

*Map of Indonesian Culture as Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory (ICHI) of
Indonesia*

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Indonesia is often referred to as a multi-ethnic nation. The Indonesian archipelago is inhabited by over 350 ethnic groups, each with its own culture, some of which are quite similar in nature and others completely different. As such, there is a great wealth of cultural works to be found in this nation, both tangible and intangible. These cultural works include those passed down from our ancestors over many generations, as well as new works that still maintain close ties to the past. Both are of great importance to the Indonesian nation, not only in helping to form our national identity but also as an indication of the nation's level of civilization.

In this context, there is no problem concerning the ownership of cultural heritages which are of a tangible nature. However, intangible cultural heritages, because of their very nature, are often treated inappropriately, or misappropriated for financial profit or political gain. This kind of behavior is also due in part to the nature of non-literate cultures, in which it is not common practice to keep records or archives of cultural works. Therefore, when the world began to implement a system of ownership for cultural works, such as intellectual property rights, which incidentally originated from the literate culture of the West, the ownership of intangible cultural heritages of non-literate nations, including Indonesia, could easily be transferred by those adept in the administration of such systems, for their own personal gain.

The Convention of the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, sanctioned by UNESCO on October 17th 2003, not only aims to prevent the cultural heritage of a nation from becoming extinct but is also an effective way of overcoming the problems of ownership, as outlined above, in the nations which ratified the convention. Although sanctioned by UNESCO in 2003, Indonesia did not ratify the convention until 2007. This is an indication of how little attention the Indonesian government gives to cultural matters.

Countries that have ratified this convention have the right to submit a proposal for various kinds of aid to help safeguard their cultural heritage. Proposals may include studies on various aspects of safeguarding, providing experts and practitioners, training for all the manpower required, learning how to set standards and other similar activities, developing and operating infrastructure, acquiring equipment and practical knowledge, financial and technical assistance, providing soft loans, and so on. However, at the same time, each country must also carry out its obligation to create an inventory of its own Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). The standards to be used in creating such an inventory are stated primarily in Chapter 3, “Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage at the National Level,” articles 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 of the convention.

Article 11 states that each nation should take the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory with the participation of communities and relevant NGOs.

Article 12 states that to ensure identification with a view to safeguarding, each State Party shall draw up, in a manner geared to its own situation, one or more inventories of intangible cultural heritage present in its territory. The inventories shall be regularly updated and reported periodically to UNESCO via the UNESCO Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Article 13 states that the State Party should adopt a general policy aimed at promoting the function of intangible cultural heritage in society, integrating the safeguarding of intangible heritage into planning programs; establishing one or more competent bodies for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage; fostering scientific, technical, and artistic studies, as well as research methodologies for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage present in its territory. Furthermore, each State Party should adopt appropriate legal, technical, administrative and financial measures.

Article 14 states that the State Party should ensure recognition of, respect for, and enhancement of intangible cultural heritage in society, in particular through educational,

awareness programs, aimed at the general public, and especially at young people, as well as through specific educational and training programs within the communities and groups concerned. The State Party should also keep the public informed of the dangers threatening such heritage, and of the activities carried out. The State Party should promote education for the protection of natural spaces and places of memory whose existence is necessary for expressing intangible cultural heritage.

Article 15 states that within the framework of its safeguarding activities for intangible cultural heritage, each State's Party shall endeavor to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit such heritage, and to involve them actively in its management.

It appears that Indonesia has been very slow to fulfill this obligation, despite the strong need for such an inventory of its cultural heritage. This is due to the numerous obstacles the country has faced over the past few years. In the mid-1990s, preliminary steps were taken towards creating an inventory of Indonesia's cultural heritage, which was known as an Integrated Cultural Information System, designed by the Directorate General for Culture in the Department of Education and Culture, with the aim of becoming a national activity. However, this endeavor was brought to a halt as a result of the continuous changes in the structural organization of the government since the end of the Suharto era.

When President Susilo Bambang Yudoyono was first elected (in 2004), despite the fact that the Indonesian government had not yet ratified the above mentioned Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Directorate for Art and Cultural Values and Film in the Department of Culture and Tourism began to design a Map of Indonesian Culture. This map follows the standards and criteria laid out by the convention, and as such can be legitimately referred to as the Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory (ICHI) of Indonesia, and can be accessed by anyone from anywhere in the world. This Map of Indonesian Culture is in the form of a website that contains a

database of the intangible cultural works of Indonesia. It is formatted to include descriptions of research results, both of a textual and contextual nature, and also audio-visual presentations. The physical network has already been compiled, but work on the data entries has not yet been started, due to a variety of obstacles.

The human resources for this project, including researchers, writers, audio-visual programmers, and computer operators, are already available. With the current salary system implemented for government employees in Indonesia, it is possible to manage the wages needed for the data entry technicians, but as yet, the government has not taken the necessary steps required for the further implementation of this program. This is perhaps because the government is not yet fully aware of the importance of this kind of inventory of its cultural heritage.

Form of Network and Content of the Map of Indonesian Culture

This map is different from a geographical map, which shows only geographical locations. The Map of Indonesian Culture shows geographical locations, but also shows the intangible cultural works of each area, along with an explanation and a number of illustrations. As is usually the case for an internet site, the Map's homepage contains an explanation of the different windows which can be opened. The first window is a Map of Indonesia showing all its islands, divided into provinces, with each province sub-divided into smaller administrative districts known as regencies (or *kabupaten*). If a visitor to the site clicks on one of the regencies, he or she will be shown a presentation with general information about the area and more specific information about the cultural works found in the area, along with a menu which offers the visitor the opportunity to choose which kind of cultural product he is interested in.

Ideally, each item (cultural product) is accompanied by a textual and contextual description, including photographs and an audio-visual presentation, depending on the nature of the cultural product. Textual descriptions include everything directly related to the cultural product, such as the form of all its different kinds of activities, its

components, the way it is treated and presented, its notation (if any exists), diagrams or photographs, audio visual recordings, and so on. Contextual descriptions include the historical, social and cultural background of the cultural product. The cultural works that the website offers are: (1) language; (2) art; (3) costumes; (4) traditional customs and ceremonies; (5) social or family systems; (6) traditional sports and games; (7) culinary works; (8) architecture; (9) traditional tools and technology; and so on.

In due course, all entries which meet the minimum requirements will be directly available for view without the need to wait for a more thorough or detailed explanation to fulfill the required parameters as stated in Articles 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15. If one or more requirements do not appear in the explanation of an entry in the map – for example, specific educational and training programs within the communities and groups are not mentioned – it means that central or regional government bodies or concerned organizations should to take action in accordance with the requirements.

The visitor to the site will be able to add additional information to the entry and a special space is provided on the site for this purpose. However, any information added will be reviewed first by a reviewer who is specially assigned to work on the Map of Indonesian Culture, to ensure the validity of the information before it is made available for public viewing.

As we all know, culture cannot be limited by geographical or administrative boundaries, and, for that reason, it is quite common for overlapping to occur. For example, *tempoyak* (a culinary culture) can be found in a variety of regions where durian is grown, and as such, *tempoyak* is a trans-regional, trans-provincial, and even trans-national culture. This explains why a cultural product does not necessarily belong to a particular ethnic group, but as in the case of *tempoyak*, may belong to several different ethnic groups and even different countries. In such cases, the researchers or those responsible for inputting the data can expand their contextual descriptions to include the similarities and differences that exist between similar cultural works from different areas

to provide more comprehensive information about the background of the specific culture, so that the matter of ownership need not be a problem.

Network and Procedure

On a national level, there is a central computer installation which functions as the “centre” of the Map of Indonesian Culture. Since this Map of Indonesian Culture also functions as an Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory (ICHI), it can also be referred to as the National Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory. This central installation is managed by experts, who need not be physically present in the central installation, using their own personal computers or Notebooks and who on a regular basis can monitor the development of the content in the central installation. The central installation provides space to accommodate entries from all corners of Indonesia which can be submitted from all regions in accordance with the parameters established by the National ICHI. This space for collecting entries has been divided up in accordance with the number of regencies and cities in the whole of Indonesia.

Local ICHI Units will be established in every regency or city throughout Indonesia, such as ICHIU Banyuwangi, or ICHIU Manado, for example, which will be managed by local experts who are facilitated by local government and BPSNT3 offices in each area. These ICHIUs provide entries which are then accommodated in the National ICHI. Experts who are in charge of the National ICHI will review each entry according to their field of expertise, and if the entry does not meet the parameters, it will be returned to the ICHIU to be improved. Only when it fulfils the established parameters is it ready to be presented through its own particular regional space to be viewed by the rest of the world.

