United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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· Intangible
· Cultural
· Heritage

Integrating intangible cultural heritage in education

Intersectoral meeting with Education Institutes and Programmes

17–19 May 2017, Paris, France

Summary Report

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1. Introduction and objectives

From 17–19 May 2017, the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section at UNESCO organized an intersectoral meeting on 'Integrating intangible cultural heritage in education' at UNESCO Headquarters. The meeting brought together 40 colleagues from the Education and Culture Sectors (Education Institutes, Field Offices and Headquarters).

The Intangible Cultural Heritage Section convened the meeting as a first step towards developing new partnerships with relevant educational programmes in the context of the next quadrennial UNESCO programme (2018–2021). More specifically the main objectives of the meeting were to:

- Establish a shared conceptual understanding of the interface between intangible cultural heritage and education;
- Share previous and ongoing concrete experiences relevant for integrating intangible cultural heritage in education;
- Discuss SDG 4 monitoring and intangible cultural heritage; and
- Define areas of strategic action and collaboration for 2018-2021.

Over three days, colleagues from both the Culture and Education Sectors took turns facilitating the different sessions, presenting perspectives and relevant projects, and engaging in group and plenary discussions. The present report summarizes these presentations and discussions, and suggests areas for future action.

2. Establishing a shared conceptual understanding

The meeting opened with remarks from Jyoti Hosagrahar, Director, Division for Creativity and Christopher Castle on behalf of the Director, Division for Inclusion, Peace and Sustainable Development. Gwang-Jo Kim, Director, UNESCO Office in Bangkok and Regional Bureau for Education gave a brief keynote where he emphasized that this is the opportune moment to promote integrating intangible cultural heritage in education to meet the challenge of quality education.

Following these remarks, Tim Curtis, Secretary of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, briefly introduced intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and the 2003 Convention, including the five domains outlined in the Convention (oral traditions; performing arts; social practices, rituals, and festive events; knowledge about nature and the universe; and traditional craftsmanship). He recalled that the Convention includes transmission through formal and non-formal education as a safeguarding measure (Article 2.3) and calls on States Parties to

'ensure recognition of, respect for, and enhancement of the intangible cultural heritage in society' through education programmes (Article 14).

The presentation stressed that intergenerational transmission is the central tenet of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding and the key requirement for its viability. In the past, intergenerational transmission happened mainly through traditional modes of transmission embedded in the daily lives of the people. However, these are increasingly disrupted for many reasons. In this changing context, educational responsibility and transmission of practices, knowledge and skills are no longer the prerogative of families and communities alone, but shared with public institutions. Hence, formal and non-formal education can play a key role for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. However, typically education systems have not given due consideration to the important role they can play in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage nor have they harnessed the great potential of intangible cultural heritage to improve education quality and relevance.

Lydia Ruprecht brought in the education perspective by presenting developments from the Section of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship. She shared the approach emerging in the Education Sector to deal with these two fields. She reminded colleagues that while integrating ICH in education can cut across the different education programmes, one important entry point for our conversations together is Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which includes the 'promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development'.

She saw many possible synergies and possible areas for collaboration between education and ICH. For instance, for Global Citizenship Education, there is the possibility to connect with the Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education, where a lot of their work is focused now. ICH and Education for Sustainable Development are also intricately linked with the context of local communities and their traditional knowledge of sustainable lifestyles.

Links between intangible cultural heritage and education

After framing the discussion with viewpoints from both Sectors, participants broke out into small groups. They were asked to reflect on two questions:

- What are the links between ICH and education?
- How do you see the connections with your work in education?

In plenary, groups reported on a few key points that came out of the discussion:

- A key aspect of safeguarding ICH is transmission (passing on knowledge and skills from one generation to the next), which in itself is education. It often represents informal education that has been happening within communities.
- In some cases, school attendance disrupts traditional transmission within the community.
- Sometimes countries are not referring to 'intangible cultural heritage', but they may already be integrating such concepts in education.
- Education curricula are often disconnected from students' real lives and what is taught may not be relevant for them.
- Young people may feel that education is removed from who they are and that education does not recognize their identity. Incorporating ICH could bring a feeling of pride and legitimation for students, recognizing diversity not as a problem but as an enriching feature for education.
- Stakeholders are increasingly expressing the need for education to connect with communities. Integrating ICH in education programmes is one way to re-establish this connection.
- Teachers need to be convinced about integrating ICH in education since they have a key role to play, including for advocacy.
- Other approaches (arts education, heritage education, etc.) have similarities with integrating ICH in education, but the key difference here is the focus on transmission. Mother tongue education is also relevant for and connected to integrating ICH in education.
- Any approach needs to account for diversity in terms of socio-cultural backgrounds of learners.

- ICH can be a content area, but can also act as a leverage to increase the relevance and quality of multiple subject areas.
- Some intangible heritage could be useful when teaching social values and competences, such as critical thinking.
- There are opportunities to make connections with and piggyback on the work of several education programmes, for example, GCED and ESD.

3. Sharing concrete experiences

The Intangible Cultural Heritage Section invited several colleagues to share relevant previous and ongoing projects with connections to integrating ICH in education with the goal of drawing out lessons learned and inspiring future work.

Promoting intangible cultural heritage for educators to reinforce education for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region

As a first concrete experience, Vanessa Achilles (UNESCO Office in Bangkok) presented a recent pilot project from four countries in Asia Pacific (Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Viet Nam, and Palau). The project took an intersectoral and inter-office approach to integrating ICH along with ESD principles into teaching and learning in formal education. Employing a novel approach, the project identified entry points in existing curricula through mapping and analysis and then developed appropriate lesson plans. All lesson plans integrated subject topics, ICH practices (identified with local partners) and ESD principles. For example, in a course on the natural sciences, community songs related to the harvest were used to learn about agriculture and the harvest cycle, incorporating the ESD principle of sustainable agriculture.

The project produced numerous teaching resources (locally customized guidelines for teachers, sample lesson plans, textbooks, etc.). Experiences and lessons from the pilot countries were synthesized in guidelines for educators,[1] which suggest steps for integrating ICH into education (see figure 1, below).
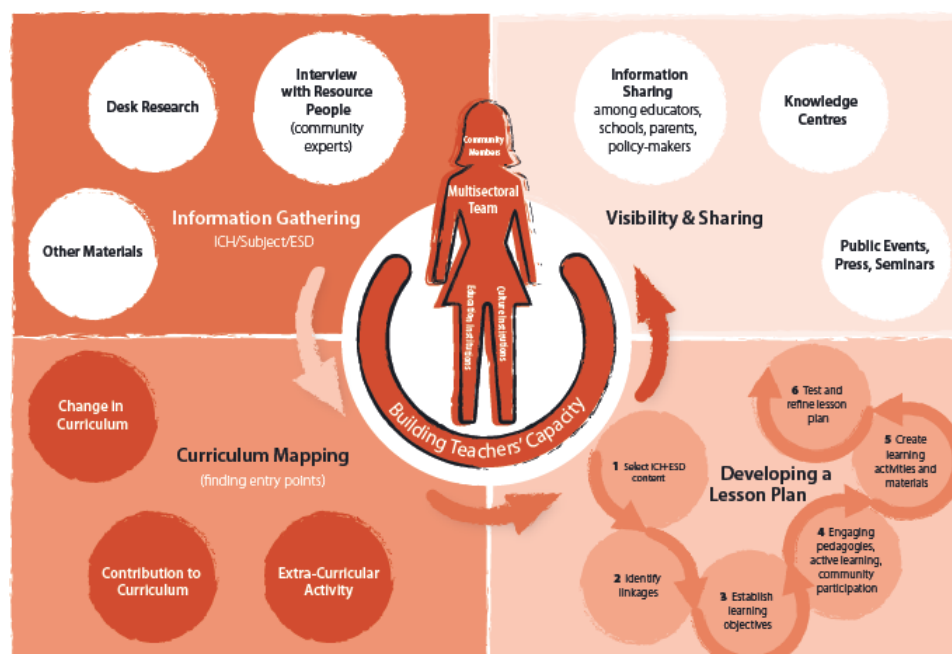

Figure 1. Steps for integrating ICH into education.

