Women and Intangible Cultural Heritage in southern Africa

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1.0 Introduction

The gender dynamics of cultural heritage have, until recently, been seriously overlooked and have certainly not featured greatly in discussions about protecting cultural heritage under international law. The multiple ways in which women and cultural heritage interact are extremely complicated and often raise highly sensitive issues especially in partriachial societies. In this paper will analyse how women in southern Africa intersect with ICH as outlined in the 2003 Convention. We highlight the various nuances and complexities involved in understanding the position of women in relation to ICH. The chapter contends that access and participation in culture is a fundamental right and fundamental rights apply to everyone without distinction of any kind including gender. UNESCO has over the years built in gender within their programming. In terms of preservation of ICH, UNESCO views women as the main bearers and providers of intangible heritage in communities. The 2001 *Synthesis Report: Activities in the Domain of Women and Intangible Heritage* notes that:

> expressions of living cultures are best sought in the everyday practices of those engaged in making a living, rearing the young, healing the sick, enjoying leisure or searching for existential meaning. The role of women as key reproducers of cultural identities is, therefore, not in question.

This however is contested as across the world there are many nations and communities (including spaces in Africa) where women are not recognised as part of heritage sector. Across Africa, women's contribution to the creation of heritage is undervalued and they are often deprived from the possibility to participate in its identification. The exclusion of women's contributions to the creation of heritage is partly due to the fact that in all societies, women's activities have been traditionally identified with, and relegated to, the private or domestic sphere, while the public sphere, seen as more relevant, important and prestigious, has historically been men's monopoly. In the same vein, the dismissal of certain forms of women's contributions to heritage is often explained by their belonging to what is considered as merely falling under female role (traditional food production and preparation, textile weaving and making pottery), rather than practices to be valued and safeguarded as heritage. In terms of gender equality, the 'convention might work in contrary ways. Documenting intangible cultural heritage could serve to "freeze" certain practices;

conversely, it could end the "secrecy" of certain cultural practices or open them to imitation' (Moghadam and Bagheritari 2005:5).

2.0 Women and the 2003 Convention

In its text, the 2004 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage makes reference to international human rights instruments, in particular to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1966, and the International Covenant on Civil and political rights (ICCPR) of 1966. All these instruments note against discrimination according to sex. UNESCO (2003) also highlights gender equality cuts across UN structures and policies. Within the process of coming up the Convention, the role of women within ICH was polarised. UNESCO (2003:1) argues that:

> at the meetings of intergovernmental experts preparing a draft for the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (September 2002-June 2003), various opinions were heard between two extremes concerning women; while there were voices that assumed women's special roles in transmitting intangible heritage and emphasised the necessity to pay particular attention to them, other delegates did not want to allow any such attention because it might mean (positive) discrimination to women. In the end, no particular mention of women was retained in the text of the Convention, and women are considered to be included in 'communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit' intangible cultural heritage (Article 15). Instead, emphasis was put on conformity with existing international human rights instruments for intangible cultural heritage to be eligible for assistance under that Convention (Article 2 (1).

This provides a problematic construction when focusing on gender within the context of the Convention. The lack of explicit consideration of gender however needs to be understood within a context of varied, complex and contested views on gender and the need to avoid universal application of specific ideas on gender. Women are central to the maintenance and vitality of cultural heritage and diversity worldwide. Their roles in relation to intangible heritage are of particular significance, and encompass what may be described

as fundamental domains and expressions of cultural heritage, which are very often central to maintaining cultural identity. UNESCO (2003:1) highlights the outputs of a gender expert meeting on the 2004 Convention held in December 2003. One of the suggestions from the experts was, 'women custodians and researchers should be involved in identifying and documenting intangible cultural heritage, as well as in designing policies for the safeguarding of such heritage' (UNESCO 2003:1). There are however other scholars who still believe that heritage is a male domain. For example, Lowenthal (2009:48) has argued that women have no place in heritage: 'Heritage is traditionally a man's world, inheritance largely a matter of fathers and sons…women are part of heritage, not sharers in it, is still a common view.'

