



IGRMS BHOPAL CHARTER

Ethical Principles for Community Cultural Engagement

The participants of the intercultural dialogue in Bhopal, India, gathered to discuss and deliberate on the theme ‘**Safeguarding Living Cultures and Living Traditions**’, hosted and facilitated by the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, in strategic partnership with the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences and the International Institute for the Inclusive Museum, adopted the following Charter:

Being respectful of elders past, present and emerging in Indigenous and all cultural communities;

Celebrating cultural and linguistic diversity as the invaluable heritage of humanity;

Being mindful of urgent attention to climate emergency and the benefits from Indigenous Knowledge Systems in mitigation, adaptation, and prevention of loss and damage;

Honouring the Hard Law and Soft Law Instruments of the UN and UNESCO with a focus on the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001; the UN Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, 2007; The Ethical Principles in the spirit of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage ;

Seeking the support of professional bodies, especially INGOs such as ICOM, ICOMOS, IFLA, ICA representing GLAM institutions as well as IGOs, such as UNESCO, ICCROM, IUCN, WIPO, UN Tourism and UN WHO;

Adhering, in particular, to the ICOM Code of Ethics, ICOM Cultural Diversity Charter and the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society, 2015;

Appealing to all local, state, regional, national and international agencies for their support;

Committing to promoting peace, harmony and intercultural dialogue addressing the UN Agenda 2030;

Building on the Shillong Charter for Sustainable Heritage Development and cognisant of the potential of Sustainable Development Goals in heritage, health and well-being, the following

Set of Policy Guidelines to provide for the **Safeguarding of Indigenous Heritage** in all its manifestations through inclusive museums, heritage landscapes and cultural agencies as civic spaces for all people:

1. **Inter-generational transmission** of Indigenous and Local Knowledge Systems and embedded cultural values through all possible channels of communication, especially museums and heritage agencies, in order to prioritise those knowledge elements that are endangered, with few living elders who are bearers and transmitters.
2. Appropriate curriculum development and pedagogy, respecting and promoting the First Voice of groups and communities through all forms of heritage, including language, literature, performing arts, cultural expressions and contents; enabling a sense of identity, self-esteem and dignity to the particular group/ community; and ensuring that educational programming in museums, cultural centres, schools and educational institutions is developed with **dialogical pedagogy**.
3. Development and promotion of **Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs)** by the primary stakeholder communities to safeguard tangible and intangible, movable and immovable, cultural and environmental heritage, ensuring that IKCs become collaborative hubs for strategic partnerships with educational and all responsible agencies at the local, state, regional, national and international levels.
4. **Mutual respect**, as well as respect for and mutual appreciation of Indigenous and Intangible heritage to prevail in interactions between States and between communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals. The **dynamic and living nature of intangible heritage** should be continuously respected, and authenticity and exclusivity should not constitute concerns and obstacles in the safeguarding of Indigenous and Intangible heritage.
5. All interactions with the communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals who create, safeguard, maintain and transmit Indigenous and Intangible heritage to be characterised by **transparent** collaboration, dialogue, negotiation and consultation, and be contingent upon their **free, prior, sustained and informed consent**.
6. **The access** of communities, groups and individuals to the instruments, objects, artefacts, cultural and natural spaces and places of memory whose existence is necessary for expressing the Indigenous Heritage to be ensured, including in situations of armed conflict. Customary law and practices governing access to Indigenous and intangible heritage should be fully respected, even where these may limit broader public access.
7. Each community, group or individual to assess the value of its own Indigenous Heritage, and this heritage should **not be subject to external judgements of value or worth**.
8. Communities, groups and individuals who are custodians of Indigenous Heritage to **benefit from the protection** of the moral and material interests resulting from such heritage, and particularly from its use, research, documentation, promotion or adaptation by members of the communities or others.

