Lacquerware Arts
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Editorial Remarks

Kwon Huh  Director-General of ICHCAP

Over the past eight years, ICHCAP has been conducting projects under the framework of the Central Asian Sub-regional Network Meetings to safeguard ICH and promote awareness. In July, we jointly held a Central Asian ICH film festival and photo exhibition with the National Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic for UNESCO, showcasing the outcome of the Central Asian ICH Film Production Project (2015–2017). Some of these films were also screened at the International Intangible Heritage Film Festival at the National Intangible Heritage Center in September, where they were very well received.

The sub-regional meeting was accompanied by a symposium to discuss ICH safeguarding and building a vocational education network. The participants agreed that reinforcing vocational education grounded in ethical principles was necessary to sustain ICH vitality and continued practice and transmission. There were also requests for future projects in this field.

Meanwhile, the South Asian Cooperation Meeting, jointly held with the Nepalese Ministry of Culture in Kathmandu (16–17 August), allowed regional stakeholders to discuss policies and share experience in implementing and promoting the 2003 Convention. We thank the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu for their role in making this meeting a success.

Developing vocational education and higher education programs for sustainable ICH transmission and expanding ICH policy experts challenges that Asia-Pacific ICH organizations and stakeholders must work together. In this issue of the ICH Courier, we discuss the role of higher education institutions in safeguarding the heritage of humanity, amidst the challenges facing the discipline of humanities in the world today. We also introduce a case study of higher education in the Philippines led by the UNESCO Office in Bangkok, which participated in the Meeting for Higher Education Network Building in the Asia-Pacific.

Other articles include an overview of the evolution and transmission of lacquerware crafts in four Asia-Pacific countries: Vietnam, the Maldives, Uzbekistan, and the Republic of Korea as well as a discussion of the 2003 Convention. We thank the UNESCO Office for their role in making this meeting a success.

Finally, ICHCAP is looking forward to its follow-up project to the Central Asian ICH Video Production project—the Southeast Asian ICH Video Production project, which will be conducted over the next two to three years, commencing next year. This is because visual media plays an influential role, not just in documenting heritage but also in raising awareness among the public. We call on your growing support and cooperation in the years to come.
I have had the opportunity to live in a small village, Amaravathi, in Andhra Pradesh, South India, for the past two years. It has been continually inhabited for almost 2,400 years, a 300-acre landscape or ecomuseum that is embedded with rich layers of heritage values of significance. It is the birthplace of Mahayana Buddhism. I could engage with universities and the School of Planning and Architecture from the state to scope their role in safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of the region. We organized two major festivals on ICH, one at the regional and another at the national level. This immersion of living among ICH carriers and transmitters and fluency in Telugu language and its local dialects enables me to make the following observations. These are also drawn from teaching designated courses on ICH and associated domains since 1985 in Australian, Indian, and Vietnamese universities and working on the living heritage of communities from Ethiopia to Bangladesh, from India to Korea. Understanding and maximizing on the role of higher education institutions such as universities in promoting and safeguarding ICH is critical for the continuity of the cultural diversity of all forms of heritage across the world.

The suite of cultural conventions of UNESCO, especially the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 2003 Intangible Heritage Convention, have been catalytic in the growth of higher education programs and professional development programs. Programs on the former instrument are well established. The latter is emerging with challenges in addressing heritage education that is predominantly focused on tangible heritage, whether movable or immovable. All forms of heritage education and at all levels mandates rigorous curriculum development, diverse and appropriate pedagogy and decision making for planning courses and programs.

The translation of conceptual frameworks into higher education/post graduate programming and research is a challenge for promoting intangible heritage. Debates, discussions, and ambiguity of understandings continue around such core concepts.
The participants came from sixteen universities and from eleven countries, from all models and modalities of facilitating learning requires a better and ethical nexus. The importance of developing curricula and pedagogy that is different from those dealing with tangible heritage resources was underlined. A preferred instrument, it is more open to critical and discursive research and teaching with definitions, domains of elements, and forms of engagement with community groups. Models and modalities of facilitating learning requires a better and ethical nexus between university programs and carrier and transmitter community groups.

In the face of global decline in the support for humanities, we need to strategically advocate with university officials on the relevance of ICH so that they can appreciate and promote related programs. Universities are placing substantial emphasis on science, technology, engineering, economics, planning and architecture. We need to advocate that ICH is relevant in developing appropriate technologies, sustainable architecture, cultural economics, and design to improve life. Indigenous and local knowledge systems are becoming significant in addressing concerns of environmental degradation, fire management regimes, and climate change. There is substantial evidence-based knowledge in different disciplines on ICH, but integrating this knowledge into and across disciplines is needed urgently to safeguarding ICH and the diversity of elements being mapped all over the world.

Universities compete to secure grants and major research support. The breadth of challenges for safeguarding ICH is so big that it provides opportunities for cooperation and collaboration to work together and build a strong platform. We need pedagogy that enables learners to work closely with knowledge bearers. Ethical approaches are needed to go beyond treating knowledge bearers as information sources. New forms of collaborative teaching and learning in partnership with community groups need to be developed, moderating the authority of the academy as safeguarding, intergenerational transmission, first voice and rights of carriers and transmitters, inventorization, transliteration and digitization of living cultural systems, and the very paradigm of intangible heritage. Majority of heritage education programs, while focusing on tangible heritage tend to add an additional course on intangible heritage largely introducing the 2003 Convention. Designated programs are emerging such as the Master’s Program on Intangible Heritage at the Chonbuk National University in ROK.

Tim Curtis, Chief, Intangible Heritage Section at UNESCO, underlines the importance of the new generations of people with qualifications at post graduate level who could be promoting and safeguarding the diverse ICH around the world. He initiated a workshop in Bangkok in 2015 to encourage networking of higher educational institutions in the Asia Pacific, promoting local pools of expertise on ICH. The participants came from sixteen universities and from eleven countries, from all the sub-regions of the Asia Pacific, a vast area with over 60 percent of the world’s population. Discussions in the workshop were informed by diverse disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology, history, indigenous studies, environmental sciences, dance, theatre, folklife, planning, and policy making. This higher education networking could complement the UNESCO intangible heritage capacity-building program, a standard setting faculty that raises awareness and promotes the understanding and safeguarding of ICH under the 2003 Convention. The importance of developing curricula and pedagogy that is different from those dealing with tangible heritage resources was underlined. A preferred future would be where courses and programs are offered taking integrated and holistic approaches to both tangible and intangible heritage. Universities pride themselves in academic freedom. While the Convention is a standard setting instrument, it is more open to critical and discursive research and teaching with definitions, domains of elements, and forms of engagement with community groups. Models and modalities of facilitating learning requires a better and ethical nexus between university programs and carrier and transmitter community groups.