Lowe (2013) argues that across the world men dominate the public and national heritage, which are mostly large monuments and buildings. In other countries, such as Saudi Arabia, religious and cultural traditions give men and women different roles in life and are therefore not necessarily equal (Smith and Natsuko 2009). What this show is a continued debate over the place of women and gender equality within the ICH sphere. The complexity and cultural variations within and without nation makes ICH a rather difficult arena to integrate any universal norms around gender. What UNESCO has done is to ensure that all activities related preservation and safeguarding have to adhere to other UN conventions on human rights yet critical elements relating to women's rights such the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) are not mentioned. This has been criticised by Kurin (2004) because the Convention does not recognize cultural activities not compatible with international human rights instruments, some activities, such as female genital mutilation, that groups may themselves consider critical to their culture, are not eligible.

There is however another school of thought which focuses on the positive impact ICH can have on gender. According to this school of thought:

> Values, norms and rules related to gender are diverse among societies, communities and groups. All intangible cultural heritage expressions carry and transmit knowledge and norms related to the roles and relationships between and within gender groups in a given community. In such a way, intangible cultural heritage is a

privileged context for shaping gender roles and identities and transmitting them. Intangible cultural heritage and the construction of one's gender identity are therefore inseparable.[1]

ICH is thus important in the production and dissemination of gender values and norms, and their transformation. Women have specific knowledges that they have cultivated overtime in all societies which forms an important part of their identities such areas as grooming, weaving, child rearing and language. It is also important to note that gender roles and ICH is not static so much that many practices that were gender specific in the past have new incorporated other genders.

In southern Africa, the listing of elements and safeguarding activities have largely remained gender blind. Women are rarely mentioned for their own special or unique contribution specific elements that are community owned. In Zimbabwe for example, the Mbende Jerusarema Dance was listed on the Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (Mapira and Hood 2018). Women play an important part in the various living heritage accompanying the dance yet the unique contributions of women are not celebrated. In safeguarding activities therefore, we see most nation states in the region not implementing any gender analysis in their activities. Gender mainstreaming in safeguarding exercises is thus absent in ICH activities. In Zambia, inventorying projects such as proverbs of the Lala Communities of Luano District and inventorying of music and dance of the Lozi and Nkoya people of Kaoma District[2] involved women in the activities though gender was not a prominent part of the activities. There are however examples of projects focused on specific feminine skills such as the safeguarding of *kondowole*[3] in Malawi.[4] The project was not chosen specifically for gender purposes but rather to respond to hunger and food shortages in Malawi. Women however are not at the forefront of such activities. In Mozambique a specific project focused women's expressions in Chinhambudzi focused on women's pottery activity and the role of culture in their life and community.

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[1] http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002434/243401e.pdf
[2] https://mwebantu.news/zambia-receive-usd-334-000-fund-projects-aimed-safeguarding-intangible-cultural-heritage/
[3] It is pulp made of cassava flour
[4] http://www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam/activities/past_conferences/1999conf/GondweCAM.pdf

3.0 Negative aspects of culture and women

It is important in this section to highlight that for the purpose of the 2003 Convention, only ICH that is compatible with international human rights instruments, mutual respect among communities and sustainable development can be considered.[5] There is still however debate on controversial elements that may be perceived as not respecting international women's rights. We therefore outline some of the negative aspects related to culture as noted by various scholars as a way for providing a roadmap on some ICH elements which should not be part of safeguarding activities. This section thus makes it clear that when speaking to ICH safeguarding our concern is not with some of the practices outlined in this section rather as the 2003 Convention notes, our concern is with those practices that do not undermine human rights of any kind. There is general consensus that some cultural (and religious) often has been used as a justification for discrimination against women. Tripp (2001: 416) notes,

> …cultural rationales are used throughout the world to protect the status quo when it comes to advancing women's rights… even in the United States, which is a democratic country, culture features prominently in arguments against improving women's rights.

