Unit 9

safeguarding

lesson plan

Duration:

3 hours

Objective(s):

Explain safeguarding as understood by the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage[[1]](#footnote-1) and illustrate (by using case studies) what characterizes good safeguarding practices.

Description:

This unit introduces the topic of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (ICH) at the national level, covering both an introduction to general safeguarding measures and safeguarding activities relating to specific ICH element(s). It covers the following topics: safeguarding under the Convention, different kinds of safeguarding measures, threats and risks to viability and the elaboration of safeguarding plans.

Proposed sequence:

* Safeguarding defined and discussed
* Types of safeguarding measures
* Addressing threats and risks to viability
* Safeguarding plans

Supporting documents:

* Facilitator’s narrative Unit 9
* PowerPoint presentation Unit 9
* Participant’s text Unit 9
* Participant’s text Unit 3: ‘Awareness-raising’, ‘Domains of ICH’, ‘Elements of ICH’, ‘Identification and definition’, ‘Inventorying’, ‘Preservation and protection’, ‘Promotion and enhancement’, ‘Respect’, ‘Revitalization’, ‘Safeguarding and safeguarding measures’, ‘Threats and risks’ and ‘Viability’
* Case studies 21–27
* Unit 42 Hand-out 3.a: *Fonabal* final mock nomination
* Basic Texts of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage[[2]](#footnote-2)

Notes and suggestions

In this unit, the Voladores example (Case study 22) is used as an anchor case study to illustrate the concept of safeguarding measures that address risks. The facilitator can also choose some of the other case studies or provide alternative examples to illustrate key points raised in the unit. Participants could be asked, for example, to develop a written safeguarding plan for a local case study, using the table format from the *Fonabal* mock final nomination under the Facilitator’s narrative for Slide 17, below. Some sample questions have been included for Case study 26 Qiang New Year festival (China) and Case study 27 Mongol Biyelgee (Mongolia) in the text for Slides 21 and 22 to guide discussion.

Unit 9

safeguarding

facilitator’s narrative

###### Slide 1.

Safeguarding

###### Slide 2.

In this presentation …

###### Slide 3.

Safeguarding defined

Participant’s text Unit 9.1 outlines the Convention’s definition of safeguarding.

See Participant’s text Unit 3: ‘Safeguarding and safeguarding measures’.

###### Slide 4:

Case study: the Ahayu:da war gods (USA) – safeguarding vs. conservation

If further clarification is needed about the relationship between the conservation of tangible heritage (e.g. objects) and the safeguarding of ICH, Case study 21, on the Ahayu:da Zuni war gods (USA), provides a good basis for discussion.

###### Slide 5.

The Convention and safeguarding

Participant’s text Unit 9.1 outlines the focus on safeguarding in the Convention.

###### Slide 6.

‘The necessary measures’:   
do States need to safeguard all threatened ICH elements?

In most States there is a considerable quantity and variety of ICH, and a majority of these ICH elements are probably endangered. Not all ICH should – or indeed can – be safeguarded or revitalized. Without strong motivation and commitment on the part of practitioners and other tradition bearers, safeguarding actions will fail. And when resources are limited, choices will have to be made.

Although States Parties are required to take ‘the necessary measures to safeguard the ICH present in [their] territory’, this cannot be construed as meaning that they should contribute to the development and execution of safeguarding plans for *all* endangered elements of ICH in their territories. States Parties are, in the first place, expected to take measures of a more general nature (outlined in Articles 12–15) that help to create or reinforce the appropriate conditions under which the ICH present in their territories may be safeguarded.

###### Slide 7.

General measures for safeguarding ICH

Participant’s text Unit 9.2 explains when the Convention and the ODs request or require States to put general safeguarding measures in place.

Participant’s text Unit 9.3 outlines some measures used for safeguarding ICH in general. Many of these general measures are discussed in other units. In this unit, therefore, the focus is mainly on specific measures for safeguarding ICH elements.

See Case studies 3, 6, 26 and 27 for examples of general measures.