In the face of global decline in the support for humanities, we need to strategically advocate with university officials on the relevance of ICH so that they can appreciate and promote related programs. Universities are placing substantial emphasis on science, technology, engineering, economics, planning and architecture. We need to advocate that ICH is relevant in developing appropriate technologies, sustainable architecture, cultural economics, and design to improve life. Indigenous and local knowledge systems are becoming significant in addressing concerns of environmental degradation, fire management regimes, and climate change. There is substantial evidence-based knowledge in different disciplines on ICH, but integrating this knowledge into and across disciplines is needed urgently to safeguarding ICH and the diversity of elements being mapped all over the world. Universities compete to secure grants and major research support. The breadth of challenges for safeguarding ICH is so big that it provides opportunities for cooperation and collaboration to work together and build a strong platform. We need pedagogy that enables learners to work closely with knowledge bearers. Ethical approaches are needed to go beyond treating knowledge bearers as information sources. New forms of collaborative teaching and learning in partnership with community groups need to be developed, moderating the authority of the academy based on respect for intangible heritage and respective knowledge communities. A key ethical concern to be addressed is understanding and enabling the benefits to the source community groups. Long term relationships are needed and these are possible at the faculty level while student cohorts could contribute to documentation and awareness raising.

Professional and academic associations and networks play an important role. For example, anthropological associations, folklore studies associations, archaeological associations with ethno-archaeology subgroups, councils of architects, performing arts trusts, and so on. Here ICHCAP could play an important role in the Asia-Pacific region. It could provide an online interactive platform as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre with the mandate for information sharing and networking. It could bring together the range of professional NGOs, universities, and cultural agencies that address ICH. This could be incremental, starting simple and make it work and expand. Such a platform could work with cooperation from universities. It could, for instance, highlight how ICH is embedded in various courses and programs, provide access to dissertations (with abstracts) by researchers on ICH and related studies, highlight ICH research across international boundaries, and explore and unravel the complexity of intellectual property rights that are mostly dealt with by WIPO.

As for priority issues, how can the synergies with universities assist in enhancing infrastructure, inventory methods and systems, effective safeguarding plans and measures, and effective participation in the 2003 ICH Convention modalities and mechanisms. Similarly, universities have considerable capacity to focus on policy analysis and development. Policy analysis could address transversal aspects: key concepts, community involvement, sustainable development, education of future generations for ICH-related employment, and advisory support to government and other stakeholders. It would help in delineating ICH policy framework and scoping interdisciplinary engagement with other related policy frameworks. Interdisciplinary thinktanks are useful for providing new and innovative approaches and multiple perspectives.

Collaborations for promoting and safeguarding ICH through universities is limitless, waiting to be scoped and facilitated. Awareness raising about ICH is one of the key challenges that could be taken up by media and journalism departments. Historical research on ICH elements needs to be taken up. Applied teaching strategies and practice-based research will enable the graduates in the marketplace. We need to graduate professionals in research, education, policy making, management, heritage practice, and so on. Documenting, inventoring, and archiving using digital technologies could be taken up by library and archival science departments. These and several other avenues to engage with universities in safeguarding ICH is exciting with huge potential. What is discussed here is only the beginning.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that problematizing or pointing to the limitations of the 2003 Convention by universities would benefit implementation of it, or most importantly safeguarding ICH, at the local level. University programs are ideally placed to address contextualization of ICH elements through deep research, facilitating the expanded idea of the classroom working with carrier and transmitter community groups; and addressing the implications of commercialization with the rapid growth of tourism and cultural industry sectors.
Mainstreaming Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Programs of the USTGS-CCCPET

Eric B. Zerrudo
Professor, University of Santo Tomas-Center for Conservation of Cultural Property and the Environment in the Tropics (USTGS-CCCPET)

The University of Santo Tomas-Graduate School Center for Conservation of Cultural Property and the Environment in the Tropics (USTGS-CCCPET) was established in 2003 primarily to advance research and advocacy on heritage conservation and sustainable development. At a time when heritage was at risk all over the world, pressured by globalization, climate change, migration, tourism, and terrorism, the search for memory and identity became more pronounced and more assertive. The main objectives of the Center are to

- promote an atmosphere conducive to and provide opportunities for research led by the Graduate School—Master of Arts in Cultural Heritage Studies program;
- conduct exchanges in research and collaboration in projects among the professions responsible for the care of the cultural heritage and related activities in the tropics;
- render services by providing consultation, training, and technical assistance to institutions, cultural heritage workers, and students;
- and disseminate information and promote deeper understanding of conservation and care of cultural property and environment in the tropics through conducting conferences, seminars, and training and publishing materials.

Intangible heritage had been overshadowed by the preponderance of built heritage in the Philippines. Traditionally lodged under anthropological and sociological studies, the intangible dimension of heritage had only been staged in the limelight after the adoption of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Under the purview of this Convention, the Ifugao “Hudhud” and the Maranao “Derangen” chants were recognized in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. In 2015, the Ifugao punuk or tugging ritual was part of the multinational inscription for tugging rituals and games, along with tugging rituals and games of Korea, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