In most parts of southern Africa gender as a system of social organisation is firmly based on a cultural system of patriarchy in which maleness is privileged over femaleness. Any discussion on promoting culture thus needs a clear nuance in terms of how this does not promote and entrench already existing gender inequalities. Patriarchy ultimately is a gendered power system: a network of social, political and economic relationships through which men dominate and control female labour, reproduction and sexuality as well as define women's status, privileges and rights in a society (Chakona 2012). The term 'patriarch', understood traditionally as 'the father' or 'chief of a clan', captures the dominant position of men in society and the social inequalities that exist between men and women. Historically, the term patriarchy was used to refer to autocratic rule by the male head of a family.

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[5] https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/15164-EN.pdf

Ferguson (1999) argues that modern historians and sociologists describe a "patriarchal society" as a society where men hold the positions of power in different institutional spheres: heads of the family unit, leaders of social groups, bosses in the workplace and the elites of government. It is important that such systems of male privileged are reproduced in ICH safeguarding activities. Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome (2003:82) argues, 'In both its colonial and post-colonial forms, the African State has discriminated consistently against women'. At independence in most African states women were simply co-opted into the structures of the new ruling elites. Gaidzanwa (1992) shows how in Zimbabwe, women simply became appendages of the partriachial ruling classes without any fundamental changes in their conditions. The post-colonial state in Africa has thus largely been partriachial and co-opting women through gender mainstreaming programmes which do little to transform structures that place women in inferior positions. Across southern Africa women form the majority of the population yet occupy less than thirty percent of government and political positions. They are even less numbers in top managerial positions in the region. Women have largely been relegated to the private sphere in the kitchen as housewives and domestic workers. This is also true in the case of the cultural industry in southern Africa as will be noted later in this paper.

There are also specific cultural practices which have been labelled harmful cultural practices. Moghadam and Bagheritari (2005) argue that feminists were alarmed at the inclusion of "social practices and rituals" as one domain of intangible culture because of the fact that some social practices have been known to be harmful to women and girls. This is why the Beijing Platform for Action makes a reference to "harmful traditional practices" (e.g., paras. 114 (a), 119, 225, 232 (g), 274 (c). These practices refer to 'all behaviour, attitudes and or practices that negatively affect the fundamental rights of women and girls, such as their right to life, health, dignity, education, and physical integrity.'[6] Safaids (2011) highlights another harmful cultural practice in Zimbabwe called *kupisa guva* that is a tradition where after the death of their father, all the girls in the family would be taken to the river for virginity testing. Virginity testing is also common in Swaziland and parts of South Africa (Wadesango, Rembe and Chabaya 2011). In various parts of southern Africa (Zambia, Malawi

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[6] http://www.achpr.org/instruments/women-protocol/

and Mozambique) in particular there is a practice of sexual cleansing (*kusasa fumbi*) girl or woman is expected to have sex as a cleansing ritual after her first period or after becoming widowed. In Malawi 'it is traditional for girls to be made to have sex with a man after their first menstruation…What is known as a "hyena" in Malawi culture.'[7]

The UN Study on Violence against Children (2006) lists *harmful traditional practices* (HTPs) as follows: genital mutilation (including female genital mutilation – cutting of girls' sexual parts and male circumcision); child sexual abuse, including girls married very young or being forced to marry; honour killings, where men kill girls in the name of family 'honour', for example for having sex outside marriage, or refusing an arranged marriage. In Zimbabwe, Muronda (nd:149) also outlines practices such as *kuputsa or kutengesa* whereby a young child is sold so as to benefit her family; this could also be referred to as trafficking. In South Africa, there is a 'practice called *Ukuthwala*, which translates as 'to pick up' or 'to take' and whereby a young man, preliminary to marriage, takes the girl by force to his home.'[8]All these practices are based on specific traditional and cultural beliefs. In terms of intangible cultural heritage, it is thus important to highlight this background debates to culture as a factor in gender and child maltreatment. It is important that in upholding ICH we do not invariably promote, valorise and celebrate maltreatment, abuse and inequalities. The aim of the 2003 Convention is to focus on those practices that promote inclusivity and social justice.

