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Wisdom to Overcome Disasters

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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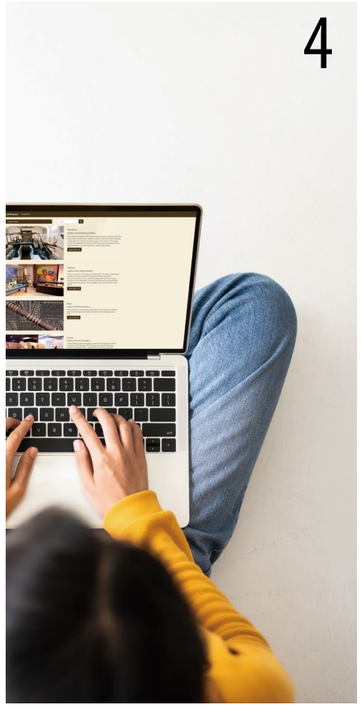
International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO



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Editorial Remarks

KEUM Gi Hyung *Director-General of ICHCAP*

Despite the increasing rate of vaccination rollout around the world, it seems we need more time to overcome COVID-19 completely. As COVID-19 blues (situational depression) is affecting our daily lives, cures are not limited strictly to the medical. To that end, it might be meaningful to reflect back positive experiences of overcoming difficulties by communities acting in cooperation.

When it comes to disasters, we often think of natural disasters first. However, the scope of disasters that threaten our lives, such as infectious diseases and accidents, is quite wide, and there are also various ways to overcome them. In this respect, "Wisdom to Overcome Disaster" was selected as the theme of *ICH Courier* Volume 48. The key points are to see how traditional knowledge handed down within communities was applied in disaster situations and how it contributed to the process of overcoming and recovering. It is expected that this volume will serve as an opportunity to think about how wisdom handed down with the help of modern technology or oral transmission can stay with us for a long time.

In the "Windows to ICH" section, we introduce examples from different regions on the utilization of local intangible cultural heritage (ICH) for ecological sustainability and as a mechanism for psychological healing. Along the same lines, including within the "Expert Remarks" section, further articles are connected to the designated theme in broader scope. Particularly, the case of Indonesia in the Field Report represents a chance to feel the power of intangible value that we who will live in the post-COVID-19 era might face.

ICH Courier readily accepts its responsibilities as a medium for sharing ICH information and discourse. We would like to express our gratitude to the contributors and readers who shared good safeguarding activities and show interest in the activities of ICHCAP, which will continue to listen to the widest possible range of voices.

Wishing you good health and happiness. ■

COVER ART
Ratoh Jaroe Saman dancers perform in Jakarta, Indonesia. Saman Dance is a traditional dance of the Province of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Indonesia.© danipicture, kr.123rf.com

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The Role of Museums in Sharing Traditional Knowledge During COVID-19:

Case Study of Fiji

Tarisi Vunidilo
Assistant Professor, University of Hawaii-Hilo

The Fiji Museum - Virtual Museum Screen capture. © virtual.fijimuseum.org.fj

Museums are, without a doubt, important institutions in any society. They are repositories for knowledge and objects of value all over the world. Some view museums as a place to find solace, cultural reflection, and inspiration. Others compare them to schools and view them as educational institutions where they can learn about their past, culture, and tradition. Museums are seen as keepers of the past, as they manage artifacts that were used by groups who have, in the main, passed on. Visitors believe that their elders have left behind a legacy for the new generation to carry on the culture and tradition of a people.

Even though museums may be compared with other institutions, such as schools, it has been argued that they can provide services to the community that other institutions cannot.[1] This article will highlight how museums in Oceania are adapting to the ongoing COVID-19 situation in order to be accessible to visitors. Since indigenous people are known for the art of storytelling and gathering together to impart knowledge, virtual museums and podcasts are effective digital media to reach communities with key climate change information. Two examples from Fiji will be discussed: firstly, the Fiji Museum, and secondly, *Talanoa With Dr. T,* a podcast created by Dr. Tarisi Vunidilo as an information-sharing platform for families both in Fiji and around the world.

According to Hirini Mead, there are two types of indigenous museums.[2] The first is a single-purpose building that tells a people's story from prehistory to modern times. The other is a multi-functional tribal cultural center with various functions and purposes, known as a *marae* in New Zealand. For instance, the Ngati Awa Tribe in New Zealand expected a library, research center, community hall, and an events center to be built alongside the main building, which will serve as a museum. Another example is the custom houses in the Solomon Islands, which have become a repository for culturally valued and historic artifacts, and also serve as ceremonial locations for religious and cultural practices.[3]

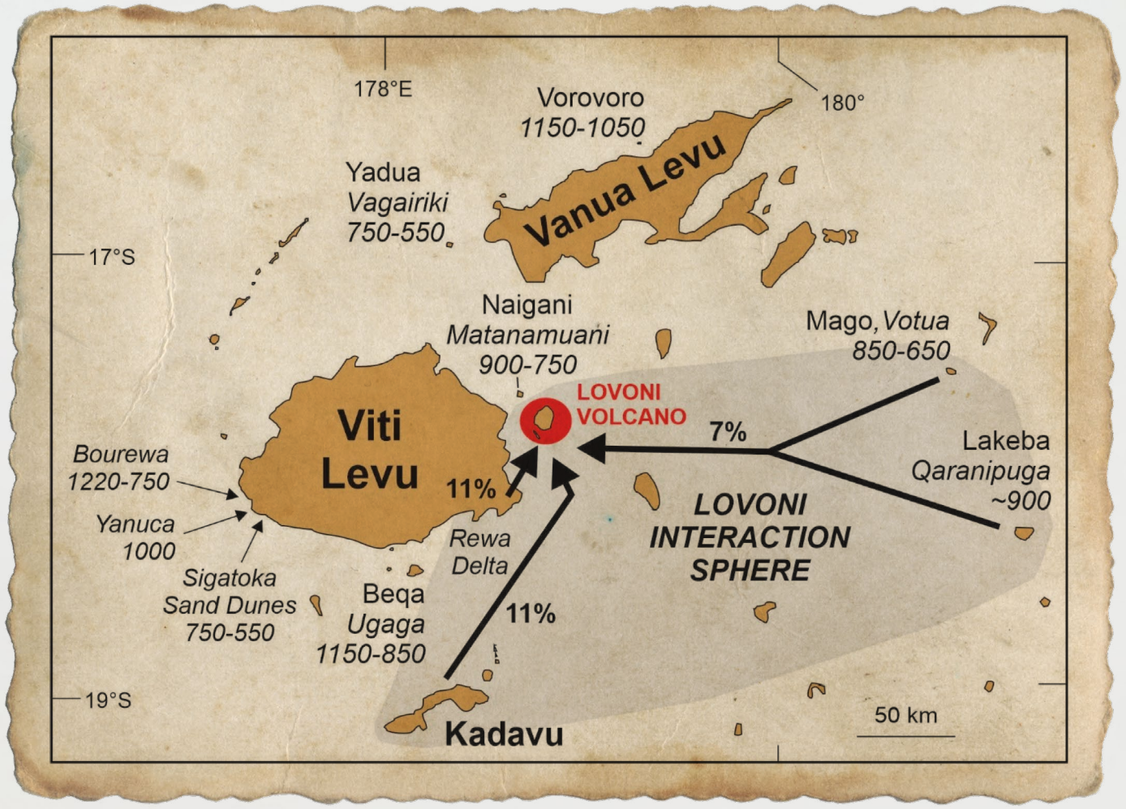
Today, we have "virtual *marae*" and "digital custom houses" where young and old, urban and rural dwellers can learn about their culture and heritage through virtual storytelling. Virtual museums and podcasts established in Fiji are two effective ways of ensuring that traditional knowledge as ICH is utilized in situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Way Forward During the COVID-19 Pandemic

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, museums and cultural centers around the world closed, while many communities enacted various precautionary measures such as implementing "lockdowns" and "social distancing" to combat the spread of the disease. Community gatherings have been strongly discouraged, which can have an impact on the sharing of knowledge among families and tribes.