For the Center, research, discussions, and concerns on intangible cultural heritage surfaced in some major projects and activities conducted throughout the country. Cultural heritage mapping projects have been undertaken in world heritage sites, provinces, cities, and municipalities. One major module is the intangible heritage identification and documentation, which covers festivals, song, dances, beliefs, skills, literature, recipes, language, jokes, practices, herbal treatments, well-being,
Pinas bamboo organ, one of its kind in the world, was discussed and dissected to Province, outstanding artisans of Maranao crafts and arts were recognized by the Province, the mappers studied the Moriones Festival, from the mask making to Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) Episcopal Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church. Every two years, a national conference is held in using live chicken to swathe all over the body of the sick. In Boac, Marinduque, local craftsman to develop the mechanism in the Spanish colonial period. In Bohol, the National Museum documented the ancient boat building tradition of Butuan—

and secret knowledge. In Butuan, Agusan del Norte Province, the mappers from the National Museum documented the ancient boat building tradition of Butuan—halengay, dated from the ninth to twelfth centuries and is currently practiced by the indigenous Monobo and Sama communities. In Samar Province, the mappers observed a shaman perform the traditional healing ritual to ward off evil spirits using live chicken to swathe all over the body of the sick. In Boac, Marinduque Province, the mappers studied the Moriones Festival, from the mask making to the actual dramatization of the Holy Week Ceremony. In Tugaya, Lanao del Sur Province, outstanding artisans of Maranao crafts and arts were recognized by the local government for transmitting traditions to younger generations. The cultural mapping project increased the visibility and viability of intangible cultural heritage elements, and many of these forgotten community elements resurface.

The Center prioritizes Catholic church heritage conservation programs and projects. As the Royal and Pontifical University of Asia, the University of Santo Tomas through the UST GS CCCPET serves as the national coordinator of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) Episcopal Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church. Every two years, a national conference is held in different dioceses to share experiences, issues, and concerns related to church heritage. In Ozamiz, Misamis Occidental, the research on liturgical music and Spanish religious cantorals shed light on the dying tradition. In Sorsogon Province, the Las Madres festival, a noodle dish sourced from mainland China that has been adopted and popularized by Sorsogon Province. The study discusses the evolution of the intangible culinary heritage, its iterations using non-traditional condiments and new flavors, and the way it has become an identity of the local community. Another milestone was the memory project conducted by the student who documented the journey and experiences of white Russians in Tubabao Island in Eastern Samar Province immediately after World War II. This pioneering study translated the documentation of the experience from the memory phase to the contemporary social value of the community. This translation of intangible cultural heritage led to a paradigm on how to measure social value.

In 2010, the Center was the focal agency for the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines for matters related to the 2003 Convention. With the Philippines as member of the Convention Committee, the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines coordinated with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) Intangible Cultural Heritage Unit and convened the panel of experts to review the nominations for the Representative List, Urgent Safeguarding List, and Register of Good Practices. The novel exercise opened new areas of understanding deeper discussions on issues related to intangible cultural heritage. It also opened new opportunities to involve more researchers for scholarship, visibility, and viability. With more avenues and opportunities for open discussion and collaboration, the Center works closely with the NCCA to popularize the documentation of intangible heritage even at various local levels of society.
Lacquerware Arts

Many communities throughout the Asia-Pacific region have lacquerware art traditions that are specific to their own cultures and environmental contexts. In this volume, we look into the unique lacquerware craftsmanship of some communities in Vietnam, Uzbekistan, the Republic of Korea, and the Maldives.
Traditional Lacquerware Villages of Vietnam

Pham Cao Quy
Expert, Department of Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Vietnam

The painting industry and paint products in Vietnam have a long tradition. The first vestiges of paint materials were unearthed hundreds of years before the Christian era. Since ancient times, plastic latex was extracted from bark for its stickiness, durability, and resistance to rain, sunshine, salt water, and high humidity. Therefore, Vietnamese people used it to plaster boats and paint on wooden furniture, rattan, and bamboo to increase aestheticism and durability. Previously, the Nguyen lords took plastic resin from forests in Quang Tri in Quang Ngai Province or Nam Dong district of Thua Thien Hue and later mainly from Phu Tho and Yen Bai provinces.

Vietnamese painting process is complex and requires experience and esoterica. In the early 1930s, the first Vietnamese artists studying at the Indochinese art school in Hanoi explored and learned how to use other materials such as gold leaf, silver leaf, eggshell, conch, pearl shell, bamboo, and wood, and perfected grinding techniques to create special Vietnamese painting lacquer.

Traditional Lacquerware Types in Vietnam

Decorative Lacquer in Palaces and Places of Worship. Painted decorative items associated with religious beliefs to serve spiritual life, such as worshiping in pagodas, temples, and palaces. These include architectural columns, lacquered, hammock doors, parallel sentences, sanctuaries, sets of eight weapons, King's palanquins, and worship pictures.

Applied Paint. Products are handicraft items. In processing, all major stages are handmade or hand-painted.

Lacquer Painting in Vietnam. Lacquer painting strictly follows the process and technique from stitching to expressing to create lacquer paintings with high artistic value. Lacquer paintings are now flourishing and very popular in Vietnam.

Some Traditional Lacquer Villages in Vietnam

Cat Dang Traditional Lacquer Village, Nam Dinh Province. Cat Dang lacquerware has a history of more than 600 years, founded by forefathers Ngo Duc Dung and Ngo An Ba. At present, in Cat Dang Village, there are temples and traditional festivals to show gratitude and merit to the career founders. Cat Dang lacquerware uses traditional materials and is practiced manually with optical paint products, mainly worshiping, and decorating religious works. Traditional products are altarpieces (strokes - drawings) and fragmented. Currently, Cat Dang has 360 households and 63 enterprises producing and trading the products of lacquer craft villages. There are about 1,400 people practicing, mostly women. Fourteen senior craftspeople hold the craft village technique. Domestic and foreign consumption markets create a large demand for goods. In 2017, the handicraft village of Cat Dang was included in the list of national intangible cultural heritage by the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

Ha Thai Traditional Lacquer Village, Hanoi. According to the researchers, Ha Thai Village, lacquer dates from the sixteenth century. Previous studies show that Ha Thai Village has more than eight hundred households but only about four hundred household producers. Currently, Ha Thai Village is planned to be one of the six tourist villages in Hanoi. The production stages, raw materials, and products here have many similarities with those in other traditional paint villages. The lacquer works of Ha Thai have been inventoried and listed as intangible cultural heritage of Hanoi.