9. Communities, groups, local, national and transnational organisations and individuals to carefully assess the direct and indirect, short-term and long-term potential and definitive **impact** of any action that may affect the viability of Indigenous Heritage or the communities who practise it.
10. Communities, groups, and, where applicable, individuals to play a significant role in determining what constitutes **threats** to their Indigenous Heritage, including the decontextualisation, commodification and misrepresentation of their heritage and deciding how to prevent and mitigate such threats.
11. The **cultural diversity** and identities of communities, groups and individuals to be fully respected. In the respect of values recognised by communities, groups and individuals and sensitivity to cultural norms, specific attention to **gender** equality, **youth** involvement and **respect for ethnic identities** to be included in the design and implementation of safeguarding measures.
12. The safeguarding of Indigenous and Intangible heritage, as a **general interest to humanity**, to be undertaken through cooperation among bilateral, sub regional, regional and international parties; nevertheless, communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals should never be alienated from their own Indigenous and Intangible heritage.
13. Inventorisation to be undertaken as a dynamic and ongoing process for documenting all forms of arts, culture, heritage and environmental practices, including local literature, and especially through the bearers and transmitters of various forms of living heritage, and with due respect to the intellectual and cultural property rights of the respective communities.
14. An Indigenous Heritage capacity-building strategy to be developed with adequate and appropriate resourcing and implementation as a priority affirmative action agenda with anticipated outcomes that can be measured with evidence-based qualitative and quantitative indicators.
15. In safeguarding Indigenous Heritage, all affordable technologies to be used with careful assessment of the impacts of digital globalisation and ensuring the IP rights in the digital domain. Digitisation, digital access and born digital heritage should be addressed with appropriate strategies.
16. As part of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and with UNESCO as the co-chair of the UN Inter-Agency Support Group (IASG), to participate in the global call to action for building an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient future with Indigenous peoples. The International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032) aims to safeguard Indigenous languages, cultures, and traditions through mother-tongue-based education and educational kits, and programming to ensure students maintain a strong connection with their heritage.



Don Bosco Centre
for Indigenous Cultures



SHILLONG CHARTER FOR MUSEUMS & SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT

We the participants representing indigenous¹ people and cultural institutions from all the eight North Eastern States of the Republic of India, gathered at the Siloam near Shillong from 18th to 21st February 2015, to discuss and deliberate on the theme *Museums, Indigenous People and Living Heritage*, facilitated by the Indian Museum as part of its North East Museums Programme (NEMP) in partnership with the Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures and the International Institute for the Inclusive Museum:

Respectful of elders past and present in our indigenous communities;

Celebrating the guarantee of Fundamental Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of India;

Honouring the cultural and linguistic diversity of the eight states of North Eastern India;

Expressing our commitment to the ICOM ASPAC *Shanghai Charter* (2002), the *Indian Model on Intangible Heritage* (suggested at the ICOM ASPAC workshop on “Intangible Heritage, Museums and Globalization”, Shanghai 2002), the *ICOM Seoul Declaration* (2004), and the *Calicut Charter* (2007);

Seeking the support of professional bodies especially INGOs such as ICOM, ICOMOS, IFLA, ICA as well as IGOs such as UNESCO, ICCROM, IUCN, WIPO;

Appealing to all Indian authorities at the local, state, regional and national levels for their support;

Committing to promoting peace, harmony and intercultural dialogue in our secular and democratic Republic of India;

Valuing the *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (2001); the *UN Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*, 2007; and the entire set of *UNESCO Conventions*; and

Underlining the potential of Sustainable Development Goals for indigenous well-being within the UN post-2015 Development Agenda;

Adopted the following Set of Principles to provide guidance for promoting the cultural, linguistic, social, economic and environmental diversity of North Eastern India through inclusive museums and heritage institutions as civic spaces for all people:

1. Inter-generational transmission of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKSs) and embedded cultural values through all possible channels of communication, especially for museums and heritage agencies to prioritise those knowledge elements that are endangered with few living elders that are carriers and transmitters.
2. Development and promotion of Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs) by the primary stakeholder communities to safeguard tangible and intangible, movable and immovable, cultural and natural heritage, ensuring that IKCs become collaborative hubs for strategic partnerships with educational, public, private and all responsible agencies at the local, state, regional, national and international levels.
3. Appropriate curriculum development and pedagogy, respecting and promoting the First Voice through all forms of heritage including language, literature, performing arts, cultural expressions and contents of indigenous people, enabling a sense of identity, self-esteem and dignity to the particular group/ community; and ensuring that educational programming is dialogic in museums, cultural centres, schools, educational institutions.
4. Inventorisation as a dynamic and ongoing process for documenting all forms of arts, culture, heritage and environmental practices including local literature and especially through the carriers and transmitters of various forms of living heritage; and taking advantage of the methodology of People's Biodiversity Registers; and with due respect to the intellectual and cultural property rights of the respective communities.
5. Revitalisation of endangered IKSs and in particular most vulnerable cultural elements through documentation and awareness raising activities about our sense of place and identity through cultural performances in museums, cultural centres, villages, educational institutes so as to instill a sense of pride and self-esteem amongst indigenous people of all generations.
6. Research and development of methodologies and case studies for understanding and promoting the layers of significance of heritage resources, gender mainstreaming and creativity of indigenous and all other cultural groups based on mutual respect and commitment to inclusive and sustainable heritage development.
7. Development of a systematic and collaborative North Eastern Indian capacity building strategy with adequate and appropriate resourcing, and guaranteeing implementation as a priority affirmative action agenda where the anticipated outcomes could be measured with evidence based qualitative and quantitative indicators.

¹Understood as *Adivasi* or Tribal people and communities in India