In light of the stringent rules implemented in the Pacific, virtual museums have come into existence. Families in lockdown, if they have a stable internet connection, can access these virtual museums and related collections. Such facilities have enabled many to access archival materials, photographs, and audiovisual records related to indigenous knowledge of overcoming disasters. The Fiji Museum, for instance, has a "virtual museum" platform where online visitors can view selected artifacts and exhibitions. They can also post about these artifacts on their social media accounts. As a result, people have begun to share personal stories and memories regarding these artifacts, and online *talanoa* or storytelling spaces have been formed among Fijians both in Fiji and abroad. Such virtual spaces for storytelling are vital at this time since COVID-19 regulations stipulate social distancing and discourage gathering in groups. These virtual gatherings create opportunities to discuss indigenous knowledge-sharing, which leads to meaningful discussions around island life and everyday issues that islanders face such as sea-level rise and climate change.

Museums, then, are both spaces of empowerment and repositories of valuable indigenous knowledge. Oral histories related to land, ocean, and sky are kept in these institutions. The Fiji Museum, for instance, has found the benefit of sharing collections digitally is twofold: firstly, virtual visitors have been able to explore and enjoy cultural knowledge through the exhibitions; and secondly, the ensuing online discussions have added value to the displays created for visitors. Museum staff have an increased interaction with this online space.



Map of Fiji showing the islands of Ovalau and Kadavu, that Professor Patrick Nunn mentioned in his storytelling session with Talanoa With Dr T © Kumar, Roselyn & Nunn, Patrick & Nakoro, Elia. (2021). Identifying 3000-Year Old Human Interaction Spheres in Central Fiji through Lapita Ceramic Sand-Temper Analyses. Geosciences. 11. 238. 10.3390/geosciences11060238.

Another example that can serve as evidence of what virtual spaces of sharing and learning can result in, is *Talanoa With Dr. T.* The author and content creator, Dr. Tarisi Vunidilo, established this online program in April 2020, shortly after COVID-19 began to spread rapidly around the world. In an effort to reach Fijian children in Fiji during the first global lockdown period, Dr. Vunidilo organized storytelling sessions in the iTaukei (indigenous Fijian) language via her Facebook page and YouTube channel. This program has amassed over 40,000 followers via Facebook and subscriber numbers are continuing to grow.

Dr. Vunidilo features in her videos guests who have inspirational stories to share, intended to empower Fijian people during these stressful times. Due to the increased pressure and impact of climate change and sea-level rise in Fiji, particularly the outer islands, Dr. Vunidilo has invited climate change experts as well as academics and environmentalists to share their research data on her platform. Moreover, these guests speak the indigenous iTaukei language (*Vosa Vaka Bau*), which has enabled relevant climate change messages to reach Fijian homes across the country.

One example is Dr. Rosiana Lagi of the University of the South Pacific, a climate change advocate in Fiji who has appeared twice on *Talanoa With Dr. T.* In one video, she highlighted traditional knowledge that holds that it is possible to predict hurricanes by observing the over-fruiting of breadfruit. In the past, when elders noticed this phenomenon, they took this as a sign to expect a hurricane, and urged local communities to prepare for imminent disaster. Dr. Lagi has expressed a keen interest in returning for future interviews to continue to advocate climate change messages in simplified forms for audiences in Fiji and abroad.

Professor Patrick Nunn, an academic well known in the circles of geography, geology, and archaeology, has similarly shared his work on this platform. He recorded Fijian oral histories to highlight the power of traditional knowledge. In a recent talk, he spoke about a place called *Vuni-ivi-levu*, a sunken island between the islands of Ovalau and Moturiki in Lomaiviti Province. He noted that the movements of tectonic plates below the sea caused *Vuni-ivi-levu* to move and fall from its continental shelf. The island is nowhere to be found today; however, when Nunn conducted research on Moturiki, he found they still have oral history related to the lost island. Similarly, on the island of Kadavu, he collected stories about sunken and dormant volcanoes in the area. Via the podcast, he reminded iTaukei people of the importance of oral history and how it needs to be recorded, otherwise these stories are at risk of being lost forever.

The *Talanoa With Dr. T* program has generated information-sharing from mainstream research to the community level within Fiji. The use of the iTaukei language has enabled critical climate change information to reach local communities. Such information is vital for decision-making, especially when it is related to relocation and mitigation of dangerous environmental phenomena. Along with virtual museums, such online programs are effective methods of community outreach that will ensure iTaukei communities in Fiji receive well-researched data that will benefit them and, most importantly, save lives. ■

Notes

1. Karp, I. (1992). *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture.* Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
2. Mead, S., and B. Kernot (1983). *Art and Artists of Oceania.* Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
3. Stanley, N. (ed.) (2007). *The Future of Indigenous Museums: Perspectives from the Southwest Pacific.* New York: Berghahn Books.

Map of the Fiji Islands, showing the locations of the main islands on which evidence of Lapita-era occupation (approximately 3050-2500 BP) has been found. Lapita sites on the main islands Viti Levu and Vanua Levu have names underlined. The inset map shows the Lapita sites known in southwest Viti Levu. © Nunn, Patrick. (2007). Echoes from a distance: research into the Lapita occupation of the Rove Peninsula, southwest Viti Levu, Fiji.

Young boys playing Saman under a traditional house
© Gaura Mancacaritadipura

Safeguarding ICH in the Face of Natural Disaster:

The Healing Power of Culture

Gaura Mancacaritadipura
Member of Expert Board, Indonesian Heritage Cities Network

The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity aims at safeguarding ICH for its own sake. However, it can also bring other benefits. This article describes how safeguarding and transmission of ICH—in this case traditional performing arts—revived the spirit and enthusiasm of the children of Aceh in the wake of the terrible tsunami that struck the Indonesian province in December 2004.

The tsunami of 26 December 2004 was preceded by an earthquake that struck at 07:59 Western Indonesian Time, measuring 9.3 on the Richter scale with its epicenter at a depth of 30 km off the west coast of northern Sumatra. The earthquake generated waves 30 m high that traveled at a speed of 100 m/s, or 360 km/h. This huge and powerful tsunami struck the coast of Aceh Province, drowning people and animals, devastating residential, agricultural, and commercial land over a wide area, and it even dragged a large generator ship, PLTD *Apung 1*, several kilometers inland where it remains today as a museum. It is estimated that 333,000 km^3 of water was displaced in the Indian Ocean. Miraculously, the thirteenth-century Baiturrahman Grand Mosque in the center of Banda Aceh City was not destroyed, though most of the surrounding area for miles around suffered extensive damage.

It is estimated that 230,000 people lost their lives in Aceh Province as a result of this disaster. In addition, as many as 500,000 lost their homes and were displaced. The UN considers this one of the worst natural disasters in history. As well as Indonesia, tsunamis from the same earthquake damaged coastal areas all around the Indian Ocean. Besides the massive, tragic loss of life and property, the tsunami impacted many ICH elements and practices.

Immediately following the tsunami, national and international rescue teams concentrated on saving lives and treating, housing, and feeding the hundreds of thousands of people displaced by the disaster. Later, the question arose of what to do about all those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to loss of family members, homes, and livelihoods. It was noted: "The rebuilding and reconstruction of physical interventions provided only the framework for the society as a whole to recover in the aftermath of the December 2004 tsunami. Uplifting the heart, soul and spirit of the tsunami-affected people was a vital element of the recovery process and this was made possible through the healing power of culture."[1]

Sacred Bridge Foundation (an NGO), in collaboration with UNESCO Jakarta Office (Ms. Himalchuli Gurung), the Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Bureau of Aceh, and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Indonesia, came up with a project using ICH to help rehabilitate the many people of Aceh who were suffering, including with PTSD, following the tsunami. The project would at the same time safeguard and revive the transmission of elements of the ICH of Aceh that had been disrupted by the tsunami. There have been similar projects in other places affected by tragedy. One noteworthy example was carried out by Ms. Reme Sakr of the Syria Foundation, who utilized traditional Syrian handicrafts and puppetry to rehabilitate people traumatized by conflicts in the region. Syrian shadow puppetry is inscribed on the UNESCO Urgent Safeguarding List.

Sacred Bridge Foundation was founded in Jakarta, Indonesia, in 1998. Since the beginning, the not-for-profit cultural organization has been a home to individuals of different generations with distinct backgrounds and expertise.

