

III. Relevant Organizations

1. The Government Organizations/Sector: Cultural Heritage Institutions

With regard to the National Philosophy, Cultural Heritage is at the core of Cambodia's official expressions of its national identity.

The objective of the Royal Government of Cambodia in cultural heritage protection and preservation is to establish and strengthen national identity.

A. The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts

The Ministry with primary responsibility is the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, which has six departments and one institution which are responsible for protecting and preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Departments and Institution involved in Cultural Heritage Management in Cambodia appears.

Besides the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts' responsibility, at the local level are the Provincial Culture and Fine Arts Departments with bureaus that replicate the whole composition of the Ministry. The Provincial Departments involved in Cultural Heritage Management in Cambodia appear.

B. APSARA Authority

APSARA Authority is responsible for Angkor Archaeological Park and Siem Reap province. The Angkor region presents a number of the challenging issues and solutions in interfacing harmoniously with local communities and customs. With increased security across the region, and in spite of persistent

poverty, the cultural life of isolated communities in and beyond the Angkor Archaeological Park is currently undergoing a renaissance. Maintaining the traditions of their ancestors with particular fervor, these materially poor villagers constitute an invaluable part of the national cultural heritage.

The Department involved in Intangible Cultural Heritage Management in Angkor Area in Cambodia appears.

C. Royal Academy of Cambodia

In 2000 the Royal Academy of Cambodia (ARC) was re-inaugurated. It was initially created as the Royal Academy in 1965 the Sangkum Reastr Niyum period but was never activated. It was recreated by Royal Decree No NS/RKT/0599/97 of 11 May 1999 and its name was changed to the Royal Academy of Cambodia by Royal Decree No NS/RKT/1299/220 of 27 December 1999.

The Royal Academy of Cambodia comprises three of five institutes relate to the Intangible Cultural Heritage: (1) Institute of Culture and Fine Arts, (2) Institute of Human and Social Sciences, and (3) Institute of National Language. The **Institutes of the Royal Academy of Cambodia** involved in Intangible Cultural Heritage Management appears.

2. Non-Government Organization/Sectors: Activities in Cultural Heritage

Many national and international agencies, foreign government aid organizations, donors and NGOs operate in Cambodia in assisting national reconstruction and sustainable social development. Generally speaking, the inter-relationships between the NGOs and the public sector are positive and mutually supportive – with the latter making good use of the opportunities for funding of essential activities for which resources would be very limited or unavailable otherwise.

While in many South East Asian countries the emergence of non-governmental organisation (NGO) activity in support of heritage and environmental preservation parallels growth in industrialisation, per capita incomes and the rise of a middle class, orientated to a modern global nostalgia for culture and the past, the situation in Cambodia is markedly different and is driven mostly by the very real situation of poverty, mass displacements of people and large numbers of the underprivileged and deprived (especially young people) and inadequate social infrastructure.

While most NGOs in Cambodia do not have a specific mandate relating to cultural heritage preservation and management, some are concerned with environmental issues in ways which assist in the sustainability of local communities and a number have introduced innovative approaches to poverty alleviation which directly impact on cultural heritage and which could serve as effective models in like situations in other countries.

The corporate sector also provides support in a number of ways to the preservation, sustainability and revitalisation of Cambodian culture. Particularly important is the role of King Norodom Sihanouk as the father of her national culture and a symbol of Khmer unity that increases the profile of culture, stimulating donations for the maintenance of cultural heritage from the private sector, including private companies.

Many individuals and groups have collaborated to support the dispossessed in the revival of traditional handicraft industries. Of note are the workshops in weaving, woodcarving, etc, which have been established at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh, replicating much of the high quality of the former court workshops.

The following National and International Agencies including the bilateral and multilateral agencies involved in Intangible Cultural Heritage Management and Development Cooperation in Cambodia.

A. UNESCO's Recent Intangible Heritage Initiatives

This very early involvement with the Royal University of Fine Arts triggered initiatives in other domains. It is well understood that a lot of intangible cultural art forms had suffered and traumatized, especially during the Khmer Rouge regime, and gradually find itself on the brink of extinction.

