this in more detail in the following chapter on 'transmission', but the bottom line is that we are able to make distinctions between different modes of education. Educational packages, workshops, courses, readings, etc. which are primarily designed to provide an initial introduction to an ICH element or topic can be categorised as promotion and awareness-raising. They often stimulate, initiate, inform and tell us more 'about' a certain musical tradition, festival culture, ritual, traditional technique, etc. It is fair to say that a rich and varied range of educational programmes and projects - some of them on intangible heritage as well - is being developed in Flanders. There are opportunities for all age groups: museum workshops, hand-outs and educational packages for local schools, workshops and demonstrations during festivals, course offerings within socio-cultural education (such as the *VormingPlus* centres), etc. The reach of these educational initiatives is wide and varied; they can play a key role in raising awareness of ICH among people in our society. Collaboration is the goal!

The Flemish Inventory and platform www.immaterieelerfgoed.be as resources for communication/awareness-raising

A well-known instrument for safeguarding is the Flemish Inventory for Intangible Cultural Heritage, which, in addition to its function for inventorying and documenting ICH, also plays a visible role in communicating, publicising and raising awareness about ICH that is unique to Flanders. A logo was also created for the Flemish Inventory in 2012 to further increase its visibility. Beginning in autumn of this year, the ICH Platform www.immaterieelerfgoed.be will have a comparable effect with a wider range.

Using the UNESCO Logo as a tool to increase visibility and appreciation

In the same spirit as the Flemish Inventory, albeit with a much larger and more international impact, is the logo of UNESCO, which is promoted by the Convention as a tool for increasing awareness of intangible cultural heritage. The logo can in principle be used for sponsorship purposes by partners when organising special activities and events in the Member States. Elements which are included on one of the Lists or the Register established by the Convention are eligible for the logo, something which is obviously quite desirable. In practice, however, it turns out that it is practically impossible to get official permission to use the logo for ICH because the use of the primary UNESCO logo - which always accompanies it - is so highly regulated (in order to combat commercial and other misuse). UNESCO is for now failing to hit the mark on this issue via the Operational Directives.

Negative consequences

At the same time, care must be taken to prevent the ICH from suffering the negative effects of increased attention. An increase in tourism can sometimes prompt the community to adapt the ICH to the expectations and wishes of tourists. It can also cause friction between different communities when one community's form of living cultural expression has been recognised as ICH and that of another community has not. There is also the risk of the living heritage being 'frozen' in a particular state or moment in time for one reason or another – by way of folklorisation, for example, or as a result of a community priding itself on a certain 'authenticity'. These are cases in which the economic value of the ICH takes precedence over the social value.²⁵

A few tips:

*** Make sure that each form of communication respects the heritage communities and the groups and individuals involved, and that it places them in their own socio-cultural context.**

An awareness of the cultural, social and historical significance and the diverse (economic, creative, etc.) roles of the ICH increase the likelihood that the heritage will be appreciated. If we want our young people to see the potential of ICH and follow in the footsteps of their predecessors and ancestors, this becomes even more critical.

**** The process of promoting and providing access to the ICH should in theory change or 'improve' the heritage practices themselves as little as possible.***

We sometimes see this happen with tourism communication and development, or when a tradition is folklorised. So it is important to keep an eye on this so that these types of changes in public perception do not have a ('negative') impact on the current and future practice of the intangible heritage.

*** The range of potential awareness-raising activities for safeguarding that can be devised in the way of communication, promotion, education and ensuring access is almost endless. What follows are a few recent examples of activities carried out in Flanders which could serve as inspiration:**

*** Raising awareness and ensuring access:**

INSPIRATION: work locally with a museum.

Museums can greatly augment efforts to raise awareness and provide access to the public via their communications, exhibitions and other public activities. They can also take a lot of work off your hands in the process! Here are just a few examples: 't Gasthuys - the Municipal Museum of Aalst - created a carnival exhibit that included booklets that young people could fill in; in Ypres, the ritual of the Last Post ceremony, which is observed every evening at 8:00 p.m., is being reinforced and provided a framework by the In Flanders Fields Museum, which tells

the larger story of WWI; Navigo, the National Fisheries Museum in Oostduinkerke, is actively engaged in promoting and helping to safeguard the practice of shrimp fishing on horseback.

