

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES – CREATIVE HERITAGE

Digital technologies and the Internet offer new opportunities for the preservation, protection and revitalization of traditional cultural expressions, or folklore. Recorded and disseminated in digital form, traditional music, designs and art can reach new audiences in niche markets, so promoting development of the community that created them. But this can also result in their misappropriation and misuse. Safeguarding efforts sometimes unwittingly lead to the unauthorized commercial exploitation of culturally-sensitive materials. Indigenous communities, museums, archives and researchers have therefore called for guidelines on the IP issues and options which arise in this area.

The *WIPO Creative Heritage Project* is developing such guidelines in consultation with indigenous communities and cultural institutions. The Project provides advice on managing IP options as well as IT assistance to indigenous communities, such as to this Maasai community in Kenya, as it embarks upon recording and digitizing elements of its rich cultural heritage.



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Distributing WIPO comics in a Bahrain shopping mall to raise awareness



- In **Africa**, IP audits were conducted in 20 countries in 2006. Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria and Uganda were assisted in developing national IP strategies.
- Projects to promote the use of geographical indications were underway in five countries.
- Work began to facilitate the drafting of regional legal instruments on the protection of traditional knowledge and expressions of folklore.
- The work program in the **Arab States** focused on increasing the interaction between IP offices, R&D institutions and the private sector, with activities covering licensing, technology transfer and patent drafting. Regional and inter-regional cooperation was facilitated through the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Islamic Development Bank.
- WIPO undertook “SWOT” analyses to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in IP offices in the Arab countries. The results will constitute the base for an action plan in the coming biennium.
- In **Asia and the Pacific** region, WIPO assisted IP offices in becoming more oriented towards providing value-added services. Activities contributed towards establishing an integrated IP management system in Pakistan, modernizing the national IP system in Bhutan, and promoting use of the international registration systems in the area.
- WIPO responded to demand to help countries build capacity in the field of patent examination in specified technologies.
- New reference materials were produced on IP valuation and on university-industry partnerships to promote technology transfer.