



# SUMMARY REPORT CONCERNING THE SOCIAL APPROACH TO ICH

D.T1.3.2

ACTIVITY A.T1.3: THE SOCIAL PERCEPTION OF ICH VALORIZATION

WP T1

Version 2

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## 1. Introduction

In this task, the major approach is to understand the general social perception of ICH and its valorisation. To receive promising data, it was necessary to get in contact with people and associations dealing with ICH in the specific areas of all Project partners, to actually talk to the people who are involved with ICH. Therefore, interviews were chosen as a method. Beyond the general social perception of ICH valorisation, special attention was paid to younger audiences and their involvement in ICH. Knowing that one major problem in many regions is what many project partner called a generation gap - younger people are not interested in ICH and regional activities and the older ICH bearers do not know whom to pass on their knowledge, therefore some ICH related knowledge gets lost - the ARTISTIC project wants to address this issue and find solutions how to involve younger audiences stronger into ICH.

The interview guidelines were developed by PP08, University Hamburg, but all PP conducted them by themselves, which was challenging, as some PPs did neither have experiences with finding and contacting interviewees, nor with interviewing itself. Other challenges were the language, as some partners had to translate the interview guidelines in order to get some response. But all PP managed to conduct at least the required number of interviews (many conducted more interviews than 15) between November 2017 and May 2018 and furthermore received valuable data for the social data analysis, which was attached to the interviews. Also, interesting aspects concerning the social perception of ICH valorisation came already up in some of the interviews with cultural operators, which were conducted for A.T1.2 / Marketability and Sustainability of ICH. Therefore, parts of those interviews were also taken into account and analysed for this summary report.



## Overview of the completed/submitted interviews

PP	Region, Country	Nr of interviews
LP	Veneto, IT	17
PP02	Veneto, IT	18 (9 citizens, 9 associations)
PP03	Steiermark, AT	15
PP04	Zahodna Slovenija, SI	15
PP05	Zahodna Slovenija, SI	15
PP06	Nyugat-Dunántúl, HU	16
PP07	Leipzig, DE	16 (5 citizens, 11 associations)
PP09 <sup>1</sup>	Podkarpackie, PL	30 (16 citizens, 14 associations)
PP11	Jihozápad, CZ	15 (6 citizens, 9 associations)
PP12	Bratislavský kraj, SK	19 (14 citizens, 5 associations)
PP13	Steiermark, AT	16

This report is divided into three main parts: In chapter 2, social trends concerning ICH are identified. Recurring themes from the interviews are summarized in four main points. In chapter 3, several groups' of actor's main expectations concerning the valorisation of ICH is analysed. Recommendations and contributions are given in chapter 4. They are product of the previous analysis. Final, a short conclusion is completing this summary report.

Despite all aspects and suggestions collected and given, one has to keep in mind, how different each region, each ICH and each interviewed person is. The level of confrontation with ICH differs from PP to PP, some of them were already part of the Cultural Capital Counts Project (CCC), some regions have strong local support from tourist associations or even policy makers and others have very specific problems they

<sup>1</sup> Because all project obligation, activities and budget from former PP10 have been transferred to PP9, PP9 had to conduct the double amount of interviews; 30 instead of 15.



are dealing with. This summary report examines common issues related to the social perception of ICH valorisation and should be understood as a global overview, but the local situation of each PP cannot be portrayed at length. The local reports of all partners can be found in the Deliverable D.T1.2.1.



## 2. Identification of social trends concerning the valorisation of ICH in CE area

Analysing the interviews and reports handed in by the project partners several recurring themes could be identified. We consider them relevant parts of the general social perception of ICH and its valorisation and/or topics that can become social trends concerning the valorisation of ICH in the CE area.

### **General Perception of ICH and its understanding: strong involvement and commitment**

Generally, many PP stated that people liked to talk about ICH (D.T1.3.1 LP), some of them were “great story tellers and even performers” (D.T1.3.1 PP5: 4) and that the interviews were often very emotional, ICH seems to be a very specific topic, in which people feel personally persuaded (D.T1.3.1 PP4). Here, a strong involvement and commitment of those who are in any way connected to ICH can already be clearly stated. Nearly all of the interviewed people have a strong relationship to ICH, most of them were already early in their childhood involved (D.T1.3.1 PP13; D.T1.3.1 PP6).