INSPIRATION: Carillon culture reaches out to new target groups through original initiatives

- 2010: *Great musical dictation* on the carillon of the belfry of Bruges
- 2010: *Django Bells* (tour on mobile carillon with the music of Django Reinhardt, by Carl Van Eyndhoven)
- 2010 and 2011: Carillon festival for young people in Mechelen
- 2011: *Carillon Cantus* in Leuven, with 3,200 students participating
- permanent programme: *Carillon for Kids*, with mobile carillon by Liesbeth Janssens
- permanent programme: *Rocky het Klokkie* with mobile carillon by *Compagnie Aardbei* (Jan Verheyen)
- permanent programme: *Fusion on Bells* (initiation of immigrants on the carillon with non-Western music, by Luc Rombouts in Leuven)

www.beiaard.org

INSPIRATION: impressive and inspiring: awareness-raising and participation surrounding the Virga Jesse Festival, held once every seven years

The big challenge for the Virga Jesse Festival today is to obtain a special place in the heart of **new and young residents of Hasselt**. It was for this reason that a great deal of attention was paid to reaching new and younger residents of Hasselt on the occasion of the 2010 edition. Efforts were also made to reach special target groups.

- **wall newspapers:** in order to increase awareness of the preparations taking place in the parishes and street committees among the general public, (volunteer) heritage journalists created ten different wall newspapers that were displayed throughout the streets of Hasselt during the lead-up to the festival.
- **tables and symbols for street committees:** during 2009 Heritage Day, each street committee received a distinctive symbol and a special table for their street. This personalised table displayed photos of decorations from the recent and not-so-recent past. The idea on the part of the Virga Jesse Committee and the Hasselt Heritage Cell was that the street committees could bring together the inhabitants of their street around these tables. The photos could serve as a source of inspiration and a means by which to explain the traditions of that street to immigrants. The street committees received this initiative enthusiastically. The table and the symbol were visible here and there throughout the city: in store windows, on squares and in the cafeterias of large businesses.
- **the “Wow...see how great the decorations in Hasselt are” family tour:** in cooperation with the Virga Jesse Committee, a number of tour guides and teachers developed a dynamic walk through the city for children. It turned out to be a real crowd-pleaser.
- **exhibitions and publications** on Virga Jesse heritage (including the festival held every seven years²⁶)
- And also: various programmes in cooperation with the council for integration, a special meeting place for young people, an information panel for the vision-impaired, etc.

www.virgajessefeesten.be

* Education:

INSPIRATION: educational websites

Set up an educational website. If there is no one in your organisation with a talent for computers, or if you don't have the funds to outsource the job to a professional, you could still appeal to an educational institution like the heritage educational programme at KATHO college.²⁷ Or you could blog with classroom groups, like they decided to do from the Houtem Annual Fair in Sint-Lievens-Houtem...

<http://demarktvanmij.be>

www.sjottesjoel.nl

www.beiaard.be

<http://vinken.kathotielt.be>

http://www.erfgoedcelwaasland.be/item.php?itemno=1_418_419_434&lang=NL

INSPIRATION: Telling young people the story of ICH by means of a comic strip

The procession of the *Hegge* (Fence) in Poederlee is staged only once every 25 years, so it is no surprise that young people are no longer familiar with the traditions and stories which surround it. The organisation decided to address this. They did the rounds of schools in the Belgian town of Lille in order to tell children about the *Heggewonder* (Miracle of the Fence). In order to draw attention to this tale and make it more interesting for the children, they decided to turn the story of the *Heggewonder* into a comic strip.

www.hegge2012.be

INSPIRATION: educational trunks, packs and trips

Every year during the Light Parade in the Belgian town of Mol, school groups are taken to **visit the light wagons**. In the tradition of *krulbol*, a **krulbol trunk** rolls into the secondary school on wheels. The students end up learning 1001 things about the sport, but above all they get the opportunity to play the sport themselves.²⁸ Together with a teacher training in Hasselt, they produced **teaching material on ICH and the Virga Jesse Festival** for primary and secondary students.²⁹ In Bruges, an **activity-focused and playful educational pack** was developed on **the experience of the Holy Blood Procession in Bruges from a variety of viewpoints** (the Noble Brotherhood of the Holy Blood, the behind-the-scenes coordination, the participants in the Procession and the spectators).³⁰

SAFEGUARDING

Transmission

We treat intangible heritage as something that is inherently **evolving** and which repeatedly offers a snapshot of a cultural expression that is continually being further shaped by individual and collective **learning processes**. From this approach it is clear why the safeguarding of intangible heritage requires different measures than those required for the preservation of heritage objects or monuments: ICH must, after all, **be practised on a regular basis and taught to other groups or subsequent 'generations' in order for it to be, and to remain, living**. The 'learning' and the 'transmission' of ICH practically form the essence of the intangible heritage itself, and constitute a condition for any safeguarding of ICH. If the transmission ceases at some point, the ICH sometimes simply has to die out and disappear - this is just a part of the life cycle of 'living things'.

