

## **Definition**

### **Communities, Groups and Individuals**

The idea of community is highly problematic and often not immune from politics of 'essentialism' and 'homogeneity', especially within the construction of a unifying identity like 'national identity'. Community is over-encompassing, as it covers both groups and individuals bound by similar and dissimilar interests or ideas across a broad array of cultural entities in life. For example there is a Community of Artists, a Community of Scientists, Indigenous Community, Practicing Community, Local Community, Disadvantaged Community, Privileged Community and ect . In particular the term Local Community, from a South African perspectives, generally refers to a group of people who constitute a community at local levels or grass-root levels of government.

An individual with all his or her cultural convictions or perceptions, is judged or defined in relation to other cultural beings around him or her. In South Africa this phenomena constitute the humanitarian concept of 'Ubuntu' or ,in full, 'Umtu Ngomtu Ngabantu' which translates as, a human being is a person because of other people around him or her. This idea implies that a person, who is part of the human community, cannot define the 'individual-self' in total isolation from his or her fellow human beings. In applying the lenses of 'Ubuntu' in unpacking the deep-seated relation of community and intangible cultural heritage, it becomes apparent that cultural heritage is a shared resource amongst interested and affected parties. For instance an interested party can be a community of scientists (Researchers) expressing interest in researching heritage resources of an affected party who are an indigenous community with direct links to the heritage resource. At various levels both interested and affected parties become claimants of the ownership rights of the heritage resource.

Effecting IP laws, to ensure adequate protection of ownership rights, still has to be properly instituted especially in the field of intangible heritage.

### **Communities role in defining, inventorying and safeguarding of intangible heritage resources.**

Intangible heritage resources is a relatively new field in the South African heritage fraternity. Much education is required to highlight the importance of safeguarding intangible heritage in accordance to its cultural value and conservation needs. Especially, protection such inventory-making still has to be made practical, especially amongst various communities.

However communities have, over many years of human evolution, developed local skills and often traditional /indigenous techniques of safeguarding aspects of their intangible cultural heritage. As such the South African Heritage Resources Agency is in the process of conducting an audit of local know-how and indigenous skills that local communities apply to identify, promote and conserve their heritage resources, particularly heritage sites and cultural landscapes.

### **The relation between ICH and Community development.**

ICH definitely covers various aspects of community development such as social and economic development. For instance the popular 'art of animal tracking' amongst the San (//Ngu) community of the Kalahari desert, currently serves both social and economic purposes for this particular community. The 'art of animal tracking' is an old tradition of following animal tracks as a mean of tracing animal movement (tracking). The //Ngu are one of the impoverished communities due to scarcity in jobs and employment opportunities. At the same, this is a community that is plagued by excessive abuse of alcohol leading to moral decay, especially amongst the youth. In this context the old tradition of animal tracking has been revived as a job creation initiative linked to tourism. At the same time the practice is transmitted to the young generation, also as means to instill discipline for moral regeneration purposes.

In this regard intangible cultural heritage constitute an integral aspect of community development, and examples of this in many different communities.

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