Traditional Lacquer Works in Tuong Binh Hiep, Binh Duong Province. Son Mai in Tuong Binh Hiep is well known and preferred by customers, because each stage, from wood material processing to final product, requires meticulous and sophisticated artistic skill. Each painting process takes from three to six months to ensure quality requirements. From 1975 until now, after many changes, the lacquer industry here is stable and developed. Traditional lacquer is still popular, and a variety of modern designs have been developed, suitable for new taste of customers. The most famous and unique is the embossing lacquer. Traditional lacquer here is very advanced and creates more jobs. In 2016, traditional lacquerware in Tuong Binh Hiep was included in the list of national intangible cultural heritage by the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

Conclusion

Traditional Vietnamese lacquer is still practiced some areas and has been nationally recognized as representative intangible cultural heritage. However, the tradition is still facing an increasing threat due to the greater use of industrial and material processes and there being fewer skilled artisans every generation.
The Art of Lacquer Miniature in Uzbekistan
Shohalil Shoyakubov
Doctor of Philosophy in Art History

Saida Azimova
Senior Expert, National Commission of Uzbekistan for UNESCO

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The art of lacquer painting of Uzbekistan has deep traditional roots. Lacquer had been used in Samarkand since the Temurids epoch (fourteenth to fifteenth centuries). These facts can be testified by miraculously preserved original ornamental medallions from papier-mâché in the interiors of Mosque Bibi-Khanim. Particular interest represents carved doors and completely restored golden-blue dome, at the interior of the main building of Gur-Emir, consisting of 998 papier-mâché elements (tosh qog‘‘oz in Uzbek).

Furthermore, lacquer had been used also for decoration and preservation of wooden objects such as the 213 columns of Juma Mosque from the seventeenth century. Columns covered with lacquer from the historical area of Ichan-Kala in Khiva are also still preserved. Manuscripts, chairs from valuable wood, columns of mosques and houses, wooden cradles for babies, boxes, caskets, tables, national musical instruments, aulandov (pen cases), and chess boards have been decorated with lacquer painting or covered with fine lacquer textures. The lacquer surfaces still shine as though they were wet. Lacquer works were durable enough to withstand environmental erosion and rarely exfoliated.

Lacquer miniatures are an important and traditional form of applied art of Uzbekistan requiring high levels of patience, technical skill, and knowledge. The pictures were painted by brush on the ground and included gold or bronze powder with cherry and apricot glue as an adhesive. Lacquer and glue used for papier-mâché prepared in several stages. The main motifs of papier-mâché paintings are derived from classical medieval miniatures and folklore.

Contemporary miniaturists, like their medieval forebears, depict episodes from Firdavsi’s Shahnameh, Nizomi’s Khamsa, Jami’s Yusuf and Zulaikho, Na’oii’s Farkhud and Shirin, Layli and Majmun, and other great works of Furqat and Khayyam. Between the mid-fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, this field reached high-level development, during which creative schools such as the Samarkand School of Miniature, the Khirot School of Miniature, and the Boburids’ School of Miniature were founded. In the seventeenth century, the Tashkent School of Artistic Painting was established, in which prominent artists—namely, Kamoliddin Bekhzod and Mahmud Muzakhib—continued the tradition. But intersec-
The geography of Korea is ideal for growing lacquer trees. Optimal climate, topography, and soil conditions can be found across the country, and the lacquer produced is of the highest quality. This led to lacquerware crafts being highly valued in Korea over the years, and a uniquely Korean culture of lacquerware being developed. It is impossible to pinpoint when lacquerware crafts started in Korea or the path by which it entered the culture, as no documents of its origin exist. However, Bronze Age artifacts indicate that lacquerware had been in common use around the late Bronze Age or the third century BCE at the latest. This theory is based on fragments discovered with bronze plates in the stone mound tombs of Namsan-ri, Asan, Chungcheongnam Province, and Cheongog-ri, Seosu-ri, Hwangze Province, dated to around the third century BCE. As these artifacts belong to the late Bronze Age, it is possible that the use of lacquer began several centuries earlier. 

Prehistoric lacquerware artifacts, numbering over twenty pieces, include a round lacquer ritual dish discovered in Daho-ri, Euiyang-gun, Gyeongsangnam Province, in 1988. These artifacts indicate the independent development of Korean lacquerware crafts and culture.

The historical development of Korean lacquerware by period can be clearly observed in terms of styles and techniques. The prehistoric age was the inception and introduction of lacquerware to Korea. The period from the three kingdoms of Korea to the unified Shilla era (57 BCE—935 CE) can be seen as a period of establishment and development, when wide range of manufacturing methods and techniques were developed. During the Goryeo era (918—1392) Korean lacquerware crafts advanced significantly, with newly created techniques such as the najeon (shell inlay lacquerware) technique. The Joseon era (1392—1897) was a transitional period in which the prehistoric age spread from aristocratic culture into folk culture. The modernization period (1860—1900) was when the state-led lacquerware production of the past ceased and free private sector production began.

One characteristic to note about Korean lacquerware crafts is that all products made before the modernization era were produced under the control of the state. Red lacquerware was exclusively used in the royal court. Thus, lacquerware craftsmen were able to practice their craft freely only from the modernization era onward. During the Shilla era, a government office called Chiljeon (Lacquer Office) was placed in charge of not just the production of lacquerware but also the creation, management, and supervision of lacquer farms. In the Goryeo era, a state-owned production facility called Jungsangseo was in charge of najeon gyeongham (najeon scriptures box) to produce the complete collection of Buddhist sutras, contracted by the Yuan dynasty. In the Joseon era, lacquerware was managed and supervised by the state as both government and military supplies. Lacquerware craftsmen (chiljang) and shell inlay lacquerware craftsmen (najeonjang) were employed in the Gungisi (Office of Military Supplies) of central government craftsmen (gyeonggongjang), Shanguiswon (Office of Royal Attire), and the Gungsis (Office of Military Supplies) to solely produce goods for the royal court and government.

