ICH Courier
Intangible Cultural Heritage Courier of Asia and the Pacific

Intangible Heritage and Birthing Traditions
Editorial Remarks

Gi Hyung Keum  Director-General of ICHCAP

On behalf of ICHCAP I wish all our readers, collaborators, and partners a comfortable and safe season as we approach the summer months. We also look forward to celebrating the tenth anniversary of the ICH Courier later this year with an extended volume, and we appreciate your support for all these years. In this volume, we will be presenting birthing traditions in Windows to ICH. As a celebration of new life, cultures around the world hold a number of symbolic events to usher in a new life into their community. At the same time, many activities also extend to helping the mother recuperate from the arduous task of giving birth. In this volume, we highlight some birthing rituals of Palau, India, the Philippines, and the Republic of Korea so we can show the myriad ways communities and cultures celebrate the birth of a child in the Asia-Pacific region.

Museums have long been a part of communicating cultural history. However, some critics claim that museums fossilize intangible cultural heritage. An additional issue is related to massive increases in diverse peoples moving into and out of culturally different areas; it is thought that museums could help bridge some of the cultural divides seen in some communities by incorporating ICH into museums. These issues are examined in our Expert Remarks and Field Report sections. Our expert contributor focuses on the work of organizations working to combine ICH into museum experiences. The contributor in the field reports on the ways technology is influencing museology by introducing immersive experiences for museumgoers.

Our Safeguarding Activities section looks at climate change’s effect on Pacific ICH as well as the importance of storytelling as a safeguarding tool, particularly though the Pacific Resources for Education and Learning. The Minister of Culture of Uzbekistan shares his thoughts about ICH festivals and safeguarding through an interview of our Safeguarding Pioneers section. Finally, Safeguarding Communities looks into a modern cultural phenomenon of Singapore—namely, community dining centers also known as hawker culture.

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation for your support with the ICH Courier, and I encourage all readers to visit ichcourier.ichcap.org to download previous issues and to look at the new submissions section, where we have an open call for papers for select sections of the publication.
Glance into The ICH & Museums Project: Where Museums and ICH Meet

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It has become recognized nowadays that cultural heritage encompasses more than collections of objects or monuments; it includes just as much also intangible manifestations such as traditions and living expressions. This intangible cultural heritage (ICH) stretches into a wide range of domains of our society, such as performing arts, social practices, oral traditions, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature, and the knowledge and skills used to produce traditional crafts.

Over the course of the last two decades, several initiatives have been taken to safeguard ICH, in addition to the earlier established international heritage policies that had been focusing mostly on tangible heritage expressions. Among these recent instruments devoted to ICH is first and foremost the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage—including the Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention—but also the 2014 Seoul Declaration of ICOM on the Intangible Heritage. The ICOM definition of a museum, dating back to 2007, already recognized the role of museums in the preservation and protection of both “the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity.” Museums can contribute significantly to safeguarding ICH, using their mandate, infrastructures, and resources to develop creative initiatives about its preservation. Hence, these strategic documents by UNESCO, ICOM, and other relevant heritage policy agencies have significantly contributed to a blueprint for the integration of safeguarding ICH and museum practices. These practices range from involving ICH practitioners in museum activities, such as exhibitions and lectures and developing participatory approaches, to employing various information and communication technologies to bring meaning and knowledge linked to ICH closer to audiences.

Museums and Safeguarding ICH

While awareness among heritage and museum professionals of the importance of collaborative work on ICH has been steadily rising, a number of outstanding challenges has also become apparent. For instance, there is often disagreement over the concept of ICH and what it comprises. Oral history and narrative interviews with practitioners, for example, can provide background information to objects or practices being highlighted in a museum. Such oral and documentary resources in museum circles are often regarded as ICH in themselves, whereas ICH professionals, on the other hand, point out their intermediary character. These resources offer a medium of transmission or documentation, but do not constitute a ‘living ICH practice’ in itself. In addition, current approaches such as participatory museology are very suitable to fulfill the interactive processes aimed for also in museums’ work on living heritage, but should not be regarded as being one and the same, which often occurs. Moreover, in present day-to-day museum practices, participatory museology still appears to feature at the margins. The specific skills required for such participatory practices, such as a storytelling approach and a stronger emphasis on both audience and practitioner engagement, are in many cases not at the center of traditional educational trajectories of museum staff. Similarly, perspectives may differ considering the main focus or objective of the ICH activities. According to the UNESCO 2003 Convention, the principal goal is to safeguard the viability of living heritage practices with a view to future generations, and thereby taking into account due participation of communities, groups, and individuals involved. For museum professionals, however, the focus of ICH activities might lie primarily in enriching their activity around the collection(s) at the core of their objectives.

Formulating perceived divergences between museums and the paradigm of safeguarding ICH appears to suggest that these perspectives are at odds with each other. It is, however, more productive to provide a forum for encounters and exchanges between museums and ICH. The key then lies in cooperatively refining and developing multiple perspectives, conceptual frameworks and methodologies with a view to serve practices on museums and collections as much as they can foster the
safeguarding of ICH. Such a contact zone is what the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museums Project (IMP) has been providing in recent years.

The IMP

The Intangible Cultural Heritage & Museums Project aims to contribute to this complex subject by means of capacity building and knowledge exchange between museum professionals and those engaged in ICH. The project runs from 2017 until 2020, and is a partnership of organizations in five partner countries: Werkplaats Immaterieel Erfgoed (Belgium), Dutch Center for ICH (Netherlands), SIMBDEA (Italy), Centre Français du Patrimoine Culturel Immatériel (France), and Verband der Museen der Schweiz (Switzerland). Importantly, two international museum networking partners joined the project: ICOM international – the international Council of Museums, NEMO—the European museum association, and ICH NGO FORUM—the international platform of NGOs accredited to the UNESCO 2003 Convention.1

For example, in the most recent meeting in Belgium, a co-creation was set up to safeguarding ICH in each of their countries, combined with their experiences connected to a strong and varied museum sector. The majority of museums in 2015 appeared to be inactive, and very often unaware, about the emerging ICH paradigm and possibilities. Driven by this observation, this network cooperation developed a project proposal converging museums and the ICH field. The project’s international setup is one of its key dimensions. Actively enabling transnational mobility provides an optimal framework for obtaining the envisaged goals of the project, including peer learning, developing professional skills and tools, and creating international networking opportunities. This approach enables the exchange of good practices between museum and heritage professionals within Europe. The international orientation of the IMP is part of a broader set of strategic directions which also include goals such as raising awareness on the topic of ICH and museums among both museum and heritage professionals and the development of innovative participatory safeguarding measures for ICH.