Transmission of ICH takes place when practitioners and bearers of traditions pass on their practices, skills, knowledge and ideas to others. ICH is usually transmitted to younger people by means of formal or informal modes of learning. Communities all over the world have their own methods and systems

for transmitting their knowledge and skills. The tradition usually takes place orally rather than via written texts. This is also a reason why communities, groups and individuals that are bearers of intangible heritage must always be/become actively involved in the safeguarding of the heritage. (Convention Art. 14(a)(ii), (iii), (iv))³¹

The continuation of dynamic and traditional forms of transmission is not in itself considered to be a 'safeguarding measure'. It is only when the transmission of an element appears to be deficient or is threatened that **measures for safeguarding** can be appropriate or even necessary in order to **strengthen the transmission process** or perhaps to **develop new forms of transmission**. Introducing new modes of transmission often entails setting up more formalised or professionalised learning processes, by means of education, etc. When schoolchildren are taught something that is traditionally passed on in the community (such as by learning to sing traditional songs in the classroom), this can actually serve as a safeguarding measure that helps to ensure that this ICH does not die out.³²

Within the context of the ICH Platform, there is another type of measure that can be documented under the category of 'transmission'. These are measures related to **management and organisational aspects**. These are activities which in some way form a precondition for **the continued survival and functioning** of the ICH practice, such as support and cooperation from the government, legal institutions, ensuring the accessibility of certain sites, rituals, etc. to specific groups, and similar activities.

A few tips

* **See to it that your ICH practices continue to remain a part of daily life and that there are plenty of opportunities to pass on traditions**, such as the elderly telling their stories at schools, occasions for teaching traditional music and songs that have been passed down, honouring social customs and traditions and explaining them to children, etc.

* **Safeguarding can have an indirect effect as well:**

by making improvements to theatrical stage infrastructure; by strengthening existing markets and tapping new markets in the case of traditional crafts, etc.; through **laws and legal measures such as the protection of intellectual property rights and the registration of patents and copyrights**; by protecting the natural environment or through the replanting of threatened species, etc.

* **Take a look at or contact the socio-cultural adult education programme**

For the transmission and safeguarding of ICH, we can learn a lot from the experience and competences that the socio-cultural adult education programme has accumulated over the years. It has a strong tradition of informal education (considering the programmes they offer) and informal learning (considering the participants).³³ In addition, a great many *VormingPlus* centres already offer a variety of courses and workshops on ICH topics: from the use of herbs to felt techniques, from an introduction to sign language to puppet theatre for beginners, etc.

* **Transmission and learning:**

INSPIRATION: Short-term basic courses and practical workshops

There is a great deal of work being done with the heritage communities to organise numerous courses and workshops in which the knowledge and techniques required to practise the ICH can be passed on or perfected. A random selection from the course offerings:

- For the **Carnival of Blankenberge**, a biennial '**Carvers weekend**' is held for the carnival associations in which their members can learn specific techniques for building carnival floats, etc. but also for making clothing and applying make-up.

- The two **Mol light parades** are working together to set up **wagon-building workshops**.
- For **lacemaking in Flanders**, there are all sorts of **workshops and courses on lacemaking for young and old at a variety of locations throughout Flanders**.
- The **St. Nicholas Society of Flanders** organises a **basic course for Sinterklaas helpers and black petes**. The course consists of three sections and sheds light on both the educational and psychological aspects of the children's festival as well as the origin and evolution of legends and practices. Students taking the course also receive useful and informative tips for clothing and make-up.
- In connection with the **Old Limburgian Shooters' Festival**, a **variety of courses** are organised, **including those for rifle masters, commanders, drum majors, etc.** These courses are intended to increase the fundamental knowledge on the part of the shooters themselves. As a result, the shooting association performs better, not only at the festival but also within its own community.

INSPIRATION: training and education - independently or in a group

Over the years there have been many heritage communities that have taken the initiative themselves to organise training sessions or set up workshops and courses, or have sought the cooperation of recognised educational institutions to include their 'subject' in their programme.

- One example of this is the **'falconer' training** offered by Syntra at the initiative of the Belgian Falconry Federation, which is designed to ensure the existence of experts in **the Art of Falconry** who are certified to work professionally with these animals.
- In the same spirit is the **training to become a 'zythologist'** or 'beer connoisseur' that Syntra is establishing in light of the ICH of 'Belgian beer culture'. In addition to providing students with a basic understanding of beer, the zythologist training also includes a deeper exploration of professional beer tasting - a beer sommelier, as it were. In addition, there is also a 'serving course', or course in the 'Belgian Art of Serving Beer'. Graduates of this course also receive certificates which they can use to search for work.
- Training courses are sometimes offered for other skills and crafts on an independent study basis. For example, the organisation Lace in Flanders is organising a **'Lace specialist/teacher training course'**. This modular training course is intended to train lace specialists who will in turn be able to provide others with a sound education in lacemaking, both in a formal educational setting as well as through any number of local associations. These specialists can be deployed across the wider heritage scene, such as in museums, on the local folklore circuit, church boards, archive institutions, etc.
- **Fevlado-Diversus** is creating the **'Deafhood course'**. The goal of the course (which runs for ten full days and is spread over the course of nine months) is to reflect on, discuss and learn about Deaf Culture, Deaf History, education and the future of the Deaf Community in Flanders and throughout the world.