In this process, Korean craftsmen created a wealth of lacquerware artifacts over the course of history. The craftsmanship and skill contained in these artifacts are truly awe-inspiring. The different kinds of lacquerware artifacts remaining include moktae chilgi (wooden lacquerware), namtae chilgi (bamboo lacquerware), geumtae chilgi (gold lacquerware), pitae chilgi (leather lacquerware), jitae chilgi (paper lacquerware), hye-objectae chilgi (hemp lacquerware) as well as embellished lacquerware, such as chaehwa chilgi (colored lacquerware), hyeongtal chilgi (metal inlay lacquerware), and najeon chilgi (shell inlay lacquerware). Among these, the najeon chilgi is recognized worldwide for its outstanding artistry. Although lacquerware crafts had flourished as a point of pride for the nation in the past, its privatization in the modernization era led to harsh working conditions and a lack of skilled masters to train craftsmen. This ultimately led to a decline in product quality. The tide of modernization also led to an indiscriminate embracing of foreign culture, leading to a further loss in originality. The greatest blow came during the Japanese occupation, which almost brought an end to Korean lacquerware crafts.

Recognizing these challenges, the Korean government enacted the Cultural Heritage Protection Act in 1962 to safeguard, transmit, and develop ICH, including lacquerware crafts. Comprehensive efforts are being made to provide adequate infrastructure for lacquerware crafts, including the designation of the Okcheon Special Lacquer Industry District, the construction of a lacquer tree plantation, and support for producing raw materials and lacquerware. At the same time, educational institutions such as schools, workshops, adult educational institutions, and transmission centers are conducting lacquerware crafts education to train professionals and practitioners. These professionals have in turn created groups and organizations such as the Korean Lacquerware Crafts Association that act to further develop lacquerware crafts in Korea by conducting projects such as academic research and holding exhibitions.

With continued efforts from the central government, local governments, lacquerware crafts organizations, and groups to promote lacquerware crafts, I believe that the intangible cultural heritage of Korean lacquerware will continue its legacy and development even in an increasingly diversified and scientifically advanced future.
Lacquer work, or liyela jehun as locally known, is one of the most distinctive forms of handicraft. In simple terms, a piece of wood is sculpted into the desired shape and then coated with layers of different colors of lacquer. Once the lacquer coating is finished, it is polished with dry leaves. And intricate patterns are engraved on the item with simple tools, without any premade drawings. They can be seen on many wooden objects and in Coral Stone Mosques of the Maldives; six of which on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List are also adorned with lacquered works that contribute to their outstanding universal value. Lacquer work can be seen in almost all types of handicraft in the Maldives. Since ancient times, it has been used to decorate building interiors and showcase the artistic abilities of Maldivian craftsmen. It is mostly practiced on wood as it acts as a coating to prevent the wood from weathering and maintain the quality of wood. Records show that the Chinese were the first to manufacture and trade lacquer. Lacquer work may have been brought to Maldives during the period when trade between China, Japan, and the rest of South Asia flourished. This helped to establish one of the most important cultural traditions of artistry in the Maldives. The craftsmen stick a piece of lacquer on a stick and heat over a fire to melt it. It is then separated into the size required before it cools down. Coloring pigments are added when the lacquer cools down enough so that it can be pulled into thread like pieces. Traditionally, the craftsmen used three different pigments to color the artifacts in yellow, red, or black. A Maldivian herbal medicine called fashurisseyo was used for yellow and a substance called uguli was used to make red color. The lightness or darkness of the colors depends on the ratio of lacquer to coloring pigment. Black pigments are created by heating a piece of ceramic tile with an oil lantern and collecting the black tar off the tile. Gold and silver dust were also used to add a more exquisite look to the design. Recently, some craftsmen have opted to use oil colors as there is more variety of colors, and they are readily available. When the color has been added, the lacquer is cut into the shape and size that is best for application. A stand called dhigah haru or bomakantilhu haru is used to spin the sculpted piece of wood. The colored strips of lacquer that were prepared earlier are slowly applied on the wood as it spins. This helps to evenly apply lacquer around the object. Layers of lacquer are applied on top of each other depending on the type of design the craftsmen want to create. After the lacquer is applied, the artist carves intricate floral designs into the lacquer work. Since the design is engraved on the topmost layer, it reveals the layer beneath creating an aesthetically pleasing look. Maldivian craftsmen have applied lacquer onto objects of varying shapes and sizes. After the lacquer is added it is buffed with either dried banana leaves or coconut palm leaves to give it a more polished look. Another form of lacquer work known as laa fenkurun is the traditional process of applying heated lacquer over a surface, dyeing it in natural colors, and giving it a protective layer of glossy shine, a delicate art practiced on the ornamental wooden beams and columns in Maldivian mosques. Lacquer is cooked in water along with another substance called ran-kara. This broth is left to boil until all the water evaporates, and the remaining mixture is left in the sun for three days, and then this water mixture is poured onto the piece of design work. Lacquer crafts used to be a thriving industry. However, there are very few craftsmen, and even fewer who can do it with equipment that was used traditionally. With the blooming tourism industry, there is added demand for lacquered products. Some craftsmen prefer using modern equipment as it is easier and requires less work. The country has also faced the issue of bootleg products being imported from abroad by souvenir shops, but overall, the tourism industry has helped to keep this art alive in the communities most known for it. The people on the island of Thulhaadhoo in Baa atoll are renowned for their skills in working with lacquer.
Yohor, Part of a Collective Past, Present and Future of the Buryat

Tserendorj Tsolmon
ICH Specialist, Mongolian National Center for Cultural Heritage, Choreomundus Master

The performing art of Mongolia, especially the traditional folk dance, is an expression that embodies and originates from the nomadic way of life, expressing their lifestyle, household activities, courage, love, pride, and livestock. The dance is accompanied by singing, and some musical instruments as morin khuur, ikek khuur, tovshuur, tsuur, with the performers dressed ethnic costumes. Since ancient times the motifs and movements in traditional folk dances were used to transmit the narratives and social myths of Mongol history and culture.

Yohor, a singing round dance of the Buryat ethnic group in Mongolia, the Buryat Republic of the Russian Federation, and the People’s Republic of China (Shineheen Buryats), is a complex synchronized expression of poetry, melody, and movement. Yohor is performed in the traditional manner with vocal singing and the modern way with playback music. Elders generally opt for the traditional way and have rich repertoire on Yohor songs. They say that the old way of singing is very important in the traditional way of dancing Yohor and that song can also affect the way of dancing.