4.0 Conceptual approach to understanding women and ICH

The gender diversity expressed in intangible cultural heritage (ICH) should be seen as a part of the cultural diversity now celebrated as a human rights value and should therefore be protected as such. However, this is not a simple matter since, as we know, some traditional cultural practices are incompatible with the fundamental human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination. Indeed, the question of how the requirements of gender equality can be met within the framework of UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage raises some important and extremely complex issues. At the core of these rests an apparent contradiction between the human rights concept of

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[7] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36892963
[8] https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/protecting-children-from-harmful-practices.pdf

gender equality and the multiple ways in which gender is expressed in ICH and understood by bearer communities. Since, as stated in its preamble, the 2003 Convention is explicitly placed within the broader context of human rights, this is not simply a theoretical question; any heritage recognized and safeguarded under that treaty should be compatible with human rights requirements, of which equality on the basis of sex (among other bases) is a central one. This presents important challenges in framing conceptual debates in understanding the role og gender in promoting intangible cultural heritage.

We therefore advocate the need to use the gender, law and development approach, (Banda 2005, Mutopo 2014) in understanding the nexus between gender and intangible cultural heritage. A first step is to understand how gender operates within ICH and to identify the differences between this and the human rights standard of gender equality. It is very important to be aware that, despite attitudes in many societies, gender does not operate along simple dualistic lines of biological sex; in reality people acquire gender roles though social and cultural processes and gender categories are, themselves, culturally determined. In contrast, the human rights notion of equality is primarily predicated on biological sex. Moreover, there is no universal understanding of gender, (Mutopo 2014, Hellum 2015) and it is vital to appreciate that our own (culturally bound) understanding of gender may differ greatly from that of other societies and cultures. Indeed, the imposition of outsiders' notions of gender are potentially damaging to gender systems that may be crucial to safeguarding ICH elements expressing, for example, gender categories beyond the dualistic male-female concept such as transgender gender roles or 'double-spirited people'. It is, therefore, important to apply an approach to gender that takes account of the variety of gender roles beyond those expressed in the notion of male-female sexual equality.

5.0 Women's cultural heritage in southern Africa

A major part of the society's collective memory is women's cultural heritages. Women's cultural heritages are collections of archives, family papers, oral histories, and artifacts that are preserved to document and honor the contributions of women. Women on average constitute about half of a given nation's populace in Southern Africa (Leahy and Yermish,

2003). They have been playing important roles in the development of society. Women represent three quarters of all heads of households in developing nations (UNICEF, 2001, cited in Leahy and Yermish, 2003). In Southern Africa, the role of women is closely linked with the status of women in society. Culturally, women, according to Madumere-Obike and Ukala (2011) are conceptualised as not being equal to men and as such they are expected to prepare themselves for lesser roles than men. Primarily, women play nurturing roles in the family. As mothers, they raise babies, nurse and teach them the norms and values of the society (Sani, 2001). As wives, they care for the welfare of the entire household and sometimes the extended family (Sani, 2001).

Apart from bearing the burden of childbearing and upkeep of the home, women engage in economic activities. Studies have shown that direct responsibilities for household food production rest largely on women (Munonye, 2009; Sani, 2001). They constitute well over 50 per cent of the labour force and are producers of agricultural products meant for the furtherance of societal economies (Otunu-Ogbisi, 2011). In Southern Africa, it is known that women provide some 60-80 per cent of the food for the family consumption (Mutopo, 2014). This brings with it rich cultural methods of farming employed by the women, that are meant to enhance the household food baskets and ensure that households are nutritionally fed meeting the goals of a balanced diet and ensuring food security according to the sustainable development goal 5 on food security.

Politically, women in Southern African indigenous societies held many positions before the advent of colonial powers (Oni, 2001). Today, women in southern Africa and most especially in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Angola and Madagascar remain politically under-represented. It is obvious that the number of Southern African women in political leadership is below the globally advocated standard. This indicates poor or low visibility of women in public affairs of the nation. Driscoll and Goldberg (1993) opine that visibility involves personal repositioning or being repositioned by someone else. In a similar way, Vinnicombe and Singh (2003) pointed out that an individual's visibility may lead to their public approval and success. Vinnicombe and Bank, 2003) emphasised that visibility is increased by being involved in challenging assignments, participation in social events, professional events and networks.