INSPIRATION: Set up public 'doing activities'

Get to work in a park, on a square, etc. and invite others to try it out too:

- **a contest for 'floats designed by young carnival participants'**

The Aalst youth council and the festival committee organised a contest for 'floats designed by young carnival participants'. The different designs were placed on display in the Municipal Museum's carnival exhibit between 4 February and 13 March 2011. Drawings made by Aalst schoolchildren on carnival were exhibited at the same time.

- **LACE XL**

A few organisations in Bruges joined hands to give some momentum to the process of awareness-raising and transmission of making bobbin lace. A large-scale piece of lacework was made with large bobbins and fluorescent threads in a public space, namely the city park. Passers-by were invited to participate and get a taste of the technique - an activity that is

accessible to all people and which draws the public's attention to the making of bobbin lace in a contemporary way. The lacemaking school reported new enrolments following these activities.

*** Transmission and organisation:**

INSPIRATION: Suskewiet initiative! Developmental ICH project on the sport of finching employs a temporary employee from the heritage community

A comprehensive project is being established on the sport of finching by way of the *Suskewiet* initiative. In addition to documenting, inventorying and assessing the collections and the ICH, the project is seeking to explore what steps could be taken to safeguard the sport of finching, together with the 'finchers': how might they ensure that this sport's traditions are passed on to the next generation?

In the autumn of 2012, the project will employ a project assistant for a period of one year, mainly to perform work related to the intangible heritage of the sport of finching. This measure on the part of the project initiators is fully consistent with Flemish ICH Policy, which is aimed at supporting and strengthening heritage communities in their efforts to develop safeguarding measures.

www.harelbeke.be/suskewiet & www.suskenieuws.be

INSPIRATION: a steering group or audit committee for safeguarding

- In December 2010, an **Audit Committee for the Holy Blood Procession** in Bruges was formed. The members of this committee play a role in the future evolution of the Holy Blood Procession by means of their personal expertise or position. This group, which is made up of representatives from the town council, the Noble Brotherhood, the Bruges Diocese and the heritage world, has made the commitment to reflect on major challenges to the procession over the course of three years. How can we keep children and young people enthusiastic, how can we further clarify the mission of the procession and perhaps even modernise it, or how can we maintain a balance between an authentic experience and a touristic event? These are a few examples of the crucial questions on the agenda. After three years the process will conclude with a **memorandum of reflection**.

- The **Holy Blood Procession of Meigem** set up a special **committee for safeguarding** which included persons from the heritage community as well as experts committed to monitoring the safeguarding of the element.

INSPIRATION: forming new neighbourhood committees, getting other neighbourhoods involved...

A safeguarding measure that can help to advance the transmission process could also consist of getting newcomers, immigrants, **other target groups** or **additional neighbourhoods involved**. It used to be that the **once-every-25-years Hegge Procession** took this approach with Poederlee, a town in the municipality of Lille in the Campine region. But for the most recent edition of the procession it was decided to enlarge the scope and appeal to the population of all of the different submunicipalities of Lille to be flag bearers for their respective towns. They found partners for each of the towns of Lille, Giele and Wechelderzande to do the work, to form 'a neighbourhood' and to populate a group for the procession.

INSPIRATION: a working group for rejuvenation, younger directors in the association

There are some heritage communities that are also making a special effort to rejuvenate their organisations. The **Old Limburgian Shooters' Festival** maintains an active **working group on the role of young people**. A major rejuvenation effort was launched by the **Belgian Krulbol Society** a few years ago. **Three young krulbollers were invited** to become members of the **Society's board**. They were given **no obligations** for the first year, and instead were allowed to

quietly familiarise themselves with the organisation and **get a taste** of what it is like to sit on a board. This approach was successful. The young people remained, and have since assumed duties such as bookkeeping, technical tasks during events, etc. - each according to their own talents and interests. When their **school** obligations get in the way of their work on the board, their duties are temporarily reassigned to others. As such, members in their 30s maintain a 'special status' on the board because it can be difficult to combine work and family with a time-consuming hobby. This is why they are given no permanent obligations as board members during this busy period of their lives. It is not a problem if they end up missing a meeting now and then.

