

Guide to Making an Initial Community Arts List

Artistic Events and Genres in this Community:

Overview

A community that can identify and describe each of its art forms

- has access to effective educational and motivational tools
- can wisely choose the art forms that will best help them reach their goals for a better future

This guide will lead you through a process to make such a list for a community you care about.

1. Gather

Gather some people (even one will help)

Gather a few people from a community of different ages, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Or if you happen to be with one or more people informally, ask them some of the questions in this guide.

2. Define

Together, define the community

Decide how wide or narrow you want to define the community to be for this Community Arts List. It could be a language group, a city, a neighborhood, a religious group, a village or city, a subculture or clan, a virtual, or other group. The important thing is that you all agree on who you're talking about.

3. Start

Start an Initial Community Arts List for the community you've defined

Make a copy of a blank version of the file, "ICAL for COMMUNITY.docx." Name the file, "ICAL for COMMUNITY.docx" where you replace COMMUNITY with the name of the community you are researching.

 **Fill in the basic context information in the ICAL document.**

4. Build

Together, build a list of artistic genres and artistic events

You are looking for these elements of communities' lives:

Artistic genres are the different types of performance or other artistry that people in your community make. People think of these types of artistry when they think of who this community is and what they do.

Artistic events are occasions at which people do artistic genres. An event might contain enactments of more than one artistic genre.

Most people haven't thought of their arts through these categories, but you can help draw them out. You may be able to use the categories of questions below in a simple conversation. Or you may need to use more participatory methods that are less linear and word-based. Sometimes the discussion will lead to an artistic event, and sometimes you will find out about an artistic genre. Both will help you build an Initial Community Arts List.

 **Whenever someone identifies an artistic genre or event during the discussion**

- **Type the name of the event and/or genre into the ICAL document. Ask for a few more bits of detail, using the questions we've included in the ICAL document.**
- **Then start searching for more artistic genres and events.**

Search through common human artistic actions

When do people in this community do artistic activities common to lots of people in the world?

- When do people sing? dance? tell stories? wear special clothing? craft something? speak proverbs or riddles? act like a different person or character?

Search through this community's unique life patterns

What artistic genres or events are a normal part of this community's life?

- Do people do anything special surrounding someone's birth? childhood? becoming an adult? courting? getting married? dying?
- Do people do anything special (like singing) while working? preparing for war? having fun? celebrating? doing spiritual or religious activities? for seasons of the year? for beginning or finishing something?
- Do people do anything special to communicate about animals? places? people? special relationships? shaming people?

Search for connections to human senses

Some art forms may be more difficult to recognize, especially if community members themselves do not recognize their communication genres as "art" or "music", as those words or translated words may carry foreign meaning. Asking about "sounds", "colors", "shapes", "patterns" or things people see, hear, smell, and touch, that have meaning in their communities can draw out key terms of local art forms that may be the most meaningful forms for local communication and identity.

Look for similarities with neighbors' artistry

How do artistic genres and events in this community compare to those in neighboring communities?

- Do people in this community have the same or different kinds of instruments? the same or different styles of clothes? the same or different ways to tell stories? the same or different do any arts like people in other communities you interact with? and so on.
- How are arts in this community different from the arts in other communities? What makes this community's arts special?

Connect to some of the world's specialized artistic vocabulary

Does this community have artistic genres similar to categories that other people have come up with?

- Do people in this community do anything related to these words? Exclamation, greeting, calling, imperative, announcement, spiel, exchange, argument, discussion, debate, hortatory, persuasive, report, commentary, narrative, eulogy, prayers, proverbs, riddles, humour, artistic/poetic, meditation, song, proverb, word games, unintelligible speech, story, myth, fable, folktale, chant, parable, etc.

5. Continue

Together, continue adding to the Initial Community Arts List over time

An Initial Community Arts List is a strong beginning for helping communities meet their goals. Add more artistic genres and events as you learn about them, and expand your understanding and descriptions of all the genres and events.

Sample Initial Community Arts List

Community: Mono language speakers, northwest DR Congo

Investigator: Brian Schrag

Location(s) of investigation: Primarily Bili, DR Congo

Date(s): July 1994 - 2015

This is a partial list of Mono arts, with just a few identifying characteristics.

Genre	Brief description	Who, What, When, Where, Why
<i>agbolo</i>	children's play songs; all children	spontaneous playing
<i>ako'ba</i>	dance of women healers	Women spiritual healers–Aya ko'ba–will call other healers for ceremony.
<i>ambala</i>	malice dance	during festival
<i>banda</i>	male judges' dance	during ngakoala judging rites
<i>gaza aga</i>	men's circumcision dance	circumcision ceremony
<i>gaza mbala</i>	men's circumcision elephant dance	circumcision ceremony
<i>gaza yashe</i>	women's circumcision dance	circumcision ceremony
<i>gbaguru</i>	proverbs sung to exhort people	informal, intimate social contexts
<i>gbaya</i>	celebratory social circle dance; young and old; purpose: to make us all happy	call people from other village, meet in the middle somewhere.
<i>gbenge</i>	mourning song	when village leader dies
<i>kowo</i>	victory dance	on returning from successful battle
<i>ku'u agbolo</i>	lullabye	putting children to sleep
<i>kuzu</i>	death celebration dance	after someone dies
<i>nganga</i>	hunters' protection song	before and while hunting
<i>ngaranja</i>	male judges' dance	during ngakoala judging rites
<i>yangba</i>	celebratory social dance	after someone dies; to join with another village; to celebrate elephant kill; to celebrate having many children