Elementary school boys playing Saman, 2010 © Centre for Research and Development of Culture, Indonesia

The founding members of the Foundation included historian Umar Kayam, Islamic scholar Nurcholish Madjid, sociologist Stephen Hill, composer and musician Stomu Yamash'ta, architect Roby Soelarto, ethnomusicologist Franki Raden, anthropologist Tony Rudyansyah, and economist Serrano Sianturi. Sacred Bridge celebrates life through the arts, believing that art can be a universal language. The organization was recognized as a cultural counterpart by UNESCO in 2000. It often organizes exhibitions and concerts, for example, showcasing artists who have special needs.

The Aceh project was called Rising Above the Tsunami (RAT-1) and comprised psychotherapeutic healing through local arts and culture, with the goal of the project, simply stated, "to use culture as a tool to heal and revive the spirit of the children of Aceh."[2] It was initiated by Sianturi and was carried out in two phases: Phase 1 from February until May 2005, and Phase 2 from 26 December 2005 until 12 February 2006.[3] The opening of one of the main programs was a teaching clinic held on 21 January 2006 at Tikar Pandan, Ulee Kareng, Banda Aceh. Project training sessions have been published on YouTube (https://youtu.be/slyoKFnAtiI) to bring them to a wider audience.

Aceh Province has a rich seam of ICH in the form of oral traditions, performing arts, customs and traditions, knowledge of nature and the universe, and traditional handicrafts. The *saman* dance is one of those ICH elements from Aceh that was inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2011. The ICH elements taught by maestros of Acehnese culture and presented by children under their guidance as part of the RAT project included performing arts such as the *rapa'i* percussion instrument, the *saman* and *seudati* dances for boys and men, and the *ratoe jaro* and *tari pukat* dances for girls and women.

The project involved gathering together children from Aceh, in particular but not exclusively those traumatized in the wake of the tsunami, and educating and training them in the local traditional performing arts mentioned above, along with the wisdom contained within the accompanying songs. At the culmination of the project, in May 2006 forty children and twelve local artists from Aceh who had participated in the project traveled to Jakarta and, as a closing event, gave a performance and presentation of various results of the field clinics that had been held. This performance was given in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's Balairung Sapta Pesona Auditorium on 9 May 2006, and was attended by the (then) Minister of Culture and Tourism, Ir. Jero Wacik, SE.[4] The performance demonstrated the non-formal method of transmission of Aceh's traditional culture from one generation to the next—in this case, from the maestros to the children.

The project was met with approval by the then director of the UNESCO Jakarta Office, Stephen Hill, as expressed in a speech delivered on his behalf by Linda Posadas. The Minister of Culture and Tourism, Jero Wacik, also conveyed his appreciation in his speech that opened the event. The Liputan6 news agency commented: "The children were invited to join in training in the *seudati* dance. Besides the religious nature of the lyrics of its song, this dance utilized the children's energy and required their concentration. Thus, the dancers were not able to think of any other things."[5] After participating in this project, the children, who had previously been traumatized, depressed, withdrawn, and unenthusiastic, regained their youthful spirit and began singing again, as young children normally do.

Transmission of traditional arts of Aceh did not cease at the end of this project, but has carried on with the support of the provincial, district, and municipal government. It is hoped that safeguarding and transmission of ICH in Aceh will continue into the future. ■

NOTES

1. UNESCO (2007), "Rising Above the Tsunami" [video], https://unesco.org/archives/multimedia/document-3418.
2. Ms. Linda Posadas, speech on behalf of the Director of UNESCO Jakarta Office, Jakarta, 6 May 2006.
3. Sianturi, Boo-boo, SBF
4. UNESCO (2007), "Rising Above the Tsunami" [video], https://unesco.org/archives/multimedia/document-3418.
5. Liputan6, "Menari untuk Menghilangkan Trauma Tsunami" [Indonesian], 10 May 2006. www.liputan6.com/news/read/122591/menari-untuk-menghilangkan-trauma-tsunami.

Boys playing Saman on the steps of the Mersah dormitory © Centre for Research and Development of Culture, Indonesia

Ecology and world change concept.
© choat, kr.123rf.com

Wisdom to Overcome Disasters

Recently, in early September, Hurricane Ida struck the Caribbean, and the Southern and Northeastern states of the U.S. caused catastrophic flooding, even the death of the people. Even Australian Bushfires, Cyclone Amphan hit Bangladesh and India, Volcano eruption in the Philippines in 2020 scratched the people all over the world. Mother nature makes human beings humble; however, we get the power from nature to overcome hardships at the same time. This volume mainly introduces traditional knowledge and oral traditions by focusing on who, what, and how with the Pacific Islands, Japan, India, and Thailand cases.

"Natural" Disasters and Intangible Cultural Heritage

Christopher Ballard
Associate Professor, Australian National University

Figure 1. Damaged infrastructure at Chief Roi Mata's Domain World Heritage site after Cyclone Pam, 2015 © Chris Ballard

Figure 2. Chief Murmur reconsecrating the Chief Roi Mata's Domain World Heritage site during the clean-up after Cyclone Pam, May 2015 © Chris Ballard

The distinction between natural hazards (such as earthquakes or droughts) and disasters (which are the impact of these hazards on human populations and infrastructure) has been clearly defined since at least the 1970s. No disaster is entirely natural. Instead, hazards exploit existing vulnerabilities, including the ways in which people are exposed to their impacts, and the capacity of communities and states to respond to hazard events and to prepare for future disasters. Disasters related to natural hazards, or to anthropogenic hazards such as nuclear pollution, are classed as emergencies, along with epidemic disease and armed conflict. In the context of cultural heritage, all these emergencies share a dual aspect – the impact of the emergency on culture and heritage, and the capacity of culture and heritage to respond to and limit the impacts of the emergency.

Since 2016, UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has advocated at each of its annual meetings for closer attention to the relationship between ICH and emergencies. The Committee has called for a series of initiatives, including a desktop study on "Safeguarding and Mobilising Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Context of Natural and Human-induced Hazards,"[1] and an Expert Meeting on Intangible Cultural Heritage in Emergencies in May 2019,[2] which drafted the "Operational Principles and Modalities for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Emergencies,"[3] subsequently adopted by the General Assembly in 2020. Two training modules—Basics in Disaster Risk Reduction and Intangible Cultural Heritage (U063), and Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction into ICH Inventorying (U064)—have been developed and trialed at workshops in the Philippines and Honduras during 2021.

ICH plays an important if often under-acknowledged role in every stage of the disaster management cycle—in preparing for, responding to, and then recovering from disasters. At a local level, knowledge and practices that are critical to the management or reduction of disaster risk are commonly held widely across a community, rather than being concentrated in a few specialist roles or institutions. Local understandings of landscape, ecology, and weather are drawn upon to limit risk—in situating settlements to avoid cyclone damage, for example; specific practices are embedded in daily routines and transmitted across generations; and knowledge gained through historical experience of disaster is passed on, through oral tradition and encoded warnings. Where these ICH traditions are maintained, their influence on disaster risk reduction can be profound, as in the cases of Indonesia's Simeulue Islanders and their tradition of *smong*, which massively reduced mortality during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, or similar knowledge held by Simbo Islanders in the 2007 Solomon Islands tsunami. In both cases, mortality among immigrant communities without these forms of local knowledge was tragically higher.

ICH also plays a crucial role in recovery from disaster, through life-affirming ceremonies that help to bring communities together again with a common purpose, as witnessed in the revival of traditional rituals and ceremonies in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. Craftwork can provide a relatively swift means of generating income in the aftermath of disaster, where access to the necessary materials is available.

Although there is increasing awareness of the role of ICH in managing disaster, the ways in which disasters impact on ICH is poorly understood and less well documented. The focus on impacts to tangible heritage in post-disaster needs assessments and other mechanisms for investigation has left us with a very limited knowledge base for the precise links between disasters and ICH impact or loss. In part, this reflects the lack of adequate prior inventorying of ICH elements and practitioners, and the under-representation of these factors in disaster planning. But it also reflects the absence of a general model for the ways in which ICH is transmitted over time, and how it becomes exposed or vulnerable to disaster. How can we safeguard ICH if we do not appreciate it as fundamentally dynamic, and understand how it is transmitted?