The UNESCO Phnom Penh Office was one of the first to publish an inventory of intangible cultural heritage in Cambodia in 2004. At the same time, projects were started with relation to the development of a Living Human Treasure (Korean FIT) in Cambodia and the revival of the 'Royal Ballet' tradition (Japan FIT). A Sub-Decree is now proposed by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in close collaboration with UNESCO to officially institutionalized the system and selection of Living Human Treasure in Cambodia.

Royal Ballet performances with new choreography and new instruments, all made possible through the generous UNESCO/JFIT project contribution, have been staged at the National Theatre, in Phnom Penh. Continued innovation on choreography and new performances hope to have a sustainable effect.

More recently, UNESCO's regular program has contributed to the publication of 'Preliminary Research on Minority languages in Cambodia', which gives a first overview of the location and number of minorities and their languages in the country. Other projects look at the revitalization of folk tales through the production of video materials and research on the production of traditional silverware. This legacy will continue in the next biennium, focusing on the further preservation of performing arts and the promotion of creative industries.

B. The University of Hawaii at Manoa (UH), United States of America

The East-West Center and the University of Hawaii in 1994 joined the Royal University of Fine Arts in a program to train graduates of the Royal

University's Faculty of Archaeology. Training and research, in collaboration with Royal University of Fine Arts, Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, focuses on archaeology, cultural anthropology and environmental studies.

C. Center for Khmer Studies (CKS)

Located in Siem Reap, the Center for Khmer Studies is an independent, international institution dedicated to facilitating the study, research and teaching of Khmer civilisation. The aims of the Center are to: serve as a forum enabling international academic exchange on Khmer studies; to help promote a new community of Cambodian scholars who will contribute original knowledge to this field; and will expand the field of Khmer Studies internationally, in partnership with Cambodian institutions of higher education.

D. Reyum Institute

The primary Cambodian NGO with a dedicated focus on cultural heritage is Reyum, designated as a Local NGO for Research, Preservation and Development of Khmer Arts and Culture. Reyum has an excellent exhibition space, the Reyum Institute, opposite the National Museum in Phnom Penh where it shows displays relating to Cambodian culture.

The Tools and Practice Project was undertaken by Cambodian specialists and students from the Faculty of Archaeology at the Royal University of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh, focused on **'traditional'** tools in order to consider the consequences of the evolving encounter between long-standing local practices (and their linkages to systems of techniques, social habits and beliefs) and modern global culture and its artifacts – resulting not necessarily in the abandonment of traditional practices but rather the innovative incorporation of new objects such as beverage cans for scarecrows or aerosol cans for fishing floats in place of wood or bamboo. The project considered that an understanding of such changes in detail must serve as a concrete basis for wider discussions of the process of globalisation.

The Reyum Institute displayed an exhibition devoted to Khmer lacquer and the masked dance *lkhon khol* which uses lacquer masks. This dance form exclusively presents performances of episodes from the Reamker (the Khmer version of the Ramayana). An illustrated publication was also

published to accompany this exhibition (in Khmer and English). It presents a picture of *lkhon khol* as it was performed in former days at the Royal Palace and also as it is performed today in the village of Vat Svay Andet, Kandal province. The text also describes the process of manufacture of the lacquer masks.

These Reyum exhibitions and publications exemplify the quality of work being produced by a new generation of Cambodian students of culture and archaeology and their teachers in the face of very considerable economic and practical constraints.

E. Friends of Khmer Culture (FOKCI)

Friends of Khmer Culture supports a wide range of cultural activities in Cambodia and beyond. Working with Khmer and international organizations, he is committed to:

- The past, by helping to conserve, protect and study ancient Cambodia's magnificent temples and sculptures.
- The Present, by sustaining Cambodia's performing arts, cultural websites, museums and publishing
- The Future, through program that train young Cambodians to become the guardians of their own cultural inheritance.