ACCU’s ICH PROGRAMMES
- Promotion of Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Asia and the Pacific

ACCU: [http://www.accu.or.jp](http://www.accu.or.jp)

The Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) is a non-profit organisation for Asia and the Pacific regional activities in line with the principles of UNESCO. ACCU has been implementing programmes on the safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, book development and literacy education, jointly with Asian-Pacific UNESCO Member States since its inception in April 1971. Culture programmes aim at promoting activities for mutual understanding and safeguarding of cultural heritage in Asia and the Pacific, through various means, such as training for those who work in the field of culture and book development, concours for artists, and production and promotion of publications in indigenous languages.

In Asia and the Pacific Region, there are multifarious forms of ICH. Due to the rapid social changes, a significant part of this rich heritage is on the verge of disappearance.

**ACCU’s Three Approaches to Safeguarding ICH**

**Transmission**
To safeguard ICH, it is of primary importance to ensure its sound transmission. If the last practitioner of a certain ICH passes away without handing down his/her knowledge/skill, the heritage is lost forever. So, it is essential to create an encouraging environment for transmission and to help practitioners of both old and young generations to be aware of the significance of handing down and upholding the heritage.

**Education and Awareness**
Raising awareness of its value among the public, particularly the youth and children, is indispensable in gaining support for practitioners and tradition-bearers to practice, recreate and transmit the heritage.

**Recording and Documentation**
It greatly helps transmission of ICH to record and document ICH as precisely and comprehensively as possible. It is particularly important when it comes to those cultural expressions which are on the verge of disappearance and requires urgent measures.

**ACCU’s ICH Networking**

ACCU’s ICH Network includes local communities because we put weight and priority on community empowerment (including individuals) in Asia and the Pacific region. As mentioned in the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH, Chapter III Article 11(b), it is important to ensure participation of communities, groups and relevant non-governmental organisations in identifying and defining ICH because they are the ICH bearers who must be affected the most through the network and programmes.
Based on these approaches and networks, ACCU has been implementing programmes and activities on ICH. The main pillars of our activities are “Human Resource Development”, “ICH Data Base” and “Materials Development”.

1. Human Resource Development

ACCU puts emphasis on human-resource development through workshops and training programmes on ICH in order to build capacities of cultural personnel and experts to safeguard ICH in Asia and the Pacific region.

a. ICH Training Course

ACCU launched the “International Partnership Programme for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage” with the Agency for Cultural Affairs (Bunkacho) in 2007. It aims to learn about the Japanese systems at the national, prefectural and community levels, and to share information on safeguarding ICH among participating countries, based on the International ICH Network which was established under the Partnership Programme.

The 1st “Training Course for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage” was conducted as human resource training in January 2008 in Japan, inviting participants from 13 countries within and beyond Asia and the Pacific. In December 2008, the 2nd Training Course was organised with participants from 9 countries in the region. The lectures, including introduction to the UNESCO's ICH Convention and the Japanese law, as well as field visits were organised by the Japanese cooperating organisations. Selected lectures were videotaped and uploaded to ACCU's Database on ICH together with PDF files in the Japanese and English versions.
b. ICH Contest for Community’s Revitalisation

ACCU launched Community-Based project in 2006. Within the project, “the 1st contest for Better Practices in Communities’ ICH Revitalisation” was held with many entries from successful communities for revitalising of their performing arts in the UNESCO Member States.

The aims of the project are 1) to collect better practices and share experiences with UNESCO and its member states; 2) to analyse problem-solving approaches and knowledge by the experts; 3) to provide ideas on revitalizing ICH through a case study report and Website; and 4) to contribute to promotion of the Convention at grass-roots level by encouraging communities’ direct participation.

Six communities were awarded the ACCU Prizes, as well as the Honorable Mention in the international Jury Meeting. As a follow-up, the awarded communities were invited to the workshop held in Japan in 2007, to share their safeguarding experiences and to establish ACCU’s ICH community network.

The 2nd Contest was organised in 2008 and asked for entries. An international jury meeting is organised in 2009 to select better practices.


ACCU developed Asia-Pacific Database on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). This site introduces with use of audio media, contest awarded communities’ ICH safeguarding activities and interviews to the community members, and lectures of the ACCU’s ICH training courses. It also provides details of past meetings and workshops, and free sample pages of the ICH learning material for children.
3. Materials Development
   a. ICH Educational Materials Development Project

ACCU published “Animals in Asian Tradition - Intangible Cultural Heritage around Us” in 2007. This is to be a model material for further series of books and other educational materials on ICH in Asia and the Pacific.

b. Asia/Pacific Copublication Programme (ACP)

29 titles have been translated into 42 languages and a total of 4.4 million copies had so far been published. Multi-lingual countries have published different language versions, such as Hindi and Kannada in India.

- Audio-Visual Materials
  ACCU produces video and cassette tapes on folk/traditional music and dance, musical instruments and festivals etc.

- Asian Copyright Handbook
  Copyright, which protects rights of authors, illustrators and others by providing legal framework, plays a crucial role in promoting their creative activities. ACCU promotes copyrights for better understanding and eradication of unauthorised use of intellectual property. The English Master version of the “Asian Copyright Handbook” was published in 2004. Vietnamese (2005), Myanmar (2005), Indonesian (2006) and Mongolian (2007) versions were published based on results of discussions in the National Workshops on Copyright held in 2005-2006. In addition, Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese and Japanese versions are available on the ACCU’s website.