When Category 5 Cyclone Pam struck the World Heritage cultural landscape of Chief Roi Mata's Domain in Vanuatu, the traditional sites—carefully located to restrict cyclone damage—were largely untouched, while much of the modern tourism infrastructure was destroyed (Figure 1). But more important than the limited physical damage to the tangible heritage was the recognition among the site's custodians in the community that the cyclone also represented an opportunity to reflect on the state of traditional disaster mitigation strategies, and their transmission as ICH (Figure 2). In the process of managing their World Heritage site since 2008, the custodians have developed a model of heritage sustainability that integrates tangible and intangible forms of heritage, together with community livelihood, a model referred to as "People, Place, and Story" (Figure 3). The material world of environments, landscapes, artifacts ("Place") is made meaningful through the intangible narratives and knowledge about it ("Story"), and this knowledge is developed and communicated among communities and individuals ("People"). Conscious safeguarding of all three of these modalities of heritage, and of their articulation through performance, expression, or production is vital to successful transmission, and something like this model from Vanuatu will be an essential platform for the way we approach ICH and disasters in the looming climate change crisis.

Further reading

C. Ballard, M. Wilson, Y. Nojima, R. Matanik, and R. Shing (2020). "Disaster as Opportunity? Cyclone Pam and the Transmission of Cultural Heritage," *Anthropological Forum*, 30:1–2, 91–107, https://doi.org/10.1080/00664677.2019.1647825. ■

NOTES

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2. UNESCO (2019). "Expert Meeting on Intangible Cultural Heritage in Emergencies," Report, 16 October 2019. Paris: UNESCO. https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/46083-EN.pdf.
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People, Place, Story: A Framework for Knowledge Transmission, and Safeguarding

Modality	Form →	Articulation →	Transmission →	Safeguarding
people	Individuals, communities, agents, transmitters, transactors, institutions, states	Performance, expression, language, practice, mobilisation, production	**Space**: Intra-group, external, exchange, trade, theft, conquest **Time**: Inter-generational, monumental, archival, memory	Local, national, regional and international strategies to enhance the viability of the forms, articulation and transmission of culture.
place	Material or tangible settings, sites, environments, resources, settlements, objects, artefacts			
Story	Immaterial or intangible, Knowledge, narrative, tradition			

Figure 3. People Place, Story: A Framework for Knowledge Transmission, and Safeguarding

How Does Intangible Cultural Heritage Contribute to Disaster Mitigation?

Hiroki Takakura
Professor, Tohoku University

Ningyosama ritual, performed by locals to avoid misfortune (Miyagi, Niiyamahama, Feb 2012) © Hiroki Takakura

Interviewing anthropologist with the owner of the damaged house © Hiroki Okada

Kanatsuryu-urahama Shishiodori dance performing on the remains of the community hall with debris in the foreground (Iwate, Ohfunato, June 2011) © Satoru Hyoki

Mikoshi, a portable shrine which houses a deity, being carried through disaster temporary housing (Miyagi, Kasano, July 2012) © Tsutomu Inazawa

Disaster and ICH

The relationship between disasters and ICH might share some similarities with the relationship between disasters and cultural heritage with physical form. Natural disasters destroy tangible artifacts and monuments, strike at people, places, and communities related to ICH, and disrupt knowledge, skills, and technology. In this context, we need to prepare safeguards against the impact of disasters on both ICH and tangible heritages. Combining living heritage with people, places, and communities could also lead to an alternative way of thinking about how ICH might mitigate the impact of disasters.

The role of culture in disaster mitigation and risk reduction is an idea resulting from recent disaster policies. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) encourages strengthening communities' capacity for managing disasters and risk reduction (Hyogo Framework) and advocates disaster risk reduction through integrated and inclusive economic, legal, structural, health, and cultural measures, among others (Sendai Framework). This article reviews recent scientific developments in cultural measures for disaster risk reduction and how ICH contributes to disaster mitigation, and identifies convincing arguments from case studies of the 3.11 disaster in Japan.

Socio-cultural Perspectives

Social scientists have investigated socio-cultural measures related to disaster risk reduction. One such study on indigenous knowledge, for example, was primarily triggered by the Sumatra–Andaman earthquake and the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004. UNDRR actively advocates awareness of indigenous and local knowledge in the pre- and post-disaster phases as an effective disaster risk reduction tool. Modern thinking might be skeptical of any relationship between indigenous knowledge and disaster risk reduction. However, there is specific indigenous knowledge related explicitly to disasters, and such knowledge is culture-specific. Hence, researchers have investigated local knowledge related to risk reduction and deliberated its applicability beyond its original culture. One successful example of this is tsunami *tendenko*, a local oral tradition in Japan conveying urgent advice to save the self, even at the cost of leaving the family, by fleeing to higher ground when a tsunami strikes, thereby ensuring the survival of many people as possible. This oral tradition could be considered a part of disaster prevention culture.

The political scientist Daniel Aldrich and other scholars have uniformly asserted the significance of non-physical social infrastructure or social capital in disaster reduction. They describe features of social organizations such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit by implying that better social capital results in greater resilience. Anthony Oliver-Smith, a leading disaster anthropologist, suggests that disasters provide a rare opportunity for observing society's resistance in the face of chaos, which is the essence of social mechanisms. Focusing on the socio-cultural process leads to the argument about the role of culture in disaster vulnerability and resilience in the policy field. People are not passive observers of dangers but can worsen or avoid threats by themselves.

3.11 Disaster in Japan and Local Performing Arts

One of the salient features of the 3.11 disaster in Japan was the coverage and anthropological focus on local performing arts and festival events as symbols of the community's recovery. One reason for this focus is the geography of small coastal communities with historical traditions; another is the religious function of performing arts in times of mourning. According to anthropologist Isao Hayashi, people who were affected by the tsunami and were living in evacuation housing acted in folk performing arts dedicated to the souls of those who lost their lives; these performances, which followed local Buddhist traditions, took place several months after the catastrophe on a particular prescribed date after the funerals of the deceased. Dr. Akiko Iizuka and Dr. Florence Lahournat recognize the effects of ICH for the survivors' psychological recovery and its integrative quality that contributes to identity and community formation while promoting ties with locals and non-locals, including disaster volunteers.

Different scholars have described the effect of recalling an alternative time during emergencies. Survivors face unfamiliar difficulties as refugees; for instance, most also lose their livelihood. One reason for these difficulties is that the government and NGOs force survivors to choose alternatives from a policy menu with an irreversible timeline. The sociologist Kyoko Ueda argues that festive events provide the concept of repetitive time and encourage participants to return to their pre-disaster sense of rhythm. Hiroki Takakura has also pointed out that rituals provide participants a sense of the structured historical-cultural depth of a given community. They afford a new way of social cohesion going beyond the "here and now" that can renew existing social integration methods with the legitimacy derived from community-based traditions.

These studies suggest that ICH provides local initiatives, associations, and an alternative vision of the future for those in mourning. ICH mitigates the pain and predicament of survivors and enables them to recover social cohesion and collaboration, which is the unique contribution ICH can make to disaster risk reduction. ICH is not omnipotent, but it is a powerful tool for evoking the initiatives of community-based sufferers. It is suggested that cultural policymakers, together with disaster policymakers, must consider the practical value of ICH for disaster risk reduction in local contexts. ■

Windows to ICH

Living Heritages of Sundarbans—Coping with Natural Disasters

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The Sundarbans, consisting of 10,200 km² of mangrove forest across India and Bangladesh, is the world's largest delta and mangrove ecosystem. Transected with rivers and creeks, the landscape is home to diverse and endangered flora and fauna, most famously the Royal Bengal Tiger. Because of its unique ecosystem, the Sundarbans enjoy the status of a Biosphere Reserve and UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The area is also home to millions of forest-dependent people. The colonial period witnessed large-scale deforestation of the mangroves and in-migration, starting from the late eighteenth century, driven by the desire for more farmlands to generate revenue, development of a port township in Canning, and other factors. There was also a substantial inflow of refugees during partition at the time of India's independence.

People living here for generations consider the Sundarbans their sacred home and provider of their sustainable livelihood, although accessing resources from the forests—fishing, collection of honey, crabs, prawn seeds, and wood for fuel—are fraught with the risk of falling prey to tigers, crocodiles, and snakes. The forest fringe dwellers, who do not have their own land for agriculture and often live in abject poverty, are dependent on forest produce. They have developed a deep-rooted relationship of reverence with nature that is reflected in their cultural and ritualistic practices. Local folklore reveres local gods and goddesses who protect the people and help them survive with faith and hope. Historically, these legends have been shaped and nurtured through traditions of song, theater, dance, and social customs.