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1. UNESCO. 2015. *Learning with Intangible Heritage for a Sustainable Future: Guidelines for Educators in the Asia-Pacific Region*.

During the Q&A session, it was mentioned that this project focused on getting ICH into the lesson plans of different curriculum areas rather than focusing on national curriculum reform, which is more challenging and would require several years. Some of the questions revolved around the role of teachers in the project. Vanessa emphasized the importance of teachers, and explained that teacher training at the beginning of each pilot covered the concepts of ICH and ESD as well as training on learner-centred pedagogies. The teachers then wrote the lesson plans themselves, customizing them to the knowledge found in that particular community.

Meeting participants also recognized that it could be interesting to replicate this project in another region or to scale it up, which could be an important area for intersectoral collaboration with the Education Sector. At the same time, participants recognized that caution should be taken when scaling up as this model needs to be customized.

Rethinking learning in a complex world

The second presentation involved colleagues from Headquarters and two field offices who are involved in a research programme on 'Rethinking learning in a complex world'. Sobhi Tawil provided the rationale for this work, outlining trends that are leading to increasing contradiction in the world today and recognizing that learning is now happening in an increasingly complex environment.

In response, in 2015 UNESCO published a think piece on rethinking education that recasts the purpose of education in a broader way.[2] It reaffirms the humanistic approach to education, which aims to enhance and sustain the dignity and capacity of the human person in relation to others and to nature. The presentation recounted that it is important to recognize not only dominant value systems, but also diversity of lived experience.

As part of this project, and in collaboration with Headquarters, the UNESCO Office in Santiago did a study on indigenous knowledge and education policies in Latin America. Cecilia Barbieri presented the work, which has recently been published.[3] The objective of the study was 'to carry out an exploratory analysis of how the worldviews and indigenous cultural concepts of knowledge have influenced and can influence regional education policies'.

Three countries were used as case studies: Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru. These three countries have all been through important reforms, rethinking how indigenous knowledge systems are taken into consideration in educational policy and practice. Several examples were shared; for instance, in Peru, there are indigenous calendars, which are school calendars that also include important events related to community life that the students also participate in.

A second field office colleague, Gwang-Chol Chang from the UNESCO Office in Dakar presented a study they are undertaking on 'Harnessing cultures to advance education in sub-Saharan Africa'. It aims to compile concrete examples of cultural assets and traditional values that have been leveraged and harnessed to enrich education policies and practices in Africa.

The presentation listed seven preliminary findings; among them is research that indicates that African education systems (formal, non-formal and informal) predate colonialism. The detailed findings of the study will be shared in an upcoming report. Finally, a draft conceptual and theoretical framework for effective integration of African cultural assets within education systems was shared.

Throughout the presentations several points were highlighted that are relevant for integrating ICH in education, including involvement of the communities concerned, issues with teachers (role, qualifications, training), connection with mother tongue education, importance of integrating in everything from pedagogical approaches to learning assessment, and the overall need for more research.

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2. UNESCO. 2015. *Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good?*
3. UNESCO. 2017. *Indigenous Knowledge and practices in Education in Latin America: Exploratory analysis of how indigenous cultural worldviews and concepts influence regional educational policy*

Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) projects on indigenous education

Douglas Nakashima from the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme presented the final concrete experience. He started by providing some context for LINKS, which began as an intersectoral initiative.

The presentation outlined key points for consideration, drawing on the experiences LINKS has had on several projects related to indigenous education. Local and indigenous knowledge is passed on from generation to generation with each generation adapting and appropriating the knowledge. In the past, intergenerational transmission happened in communities; however, today, traditional transmission processes are being disrupted because children go to school.

Formal education systems further contribute to the loss of indigenous languages and knowledge when content is detached from children's everyday reality, discrediting parents' knowledge. This is not to say that formal education is not extremely important, but rather that more of a balance is needed. However, connecting schools with the knowledge that is embedded in the community requires teachers to take on a new role as more of a facilitator—a change that they may resist.

Finally, a point was made about the importance of language and content. Using mother tongue as the language of instruction is essential; however, translating materials into indigenous languages also requires understanding the concepts that are embedded in the culture. An example was given of how in the Inuit worldview there is no simple translation for 'fish' because it depends on whether it is a marine fish or a fresh water fish. If we do not understand a culture and the way its' representation of the world is organized we can inadvertently make mistakes when developing educational materials.

Examples from three projects contextualized the presentation. The first project involved the development of Mayangna educational materials in Nicaragua.[4] Based on two volumes of recorded Mayangna knowledge, teacher manuals and student workbooks were developed, and several training workshops were held to pilot the materials with Mayangna teachers. This project took a similar approach to the previous project from the Asia-Pacific region in that it looked for ways to fit within the already existing curriculum. The other two projects shared were the development of a Marovo wiki that includes lesson plans (based on the Reef and Rainforest: An Encyclopaedia of Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands),[5] and The Canoe is the People Educational Resource Pack.[6]

4. Thematic discussions

For the next session of the meeting, discussion turned to other education programme themes to explore possible synergies. Participants divided into four groups with each group discussing one programme area and then presenting it in plenary.

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

The first group discussed Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The group identified three of the ICH domains from the 2003 Convention (Article 2) that are directly linked to TVET – traditional craftsmanship, performing arts, and knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe.

Colleagues identified a link between ICH and TVET around livelihoods since many people's livelihoods are dependent on ICH. Thus, when looking at TVET and ICH there is an economic aspect and the possibility of linking knowledge with qualification. The question then is how to maintain the balance between the social meaning and the economical good. One way that was suggested is to emphasize the community aspects of TVET.

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4. http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/links/knowledge-transmission/projects/mayangna

5. http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/links/knowledge-transmission/projects/mar

6. http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/links/knowledge-transmission/publications/multimedia/canoe-is-the-people/

Finally, the group acknowledged that through TVET there is a link between intangible and tangible heritage in terms of the knowledge needed for preservation. They gave an example from the Nepal earthquake, where the re-building was linked with ICH practices. Overall, TVET was identified as an important enabler of transmission.

Prevention of violent extremism through education

The second group looked at how ICH can contribute to UNESCO's work on the prevention of violent extremism through education. Education in and of itself cannot prevent individuals from engaging in violent extremism, but it can create a climate that is conducive to prevention. The group discussed how this climate can be cultivated through:

- creating an inclusive environment;
- ensuring that schools are safe and non-violent zones;
- building resilience and the ability to deal with adversity;
- supporting vulnerable youth; and
- building partnerships.

One point that came through in the discussion was that violent extremists do not just target tangible heritage. Often, one of their first targets is traditional culture practices. In many contexts, for instance amongst immigrant communities or in countries where the education system still show features that go back to colonial times, youth may have a decreased sense of identity and belonging, which can increase frustration and the sense of deprivation, creating fertile ground for radicalization.

Taking all of these factors into account, the group highlighted that ICH can be a tool to fight violent extremism through education. In this regard, three main ideas came out:

- **ICH as a resource:** ICH elements are complex and diverse, reflecting the nature of communities they come from. These elements are a pool of resources that can enrich educational content and help develop certain competencies and skills. For instance, teachers could incorporate traditional methods of conflict resolution in their courses or choose to include ICH that builds critical thinking.
- **ICH can enhance relevance**: When careful reflection has gone into which ICH elements to integrate in education, they can notably increase the relevance of content, policies, practices, etc. and thereby help improve learning.
- **ICH contributes to building resilience**: Valuing ICH through education can build resilience. When ICH acts as tool of resilience, it can play an important role in the prevention of violent extremism. ICH is a way to strengthen the feeling of belonging to a community. Even just having students know that they come to the classroom with ICH and recognizing that is a very important step. Furthermore, incorporating ICH in education has the potential to reconnect communities and individuals with public institutions. Connecting schools with communities is essential and can have many positive effects.

