

Teaching and Learning with East Asian Shared Heritage

Concept Note

1. OUTLINE

- **Timeframe** March 2024 – October 2025

- **Partners**
 - UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia
 - International Training Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (CRIHAP)
 - International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHCAP)
 - World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region (WHITRAP), Suzhou
 - Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding under the auspices of UNESCO (APCEIU) (TBD)
 - Teachers' training universities from East Asian countries (1-2 universities from each country)

2. BACKGROUND

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development advocates the “promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development” as an important target to achieve Goal 4 on quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

One of culture’s manifestations is living heritage or intangible cultural heritage (ICH). It includes cultural practices and knowledge that are meaningful to communities. They are a part of people’s identity which they want to continue to transmit to future generations. Music and dances, festivals and rituals, making handicrafts and agricultural knowledge are several forms of ICH.

ICH can provide context-specific content and pedagogy for education programs and thus act as a leverage to increase the relevance of education and improve learning outcomes. For example, education for sustainable development uses indigenous knowledge and ICH as a key resource for communities in understanding the environment, sustainably using its resources, assessing climate change impacts and adapting to them. In this regard, ICH is an incredibly rich resource. This is why UNESCO promotes learning and teaching through and about ICH in education programs in all relevant disciplines. At the same time, bringing ICH in education also contributes to raising awareness about ICH and encourage youth to engage in its safeguarding.

Between 2019 and 2022, UNESCO has launched an initiative in Asia-Pacific to integrate ICH, together with other global agenda such as ESD and GCED, in formal education, with the dedicated strong support from ICHCAP and APCEIU. In addition to the country-specific activities taken place as pilots (Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Thailand, and Republic of Korea) and teachers’ training (Kyrgyzstan and Nepal), a number of resources have been developed at the regional level that can be applied at the national level. These include:

- [An animation series](#) to raise awareness about the topic of integrating living heritage to schools, targeting teachers, education managers, community members and students. The series have been made available in a number of languages. A Chinese version has just been included;
- [An online course](#) for teachers and educators on *Bringing Living Heritage to the Classroom in Asia-Pacific* (2022) – providing 6 modules, 19 chapters, including 24 lectures on why and how to integrate ICH into lesson plans and activities; connecting ICH with the educational priorities such as GCED, ESD, MTBE, and SEL. To this date, more than 500 educators and teachers have taken the online course. The course materials are being translated to Korean and Thai, with a view to provide subtitles for the course to make it accessible to more teachers;
- [The Resource Kit](#), *Bringing Living Heritage to the Classroom in Asia-Pacific*, (2022). The Resource Kit has been translated to Russian, Thai, Nepali, Khmer and Korean.

While ROK is the only country in East Asia which has participated in this regional initiative, East Asian countries have a long tradition of integrating ICH in schools, which has been demonstrated in a number of ways:

- When UNESCO carried out [a regional survey](#) to understand the extent to which teachers around the Asia-Pacific region teach with ICH, four out of five North-East Asian countries submitted a sizable number of responses. This expressed in general a good track record and interest of teachers and educators in the sub-region in using ICH in the school context.
- After-school clubs providing opportunities for students to learn more about ICH and engage in practicing it are quite popular in North-East Asian countries, notably China, Japan and ROK. These include but are not limited to ICH forms such as calligraphy, dance, martial arts, etc.
- Mongolia has implemented the “Heritage in the box” project for a number of years and has refined this approach, which is largely linked with tangible heritage. However, connection can easily be made to ICH.

Since 2022, UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia worked with partners to further promote this approach in East Asia. This included:

- Adaption of the animation series for East Asian countries. The animation series is now made available in all East Asian languages. The series has also been disseminated through various channels.
- Organization of an online webinar to introduce the approach in bringing living heritage to schools for East Asian countries, with the participation of close to 100 teachers from the region (August 2023).
- Organization of an online webinar to Japanese teachers within the framework of the Japan ASPnet national conference (January 2024).
- Translation of the Resource Kit to Chinese language (ongoing).

During the 2024-2025 biennium, these efforts will be intensified and expanded to reflect the additional global and regional priorities. Specifically, the upcoming activities will:

- Identify ways to go beyond the single-workshop approach ensure that the capacity building activities will have long-term and sustainable impacts, such as through Teachers’ Training Universities.

- Ensure that heritage is being addressed holistically, as discussed in the recent [Naples Conference](#) on Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century.
- Highlight the cultural commonalities among the countries in the region, for example by featuring the heritage that is shared across the countries, so as to promote a peace and mutual understanding.

3. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Build capacity for relevant stakeholders, including teachers and educators, culture professionals and community members, on the methodologies of teaching and learning with heritage;
- Develop resource materials on shared heritage in East Asia;
- Provide opportunities for sharing experiences and exchange among interested stakeholders in East Asia;
- Mainstream the teaching and learning with heritage methodology in Teachers' Training Universities.

4. ACTIVITIES

4.1. Identification of shared heritage that can be used for teaching and learning

This activity can potentially be combined with the sub-regional forum for East Asia that ICHCAP is planning on, in collaboration with UNESCO Beijing and Mongolia National Commission for UNESCO.

Based on the expert discussion and brainstorming that takes place at the sub-regional forum, an initial list of East Asian shared heritage with key information will be compiled. The list of shared heritage will cover diverse types and domain, so as to provide as much as possible a comprehensive view of the region's shared heritage.

4.2. Capacity building for lecturers of Teachers' Training Universities on the methodology

This activity will be integrated in CRIHAP's 2024 workplan. 4-5 lecturers from 1-2 universities from each East Asian country will be invited to join this training. The key objectives of the training will be to i) raise awareness about heritage and the importance to integrate it to schools; ii) provide the lecturers with the step-by-step methodology on teaching and learning with heritage; iii) introduce the East Asian shared heritage; iv) organize multinational teams for materials development; v) discuss the outline of the resource materials to be developed.

4.3. Development of resource materials on shared heritage for East Asia

The teams established during the Activity 4.2 will continue to work together, under the guidance of heritage and educational experts, to develop lesson plans and school activities using shared heritage for East Asia. The resource materials will be tested through pilot activities. Once finalized, will be translated to East Asian languages for future

use by teachers in the region.

4.4. Mainstreaming with the teaching and learning with heritage methodology in participating Teachers' Training Universities

The discussion with universities will take place throughout the whole project to identify entry points to bring the methodology in the universities' curriculums and teaching programs.

4.5. Integrating visual materials collected from the resource material development process in the IchLinks platform

During the resource materials development process, lecturers from the teachers' training universities will be encouraged to collect visual materials, using the guidance provided by ICHCAP. The selected materials will be integrated in the IchLinks platform for easy access to the public. If the visual materials are of high quality, a virtual exhibition on shared heritage in East Asia can be considered, so as to provide additional teaching resources to teachers from the East Asian countries and beyond.