



Community-based inventorying of Intangible cultural Heritage in the Urban Context of Tbilisi, Georgia



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Intangible Heritage
Convention

This brochure has been published in the framework of the project ‘Community-based inventorying of intangible cultural heritage, related to traditional income-generating activities in Old Tbilisi’ .

The project was implemented by the Georgian Heritage Crafts Association in cooperation with the Living Heritage Entity at UNESCO as part of the overall project ‘Intangible Cultural Heritage and Creativity for Sustainable Cities’, generously supported by Yong Xin Hua Yun Cultural Industry Investment Group Co. Ltd.

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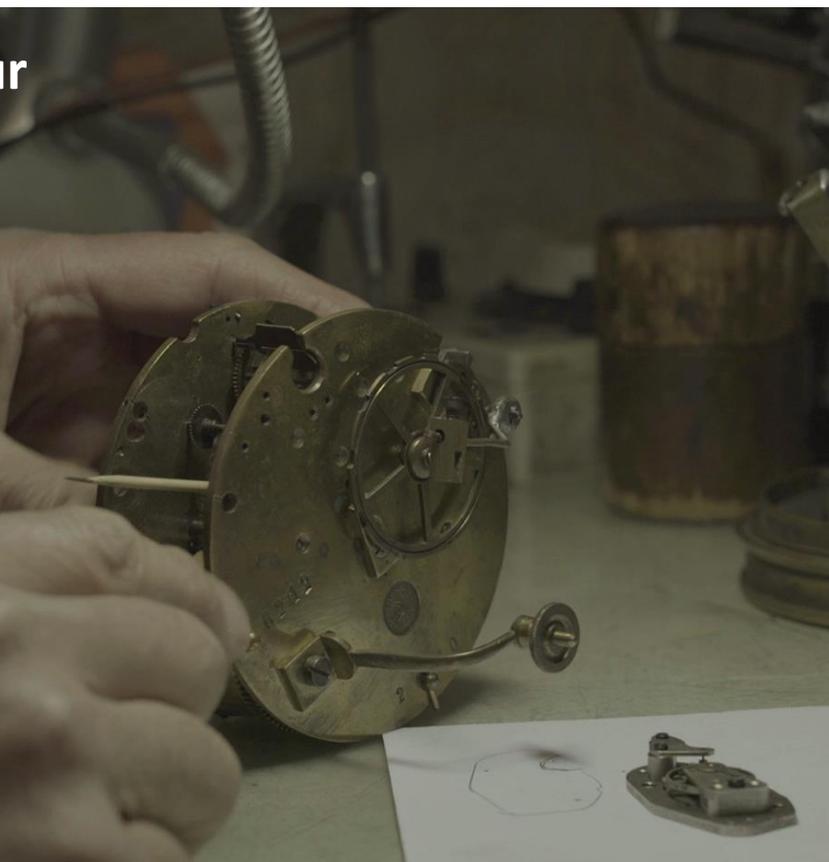
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**Safeguarding our
Living Heritage
make our
communities more
vibrant,
resilient and
sustainable.**

**Inventorying living
heritage is the first
step to its
safeguarding.**

Clockmaker Artur Petrov
©Photo By Lasha Adamashvili



**Safeguarding
intangible cultural
heritage in urban
contexts contribute
to attaining
Sustainable
Development Goal 11**

**11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES**



The project 'Community-based inventorying of intangible cultural heritage, related to traditional income-generating activities in Old Tbilisi' was implemented by Georgian Heritage Crafts Association as part of the overall project 'Intangible cultural heritage and creativity for sustainable cities', that was generously supported by Yong Xin Hua Yun Cultural Industry Investment Group Co.Ltd (Yong Xin Hua Yun).

Project activities were carried out from November 2020 to June 2021 and included meetings with local community members, capacity-building activities led by international facilitators, community-based inventorying exercises, which involved audio-visual and narrative documentation and production of 20 promotional videos, organization of public meetings to present the project results and raise awareness on the importance of ICH safeguarding and an on-line film festival.