###### Slide 8.

Measures for safeguarding specific ICH elements

Participant’s text Unit 9.4 outlines what kinds of measures could be used to safeguard specific ICH elements.

Participant’s text Unit 3 contains relevant entries on safeguarding measures discussed in this section.

Participant’s text Unit 9.5 gives examples of some safeguarding measures, such as research, documentation and revitalization.

Participant’s text Unit 9.6 refers to the importance of involving the communities concerned in safeguarding.

###### Slide 9.

Safeguarding of viable ICH elements

Participant’s text Unit 9.4 mentions safeguarding of viable ICH elements.

Note on general measures that could support viable ICH elements

Specific safeguarding measures are not necessary when practice and transmission sustain an ICH element over time: general safeguarding measures may provide support in such cases although they will mostly benefit the safeguarding of ICH that is facing threats to its viability. General measures may include the provision of an enabling legislative and administrative context (see Unit 10), reinforcement of the capacities of communities to manage their ICH (if they so wish) and awareness-raising about a thriving element (see Unit 5).

###### Slide 10.

Addressing threats and risks

Participant’s text Unit 9.4 introduces specific safeguarding measures that address threats or risks to the viability of ICH elements.

Participant’s text Unit 9.7 discusses how to develop safeguarding measures.

Note on kinds of threats and risks threatening the viability of ICH

Various kinds of threats and risks may threaten the viability of ICH, such as:

* threats to traditional systems of transmission (changing ways of life; loss of interest by young people in learning or practising the ICH; lack of demand for the products produced through the ICH practice);
* negative attitudes (intolerance, misunderstanding) towards the ICH of a community, or one or more of its elements– among authorities, the general public, other communities, or in the community concerned;
* threats to the living character of the ICH (staging events, ‘freezing’, over-commercialization); and
* unavailability of specific materials, spaces or opportunities necessary for the practice of the ICH (deforestation, migration, social change, repression).

###### Slide 11.

Voladores ceremony (Mexico)

Case study 22, discusses the safeguarding measures developed to address threats to the viability of the Ritual Ceremony of the Voladores (‘flying men’) in Mexico.

Key points to note

The element is a fairly vibrant one, but, like much ICH, it faces various threats. Among the current threats are:

* only one part of the ceremony is being performed for tourists;
* declining availability of trees for wooden poles; and
* loss of the ritual and spiritual dimensions of the ceremony.

Safeguarding measures have been developed to address these threats.

More information about the element can be found in Case study 22 and in the nomination file: http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/00175

###### Slide 12.

Threats to viability (1)

The flight of the Voladores around the pole is the climax of the ceremony. In performances for tourists, however, only this part of the ceremony is enacted, as an acrobatic spectacle. The ceremony is thus now often shortened and presented outside the traditional community setting and calendar.

###### Slide 13.

Threats to viability (2)

In the full ceremony, poles need to be cut down in the forest and ritually prepared and erected in order to establish communion with the gods and ensure the fertility of the earth. Unfortunately, due to deforestation, the special kind of tree that was formerly used for the poles is no longer widely available and fixed metal poles are used instead. This results in a loss of some of the ritual dimensions of the ceremony and affects its significance for the local community.

###### Slide 14.

Threats to viability (3)

Ritual preparations before the ceremony ensure that it has deeper spiritual associations for the community concerned, creating connections between the natural and the supernatural world. Because the ceremony is becoming commercialized, the observance of these rituals is decreasing, especially among groups of professional ‘flyers’ who have not undergone the proper training as Voladores.

###### Slide 15.

Voladores safeguarding measures

As in any good safeguarding strategy, the Totonac communities and Voladores groups concerned have played an important role in formulating and implementing safeguarding measures to address the threats. Meetings of Voladores have been convened with the help of local government and NGOs so that they can discuss problems and formulate ongoing strategies to resolve them. The Voladores groups were very clear about the need to create more opportunities to perform the entire ceremony, including the necessary ritual preparations. Schools for Volador Children have been established to teach the full significance of the ritual and promote transmission of knowledge within the Voladores groups. To ensure the availability of wooden poles, the government, in collaboration with local Voladores communities, has implemented reforestation programmes and proclaimed forest reserves in some areas. The safeguarding project has benefited from strong State and NGO support.

