



Apia Office

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



ichcap

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

International Information and Networking Centre
for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region
Under the auspices of UNESCO

Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Pacific





Blowing Traditional Samoan Horn
© UNESCO/A. Esquivel

Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding in the Pacific



The Lakalaka, Dances and Sung Speeches of Tonga © UNESCO

Message	04
Introduction	06
Partnership	08
Documentation and Recognition	10
ICH for Sustainable Development	12
MDGs and ICH	15
Pacific Map	16



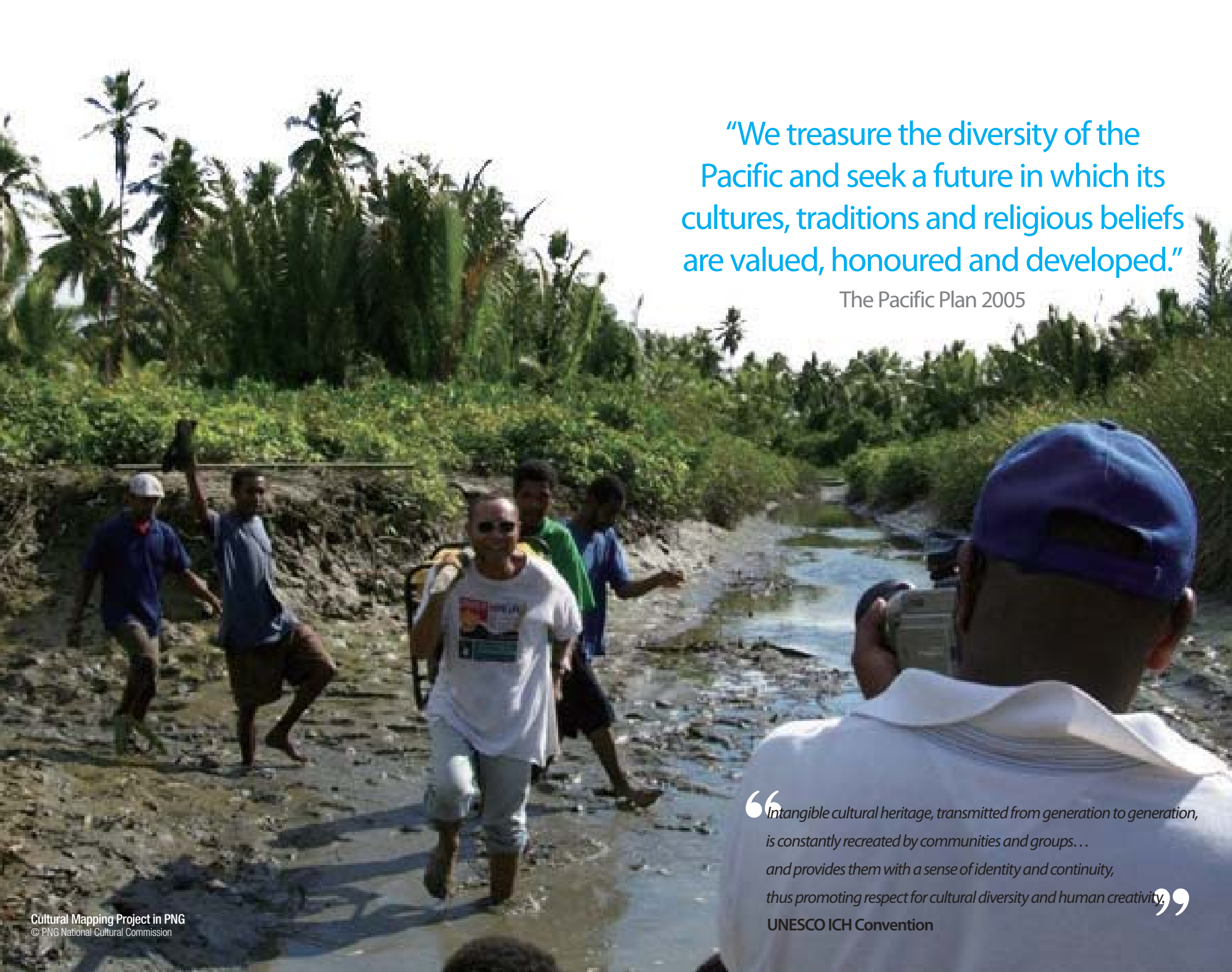
Fire Dance in Tonga
© ICHCAP/W. Park



Dukduk Mask Festival in PNG
© UNESCO



War Canoe
© Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs, Palau



“We treasure the diversity of the Pacific and seek a future in which its cultures, traditions and religious beliefs are valued, honoured and developed.”

The Pacific Plan 2005

“Intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups... and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.”

UNESCO ICH Convention

Introduction

Throughout history, the unity in diversity in the Pacific has been the foundation for the identity, continuity and sustainable development of the region. In societies throughout the Pacific, this cultural diversity contains indispensable information about learning and creativity. Pacific culture has manifested itself in different languages and through various cultural expressions. It primarily takes the form of intangible cultural heritage (ICH).

ICH is a concept developed in contrast to tangible cultural heritage, which covers historic monuments and sites. In the Pacific, terminologies such as customs and traditional knowledge have long been used to describe the concept of ICH. This shows that ICH is not a foreign concept to the Pacific people and that ICH simply needs to be translated into local languages. For example, after lengthy discussions, the participants in the Tarawa workshop in 2011 translated ICH into *Anuara ma Kateira ake Rikiara* in the Kiribati language, which literally means “Attitude/Behaviour and Custom/Culture are Our Heritage”.

ICH domains as defined in the ICH Convention

- Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of ICH
- Performing arts
- Social practices, rituals and festive events
- Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
- Traditional craftsmanship

Pacific ICH is living and hence constantly being recreated by communities, groups and individuals. Pacific ICH has been modified through contact with the outside world, most notably by the adoption of Christianity, through colonisation and by the progressive integration into a cash economy. Recently, because of the effects of globalisation and natural disasters, Pacific ICH has been in urgent need of attention and safeguarding, lest it be lost forever.

This is why Pacific island countries have been redoubling their efforts to implement a range of ICH safeguarding measures. Each Pacific island country has its unique ICH and faces varying challenges according to the socioeconomic circumstances specific to each island. However, by sharing information and experiences while employing safeguarding measures, each Pacific island country can learn about and support one another.

Several Pacific island countries are State Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage that was adopted by UNESCO in 2003. Two ICH elements—the *Lakalaka*, Dances and Sung Speeches of Tonga, and the Vanuatu Sand Drawings—are inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity established by the ICH Convention.



Vanuatu Sand Drawings
© UNESCO



Lakalaka
© UNESCO



Niue Meke Dance © Department of Niue Cultural Heritage

Partnership

ICH safeguarding requires collaboration and partnership to be effective and sustainable. Consultations on ICH safeguarding organised by Pacific island countries bring together a wide range of stakeholders, including custodians of ICH, traditional leaders, NGOs, researchers and academics, private sector experts, and national authorities, to discuss a national strategy and action plan for ICH safeguarding. The role of traditional leaders and village representatives is of paramount importance in the Pacific. As key actors, they help reinforce the synergy between community-based customary laws and practices and government-supported ICH safeguarding policies and measures.



Apia ICH Workshop
© UNESCO/A. Takahashi



Maneaba at Tarawa
© UNESCO/A. Takahashi



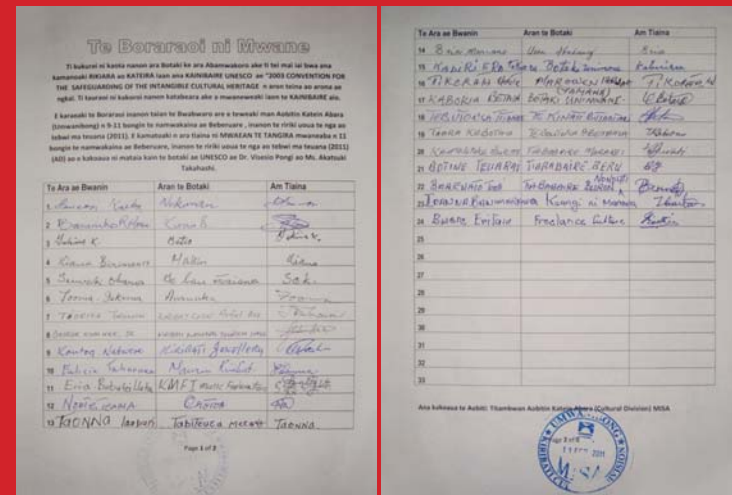
Bure Building Skills in Fiji
© Institute of Fijian Language and Culture

The Elders at the Tarawa Workshop
© UNESCO/A. Takahashi



Elders and ICH Safeguarding in Kiribati

A consultation on ICH safeguarding held at a traditional meeting place (*maneaba*) in Kiribati in 2011 was attended by the elders (*unimane*) from seventeen outer islands of Kiribati. Unimane status implies not only age but also wisdom and leadership within the family, village and wider community. The unimane are traditionally responsible for overseeing matters relating to community life. Their authority remains strong, especially on the outer islands, and it has influence on the local governance of Kiribati. The consultation on ICH safeguarding presented an opportunity for the unimane to become familiar with the key aspects of ICH safeguarding and to discuss the link between ICH safeguarding and the well-being of their community. At the end of the consultation, the unimane signed a document that endorses Kiribati's ratification of the ICH Convention.



Support from the Elders in Kiribati © Kiribati Ministry of the Internal Affairs

Documentation and Recognition

ICH safeguarding cannot be done without community participation. Communities themselves must take part in identifying and defining ICH since they are the ones deciding which practices are part of their cultural heritage. UNESCO support has been provided for ICH safeguarding consultations and capacity-building workshops on the ratification and implementation of the UNESCO ICH Convention and ICH inventory-making.



Field Research Team
© PNG National Cultural Commission

Possible outline for an ICH inventory

01 _ Identification of the element

- Name of the element, as used by the community or group concerned
- Short, maximally informative title, including an indication of domain(s) and community(ies) concerned
- Physical location(s) of element
- Short description

02 _ Characteristics of the element

- Associated tangible elements
- Associated intangible elements
- Language(s) involved
- Perceived origin

03 _ Persons and institutions involved with the element

- Practitioner(s)/performer(s): name, age, gender, social status and/or professional category
- Other participants: e.g. holders and custodians
- Customary practices governing access to the element or to the aspects of its modes of transmission
- Concerned organisations

04 _ State of the element's viability

- Threats to the enactment
- Threats to the transmission
- Availability of associated tangible elements and resources
- Viability of associated tangible and intangible elements
- Safeguarding measures in place

05 _ Data gathering and inventorying

- Consent from and involvement of the community or group in data gathering and inventorying
- Restrictions, if any, on the use of inventory data
- Resource person(s): name and status or affiliation
- Date and place of data gathering
- Date of entering data into an inventory
- Name of the person who made the inventory entry

06 _ References to literature, archives, audio-visual materials, etc.



Samoan Fine Mat Ceremony
© UNESCO/L. Elerton



Vaeruarangi Ariki
© Ministry of Cultural Development, Cook Islands

ICH for Sustainable Development

The Pacific heritage is a source of creativity and innovation. A number of artists-in-residence programmes are hosted by Pacific countries for artists from both within and outside the region. Building upon its wealth of culture, including traditional crafts, designs and navigation methods, the Pacific region is building a culture industry with cultural tourism at its heart. This is presenting opportunities for generating income and employment. When properly managed, community-owned tourism activities bring economic benefits to local communities and provide unique opportunities for intercultural dialogue between community members and visitors.



Nauru Children Performing Kiribati Dance
© UNESCO/A. Takahashi



Welcoming Ceremony at Chief Roi Mata's Domain, World Heritage Site in Vanuatu
© UNESCO/E. Waterman



Marshallese Master Navigator
© UNESCO/A. Takahashi

Traditional navigation systems in the Pacific

The Pacific, together with its land and oceanic areas, spans a quarter of the planet. This is one reason why the region has particularly rich traditional skills, knowledge and practices relating to the ocean. Civil society organisations, such as the Voyaging Societies, established across the Pacific island countries, have been playing an important role in safeguarding and reviving the traditional navigation systems of the Pacific. Thanks to their efforts, traditional ocean voyaging canoes are rebuilt, and the transmission of specialised knowledge from the few remaining master navigators to the young people is ensured. The Pacific voyaging activities are thriving, spreading a message of environmental protection and living together.



Pacific Crew at Galalofa in Samoa
© UNESCO/A. Takahashi



Two Children Bowing to Show Respect to an Elder
© Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs, Palau



Traditional Way of Making Fire
© PNG National Cultural Commission

Recognition of traditional knowledge and skills and non-formal learning in the Pacific

The Pacific region has been developing the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS) as a collaborative effort by the Qualifications Authorities of Pacific island countries. This system aims to provide official recognition of traditional knowledge and skills obtained by individuals mainly through non-formal education and on-the-job training so as to improve their mobility and to ensure consistency among qualification systems across the Pacific.



Basket Weaving
© ICHCAP/W. Park

MDGs and ICH



Food security

Traditional economy in the informal sector and local system of gardening and agriculture



Universal primary education

Local-knowledge and mother-language based



Non-formal education

Intergenerational transmission of knowledge in communities and villages



Empowerment of women

Traditional knowledge and skills of women and their recognition by qualification authorities



Protection of child and mother

Traditional birth attendants and their training and recognition by health authorities



Prevention of diseases

Traditional performing arts in raising awareness



Environmental sustainability

Traditional knowledge of nature and the universe



Partnership

Traditional chieftain system as part of governance

Cooperation development

Cooperation development in ICH safeguarding to strengthen intercultural skills and competences

UNESCO PACIFIC MEMBER STATES

Federated States of
Micronesia

Marshall Islands

Palau

Nauru

Kiribati

Papua
New Guinea

Solomon
Islands

Tuvalu

Tokelau

Cook Islands

Vanuatu

Samoa

Fiji

Tonga

Niue

Australia

New Zealand



Apia
Office

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO Office for the Pacific
P.O. Box 615, Apia, Samoa
Email: apia@unesco.org
Phone: +685 24 276
Fax: +685 22 253
www.unesco.org/apia



ichcap

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

International Information and Networking Centre
for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region
under the auspices of UNESCO

132 Munji-ro Yuseong-gu
Daejeon 305-380 Republic of Korea
Email: info@ichcap.org
Phone: +82 42 820 3507
Fax: +82 42 820 3500
www.ichcap.org