

**CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR THE GLOBAL FACILITATORS' NETWORK

LIVING HERITAGE AND EDUCATION

**10 July 2025
Online**

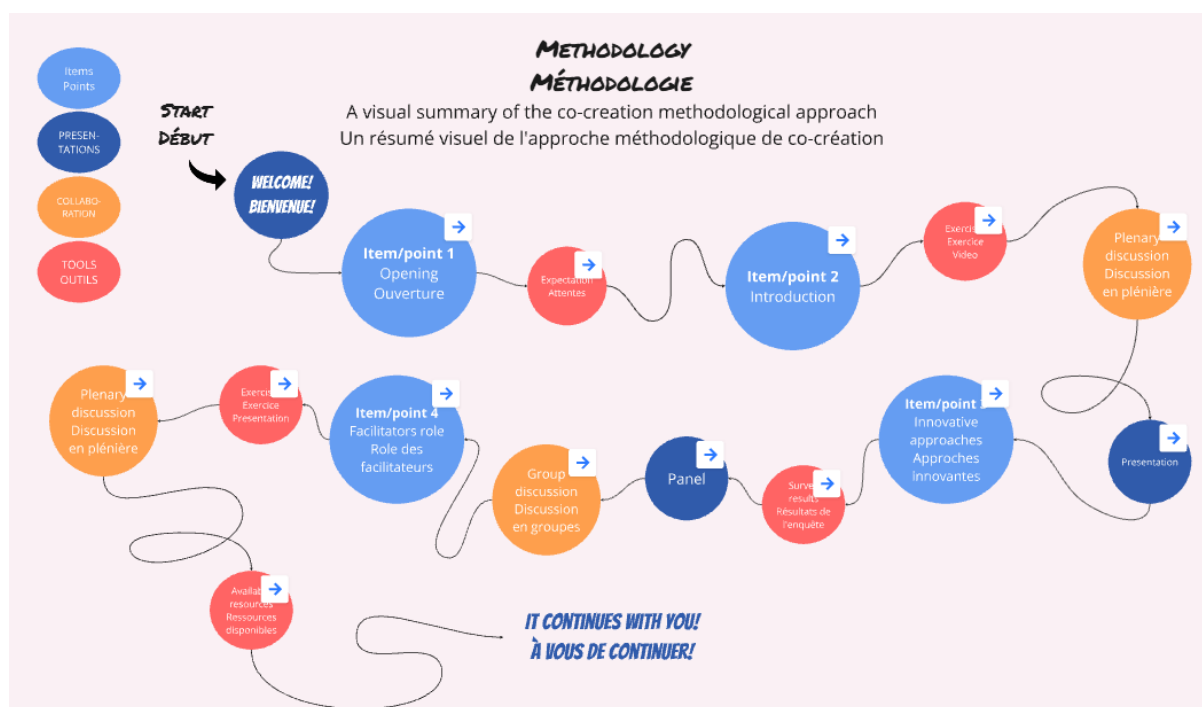
Report

I. Overview

1. Living heritage plays a vital role in education by connecting learning to students' cultural contexts, enhancing engagement, promoting social cohesion, and fostering respect for cultural diversity. The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage emphasizes the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage through both formal and non-formal education. Since the launch of its intersectoral programme in 2017, UNESCO has implemented its two phases – first focusing on awareness raising, methods, tools, and capacity development, and later on systemic integration of living heritage into educational systems. Over 80 countries benefitted from these efforts, resulting in increased teacher confidence, student involvement, and community pride.
2. As part of the 2025 Training Programme for the Global Facilitators' Network, the Secretariat of the Convention organized an online training session on Living Heritage and Education on 10 July from 3 to 6 p.m. CET. The List of invitees (document [LHE/25/TRA ED/1 Rev.](#)) and the Concept note and agenda (document [LHE/25/TRA ED/2](#)) are available on the [dedicated training website](#), together with the training presentations.
3. The objectives of the training were to (i) develop a shared understanding of the connections between living heritage safeguarding and education, (ii) explore practical approaches and tools for integrating living heritage and education through concrete experiences, and to (iii) reflect on the facilitator's role in supporting this area while strengthening collaboration among network members.
4. The session was co-facilitated by facilitators Vanessa Achilles and Maite Zeisser Gutiérrez. An online survey was conducted before the sessions to gauge the depth of knowledge and practical experience of facilitators in this field. 112 facilitators attended the training.