SAFEGUARDING

Revitalisation

The term '**revitalisation**', or the phrase '**revitalisation of various aspects of the ICH**' (convention Art. 2.3), is likely to raise suspicions among some readers. This can evoke associations with folklorisation and nostalgia in terms of the learning and staging of long-lost traditional dances in historical costume. But the revitalisation of certain aspects of intangible heritage can be of particular value, such as when the last living bearer of a tradition or technique actually succeeds in finding a number of successors and training them. Revitalisation can also be innovative: when a contemporary designer discovers a nearly-forgotten technique and reappropriates it in order to utilise it in new and innovative ways in terms of form, materials or function.

The revitalisation of intangible cultural heritage means supporting and strengthening ICH practices which are under serious threat. The condition is that the ICH must still demonstrate a minimum level of vitality within the group or community. The restoration, strengthening and intensification of intangible heritage that is weakened and threatened is embraced and even applauded as a fundamental safeguarding measure in the text of the convention. However, the regeneration of 'extinct' elements falls outside the scope of the convention.

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding programmes

A sixth and special safeguarding measure which can also be found at www.immaterieelerfgoed.be is the '**safeguarding programme**'. A programme is defined as a **set of safeguarding measures which are used for intangible cultural heritage within broader cooperation partnerships**. Programmes usually strengthen the viability of **multiple elements of intangible cultural heritage, of multiple traditions, phenomena and practices**.

The 2003 UNESCO convention also refers to the concept of programmes in Article 13(a), (b) and Article 18.1. The intergovernmental committee is also publishing an overview of **programmes, projects and activities which best reflect the principles and objectives of the convention** - in short, **examples of best practices**. It is designed to be an example of effective safeguarding in the spirit of the Convention so that it may inspire other communities and States Parties in the development of their own safeguarding measures and activities. A great deal of attention is being focused on the possibility of easily (and preferably inexpensively and sustainably as well) translating these best practices to other places and contexts in the world, especially to developing countries.

The best-known example of such a programme in Flanders is unquestionably the '**Ludo Diversity**' programme, which supports a large number of traditional sports which are practised here. In 2011 UNESCO added this programme to the aforementioned Register of programmes, projects and activities

which best reflect the objectives and principles of the convention.

Some organisations have in recent years also developed and launched **new programmes** relating to intangible heritage. Making progress over the next few years through cooperation on safeguarding in Flanders by way of processes or programmes is in line with the cultural heritage sector's policy vision for ICH as well as its networking and expertise model. Nationally subsidised cultural heritage organisations **are able to offer substantive and methodological support and guidance to heritage communities via the topic-based or methodological expertise that they have accumulated. From recurring problems and processes regarding safeguarding that they come across within their subject matter, these national players are able to establish safeguarding programmes for their heritage communities which are then used to encourage a set of safeguarding measures within broader cooperation partnerships.**

* A few examples of current programmes:

INSPIRATION: Rond de Rokken van de Reus (Around the Coattails of the Giant): an ongoing experiment

The tradition of gracing all sorts of parades and events with giant puppets is alive and well in Belgium. Associations, friend networks, companies, schools, etc. create one of these giant puppets which in one way or another references their identity. The tradition goes back more than five centuries, and these giants are heavily embedded in festival culture. But very little is known about the viability, spread and diversity of 'giant culture' today.

With the initiative '**Rond de Rokken van de Reus**' (Around the Coattails of the Giant), LECA³⁴ is seeking to **improve the future prospects of giant culture in Flanders by identifying, documenting, researching, improving the visibility of, promoting and setting up educational programmes** on this heritage from the ground up. Efforts are made throughout the entire process to elicit the maximum contribution from the cultural heritage community itself. With the online platform www.feestelijkvlaanderen.be/reuzen, LECA is capable of addressing both the demand for making the giant associations more visible as well as the goal of sharpening the heritage instincts of the persons involved. At the same time, LECA is putting the diversity and dynamism of giant culture into a broader historical and international perspective by means of various articles, etc. With an eye to sustainable safeguarding, LECA guided a number of 'giant' coordinators through the process of launching the new non-profit Giants in Flanders so that common practical issues and challenges can be addressed in the future. In 2012, this will be followed by a needs and wants assessment process. Finally, LECA is engaging in a whole series of partnerships for initiatives both in Belgium and abroad which will be able to increase the awareness, knowledge and visibility of giant culture: seminars, exhibitions, inventories, the schedule of giant events, etc.

INSPIRATION: Design met Wortels (Design with Roots): giving (artistic) traditional crafts a future

In 2009, tapis plein vzw initiated an innovative and participative programme to safeguard traditional crafts as intangible cultural heritage: **Design met Wortels (Design with Roots)**.

