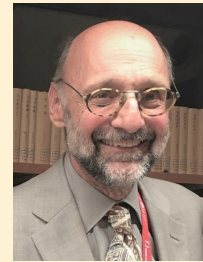


Greetings



This 16th edition of the *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* marks a new and exciting phase for the journal, following a cooperation agreement between ICOM, the National Folk Museum of Korea and ICOM Korea earlier this year. This reinforced collaboration is intended to extend and enhance the discussion of intangible heritage among our international museum community.

Following the adoption of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003, and the ICOM General Conference that followed in Seoul, Republic of Korea in 2004, intangible heritage became a priority in the museum world. The creation of the *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* (IJIH) was one inspired initiative that ensued, as the first journal of its kind to present content on the study, preservation, interpretation and promotion of intangible heritage.

Refereed and edited to the highest academic standards, IJiH has cast a spotlight on this growing aspect of heritage studies. The National Folk Museum of Korea, itself a source of inspiration for intangible cultural heritage preservation, has been a dedicated driver of this initiative, and together with ICOM Korea and experienced contributors from various disciplines, countries and organisations, has produced an effective new platform for the intangible cultural heritage movement.

Also known as 'living cultural heritage', intangible cultural heritage encompasses the skills and traditions that can be transmitted from one generation to the next. Museums are vital places for the preservation and safeguarding of this heritage, and resources such as IJiH have the potential to revive intangible human practices and expressions that may be in danger of disappearance from the collective memory.

Since the creation of IJiH, ICOM has taken further steps to improve the awareness of intangible cultural heritage. For instance, our General Conference held in Milan in 2016 on the theme of *Museums and Cultural Landscapes* included several discussions of a wide range of intangible cultural aspects such as language, ways of life, belief systems and inter-generational exchange.

In addition, the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museums Project (IMP), launched in 2017, explored how intangible heritage practices were incorporated in museum work across Europe, with partner organisations from Belgium, The Netherlands, France, Italy and Switzerland. In 2020, the project produced the IMP Book, which presents transformative heritage practices for the 21st century, and the **ICH and Museums toolkit**, which provides tools for museum professionals to engage with safeguarding living heritage.

The time is therefore ripe for ICOM and IJiH to join forces to ensure that this aspect of museum work and research continues to be explored and given the attention it deserves. This is especially vital given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and related restrictions on the intangible heritage of communities, including interpersonal connection and social support systems.

In this challenging context, IJH can support the quest to reinforce museums' commitment to their communities, while highlighting their essential role in building a just and sustainable future.

As ICOM President and more recently, a member of the newly created IJH Governing Board, I would like to thank all the contributors and collaborators who have made IJH such an excellent resource in exploring intangible cultural heritage to date. I look forward to raising this discussion to new heights, with the collaboration of our Korean colleagues, and the entire ICOM community.

Alberto Garlandini
ICOM President