###### Slide 16.

Safeguarding with the communities concerned

The topic of community participation was introduced in Participant’s text Unit 9.6, but this slide integrates the idea of involving communities in the process of developing safeguarding measures, which is covered in Participant’s text Unit 9.8.

Note on the relationship between identification, inventorying and safeguarding

Specific measures, prepared with outside intervention in the framework of the implementation of the Convention, may start with the identification and definition of the element or elements concerned. This should be done in conformity with Article 11(b) of the Convention, i.e. with the participation of the community concerned. Some of the information collected may be used for drafting or updating an entry for an inventory of ICH.

###### Slide 17.

Safeguarding plans

The relationship between safeguarding measures and plans is discussed in Participant’s text Unit 9.7.

As an example of a concrete plan, participants can be referred to the mock *Fonabal* safeguarding plan in the final *Fonabal* mock nomination which is used as an example in Unit 42. A short description of the element is provided below as background, followed by Table 1, which shows parts of the safeguarding plan:

*Fonabal* (xylophone) music accompanies chanting and dances in a number of rituals and festivities practised by African-Hispanic people in the southern coastal part of Country F. The chants combine Spanish words with African laments, a reminder of the slave ancestry of the African-Hispanic community. There are four main traditional contexts in which the *fonabal* music and chants are performed: the Worshipping of Saints, the *Fonabal* Dance, the Child’s Wake and the Adult Wake (funerals). Each context is associated with specific musical expressions. The music is performed on *fonabals*, its rhythms reinforced by hand-clapping, drums and seed rattles. Today, many young African-Hispanic people have migrated to the cities to study and work, or to escape conflict in rural areas, often thereby breaking close connections with family and with their traditions. Most of the maestros who lead the singing and dancing in the rituals and festivities have remained in the rural areas. In the cities, therefore, the music and rituals associated with the *fonabal* are less frequently practised and the element is thus in need of urgent safeguarding.

Table 1. Mock safeguarding plan for fonabal music

| Activity | Stakeholders | Timetable | Cost/Needs (US$) | Outcomes expected |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Coordination between stakeholders to promote the element and raise its status locally, nationally and internationally  2. Allowing *fonabal* ceremonies to be performed alongside government funeral facilities for African-Hispanic people | Fonabal First (a local NGO)  Musicians, singers, communities, researchers and government | 2011–14 | $30,000 p.a. (government subsidy) | The element to be recognized as the main cultural resource in the region, supported by networks of performers, teachers and promoters  Young people from the African-Hispanic community in cities and rural areas becoming more interested in participating in *fonabal* ceremonies |
| 3. Including *fonabal* in the formal music curriculum in universities and State-run schools  4. Support for the teaching of *fonabal* chants, music and dance, both formally and informally | Fonabal First,  Musicians and singers,  Schools of Traditional Music and Dance,  Universities | 2011–14 | $40,000 p.a. (municipal subsidies) | More young people trained as singers and *fonabal* musicians |
| 5. Research into the performance of *fonabal* music and chants | Local universities  African-Hispanic youth groups | 2011–12 | $30,000 p.a. (university funds) | Better knowledge of the range and diversity of songs, chants and contexts in which *fonabal* is performed; publication of information about it that to be used in schools |
| 6. Organizing traditional music festivals | African-Hispanic youth groups  Fonabal First | 2011– | $40,000 p.a. (NGOs and government funds) | Greater awareness of the element among African-Hispanic youth in urban environments  Increased status associated with the element  Increased opportunities for performance of *fonabal* music and dance in urban contexts |

###### Slide 18.

Case study: Anu Raud’s folk art centre (Estonia)

Case study 23, discusses the work of a design school in Estonia that researches and uses traditional patterns for knitting and weaving. Participants may be asked to identify safeguarding measures for traditional knitting and weaving in this case study.