Traditional crafts have an outdated ring to them in Flanders these days. The field is somewhat withdrawn, dusty and fragmented. It has no overarching network or point of contact.

Numerous barriers stand in the way of transmission. The ageing of practitioners brings with it the rapid loss of knowledge and expertise regarding traditional craftsmanship. It can also take a long time for someone to master a skill or trade, and there are a number of economic motivations that work against this, such as the fierce protectionism of accumulated knowledge among craftsmen and within companies, the economic crisis, etc.

The 'Design with Roots' programme studies ways of breathing new life into traditional crafts, how techniques and knowledge can be passed on to young designers so that they can experiment with them, how to appeal to new target groups and audiences (via education,

sustainable tourism, etc.), and how new alliances and methods of cooperation can be forged with other sectors. From practices and testing grounds (such as 'Quartier Bricolé') and from networks and communities, '**DESIGN with ROOTS**' follows several leads in order to accumulate knowledge and experience concerning sustainable, effective and feasible future prospects for creative traditional crafts that have roots in traditional styles and techniques. www.quartierbricole.be

INSPIRATION: Iron and Fire: a spontaneously developing programme for the art of forging

The goal of Ijzer en Vuur! vzw (Iron and Fire!) is to preserve and breathe new life into ancient and almost lost (artistic) traditional crafts using metal and fire (forging, copper embossing, silversmithing, etc.). It is seeking to help keep the tangible and intangible heritage associated with it viable and up-to-date.

The alchemy of iron and fire has been fascinating humans for more than 12,000 years. Today the profession of blacksmith has almost completely disappeared from our society. Museums have undertaken the responsibility to keep the memory of the blacksmith alive. Iron and Fire! is taking it a step further, and is **keeping the blacksmith's fire hot**. Through **lectures**, they are bringing the ancient tale of alchemy between iron and fire back to life. During **workshops and traineeships**, interested individuals get the chance to place the iron in the fire themselves and learn the basics of forging. Some years ago the organisation had the foresight to fashion a **mobile workshop** that can be transported and used for initiation courses. For those who are employed professionally or who are simply bit by the bug, Iron and Fire! will soon be offering **completion and specialisation courses** as well. **Exhibitions** are being set up in conjunction with numerous partners to get the public at large interested in the work of contemporary blacksmith artists. Each time that this organisation encounters a new challenge, it takes the following approach: **solutions are sought in a progressive way** to problems concerning traineeships, work placements, the status of the blacksmith, etc. www.ijzerenvuur.be

IN CONCLUSION

SAFEGUARDING is a network

The plant doesn't grow when you pull on it.³⁵

The main thrust of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Flemish ICH policy is the **sharing and exchange of safeguarding experiences** in order to increase the opportunities for sustainable safeguarding. Rather than making a list of the imposing multiplicity and diversity of the intangible heritage in existence, this involves giving as many chances as possible to as many cultural practices as possible so as to guarantee them a future. The new **ICH Platform** www.immaterieelerfgoed.be can serve as a fascinating foundation and forum for exchange for this process in Flanders. In order to make something of this, it is up to the **network of national and local cultural heritage organisations and heritage communities, which are gradually evolving and becoming more visible**. It should nevertheless be mentioned that we are attempting to **blaze a trail** by means of this digital and physical network that will hopefully be able to serve as a model and inspiration for other countries.

The Convention is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2012, at which time the Flemish Inventory will be five years old. The first major steps towards launching the safeguarding policy are now behind us. What we can take from this first phase is that both the **Lists of the Convention as well as the Flemish Inventory for ICH exert a huge gravitational force**. In this regard, it **should be noted** that even though these tools do ensure a high degree of attention, visibility and awareness, we unfortunately end up

getting quickly bogged down in the **science of lists, selections and competition**, and as a result we are susceptible to losing our **focus on the safeguarding and the value of diversity**. It is important for those working with cultural heritage to maintain a sharp focus on this.

These anniversaries also call for an **evaluation** and a shift in focus. Many dynamic traditions and heritage practices will have gradually found, or will gradually find, their way to the ICH tools and the cultural heritage field. The challenge is to keep these bonds alive and to continue to work on them. These **dynamic traditions and heritage communities** are the most beautiful advertisement that the ICH could ever wish for. At the same time, the heritage sector has to guard against automatically spending time and effort on enthusiastic heritage communities that spontaneously approach professional heritage organisations. Otherwise, we risk continually having to contend with the usual suspects, no matter how important it is that these communities demonstrate dynamism and mobilise support and awareness, and no matter how appropriate it may be for the small-scale heritage sector to have its hands full with these heritage communities overnight.

