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

URL: http://www.accu.or.jp
ICH Data Base: http://www.accu.or.jp/ich/

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 nongovernmental 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 mentioned above, 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”.

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.
ICH Database

ACCU developed a Data Bank on Traditional/Folk Arts and the Pacific- A Basic Model, and in 2005, it was developed into an ICH Database covering other domains of ICH as well. Its objectives are to share and mobilise information on ICH for promotion of mutual understanding through cooperative efforts to compile a directory on ICH in the region. It aims at assisting policy-making, development of projects, research and education thereon.

Materials Development

ICH Educational Materials Development Project
ACCU is now in the process of preparing to publish a book “Festival of the Spirit - Intangible Cultural Heritage in Asia (tentative)”. This is going to be a model material for further series of books and other educational materials on ICH in Asia and the Pacific.
● 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 unauthorized use of intellectual property. 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 uploaded on the ACCU’s website.

Among series of different programmes, ACCU put emphases on promotion of community participation, especially the youth and adolescent, in ICH activities at grassroots levels; and contents development to support the 2003 Convention. Immediately after this meeting, ACCU has organised, in collaboration with UNESCO, the International Jurors’ Meeting on a Contest for Better Practices in Communities’ ICH Revitalization, with financial support by Accenture Corporate Citizenship Grant. ACCU will try its best on the programmes for safeguarding ICH, so that those communities facing the danger of disappearance of their cultures may learn lessons from the precious experiences of other communities.