



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Intangible  
Cultural  
Heritage

## International Assistance

ICH-04-Report – Form

### INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND

#### PROGRESS NARRATIVE REPORT

Beneficiary State(s) Party(ies): Cambodia

Project title:	Implementation of the Safeguarding Plan for Chapei Dang Veng (file no.01165)
Reporting period:	From: 03/11/2017 to: 29/02/2020
Budget:	<p style="text-align: right;">Total: US\$152,097.40</p> <p><i>Including:</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund: US\$126,897.40</p> <p style="text-align: right;">State Party contribution: US\$25,200.00</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Other contributions: US\$</p>
Implementing agency (contracting partner or UNESCO Field Office):	Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, The Royal Government of Cambodia
Contact person:	<p>Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Mr</p> <p>Family name: SIYONN</p> <p>Given name: SOPHEARITH</p> <p>Institution/position: Director-General of Directorate-General of Techniques for Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts.</p> <p>Address: #227 Norodom Boulevard, Khan Chamkarmorn, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.</p> <p>Telephone number: +855 (0) 17 674 905</p> <p>E-mail address: sopheariths@yahoo.com</p>
Partner agency (in the case of a service from UNESCO project):	N/A

Implementing partners:	Cambodian Living Arts (CLA), Community of Living Chapei (CLC), Khmer Magic Music Bus (KMMB)
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## Background

*Provide a brief description of the situation existing at the time of the request and the need that the assistance aimed to address. For safeguarding of a particular element, provide a description of the element, its viability and why safeguarding measures were required. For preparation of inventories, strengthening of capacities, awareness-raising, visibility or other safeguarding not focussed on a particular element, identify gaps that were to be addressed. For emergency assistance requests, describe the nature and severity of the emergency at the time of the request.*

*Not fewer than 750 or more than 1000 words*

Chapei Dang Veng (hereafter called Chapei), a long necked lute, is a popular musical instrument found in Cambodian society. Chapei is played in accompaniment of melodious signing about previous lives of Buddha, folktales or even good advices for listeners. The instrument itself is used as of today in two eminent ancient ensembles, 'Pleng Araek' (Music played to entertain spirits) and 'Pleng Kar Boran' (Traditional Wedding Music) both of which are endangered forms themselves. Although Chapei is closely interwoven in the tradition and beliefs of the Cambodian people, during the Khmer Rouge regime (1975 to 1979), Chapei, like other form of entertainment, disappeared from Khmer society. Besides many artists were killed, the notable break has jeopardised the continuity of the tradition. After Khmer Rouge, the government has made serious endeavors to restore this element in conjunction with great efforts of from many surviving individual artists, NGOs and generous donors. However, its situation remained precarious and required urgent safeguarding measures.

At the time of the request for UNESCO ICH Financial Fund, there were only two surviving grand masters of Chapei who were then honoured as the Living Human Treasures. However sadly one of them died during 2018 and the remaining grand master is rarely able to perform due to old age and poor health. Beside the Grand Master, there are a handful of masters with a limited number of students continue to learn the form throughout the country. Despite all challenges, the existing masters are still practicing and using traditional methods to transfer the knowledge orally, particularly within families that have traditionally practiced Chapei throughout Cambodia.

There are committed groups and organizations that also use these methods to preserve Chapei. For example, in Phnom Penh, there is a small but very committed group of young students and artists, who have organized to form an informal association, called "The Community of Living Chapei." Intergenerational transmission efforts are primarily supported by arts organizations, whose classes provide an opportunity for young people to learn. For example, over the past 19 years, Cambodian Living Arts has supported the transmission of Chapei through their own programs. The Champey Arts Academy, which was established 6 years ago, has also carried out similar activities.

The only formal government art school, "The Secondary School of Fine Arts" integrated a Chapei training program into its curriculum in 2002. While there have been formal programs developed to try to support the transmission of Chapei, it is still very much transferred through a master-disciple methodology. As a result of these programs, a small number of talented new generation Chapei players have emerged, however stronger mechanisms for transmission need to be reinforced.

At the time of the request, the main threat in transmission was the lack of qualified students entering into the programs; but due to recent increased awareness of the art form, more students are seeking enrolment. However, outside of Phnom Penh, there are still no formal training programs for Chapei in Cambodia.

Currently the demographics of the practitioners of Chapei are almost exclusively male, with the masters being over 50 years old, and the sole surviving Grand Master is in his mid 70s. The students of Chapei are mostly under 30 years old. The mid-generation players are

capable performers, however not fully proficient – particularly in relation to improvisation skills. It is still predominantly the elderly masters who continue to teach and perform, and even travel abroad for festivals or other performances. The audience for Chapei is the general public, of all ages and backgrounds. In the past it was favored by the elderly population, but there has been an increase in younger audiences' enthusiasm for Chapei. The thrill of the young audiences towards Chapei augurs well for the future of this art form.

At the time of the submission of this request in 2015, the form itself had minimal historical research and documentation and relied almost exclusively on oral tradition with limited resources for teachers to use in being able to teach the art form. The high cost of instruments and the fact that it is hard to make a living by performing Chapei alone present major economic obstacles, and so young people prefer to engage in activities that bring more income.

The inscription of Chapei in 2016 gave a major impetus to the revival of this treasured art form and the first year of implementing the safeguarding plan has begun to yield promising results. The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MoCFA) in collaboration with its partners, namely the Cambodian Living Arts, the Community of Living Chapei, Khmer Magic Music Bus has launched a range of activities in according with the proposed action plan. Due to this project, Chapei's popularity and visibility is reaching new heights today especially among the young generation and is becoming an increasingly regular feature of both live and broadcast performances and even in private and corporate events. However, there are still many challenges to overcome for the sustainability and visibility of the elements.

#### **Objectives and results attained**

*Overall, to what extent did the project attain its objectives? Describe the main results attained, focussing in particular on the perspective of the direct beneficiaries and communities. For each expected result identified in the request, explain whether it was fully or partially attained. Also describe any unexpected results, direct or indirect, whether positive or negative.*

*Not fewer than 100 or more than 500 words*

During the implementation of the safeguarding plan of the project, the results attained have been largely as identified in the request. The Ministry, through the Provincial Departments of Culture and Fine Arts conducted a survey and a series of interviews to provide the data for a mapping of Chapei.

Today, the number of practitioners of Chapei in Cambodia is increasing due to the active support provided by over one hundred artists and teachers. Base on the survey, Chapei resources exist in 19 of Cambodia's 25 provinces, however the highest concentration of players was found in Phnom Penh, Banteay Meanchey, Prey Veng, Kampot, Takeo and Kandal. Although Chapei artists were willing to perform on many occasions, such as at local and national festivals as well as important events in Buddhist monasteries, their opportunities are limited to 4 or 5 performances per year due to the small number of invitations. Consequently, they cannot support their living solely from the income from Chapei performance.

Despite the impact of globalization, which has both positive and negative effects on traditional art forms like Chapei, Cambodia is developing effective strategies for safeguarding and transmission to future generations. We consider the importance of harmonization between modern creativity and the traditional form so that Chapei can be played with other art forms.

The "Community of Living Chapei" has formed a group of young artists who were trained by a student of Grand Master Kong Nay who is the sole surviving National Living Human Treasure in Chapei. These young artists are trained to be skilled performers through practicing the technique of this traditional form, and eventually hope to be recognized as Grand Masters themselves.

Our survey shows that the popularity and public awareness of Chapei is increasing in the living culture of Cambodia, creating a positive environment for the artists, and offering greater visibility of the art form throughout the media.

MoCFA has introduced a new system to honor the Chapei Masters which will encourage young followers to develop new skills in the field. In reality, the value of Chapei performers rest not only on musical ability, but they also need to use their wit, intelligence and ability for quick adaptation and improvising to be a good story teller. They are required to be well-versed in language, literature and poetry and to be aware of contemporary social and political events and personalities. Furthermore, today Chapei is not only performed by males, but a small number of female Chapei players have started to emerge.

### Description of project implementation

*Provide a description of the activities undertaken and the outputs they generated (e.g. trainings, consultation process, technical assistance, awareness raising, publications, toolkits, etc.). Also describe any problems encountered in project delivery and corrective actions taken. Describe the role of the implementing agency and of the partner agency (in the case of a service from UNESCO project) and the role of other implementing partners in carrying out activities and generating outputs.*

*Not fewer than 1000 or more than 1500 words*

Nine major activities have been proposed for as the safeguarding plan. Although many activities were fully or partly implemented since the inception of the project, due to limited human resources not only in MoCFA but also in Cambodia some activities need to be expedited to match the timelines given for the implementation of the project; i.e. November 31, 2020. Thus, these activities were rescheduled:

#### 1. MAPPING:

To fully understand the current situation of Chapei and create database of Chapei artists in Cambodia, MoCFA team developed a research questionnaire aiming to cover the following aspects:

- Chapei artists and students and their whereabouts and profiles (age, gender...);
- Conditions of performances (place, income, audiences, supporters, etc.);
- Types of ceremonies and events they perform at;
- Repertoire (contents, lyrics, stories, melody...);
- Level of ability and knowledge of performers (educational background, skills...);
- Community awareness of Chapei (participation, safeguarding, promotion).