Ideally, the local experts, who incidentally are Indonesian government officials, should be given a target to input a certain number of data entries within a certain time, equivalent to working 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, excluding official holidays. Those who exceed the target stated by the National ICHI would report to the Employee Affairs

Department in their own offices and a recommendation would then be made for a non-regular increase in rank.

Funding

Funding is usually a difficult issue to resolve in Indonesia due to the limited finances available, particularly in the field of cultural affairs. However, the Map of Indonesian Culture is in fact designed to use funds which are already available every month, namely the salaries of government employees. Funding for hardware does not present too much of a problem but the funds required for inputting and updating data on the Cultural Map system are quite substantial due to the broad scope of Indonesian culture. However, there is in fact no need to allocate additional funds for this activity as the relevant operational funds and salaries of government employees can be used instead.

One government office responsible for managing cultural affairs is an institution known as Badan Pelestari Nilai Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional (BPSNT) – Office for the Conservation of Historical Values and Traditional Values, which is responsible for conserving, promoting, and safeguarding the historical and traditional values that constitute intangible cultural heritage. One of the office's tools for fulfilling its duty is the keeping of a record of the existence and condition of historical and traditional cultural values in each area in order to ensure their preservation, conservation and promotion. The duty of the office seems to meet the UNESCO's requirements as stated in articles 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. By rearranging its format, the output of the office can be used as data entries for the Map of Indonesian Culture.

In Indonesia there are 11 (eleven) BPSNT offices. These eleven offices cover all the cultural areas of Indonesia, and as such, most of the funding for the input of data entries is already available. Funding for the network has already been allocated by the Directorate General for Cultural Values and Film. Only a relatively small amount of funds are required for the hardware in each regency. Each regency needs only to provide

a computer with internet facilities and an operator, and this is a very small cost for a regency. Therefore, in order to ensure the continued implementation of the Map of Indonesian Culture program, it now requires only the resolve of central government to coordinate the project in other areas.

Material for Data Entries and Human Resources

The quantity of material for data entries which is already in the form of research reports is immense. Universities which have cultural studies programs produce numerous research papers each year; cultural offices in many areas of Indonesia have documentation of the cultural works of their own areas; the former Directorate General for Culture – which has now become the Directorate General for Art and Cultural Values and Film – also has a collection of research results (both incidental reports and collections of reports from different regions all over Indonesia), there are many books on the subject of cultural works written by experts in each particular field; encyclopaedias about cultural works (such as traditional daggers [*keris*], shadow puppets [*wayang*], and ceramic handicrafts); and collections of audio visual recordings about Indonesian cultural works. There are numerous research results about Indonesian culture from the past and present, and similar research will continue to be carried out in the future. If all these resources are edited, they will provide an unending supply of data for the Map of Indonesian Culture.

The people heading this project are cultural experts, many of whom are residents in universities or working in cultural offices and independently. Editing can be performed by researchers from BPSNT whose field of work already covers the whole of Indonesia. The technical operation of inputting data can be carried out in cultural offices in different areas, under the supervision of local BPSNT offices. Editors (for content or substance), writers (for the format), and data input operators (for the technical work) do require training and coordination. The best coordinator that can work on a national level is the central government itself.

Final Summary

Thus ends the report about the preparation of the Map of Indonesian Culture. In fact, work already began on this project in the year 2003, with the following timeline:

2003 – 2005	Planning
2005 (4th quarter)	Development of ICHI Network in the format of a website
2006	Improvement of the Network and training on the procedure of inputting data entries for operators at the National ICHI Socialization and training on the procedure of inputting data entries in other areas Promotion to Local Governments in all Regencies and Cities throughout Indonesia and the Establishment of ICHIU
2007	Training on the procedure of inputting data entries; reviewing, correcting entries, and trial viewing.
2008(1 st to 3 rd quarters)	Input of entries from numerous ICHIU
2008 (4th quarter)	Launching of Map of Indonesian Culture (ICHI Indonesia)

However, at the beginning of 2007, the project began to falter. The latest news from the Directorate General for Art and Cultural Values and Film in the Department of Culture and Tourism stated that the Map of Indonesian Culture will be launched in the year 2009. Let us hope that this will really happen. It should be noted that in 2009, Indonesia will be holding a general election which will mean the election of a new president and government. We can only hope that this project does not become buried by all these political activities.

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