

NICHE

Nurturing Intangible Cultural Heritage for Entrepreneurship
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IO2 Mapping and Benchmarking: linking ICH Professions with EQF and ESCO

NICHE Country Profiles Executive Summary

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Introduction

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is a practice, representation, expression, knowledge/skill considered by UNESCO to be part of a place's cultural heritage; it comprises nonphysical intellectual property, such as folklore, customs, beliefs, traditions, knowledge, and language. The NICHE Project (Nurturing Intangible Cultural Heritage for Entrepreneurship) will develop innovative training for the underserved cohort of professionals (and prospective ones) who operate in the field of ICH to promote entrepreneurial initiatives in the sector, enhance its competitiveness and sustain its growth.

Methodology

In order to produce O2, partners implemented the following Tasks (T):

T1 Shared Methodology for Mapping: From 1-12-2020 to 28-2-2021 - Duration: 3 Months

Partners defined a common methodology and guidelines to be used during the mapping and benchmarking, developing shared guidelines to ensure accuracy, coherence and reliability of results. Guidelines layout hints on the identification of documents, elements of the mapping, means to collate and process data /information /results.

T2 Mapping to extract means/methodologies/techniques: From 1-02-2021 to 30-6-2021 - Duration: 5 Months.

In this task, partners carried out the actual situation in terms of employment and professional profiles for ICH, extracting those elements that will feed into IO3, identified the most pressing training needs of the relevant professional profiles, and mapped the trend of professionalization of ICH.

In the last section, each partner gave a general overview/ description of the consolidated results found through the desk research.

The order in which the countries are mentioned in this report is alphabetical.

Greece

The Greek traditional heritage, rich, creative, and lasting, material and intangible, since 2003 is protected by UNESCO with the Convention for the Intangible Cultural Heritage of mankind. In addition to its indisputable cultural dimension, it is also a human activity, which draws on elements of popular tradition, is practiced by business units, moves and develops in the modern market and aims, for its viability, in local and international markets. It belongs to the "productive system" and is linked to other subsystems, such as economic demographics, tourism entrepreneurship, environmental protection, technological development, education and research, and cultural communities, personality

development; and in fact entrepreneurship and artistic creation-, therapeutic and creative employment and, of course, is subject to the institutional and regulatory regulations of the state and claims its care and support.

In the current historical context, one of the most critical in the history of mankind, a return to the cultures of "locality" and their values, such as the circular economy and respect for nature-environment, seems more necessary than ever. Locality in the form of traditional local products (Products of Designation of Origin and Geographical Indication, Peculiar Traditional Products, etc.) and applied traditional arts - Crafts, is the post-modern response to globalization, re-introducing the positive assessment of tradition, which integrates the natural environment and cultural peculiarities.

It is, therefore, necessary to re-evaluate the importance of the cultural capital of a country, such as Greece, for the design of the local and national economy with modern cultural policy rules, utilizing international conventions and protocols (UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, Common Agriculture Politics, circular economy, innovation), but also successful practices of other countries. For example, according to a report by the Crafts Council UK (May 2020), during pandemic, handicraft activity has led to a huge increase in exports of folk art items. In the agricultural sector, the development opportunity will not come from the intensive and extensive cultivation, but mainly from the activation and utilization of the peculiar territorial natural resources, in combination with the human and cultural capital, which Folklore has saved from scientific interest, despite the sweeping changes made.

The currently proposed localized agri-food systems will allow rural areas to claim development in a competitive, globalized environment, through their identity and diversity against agricultural industries and distribution networks. What farmers were called upon to give up may become their comparative advantage. The promotion of the Greek Diet as a pillar of the Mediterranean Diet in the List of World Intangible Cultural Heritage reinforces the above considerations and facilitates the strategy focused on nutrition. It is also important to have the most systematic support of the industry from local projects in the context of the wider cultural, tourist and educational upgrade. Innovation is no longer just a privilege of the high-tech industries, but also of strategic importance for culture and the traditional "medium-low tech" applied arts and crafts, as these companies may not introduce new technology, but support their innovative activity in utilizing the existing coded knowledge in a practical direction, which makes them competitive.

In Greece, the decade-long economic recession with strong social consequences has revealed the previously wrong strategic choices for the development of productive fields, such as agriculture, animal

husbandry, beekeeping, and creative industries, and especially the reluctance for structural changes, which would limit the impact on the population of such crises, as has happened in similar cases in the past. Now, is the opportunity to start methodically and with the substantial support of the Greek state the return, with modern tools, to some traditional systems of local economy, which can provide a way out of the expected problems of climate change, in the management of endangered water resources, biodiversity and to ensure the income of producers and creative craftsmen.

Iceland

This literature review confirms that preservation, documentation and education of intangible cultural heritage in Iceland need improvement. Even though Iceland seems to be rich in the terms of intangible cultural heritage and related activities, research, data, legislative framework and educational opportunities within the formal education system is lacking. Intangible cultural heritage is e.g., not mentioned by the Culture Heritage Act (2012), in the Icelandic governments Cultural Policy (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2021) nor in the database of Statistics Iceland. Despite this, many museums, associations and amateur societies build their work partially or entirely on Iceland's intangible cultural heritage (e.g. the Viking organizations and the Museum of Sorcery and Witchcraft). Note that these findings do not reflect the information on and usage of Iceland's cultural heritage in general. Iceland has a rich cultural environment and proportionally high cultural employment rate, compared to other European countries. With an improved legislative framework, increased emphasis on related research, data and education, as well as cooperation between education providers and the government it is plausible to increase the public's awareness and ensure the preservation of Iceland's intangible cultural heritage. Utilization and innovation in the field of intangible cultural heritage could create important opportunities for the Icelandic economy, declining rural areas and the tourism industry.

Ireland

The ICH sector is still relatively new in Ireland although many of the practices involved in the sector have been in place for centuries. Ireland ratified the UNESCO code in 2015 and the National Inventory List was only created at the end of 2019. Many of the practices on the list are people's past-times and hobbies with little scope for the development of full-time or even part-time employment in some cases. Very often the practices listed on the National Inventory List get subsumed into the wider Culture and Heritage sector. Up until recently, very little focus was given to this sector also. However, there has

been a greater focus on this sector and the contribution it makes to the tourism sector and selling Ireland abroad as a tourism destination or a place to do business. Highlighting some of the practices that are unique to Ireland is a key selling point.

The promotion and raising awareness of the practices on the National Inventory list is still done on a very small scale. While there is support at the national level to communities who wish to become involved or get practices on the list, at the local level it is not as prevalent. Also helping communities identify if they have any traditions or practices unique to their area or region is also minimal.

While there are a lot of challenges there are also many opportunities. Given the renewed appreciation of local amenities and people being more aware of what is available in their local area as a result of the pandemic, there are opportunities to engage with communities on the different practices and become more involved and develop the ICH sector at a local level.

The protection and safeguarding of ICH practices and the sector must be paramount. While promotion and raising awareness of the sector is seen as important it cannot and should not be done to the extent that it endangers the practices and they lose their unique qualities.

Italy

The literature review confirms that Italy is one of the richest countries in terms of cultural heritage and related activities. In this context, despite having ratified the 2003 Convention and having 14 items on the ICH list, there still appears to be too little spending on safeguards and protection and no policies have been promoted to raise awareness and skills to exploit them. In addition, the data confirms that the people employed in this sector are highly educated: this justifies the lowest youth employment rate in Europe in the cultural sector, where the 35-54 age group is most active.

Despite the presence of paid training courses and postgraduate masters, in Italy, there is no specific training proposal at VET level and training still seems too niche to involve operators at local level. The literature review in fact confirmed training needs and skills gaps especially in the areas of managerial and digital skills. The transfer of competences requires that the training courses NICHE will develop take into account the particular nature of the ICH operator that we have theorised as the so-called “ICH Activator” should therefore be able to design, animate and coordinate:

- mechanisms of local interaction and dialogue among stakeholders of the communities, ranging from policy makers to citizens’ groups and the private sector;
- local systems of territorial governance that allow to mobilize local knowledge and good practices and build “local identities”

- territorial marketing plans that enable local businesses (including social enterprises) to access markets in a competitive, sustainable, and inclusive way.

Spain

Cultural heritage is one of the strengths of Spain. Even so, the Spanish legislative framework did not consider ICH until the ratification of the UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Although efforts are being made for the promotion and education of ICH, its socioeconomic potential is sometimes not very much exploited. The focus is given to the preservation since many elements are at risk of disappearing, but more attention should be given to raising awareness and providing society with the suitable tools to grow up as professionals, capable of analysing and identifying ICH possibilities and so being able to start a business related to ICH, what would guarantee its preservation, valorisation, dissemination and would add economic profit and even more cultural value to the country. At this moment, although ICH is being promoted and introduced in compulsory education as well as in society via cultural organisations, the knowledge and specific tools are not available for everyone, since the more specialised is offered just at further education (degrees, masters, etc.), and therefore, the access is limited to those people able to pay, which makes the NICHE project a precious and valuable instrument to meet this gap.

An interesting aspect present in many other professional sectors is that, although the highest percentage of people who study cultural programmes are women, men are who cover the majority of the related positions.

In terms of regions, the most demanded by national and international tourists are Madrid, Barcelona and Andalusia, and consequently, these are the areas which generate more cultural employment.

Last but not least, the professional profile of ICH operators is obviously related to the educational level that, as mentioned above, is not available or free for everyone. In order to increase the promotion and preservation of ICH, it is necessary to raise awareness and train professionals at all levels, since this may be a key to safeguard it. Consequently, the purpose of NICHE perfectly meets these challenges and needs since the necessary tools required to develop and acquire the appropriate knowledge, skills and competences will be openly available for anyone willing to make use of them.

Sweden

Sweden is an attractive tourist nation and the beautiful nature experience is the most interesting factor in visiting Sweden and culture linked to nature and crafts are the strongest intangible cultural heritage in



Sweden. On January 26, 2011, Sweden ratified UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage which means that Sweden is bound to implement the Convention through national legislation.

When it comes to ICH the Swedish government has so far chosen not to nominate any traditions to the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage, in order to avoid valuing different traditions. Instead, the public and organizations can submit proposals for traditions, customs and practices to Sweden's list of living traditions for which the Institute of Language and Folklore is responsible. In the period 15 March – 15 April 2021 the public has been able to submit proposals from Sweden's list for nomination to the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage. The Swedish government decides and will notify of the assessment no later than 30 June 2021.

Sweden will play a heavier role in UNESCO's work on intangible cultural heritage since Sweden has been elected to the Intergovernmental Committee for the work of securing the intangible cultural heritage. The new role means that Sweden's international involvement in cultural heritage issues is increasing.

Sweden has 130,000 cultural and creative companies and they are steadily increasing, not only in numbers, but also throughout the country. Together, they contribute 3.1 percent of GDP. There are about 143,000 employees, but characteristic of these industries are solo entrepreneurs, i.e. companies with zero employees, except themselves.

The number of employed persons also grew in 2019 and employment in culture and the media has increased by almost one and a half percent in the past year. This is not quite at the same level as the sharp increase in employment for the entire labour market. Growth is a clear break in trend now that employment has increased for several years in a row. However, the cultural industries employ not only cultural professions but also other professions such as administrators and shop staff. Therefore, this increase reflects not only cultural professions but also cultural employers.

The list of Living Traditions is continuously growing and since the beginning of 2020, 6 more intangible heritages have been added to the national list. The list is a living document that is constantly updated.

Conclusions

The term 'cultural heritage' has changed content considerably in recent decades, partially owing to the instruments developed by UNESCO. The importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next. The social and economic value of this transmission of knowledge is relevant for



minority groups and for mainstream social groups within a State, and is as important for low income as well as high income countries. The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage – UNESCO 2003 is an international Convention that emerged from the international concern regarding the concept of cultural heritage and especially its cultural aspects which have no tangible, material dimension (e.g. music, dance, knowledge and practices etc.). In 2017, the European Commission developed a set of guidelines included in the “The Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills” which outlines a new process that offers the potential to obtain European funding to address lifelong learning requirements in cultural heritage.

Through the research done by all partners, here are the main observations concerning the Intangible cultural heritage and the profile of ICH operator in Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and in the European context:

All partner countries acknowledge that cultural heritage and especially intangible cultural heritage is considered of high importance in their territory;

All partner countries ratified UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage are: Greece (since 2006), Spain (since 2006), Sweden (since 2011), Iceland (since 2006), Ireland (since 2015), Italy (since 2008);

Europe has more than 126 elements included in the UNESCO list that defined the concept of ICH ratified by many member states. The importance of cultural heritage has also been recognized in the Treaties (Articles 107 and 167 TFEU) and several recent initiatives of the European institutions demonstrate the attention paid to safeguarding and protecting it;

There are a lot of challenges and there are also many opportunities. Given the renewed appreciation of local amenities and people being more aware of what is available in their local area as a result of the pandemic, there are opportunities to engage with communities on the different practices and become more involved and develop the ICH sector at a local level.

Although ICH is being promoted and introduced in compulsory education as well as in society via cultural organizations, the knowledge and specific tools are not available for everyone, since the more specialised is offered just at further education (degrees, masters, etc.), and therefore, the access is limited to those people able to pay, which makes the NICHE project a precious and valuable instrument to meet this gap.

The most frequent competencies defined in the Country Reports that would feed the design and development of training modules are the following:



EU Framework	Title of competence
DigComp (https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcomp/digital-competence-framework)	1.2 Evaluating data, information and digital content
	1.3 Managing data, information and digital content
	4.2 Protecting personal data and privacy
	2.1 Interacting through digital technologies
	2.2 Sharing through digital technologies
	2.5 Netiquette
	2.6 Managing digital identity
EntreComp (https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/entrecomp-entrepreneurship-competence-framework)	1.3. Vision
	1.4 Valuing ideas
	1.5 Ethical and sustainable thinking
	1.1 Spotting opportunities
	1.2 Creativity
	3.2 Planning and management
	3.5. Learning through experience

The NICHE project (Nurturing Intangible Cultural Heritage for Entrepreneurship) aims to promote entrepreneurship by developing innovative training and education course for ICH professionals, increasing its competitiveness and maintaining growth.