But it is also important to take the next step and shift the energy and expertise of this cultural heritage field and these dynamic elements to **phenomena that are less stable or which are less capable of finding their way**. This could involve ICH that is more weakly organised, is not underpinned by strong structures or associations, receives less local political or touristic attention, might be poorly positioned 'in the market', etc. It may be that the efforts of heritage workers in the near future should be focused more on those areas where there is a greater need, where it is almost too late and where transmission and safeguarding is less spontaneous or complete. This can be done by providing **impetus**, by **giving a nudge to a safeguarding plan** and generating **renewed prospects for the future**. This will probably be a more laborious course to take, and will be a quest in which we will need to, and will be able to, draw on our accumulated experiences and expertise to their fullest.

And finally - while we here in Flanders are developing experiments and programmes and accumulating experiences en masse - an appeal to every now and then translate a portion of our time, effort and expertise at the international level - to the roots of the Convention: to achieve a greater balance between the opportunities and chances available in the North and the South through **multinational cooperation partnerships, through contributions to capacity-building projects and programmes, and through exchange and international residencies**. In 2008 and 2009, in cooperation with FARO, tapis plein travelled to South Africa for a capacity-building project on ICH for young people. In Thaba Nchu (near the city of Bloemfontein), we created an initial project component for young people that was modelled around the development of an **educational heritage game** for children. In November and December of 2009, the second component of the project took place in Nyanga (Capetown). It focused on **mapping** as a contemporary way of getting the local population involved in tourism initiatives from both a heritage and economic standpoint. We shared all of the ideas and experience we possessed with the local community and its young people. And when we travelled home, we had even more luggage with us than when we arrived.

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¹ 'intangible cultural heritage' is often abbreviated as 'ICH' and is also abbreviated as such in this text.

² For an overview of the lists and the elements included from Belgium, see:

www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00011 (accessed on 10 August 2012).

³ 'Vision Statement - A Policy for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Flanders' (17 December 2010), in: *faro*, 3(2010), p. 4-29.

⁴ J. BLAKE, *Commentary on the UNESCO 2003 convention for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage*, Cambridge, Institute of Art & Law, 2006. p. 23

⁵ Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Paris, 17 October 2003.

www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00006 (accessed on 10 August 2012).

⁶ The UNESCO conventions of 1954 and 1970 on tangible heritage; the UNESCO conventions of 1954 and 1972 on World cultural heritage.

⁷ In the 'Vision Statement - A Policy for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Flanders' (17 December 2010), this terminology issue is explained in detail in the chapter entitled "From 'protecting' to 'safeguarding' intangible cultural heritage". *faro*, 3(2010), p.4-29.

⁸ 'Vision Statement - A Policy for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Flanders' (17 December 2010), chapter entitled 'From "protecting" to "safeguarding" intangible cultural heritage', in: *faro*, 3 (2010), p. 4-29.

⁹ The introduction to the 2003 Convention text includes the following:

"(...) Considering the importance of the intangible cultural heritage as a mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development, as underscored in the UNESCO Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore of 1989, in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2001, and in the Istanbul Declaration of 2002 adopted by the Third Round Table of Ministers of Culture, (...)

Recognizing that the processes of globalization and social transformation, alongside the conditions they create for renewed dialogue among communities, also give rise, as does the phenomenon of intolerance, to grave threats of deterioration, disappearance and destruction of the intangible cultural heritage, in particular owing to a lack of resources for safeguarding such heritage, (...)"

¹⁰ The infomap of intangible cultural heritage distributed by UNESCO Platform Flanders vzw and FARO (Flemish Interface Centre for Cultural Heritage) provides a handy, accessible and detailed explanation of ICH and the 2003 convention.

¹¹ R. Kurin, 'Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in the 2003 UNESCO Convention: a critical appraisal', *Museum International*, Volume 56 (2004), Issue 1-2, p.71.

¹² For more information on the researchers forum and the programme of the most recent seminar, see:

www.festivaldelimaginaire.com/programme/journee-du-patrimoine-culturel.html en www.ichresearchers-forum.org/ (both accessed on 12 August 2012).

¹³ Chérif Khaznadar often works as a cultural expert at UNESCO and is a valued advocate of intercultural dialogue. Starting from 2002 and up to the present, he has been involved in the UNESCO Convention as an expert for the French delegation. He also serves as chairman of the House of World Cultures in Paris, which sets up programmes concerning ICH on a regular basis.

¹⁴ This refers to the so-called SWOT analysis. This is of course only one way of working on organisation and policy development, though it is often used in the heritage sector. For more information on this, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SWOT_analysis (accessed on 13 August 2012).

