

Folklore Laboratory at the Science Research Institution in Kazakhstan

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Kyrgyz and Kazakh musicians in the Kokterek pasture in China © Maulet A.

The Kazakh National University of the Arts the Research Institute, named after Korkyt Ata (KazNUA), was established to achieve the lofty goals in science and education development. The main objective of the institute is to study and promote traditional Kazakh art. Investigations into the spiritual heritage of the Kazakh people are conducted in folklore, literature, culture, and art. Since the institute's main objective is to study the national culture, the employees search for artifacts and collect information related to folk art, in Kazakhstan and other countries.

The folklore laboratory at the institute is working to collect folk music (archives), organize workshops and masterclasses, and take part in government and international research grants.

Researchers of the institute took part in creating 1,000 Kuys of the Kazakh People, an anthology that includes the representative kuys of the performing schools of Eastern Kazakhstan and Zhetysu. Since 2012, about 4,000 works have been collected in the archives and digitized musical compositions have been housed in the media library of KazNUA for use in education.

After Kazakhstan signed the 2003 Convention in 2011, the work in storing and promoting ICH intensified, and within the framework of these activities, workshops and roundtables were organized. The Electronic Migration 2012 workshop was held to determine nominations for the UNESCO Representative List. The result of which was the decision to nominate Traditional Performing Art on the Dombra.

Our researchers are involved in national

and international grants, which allowed the project, *Kazakh Contemporary Music*, to be implemented. One of the project sections is "Kazakh National Art: The Continuity of Traditions" through which the goal is to collect, study, inventory, identify, and archive ICH and related information.

A musical and ethnographic expedition, *The Art of the Turkic Peoples: The Continuity of Traditions*, was held in October and November 2012 in the areas of Bayan Olgii and Cobden, Mongolia to showcase musical folklore in audio-video formats. In 2014, the researchers published a seven-volume collection of selected works, *Song Competition of Akyns*.

At this time, the members of the institute have developed a three-year work plan to elaborate, develop, and publish a twenty-five-volume anthology on traditional Kazakh art.

Research and expeditions have been carried out in several stages:

1. In conjunction with TURKSOY, the International Turkic Academy, the Kazakh Ministry of Culture, and the research institute at KazNUA in cooperation with Turkish researchers and undergraduate students from KazNUA, the folklore and ethnographic expedition was held in the Karaganda region. At the end of the expedition, there was a workshop to present video and audio recordings of traditional singers from the expeditions.
2. Field work has been carried out throughout Kazakhstan. Currently, the collected materials are being processed,

systematized, inventoried, and archived in addition to being transcribed.

3. The music album, *Modern Kazakh Music*, was released. It contains sixty samples of musical-poetic heritage of the Kazakh people and other materials from the 2010-2012 expedition.
4. ICHCAP assisted in facilitating the ICH inventory and the use of interactive tools in the third stage of the project (2013-2014). The results of which led to opening a new Internet portal, etnofolk.kz, and later the Database of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Kazakhstan will be placed at this site.

The results of the ethnographic expeditions from the past few years can be seen through the questionnaire survey, inventories, and identification and registration of our national values. From this, it is possible to evaluate and draw conclusions relating to safeguarding ICH in each region. Unfortunately, the problem of safeguarding ICH in Kazakhstan is at the lowest level.

Other than cultural activities identified nationally, special programs for ICH safeguarding are still not provided to secure traditional life and customs. In this regard, here are some suggestions from vendors and suppliers of ICH and individuals with an interest to our region:

- create conditions to develop ICH in government, educational institutions, and informal organizations to open training workshops, studios, schools, etc. in regional district centers and in villages and provide financial assistance
- provide material and moral support for ICH suppliers to obtain social and public status
- create a database of ICH to identify and inventory
- unite non-government organizations to develop ICH

To safeguard Kazakh ICH just now is a great experience, and assistance from UNESCO and others is needed to preserve this and other unique cultures because people still retain the most valuable and sacred heritage of humanity. Therefore, we must safeguard this unique property.