

14 February 2018

Dear ICME Members,

Greetings from a sunny Rome, where winter is slowly but surely taking flight and spring is on its way!

As many of you know, some issues have come up over the past few months about the description of our ICOM international committee and the text that ICME uses to present itself to the public. ICME is one of 30 ICOM international committees. Their purpose is to function as “global think tanks on museum, and more generally, heritage, matters. They define the museum professional’s standards, share scientific information, establish partnerships with other organizations and develop recommendations for ICOM members.”

<http://icom.museum/the-committees/international-committees/>. In other words, we in our international committees are expected to take a leadership role for our respective museum categories.

ICME represents a type of museum that has undergone tremendous change in the past few decades. Many museums of ethnography have reexamined their collecting, exhibiting and programming practices to meet the needs of a changing world. Others have reassessed the word “ethnography” itself. To further complicate the landscape, varied countries use the word “ethnography” differently and therefore represent multiple museum practices and values.

With these important issues in mind, our ICME Chair Dr. Viv Golding has asked me, in my capacity as second-term ICME board member, to form a working group to revisit the written description of ICME, and consider a wider frame of what museums of ethnography represent in the 21st century. Hence, this letter is a call to all those interested to let me know of your availability to serve with me and tackle these topics.

The working group will be small, approximately 3 – 4 people chosen to represent a broad geographic and institutional diversity and stated interest in serving. The commitment will not be onerous but will be on task and result-oriented—the group will communicate among ourselves, create questionnaires for distribution to the membership, gather replies and draft a definition for presentation to the membership by the next ICME meeting, to take place 9 – 12 October in Tartu, Estonia.

For potential working group partners, I will need to hear from you by **28 February 2018** at **lauriecosmo@gmail.com**. Our group will be formed by 30 March and we will begin our work in April. Looking forward to hearing from you all of you as we embark on this important and timely exercise.

All best wishes,

Laurie

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