Project Objectives



Golden Metal Inlay Technique, Workshop of Teimuraz Jalaghania
©Photo By Lasha Adamashvili

1

Identify key issues related to ICH in urban contexts: shed light on how the urban context is shaping local ICH and also on issues and potential ways forward for safeguarding ICH in other urban contexts.

2

Elaborate recommendations for practitioners and policy makers on safeguarding ICH related to income-generating activities (crafts, performing arts, festivals and other traditional occupations in Old Tbilisi).

3

Raise awareness among the local community, decision-makers and wider public on the potential contribution ICH can make in urban contexts for ensuring more sustainable development.

Tbilisi a vibrant multicultural city



Narikala Fortress, Old Tbilisi
©Photo By Lasha Adamashvili

Tbilisi has evolved over the millennia as a vibrant multi-ethnic city, which has been a cultural and economic centre of the entire Caucasus for centuries. The city flourished notably in the 19th century, when it became the hub of craftsmanship and trade, where local marketplaces - the bazaars - brought together an astonishing range of producers and service providers. They ranged from hairdressers and bakers to musicians and bands performing usually during weddings and festivals, as well as water- and wine-sack carriers and sulphur bath scrubbers. Here, craft workshops ensured the transmission of the skills and knowledge for producing and selling the plethora of traditional handmade goods. The vendors offered their customers clothes, shoes, various types of textiles, rugs & carpets, ceramic tableware, as well as gold-, silver-, stone- or wood works.

During the Soviet period, the push for industrialization had a disastrous impact on the creation and transmission of much of the city's rich intangible cultural heritage, and the marketplaces that ensured the economic independence of ICH bearers. The most dramatic changes, however, were caused by the eventual demise of the Soviet Regime in the late 1980s, followed by decades of transitioning as a post-Soviet society. One of the main factors impacting living heritage in the city of Tbilisi today is the acceleration of rural to urban migration. The movement of people from their more traditional homelands and workplaces has led to a major change of lifestyles and livelihoods in Georgia, as in other countries worldwide. Added to this, in part of the city, the growing gentrification has pushed lower-income earners even further from their traditional districts.

Project Activities and Outcomes

10-18 December, 2020

An online capacity building workshop on Community based inventorying for the project teams was delivered by two members of the UNESCO network of facilitators: Ms. Suzanne Ogge (Australia) and Ms. Alla Stashkevich (Belarus)



Going Online



Online interview with Teimuraz Jalaghania, Traditional Weapon Maker
©Photo By Rusudan Barnov

15-17, December, 2021

An Online Fieldwork Practice

Due to the restrictions related to the COVID pandemic, an online interviewing methodology was developed and successfully pilot tested during the project. It was used as a complementary method to collect information.

A core group of local facilitators and cultural workers from relevant cultural institutions were trained in CBI and assisted the bearers with the use of new technologies and the on-line interviews, as needed.

Project Activities and Outcomes

Following a series of online capacity-building workshops, a project team composed of 10 young local facilitators was formed and extensive fieldwork was carried out, including interviews with professional organizations and networks, community representatives of different ethnic Diasporas, as well as online questionnaires distributed through social media.

As a result, more than 40 ICH elements were identified and a database for Tbilisi ICH bearers was created.



The biggest challenge we faced in this project was to reach out and identify ICH bearers in such a big city as Tbilisi, especially in the time of Pandemics. We have managed to find diverse ways of communication to gather information involving wider community.

Ana Shanshaishvili, Director of Georgian Heritage Crafts Association, Project Coordinator



Local Facilitators: Rurudan Barnov and Makuna Jalaghonia interviewing Teimuraz Jalaghania, Traditional Weapon Maker

©Photo By Lasha Adamashvili

I have found the most interesting to explore those crafts and traditional occupations, which were typical to Old Tbilisi. All this made us realize better the close ties we still maintain with our past.

Makuna Jalaghonia, Local Facilitator

Project Activities and Outcomes



Documenting the video story of Elguja Omiadze, an Organ and Accordion player

©Photo By Ana Shanshiashvili

40 Elements Identified, 20 short videos filmed and 11 inventory entries drafted on such elements as crafts, music, bath culture and other traditional occupations specific to Old Tbilisi



This project was an interesting and innovative initiative in many directions. It was the first time, when our team together with local facilitators perceived the living culture and the bearers in a different context.

