



Intangible
Cultural
Heritage



International Centre
for Technical and Vocational
Education and Training

Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage through technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

Virtual conference on the UNESCO-UNEVOC TVeT Forum from 29 October to 7 November 2018
Moderated by Panas Karampampas and Wouter de Regt

Introduction

‘Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage’ (Article 2.1 of the Convention). Thus, ICH, amongst other things, includes performing arts and traditional artisanship (Article 2.2 of the Convention), which are also found in technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

Discussions about the need to safeguard intangible cultural heritage and the need for an international legal instrument began in the 1970s among UNESCO Member States. They started from the idea that cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions passed on from generation to generation. By the late 1990s, there was broad support for the elaboration of a new standard-setting instrument among the Member States of UNESCO, in particular from those in East Asia, Africa and South America.

The concept of ICH builds on a dynamic notion of cultural heritage, referred to, also, as *living* heritage. In the process of its transmission from one generation to the next, it is “constantly recreated by the communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history” (Article 2.1 of the Convention). Thus, in the field of ICH, it is the communities and groups, who define their own heritage, imbue it with meaning and value and work towards its safeguarding and management within the wider context of sustainable development.

One important aspect of safeguarding is the engagement of young people with ICH in order to become active participants and bearers of their heritage. This is because intergenerational transmission is the central tenet of ICH safeguarding. However, in contexts where ICH may be under threat, due to the effects of social, economic and environmental transformation, young people may not always see the potential of safeguarding their ICH as a source of empowerment. It is therefore important to support communities and groups in safeguarding their ICH, including in situations where

The *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (hereafter the Convention) was adopted during UNESCO’s General Conference in October 2003. Soon after the 2003 conference, States started ratifying the Convention and it came into force on 20 April 2006. The Convention has been widely implemented and has been ratified by 178 States Parties (May 2018), making it one of the most rapidly ratified international conventions.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>

communities and groups experience social discrimination. The Convention clearly sees the potential of safeguarding ICH for the well-being and sustainable development of communities.

TVET is understood as comprising education, training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services and livelihoods. In addition to passing on technical skills, learning to learn, the development of literacy and numeracy skills, transversal skills and citizenship skills are integral components of TVET.

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002451/245178e.pdf>

The Convention states that ‘safeguarding’ includes measures that ensure the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, encompassing transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education (Article 2.3 of the Convention). Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) can play a major role in the transmission and safeguarding of ICH.

TVET empowers individuals, organizations, enterprises and communities and fosters employment, decent work and lifelong learning to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability.

Therefore, both TVET and the safeguarding of ICH have the potential to empower individuals, groups and

communities, and in this conference, it will be discussed how this is achieved in the safeguarding of ICH through TVET.

Exploring the link between ICH and TVET

The important role TVET can play to safeguard ICH has been acknowledged. An intersectoral meeting on ‘Integrating intangible cultural heritage in education’ held in 2017 in Paris, France, discussed TVET and ICH.¹ Meeting participants saw a link between ICH and TVET around livelihoods since many people’s livelihoods are dependent on ICH, but questioned how best to maintain a balance between social meaning of ICH and economic good. Moreover, a number of Member States have also recognized the importance and value of safeguarding ICH, and have stressed the important role education, including TVET, plays in this respect by adopting the integration of ICH in education as a programme priority. Examples of safeguarding of ICH through TVET already appear in formal, non-formal and informal TVET programmes as it will be discussed during the conference. They play out in a number of settings, from TVET schools and training centres, to apprenticeship schemes and family or informal businesses.

In this work, in addition to the social, cultural and environmental benefits of safeguarding ICH, the employment and economic opportunities of ICH are considered. For example, one may ask, what are the implications of the growth of the creative industries and tourism sectors for ICH safeguarding. TVET can, for instance, support craftspeople and performers by passing on practical economic, management and entrepreneurial skills, so that they can be conscious actors in a market of which they are already part of. Having said this, it is important to highlight that traditional jobs are valued because of their relationship with the community from which they develop, which raises questions about the dangers of over-commercialization that could be harmful to the community and the viability of intangible cultural heritage.

¹ https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/Meeting_report_EN.pdf

TVET can also play a role in developing self-respect among traditional craftspeople and performers, since there is a tendency that their work is not valued and appreciated (Kokko & Dillon 2011). Likewise, developing formal qualifications can be a means for non-specialists to understand the dedication and the training that is needed for traditional craftspeople and performers to continue the transmission of their practice and the high-quality work it represents. While this may be the case, transferring ICH into formal programmes and qualifications also raises questions about possible approaches for integrating ICH, the assessment of students, and the training of teachers and trainers, to name a few.

In this virtual conference, we will discuss the above topics in order to consider how through TVET the communities and groups can strengthen the safeguarding of their ICH as well as how ICH can contribute to TVET.

Structure and intended outcomes

The **intended outcomes** of the conference are for participants to:

- Understand what intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is and the roles of the communities, groups and individuals in designing and delivering TVET programmes on ICH
- Recognize the links between ICH and TVET and the role of different TVET stakeholders in integrating ICH safeguarding into TVET
- Identify the opportunities and challenges safeguarding ICH presents to TVET and ICH stakeholders

The **structure and sequencing** of the virtual conference's events are founded on five topics. These topics will be 'opened' for discussion on the following days:

Monday, 29 October	Topic 1	Understanding intangible cultural heritage ~ Webinar: introduction to ICH and its stakeholders
Tuesday, 30 October	Topic 2	Exploring the links between ICH and TVET
Thursday, 1 November	Topic 3	Opportunities and challenges of safeguarding ICH through TVET
Monday, 5 November	Topic 4	Safeguarding ICH in TVET: Making it work
Wednesday, 7 November	Topic 5	Key outcomes and the way forward

Topics and leading questions

Thread 1: Understanding Intangible Cultural Heritage

To be able to discuss the integration of ICH in TVET and the safeguarding of ICH through TVET, participants must know about the key concepts of the Convention and the role of the different stakeholders who are engaged in ICH. Moreover, here the dynamic aspect of ICH will be highlighted, which allows ICH to adapt in an ever-changing society while contributing to the well-being and identities of communities, groups and individuals concerned.

A video presenting the concept of ICH will be distributed before the thread opens. Participants will then have the opportunity to ask questions during a live Question and Answer session. A link will be shared in the virtual conference, and the session will start on Monday 29 October, 11:00 am (CET).

Leading questions:

- Can you identify examples of ICH in the different domains in your country?
- What measures has your country taken to safeguard intangible cultural heritage?
- Could you identify who are the stakeholders who are engaged in the safeguarding of ICH in your country?

Thread 2: Exploring the links between ICH and TVET

This thread will use experiences that are relevant for safeguarding ICH through TVET in order to explore the links between them. Stakeholders who participated in these cases will be invited to reflect on their experience while conference participants will have the opportunity to ask questions. The examples will be from various countries, highlighting that various socio-cultural factors (such as the economy, educational system, social fabric of a society) could engage different stakeholders and lead to a range of formal or non-formal educational pathways. Through this, the participants will identify the links between ICH and TVET in these case studies and then do the same with ICH of their choice with which they are familiar.

Leading questions:

- Using the case studies and other examples you know of/were involved in, what do you see the role of: (i) community; (ii) parents and students; (iii) training providers and schools; (iv) teachers and trainers; (v) government (local/regional/national); (vi) local businesses and the private sector; and (vii) NGO and cultural organizations, in safeguarding ICH through TVET
- What are the benefits and opportunities for each TVET stakeholder of being involved in ICH safeguarding?
- Are there any stakeholders that are important and were left out of the list?
- How do you promote a multi-stakeholder approach to safeguarding ICH through TVET? Are there any promising mechanisms or frameworks that you know of?

Thread 3: Opportunities and challenges of safeguarding ICH through TVET

This thread will focus on ‘hot’ but also ‘double-edged’ topics of safeguarding ICH through TVET. Examples of the issues that will be discussed are: how curriculum design could help the transmission of ICH but also could supersede the dynamic nature of ICH, as it would no longer be constantly recreated by communities. Likewise, how to make ICH artisans competitive in the open market without ‘over-commercializing’ ICH and endanger the coherence of the community, or make ICH lose its significance that the community had placed to it (Warren & Gibson 2014). Finally, it is also possible that more topics could arise based on the interests and questions of the participants.

Leading questions:

- What can intangible cultural heritage contribute to TVET?
- How can TVET help safeguard intangible cultural heritage, while ensuring respect for the meanings and functions that communities attribute to their intangible cultural heritage? What impact may safeguarding ICH through TVET have on, for example, the design of curriculum and the training of teachers and trainers?
- How can TVET strengthen the recognition of intangible cultural heritage and help to counter-act the effects of mass production on bearers of ICH?
- Are ‘over-commercialization’ and ‘de-contextualization’ of intangible cultural heritage an issue, and if yes, how can stakeholders act against it?

Thread 4: Safeguarding ICH in TVET: Making it work

In this thread, the participants will be called to combine the issues discussed in the previous topics with the local knowledge and expertise. First, they will suggest how ICH could be safeguarded through TVET based on local examples. Then, other participants can offer feedback to their peers, discuss the practicalities and identify the transferability of safeguarding practices ICH through TVET (especially when ICH is shared across national borders and have the potential for multinational collaborations).

Leading questions:

- Considering the factors discussed in the previous threads, present a potential case study from your country and propose possible steps towards creating a community-centred plan that will be based on safeguarding ICH through TVET.
- How this plan might use already established networks and schemes?
- Which are the limitations and potential dangers in this plan and how they could be minimised?
- Provide your (constructive) feedback and suggestions to your peers in order to strengthen their plan.

Thread 5: Key outcomes and the way forward

The final session reports on the primary outcomes of the side-sessions and gives some concluding remarks. The concluding remarks and feedback will form part of a short report on the virtual conference.

About the moderators



Panas Karampampas is a post-doctoral researcher at the Institut interdisciplinaire d'anthropologie du contemporain (IIAC) of the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS). As part of the 'UNESCO FRICTIONS' project, he explores cultural heritage policies in the era of global governance, focusing on their most recent and debated domain, that of Intangible Cultural Heritage, and on the concepts of the 'participation' of 'communities' in Greece.

Previously he lectured in the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of St. Andrews, where he also completed his PhD. He has also conducted ethnographic research on Roma education policies as a scientific associate at the Centre for Intercultural Studies at the University of Athens and co-edited the volume *Collaborative Intimacies: Anthropologies of Sound and Movement* (Berghahn, February 2017).

Wouter de Regt is the Associate Publications Officer at UNESCO-UNEVOC, the International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training. He currently oversees the International Centre's publications programme, thematic and analytical research projects, and virtual conferences conducted on UNESCO-UNEVOC's TVeT Forum. He is also involved in the International Centre's work on greening TVET and gender equality and equity.

Wouter holds a Master of Science by Research (M.Sc.) in Cultural Anthropology from Utrecht University, the Netherlands. His research work focused on multi-stakeholder engagement in environmental policy-making, and particularly concentrated on the inclusion of indigenous knowledge and understandings about nature in environmental management and regulations.



Wouter is co-moderating the virtual conference in cooperation with the UNESCO-UNEVOC team working on intangible cultural heritage and TVET.

References and further reading

Reference list

- KOKKO, S. & P. DILLON 2011. Crafts and craft education as expressions of cultural heritage: Individual experiences and collective values among an international group of women university students. *International Journal of Technology and Design Education* **21**, 487–503.
- WARREN, A. & C. GIBSON 2014. *Surfing Places, Surfboard Makers: Craft, Creativity, and Cultural Heritage*



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Recommended readings

- BORTOLOTTI, C. 2007. From Objects to Processes: Unesco's 'Intangible Cultural Heritage'. *Journal of Museum Ethnography* **19**, 21–33.
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- VECCO, M. 2010. A definition of cultural heritage: From the tangible to the intangible. *Journal of Cultural Heritage* **11**, 321–324.