The traditional Yohor has three main parts. The first part starts with an appeal to others to join in the Yohor, “Yohoro khatariyal Khatariya khatariysh” (Let’s do the Yohor dance). In the second part, people stand in a circle holding hands and singing in a low pitch. The dance movements are simple forward or sideways steps, or backward jumps while the arms move up, down, or to the side. It is also common to include swaying body movements as well as head gestures. The dance movements modulate into stamping, hopping, and leaping with changes in the rhythm. For the third and final part of the Yohor, people say, “Hatariya hatarysh” (The dance is finished).

The dance may last from several minutes to several hours. According to social myths, people used to do the Yohor for three days during the sacrificial ritual of mountain Yord in the Buryat Republic of Russian Federation. Yohor dance isn’t limited to a single circle, and there is no prescribed number of people in the circles, so it isn’t uncommon for one circle to be larger than another. Yohor is not taught dance, people used to learn by watching the dancing in the social events. As explained by Buryat elders, they mostly do the dance to feel their cultural identity. Dancing Yohor reminds them of the shared past of Buryat ethnic group and strengthens the ethnic identity in the present and for the future. Buryats believe that when singing and moving from heart for the soul, Yohor becomes real. Together with movement, the singing is the core of the Yohor dance.

Indeed, the Yohor dance reflects a cultural uniqueness and a unity of Buryat people in three countries. Separated because of a long history and complicated political situations, Buryat people’s culture, tradition, and language changed. The Buryat language, an official dialect of Mongolian, has already been included in the category of severely endangered languages by the 2010 UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger. With this language loss, the number of elders who know the song narratives and old Yohor song repertoire are decreasing, and this brings the Yohor dance under the risk of disappearance as its complexity of song and movements but also of language. The annual and biennial cultural festivals, such as Altargana, Yohor, Night Yohor, and Global Yohor, show how Buryats have been trying to revive the traditional culture and art for long time. Even though, the collective memory and living experience of Buryat people is under the risk of disappearance due to rapid modernization and globalization with language loss. It is essential to safeguard ICH, especially dance heritage and the associated community participation.

Therefore, it is necessary to take some short- and long-term measures to safeguard this dance heritage. As a short-term measure to promote, encourage, and support elders who have knowledge about traditional Yohor, bring space to them so they can share their knowledge and practice with younger generations through live interactions. As a long-term measure to encourage younger generations to learn the Buryat language, encourage younger generations to learn Yohor dance with vocal singing and support the initiatives from young people using the Yohor in social and cultural contexts.
Gauging Musical Vitality and Implications for Safeguarding: The Case of Cambodian Chapei

Catherine Grant
Senior Lecturer in Music Literature and Research, Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University

This article briefly presents a framework designed to gauge the level of vitality or endangerment of music traditions and suggests how the tool can be used to inform music safeguarding activities across contexts. The framework is the Music Vitality and Endangerment Framework (MVEF), developed and first presented in my book Music Endangerment: How Language Maintenance Can Help (Grant, 2014). The MVEF draws inspiration from various language vitality assessment tools, particularly UNESCO's Language Vitality Framework (2003). In the absence of any such tool for gauging music vitality or endangerment across contexts, the MVEF was developed to fill this gap.

The MVEF identifies twelve factors in the vitality of any music genre. The first factor is its intergenerational transmission, which can be used as an indicator of vitality or endangerment overall. The next four factors relate to change over time (with a suggested assessment period of five to ten years):

2. change in the number of proficient musicians;
3. change in the number of people engaged with the genre;
4. pace and direction of change in music and music practices;
5. change in performance context(s) and function(s).

The remaining factors are:

6. response to mass media and the music industry;
7. accessibility of infrastructure and resources;
8. accessibility of knowledge and skills for music practices;
9. official attitudes toward the genre;
10. community members' attitudes toward the genre;
11. relevant outsiders' attitudes toward the genre; and
12. documentation of the genre.

Taken together, these factors give an overall picture of the strength of the genre.

Gauging the vitality of music traditions through a pre-determined framework like the MVEF admittedly has its limitations, as UNESCO quickly recognized in relation to its language vitality framework. (These, and other concerns such as the risk of reductionism, are explored at length in Grant, 2014.) Yet despite some limitations, MVEF assessments may prove useful to music safeguarding efforts, in three key ways. First, they may be used by performers, researchers, non-government organizations (NGOs), and others to advocate for (and secure) safeguarding support for specific traditions through affirmative funding strategies or policy decisions. Second, used to gauge the relative vitality of two or more traditions, they represent foundational work for priority-setting, by helping identify traditions that may be in most urgent need of safeguarding, as well as suggesting specific areas where at-risk traditions may need support. Lastly, the assessments offer a way to gauge the trajectory of music traditions over time, with assessments at intervals (say of five to ten years) also representing a way to evaluate the success of any safeguarding interventions. In these ways, the MVEF may be useful for musicians, communities, fieldworkers, scholars, cultural bodies, and others who are trying to find best ways to safeguard musical heritage around the world.

With this hope in mind, and again taking inspiration from UNESCO—this time its Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger—between May 2014 and March 2015 the MVEF was used to gauge perceptions of vitality of 101 music genres across the world (see www.musicendangerment.com), through a survey methodology. While further testing of the tool is necessary to better understand validity and inter-rater reliability within and across contexts, the outcomes of that project (reported in Grant, 2017) suggest that the MVEF may be a promising means of assessing music vitality.

Putting the MVEF to Use: Cambodian Chapei

I now offer a brief example of an assessment of a musical tradition using the MVEF and its implications for safeguarding. During my six-month research fellowship in Cambodia in 2015, collaborating with my colleague Chhuon Sarin of Cambodian Living Arts (a cultural NGO), we carried out an MVEF assessment of three Cambodian music traditions—smot, chapei, and kantaomming (reported in Grant and Chhuon, 2016). To do so, we drew on our own knowledge of these genres, existing research, (participant) observation, and insights from formal and informal interviews with performers, teachers, students,
government representatives, and cultural workers. Our undertaking aligned with the on-going agenda of traditional musicians, their communities, the Cambodian government, and local cultural NGOs to safeguard and revitalize traditional Cambodian performing arts, which were severely disrupted during the years of genocide, war, and famine in the 1970s and 1980s.