¹⁵ See the UNESCO workshop programme INV Community-based inventorying at

www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/INV%2520Community-based%2520inventorying%2520-%2520advance%2520copy.docx+glossary+Intangible+cultural+heritage&hl=nl&gl=be&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEEShFfg4XEFiGwXa8C2rkdGdpDhrinae_8XS70FgdGZUQrmS1fncV3g-tzbgxU31UngmRC-_aVwR6m_TB2kiZ51m7PCoSS_6DN6iIX_VuOgG9JiB0o2A-6l8nQbvyXqfOg5ou_EN1&sig=AHIEtbQQyk6p3fNphBdczNFogupAN-Glwg&pli=1 (accessed on 14 August 2012).

¹⁶ From the UNESCO workshop programme INV Community-based inventorying (see footnote 17).

¹⁷ See [www.volksverhalenbank.be](http://www.volksverhalenbank.be;); www.liederenbank.nl; www.meertens.knaw.nl/soundbites/ (accessed on 15 August 2012).

¹⁸ See: www.muzikaalergoed.be/categorie-portaal/onderzoekinstellingen (accessed on 15 August 2012).

¹⁹ Research projects which might be relevant to safeguarding and which are in the pipeline as of 2012-2013 include:

- for the element of '(the ritual act of) bell-ringing by hand in Flanders': historical research into local manual bell-ringing traditions with a focus on its origin and spread, significance of the chimes, bell-ringers, competitions, etc.;

- for the element of the 'light parade' held in the Belgian city of Mol: research into light parade dynasties and light traditions in the Campine region during the month of September;

- for the element of the 'customs surrounding Sinterklaas and St. Martin in Flanders': reprise research that was conducted in 1992-1993 into the spread of Sinterklaas and St. Martin customs to make it possible to create a new baseline and map of Flanders in 2013.

²⁰ The final report from this research project was published in 2010 under the title '*The Septennio in Septennium: Seven-year Processions in the Maas-Rhine Region*', by Gert Gielis with collaboration from Sebsten Libens.

²¹ See: www.volkskunde-vlaanderen.be/cms_files/file/Verslagboek%20processies%20met%20Mariabeeld.pdf

²² The three heritage cells in the Campine region are the Northern Campine Heritage Cell, the Kerf Heritage Cell and the Campine Character Heritage Cell.

²³ 2003 UNESCO convention: *Article 14 - Education, awareness-raising and capacity-building*.

(a) ensure recognition of, respect for, and enhancement of the intangible cultural heritage in society, in particular through:

(i) educational, awareness-raising and information programmes, aimed at the general public, in particular young people;

(ii) specific educational and training programmes within the communities and groups concerned;

(iii) capacity-building activities for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, in particular management and scientific research;

(iv) non-formal means of transmitting knowledge;

²⁴ Taken loosely from the UNESCO workshop programme INV Community-based inventorying (see footnote 17 above).

²⁵ More on this can be found in the infomap on intangible cultural heritage distributed by UNESCO Platform Flanders vzw and FARO, the Flemish Interface Centre for Cultural Heritage (see footnote 11).

²⁶ See: www.hetstadsmus.be/content.php?hmlD=1821&smID=1551&ssmID=7 (accessed on 15 August 2012).

²⁷ See: <https://www.katho.be/apps.aspx?smid=1354> (accessed on 15 August 2012).

²⁸ See: www.erfgoedcelmeetjesland.be/item.php?itemno=19_123_166&lang=NL (accessed on 15 August 2012).

²⁹ See: www.virgajessefeesten.be/website/virga-jesse/assets/files/shop_roosje/folder_lesbrieven_pd7_def.pdf (accessed on 15 August 2012).

³⁰ See: www.erfgoedcelbrugge.be/product.php?lang=NL&prodid=550&catid=43&itemno=&pos=0 (accessed on 15 August 2012).

³¹ In certain cases, an external safeguarding intervention can be undesirable because it might disturb the value that the heritage represents for the community.

³² Taken loosely from the UNESCO workshop programme INV Community-based inventorying (see footnote 17 above).

³³ H. Baert, 'Een sociaal-culturele methodiek: denken over doen (A socio-cultural methodology: thinking about doing), in: Y. Larock, F. Cockx, G. Gehre, G. Van den Eeckhaut, T. Vanwing, & G. Verschelden (red.), *Spoor zoeken. Handboek sociaal-cultureel werk met volwassenen (Looking for clues: Handbook for socio-cultural adult education)*. Ghent, Academia Press, (2005), p. 157-180.

³⁴ LECA, National Expertise Centre for Everyday Culture, formerly known as Volkskunde Vlaanderen vzw (Folklore Flanders).

³⁵ Small nugget of wisdom from the performance of 'Geheime Bijlage' (Secret Enclosure) of Judith de Joode and Lisa Verbelen, Jong Wilt – Kunstencentrum De Werf 2012.