#### Activities and Outputs:

- Development of an updating date of Chapei artists:

By reviewing existing data of MoCFA's Chapei inventory forms, lists of Chapei performers of CLA and CLC, the list of Chapei performers participated in the Chapei and Khsae Deav Festivals, organized by MoCFA, we are able to identify 116 Chapei artists (8 artists who died before the preparation of this report are not included) coming from 18 out of 25 provinces of Cambodia. Among them, there are 4 female Chapei artists.

- Interviewing the selected artists:

The selection of Chapei artists is mainly based on their active involvement in Chapei performance and their availability for interview in regard to specially their health. Our team also developed a priority for the interviews by looking into whether the interviewees are:

- women Chapei artists
- disable artists
- aged between 40 to 80
- members of Living Human Treasure or Esteemed artists
- famous Chapei artists or Chapei performance winners
- artists who have been trained with famous Masters or from their parents
- artists who have been trained for many years
- only one or two artists in a province

Out of 116 identified Chapei Artists, we selected and interviewed 53 artists from 18 provinces, namely Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Kampong Speu, Thbong Khmum, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Posat, Takeo, Kampot, Kep, Steung Treng, Kampong Thom, kampong Cham, Oudor Meanchey, Kampong chnang, and kandal. The rests were requested to answers the questions in a prepared questionnaire. Through a close collaboration with Provincial Departments of Culture and Fine Arts, 12 out of 54 artists returned the questionnaire to us.

The interviews were documented by using video and still cameras as well as audio recorders. Completed questionnaires have been collected. Our team organized data according to provinces from where artists are. Data are transcribed, consolidated and analysed. Final reporting of the mapping will be given at the end of March 2020.

## 2. RESEARCH & DOCUMENTATION:

Research team of CLA, as requested by MoCFA, implemented its research work and reported to MoCFA its progress from the period of September 2018 to February 2020. Research team of CLA lead by Musicologist Patrick Kersalé completed all the work including:

### a. Written research document covering:

- Origin of the term Chapei
- Different names of Chapei
- Research on the origin Chapei
- Manufacturing and organology
- Gender of Chapei players throughout history
- Chapei and its relatives in Cambodia

### b. Video focusing on:

- Kong Nay & Amund Maarud: a new path for Chapei
- Keo Samnang, a street singer: repertoire pieces and translation
- Chapei and the three-string lesson: Buddhist iconography in Cambodia'
- Restoration and colonization of high definition pictures of the 19th century'
- Kong Nay, the master: repertoire pieces and improvisation with English translations
- Kong Boran, the new generation : repertoire pieces and improvisation with English translations'

- Chapei and the Buddhist iconography outside Cambodia
- Chapei in contemporary Cambodian society
- Making a Chapei
- A documentary film about Chapei

Aiming to wider diffusion of the report and visual documents, an English-Khmer website was launched and updated with new information. YouTube channel dedicated to the Chapei videos will also become soon available.

Moreover, MoCFA in collaboration with CLC produced a book entitled "LIVING HERITAGE: The Artists of Cambodian Chapei" to celebrate, promote, and safeguard the tradition. This publication is proudly supported by: UNESCO; Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre and Griffith Centre for Creative Arts Research, Griffith University; MoCFA; and CLA.

### 3. BROADCAST AND MEDIA OUTREACH:

At the outset, MoCFA Chapei Project team invited the Cambodian Broadcasting Service (CBS) to discuss a new high quality production of Chapei performance. MoCFA also asked CLC to assist in facilitating Chapei masters and community leaders to participate in the program from November 2018 to March 2019. The meeting discussed about:

- how to develop a short broadcasting program
- best way to deliver the Chapei to the audience
- Integration of Chapei masters' opinion on the plan;
- how to evaluate the impact of the program.

However, its execution has not be done. To expedite the work, MoCFA contracted Mr. Pok Borak in February 2020 to do the work. He will start the work from March 2020-October 2020. He and his team will produce the content as well as do the marketing and promotion of Chapei broadcasting programs.

### 4. EDUCATION & TRAINING:

The activities have been delayed and rescheduled. We wish to propose a new Education and Training from April to October 2020. Through our mapping project, what we discovered was that the many Chapei winners in Chapei competitions either in the first, second or third place are ignored and they are potential trainers. The education training will select those winners to join a workshop in Phnom Penh with Grand Master Kong Nai and others for a week. These Masters upon returning to their locales will train young school children and people at nearby secondary schools and at their hometown to stimulate the young to engage in the training. Their training will be paid through the projects. In the near future, as a part of MoCFA and Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports' "Education for Culture and Culture for Education" they will be recruited as staff of either ministry of Education or Ministry of Culture. Furthermore, Chapei instruments will also be provided to their training place.

### 5. SECONDARY SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS (STATE SCHOOL):

In the curriculum of the Secondary School of Fine Arts, which is under the patronage of MoCFA, a formal education in Chapei is already included and is obligatory for students. A concrete Chapei curriculum was developed by a few experts.

## 6. CHAPEI FESTIVAL:

Three Chapei Festival were planned in different places in Cambodia.

- The first was organized by CLA's Heritage Hub team in Siem Reap from 30 November-2 December 2018 at the Heritage Hub office in Wat Bo Pagoda. The Festival was participated by 25 Chapei Masters and Students, local two groups of public school students, 15 volunteers, local art communities including Sounds of Angkor, Wat Bo Puppet Troupe, TukTukTV, Phare Social Enterprise, Bamboo Stage, Silong Original, Small Art School and American Corner.
- The second was organized in Phnom Penh by Cambodian Living Chapei under the patronage of CLA. The event was taken place from 28 to 30 of November 2019 with participation of Chapei Masters, Chapei Students, University students and as well as the general public with the total participation of 2048 people.
- The third festival will be taken place in May 2020 in Kadal Province.

## 7. INSTRUMENT COST

The high cost of Chapei instruments is hindering students from studying Chapei as well as for art schools to maintain Chapei classes. The grant from UNESCO for purchasing Chapei instruments helped artists to reduce their financial burden. Based on our survey conducted in 2018, we found only two Chapei manufacturers in Phnom Penh due to low demand. Long Borarith's Chapei shop and Chum Prasoeur's Chapei shop are the only shops today that produce Chapei at a reasonable price and quality. Luckily our first order for 10 the instruments cost only USD3,600. However, the second order for 20 more Chapei instrudments cost USD1,1000 due to the lack of materials and low demand.

The distribution of Chapei instruments to public schools was a part of the project and MoCFA invited Chapei masters and other artists for consultation prior to the purchases. Based on these comments in the first year MoCFA purchased 10 Chapei instruments and distributed them as follows: 4 for Secondary School of Fine Arts, 1 Chhouk Va High School, 2 for Kampot Traditional Music School for Orphaned and Disabled Children, and 3 for CLC.

## 8. CHAPEI LAUREATE

Although planned for an annual Chapei competition, MoCFA Chapei team has not developed a concrete plan yet. However, we wish provide ranks and honorarium for winners in previous completion and sustain them in training at schools or in their villages.

## 9. MONITORING and EVALUATION:

Our team with kind assistance from UNESCO Phnom Penh Office, we are able to identify Mr. Rahul GOSWAMI as an international evaluator for Chapei Project as stated to Activity 9 "Monitoring and Evaluation." Mr. GOSWAMI agreed to be an International Evaluator. A TOR for Mr. GOSWAMI is prepared. The contract will be signed early April 2020.

## Community involvement

*Provide a description of the mechanisms used for fully involving the community(ies) concerned. Describe not only the participation of the communities as beneficiaries of the project, but also their active participation in the planning and implementation of all activities.*

*Not fewer than 300 or more than 500 words*

Prior to launching the project, MoCFA established a project team composed of the provincial departments of MoCFA and the three NGOs (CLC, CLA, KMMB) actively involved



in the performing arts.

During 2018, the provincial departments of MoCFA contacted local communities including youth associations and local art performers and, as a result, more than 30 local communities are now integrated into the project and this number is increasing.

In case of the Chapei Festival, in order to have the festival fully reach out to the communities, especially the target audience, the full involvement of the concerned communities, both partners as an active co-organizers and as beneficiaries are very important including the youth. To do so, the following mechanisms are being used:

- CLA went to the arts communities whose mission include support of Chapei form and/or who care about traditional musical instruments and who are really committed to contribute their participation in helping promoting and jointly-organizing the festival.
- Reaching out to the university students via CLA's existing network to get their contribution as volunteers in assisting some programs of the festival such as distributing the flyers and posters at universities, inviting their peers, and sharing our promotional media and helping some other logistics during the festival so that they feel they are part of promoting this arts form.
- Securing collaboration from public schools so that they were not only helping promote the Chapei festival but also working to arrange for their primary and secondary school students to join the festival programs.

From these mechanisms, the Chapei Festival was organized smoothly and effectively as follows:

- KMMB was in charge of the production of the festival
- CLC was in overall charge of the workshops program and also led the Chapei singing and storytelling workshops
- Wat Bo Puppet Troupe, a group of artist from local communities, organized the Pithi Sampeah Krou (Honouring the teacher) ceremony
- TukTukTV was in charge of the Exhibition Program
- Sounds of Angkor led the classical wedding music workshop
- Small Art School led the drawing workshop
- Bamboo Stage led the puppet making workshop
- Silong Original made the giant plastic Chapei instrument
- Other partners such as American Corner, Phare, etc. helped with promoting the events within their social media and sending their staff to help in the organizing teams.

### **Sustainability and exit/transition strategy**

*Describe how the benefits of the project will continue after the project has been completed. Where appropriate, describe the steps undertaken to ensure the following:*

- *Sustainability of activities, outputs and results, including with reference to how capacity has been built under the project. Also describe any planned follow-up measures to ensure sustainability.*
- *Additional funding secured as a result of this project, if any. Indicate by whom, how much and for what purpose the contributions are granted.*

*Describe how the ownership (of activities, outputs, results) by stakeholders and the community(ies) in particular has been promoted.*

*Describe, if relevant, how tools, processes, outputs, etc. have been adopted, adapted, replicated and/or extended for future use (e.g. in other regions, communities, elements, or fields of intangible cultural heritage).*

*Not fewer than 100 or more than 500 words*

All activities in this project have undertaken in view to establish a solid and sustainable

foundation in the field of Chapei knowledge, skills and traditions transmission to younger generations. Moreover, results of the mapping, research and documentation of Chapei have contributed to the preservation of the art form and the network for artists and communities across the country.

The strategic development of teacher education in Chapei has helped develop a higher knowledge among teachers and a solid curriculum for Chapei transmission. The outcome is inspiring a number of students' interest and developed artists' calibre while growing the popularity of this art form for today and the future.

The pilot program of Chapei in School will play a very significant role in supporting cross-ministerial collaboration to support and promote culture in education. It will look at on-going models for including arts in education, which is one of the priorities of the National Cultural Policy. This will improve the overall future quality of teachers and students having completed the programs. Activities such as the Chapei Laureate and instrument bursaries to talented artists will be core items to receive support from MoCFA.

All students and participants of the advanced training and workshops will become equipped with better skills and higher quality of performance. This will help foster the next generation of teachers and students of Chapei. Throughout the three years, a creative artistic content will be developed, as well as increased collaboration between communities, artists, students, the government, other partners and international experts.

After the project, most of the activities will continue to be carried out by stakeholders: CLA will include Chapei in their annual Arts Festival; CLC will continue to train young students with the established materials; national and private television channels will continue the Chapei Laureate program and Chapei show.

## Lessons learnt

*Describe what are the key lessons learnt regarding the following:*

- *Attainment of expected results*
- *Ownership of key stakeholders and community involvement*
- *Delivery of project outputs*
- *Project management and implementation*
- *Sustainability of the project after the assistance*

*Not fewer than 300 or more than 750 words*

Chapei was successfully promoted in public and encouraged across local communities.

Regarding the mapping project, there were a number of unforeseen challenges during the implementation:

- The plan was sometime delayed due to weather and road conditions and to the fact that in many cases the expected timetable was not achieved as interviewees were not readily available or the interview took longer than anticipated.
- Collaborating with provincial departments of MoCFA was sometimes hindered because officials were not available when our team arrived or the information they had on Chapei performers was well out of date. e.g. the performer had moved his address, or gave up performing Chapei or even had already passed away.

Regarding the Chapei Festival:

- The dates of the festival overlapped with the Siem Reap marathon, and so the festival received smaller public audiences than expected. This requires future organizers to explore carefully to avoid any overlapping dates.
- Collaborating with public schools to get the students to join the workshops and other programs of the festival was so successful that we need to keep this way of working for

future festival or events

- The workshop location for classical wedding music and Areak Music had to be changed at the last minute due to the fact that the pagoda did not inform us that there was a ceremony on that day at the place we had requested. Next time, the organizers need to ensure that the place is free for use and that, even if a ceremony of the pagoda is taking place, it will not affect the program of the festival.

- The overwhelmingly positive response by the public meant that the venues provided were often insufficient or inadequate for the size or nature of the audience. e.g. not enough seating or lighting or sound system.

## Annexes

List the annexes and documentation included in the report:

- publications, evaluation reports and other outputs, when applicable
- progress reports prepared during the contract period
- list of major equipment provided under the project and status after termination of contract period
- other (please specify)

1-Progress Narrative Report

2-Interim Financial Report

3-Work Plan

## Name and signature of the person having completed the report

Name: SIYONN Sophearith

Title: Director-General of Directorate-General of Technical Cultural Affairs

Date: 19 March 2020

Signature: 