II. Methodology

5. Considering the objectives of the training, the methodological design aimed at adapting the training to participants needs, levelling expectations through a co-creation approach. Several visual and sometimes interactive tools were used for this purpose prior and during the training, such as a Miro board (throughout the session, see image below) a Mentimeter tool to gather replies to live prompted questions, and the Article 360 platform, to present the key educational concepts and frameworks that inform work on living heritage and education.
6. Prior to the training, a survey was shared among facilitators. The purpose of the survey was to gain a better understanding of the knowledge and expectations of the target audience to adapt and finetune the webinar's strategies. The survey questions are included in the annex, and a brief analysis of results is included as part of the training presentations available on the dedicated webpage. The pre-training survey also gathered information about participants interests and, to level expectations, the introduction informed facilitators of the topics to be addressed within the 3-hour webinar.
7. The training was designed as a co-creation experience using different learning tools and supports. It included a selection of presentations by the facilitators and selected participants, interactive exercises in which all participants could take part, and open discussion and reflection segments. During the session, participants also had meaningful exchanges through the chat. The overarching purpose of the activities was to reflect and discuss how the facilitators could bring together living heritage and education, building on previous experiences and on the opportunities and needs of their respective contexts.
8. The flow of the session is illustrated in the chart below. It is to be noted that because of time constraints, the flow of the meeting was adjusted during the session.



III. Key takeaways of the training

9. During a warm-up exercise (*Item 2*), participating facilitators responded to the question ‘**What comes to mind when you think of living heritage safeguarding and education?**’. Responses revealed that transmission is the most frequently cited concept when thinking about living heritage and education. Participants emphasized the importance of passing down traditional knowledge, values, and skills – particularly through intergenerational learning and community-led initiatives. Many responses linked this transmission with identity formation, expressing how education rooted in living heritage fosters cultural pride, continuity, and a stronger sense of self and belonging among learners. Beyond transmission, participants highlighted the broader educational scope of living heritage, noting the value of integrating it into both formal and non-formal education, including technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and community-based learning. Collaboration between schools, communities, and heritage bearers was seen as essential, with education serving as a tool to strengthen social cohesion, intercultural understanding, and global citizenship. Other key themes included safeguarding and valorising living heritage through education, the use of hands-on, student-centred approaches, and the opportunities arising from innovative, contextualized teaching methods that make learning more meaningful and connected to real life.
10. Participants were encouraged to discuss two questions in relation to the video ‘[Reimagining Our Futures Together – A New Social Contract for Education](#)’ in plenary discussion (*Item 2*): ‘How does this vision of the futures of education connect with intangible cultural heritage safeguarding?’ and ‘In your work or context, how do education and living heritage intersect, and what benefits arise from this relationship?’. The lively plenary discussion, along with the exchanges in the chat, explored the following themes.
11. The **links between living heritage, education, and artificial intelligence (AI)** sparked the most reactions and concerns among participants. While AI offers significant opportunities for documenting, safeguarding, and sharing intangible cultural heritage, participants emphasized that integrating living heritage into education can help students develop critical thinking and ethical awareness about how cultural content is curated and used. Facilitators have a role in fostering this ethical sensitivity. However, many stressed the need to be cautious: AI must not replace the living, community-based nature of heritage, as without safeguards it risks misrepresentation, appropriation, or erasure, especially of cultures

underrepresented online. Protecting community rights, ensuring consent and recognition, and avoiding cultural stereotypes are key concerns. Participants urged the living heritage community to engage proactively with AI debates to avoid being sidelined, as happened with cultural discussions in STEM. Since AI relies on potentially biased or incomplete online sources, it may deepen historical gaps, particularly where colonial legacies have weakened traditional knowledge. As AI becomes more integrated in education, ensuring diverse, localized narratives are reflected in AI tools is essential to honor communities' lived realities. Reference was made to the first [Webinar on Artificial Intelligence and Intangible Cultural Heritage \(2024\)](#).

12. Participants also highlighted the value of intangible cultural heritage **in reconnecting young people with the analogue, “lived” world** – offering a grounding experience in an age increasingly dominated by digital technologies and AI. By grounding learners in community-based practices and lived experiences, living heritage was seen as a powerful means of fostering deeper understanding, resilience, and a sense of belonging. It was recognized not merely as content to be taught but as a dynamic force capable of transforming education and transforming learners to face the challenges of today's world.
13. The benefits of the integration of living **heritage across all levels of education** were recognized – from school to university, noting that each stage requires specific attention. Participants also highlighted interdisciplinarity, stressing the importance of using culturally familiar examples within **different educational subjects** to support learning. This approach encourages holistic, experiential, and creative education. Some participants also highlighted the benefits of programmes that transmit indigenous languages. They noted that community-based **transmission and the safeguarding of living heritage in formal education can and should be complementary**. Several of them stressed that while formal education can support living heritage transmission, it must do so respectfully and without imposing external models on communities. Facilitators were advised to first learn from community practices and then adapt educational strategies accordingly. Additionally, it was noted that schools, as relatively recent institutions, have historically failed to respect cultural realities, and a deeper transformation is needed, particularly through teacher engagement, to ensure that communities and their intangible cultural heritage are genuinely valued and integrated in educational settings.
14. Participants expressed concerns on how education systems in the global South were often shaped by former colonial powers, raising the question of the feasibility of integrating local intangible cultural heritage into formal education without addressing the historical imbalance of different **knowledge systems**. Despite decolonizing efforts, education remains largely shaped by industrial or global economic demands rather than local cultural contexts. Some facilitators emphasized the importance of acknowledging that education is inherently cultural. Doing so would encourage the integration of both living and tangible heritage into educational content and methods; it would render learning more effective as living heritage is rooted in everyday life. Some facilitators pointed out the value of pragmatic, job-oriented education while also highlighting the deep, lived nature of traditional knowledge, which often cannot be fully captured in formal learning processes. Concerns were raised about the potential erosion of experiential knowledge, unless schools also provide spaces for this form of learning.
15. Finally, participants expressed the need for **tailored guidelines on living heritage and education** – at either global or regional levels. Adapting existing guidelines and effectively disseminating and unpacking the Framework on Culture and the Arts in Education, would help States strengthen and build on their national strategies and practices.
16. The results of the pre-meeting survey were briefly presented (*Item 3*), highlighting the geographic diversity of participants, which bring an array of perspectives. Over two thirds of participating facilitators already have some experience with integrating living heritage in education, which provided a solid ground for exchanges. Their experience applied mostly to non-formal education (including programmes offered by museums, community learning centers, and other institutions) and higher education settings. The main **challenges expressed by participating facilitators** when working at the intersection of living heritage

and education included: structural challenges (e.g. finance, lack of intersectoral collaboration, bureaucracy); challenges related to safeguarding such as risks of decontextualization, difficulties in identifying stakeholders or ensuring adequate representation; challenges related to the scope of action, due to the vast scope of both living heritage and education areas; and challenges related to education, (e.g. in working with teachers: perceived workload, lack of interest, biases of education professionals).

17. Three participating facilitators with experience in diverse areas of living heritage and education were interviewed during the meeting in a panel format (*Item 3*). The questions guiding the interview were: ‘What were the project’s objectives and strategies?’, ‘What was your role in the project?’ and ‘What tools or knowledge were useful to you in fulfilling this role?’. Sidi Traore presented **an experience in the formal education sector in Burkina Faso**. In 2015, the government of Burkina Faso adopted a national strategy to integrate culture and the arts into the formal education system, with a long-term vision extending to 2025. Key actions foresaw the introduction of modules on intangible cultural heritage in primary and secondary education, including in artistic disciplines such as dance and visual arts in the curriculum. A national study aimed at identifying core cultural values and exploring how they could be embedded in the education system. The strategy aimed to offer contextualized education, breaking away from colonial legacies and enabling children to know, value, and embody their cultures. However, the initiative faced major implementation challenges, particularly due to intersectoral coordination issues. Despite these obstacles, the initiative is viewed as a valuable and innovative approach that deserves to be adapted in other settings.
18. Nigel Encalada shared a **multifaceted cultural initiative in Belize** leading to the development of educational resources aimed at integrating cultural knowledge into the education system, stemming from an inventorying exercise. The inventory involved collaboration with communities, cultural practitioners, and local leaders to identify and document key cultural expressions, particularly traditional celebrations. This effort aligned with a broader national objective to strengthen a sense of identity through education. The [resources](#) made available included a Cultural Celebration Series of short documentaries, teaching materials such as posters and colouring books, and adaptable classroom resources. A key component of the initiative was the establishment of a national network of living heritage practitioners and cultural activists, who were supported to travel across the country to engage with diverse communities and promote mutual respect, awareness, and cultural understanding. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, elements of living heritage were successfully integrated into the new Belizean Studies Curriculum at both primary and secondary levels.
19. Sajida Vandal presented the work undertaken to **bridge traditional and contemporary systems of knowledge within education in Pakistan**. Teachers and knowledge bearers were brought together onto a shared platform to collaboratively design and deliver educational content. For example, in one community, a science teacher used local musical instruments, such as the rebab, to teach the physics of sound. In another case, traditional games were used to teach mathematics, resulting in highly engaging lessons that connected students to both cultural and curricular content. A wide range of educational resources based on intangible cultural heritage resulted from this work, including documentaries, animations, and teaching tools that facilitate the inclusion of local knowledge in classrooms. These efforts highlight the potential of integrated teaching models, considering the diversity of local identities. In one province where the project was active, a policy allowing for 20% of classroom content to be locally developed strengthened educational relevance. However, until today, schools may undervalue art subjects, which are key vehicles for transmitting living heritage. These may for instance not be formally graded. In many contexts, tradition bearers face lack of recognition because they may not hold the formal degrees required for teaching. Sustained efforts are needed to adjust policies and create spaces where different ways of knowing can coexist, contribute to, and be valued equally in shaping education systems.

20. Breakout **group discussions** (*Item 3*) aimed to reflect further on the concepts and presented experiences. Discussions were framed by three questions: ‘How can these experiences inspire the work in your context and work?’, ‘Do you also have an experience or an idea on how this could be done in your context?’ and ‘What tools, support, or resources would help advance this work?’. **Key overarching issues at the junction of living heritage and education** included the need to acknowledge the dynamic and evolving nature of intangible cultural heritage in all its complexity, including practices introduced through, or shaped by colonial histories which have been embraced by communities. Similarly, participants insisted on the importance of ensuring that teaching with or about living heritage has clear purpose and sustainability – including better livelihoods for practitioners – and the importance of valuing it beyond symbolic inclusion. They also alluded to the need to acknowledge that tensions exist between formal educational systems and traditional knowledge transmission, due partly to the misalignment between governmental policy and community needs. Introducing competency-based curricula and recognizing and safeguarding local languages and knowledge systems in education were highlighted as important goals.
21. Participants’ experiences showed the importance of having an entry point that sparks genuine interest to begin engaging in exchanges with networks of stakeholders. For example, bringing policy makers and public officials to schools and communities where living heritage and education initiatives are taking place could help generate awareness and interest. Educating non-traditional stakeholders, such as police and military personnel, could also help emphasize the importance of contextualizing their roles. Regarding **thematic areas** linked to living heritage and education, the need to integrate TVET in the formal education system was highlighted, including anchoring it at the policy level, as it is essential to consider sustainable livelihoods and entrepreneurship within living heritage and education initiatives. The need to include living heritage in urban contexts was also raised.
22. In terms of **challenges facing living heritage in formal education**, participants referred to the rigidity of the education system: institutional and administrative cumbersome and the complexity of validation processes can make it difficult for teachers to integrate living heritage initiatives in classrooms, particularly in primary and secondary education. Training teachers from the onset (pre-service training) was deemed essential, as opposed to only carrying out on the spot capacity-building. Regarding the integration of living heritage in **non-formal education**, facilitators raised the need to advance work to better understand the needs of educators in these settings.
23. Discussions highlighted a range of **tools and actions to support the work of facilitators** in bridging living heritage and education. It was agreed that they can play a valuable connecting role in ensuring meaningful partnerships that combine the knowledge of living heritage bearers as trainers and resource developers with the pedagogical skills of teachers. Packaging content in engaging ways that appeal to young people was identified as important. Technology, including multimodal resources, was highlighted as a powerful tool to document, reflect on, and research living heritage. Facilitators also emphasized the importance of moving beyond traditional classroom settings by creating more out-of-classroom learning spaces and applying creative methodologies. For example, museums were considered connecting spaces where living heritage and educational communities can collaborate. Finally, facilitators emphasized the need for neutral and collaborative vocabulary to encourage broader understanding of living heritage and education.
24. A plenary discussion on **the role of facilitators at the intersection of living heritage and education** (*Item 4*) highlighted several key areas to advance this work. **Collaboration with strategic partners** was deemed essential. Identifying stakeholders with shared values and complementary capacities enables stronger, more sustainable initiatives. Potential partners – apart from schools and communities – suggested by participants included museums, which can serve as interactive learning spaces and connectors between heritage and education; UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), offering platforms for pilot initiatives; NGOs, acting as facilitators and community connectors; and UNESCO regional and country offices, which can bridge the work of facilitators with cultural and education stakeholders.

25. Participants acknowledged the need to **tailor initiatives to cultural, institutional, and geographic contexts** in which they work. They highlighted that, while integrating intangible cultural heritage into formal curricula is valuable, it remains challenging due to structural rigidity and administrative constraints. Alternative entry points – such as extra-curricular activities, heritage months, community-school exchanges, and experiential learning (e.g., visits to festivals or ceremonies) – were shown to be more flexible and impactful in certain settings. The importance of connecting living heritage and education in urban, multicultural, and conflict-affected areas was also emphasized. In culturally diverse educational settings, participants outlined that emphasizing respect for and appreciation of cultural diversity by recognizing that the intangible cultural heritage of all communities holds educational value can be more inclusive and effective than focusing solely on learning about or through a specific living heritage element.
26. Facilitators expressed interest in **contributing to capacity-building efforts**, which they identified as a key condition for the effective implementation of living heritage and education initiatives. This includes training educators to teach with – and not just about – living heritage and equipping them with appropriate tools and pedagogical strategies; supporting community members, particularly bearers of living heritage, to recognize and assert the value of their knowledge, thereby reinforcing self-esteem and participation; developing teaching resources; and exploring pathways for recognition or certification of living heritage and education and training initiatives.
27. They recognized that **awareness-raising and advocacy are crucial to fostering institutional and policy-level integration**. Proposed actions at this level include providing technical guidance to States Parties and communities on how to access and use living heritage-related content in education; supporting policy-making efforts for the inclusion of living heritage in national education strategies; engaging education officials through presentations and consultation sessions; promoting online platforms to enable dialogue, resource-sharing, and collaboration and generally strengthening coordination between education and culture ministries in activities.
28. Participants recalled that **ethical considerations** are fundamental in initiatives involving the transmission of living heritage through education. They discussed that facilitators must be mindful of the power dynamics and potential biases that can be introduced when engaging with communities and designing education interventions. They emphasized the importance of first-voice narratives – ensuring that educational content is shaped by community perspectives and that the agency of knowledge bearers, and their voices, languages, and ways of knowing are respected and represented in educational materials.

IV. Conclusion and recommendations

29. As shown by the high level of participation and engagement, both in live discussions and in the meeting platform chat, there was clear interest from facilitators from the network in the topic of living heritage and education, as well as in exchanging ideas with other participants. Regarding their prior experience, the training revealed that most facilitators from the network have hands-on experience supporting living heritage and education projects. Others are still being introduced to the topic, while some already count extensive experience.
30. Regarding the understanding of the programme on Safeguarding living heritage through formal and non-formal education: facilitators consider transmission of knowledge and practices within communities, as well as higher education, as key dimensions of living heritage and education. They also highlighted the importance of non-formal education for a wide range of audiences. Some were thinking of people in prison, other had the experience of facilitating training programmes with the military, and others with entrepreneurs. They expressed interest in designing additional training materials and approaches in this evolving field.
31. Facilitators expressed the interest to exchange more about facilitation in diverse contexts and in contexts with multiple actors, as well as the need to easily access tailored resources

to guide and support their facilitation role. In this regard, the network is an invaluable resource, and the Clearinghouse on living heritage and education an indispensable tool.

32. Topics identified by facilitators for further exploration in upcoming training sessions include: supporting living heritage and education in emergency situations; deepening knowledge and practical skills on connecting living heritage with formal curricula; supporting the integration of living heritage in higher education; navigating the complex intersections between intangible cultural heritage, educational practices, and artificial intelligence; and deepening knowledge about connecting transmission processes of living heritage with pedagogy and methods of formal and non-formal education.

Annex: Pre-training survey questions

1. What country are you from?
2. Do you plan to attend the webinar?
3. What are your expectations from the webinar? What would you like to see happen?
4. What is your experience working on the safeguarding of living heritage in education?
5. If you have experience, in which region(s) have you worked?
6. If you have worked to link intangible cultural heritage safeguarding and education, what forms and areas of education have you supported or focused on?
7. Please elaborate briefly about your experience or interest in linking living heritage safeguarding and education. If you have been involved in work in this area, please share examples of your work and specify what role you had as a facilitator. If you haven't worked in this area, how would you like to be involved in it in the future?
8. Which actors have you worked with safeguarding of living heritage in education?
9. Please provide more details about your collaboration with these actors. How did the collaboration begin, and how did it unfold?
10. What areas would you like to learn more about as a facilitator to support work in this area of living heritage and education? (e.g. intersectoral collaboration, curriculum development, engaging youth, evaluation methods)
11. What do you see as key challenges and opportunities for facilitators working on living heritage and education?
12. Is there a specific experience you would be willing to share during the session? If so, please elaborate briefly.