ICH elements of the Sundarbans include *Jhumur* (lifestyle songs and dance), *Bonbibir Pala* (theater), and *Bhatiyali* (river songs). These folk forms are integral to and manifest the local ways of life, with the Bengal tiger often appearing as an iconic character—exotic, beautiful, and dangerous.

Jhumur is a lifestyle performing art of migrants who came from the Chhotanagpur plateau regions in the colonial era. They convey the local systems of belief in the power of the forest, express the hardships of the indigenous people, and narrate their daily interactions with nature, associated with natural disasters, tides, and tiger attacks. *Jhumur* has also become a cultural offering in various government events and tourist resorts. It provides the possibility of a livelihood for rural womenfolk.

Bhatiyali is a folk music tradition that describes the life of boatmen and fishers who face the dangers of rough weather and tiger attacks to make ends meet. *Bhatiyali* songs often include names and characteristics of the rivers, streams, and islands that the boatmen pass, the high and low tides, and the risks that they face daily. The songs have lingering tunes that usually match the rhythm of rowing.

The age-old tradition of Bonbibi (Lady of the Forest) is a fascinating form of local folk drama. Bonbibi, a local deity, is the supreme protector of the forest-dependent people, the goddess they pray to for safe return after collecting honey or wood or fish. Village households contain Bonbibi idols, and innumerable small shrines can be found across the forest. As the sole protector of the forest dwellers, both Hindus and Muslims venerate her with the same devotion and submission, establishing their sustainable relationship with nature as fundamental to their being. This tradition is thus considered a syncretic Bengali folk religion of this region.

The play narrates the story of how Bonbibi and her brother Shahjangali came to rule over Sundarbans, and how she established her supremacy over the other native godly characters such as Dakshin Ray (Tiger God) and his mother Narayani. The play documents the mercy and kindness of Bonbibi, and emphasizes the need to maintain a delicate ecological balance by establishing the divine rules of sustainably sharing the forest resources among all inhabitants and creatures. The villagers also believe that they will be punished by Bonbibi if they use the forest indiscriminately for profit. The performances are elaborate, colorful, and dramatic in nature, and are full of songs, many of which are from the *Jhumur* and *Bhatiyali* traditions. In recent times, this folk theater has also become popular among tourists visiting the Sundarbans. The government also engages the artists to disseminate social messages and inform people about cyclones, floods, and ways of minimizing damage and ensuring safety during natural disasters.

The Sundarbans have been a major concern for nature conservationists for many years. The area's fragile ecology has been under serious threat due to climate change, as well as severe exploitation of its natural resources through tiger poaching, cutting of mangroves, illegal fishing, human encroachment, increased use of motor boats polluting water and disturbing aquatic life, decrease in fresh water supply due to construction of upstream embankments, increased water salinity, and waste water pollution from nearby cities and towns. These activities are gravely impacting the physiology, lifestyle, and ecological sustainability of the region. In recent times, the Sundarbans have faced some devastating cyclones and tidal surges—Aila (2009), Fani and Bulbul (2019), Amphan (2020), and Yaas (2021)—causing severe damage, loss of life, loss of endangered fauna, and loss of cultivable land, further pushing the local people into destitution.

Out-migration from the Sundarbans is high and, as a result, the unique ICH forms of the region are under threat due to the dwindling number of practitioners. Many music-based plays on various local legends that sustained the practice of a much larger repertoire of *Bhatiyali* songs have died out. Safeguarding the ICH and natural heritage of the Sundarbans is inextricably linked to the inhabitants' lifestyles, their changing environment, and the challenges therein. Since the local folk culture provides strength to people for adaptability and resilience, the living heritages need to be safeguarded and promoted as means of conserving life in the Sundarbans. ■

Bonbibi's Theatre Show © Banglanatak dot com

Tribal women performing Jhumur folk dance © Banglanatak dot com

Thai Sea Gypsy Communities Sixteen Years On from the 2004 Tsunami

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An elderly sea gypsy woman looks on from the doorway of her home in the Surin archipelago in Phangnga province. © Photo by Paskorn Jumlongrach

Countries all over the world are faced with increasing hazards and challenges due to climate change. Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, catastrophic storms, flooding, sea-level rise, drought, and more are becoming ever more common threats each year and the problem appears to be without limits. Many disasters lead to people losing their homes, land, local resources, and livelihoods, and force them to relocate unwillingly.

The local wisdom of indigenous sea gypsies (also known as *Chao Lay*, sea nomads, or people of the sea) in southern Thailand enabled them to foresee the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami that swept away their villages, and most of them fled safely from the affected areas. After the tsunami, forty-six sea gypsy communities have faced new challenges and struggled in the face of a bigger wave threatening their centuries-old traditional way of living, in the form of disputes over land rights, ethnic discrimination, an expanding tourism industry that is rapidly replacing their fishery, as well as the world's growing, complex risks.

Thailand has fifty-six ethnic groups and indigenous peoples with a population of over six million including hill tribes in the north and west, and *Chao Lay* in five Andaman coastal provinces of Ranong, Phang Nga, Phuket, Krabi, and Satun in the southern part of the country. The islands and coastal regions along the eastern shores of the Andaman Sea are home to unique groups, the Moken, Moglan, and Urak Lawoi, with a total of forty-six indigenous communities of approximately fourteen thousand people. There is evidence that these sea dwellers have lived in these areas for at least three centuries, inheriting and passing on their way of life, wisdom, traditions, and culture from generation to generation.

Most of the ethnic groups have a way of life based on natural resources; they rely mainly on the Andaman Sea for their livelihood, with some of them spending weeks at sea free diving and spear fishing. Some groups have a more settled life as they fish the Andaman Sea with traps of rattan and wire. Their traditional way of fishing has almost no ecological impact. They have a philosophical connection to the land on which they live as their ancestors' burial sites and spiritual shrines are located there. Accordingly, their beliefs, traditions, cultures, and wisdom result in them being close to each other and profoundly bonded with nature, which reflects their philosophy and way of living that differ from the rest of Thai society.

The Moken caught the world's attention following the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami as the whole tribe safely fled the devastation by escaping to higher ground when they noticed the sea had receded. That served as a warning to them that a giant wave was coming; this is traditional wisdom contained in their lullabies, so all Moken recognize this sign of impending danger very well.

Since 1988, the government policy of promoting the tourism sector has prompted investors to buy land by the sea for speculation and future profit. The thirst for new development with the booming tourism industry set *Chao Lay* against developers with eyes on the land where the former's ancestral homes, boats, and shrines are located. Some land titles have been issued illegally and overlap with the dwellings of the indigenous habitation. In addition, the government's legal declaration of national park and nature conservation areas, both on land and at sea, has inevitably resulted in limitations being imposed on the traditional fishing grounds and land use of indigenous people who have lived in the areas for generations.

This issue has affected indigenous lives, culture, and the existence of native groups in all aspects. There are serious concerns about the effects that the laws may have on the sea nomads' ability to maintain their traditional culture and lifestyle. Ethnic groups and indigenous peoples are deprived not only of their rights in an unstable state, they are also socially marginalized, do not have title deeds and permits, and become vulnerable groups lacking legal status.

These problems have been accumulating for some time but were made more severe after the 2004 earthquake and tsunami. The affected indigenous communities gathered to bring their issues to the government to seek solutions and changes to national policy. They initiated the Tsunami Victim Community Network in the hope of strengthening the community and network and to develop their own proposals and to raise public awareness of their problems. According to many studies, they identified nine issues, the first and foremost being housing insecurity. The other issues included spiritual spaces (such as cemeteries and holy sites for ceremonies), fishery rights, education, ethnic bias, children and youth, a lack of pride in their own language and culture, health and hygiene, and low levels of ID card possession among indigenous peoples.