Overall, the group saw the possibility of connection ICH with UNESCO's work on the prevention of violent extremism in education and education for sustainable development and it was felt that further exploration was needed on this topic.

Inclusion and gender equality

The third group examined the connections between ICH and inclusion and gender equality in education. Integrating ICH in education can focus on the learner by valuing the knowledge and skills they already bring from their culture.

Colleagues highlighted that in some cases, colonial/post-colonial systems have made a disconnect between schools and communities. Similar to the group that discussed PVE, this group thought that ICH could act as a bridge between school and society. However, the group also acknowledged that the approach for bringing together schools and communities would need to vary depending on the diversity of the socio-cultural backgrounds of learners.

The group suggested that when we look at inclusion and how everyone can be included in the learning process, ICH should not always be a 'stand alone', but it can also be part of the pedagogy. One idea the group had was for classrooms to develop a multilateral charter of respect and acceptance including the learner. Exchanges about cultural practices and expressions could help learners identify points that bring them together and could further help students to understand and appreciate others.

Issues and tensions around gender equality and intangible cultural heritage were also addressed during the discussion. For example, some intangible heritage practices may be perceived as reinforcing or actually reinforce gender inequalities. While recognizing and respecting that ICH is contextual and its meaning and significance are part of a larger socio-cultural system, learners should have the possibility to digest, discuss, and critically reflect on it in today's world. Discussions on these issues can happen in classrooms, and can, in turn, trigger parallel discussions in communities. These exchanges of perspectives can be useful when fostering respect for the ICH of the other as well as critical thinking about ICH, which are important competences for a sustainable future. In plenary, colleagues recalled that in the 2003 Convention 'consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments' (Article 2).

To conclude, the relationship between ICH and inclusion and gender equality in education needs to be further explored, taking into account those challenges identified.

Teacher development

The final group explored the topic of teacher development. Most of the discussion focused on the role of the teacher in integrating ICH in education. The group recognized that in some cases, ICH is already used by teachers in the classroom, but that they may not recognize it as such. Teachers themselves are a diverse group and we need to address their different needs. Accordingly, we should consider different aspects influencing teacher development (motivation, empowerment, support, respect, ownership of 'their' class).

The group acknowledged that when integrating ICH in education, teachers may need to take on a different role. The knowledge associated with ICH is anchored in the community and not with the teacher, changing the perspective. The teacher has been trained to disseminate knowledge, but when integrating ICH in education, the teacher may become more of a facilitator. In this regard, it is very important to have the community involved and to recognize that often students know more about ICH than teachers.

The group also identified some challenges, for example, in terms of learning environment. Similarly, to mother tongue education sometimes even if teachers may support integrating ICH, the atmosphere in the school may not be favourable. Finally, the group mentioned that sometimes teachers can play a restricting role and, whether intentional or not, could be detrimental to ICH.

As a final point, it was felt that teachers have an important role to play in integrating ICH in education and that they would need more tools to be able to integrate ICH effectively.

5. Defining areas of possible action and collaboration for 2018–2021

Intangible cultural heritage and monitoring SDG target 4.7

To start the session on monitoring, Alexander Leicht provided an update on monitoring target 4.7. The target is associated with an official global indicator along with several thematic indicators (26-29), which are not mandatory for countries to report against but can be used.

Monitoring of the global indicator draws on the existing reporting mechanism for the UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974) since it is compatible with the concepts contained in target 4.7. Member states report to UNESCO on the Recommendation every 4 years. Of importance for the topic of the meeting was the fact that the reporting form includes five questions that focus on culture and cultural diversity.

UNESCO has commissioned a review of past country reports on the implementation of the 1974 Recommendation for the reporting cycles for which data are available (cycles 3-5). This study, along with other relevant data has been shared on the target 4.7 website: Learning to live together sustainably (SDG4.7): Trends and progress: https://en.unesco.org/gced/sdg47progress

The second presentation, from Tim Curtis, described the early stages of developing a results framework for the implementation of the 2003 Convention. An initial expert meeting developed a results map that led to a set of eight thematic areas and corresponding indicators that were to be discussed at an open-ended intergovernmental working group. ICH and education is one thematic area that has been proposed to States Parties.

There have been some challenges throughout this process; chief among them has been applying the logic of an overall results framework to the complexities of a Convention – a normative instrument (which is different from a time-bound program) – with multiple stakeholders. A more general challenge comes when considering how to generate data and to get periodic reporting to reach its full potential.

During the Q&A session, it was stressed that while it is important to align our monitoring activities, we will need to move accurately. We will continue to work towards these goals even past 2030 and should focus on practical areas of collaboration, keeping in mind long-term transformation.

Ideas for strategic work for integrating intangible cultural heritage in education

Following the discussion on monitoring, the group brainstormed concrete intersectoral activities that could be undertaken for 2018–2021. Proposed areas for actions included: conceptual guidance, research, good practices, advocacy, monitoring, thematic activities, and pilot projects.

6. Conclusion

While it is not possible for this report to summarize in detail all of the presentations and discussions from the three days, there are a few key points that are important for taking this work forward:

- SDG 4 and the 2003 Convention (notably Article 2) provide clear entry points for intersectoral work.
- The 39 C/5 presents an opportunity for intersectoral work around projects, monitoring and conceptual guidance, etc. (see annex).
- Initiatives can further explore the synergies between ICH and different education programmes and themes, such as TVET, prevention of violent extremism through education, inclusion and gender equality, education for sustainable development, and teacher development, among others.

In terms of concretely taking this work forward, the following list compiled during the meeting proposes areas for future strategic action and collaboration for the Education and Culture Sectors.

- **Conceptual guidance:** Develop a simple conceptual framework on integrating ICH in education, which could include key concepts and could unpacking the relationship between competencies/skills and ICH and between ICH and various thematic education programmes. Approach papers could also be developed on specific topics, such as ICH and TVET.
- **Research:** Design research activities such as a meta-analysis on linkages between ICH and education and conduct studies assessing impact (on how students learn, on how ICH supports transmission, etc.). ICH can be integrated in UNESCO's ongoing research work, such as research on educational governance, i.e. globalization and privatization, notably related to certain forms of knowledge.
- **Good practices:** Create platform to collect and disseminate examples, including audiovisual examples, and develop a knowledge management strategy. Examples could also be used to feed into existing platforms (i.e., GCED, ESD, PVE).
- **Advocacy:** Produce advocacy materials in simple/practical language. Materials could also include e-learning and policy briefs. Advocacy can also be done through events such as conferences, Intergovernmental Committee meetings, UNESCO General Conference, etc.

- **Thematic activities**: Link with existing initiatives in different thematic areas and develop new materials/tools/initiatives based on specific identified needs. Activities could include peer reviewing material to include ICH, linking with ongoing webinars, disseminating existing capacity-building materials to education audiences, integrating education in ICH policy advice, developing materials to equip teachers or preparing an e-library of resources for teachers.
- **Pilot projects**: Lead pilot projects that can build on the experience from Asia-Pacific and explore new programmatic areas, such as the prevention of violent extremism and TVET. Pilot projects could also look at promising methodologies, such as students inventorying the ICH of their families, or focus on particular learning spaces, such as ASPnet schools or community learning centres.
- **Monitoring**: Work together to fine tune respective monitoring instruments and share developments with key audiences (such as through the 4.7 website).

A key achievement of the meeting was identifying converged interest with the Education and Culture Sectors having found considerable common ground for future intersectoral work. Moving forward, the goal is to develop practical and pragmatic activities that will help achieve the ultimate objective of integrating ICH in education.