One of the three musical traditions we chose for assessment was chapei dang veng (chapei dang veng, and the permutations chapei or chapei for short). Chapei refers both to a genre of music and an instrument—a two-string, long-necked, round-bodied, strummed, and fretted lute, these days often made primarily of jack wood. In the genre, the performer plays the instrument to accompany his or her improvised singing. Traditionally, the chapei genre was performed in outdoor or informal contexts in both urban and rural areas, often by blind musicians, for edification and entertainment. These days, chapei is increasingly also found at semi-formal or formal staged events, especially in Phnom Penh. Last year, the tradition was inscribed on UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (UNESCO, 2016).

Our MVEF assessment of the situation of Cambodian chapei revealed several areas of strength. Particularly promising for the future of the tradition is the strong interest being shown in it by a small group of committed young people (Factor 3), who have come together to form a troupe called Community of Living Chapei. This troupe is exploring new contexts and functions for the tradition (Factor 5)—including festivals, restaurants, hotels, and schools—in an effort to make it more relevant, engaging, and accessible to contemporary audiences. National and international scholarly and media interest (Factors 6 and 11) is likely to flourish in the wake of inscription on UNESCO's Urgent Safeguarding list. In turn, the inscription (with its concomitant funding) has inspired greater attention and professional support from the Cambodian government (Factor 9).

On the other hand, an MVEF assessment of chapei reveals some significant challenges to its viability. Younger generation learners are generally not yet proficient in the skills needed to perform chapei well (Factor 2). Efforts to promote inter-generational transmission of these skills are challenged by the dearth of actively teaching master-musicians, most of whom are elderly, some in less than optimum health (Factor 1). Although chapei is generally valued and appreciated by the wider Cambodian population, a persisting superstition that playing chapei leads to blindness continues to deter younger potential learners (Factor 10). Instrument makers can be hard to find, particularly in rural areas, presenting a barrier to learning, teaching, and performing; and the shift to the stage as a performance context can bring financial pressure in terms of venue hire and equipment (e.g. for lighting and sound) (Factor 7).

Implications for Safeguarding

In some cases, it may appear obvious enough whether, or for what reasons, a given music tradition (or any other form of intangible cultural heritage) is losing vitality. However, taking a systematic rather than intuitive approach to gauging the vitality of chapei, through the MVEF, helped us set aside common preconceptions about the reasons for the precarious state of this tradition, allowing us to think about possible alternative ways to support it, beyond the intergenerational transmission programs that have been at the core of safeguarding efforts to date. Instrument-makers could be trained and supported to hone their skills and generate a viable income from selling instruments; transmission initiatives might now shift emphasis from soliciting new learners to moving existing learners to levels of greater proficiency; school-based awareness-raising initiatives could aim to break down the association of chapei with blindness; and so on. In this way, the MVEF assessment of chapei is acting as a useful springboard for safeguarding discussions among chapei musicians and communities, government agencies, researchers, NGOs, and the others with a stake in the sustainable future of chapei. It is one tool in the wider efforts to secure a viable future for this precious tradition.

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References


Further information

For more details on the Music Vitality and Endangerment Framework (MVEF), see Grant (2014). Explore an interactive map of the vitality of 101 music traditions around the world at musicendangerment.com. To support chapei, contact Sokim Keat, Vice President, Community of Living Chapey: sokimkeat@gmail.com. To support Cambodian traditional performing arts, visit the Cambodian Living Arts website: cambodianlivingarts.org.
ICH and the Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre

Dr. Alexandra Denes
Former Senior Research Associate, SAC
James Todd Millar
Foreign Relations Officer, SAC

The Role of the Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre

The Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre (SAC) is a public organization under the supervision of the Thai Ministry of Culture. Established in 1989, the Centre’s primary mission is to promote understanding among peoples through the study of human societies. SAC’s activities fall within three main program areas: documentation, research, and public education and outreach. Geographically, SAC’s program activities focus on Thailand and the Greater Mekong Sub-region, with the broad aim of fostering tolerance and cross-cultural awareness in the region through anthropological research and public education.

Local Museums Research and Development Project

One of the Centre’s flagship research projects is the Local Museums Research and Development Project. Recognizing the vital role of local museums asrepositories of Thailand’s local history and culture, in 2005, the SAC began the project of surveying all the museums in Thailand for inclusion in a searchable, digital database. Concurrently, the SAC launched collaborative, action research and development projects with three local museums: Wat Lai Hin Luang Museum in Nakhon Pathom Province, The Wat Baan Don Museum of Nang Yai sub-district in Lampang Province, and The Wat Tha Phut Museum in Nakhon Pathom Province.

These collaborative projects involved a range of research, capacity-building, and knowledge-sharing activities. To share experiences and lessons learned from the first three pilot projects in local museum management, the SAC launched a series of regional museum network meetings aimed at building regional support networks among museum organizers. In addition, the Local Museums Research and Development Project publishes a quarterly newsletter entitled Moving Forward Together (Kaaw Pay Duaykan) to provide yet another forum for sharing knowledge among members of the local museum community network.

Moreover, the Local Museums Research and Development Project imitated the Local Museums Festival in 2006. The festival brings together local museum organizers to tell their stories of collecting and to share experiences of museum work.

The Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museums Field School Program

From 2009 to 2011, the SAC launched the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museums Field School, in response to the need, and as part of its commitment to the expansion of anthropological research and knowledge in Thailand and the region, aimed at providing hands-on training in ethnographic approaches to museum and heritage practitioners in the Asia-Pacific.

The Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museums Field School Program— a two-week, intensive training program open to recent university graduates, museum practitioners, mid-career professionals, educators, and others involved in the heritage field. Developed in partnership with UNESCO Bangkok and the Asian Academy for Heritage Management, the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museums Field School program aims to equip participants with both the conceptual and practical tools to actively engage with intangible heritage issues in the Asia-Pacific region.

For three consecutive years since 2009, the SAC’s Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museums Field School program has offered anthropological frameworks for researching, documenting, and working collaboratively with communities to safeguard their intangible heritage. Through a field practicum with four communities in Lamphun Province, participants gained hands-on experience in applying anthropological tools and frameworks to research intangible culture.