Today, there is widespread acknowledgment of the need to involve local communities in the conservation around cultural landscapes and natural assets. Local communities have been in these areas long before the government, tourists, and conservationists. They have a lot to offer in terms of the management of these places thanks to their particular knowledge, skills, and traditions. Finding sustainable solutions that benefit indigenous communities and the environment while satisfying national tourism and development objectives has become a focus throughout coastal Thailand and many other regions of the world in the development of recovery plans after disasters. Finding the right balance among all these issues poses significant challenges for every country's government and policymakers. ■

The performance of the young sea-gypsies to welcome foreign visitors. © TransboarderNews, Thailand

Digital Curation and Access to Recordings of Traditional Cultural Performance

Nick Thieberger
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Being home to over a quarter of the world's languages, the Pacific is a particularly good place to focus on how language records can be made accessible. The creation and description of research records has not always been a priority for humanities academics and any records that are created have typically not been provided with good archival solutions. This is despite these records often being of cultural or historical relevance beyond academia. Many cultural agencies struggle to keep track of recordings they have made, and it is the same for many researchers. Often it is only when researchers prepare recordings for archiving that they realize how many (or few) are described adequately, or have been transcribed or translated.

Many academic researchers at the end of their careers despair at the task of making sense of a lifetime's output of papers, notes, images, and recordings. Our project, the Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures (PARADISEC), a collaboration between the University of Sydney, University of Melbourne, and the Australian National University, began in 2002 by digitizing analog tape collections and providing sufficient metadata (contextual information) to make them discoverable. These tapes belonged to retired or deceased researchers and would otherwise have been stored in houses or libraries where they would be difficult to find and even more difficult to access. In the past 18 years we have added 14,000 hours of audio in a 125-terabyte collection representing 1,280 languages. It is a significant collection that has been entered into the UNESCO Memory of the World register for ICH.[1]

Endangered Records of Endangered Languages

Imagine you speak one of the 130 languages of Vanuatu, and you remember a strange visitor to your village forty years ago who recorded your family talking and singing. You want to find those recordings because you know of no other old recordings in your language. First, you have to find out who that stranger was, and try to contact them. If they published something about their time in your village then a web search may turn up their name. If they did not then the search is harder. And, if you do find them, are they able to find the tape they made? If they used a tape recorder, how can tape now be played in the village?

A group of linguists and musicologists in Australia engaged with this problem in 2002, seeing that many analog tapes had been recorded in countries around the Pacific region and those tapes were now almost all orphaned, sitting in offices and homes, not accessible to the people whose voices were in the recordings or to their families. The result was PARADISEC, a research repository that acts as a conduit for research outputs to a range of audiences, within and outside of academia. The focus is on recordings and transcripts in the many small languages of the world, and on songs and stories that are unique cultural expressions.

The research data is typically oral tradition from places where little else has been recorded, and has huge value beyond academic research. This is the basic data for research, but it is also cultural material that has value to the people recorded and their descendants, and so we, as outsider researchers, have special responsibilities to treat the materials with respect and to ensure they are accessible to the people we have worked with.

There are some seven thousand languages in the world, and few records exist for most of them. High-quality records are often made by linguists, musicologists, and anthropologists who have spent time studying performance. But, without a digital repository to store these unique records, they are at risk of being lost. The PARADISEC project does not 'save languages' and does not 'save musics'. We are saving records of performance that serve to reflect the diversity of language and performance that exists in the world. These records give presence to voices that are usually marginal and excluded from the internet.

Ambong Thompson and Asal Lazare of the Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta, receving tapes digitised by PARADISEC in 2016. © Nick Thieberger

Safeguarding Activities

Until the 1990s, many of the unique recordings in PARADISEC were made on analog tape. Analog tape, on reels or cassettes, has a major problem in that it is likely to become unplayable within the next few years.[2] The lack of playback equipment for these tapes is one factor in their inaccessibility, in particular for open reels but increasingly also for cassettes. More critically, the tapes themselves will begin falling apart, having reached the end of their lives.

Paradoxically, while analog tape is fragile, we know that digital records can be even more fragile, yet digitization is currently the recommended means of preservation of analog audio.[3] We have probably all had the experience of being unable to open digital files made even ten years ago due to changes in formats and software. A partial solution is to ensure that all files are converted to a format we know has more chance of surviving, and here we follow established standards. Thus, we archive .wav, .txt, .xml, and .tif files but also store lower-resolution copies in .mp3, .pdf, or .jpg format for delivery. Additionally, we make daily backup copies in different physical locations. In 2019 we received the World Data System (www.icsu-wds.org) data seal, signifying we conform to all required standards. In 2013 PARADISEC's collections were inscribed in the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World heritage list.

Planning for Project Ending

PARADISEC has received many accolades, but it exists in a research infrastructure environment—both at universities and at a national level—that does not provide for long-term curation of research outputs. We have pioneered a system for describing and curating particular kinds of research data, and know that our methods can be extended to other types of data. Our database controls metadata entry, and provides checking of incoming materials for conformance to our standards (e.g., file naming, metadata terms, file types, unique identifiers, assignment of digital object identifiers). A complete description of each item is written into a file in the directory that holds the data, so it is a self-describing collection, independent of cataloging software, and the catalog of the entire collection can be reconstituted from the collection itself. Each item stores collection-level and item-level metadata that is updated every time the catalog entry is edited and saved.

We are able to create arbitrary subsets of the collection from these self-describing directories and not lose the metadata. We routinely make files available to cultural centers or museums in the Pacific. Simply putting files on a hard disk does make them available, but without a catalog they are difficult, if not impossible, to navigate. To address this, we have written an app that looks into the hard disk and writes an HTML catalog of just those files to create a local viewer.[4] The same services that we provide in the online catalog (media players, image viewers, and so on) are also available in this local viewer. We can write these bundles of sub-collections and a catalog to Raspberry Pi units that serve a small Wi-Fi network, allowing access on a mobile device.

The archive's provision of fixed, reproducible, citable forms of research data makes it a locus of activity, a place from which research materials can be re-used in novel ways, with new knowledge reflected back into the collection over time. Far from being the endpoint for research, the archive reinserts these materials into an ongoing and dialogic relationship with the people recorded and with future researchers. Without the archival effort, these materials would remain inaccessible once the project that created them ended.

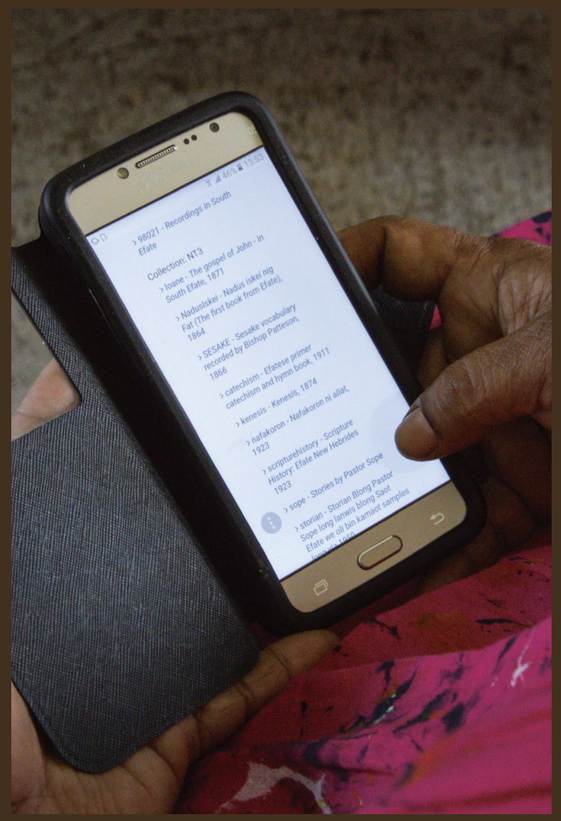
The system automates most of the processes of file ingestion, quality assurance, user management, and access for collections of research materials, especially media recordings, transcripts and material associated with linguistic or musicological fieldwork. We provide advice on our web page about data management and file naming, and we run regular training sessions to encourage thinking about archiving from the beginning of fieldwork, and the use of appropriate tools whose output can be archived and is not locked into proprietary formats.

Once files are in the collection, we assign digital object identifiers (DOI) and our system enforces access conditions. Each registered user of the catalog accepts a set of conditions,[5] and each depositor specifies how their materials can be used. For items listed as "open," a registered user can download the file. Even if an item is given "closed" status, meaning there are restrictions on access, the depositor can assign individual rights to other registered users for that item. We also allow for "private" status as a collection is being built, closing even the metadata from public view; no DOI is assigned until that private status is ended.

As our current system is now aging, we are moving to use the Oxford Common File Layout (OCFL, https://ocfl.io) to store the files and Research Object Crate (RO-Crate, www.researchobject.org/ro-crate) to describe them. This provides the same kind of description we had in our metadata files but now in a standards-compliant format. OCFL and RO-Crate are written in JSON, which is a commonly used technology and so should be more robust for our next phase of development than the current Ruby on Rails system. We have built a demonstrator (https://mod.paradisec.org.au) using these standards that indicates it is a viable and fruitful direction for our collection.

Conclusion

PARADISEC provides a model for the responsible curation of research data in ways that are also responsive to the broader community's interest in these materials. The ongoing project has built a work cycle from creation of primary data, through file naming and data format selection (for optimal longevity of the files), to deposit in a repository. This online system for access to heritage cultural records makes it possible for people to find information online in their own languages. While many more records remain to be found, we have a firm foundation and a secure system that will continue to grow and be sustained into the future. ■



A mobile phone displaying a catalog of locally relevant records, streamed on a local Wi-Fi network from a Raspberry Pi computer at Erakor village in Vanuatu. © Nick Thieberger

NOTES

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A Testimony of the Sardar Weavers

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Woman weaving in a traditional bamboo loom © Maya Rai

Sardar woman twining ropes © Maya Rai

Indigenous skills, and the stories connected to them, are learned at home and passed on down the generations. The eastern plains of Nepal, around the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, are home to more than two hundred Sardar families. Their income largely relies on the natural resources in the wildlife reserve. Not only are the Sardars protectors of the environment, but also of local crafts. They contribute to a strong relationship with the environment's local resources through their weaving craftsmanship, skills they have been practicing for generations.

Almost all Sardar households have a traditional bamboo loom where the family members, especially the women, weave. They gather wetland grass, mostly cattail (*pater*), and using this as the weft and local hand-twined jute fiber as the warp they weave "chatais," a type of floor mat that they then sell at a weekly market. This supplements their income but on its own is not sufficient to earn a livelihood.

While weaving does offer secondary financial support, money is not the only reason to weave. It is a community process, bringing together people of all ages in the village. Employment and profit are benefits, but perhaps more importantly, weaving is a display of women's agency and leadership. I come from a Rai community of weavers and I know how important weaving is to women. As well as being a source of income, it is a source of expression and satisfaction when you create a thing of beauty that is admired by others. They admire the creator too. Weaving is a part of the community's cultural heritage, an indigenous intergenerational knowledge and skill that is symbolically and tangibly entwined in women's lives.

The Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve faces challenges in community awareness and access to economic resources. Because of social change, weaving and other cultural traditions (stories of the past) are being replaced. Local crafts tell a story. Weavings are an offering, a gift of thanks and celebration to the forest, highlands, and marshes that produced the fibers. Local knowledge and craftsmanship is the result of generations of learning from nature. There are so many untold stories hidden in communities that speak of wisdom and an undeniable bond with the environment.

There is an urgent need to encourage the Sardars to continue their stewardship of nature. At a time of great uncertainty, such as that created by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, the gradual loss of traditional skills can go unnoticed. The Sardars, however, balance the past with the present. Their heritage, belief systems, and focus on community, in tune with the ecosystem, are a stabilizing force. They celebrate their creative skills, their connection to nature, and the stories that connect them to their ancestors. The culture offers unlimited potential where weaving acts as a transformational tool for learning, understanding, and respecting the environment, and for recognizing and supporting women's creative ability.

The Sardars are isolated from the urban world; they live a different life, steeped in the past surrounded by their culture and the old ways of living with nature. Integrating the past with the realities of the present in order to live and survive in a contemporary world is a move that threatens their future. But for the new generations it is crucial to accommodate new traditions and new skills that will encourage the evolution of the Sardar legacy. To continue their protection of the environment in a modern world, the Sardars need to integrate older traditions with appropriate technologies that can improve the livelihood and wellbeing of the community.

As outsiders we need to understand the difficulties of a culture in transition. With innovation and careful planning, the wisdom of the ancients can contribute much to better management of natural resources in order to balance the ecosystem. Improved weaving could be the thread of continuity that paves the way to a better future for the Sardars. ■

A Sardar man weaves on a traditional bamboo loom © Maya Rai

A rendition of the choreography "Sa Kabukiran" (In the Countryside), Hong Kong, 2017
© AlunAlun Dance Circle photo collection

AlunAlun Dance Circle: 22 Years of Pangalay Praxis

Rosalie S. Matilac
Managing Director, AlunAlun Dance Circle

Auspicious Beginnings

In 1995, pangalay dance guru Ligaya Fernando-Amilbangsa stopped teaching. The lack of diligence among students of traditional dance had caused her to lose her enthusiasm. Hopeful dancers requesting lessons at first failed to convince her to change her mind. But in January 1999 she decided to teach again, having collected a long list of applicants in the intervening years. Thus began a weekly community dance workshop in her suburban home in Antipolo City, Mega Manila. For those who joined the weekly sessions, learning from a dance master was exhilarating, especially on the eve of a new millennium.

In 2000 the excitement over pangalay and other traditional dances of the Sulu Archipelago inspired the motley group of dance students under teacher Ligaya to formally establish the AlunAlun Dance Circle (ADC), with their mentor as company artistic director. ADC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving, conserving, and propagating pangalay, which, according to teacher Ligaya, has "the richest movement vocabulary among all Philippine dances, and the living link to the dance cultures in Asia."

Pangalay, also known as *igal* among the Sama and *pansak* among the Yakan, took root in the Sulu Archipelago before the arrival of Christianity and Islam in the Philippines. The precolonial dance form, therefore, is also a key to the ancient Filipino identity that has been eroded over three hundred years of colonial rule and Western acculturation.

ADC seeks to preserve tradition by elevating pangalay into a classical dance style through performances, research, and education-training. The dance's abundant movement vocabulary, researched by Amilbangsa since 1969, is codified through the Amilbangsa Instruction Method (AIM). The method is based on breathing and the meditative character of the dance is inspired by the movement of the waves and creatures in the natural environment.

Learning from Dancing

ADC members are united in their passion to dance pangalay and the mission to safeguard cultural heritage. First, members must strive to understand the dance form and its indigenous roots. Second, all members—whether under six or over sixty years old—must persevere to become good pangalay dancers. Each needs to discover personal identity in the dance, yet be able to perform in sync with the group through breathing.

In exchange for such dedication, pangalay has given ADC members memorable experiences like performing before various audiences: child rights activists, human rights workers, urban poor citizens, college students, preschool children, public elementary pupils, UN delegates, diplomatic corps, hospital patients, stroke survivors, abused children, overseas migrant workers, mall shoppers, and many others. Performers have danced in a variety of spaces: art galleries, museums, gymnasiums, stadiums, auditoriums, parking lots, malls, gardens, streets, quadrangles, city halls, village squares, in front of the church altar, conference rooms, ballrooms, dining rooms, and classrooms.

As well as the diverse audiences and locations, ADC have been danced to all kinds of music including folk songs, pop music, rock, hip-hop, classical, and jazz, all without losing the traditional character of the dance. The dances have been accompanied with live music by traditional *kulintangan* ensembles, full orchestras, chamber groups, folk singers, opera artists, and choirs. This demonstrates the dancers' adaptability, dancing as they do to the rhythm of breathing.

ADC have taken pangalay to international audiences too. In Taipei in 2006, they were representatives in the fourth Asian Performing Arts Festival. In 2007 they mounted a series of performances in Paris for the sixtieth anniversary of Franco-Philippine relations. They visited Hanoi in 2009 to perform on the occasion of the 111th anniversary of Philippine independence. The Asian tour of the concert Water Symphony took them to India, Myanmar, Lao, and Cambodia, and they also performed at an international dance festival in Hong Kong in 2017.