To realize the project’s goals, an action program was laid out at the start. Between 2017 and 2020, five international conferences and expert meetings have been organized in each of the five partner countries. These contribute to the transnational mobility and exchange goals of the project and enable outreach to include museum and heritage professionals in the country where the conference and meeting take place. Within the framework of these meetings, a special place is also given to contemporary co-creations: ICH communities, groups or individuals can apply for funding in order to develop a creative collaboration and interaction with a museum. For example, in the most recent meeting in Belgium, a co-creation was set up between practitioners of WORD Wa(a)R, which is a creative collective launching concept battles (in the history line of spoken word contest traditions) and the Africanmuseum in Tervuren.

In addition, several other forms of outreach are planned. An online toolkit and a book will be published as conclusions of the project to share the knowledge and insights gathered throughout the IMP process. The toolbox will become an open access repository of good practices and inspirational methodologies for future collaborations between ICH practitioners and museums. The project’s website ichmuseums.eu functions—and will continue to do so in the few next years—as an online platform for sharing all of the collected knowledge, tools, and literature resources on ICH and museums.

Connected Contemporary Challenges for Museums and ICH in Society

The Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museums Project operates with a strong focus on the embeddedness of ICH and museums in society. For this reason, each of the five international conferences and expert meetings have been addressing another key challenge that museums, as much as ICH practitioners, are facing today in the context of Europe as well as on a more global scale. The first of these topics, explored at the inaugural IMP conference and expert meeting in 2017, is superdiversity. How can museums respond to the challenges presented by very diverse societies and social interactions, and what are innovative ways in which ICH can help tackle these? In such contexts, museums often hold great potential for working towards answers. They can function as dialogue spaces to negotiate subjects such as evolving identities, social conflict, and controversial heritage. The theme of the 2018 meeting in Italy was participation. They focused on questions relating to the involvement of ICH communities, groups, and individuals in museum practices in a sustainable and long-term manner. This integration poses its own challenges, such as having to renegotiate roles and power. This key focus thus contributes to establishing compromises and new balance relationships, a theme that is recurring across all IMP activities.

Urban societies’ key challenge, discussed at the 2018 meeting in Switzerland, addresses how museums can contribute to present-day societal transitions in the field of city development, such as economics, welfare, and agriculture. ICH has the potential to contribute to establishing new, sustainable relationships between different actors and sectors involved. The 2019 meeting in France approached the innovation challenge in more detail. It explored the innovating and transformational power and capacity that ICH and its safeguarding brings into museums today, and vice versa. The fifth meeting, hosted in 2019 in Belgium, centered around cultural policies. International, national, regional, and local governmental policies are the backdrop against which museum and cultural heritage work is implemented in practice. A comparative analysis of the policies in the five partner countries opens up opportunities to compare the strengths and weaknesses of each, and to gather innovative ideas for future policymaking and funding opportunities.

Future Directions

At the time of this writing, IMP is entering its final phase, which consists of gathering and converging the insights of three years of work together and the five international meetings as well as over a hundred different contributions, museum case studies, workshops, keynotes, position papers, and co-creations by a variety of ICH and museum professionals, practitioners, tradition bearers, researchers, policy makers, and others. Attention is now being devoted towards providing sustainable output in the form of tools, website, and book next to continued and growing cooperation in the network of partners and participants throughout the IMP. A follow-up project, elaborating on the rich collaboration and on the actual emerging questions from this first IMP experience, belongs to the future possibilities. For example, the complex question of how to address collection planning in museums in relation with ICH has been raised several times in the IMP project but currently remains without clear answers as it needs more time and space for experiment and reflection.

Finally, the IMP and associated partners are ready to share the expertise and experience built throughout this IMP and museums project, for future exchange and capacity building with peers in a global perspective. It will become a shared pleasure if the IMP process inspires and helps blossom other initiatives exploring the contact zones between museums or collecting institutions and the safeguarding of ICH in different corners of the world.

Notes
2. IMP is funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union in which it addresses the program priorities capacity building and transnational mobility. The realization of the project is made possible also through the co-funding support of the Flemish government and the Swiss Federal Office of Culture.
Archives in Motion: Intangible Heritage and Embodied Exhibitions

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A great challenge for sustaining intangible cultural heritage is in finding appropriate forms and methods to document and communicate its inherently ephemeral aspects. Globalization in tandem with rapid political, social, and environmental change around the world is placing both cultural and material heritage at risk in ways that societies, governments, and global institutions could not anticipate nor prevent. Recently, however, digital recording and display technologies have opened up powerful new possibilities for the representation, preservation, transmission, and exhibition of immaterial experiences, including the reconstruction of lost places, vanished objects, and embodied and ephemeral practices, signaling a new way to imagine and transmit the memory of the world.

ICH documentation faces many limitations within conventional archival and museological models, which tend to constrain archived materials to oral histories, object biographies, video, and audio recordings of songs and performing arts. Countless instances of ICH reveal that, while memory may be invested in places, objects, or materials, these are not necessarily the key modes or nodes of cultural transmission. ICH risks being caught between two incongruous frameworks; that of the nineteenth century archival archetypes, which preserves or fossilizes rather than enlivening heritage, and the technological complexity of archiving the ‘living.’ The increasing popularity of reenacted cultural performances meanwhile sustained forms of sensory education that share common traits with more classically defined ICH notions of tacit knowledge and repertoires of transmission.

Experimental museology is advancing cross-cutting and adaptive approaches to transform the digital documentation and display of ICH inside museums. In reenactment ICH, for example, we develop digital tools for multimodal encoding, algorithmic reenactment, recombinatory narrative, and kinetic digital interfaces, all of which encompass bodily practices that are profoundly experiential, replacing orthodox Western mind-matter dualisms to produce new agencies, materialities, intercorporeality, kinetic empathy, sympathetic imagination, haptic communication, and dialogue (Kenderdine and Shaw 2017, 2018; Chao, Kenderdine, and Shaw 2016, Shaw, Kenderdine, and Chao 2017; Chao et al. 2018). Two ongoing collaborative projects reveal the dynamic potential for the future museology of ICH.

The first of these, Hong Kong Martial Arts Living Archive (HKMALA), was initiated in 2012 and is an ongoing research collaboration between the International Goonhwa Association, City University of Hong Kong, and the Laboratory for Experimental Museology (eM+) at EPFL, and has resulted in seven international exhibitions, including Kung Fu Motion at EPFL’s ArtLab (2018) and the Immigration Museum Melbourne in 2015, and 300 Years of Hakka Kung Fu (2016) at the Heritage Museum and CityU Galleries, Hong Kong, China. The archiving project responds to the decline of Southern Chinese Kung Fu in mainland China, where a significant portion of traditional martial arts have already vanished. Hong Kong remains a vibrant center for elite practitioners and is home to some of the most prominent martial artists in the world; however rapid urban development, documents or objects, which generally aim to create a faithful digital copy of an original artifact. More recent additions to this toolkit are 3D or volumetric documentation and photogrammetry. Meanwhile, there have been enormous developments arising from film-making and gaming—such as 360 and volumetric video or the recording of 3D movement via motion capture, and audio iterations—all of which are emerging as fundamental apparatuses for material-based and ICH archives. These tools, taken singly, cannot encompass the living, breathing, and mutable nature of ICH. As a multidimensional cultural space, ICH requires a holistic approach that transcends the use of technologies to represent single instances of ICH. This is crucial for embodied knowledge, which is performed and delivered to us through past, present, and future communities of practice. Even more importantly, the popularity of reenacted cultural performances reveals that forms of sensory education share common traits with more classically defined ICH notions of tacit knowledge and repertoires of transmission.