Our Utmost Objective

The objective to promote the studies of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) by the SAC is still ongoing, especially when the government issued the “Promotion and Conservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage Act, 2016”, with initiatives of compiling and improving ICH knowledge management to be used as a database for the Thai public for better understanding of ICH management. With the organizing of the Heritage of the Nations: Lesson Learned from the Neighboring Countries’ experiences, which could be used as data for further insight of ICH for Thai society. After the discussions, the SAC will be publishing a summary of the forum. In addition, it will be translating “Intangible Heritage and the Museum: New Perspectives on Cultural Preservation” for comprehensive and awareness of ICH’s significance to the Thai public. Considering that the SAC is one of the organizations in Thailand that continuously works with ICH, with the objective to enhance further recognition and value of ICH as a means of fostering awareness of the significance of multiculturalism, which is the SAC’s utmost objective.
The Cultural Partnership Initiative, Creating Opportunities and Building Networks

The Cultural Partnership Initiative (CPI) commenced in July 2017. Now in its twelfth year, this year’s five-month residency program gathered experienced individuals to strengthen their abilities to become fully competent international experts in ICH safeguarding.

ICHCAP has been operating the CPI Program with the support of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea and the CPI secretariat (Arts Council Korea) from 2012 to 2014 and 2015. The following individuals are the selected participants of the 2017 CPI Program: Anil Gandharba (Nepal; General Secretary, Gandharba Cultural Art Organization), Ershad Komol Khan (Bangladesh; Editor, New Age Culture) Yeshi Lendhup (Bhutan; Research Librarian, National Library and Archives), Hauwa Nazla (Nigeria; Director-General, Department of Heritage)

The CPI Program assists the selected participants with individual research. They are given the opportunity to take part in ICHCAP projects, field studies, and workshops. In addition, the program allows participants to learn the Korean language, experience Korean culture, and visit ICH-related agencies. These activities create a collaborative platform that provides information about ICH activities in their own countries and helps collect related information in the Asia-Pacific region. The four participants for this year’s program will contribute to fostering ICH networks based on their diverse experiences earned by working on critical ICH issues. They are awarded a generous financial support—covering airfare, accommodations, living expenses, and the cost of Korean language course and cultural field trips. They are staying in Jeonju, Republic of Korea, from July to November 2017.

ICH Film Festival and Photo Exhibition in Central Asia

ICHCAP presented photo and film exhibitions on Central Asian ICH from 27 to 28 July in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan under the theme “Living Heritage: Wisdom of Life.”

ICHCAP conducted the joint video production project with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Mongolia over the past two years to promote the importance of ICH safeguarding among the public and especially young people. The project resulted in producing fifty films, or ten films for each country. During the exhibitions, fifteen films, three films per country, premiered.

Divided into three sections (Entertainment of Life, Beauty of Life, and Melody of Life), the exhibitions opened with films on traditional Kazakh felt crafts and Kyrgyz childbirth rituals. In the Beauty of Life section, films on Kazakh jewelry crafts and traditional Kyrgyz carpets were introduced. The Melody of Life section was dedicated to films about the traditional music of Tajikistan and films on making and playing the morin khuur, a traditional Mongolian instrument. Lastly, the Entertainment of Life section included films on traditional Uzbek tightrope walking and a traditional Mongolian game played with sheep ankle bones.

Prior to each film screening were meet- ings with ICH experts and production staff members from the participating countries. The photo exhibition, which took place alongside the film exhibition, showcased about a hundred photos that displayed the diversity of the participating countries’ ICH.

Director-General Kwon Huh of ICHCAP suggested that this event may encourage the organization of various public events that feature ICH and build human networks in the ICH field. The event was a collaborative platform that provides information about ICH activities in their own countries and helps collect related information in the Asia-Pacific region.

Network Building towards ICH Safeguarding in South Asia

ICHCAP hosted the Sub-regional ICH Networking meeting in South Asia from 16 to 17 August 2017 with the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu to provide participants a chance to share experiences concerning national policies and processes for ICH safeguarding.

South Asia is facing challenges in securing resources or trained experts for ICH safeguarding amidst rapid globalization and economic development. Against this backdrop, ICHCAP and the UNESCO Kathmandu Office organized the meeting to discuss ICH policies and build human networks in the ICH field. The event was a collaborative platform that provides information about ICH activities in their own countries and helps collect related information in the Asia-Pacific region.

The last day of the meeting opened with a session for participants to share their experiences on making ICH inventories and preparing nominations. Following this was a session to establish action plans for South Asian ICH safeguarding. Through the sessions, participants were able to better understand each other’s ICH policies. Jinjo Yang, a Korean expert from the National Intangible Heritage Center presented information on the Act on the Safeguarding and Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Korea, which is aligned with implementing the 2003 Convention and institutional protection of ICH. As the host of the Sub-regional ICH Networking Meeting, ICHCAP will continue to collaborate with South Asian Member States and engage in collaborative projects for regional ICH safeguarding.

ICH NGO Forum: The First Capacity-Building Workshop

The ICH NGO Forum provides a platform for communication, networking, exchange, and cooperation among UNESCO-accredited NGOs, which provide advisory services to the Intergovernmental Committee in the framework of the UNESCO 2003 Convention. As accredited NGOs, they are integral partners at the national level connecting communities, states, and other stakeholders to help implement the 2003 Convention and thereby assist in safeguarding ICH around the world.

To share information and experiences among accredited NGOs internationally and promote opportunities for ongoing networking and skill sharing at a regional level, the ICH NGO Forum has begun a capacity-building program which will hold its first workshop on Jeju Island, the Republic of Korea, from 1 to 3 December 2017. This three-day workshop will take place just prior to the Intergovernmental Committee meeting of the Convention, which will take place from 4 to 10 December. The language of the ICH NGO Forum meeting will be English and French, and there will be Korean translations provided for some of the sessions.

Participants of the Sub-regional ICH Networking Meeting in South Asia © ICHCAP

Exterior of the Central Asian film festival venue © ICHCAP

ICH NGO Forum © ICHCAP

ICH Film Festival and Photo Exhibition © ICHCAP
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