ICH is understood in different ways, sometimes no clear vision exists, which makes even clearer “how procedural and living it is” (D.T1.3.1 LP). Most interviewees connect it to their region, to local values and to local identity. It is, for example, understood as “expression of the life of man, his values” (D.T1.3.1 PP12: 6) and “as the tradition of the region, knowledge and culture of its environment” (D.T1.3.1 PP5). But no matter how the individual understanding of ICH is, all agree that ICH is highly relevant.

“Cultural heritage is hidden in everything. It is an invaluable source of information about the time in which a person lived, about his way of thinking and acting, about the way of his everyday life. Cultural heritage is unique, individual, and specific to each nation.” (D.T1.3.1 PP12: 13)

A rising of awareness and importance of ICH can also be witnessed: “Our past is our future. Without knowing our own heritage, we will get lost in the global world. Investing in an intangible heritage enables us to preserve and show our uniqueness,



which is the key in an increasingly uniform world.” (D.T1.2.1 PP04: 13) is a quote from one of the interviews conducted during A.T1.2, which strongly underlines this hypothesis. The project partners who were already part of Cultural Capital Counts project (CCC) stated that the project helped to increase awareness for ICH and that ICH practitioners are proud of this rising awareness of ICH (see for example D.T1.3.1 PP7). But also the other project partners discovered that the awareness for ICH is rising: Many called it identity creating for the region and that the awareness of the uniqueness and the importance of safeguarding ICH is rising. At the same time, concerns regarding an increasing visibility of ICH were already expressed: citizens are worried that the local community might be pushed out of the ICH if it becomes bigger and more touristic (D.T1.3.1 PP11).

Another reason for the increasing perception of ICH seems to be an official listing, for example of the UNESCO: “The media perception has improved by the inclusion in the UNESCO list.” (D.T1.3.1 PP7: 7)

### **Voluntary Work**

A recurring topic was voluntary work, which in many cases is the basis of ICH: Most ICH would not exist without the voluntary work of the local community. In almost all regions involved in this project, voluntary work is a crucial topic for ICH. The non-monetary support is strong and a necessary criterion in the valorisation process. Through the opportunity to participate actively, voluntary programs contribute to the community feeling (D.T1.3.1 PP6). But the strong support also means that in some cases the volunteers “break away” once offered a paid job, which then has a strong impact on the whole ICH (D.T1.3.1 LP). It also demands organisation, preparation and time to keep volunteer programs running, which is often missing. In some cases, however, the involvement in voluntary programs of younger audiences helps to raise awareness and stronger commitment: “It is interesting to observe that many young people after an experience as volunteer or having attended traineeships have decided to collaborate with the associations, bringing their enthusiasm in the activities.” (D.T1.3.1 PP02: 7).

Connected to the voluntary work, all project partners found out that the soft factors, such as emotional or personal ties for example, are main reasons for the involvement



in ICH and its valorisation: The strong commitment and the high level of energy - which are the “lifeblood” for ICH - are based on passion. This passion can be considered the common ground and basis for the involvement with ICH: Its practitioners and cultural operators connected to it are emotionally attached, money is not the reason why they show so much commitment. This enthusiasm is coupled with a certain seriousness about the work that is done. A self-positioning in the omnipresent discourse on protection and safeguarding of heritage against the threats of modernity and globalization can be seen.

Another factor for the involvement in ICH was the recognition within a community, based on the active inscription of values in this same community via the involvement in ICH practices:

“The most amazing thing is that it is not a matter of money, it is a matter of values and recognition of role in this society. Something to be further developed in our research: we think could be the core issue, if we want to centre our goal: recognition of a role linked to the search of an identity linked to a territory, traditions and values. People have fear, young people have fear. Being linked to ICH values could let them chill out from anxiety and misery” (D.T1.3.1 LP: 4).

These rather soft aspects and points build the fundament for ICH and its social perception - even when they are not measurable with quantitative methods.

### **Including Younger Audiences**

The difficulties ICH bearers have including young people were also an important theme in the interviews and reports, like already pointed out in the introduction of this summary report. “People need to be aware even more that their knowledge is important and have in mind how to transfer it to young people” (D.T1.3.1 PP4: 11). Basis to considering the transmission so essential is the intangibility of the customs, handicrafts, traditions etc. being central to the ICH bearers: ‘Protection via documentation’ does not seem to be sufficient or adequate. The problem evolving around the inclusion of the younger generation is twofold: For one thing it is hard to reach young people. There is a better chance that young people stay/get involved with ICH when they were introduced to ICH in their early childhood through family or kindergarten, cultural or ICH connections in the childhood foster knowledge and