###### Slide 19.

Case study: Gawad sa Manlilikha ng Bayan (GAMABA) system (the Philippines)

Case study 24 presents an example of a Living Human Treasures system in the Philippines.

###### Slide 20.

Case study: Sanbasomawashi ritual (Japan)

Case study 25, discusses the revitalization and renewed appreciation of a traditional practice, the Sanbasomawashi (New Year’s Performance) in Japan.

###### Slide 21.

Case study: Qiang New Year festival (China)

Case study 26, outlines the safeguarding measures developed for the Qiang New Year festival (China), inscribed on the USL in 2009.

The facilitator may suggest that participants first read the case study and then (in small groups) discuss some of the questions below. If time permits, a report-back and broader discussion may then be held in plenary.

Questions to discuss regarding this case study

* Who is the community concerned with the Qiang New Year festival?
* What are the threats to the viability of the festival?
* Do the safeguarding measures (proposed and undertaken) address all these threats?
* How do the safeguarding measures involve the community concerned?
* Can you suggest other safeguarding measures for this element?
* How can research materials about the festival be made more accessible to the communities concerned so as to contribute to the festival’s viability?
* If material required for the performance of the festival is collected for a museum exhibition, will this threaten the viability of the element or enhance it?
* Would you give high priority to organizing live demonstrations of the festival in a museum?
* What approaches could be used to ensure that the communities concerned are active partners in all proposed safeguarding measures?

###### Slide 22.

Case study: Mongol Biyelgee (Mongolia)

Case study 27, outlines the safeguarding measures developed for the Mongol Biyelgee: Mongolian Traditional Folk Dance, inscribed on the USL in 2009.

The facilitator may suggest that participants first read the case study and then (in small groups) discuss some of the questions below. If time permits, a report-back and broader discussion may then be held in plenary.

Questions to discuss regarding this case study

* What are the main threats to the viability of the Biyelgee folk dance?
* How do the safeguarding measures try to address these threats?
* Can you think of any other safeguarding measures that would be appropriate?
* Would it be positive or detrimental to the safeguarding of the Biyelgee folk dance to prescribe how it should be performed?
* How can research materials about the Biyelgee folk dance be made accessible to the communities concerned?
* How can the communities concerned be given a prominent place in the execution of the safeguarding plans?
* The Biyelgee folk dance embodies nomadic ways of life that are rapidly disappearing as people migrate to the cities. What safeguarding interventions can you think of for urban areas?

Unit 9

Visit to a safeguarding project

It may be useful for participants to visit a place where a local safeguarding project has been implemented: they can learn about the practical challenges faced in safeguarding an element, and the successful strategies developed to meet these challenges. Alternatively, project members could be asked to visit the venue at which the workshop is being held and to give a brief talk to the participants about strategies and processes that have been successful in safeguarding an ICH element, and those that have not been so successful. Time should be allocated for participants’ questions.

If such a visit is possible, the facilitator should help participants to structure possible lines of thought and reflect on their experience of the visit. For example, the facilitator could prepare a hand-out asking participants to reflect on specific questions during the visit (these questions would not necessarily be addressed directly to the project members). The facilitator could ask participants to report back briefly the next day. It is important to leave time within the schedule for participants to reflect on the lessons learned from the visit.

If a visit is not possible or appropriate, a discussion of video materials on safeguarding and community participation would be an alternative. The facilitator would need to select appropriate video materials. Participants could be encouraged to identify threats and risks facing the element, and safeguarding measures to address them, and to examine how communities concerned were involved in promoting the viability of the ICH. Local examples could be used, but sometimes using a new example from another region encourages participants to think critically about the issues at hand.

For example, participants could discuss the ‘Wooden movable-type printing of China’ nomination video:

http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/USL/00322

1. . Frequently referred to as the ‘Intangible Heritage Convention’, the ‘2003 Convention’ and, for the purpose of this unit, simply the ‘Convention’. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . UNESCO. *Basic Texts of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (referred to in this unit as Basic Texts). Paris, UNESCO. Available at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00503>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)