6.0 State of women in the culture industry in southern Africa

Women however remain underrepresented across the cultural and creative industries in the region. They face various structural challenges that make it more difficult for women to establish themselves in the culture industry. Societal and cultural norms make it difficult for women 'who desire to establish independent careers regularly have to face up to the challenges posed by societal and traditional norms, which perpetuate and maintain women's confinement to the domestic sphere.'[9] Women thus have not been given much primacy in advancing intangible cultural heritage preservation methods in Southern Africa. The role has rather been male dominated due to the nature of the political, social and physical space that places more prominence the role of men in preserving and advancing traditions. Today, much effort is made to retell the stories of political activists who advanced the liberation of South Africa from apartheid. The heroic actions of Mbuya Nehanda in Zimbabwe, Winnie Madikizela Mandela, as well as lesser known activists like Dulcie September, are being excavated. They're presented in memoirs, recovered sites and memorabilia in South Africa (Eddy- Sutherland 2012).

The thinking is that the journeys, actions and philosophies of these activists are the nation's "liberation" heritage. But the reality is that the country's "liberation" heritage goes much further back, and far deeper. The revolutions have been male and female dominated which is often an ignored fact in historical analysis. For centuries, ordinary Africans have used culture to liberate themselves from the yoke of oppression. In this juncture women have played a key role in ensuring the justiciability of freedom through rich manifestations of culture embedded in their everyday forms of life via theater arts in southern Africa as evidenced in Zambia (Manatsi 2011).

In this, they echo Africans the world over who have employed language, belief, ritual, clothes, hairstyles, stories and food to resist and transform colonizers' religions and cultural practices. From Southern Africa and to Latin America, from blues and jazz music among African-Americans in the southern states of the United States, to the dub culture of black

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[9] http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/gender-equality-heritage-and-creativity-2014-en_1.pdf

British Jamaicans in the United Kingdom, Africans have steadfastly responded to oppression through culture. With the advent of globalization and the rise of popular culture the role of women in cultural development is gaining more currency changing the dichotomy that existed since the pre-colonial, colonial and neo-colonial periods. Women are rising to the cause through different forms of musical performances and political activism changing the face of Southern African intangible heritage status. Yet as Kamara[10] notes below there is still a long way to go to ensure full and equal participation of women:

> Firstly, the participation of African women in the performing arts sector is relatively low. This is doubly problematic as it means that the cultural economies of these arts are missing out on the potential contribution of women, but also importantly that cultural and creative expression in these arts is excluding a significant part of humanity. It is therefore important to understand what factors are hindering women's participation in the performing arts. Secondly, the performing arts sectors are notoriously time-intensive and participation in these arts is often very public, exposing one more acutely to any existing social stigma.

In speaking to inventorying and safeguarding activities it is thus important to keep in mind that women as keepers, performers and practitioners of specific forms of living heritage may not be necessarily readily available in the public sphere because of social stigma that often relegates them to the domestic sphere.

7.0 Role of women in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage

We have mentioned above that there is some controversy about the constraints imposed by gender streaming and also about what happens in the social spaces within which women operate. It is undeniable however that there are long–established institutions in which women have agency and control. Within these contexts, the leadership skills and knowledge of women is created, validated and transmitted. Women's perspective on life is made manifest very clearly and their feelings are clearly expressed. A few examples may serve to illustrate the point. In most African societies, puberty rites are held for girls who come of age. During these rites, young women are often expected to attend a school of life during which they are taught what woman hood implies in their particular culture. Zambia,

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[10] http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/gender-equality-heritage-and-creativity-2014-en_1.pdf

this strong female institution it is named Chisunga by the Bemba people and Shinamwali by the Chewa people (both of Zambia). Sessions are led by the instructor called Alangizi "The One Who Shows the Way" (Oni 2001). The training given is intensive and ranges over areas such as historical traditions and norms, personal hygiene and herbal medicine Women's sexuality is celebrated in the all-night dance held exclusively for women by the Queen of the Basotho of Lesotho. Women are recognized as praise singers and custodians of history in many cultures. The singers of formal clan and state dirges among (Manatsi 2011). In Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mozambique the tradition of shorter singing has slowly gained popularity in singing the longer historical texts which were originally the sole preserve of men (Manatsi 2011).

Regarding the performance heritage of women, we have already alluded above to the fact that within this creative universe woman give range to free self-expression and ascend to great heights of religious social and political influence. The intangible culture of the work song or chant for example, innocuous as it may seem, allows the woman to negotiate marital concessions through indirect but powerful messages to her spouse. It also enables her to unburden her mind of the effect of stresses and pressures of conjugal life involving co-wives, in-laws and so on. At another level, women as composers of song for particular groups such as the Bemba, Tonga and Chewa bands of Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, are able to engage in social and political commentary which makes them an obvious force to be reckoned with in the states to which they belong (Addy- Sutherland 2012). Essentially the heritage of women as performer within traditional institutions is a powerful one. Embedded within this heritage is also the heritage of protest and resistance. This protest is often verbalized but symbolic.

8.0 Gendering ICH in southern Africa: Opportunities and challenges

In this section we shall make a number of suggestions pertaining to areas that require further investigation in the Africa region as well as possible actions that might be taken to foreground the role of women as creators, custodians, protectors and transmitters of intangible heritage. It is suggested that a "document, show and tell" approach be adopted to ensure that the information accruing from the project is packaged in different forms for

various publics such as the particular society groups from which the knowledge was solicited; young persons, academics, policy makers. This is to ensure that women's intangible culture is validated as much as possible through the audibility of their own voices. This approach is likely to work as advocacy for the conscious re-creation of the heritage to remove denigrating aspects. This is important because of the erosion of confidence of confidence in women's heritage and the lack of importance given to its role in sustainable development.

8.1 Documentation

The bulk of documentation of African women's intangible culture is being done by Non-Africans for academic or policy work in institutions outside the continent. A database needs to be prepared and made available in Africa. Standards for research into women's intangible heritage need to be developed to provide a guide to assist in the assessment of documentation already undertaken and future research undertakings. Thus, samples should be taken of the research methodologies utilized to collect information on women's intangible culture in order to share best practices with regard to the most effective approach. This exercise is important because depending on the interference of the bias and agenda of researchers; some of the data collected would be erroneous in fact and in perspective and in interpretation. This situation could occur where the words spoken by the custodians is mediated or where there is a missionary agenda. Research both in women's intangible heritage and women and development undertaken both by academics and non-academics in Africa needs to be collated because it is hiding in departments and offices all over the continent. There are forms of intangible knowledge in the custody of women healers and spiritualists. This is perhaps one of the areas that is most difficult to reach and most under siege on the continent. This knowledge includes history, primordial myths, symbolism, ancient writing and speech forms, pharmacology and other forms of ethno-science. Perhaps an approach that would involve assisting these knowledgeable people to undertake their own documentation for their own use would be worth devising to ensure ownership and cooperation.

8.2 Women's Speech

Literary or otherwise there is a language and discourse associated with women. A clear understanding of this should greatly facilitate an understanding of women's perceptions of reality and communication culture for the purpose of effective development work, and to give women their due as artists, social commentators and philosophers for example. The documentation of women's literature is beginning to receive attention and should be pursued further. It is interesting to note briefly that the department of Kiswahili studies in the Dar es Salaam University has discovered that there is a considerable corpus of Kiswahili composed by women which was put in writing by men but which does not acknowledge the original composers. There are contemporary composers of songs, poetry and narratives whose works are performed but not written. There are also written works of women which have been published in little-known magazines, newspapers etc. It would be very important to capture these voices, (Addy-Sutherland 2012). It would be worthwhile to consider the collaboration of UNESCO with the Women Writing Africa Project in this area. Women and society in general continue to be custodians of intangible culture and ideologies which act as a powerful force to undermine women's effective establishment of a development agenda.

8.3 Women's household goods, crafts and grooming items

It is also important to target the spaces that women have traditionally dominated especially in the domestic sphere. Member states should thus promote the inventorying of household goods, crafts and grooming items so as to ensure that traditional practices, activities and beliefs related within and without the household are documented. The household is an intimate space where goods and items also have important meanings especially for women. This intimacy is at the root of understanding the symbolic and spiritual meanings of various forms of goods and crafts. These goods and crafts include specific items including: tools, utensils, décor, attires and cosmetics among other household goods.

8.4 Gender mainstreaming

Beyond these measures the question is how then do we ensure gender mainstreaming within ICH activities in southern Africa. UNESCO's work in southern Africa should be commended and their commitment to the preservation and safeguarding of ICH has been

exemplary. There is however need to focus on gender caveats related to a discussion of culture in partriachial spaces such as most parts of southern Africa. The Convention could be vulnerable to manipulation or dismissal of women's participation and rights, because of the tension between cultural rights and gender equality, the gender-neutral language of the Convention and the Declaration, and the fact that neither CEDAW nor any other women's instrument is mentioned. As Zimbabwe moves forward with implementing the Convention there is need to pay particular attention to gender.

Moghadam and Begheritari (2005) advocate for the development of a monitoring system with specific indicators that outline the progress towards gender equality. Box 1 below outlines some of these indicators that can be used by national governments such as in Zimbabwe to see progress on mainstreaming gender within the culture sector. These indicators should guide a clearly spelt out gender mainstreaming programme as starting point to ensuring that there is gender equality in the culture sector. Other indicators should include number of women elements inventoried; number of women participating in inventorying, number of women's organisations involved in safeguarding activities and number of women trained in inventorying.

Box 1: Gender mainstreaming indicators

In an era of measurements and benchmarking, what are the appropriate indicators to measure women's cultural participation and rights? To that end we propose the following measures, most of which can be found in international data sets or in national statistical yearbooks:
• Tertiary students in fine arts and humanities as % of all tertiary students, and % women
• Museum staff (% female)
• Ministry of Culture decision-making staff (% female)
• Number and type of women's organizations devoted to cultural issues
• Number and type of print and electronic media owned or managed by women devoted to cultural issues.

Source: Moghadam and Bagheritari (2005:8)

The National ICH Committee should have a gender balance and also expert training on gender to capacitate them as they do their work especially when recommending projects for funding. It is imperative that gender sensitivity becomes an important part of

preservation and safeguarding activities. This however raises controversies on what to do with endangered practices which are important to communities and yet are based on entrenching gender inequalities. This needs a clear articulation at national level that includes women's groups, cultural practioners, policy makers, gender experts, communities and all stakeholders on how to mainstream gender. Article 5 of the CEDAW notes that, 'a change in the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality between men and women.' The question for stakeholders in the culture sector in southern Africa is how to make this compatible with the notion of cultural rights as described in the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

Another key mechanism to ensure gender parity in safeguarding activities is to encourage member states to have a quota for women related or focused elements being listed. National ICH committees must promotes communities and organisations that seek to safeguard women specific elements. This can also be enhanced by building women's affiliations and networks in ICH safeguarding. Affiliations and networking between women is an important aspect of addressing gender inequalities, to strengthen capacity and share skills, information and expertise especially in the culture sector. UNESCO Regional Office in Harare can act as an important resource in training and capacitating women and women's organisation that are interested in safeguarding and promotion of ICH. All these suggested measures will form a part of a broad base gender mainstreaming in all member states focused on ensuring that gender analysis and gender indicators are infused in all activities related to the 2003 Convention.

9.0 Conclusion

The paper has highlighted how women intersect with the 2003 ICH Convention. It outlined how women in southern Africa have to a large extent been sidelined from safeguarding activities. Throughout the paper we have shown the need for a clear gender mainstreaming plan in ICH safeguarding activities in all member states. Women, because of historical and cultural factors are often excluded from inventorying activities or in some cases women are only co-opted into the activities but are not leading the process. We conclude by

recommending the need for member states to institute a robust gender mainstreaming exercise in all ICH safeguarding, promotion and protection activities.

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