Learning from Teaching

The AIM has enabled even those without dance backgrounds to perform pangalay. ADC's special interest is in promoting the dance form particularly among youth, older people, women, and other grassroot sectors. In 2008, for example, villagers from Punta Cruz in Maribojoc, Bohol, participated in a dance workshop culminating in a community historical dance drama. Marginalized groups that have received pangalay training include child advocates fighting the commercial sexual exploitation of children in 2000; children and older people who had suffered neglect, abuse, exploitation, and/or abandonment at the Manila Boys' Town Complex in 2012 and 2014; and the out-of-school children of Tondo, Manila, in 2017–18.

ADC teachers also held workshops among primary school children in Marikina City in 2003 and between 2015 and 2019. Workshops for the academic community were also held at the University of the Philippines Diliman and the De La Salle University Manila, both in 2019.

Learning from the Pandemic

Pangalay lessons moved online starting April 2020. The remote sessions emphasize the importance of pangalay meditative breathing to strengthen the immune system. ADC also coproduced a dance video on safety protocols for an ASEAN information campaign in August 2020.

Restrictions related to COVID-19 challenged ADC to conduct virtual concerts, which started with the premiere in December 2020 of *Pangalawang Yugto: Konsiyerto ng Pangalay, Tula, Salinawit, at Musika* (Chapter Two: Concert of Pangalay, Poetry, Adapted Songs, and Music), which was aimed at high-school and college students who had to continue their education remotely.

Online platforms broke territorial barriers, enabling ADC to engage with pangalay enthusiasts, students, and dancers from all over the Philippines and further afield. Hard times also bring opportunities. Faced with an uncertain future when extraordinary challenges are inevitable, ADC will strive to keep pangalay and related artistic expressions alive.

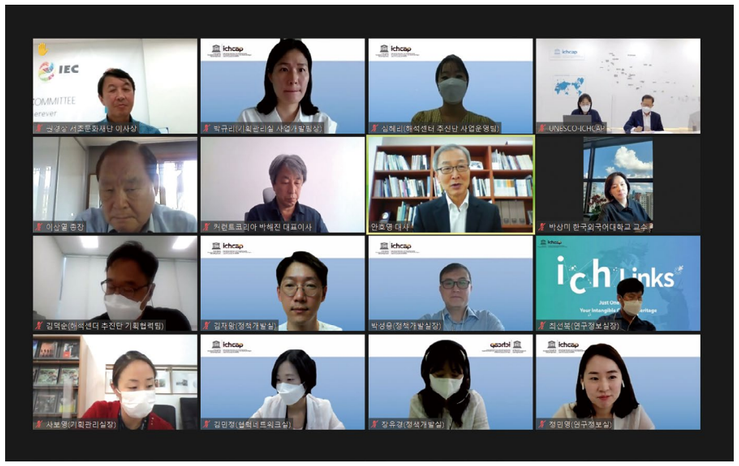
For more information, please visit the official website of the AlunAlun Dance Circle: www.pangalaydance.com. ■

ICHCAP Advisory Committee Meeting Held in August 2021

The 2021 Advisory Committee Meeting of ICHCAP was held online, 19 August.

The meeting covered not only reporting of ICHCAP's projects but also consultations by project and the Centre's future direction under the new UNESCO mid- and long-term strategy (41 C/4). Eight advisors attended the meeting online and in written form; additionally, members of the Centre took part in discussions and shared various opinions on general issues.

In particular, the committee emphasized external extension and promotion strategies. Cooperation among networks, intersectoral convergence, and application of technology were suggested as ways to improve the visibility of the results of existing projects. These ideas will be reflected in the Centre's mid- and long-term strategies. ■



2021 ICHCAP Advisory Committee Meeting © ICHCAP

Announcing the Official Inauguration of the Silk Roads Living Heritage Network

ICHCAP and its collaborative partners International Institute for Central Asian Studies and KF Korea-Central Asia Cooperation Forum Secretariat, are pleased to announce the official inauguration of the Silk Roads Living Heritage Network (SRLH) on 28 October 2021 in Seoul and online.

With the aim of establishing mechanisms to ensure the effective sharing of information related to ICH safeguarding along the Silk Road routes and building and strengthening networks among concerned stakeholders, the SRLH network intends to undertake activities to emphasize a distinctive strategy to promote and operate the network in the light of the UNESCO program that coincides with its International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022).

The foundations began to be laid in 2020. With its experience over the past decade establishing various networks within the ICH field in the Asia-Pacific region, including Central Asia, ICHCAP and its collaborative partners held five preparatory committee meetings to discuss the general operational measures of the network, including statute, membership, and so on, and also a launch ceremony.

Thirty-seven festival committees from nine countries in the Silk Road region (Republic of Korea, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Mongolia, and Turkey) will join as the founding institutions, including three coordinating bureau members.

Coinciding with KF Public Diplomacy Week, on 28–29 October in Seoul, the 2021 coordinating bureau meeting, the Living Heritage Forum, and an online photo exhibition will be rolled out for the public. The secretariat welcomes expressions of interest in participation from ICH-related institutions in this region. More information is available on the ICHCAP website (www.unesco-ichcap.org). ■

The Silk Roads Living Heritage Network AD Image © ICHCAP

Future Collaboration Through Sub-regional Meetings on ICH Safeguarding in 2021

Amid COVID-19, ICHCAP continued sub-regional network meetings. Starting from the Southeast Asian Collaborative Meeting, the barrier-free space made it possible to connect all stakeholders in East Asia and South Asia. Within the framework of UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, ICHCAP has organized sub-regional or collaborative meetings every two or three years to lead the discourse in safeguarding ICH and to foster international collaboration and build a sustainable regional network of experts at the government and community levels. Diverse themes are tabled, reflecting the issues of the regions.

ICHCAP and the Singapore National Heritage Board cohosted the meeting under the theme of "The Role of Youths in Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage," from 30 August to 1 September; with the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO, in collaboration with UNESCO Beijing, the "Exploring and Safeguarding Shared Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in East Asia Conference" was held 10 September. This initiative was scheduled to be organized in 2020, but it had to be postponed until this year due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaborating with UNESCO-accredited NGO Banglanatak.com, a discussion about "Creative Economy through Sustainable Development of ICH" took place from 14 to 16 September. For cooperation with Central Asian countries, a meeting will be held from 13 to 15 October under the topic of "Safeguarding ICH Education through the Integrated Approach" with the collaboration of UNESCO Almaty.

The major function of this project is to provide a foundation for developing new projects in accordance with the regional situation. It is expected that the discussed points and outcome document delivered will be well reflected in future collaborative works. ■

2021 South Asia Sub-regional Meeting © ICHCAP / Banglanatak dot com

2021 International Workshop on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development (27 Sep.– 11 Oct.)

2021 International Workshop on ICH and Sustainable Development © ICHCAP

UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is one of the key instruments for facilitating global heritage practice today. While the Convention and its operational directives provide a useful framework for safeguarding ICH at the national and sub-national levels, it is imperative to contextualize the Convention's concepts and processes according to each unique situation. Consequently, emerging heritage professionals need to become fully conversant with the Convention and what it offers them wherever they may be practicing. They must also explore a wide range of social and cultural issues associated with ICH safeguarding, including ethical principles in working with diverse communities.

To build a network of young professionals and practitioners in the field of ICH, UNESCO Bangkok, ICHCAP, and Ahmedabad University have jointly organized an online workshop that aims to raise awareness of the concepts and principles of the Convention from 27 September to 11 October 2021. The workshop constitutes an intensive two-week course that offers a combination of lectures, seminars, discussions, and exercises. As an integral component of the workshop, the participants will also participate in this year's World Forum for Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH World Forum), which has adopted the theme "Intangible Cultural Heritage and Creative Industry: Rediscovery of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Fourth Industrial Age." Participants were chosen based on their expressed interest and considering the possibility of applying their learning to a selected ICH case. As a final assignment, the participants will develop a sustainable safeguarding project for an ICH element of their choice. Selected final assignments will be included in a publication or a virtual exhibition. ■

Silk Roads Living Heritage Network 2021 Launch

- Date: 2021.10.28 ~ 2021.10.29 (2 days)
- Venue: DDP, Seoul & Online (YouTube)
- Program:
  1. Inauguration Ceremony of the Silk Roads Living Heritage Network
  2. 2021 Living Heritage Forum: Promoting a Culture of Peace and Facilitating Sustainable Development along the Silk Roads
  3. Online Photo Exhibition

More information about the events is available on our website
https://www.unesco-ichcap.org

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ichcap
International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO