



Safeguarding Living Heritage for Sustainability

Special Forum

6th Silk Road International Cultural Expo

07 September 2023, Dunhuang, Gansu Province, China

The year 2023 marks the 20th anniversary of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is the opportunity for UNESCO, States Parties to the Convention and all stakeholders involved in the safeguarding of living heritage to highlight that living heritage belongs to all. It is also an opportune time to reflect on the good practices that have been put in place, with a view to analyze lessons learned and synthesize experiences for our future endeavors. This forum also builds on the World Bank and UNESCO's 2021 publication on "Cities, Culture, Creativity: Leveraging Culture and Creativity for Sustainable Urban Development and Inclusive Growth". Gansu was the first province worldwide to work with the World Bank under Gansu Revitalization and Innovation Project to operationalize the emerged framework.

Living heritage or intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is about people, resilience and knowledge passed on from generation to generation. Living heritage constantly changes; or more exactly, the communities continuously adapt the way living heritage is practiced, so it continues to be relevant and meaningful to their lives, especially to the youth who tend to be less and less connected from what they consider aged-old traditions. It has become more apparent that living heritage contributes significantly to achieving the sustainable development goals. As the world is facing ever increasing sustainability challenges, innovation has and continues to become a vital force to keep the living heritage alive and become an integral aspect of achieving sustainability.

Cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in which ICH is an important domain, play a vital role for both urban regeneration and rural revitalization. On one hand, as a special domain that places great importance in transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next, ICH serves as an endless source of 'creative capital' for innovation. ICH practice and transmission mechanisms contribute to creating and maintaining networks of practitioners, learners, audiences, and customers who can function as springboards



for innovation. On the other hand, placing a great importance on the safeguarding principles of ICH, with the communities at the very center, also means that traditions are continuously being reflected in new expressions, creating CCIs with strong local flavors while making it relevant to emerging global platforms.

In 2021, UNESCO and the World Bank jointly launched the '[Cities, Culture, Creativity](#)' ([CCC](#)) [Framework](#) which provides guiding principles to support cities in unlocking the power of CCIs for sustainable urban development, city competitiveness, and social inclusion. It highlights integrated policies and interventions in six areas that can enable the emergence of creative cities: urban infrastructure and livability, skills and innovation, networks and financial support, inclusive institutions and regulations, uniqueness and the digital environment.

This year, in conjunction with the 6th International Silk Road Cultural Expo in Dunhuang, UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for East Asia, in partnership with the World Bank and Gansu Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, is co-organizing a Special Forum on "Safeguarding Living Heritage for Sustainability". This Special Forum will provide a platform to explore creative strategies and initiatives, and innovative practices for safeguarding living heritage, highlighting the importance of leveraging traditional knowledge and practices to build a sustainable future. Through vivid case studies and thematic panel discussions, participants will collectively explore how the implementation of the enablers identified in the CCC Framework in different countries can synergistically reinforce ICH safeguarding and the development of CCIs to place creativity at the center of city development and to drive sustainable development goals.

The ancient Silk Road has long been recognized as a significant historical and cultural route, facilitating the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultures across different civilizations. It is essential to recognize the immense cultural diversity present along the ancient Silk Road and acknowledge the need for sustainable development in the face of global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and socio-economic inequalities. By discussing the issues concerning ICH safeguarding and transmission through the CCC Framework's lens, with a special focus on innovation, this Special Forum aims to harness the potential of ICH practices to address challenges, to build creative cities and promote cultural diversity and resilience. It will highlight successful examples of creating enabling environments and integrating innovation into ICH



safeguarding practices, thus inspiring cities in Gansu, in China and worldwide to take actionable strategies to enhance creativity in their cities.

Objectives:

- Share Gansu innovation: present and discuss innovative approach adopted under World Bank-financed Gansu Revitalization and Innovation Project and how Gansu is currently implementing the CCC framework through a host of integrated hard and soft interventions;
- Raise awareness: promote understanding about the importance of ICH safeguarding for sustainable development among stakeholders, policymakers, experts, and the general public. Apply CCC Framework to provide enabling environments for creative cities;
- Exchange innovative approaches: facilitate dialogue and collaboration among countries to exchange experiences, good practices, and lessons learned in creating enabling environments for ICH safeguarding and transmission. Explore opportunities for joint research, capacity-building, and knowledge-sharing to advance sustainable development goals;
- Foster collaboration: encourage collaboration among nations, organizations, and communities to strengthen international cooperation in safeguarding and promoting living heritage.

The Special Forum will bring together a diverse range of speakers and participants, including:

- National and international experts in the field of living heritage;
- Living heritage practitioners;
- Policymakers and government officials responsible for cultural heritage and creative industries;
- Representatives of international organizations, including UNESCO, World Bank and other relevant institutions;
- Civil society organizations, community groups, cultural companies and individuals engaged in safeguarding living heritage.



Agenda

07 September 2023

Juyue Hall, Dunhuang International Hotel, 08:30 – 12:30

Opening Ceremony

08:30 – 09:10

Opening remarks:

- Prof. Shahbaz Khan, Director and Representative of UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for East Asia
- Mr. He Xiaozu, Director of Gansu Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism
- Dr. Ahmed Eiweida, World Bank Global Coordinator for Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Tourism

Keynote speech

- Mr. Wang Chenyang, Director of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Department, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China

Commendation Ceremony

- Dunhuang Academy and the Three Directors



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Panel Discussion 1

09:10 – 10:30

Living Heritage as a Catalyst for Urban Sustainability

- Dr. Ahmed Eiweida
World Bank Global Coordinator for Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Tourism
Setting-the-stage presentation: Operationalizing the Cities, Culture and Creativity Framework – Gansu Revitalization and Innovation Project (GRIP)
- Ms. Sazlin Sabri
Senior Manager, Culture-Based Local Economic Development, Think City, Malaysia
Title: Rejuvenating Cities Together: The George Town Stories
- Dr. Hao Qingjun
Deputy Director of China Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center
Title: China's policy and development orientation in safeguarding living heritage over the past decade
- Ms. Tsolmon Tserendorj
Intangible Cultural Heritage Specialist, Ministry of Culture of Mongolia
Title: Synergies on national and international policies for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage
- Mr. Jervais Choo
Deputy Director, Organizational Design and Innovation of National Heritage Board of Singapore
Title: Heritage for the Future – Technology and Innovation as drivers of Transformation

Panel Discussion: This panel will explore how safeguarding ICH promotes inclusive and sustainable urban development, enhances social cohesion, encourages tourism, and strengthens local economy. Through the lenses of the CCC Framework, experts will demonstrate how strengthening urban infrastructure and livability, expanding networks and financial support, improving regulations and creating digital environment can become



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effective enablers to tackle cities' challenges and improve community wellbeing. The discussion will highlight how cities can harness their heritage for vibrant and resilient places.

Moderator: Prof. Eugene Ch'ng, Founding Director of the NVIDIA Joint-Lab on Mixed Reality, NVIDIA Technology Centre, Professor of Cultural Computing, University of Nottingham Ningbo China

ICH Performances and Tea Break

10:30 – 11:00

Panel Discussion 2

11:00 – 12:20

Safeguarding ICH through Innovation

- Ms. Ji Xiaofen
Director of China National Silk Museum
Title: The immersive exhibition design for the audience experience--- "Convergence of Civilizations: Dunhuang on the Silk Road" as an example
- Mr. Lan Jing
Director of Center for Ethnic and Folk Literature and Art Development, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China
Title: Key topics in ICH transmission and development
- Dr. Chiara Bortolotto
UNESCO Chair in Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development at CY Cergy Paris University
Title: Science and technology in the sustainabilization of ICH: the case of Avalanche risk management
- Ms. Charlene Mo
Founding Board Member, K11 Craft & Guild Foundation
Title: Voyage Transcending Time and Space

Panel Discussion: ICH is something we inherit from our ancestors but it constantly evolves to adapt to the communities' ever-changing environment. This panel will discuss the role that innovation plays keeping our living heritage alive, while addressing inequalities and ethical considerations. The insightful case studies and discussion will illuminate ways innovative



approaches have empowered local practitioners, facilitating their active participation and amplifying their voices on a global stage.

Moderator: Dr. Duong Bich Hanh, Programme Specialist for Culture of UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for East Asia

Closing Ceremony

12:20 – 12:30

Closing remarks:

- Prof. Shahbaz Khan, Director and Representative of UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for East Asia
- Dr. Ahmed Eiweida, World Bank Global Coordinator for Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Tourism
- Mr. Tian Xuegong, Deputy Director of Gansu Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism