

Progress report

Integrating living heritage into primary education in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Benefitting country(ies)	Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines SIDS (Small Island and Developing State) in the Caribbean
Type of funding	Earmarked voluntary contribution to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund received from the Kingdom of the Netherlands
Amount	\$75,000
Implementing field office(s)	UNESCO Office for the Caribbean (Kingston)
Implementing period	2024-2026 (18 months)
Reporting period	Preparatory Phase

I. Background & Summary

This project is in line with the second funding priority identified by the governing bodies of the 2003 Convention on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education. It aims at strengthening the capacities of key stakeholders in Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to integrate living heritage into formal education settings and contributing to its integration into policies. It does so while fostering cross-country exchanges and peer-to-peer learning. It responds to the recommendations from the recently developed UNESCO guidelines for public policy on living heritage and education in the Latin America and the Caribbean region which highlight good practices of integrating living heritage in education across countries in the region and suggest action steps for different stakeholders to contribute to bridging living heritage and education. Furthermore, it builds on the insights from the project 'Learning with intangible cultural heritage for a sustainable future in Latin America and the Caribbean', concluded in 2021 with the generous support of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have a conducive environment for this project - they share cultural practices borne by the local communities in the Grenadine Islands. In 2012 a participatory mapping project resulted in identification of 321 sites which communities consider as part of their natural and cultural heritage and where they practice and transmit their intangible cultural heritage, including knowledge about nature and the universe. Currently, both countries are cooperating in the framework of the World Heritage Upstream Process for the potential transnational site "The Grenadine Island Chain". This includes developing common inventories of cultural and natural heritage that draw from the knowledge and practices of the communities across both countries.

Recent disasters, such as Hurricane Beryl (June 2024), have adversely affected both tangible and intangible cultural heritage in these countries. In response, an ongoing Post Disaster Needs Assessment includes an evaluation of significant harm that includes measuring the hurricane's impact on the heritage sites, cultural institutions and intangible cultural heritage.

In this regard, the integration of living heritage in education has the potential to play a key role for recovery. It can significantly support living heritage communities in strengthening the transmission of their living heritage in schools - and specifically of living heritage that supports disaster risk reduction and contributes to the well-being and the livelihoods of disaster-affected communities - thereby strengthening community resilience.

II. Implementation of the project for the period under review

The project is currently in its preparatory phase. The UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean in Kingston with the support from the Secretariat of the 2003 Convention are planning for the upcoming implementation in close consultation with the national counterparts.

In this regard, consultations have been held in both countries to conceptualize actions that will respond to specific needs, while building on previous efforts to integrate living heritage in education in the islands. Grenada implemented (2021-2023) with the support of the 2003 Convention's ICH Fund, the International Assistance project "[Proud of my Heritage: transmission and safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage in Grenada](#)". The project included the development of living heritage inventories and teaching and learning activities that linked them with schools' curricula. This participatory process was developed by teachers and students from schools. Capacity-building activities were also deployed to design and implement methodologies and tools for teachers to incorporate living heritage into their curriculum. As a result, schools and communities engaged in tailored education initiatives to teach and learn with living heritage. The current project will build on the results of this successful initiative by scaling up, while expanding it to the neighboring Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

During the preparatory phase, four project phases have been defined, to be implemented during a 18-month period:

Phase one: Preparatory phase, including an assessment of needs and stakeholder consultation.

Phase two: Awareness-raising and capacity-building phase to safeguard living heritage that will include: capacity-building sessions on methodologies for teaching and learning with living heritage for teacher training institutions (Grenada), sensitization workshops for government officials and trainings on teaching and learning with living heritage for school stakeholders (Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines). Cross-country knowledge sharing sessions will be organized regularly and in close cooperation with stakeholders and partners, to ensure experience sharing and networking.

Phase three: Pilot activities on teaching and learning with living heritage: trained educators will develop and pilot lesson plans encompassing living heritage in up to 10 schools (primary education) of Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. At the end of these projects, restitution and experience-sharing events will be organized in schools to showcase living heritage and education connections explored by student educators.

Phase four: Media campaigns: media campaigns will raise awareness and address concerns about the transmission and safeguarding of living heritage. Campaigns will feature TV and radio interviews with project beneficiaries, press releases and social media updates.

III. Challenges and how they were addressed

The project preparatory phase is advancing through extensive exchanges and consultations with local stakeholders. This is to ensure that the project phases will build on previous action and that they target specific needs (inclusion of living heritage connected to DRR, sensitization and capacity-building). The approach will lead to solid planning and eventually, the project's sustainability. Furthermore, developing activities at the policy level will have a positive effect on the project's enduring impact. This initiative aspires to serve as a blueprint for other Caribbean SIDS in future efforts to safeguard living heritage in education, linking it also with disaster risk responses.

IV. Direct Beneficiaries, Key Partners and Other Stakeholders

The main beneficiaries of the project will be actors from the Caribbean SIDS involved in implementing the 2003 Convention - including culture officers, civil servants, consultants, academics, experts, non-governmental organizations - and educational stakeholders, such as educators, teachers and students and bearer communities.

V. Communication and Visibility

One of the project's implementation phases (phase four) is dedicated to developing an impactful communications' campaign targeting different media – this will include documentation efforts throughout the project and ensure that efforts are visible and easily replicated.