

## **VI. Pending issues & urgent needs regarding the safeguarding of ICH**

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A large portion of the intangible cultural heritage in the Cook Islands is in danger of disappearance if the knowledge and skills are not preserved.

The knowledge and practice of Traditional Voyaging and Navigation in the Cook Islands is endangered. The current efforts to uphold this intangible cultural heritage is exceptional. Unfortunately the high costs associated with Traditional Navigation in building the vessels and sailing from one destination to another could be its demise. Government is required to provide further support for this art form through financing and nominating traditional navigation on the ICH representative list.

The Cook Islands Voyaging Society provides training to young Cook Islanders living in country as well as those in New Zealand and Australia. The organisation intends to introduce traditional navigation into the school curricula to ensure its permanent preservation. However without long term financing traditional voyaging will cease.

Tivaivai making is on the decline on Rarotonga and at risk of disappearing. The knowledge of tivaivai is passed on through training workshops and small women's groups that engage in this art form. Like many art forms expertise in making tivaivai develops with time and practice. Without the participation of young women the skill of designing and cutting tivaivai may be lost as women are learning tivaivai making at an older age.

Workshops that target young women aged 16-18 years of age should be organised to encourage transmission of skills to a younger audience.

The Cook Islands Tivaivai Association should be re-established to implement this strategy and to unite the smaller fragmented groups under one umbrella. This co-ordinated approach can assist in preparing an inventory for tivaivai

practitioners in the Cook Islands and safeguarding measures to ensure tivaivai making is preserved.

Traditional hymns is transforming on Raratonga. Similar to the tivaivai, young adults refrain from taking part in singing the traditional hymn. Many young men and women prefer choral singing to the traditional hymn others have difficulty in either accomplishing the right cords or maintaining the changing rhythm.

The traditional hymn is part of the Te Maeva Nui competition which is a great incentive for the younger generation to participate. The traditional hymns are incorporated into the services of the Cook Islands Christian Church and national events include a traditional hymn as a prelude to the opening prayer service. More efforts are required to maintain the interest of the younger generation in the singing of the Traditional hymns.

### **Pending issues**

Elements of ICH are more intact in the remote islands of the northern islands of Pukapuka, Manihiki, Rakahanga and Penrhyn. Moving south bound to the islands of Mauke, Atiu, Mitiaro, Mangaia and Aitutaki changes are obvious. On the largest island of Raratonga the risk of ICH in danger is at its greatest. This arrangement in ICH follows the levels of modernisation in the Cook Islands where Raratonga is the centre of economic activity and tourism as well as the central location for Government.

The reluctance of the younger generation to engage in certain forms of ICH is a concern. Despite the efforts to provide opportunities to learn the various art forms, the younger generation are unwilling to participate. The reasons are varied from lack of interest and time to difficulty in executing the art form.

Thirdly, the fragmented groups partaking in intangible cultural heritage need to consolidate to form a unified body. This will assist inventory making and projects to safeguard ICH.

### **Q1. What kind of problems and difficulties were encountered during the safeguarding projects?**

The exploitation of the intellectual property rights has compelled practitioners to withhold information relating to their particular field of ICH. Some have refrain from partaking in safeguarding projects others remain reserved on passing on their knowledge for fear of abuse. In the case of women producing tivaivai, patterns were lent to friends and relatives for personal use. These were sewn and sold for cash.

These difficulties present major challenges in the efforts to safeguard ICH. Practitioners become distrusting of fellow colleagues and refuse to share their expertise. It is crucial to gain their trust and provide assurance that the

**Q2. What future plans are there for the safeguarding of ICH (programme information)?**

International Society can contribute through providing technical assistance in inventory making as well as providing examples of successful projects that have been implemented in other communities.

ICHCAP would be most effective in designing a template for inventory making that could be applied across the region. The template should contain simple instructions to use and to manipulate data.

ICHCAP could coordinate cultural exchange programs where officials from different countries immerse into a diverse community to experience safeguarding programs at grassroots level.

ICHCAP should produce a documentary on different communities that have ICH at risk. This may create awareness at an international level and possibly funding assistance.

ICHCAP could encourage governments to be more vigilant in the safeguarding of ICH and urge them to make safeguarding ICH a priority in their development plans

ICHCAP can promote the ICH convention further and persuade all member states in the region to sign the convention.

Cook Islands would benefit immensely with an ICH inventory as the country currently lacks an inventory. Assistance in producing an inventory would be appreciated.

To ensure active involvement from the community a sustainable project designed, implemented and monitored by the community is required. Communities are naturally passionate regarding ICH and will engage in safeguarding ventures. Unfortunately many projects are one off and short term. A longer term phased strategy to safeguard ICH at the community level would be p