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population growth, cultural transformation and the aging of the masters are endangering these practices.

HKMALA brings together historical materials with creative visualizations derived from advanced documentation processes, including motion capture, motion-over-time analytics, 3D reconstruction, and panoramic video. These archival materials are re-interpreted and re-performed through the mediums of augmented virtual reality and interactive media art, such as Kong Fu Visualization (2016). As a panoptic virtual reality environment, the Re-ACTOR system shows the intricate dynamics of the Kung Fu master’s reenacted performances via serial 3D motion-captures from six different points of view, with an interactive control panel that allows visitors to select six different visualization styles that elucidate the underlying dynamics of the master’s movements.

The HKMALA ‘living archive’ also uses new immersive and interactive display paradigms to perpetuate the performance of past masters for future generations. The Kung Fu Weapons Archive (2016) is a linear navigator that provides a sliding panorama of Hakka Kung Fu weapons and training tools, as well as interactively located video demonstrations of their use by Kung Fu masters. Whenever the viewer slides the screen over one particular object, it triggers a short video clip showing the Kung Fu master’s handling of that respective weapon or training tool. With these new approaches HKMALA creates practical strategies for encoding, retrieving, and reenacting intangible heritage in ways that allow these archives at risk to be ‘alive’ in the present.

Multimodal participation is a core aspect of this exhibition’s design philosophy, and the power of these principles clearly comes into play in the pose-matching installation. Here the increasingly ubiquitous technologies of gamification are activated for ICH, with sensors allowing viewers to ‘motion capture’ their movement and body position and match these with a video sequence of poses presented on a video screen by a Kung Fu master. The viewer’s endeavor is simply to see how quickly they can configure their body to match these poses, and the reward credo of the video constructs success or failure within a given time limit. In this way, the installation appropriates the video game vernacular to create a corporeal conjunction between the body of the viewer and the body of the Kung Fu master, thereby imprinting the somatic memory of Kung Fu on the viewers’ bodies. This pose-matching installation moreover elicits the production of embodied artifacts in a generative process that enlivens the arguably crucial capacity of “novel motion-sensitive cyber technologies to both craft and leverage embodied artifacts as a means of fostering learning” (Trimmis and Abrahamson 2012, 28).

In the potential absence of masters the multiple modalities of the archive’s materials can act as a vital digital or multimedia prosthesis for memory; moreover as proxies that foreground the body as the principle site of the repertoire and the holder of knowledge. This goes beyond the knowledge of style sets and movement itself and refers to tangible aspects of Kung Fu traditions and consideration of these practices as holistic philosophies and ways of life. In the context of cultural heritage, the benefit of interactive platforms combined with HKMALA’s multiple forms allows for a mode of engagement that situates the public in the act of reproducing heritage—or what might be interpreted as the ‘social production of heritage’. This is demonstrated in the exhibition 300 years of Hakka Kung Fu, where such a collaborativemodel (re)places Hakka Kung Fu in a state of continuity:

Cross-media interaction can be powerful when people take active roles in the interpretation and construction of heritage and their experience is social and collaborative. Collective storytelling plays a critical role in supporting a situated and narrative mode of interpretation and construction of our sense of place and heritage . . . Combining technical infrastructure with diverse media and actively promoting social interaction are vital steps to support the tensional relationships between past, present and future, so that people can remember, perceive and imagine encounters with the heritage (Gacciardi, Leysha, and Taylor 2018, 284).

The future possibilities for archiving and exhibiting ICH is further highlighted in Remaking the Confucian Rites, which commenced in 2015 and continues through an international partnership between Fu Li Hall Digital Platform, Hong Kong, Tsinghua University Centre for Ritual Studies, Beijing, City University, Hong Kong, and eM+ at EPFL (Kendendine and Shaw 2018). This project uses advanced digital technologies, including motion capture and augmented-reality annotation of movement as a new performance mode for the contemporary reenactment of Confucian rituals in conjunction with an analytical rereading of the fifth century version of the Book of Etiquettes and Rites (Yi-Li 諸禮). Once a core text on Zhou dynasty social behavior and ceremonial ritual central to the Confucian canon for thousands of years, it was violently rejected by modernizers at the end of Dynastic China, precipitating a breakdown in cultural transmission. Remaking the Confucian Rites revives these as a system of awareness and embodied practice that also recontextuates the rapid changes to Chinese people’s sensibilities in terms of their physical bodies and embodied self through modernization.

So far, three out of seventeen rites have been recorded with elite actors from the Beijing Opera, alongside amateur performers. Of these, the Rite of Capping Ceremony of a Minor Official’s Son has been developed into an interactive application in which motion capture and augmented-reality annotation of movement enliven these re-envisioned performances. Another three-screen video offers a linear exposition of the capping rite, with an interactive application that offers the user a hyperlinked database, enabling deeper exploration of the layers of embodied knowledge and rich historical meanings. These works have been curated into several exhibitions, including the Royal Opening of the China Exchange London in 2015, in Body of Confucius curated by Johnson Chang for ‘Beyond the Globe’ at the 8th Triennial U3 2016 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and in 2018 at the Art Institute Chicago in Mirroring China’s Past: Emperors and Their Bronzes.

Interactive, immersive displays and augmented, virtual, and mixed reality experiences are already transforming how we conserve and engage with ICH, and these examples reveal there are vibrant prospects for ICH documentation and exhibition, challenging conventional understandings of heritage and authenticity as well as offering vital tools for sustaining and transmitting culture. Combined with expert interpretation and communities of practice, ICH reenactment provides crucial alternatives to orthodox preservation strategies beyond object-oriented approaches, to understanding that digitally remaking ICH will be an important means of safeguarding knowledge for the future.

References
Intangible Heritage and Birthing Traditions

A new life enters a community, and to celebrate and commemorate the new arrival to the community, many groups have developed rituals and ceremonies. These activities include rituals to help the mother heal from the delivery and to welcome the child into the world. In this volume of the ICH Courier, we will look at birthing traditions of communities in the Republic of Korea, India, the Philippines, and Palau.

Balusamma Thalli, village goddess of the 2,400-year-old Dhanyakataka/Dharanikota. Village goddesses are the ritual focus for the majority of young women in India, prior to and after conception and during significant stages of the infant’s development. © Amareswar Galla, International Institute for the Inclusive Museum
Taegyo, Korean Prenatal Education Culture and Its Sustainable Value

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A book written by Queen Sohye to instruct Taejunghunmun (1437–1504), the mother of Joseon’s ninth king Seongjong, wrote Naehun, which contains instructions on prenatal education during the Goryeo dynasty period. The mother of Korean medical book to devote an entire chapter to prenatal education was Mong-ju Jeong (1337–1392), a prominent scholar-official, written in the fourteenth century. Headstones of famous Buddhist monks from the Silla dynasty (57 BC–935 AD) mention how the mother of high priest Jeonggul, a devotee of a temple, performed various duties without others noticing and try to regain their pure true selves while living the rest to fate. In this regard, taegyo can be considered a movement for a good personality of parents and children.

Prenatal Education Traditions in Literature

In Korea, records on prenatal education date to the late ninth century. Headstones of famous Buddhist monks from the Silla dynasty describe prenatal education practiced by their mothers. According to one headstone, the mother of high priest Wollanggeunsa said, “I started to pay more attention to my manners and behaviors from the day I conceived him, and I read Buddhist scriptures for prenatal education. I noticed after I gave birth to him that he was born to be extraordinary.”

Records on prenatal education are also found in Goryeosa, written during the Goryeo dynasty period. The mother of Mong-ju Jeong (1337–1392), a prominent scholar-official, wrote Taejunghannun for pregnant women, which some practices partially remain to this day. Later in the Joseon dynasty, more books on prenatal education were written, as prenatal care, which had mostly been practiced by the royal family, became more widespread among commoners. For instance, Queen Sohye (1437–1504), the mother of Joseon’s ninth king Seongjong, wrote Naehun, which contains instructions on prenatal education. In addition, descriptions about prenatal education are in Hyunggukjongchong, published in 1445 and the first Korean medical book to devote an entire chapter to prenatal education.

Such traditions finally led to Taegyosang by Saju Jang (1739–1821) in 1800. The book contains excerpts about manners and behaviors from the day I conceived him, and I read Buddhist scriptures for prenatal education. I noticed after I gave birth to him that he was born to be extraordinary.”

Today, we are living in a networked society. As pregnant women of the royal palace about basic knowledge on delivery and postpartum care. The book recommended the expecting mother to make her surroundings peaceful and quiet as birth was approaching. She was also instructed to calmly wait for delivery with doors and windows closed, ensuring that she would not hear any loud noises from outside. The room should be properly ventilated to release heat. Pregnant women were also advised to wear adequate clothing to keep proper body temperature and were assisted by three or four doulas that helped her move around. In the last month of pregnancy, mothers were suggested to eat easy-to-digest foods and told to relax and feel calm as labor pains began. As such, Imsanyejibeop offered easy instructions that helped women stay calm and relaxed throughout pregnancy, instructing pregnant women to ensure proper room temperature, move around frequently, and eat seaweed soup with rice to help boost physical strength which is almost consistent with the modern recommendations.

Value of Intangible Cultural Heritage

In the past, women spent most of their time within their homes and did not usually engage in outdoor activities, so they could focus on their prenatal education with family. Today, however, we are living in a networked society. As women participate in social activities and are unwittingly exposed to a variety of risks. Furthermore, many women maintain their jobs during pregnancy. Pregnant women need to eat, think, see, and hear good things, which, however, may not be easy in today’s society.

This does not mean that we should give up prenatal education. The implication here is that all members of society should be encouraged to promote prenatal education in a social environment. Prenatal education is no longer the sole responsibility of pregnant women and their family. It should involve all members of society to ensure the safe delivery of every new life into this world. In this way, prenatal education can be considered not as an outdated tradition but as valuable intangible heritage to be safeguarded towards the future.
Rites of Motherhood: Filipino Folk Practices and Herbal Medicine

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In the Philippines, some areas still practice folk traditions that mark this biological milestone. Many modern Filipinas no longer practice these traditions, as they have been replaced with Western baby showers (Loredo, A., 2019, Tejido, H., 2019, Vargas, T. 2019). However, some mothers still experience them and become part of a tradition that recognizes the pain of childbirth and prepares women for motherhood.

One folk practice concerns the first bath after giving birth. One boils guava leaves in water, and depending on one’s tradition, bathes in it, soaks in it, or have it steamed. Pinasusukan, or having the guava leaves steamed, entails boiling the guava leaves in water and using the steam to heal the vaginal wound. The mother sits on a stool with a blanket around her lower body, while the steam from the guava-infused water drifts upwards (Ocampo, E., 2019).

Julie Alfaro Santiago recounts how her yaya, or her childhood nanny, went all the way from Cavite to Manila, to bring her guava leaves and to share this with her. She giggled during the ritual, but also considered it “a grand gesture of care.” She told me, “It felt good to take part in tradition and to experience it firsthand. Ultimately, you feel special and cared for… She did not have to go all out of her way but she did. It was a rite of passage… Now that I think about it, the gesture of supreme kindness and care is heartwarming.”

After I gave birth to my firstborn, I did this, as well. The steam that came from the guava-infused water was warm and fragrant. The wet heat was soothing and helped create a psychological transition towards motherhood. Other women bathe or soak in the guava-infused water, since it helps in hastening recovery (Teodoro, P. 2019, Duque, A. 2019). Women are also told to avoid bathing for three to seven days, however, most women no longer obey this rule today (De Guzman, A., 2019).

According to Esther Uychoco, the most important part of the ritual happens after the bath. The manghilot from the province comes and gives the traditional filot. The manghilot massages the lower back and hips to move the hips and the babay batu (the womb) closer to its original size and position (2019). Afterwards, women sip malunggay or chicken soup, to ensure that they have enough breast milk for the baby. In Ada Loredo’s experience, it was a supportive welcome to motherhood. Ada’s Bicolona friend came over after she gave birth to her son, to give her soup with seafood.

Ada recounts, “She said that was their tradition in their place when a friend has just delivered a baby. It was sweet, very intimate. She was a very close friend… I wasn’t expecting to be a biological mother (medical condition), so I felt insecure even as I looked forward to the coming chapter in my life. The soup gift was reassuring, like everything would be all right.”

New traditions come to the Philippines as well. For Jaye de la Cruz-Bekema, her Dutch parents-in-law did something special for their family. Jaye explains, “In the Netherlands they eat anise cookies to celebrate a birth. So it was very touching because even though they were far away from us, they gathered together to eat those cookies and filmed themselves doing it. When we got home from the hospital, we also served those cookies to our family… I realized how lucky my son was: to have two cultures heralding his birth. But more importantly, it made me feel supported and loved. That we had a village around us, and a village around my son.”

These folk practices help us remember what mothers go through. It folds childbirth into an experience in harmony with the earth, and the female body is cherished for the miracles it brings. In this manner, the mother is celebrated and valued in Philippine society.

List of References
Childbirth in India and the Associated Food and Song Culture

Mrityunjay Kumar Singh

The birth of a child is considered auspicious and sacred in every culture. India, being multicultural in its beliefs and customs, has diverse traditions of local cuisines at all occasions, be it childbirth, or even death. Although the recipes have grown in number as a result of shared practices in modern times, traditional food items and their variants are still popular and can be found in almost all mandatory rituals.

Childbirth in Hinduism is considered the beginning of the existence of humankind and is accordingly treated as a pivot to a life-system that revolves around the infant. It is therefore, not surprising, that seven out of sixteen sam-sakaras (sacraments) among Hindus are devoted to the birth of a child, which is celebrated with pomp and gaiety by family members and accompanied by singing auspicious songs for the occasion and partaking in celebratory food by all, but especially by the new mother.

It would be impossible to describe all the Hindu traditions spread across India, but three popular traditions from North India can illustrate the importance of traditional rituals, song, and food associated with childbirth.

Sohar is a folk song sung during pregnancy or to welcome an infant into a family. This song is about blessing a newborn and expressing gratitude at the baby’s arrival in the family mansion.

Important rituals are associated with naming the infant—Naamkaran and Jaatkarm Sanskaar—wherein the father of the child whispers prayers and Vedic hymns in the baby’s right ear. More than introducing the new born to their family religion and invoking divine protection, this ritual mainly aims at a sound social and cognitive development of the child.

A newborn Hindu child is given a few drops of honey owing to its medicinal qualities of cleaning the gastrointestinal system, which help clears out the meconium (the first dark bowel movement of a new born).

Simmantonnayan Sanskara or God Bharayi is observed in the seventh month of pregnancy, when the mother’s hair is delicately parted by the father to put her in a calm and relaxed mood amidst prayers recited by women to bless the expectant mother and pray for the well-being of the mother and the new born.

In Braj, during the seventh month of conception, a typical rite of health is held for the would-be mother where she is gifted to her by the family. This song speaks of a pregnant woman’s carving for a sweet pudding called halua, made with flour, clarified ghee, condiments and sugar/jaggery.

Keeping in mind the hormonal changes, mood swings and thus the irrational palate during pregnancy, traditional sour-sweet, tangy, savory, and spicy foods like chaat (mixture of potatoes, onion, white peas, tamarind, curd, and condiments), and pakora (batter fried vegetables) is quite common.

A sweet pudding (kheer/paaya) made of fragrant rice, milk, dry fruits, jaggery, or sugar follows.

Other foods include pickles, papad (lentil wafers), chutneys, fried breads, (kachauri) with raita (spicy yoghurt dips), and many more. Relatives also bring a variety of foods.

Throughout India, with its multicultural communities, the vast array of customs related to childbirth is as diverse as the customs themselves, and many involve food and song to help create a festive atmosphere while still holding on to the importance of bringing a new life into the world.
In Palau, the healing process after birth is an essential part of a woman's reproduction and life cycle. Great emphasis on and development of rituals have persisted to ensure women's childbearing and rearing capabilities. Processes and details in carrying out this ceremony establish connections among family and clan members for the new mother and her husband. It is a celebration of the success and joy of the first child, the family, and relatives.

**Omesurech—Hot Bath**

Preparation for the first-child ceremony begins with the hot bath, omesurech (healing process). Before the omesurech begins, word is passed to appropriate relatives of the woman regarding the bath. Word of the omesurech and omengat (presentation ceremony) is sent to the men's parents and relatives. All preparation of the omesurech and omengat are taken care of by the mlechell’s (new mother going under the hot bath) parents, family, and clan relatives.

The hot bath may begin one or two months after the birth of the child. Generally there are two divisions of omesurech, one that follows the days allotted for the mlechell’s clan and another used by followers of Modekngei. The omesurech consists of taking a hot bath, drinking herbal medicine, and having a final steam. Before the hot bath begins, the mother is told the basic protocols she has to follow. During the bath, the mother enters the hot bath area and sits on a ulitech (woven coconut sitting mat), and turmeric oil is applied all over her body. Turmeric oil aids in removing dark areas of the skin as well as protecting the skin from the hot bath water. Siting with legs stretched out, she waits for the mesurech (skilled woman giving/performing the hot bath) to begin the process. An oourich (large boiling pot containing medicinal plants) is situated near the mesurech, who ladles the hot water into a small container and selects a few leaves to be used. The leaves are dipped in the water and quickly slapped on to the mother’s body. Depending on the particular training, omesurech practices may vary; however, the hot bath usually begins from the head to the abdomen and down to the feet. A typical omesurech happens twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. For the duration of omesurech, which could last several days, the mlechell showers with the hot bath water and remains adorned with the turmeric oil, constantly applying it as needed. Her mother, sister, and female kin attend to her and her baby. Omesurech helps get rid of stretch marks and other skin discoloration that may result from the pregnancy.

**Omengat e Mo Tuobed—Married Woman’s First-Child Ceremony**

Traditionally, the first-child ceremony happens after a marriage exchange; however, the culture allows the marriage exchange to take place during this time as well. The mlechell’s maternal uncle plays a large role in terms of food preparation and all major logistics. The maternal uncle is responsible for food consisting of crops, meat, and other prepared meals that will be presented to the husband’s family. These foods may be presented before or during the ceremony.

On the day of the ceremony, a mlechell begins enters the bliukel (a steam hut) to complete the final stage of omesurech, which is the omengat. Afterward, she showers and is allowed to use soap to clean her body. She then goes back to the house to prepare for her final presentation. In the meantime, her family, clan, and in some cases the village, are busy packing food, decorating, and welcoming members of their family and clan to the house. The mlechell’s mother continues to care for the baby while her father supervises, being mindful not to step into the responsibilities of the mlechell’s maternal uncles (okdremeel).

Excitement runs high in the air as the husband’s family arrives and is greeted with a feast filled with the best food that the land can produce. As the day progresses, a meeting between the mlechell and her husband’s family takes place to exchange money, which typically covers the bus or orau (money for marriage) and buuldiil (money for the maternal uncle for taking care of her from pregnancy until the omesurech). Kinswomen gather inside the house to get the mlechell ready. A traditional skirt that bears the family color is used for her final presentation. A btek (woven pandanus belt) is lashed around her stomach. While her aunts prepare the finest adornment for her hair and other body ornaments, her younger sister and female cousins, who have not gone through the process, watch ardently, questioning and showing excitement for their own times will come. When she is finally ready, word is passed to the mlechell’s husband’s relatives that she is ready. A senior family or clan member of her husband covers her neck with valuable Palauan money. This money will be returned to the family afterwards.
Storytelling is an important aspect of the human experience. Through stories, we learn, we share, we feel, we express, and we remember. And in the Pacific, stories serve as the thread that connects us with our places. Our stories hold lessons of the strength, struggles, and solidarity that shape the identity of all Pacific Islanders, as well as the accumulated knowledge, world views, and ways of knowing developed through firsthand engagement with our environment. However, while critical to survival in our places, our stories and the knowledge held in them are not always valued in school. This leaves a gap in education that alienates communities from classrooms and young learners from the collective wisdom that would guide them into a thriving future.

Bridging this gap becomes increasingly critical in light of globalization, migration, and the rapid environmental shifts in the Pacific due to climate change. So in 2016, Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) launched the Pacific Storytellers Cooperative as an online platform to safeguard and grow our repertoire of traditional and place-based stories, and to be part of bringing our rich Pacific storytelling heritage into the internet age.

Why Storytellers?
The Cooperative arose from the Pacific Islands Climate Education Partnership (PCEP), a larger initiative funded by the National Science Foundation (#1239733; http://pcep.prel.org/), in which climate scientists, learning scientists, education practitioners, and community members came together to work toward advancing climate education in the US-affiliated Pacific islands (USAPI). As PCEP worked within education systems to revise curriculum standards, create new classroom materials, and train educators, we needed a way to help students connect their personal experiences to the big ideas of climate science and climate change impact like sea-level rise, higher air and ocean temperatures, changing rain patterns, and ocean acidification. Something else was also missing in the literature about climate change: the voices of community members, especially the youth, that are most affected by its impact.

The Cooperative is an Opportunity to Democratize who can Contribute to the Growing Body of Knowledge about Big Ideas.
Facts about climate change and other big ideas are often told to us through scholarly literature, authored by those considered to be experts in their field that hold (Western) academic credentials and can navigate the peer review process past the journal gatekeepers. These works are incredibly valuable, but they only hold part of the truth. Observations by local residents of all ages is critical to the understanding of global phenomena and can capture information in local languages and local ways of knowing that may be missed by academic researchers.

My grandpa once told me that if I do not know my history, then I do not know anything. He said I would be like a leaf that does not know it is part of a tree.

—Sasha Santiago (Pohnpei Storytellers)
The Cooperative seeks to find the nexus between oral traditions of island communities and present-day modalities of communication, especially among Pacific youth. And while we live in a world where each one of us can share a story on social media with just a click of a button, a single voice is easily lost in the noise. The Cooperative was created to weave together and amplify the countless voices of those in the Pacific that are facing global issues like climate change in a very personal way.

We are Just the First to Experience Climate Change Impact. Others Need to Pay Attention

The Cooperative is more than just a way for students to process big ideas. Sea level rise, higher temperatures, and increased storminess due to climate change are affecting everyday life in the Pacific. Ours will be the first communities facing the possibility of climate-induced migration. But we are only the first; we won’t be the last.

The way in which climate change exacerbates existing economic challenges—and how our global and local leaders choose to act—tells us what’s in store for other communities around the globe. And stories from young people living with the physical, political, social, and economic impact of environmental changes make these lessons personal.

What Does the Cooperative Look Like?

The Cooperative lives as a website (http://storytellers.prel.org/), as workshops through the Shaping Storytellers Institute, and as edited short films featured at international film festivals. The Cooperative’s online platform accepts submissions in all forms from Indigenous Pacific Islanders, including written stories, photos, videos, and poetry. Authors can create their own accounts and post their own stories without having to go through an editor. Posts are monitored, but this freedom allows writers to publish directly to the public and truly own their stories. Over 100 stories from young authors in American Samoa, Palau, Saipan, RMI, Pohnpei, and Hawaii have been published through the Cooperative online.

When storytellers submit material to the Pacific Storytellers Cooperative, they provide full permission for PREL to share their story in different types of media. However, a story belongs to its storyteller, now and forever.

The Shaping Storytellers Institute is a collaboration between PREL affiliates Dan Lin (@danlinphotography) and Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner (@kathyjetnilkijiner) that provides an opportunity for youth to build and share their stories through poetry, prose, and photography. The workshops vary in size from five to seventy participants. Not every workshop is about climate change, but the majority focuses on environmental issues. Many of these stories are published on the Cooperative’s online platform and some have been shared on YouTube and in local media outlets. Past institutes have included:

- Pohnpei Storytellers, the original group of twenty-two young storytellers that started with a creative writing and photography project to celebrate the recognition of Nan Madol as a UNESCO World Heritage Site; the group continues to produce stories
- Environmental Poetry and Storytelling at the 2016 Festival of Pacific Arts in Guam
- Youth Storytelling through Poetry with the Northern Marianas Humanities Council and over seventy high school and college students, educators, and elders to empower youth to use digital media and storytelling as tools to promote awareness about important issues in CNMI
- Manua, American Samoa with five high school students and fifteen teachers, focusing on their new solar energy micro grid built by Tesla
- Climate Science Camp in Palau with fifteen high school students to reflect on their perspectives and new learning about climate change through poetry
- Multi-day workshop with Micronesian youth in low-income Honolulu neighborhoods
- Collaboration with the CMI Media Club in the Marshall Islands to provide technical support and artistic guidance, and to create “Fusibone Hair” with Jetñil-Kijiner.

And to raise the profile of the Cooperative and bring global attention to Pacific Island issues, Lin and Jetñil-Kijiner have created two award-winning, powerful short films:

- Anoined, a voyage to the island of Runit in Eniwetok Atoll to visit a nuclear waste site that is home to 111,000 cubic yards of radioactive debris and
- Rise: From One Island to Another, a collaboration between Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviána (Kalaallit Nunaat [Greenland]) that illustrates and connects the realities of melting glaciers and rising sea levels

Why Stories in PREL’s New Direction?

Stories are in PREL’s new direction because the conversation about climate change is not over, and because conversations among Pacific Islanders extend beyond climate change.

Parts of the USAPI—specifically the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau—entered into Compacts of Free Association (COFA) with the United States that allows assistance and free access by COFA citizens to the United States in exchange for exclusive military access. These agreements fund the education and healthcare systems in each entity and have since the 1980s. However, the current COFA agreements, and their funds, are set to expire in 2023, and leaders are anticipated even a greater wave of COFA citizens migrating to the United States and its territories in search of employment, medical assistance, and education.

As an organization that spans the USAPI, PREL recognizes our role in supporting COFA citizens in navigating this new political future. This support includes expanding our work with educators, particularly in Hawaii, to support newly arrived students, as well as with those in COFA communities to prepare students for a global future and families for migration away from home. We also see the Pacific Storytellers Cooperative as one of the ways in which we build this system of support together because, as we know through the voyaging legacies of our ancestors, it is the stories—encompassing languages, knowledge, and ways of knowing—that perpetuate culture through times of transition.
Community Dining Rooms: Hawker Culture in Singapore

Hawker culture in Singapore comprises hawker centers, hawkers, and hawkers’ food. It is a living heritage shared by those who prepare hawker food and those who dine and mingle over hawker food in “community dining rooms” called hawker centers. It encompasses people from all walks of life, a wide range of affordable multicultural food, and common shared spaces. While similar food practices can be found in neighboring countries and internationally, they each have their respective historical contexts, cultural influences, and sociocultural functions.

Hawker centers in Singapore are naturally ventilated premises that are accessible and integral to the everyday lives of people in Singapore. Hawker stalls, selling food from different cultures, usually line both sides of the center, with an open communal dining space in the middle. At a typical hawker center, one can often experience sights and sounds, such as the sizzling of wok fire and rising steam from boiling pots, as hawkers whip up freshly cooked, made-to-order dishes at their hawker stalls. It is common to hear friendly exchanges between hawkers and patrons in the various languages spoken in Singapore, over a bustling atmosphere as families, colleagues, and friends chat and bond over hawker meals.

Hawkers in Singapore

In Singapore, the setting in which hawkers prepare food has changed over the years. The term “hawkers” that we use in Singapore today draws reference from the traveling hawkers of early Singapore who plied the streets in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During those times, hawkers transported their goods in varied manners, ranging from baskets attached to poles and carried on shoulders, to more elaborate forms such as tricycles or pushcarts fixed with cooking equipment to be moved around.

During the formative years of Singapore’s independence, hawkers and local communities in Singapore, with the government’s assistance, came together to develop hawker centers, to sustain livelihoods for hawkers and provide affordable food for the population in a hygienic environment. Over the generations, many hawkers work unrelentingly, taking pride in preparing their best versions of signature hawker dishes for people to enjoy. Some hawkers pass down recipes and techniques within families, or to apprentices, who continue to upkeep traditions and hone their culinary practices through generations. Some may further innovate by refining recipes or practices, or even injecting new ideas, to cater to the needs of hawkers and safeguard hawker culture.

FMAS organizes many programs that provide hawkers with a chance to network with one another and serves as a conduit between hawkers and government agencies. FMAS also organizes events to raise awareness among the general public about the hawker practice, amplifying the voices of hawkers and keeping the public informed about how they can help safeguard hawker culture.

At the community level, many community organizations and NGOs also organize activities that contribute to the zeitgeist of modern hawker culture. For example, The Birthday Collective seeks to safeguard hawker culture by documenting the recipes and practices of hawkers as well as “hawker terminology,” words that people commonly use in hawker centers.

Among government agencies, the National Environment Agency is the key government agency reviewing and implementing policies relating to hawkers and managing and enhancing Singapore’s hawker centers. It partners with institutions to organize training classes and implements the “Incubation Stall Programme,” facilitating aspiring hawkers to join the hawker practice. It also introduced the “Vibrant Hawker Centres” program, providing grants to the public to organize activities such as workshops and performances to enhance hawker centers as social spaces and foster community spirit.

Lastly, educational institutions also contribute to the safeguarding and promotion of hawker culture. These range from primary and secondary schools, where students embark on projects that seek to foster greater appreciation of hawker culture, such as documenting the different types of hawker food and the history of hawkers, to specialized culinary training institutions such as At-Sunrice Global Chef Academy, where students are taught how to incorporate both traditional and other Eastern and Western fine-dining dishes. Thus, students gain a deeper understanding of Singapore’s hawker culture and the importance of safeguarding and promoting hawker culture from a young age.

Hawker culture in Singapore continues to grow and evolve with the changing needs of Singaporeans. While hawker centers are still the go-to place for quick and affordable local meals, hawkers continue to grow their practice by catering to a more globalized palette, introducing food from other new immigrant communities like Thai, Japanese, and Korean and creating innovative fusion cuisine. The enthusiasm of young hawkers in promoting and sustaining the industry, the community initiatives documenting hawker culture and many other collaborative efforts by various communities, groups, and individuals, show the important place of hawker culture in the hearts of Singaporeans and will help ensure that the hawker culture in Singapore will be here to stay for many generations to come.
Safeguarding Pioneers

Bakshi Art Festival to Revive Silk Road Culture

Interview with Bakhtiyor Sayfullayev, Minister of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Seong-Yong Park
Assistant Director-General, ICHCAP

Eunkyung Oh
Director, Institute for Eurasian and Turkic Studies, Dongguk Women’s University

A wide range of festivals are held in Uzbekistan to generate public interest in intangible cultural heritage. This includes the recent International Bakshi Art Festival, which was held for a week from 5 April in the ancient city of Termez. Bakshi is a multi-genre art form that brings together singers, musicians, and performers of Dostan, a Central Asian oral epic. Teams from seventy-five countries took part in this festival, which featured not only a wide range of performances but also an enlightening international format, such as djirov (a Central Asian oral epic) and bakhshi traditions.

Dr. Seong-Yong Park, Assistant Director-General of ICHCAP, and Professor Eun-kyung Oh, Director of the Eurasia Silk Road Research Center, attended the festival under an official invitation from the Uzbek government. They met and interviewed with Mr. Bakhtiyor Sayfullayev, Minister of Culture and Sports, to hear about the Uzbek government’s use of festivals to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Sayfullayev had a long career as a film director, a university professor, and artist. He has been working at the Ministry of Culture and Sports since 2004 and was appointed Minister in 2017. This article is a summary of his responses during the interview.

Why Safeguard Bakshi Traditions

Bakshi is a traditional Uzbek art form with a long history. It goes by other names, with slight variations in techniques and format, such as djirov in Karakalpakstan and ashik in Iran and Azerbaijan. A presidential decree to establish bakshi schools in various regions across the country to ensure the tradition’s transmission to future generations was adopted in Uzbekistan. This policy is an example of the government’s strong commitment to raise public awareness of cultural heritage and train highly skilled professionals in the field.

As part of this initiative, a bakshi school was founded in Surkhandarya while bakshi programs were established in music schools in Khashkodarya, Samarkand, Khorezm, Dijizzakh, and Karakalpakstan. Skilled professional bakshi masters (kura bakhshi) such as Abdunazar Foyonov and Ilhomnazarov are currently training young artists at these schools.

The Uzbek government’s interest and support for the bakshi tradition led to the establishment of the International Bakshi Art Festival. The first was held last year in Surkhandarya by the Ministry of Culture and Sports, and over three hundred artists, directors, and members of the media participated. International cooperation among experts in various fields was sought to ensure the festival’s continuation in the future. The Uzbek government hopes to share the bakshi tradition with the public and ensure its transmission organically, using the festival as a stage for intercultural communication.

At the festival, Bakhtiyor Sayfullayev (middle) talks with Seong-Yong Park and Eunkyung Oh © National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO

How Does the Festival Promote Intercultural Dialogue

When this festival was initially planned, a huge challenge was ensuring that the participants from seventy-five countries, each with their own cultural background, could come together to enjoy the festival equally. Although the Ministry of Culture and Sports has extensive experience in hosting large-scale festivals, it was exciting to anticipate the huge turnout of people who we hoped would have a great time. As we had hoped, the festival was a time of harmony and communication among its many participants and made us see the possibility of intercultural dialogue through festivals.

As can be seen from the various logos on the placards and posters, the International Bakshi Art Festival was made possible with the interest and support from a wide range of partner organizations such as the UNESCO and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. I think the festival was a success thanks to cooperation and networking among various stakeholders sharing the passion and drive to safeguard the bakshi tradition. Intangible cultural heritage safeguarding cannot be accomplished through unilateral policies from the government alone. The Ministry of Culture and Sports will continue to seek close and sustained cooperation with experts in various fields to safeguard the bakshi intangible cultural heritage efficiently. The International Bakshi Art Festival was an outcome of our efforts, where members of the public were able to get an up-close and personal experience with bakshi traditions.

What Are Your International Partnership Strategies

A wide range of festivals are held year round in Uzbekistan. Apart from the International Bakshi Art Festival, there are intangible cultural heritage festivals held annually or biennially in various regions of Uzbekistan such as the Boysun Bahori Festival, Fergana Valley Crafts Festival, Samarkand International Music Festival, and Khiva Traditional Dance Festival. Not to forget, the First Silk Road Festival will be held in June this year in Murgiyan, Fergana. Tourism revenue aside, the main goal of the government for these festivals is for more people to enjoy our intangible cultural heritage and participate in its transmission.

The bulk of the funding for these festivals comes from the Ministry of Culture and Sports as well as through donations. The Fund to Promote Art and Culture under the Ministry of Culture and Sports plays a large role. The Ministry of Culture and Sports has a festival committee for the systematic organization of festivals, chaired by the Minister of Culture and Sports. We also use our international networks to cooperate with various stakeholders both domestically and internationally and to invite a wide range of honored guests from around the world.

We appreciate the efforts and achievements of the ICHCAP in safeguarding Central Asian Silk Road culture over the past ten years. We hope to continue our strong partnership with the ICHCAP as a specialized center for networking in the field of ICH, for the continued transmission of both ICH festivals and Silk Road culture.
Culture and Education Experts in South Asia Discussed ICH in Bangladesh

The 4th South Asia sub-regional meeting brought together government officials from seven South Asian countries—namely, Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Among those who attended were culture and education experts from UNESCO Offices in New Delhi, Kathmandu, and Islamabad. The meeting was primarily concerned about educational policies and activities for the safeguarding of intangible heritage and, therefore, devoted time in sharing and discussing pertinent future cooperation projects.

The first session of the meeting featured the ICH education policy and its status in South Asia. Then, session two focused on ICH education cases. Finally, sessions three and four tackled ways to build a South Asian network for intangible heritage education and intangible heritage education in the context of education for sustainable development and global citizen education.

The United Nations’ goals for sustainable development (SDGs) suggest that ICH can interact with a variety of thematic areas such as human rights, gender equality, and cultural diversity to serve as a leverage for peace and sustainable development. It is expected that the future strategy for the development of ICH education in the Asia-Pacific region will be established through this meeting and will examine more specifically the contribution of ICH education to achieving sustainable development goals.

ICH in Higher Education: Context, Safeguarding Policy, Social Awareness

Many issues arise when integrating ICH into higher education—from rote facility of education to the unreinforced role of cultural bearers, from ghostly legal implementation of ICH-informed laws to public ignorance. These issues are real, and demand holistic comprehension and intervention from stakeholders. At the 2019 APHEN-ICH International Seminar on ICH Pedagogy in Higher Education, some issues were presented by five speakers, on which the public had the chance to give their opinions. The seminar, focusing on the status of ICH-informed education in the Asia-Pacific region and its challenges in reference to UNESCO’s Overall Results Framework (ORF) was organized to deliberate on practical exposure to the teaching of ICH in different contexts.

The one-day seminar on 10 May 2019 at the National Museum of Korea opened with a keynote speech delivered by Ms. Duong Bich Hanh of the UNESCO Bangkok Office. Her talk grounded the yet-to-be-mapped-out efforts of ICH integration into higher education in terms of the ORF. The first part of the seminar was dedicated to hearing cases from India and the Philippines. Neel Kamal Chapagain presented a pedagogical paradigm based on context and is played primarily by teachers, students, and communities. Speaking from Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning, Dr. Chapagain maintained that a contextual approach to the study of ICH should move beyond comprehension to ultimately enable students to create something out of their learning experience. Prof. Martin Genodpea followed by providing a map of Philippine laws chiefly responsible for the protection of cultural heritage. He underscored that there’s a number of laws in the archipelago that tacitly pronounce the responsibility of the Philippine educational system in housing ICH. His talk highlighted that though a cultural policy exists in a particular context, specifically in the developing world, its irregular implementation impedes any effort to successfully integrate ICH and education.

The second part of the seminar focused on ICH education in South Korea and Japan. Prof. Ayako Fujieda and Prof. Shin Suk mentioned more similarities than differences in the cases they presented. As South Korea and Japan have explored ICH in deeper legal and social levels than other countries, having ratified the UNESCO 2003 Convention in 2005 and 2004 respectively, the state of their ICH education is much more stable, supporting numerous training centers and educational facilities that certainly widen social awareness and public accessibility to ICH inventories and practices of transmission.

Workshop on Safeguarding ICH through Education in Central Asia Held in Bishkek

A sub-regional meeting for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (ICH) through formal and non-formal education in Central Asia was held at the Park Hotel in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, from 18 to 19 June 2019.

As a two-day workshop, the objective was to engage responsible officials from culture and education ministries of Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) as well as directors of ASPnet (Associated Schools Project Network) schools in a joint reflection on how to implement UNESCO’s funding priority on safeguarding ICH in formal and non-formal education in Central Asia. The meeting was also held particularly to focus on methods of transmitting knowledge on learning about, with, and through ICH and develop guidance for teachers.

The topics covered at the workshop were as follows:

- Benefits of integrating the safeguarding of living cultural heritage in education
- Existing experiences on integrating ICH into education at global level
- Overview of recommendations in Central Asia (Technical Vocational Education and Training Institutions (TVET) for ICH and school based experiences of integrating ICH in education)
- Methods for integrating ICH in formal and non-formal education developed
- Available country experiences
- Development of recommendations for integrating ICH safeguarding in existing school programs and extracurricular activities

The workshop also consolidated experiences and tools to facilitate sharing within and across countries and promoted networking among relevant stakeholders in Central Asian countries as well as from other countries involved in this global initiative of safeguarding ICH in education.

Article source offered by UNESCO.
2019 Asia-Pacific Youth ICH Storytelling Contest

Qualification
Youth in the Asia-Pacific region (Born 1983-2001)

Categories
Young practitioners and general youth
- Young Practitioners
- Theme: My Dream, My ICH
- Contents: Storytelling on themselves as a ICH young practitioner in the form of an essay or an interview
- General Youth
- Theme: Youth Meets ICH
- Contents: Storytelling on ICH in their daily lives or not in traveling in the form of an essay or an interview

Format
Photo essay or video content
- Photo essay: 10-15 photos with essay between 900 and 1,500 words
- Video content: 3-5 mins (1280x720 HD or larger) and 30-sec highlights

Submission
15 July to 15 October 2019

Host
International Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre for the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHCAP)

Support
Cultural Heritage Administration, Republic of Korea

Details about the contest at www.ichcap.org/mc