Irina Mania, GHCA Project Manager



I had an opportunity to personally meet very important bearers the vivid personalities, which keep the traditions of Tbilisian culture alive and thus contribute to the diversity of the place.

Teona Lomsadze, Local Facilitator



We have managed to find those people, which still maintain Old Tbilisian spirit and flavour. It was very crucial to meet the bearers personally and observe them while working.

Elizabeth Rekhviashvili, Local Facilitator



19 June, 2021, Public presentation of the project results at the Upper Bethlemi Church Terrace in Old Tbilisi
©Photo By Otar Datuadze



19 June, 2021, Public presentation of the project results at the Upper Bethlemi Church Terrace in Old Tbilisi
©Photo By Otar Datuadze

**Awareness raising
on the role of living
heritage
safeguarding in our
contemporary
societies through a
series of public
meetings and
presentations.**

Series of 20 Video Stories

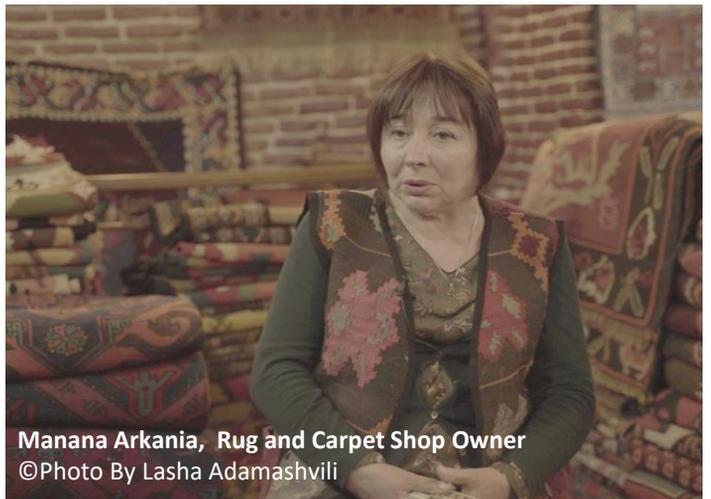


Nargile Tina Mehtieva, Saz Player

©Photo By Lasha Adamashvili

The festival aims at raising public awareness about the importance of safeguarding the living heritage in a urban environment such as Tbilisi.

**Online Film
Festival
TBILISI ICH WEEK
4-11, July, 2021**



Manana Arkania, Rug and Carpet Shop Owner

©Photo By Lasha Adamashvili

“I am concerned about the fact that the rug and carpet weaving traditions are gradually declining, and one day we will not have such practitioners any more. We have to promote our crafts, we have amazing traditions, and why should we forget and lose them?”

Manana Arkania, Rug and Carpet Shop Owner

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Giga Gorgiashvili, Balcksmith

©Photo By Lasha Adamashvili

Recommendations

How to Identify ICH elements and bearers in urban environment?

Trough the face-to-face meeting with Community members.

Through the contacts of professional networks and associations and Ethnic Diasporas

Through the online questionnaires and Social networks distributed among General public.

- **Inclusion in the National Inventory list** of endangered urban ICH elements such as duduk music, silver inlay, filigree, organ music etc.
- **Support Apprenticeship and Integration of ICH Elements in Informal and Formal Education** - Advocate towards the integration of ICH elements at different level of education system i.e. state funded art schools, professional VET schools etc.
- **Recognition of the role ICH bearers** through such awards such as the honorary citizenship, national living treasure, etc.
- **Public Awareness Raising on ICH Elements:** through promoting ICH bearers' stories through different media outreach and their active engagement in local festivals i.e. Tbilisoba etc.
- **Enhancing the income generating activities of ICH bearers** through the support of their product marketing to high-end stores, museum shop etc., and enhanced linkages with ethical travel companies.

Support Measures to Safeguard the living heritage of Old Tbilisi

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