involvement with ICH later (D.T1.3.1 P11). Also, there seems to be a correlation between the degree of professionalism of an association/organisation dealing with ICH and the level of involvement of youths (D.T1.3.1 PP5). Another problem witnessed in many regions seems to be what was called a generation conflict (D.T1.3.1 LP; D.T1.3.1 PP6): The older people define what their ICH is, how to deal with it and persist on certain rules - which leaves hardly any space for younger people to unfold their own creativity and ideas concerning ICH. Vital development of ICH is made impossible by normative definitions. Open spaces for younger people to develop own ideas and practices should be created. Here, the often missing link to present times is also an issue, which was for example stated by PP6: "Almost all the interviewees agree that ICH has to become a part of our everyday lives, it has to be made attractive, up-dated, influenced into modern culture, so that it would survive, thus assuring its social and economic usefulness." (D.T1.3.1 PP6: 7).

Once ICH related associations manage to include younger people, it can be a chance for change; a generally change in the atmosphere and dynamic can be sometimes witnessed, for example stated PP02:

"It is an evidence that young people can represent a string driving force inside Associations, the more they get involved in the activities and they have a real perception of ICH, the more they can support and generate good energy for the Association. In other words young people can be a good resource thanks to their enthusiasm and knowledge of communications tools." (D.T1.3.1 PP02: 7)

Knowledge about specific communication forms, for example social media marketing, which is more accessible for younger generations - so called "digital natives" - can be a valuable resource for ICH, if used. Moreover, new perspectives might help to connect ICH to contemporary trends without forcing anything onto the tradition, it is just a normal process of going with time.

A correlation between a general high perception of and involvement with ICH and a high inclusion of children from a very early age on can be seen for example in Styria (D.T1.3.1 PP13). Here, the common sense is that the perception was, is and will be good, but the awareness exists, that ICH has to be kept updated and included in modern ways of lives. Also other PP determined, that the general perception of ICH in the region is rather good (see for example D.T1.3.1 PP7, PP9, PP11), but did not



explicitly link the perception to a high level of involvement of children. This could be further examined to underline this hypothesis.

## Social Media

During the interviews, the use of Social Media was especially addressed. It was also already a topic during the interviews conducted for A.T1.2 (Marketability and Sustainability of ICH). Its role in possible changes of perception has been queried for this summary report.

The use of Social Media differs from ICH to ICH. Some do not use at all or rarely (D.T1.3.1 PP6), especially those who are based on the involvement of elderly people (D.T1.3.1 PP9). Others use it quite regularly to inform about events and activities (see for example D.T1.3.1 PP7) and to get in contact with citizens, mostly targeting the local community, not beyond. Organisations targeting at younger audiences try to use Social Media on a regular basis.

Of all Social Media channels and platforms, Facebook still seems to be the one which is used mostly. The awareness of the importance of other channels such as Instagram, particularly due to its better Storytelling function, which also plays an increasing role for communication, exists. But often ICH bearers do not have the time nor the knowledge to learn the strings of other networks than those they already know. However Social Media are used, no one has stated that the use and the range of it is being evaluated in any way (see for example D.T1.3.1 PP7 and PP11).

Like stated in the section above, young people play an important role when it comes to add social media expertise. For most of them, social media is common practice, and if it is not on a professional level, handling it seems to be more natural.

“This is the evidence that the evolvement of young people create new synergies. The Associations have new resources, old volunteer share their knowledge and, at the same time, learn new communication tools like the use of Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. These social media have strong impact between young generations because the news are spread almost immediately. Young people become aware of their cultural traditions and they can decide to start new business linked to their passions.”

(D.T1.3.1 PP02: 8)



### 3. Main expectations

Collecting the expectations connected to the valorisation of ICH it became clear that a summary of these main expectations must differentiate between different target user groups: Analysing the project partner's reports and interviews, youths, (adult) citizens, older people, cultural operators, financial operators, policy makers, economy, tourist offices and ICH bearers could be identified as such groups. Each of them has expectations concerning the valorisation of ICH - differing more or less from those of another group. Broadly speaking one can distinguish monetary, non-monetary expectations (which are more targeted at 'soft', qualitative, non-measurable influences of ICH valorisation) and spill-over effects from non-monetary to monetary valorisation effects. Here, we focus on three groups (cultural operators, financial operators and policy makers) as the expectations of other groups - such as 'the young generation' for example - are hard to summarize because they were only thematised in the interviews, but not spoken to directly. Therefore, results from A.T1.2 (marketability and sustainability of ICH) are also included in the analysis.

#### **Expectations of ICH related groups: Cultural Operators, associations and citizens dealing with ICH**

For the cultural operators, associations and citizens dealing with ICH, expectations attached to activities aiming at the valorisation of ICH were mostly connected to non-monetary or at least not oriented toward profit: Some cultural operators - sometimes simultaneously ICH practitioners - hope that the valorisation of their ICH will allow them to make a living on the basis of their craft, tradition etc., or to improve marketing and PR activities, which then contribute to the ICH (D.T1.3.1 PP12), but most expectations were intangible as the ICH itself. Generally, the valorisation of ICH seems to be seen as a way to foster the awareness and appreciation for qualities that are attributed to ICH even before valorisation: For example ICH is considered to be linked to a specific country, area, town or village. This 'locatedness' is sometimes processed into patriotic statements as "ICH is our national pride" (D.T1.2.1 PP12), but mostly it refers to the interconnectedness of man and space in a more general way:



“In many interviews we found the close correlation between cultural enhancement projects and territory, also intended as physical place and natural environment in which the project is developed. [...] In many cases, the initiative also aims to raise awareness in order to make that place alive again, becomes protected in some way because it is taken over by the community, and sees new opportunities for development” (D.T1.2.1 LP: 4).

The successful valorisation of ICH would attract more (and especially young) people who are then likely to connect more to the region they are living in and potentially getting more involved - which keeps the region alive or revitalizes it: The preservation of ICH is seen as a challenge for the future, therefore an important factor is to take “actions aimed at expanding knowledge and awareness of residents, engaging their activities related to maintaining and promoting the ICH so that they become carriers of this knowledge and skills for future generations, be ambassadors that promote the cultural heritage of the region they come from.” (D.T1.3.1 PP9: 10). Many PP also found out that an expectation of ICH valorisation is a stronger - individual as well as regional - identity and community feeling: “ICH draws attention to the own roots, strengthens the sense of the community and one’s own identity.” (D.T1.3.1 PP13: 10).

Also, the transmission of customs, handicrafts etc. is seen as an ICH in itself sometimes: “Cultural operators understand ICH as displaying and transferring different knowledge from generation to generation. It is the wealth of the places and people. ICH represents the preservation of the tradition, customs” (D.T1.2.1 PP04: 9). The valorisation of ICH - fostering its appreciation among the concerned community - would facilitate this transmission. And it is clearly understood, how important the transfer to new generations is to preserve and safeguard ICH: “It is important to preserve our values and transfer them to young generations.” (D.T1.3.1 PP12: 9).

### **Expectation of financial operators**

The group of financial operators - by that those operators are meant, who are actively financing ICH or who could be potential supporters of ICH in the future - is split up one more time: First, banks as sponsors of ICH - and thereby actors of its valorisation



- are addressed. "They all want visibility and the opportunity to share their corporate values to as much people as possible" (D.T1.2.1 LP) but also attach importance to what subsume under the term of "sustainability": They want the projects to run on their own without difficulties once their funding has finished.

Entrepreneurs who function as financial operators helping to valorise ICH additionally want to maintain the activities of their employees and other people, a diverse offer of recreational activities and potential for a rich social life. Also, financial operators who are commercially oriented expect the valorisation of ICH to improve the competitiveness next to other regions:

"Our past is our future. Without knowing our own heritage, we will get lost in the global world. Investing in an intangible heritage enables us to preserve and show our uniqueness, which is the key in an increasingly uniform world" (D.T1.2.1 PP04: 13).

Policy makers expect the establishment of a bond between the local population and the area they live in: "The municipalities are interested to maintain the collectivity of the population [...] and to build the relationship of the residents to the place where they live" (D.T1.2.1 PP11: 12). Besides, they hope beneficial economic development through the valorisation of ICH: "Another motivation is to support local economy and tourism development" (D.T1.2.1 PP11: 12).

During the workshop conducted at University Hamburg several project partners emphasised that - in order to receive (ideally sustainable, long-term oriented) funding, cultural operators and/or ICH bearers should try to meet the expectations of the potential investors: An investment into ICH needs a good reason. Providing the financial operators with a win-win-situation is advantageous. Nevertheless, communicating an idea or strategy that shows the reasons and/or benefits for investing can be a challenge for cultural operators.



## 4. Recommendations and contributions

Analysing the interviews and reports handed in by the project partners it became clear that the definition of ICH differs from area to area and sometimes is even additionally shaped by individual perceptions and experiences. This plurality of definitions is basis to what can be considered as the social perception of ICH - a multi-layered set of expectations, opinions, uses, assessments, appropriations - which is therefore difficult to grasp.

In order to sum up recommendations that can be considered overarching we focus on two main points here - as the difficulties they concern were part of all local reports: The dealing with the transmission of ICH to the younger generations and the 'soft' factors that are the most important reasons for the involvement in ICH.

The transmission of ICH is a twofold problem - as described above. The first difficulty consist in reaching out to young people at all. Here, the discussions in the workshop, the interviews and the analysis done for the 'Report on marketing oriented approaches to ICH projects' (D.T1.2.2) made clear that there are several factors preventing cultural operators and/or ICH bearers from experimenting with social media in order to reach out to the young. For sure, there quite tangible factors - as a lack of time, financial resources and knowledge. But these should conquerable by gaining sustainable funding that can be then used for sustainable activities - what connecting to the young generations certainly is. What will probably be more difficult is overcoming inhibitions to use social media that are linked to reluctance and rejection older people.

The second difficulty the transmission is facing is what was called a generation conflict above: Older ICH bearers sticking to their definition of ICH, preventing the young from actively participating - unfolding their own creativity and ideas concerning ICH. Basis of this conflict is the notion of 'authenticity': If authenticity and historical correctness are the incontrovertible principles, transmission is made nearly impossible. A claim made by several project partners was therefore that the older must give the young some space for their appropriation of ICH. The dialogue between the generations needs to be fostered. But also other recommendations



concerning this topic were made: On one hand ICH bearers should be made more aware of the fact that they are indeed influencing young people. This influence is an indirect one, as the practice of ICH and the commitment the bearers show lead to a “higher quality of life, happier people, greater visibility, heritage-based development” (D.T1.2.1 PP04: 11). This influence should not be underestimated. On the other hand, one ICH practitioner for example recommended to use the resources spend on the topic of transmission to the young for other topics: In his opinion, the lack of interest among the youth is a natural thing that has always been like this and should not call to us. They will come back to ICH when they are older - if they have had a first connection with it in their childhood (e.g. through kindergarten and school) that they can remember.

Integration of ICH into educational systems seems to be a highly important cross-regional issue. Many PP suggested to include ICH into curriculums at school, at least as an elective, and to foster the involvement at a very early stage of childhood.

The second main point we want to discuss here, is the voluntary work and the soft factors that are the main reasons for the involvement in ICH. The personal attachment, the enthusiasm and love ICH bearers and the interviewed cultural operators and citizens dealing with ICH conveyed was put an overall emphasis on. Connecting this touching perspective of ICH with the difficulties in communicating and marketing it for valorisation, a recommendation is to use the love and passion ICH bearers have for their craft, tradition, etc. in communication and to perceive voluntary work - as already pointed out in the summary report of marketing oriented approaches (D.T1.2.2) - as resourcing on the same level as financial support.

In some local reports, explicit suggestions were formulated, which should not miss at this point. PP5 for example suggests to involve (narrative) tradition into regions cultural, pedagogical and tourist offer, to implement the local heritage in the school curriculum, to show cases of good practice how tradition and entrepreneurship can work together and to prepare workshops on entrepreneurship and innovative products out of local resources, which young people could identify with (D.T1.3.1 PP5: 11).



## 5. Conclusion

Drawing a conclusion from the analysis of the local reports and the interviews handed in by the project partners, we want to focus on three main points. First, it became clear once more how procedural and living ICH: This is reflected in the recurring motif of the plurality of perspectives on ICH. Usually, there is more than one vision of what ICH is: Within a region, concerning a handicraft, a tradition etc. and even among bearers of the same ICH. This plurality should not be seen as a problem - even if it made the analysis of *the* social perception impossible - but as a characteristic of ICH that does not contradict valorisation but places some demand upon it.

The second point that has to be emphasised at the end of this report is the general two-sidedness ICH is facing: On the one hand it is obvious to most actors - cultural, financial, political - how important ICH is for the identity and community feeling of a region, on the other hand there is a lack of sustainable funding of ICH projects. It became clear that one of the major tasks of the ARTISTIC project is to contribute to closing this gap.

Finally, the differentiation of operators and ICH practitioners was something we stumbled over during the analysis of the local reports: Cultural and financial operators, as well as policy makers are shaping the ICH to an extent that cannot be ignored and sometimes ICH practitioners are cultural and financial operators themselves. The borders between the actor groups are blurred and the complexity of practices connected to ICH - defining *and* shaping it- reaches down to individual actors. The complexity of practices and the undetermined spread agency is characteristic for ICH and needs to be taken into consideration when defining a strategy for its sustainable valorisation.





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