

Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage**Terminal report**

Project: Safeguarding and Transmission of the Hudhud Chants of the Ifugao

Implementation period:

Original : May 2003 to January 2008

Revised : May 2003 to April 2008

Date of most recent regular progress report on project: March 2008

Overview/Summary

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) in the Philippines successfully completed a three-year safeguarding programme for the hudhud chant of Ifugao Province, proclaimed a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2001. The programme was focused primarily on transmission of the hudhud chant to young Ifugao in seven municipalities of Ifugao Province, through a range of activities including formal education in local primary schools—the Hudhud Schools for Living Traditions (HSLT)—as well as documentation, publications, competitions and festivals. A signal achievement of the project was its success in maintaining the tremendous local diversity within the hudhud tradition, as each class learned to chant based on the singing of a hudhud elder within its own village.

The programme was implemented by the NCCA through three activity-financing contracts. NCCA in turn worked closely with the Ifugao Division of the (national) Department of Education and with the Province of Ifugao. The programme was directly managed by the Intangible Heritage Executive Committee (IHEC), established in the context of the hudhud safeguarding activities and comprising concerned local officials (from DepEd and several provincial bureaus), local intellectuals, and representatives of NCCA and the National Museum.

Despite the termination of UNESCO-Japan FIT financial assistance, the Province of Ifugao has committed itself to the continuation of the programme, as evidenced by Executive Order 16/S.2008, signed by Governor Teodoro B. Baguilat, Jr. on 24 January 2008, in which a Provincial Council on Cultural Heritage is established and the Province undertakes to assume financial responsibility for sustaining the Hudhud Schools for Living Traditions and related safeguarding activities. This Executive Order provides for an integrated advisory and management mechanism for safeguarding both intangible heritage and tangible heritage—notably, the rice terraces of Ifugao, inscribed in 1995 on the World Heritage List.

(a) Development problem and immediate problems attacked

The Ifugao people in the highlands of the Cordillera region in north-central Luzon preserved their traditions until the arrival of Western influences beginning in the early 19th century. When they embraced Christian beliefs, this resulted in the decline of traditional practices that were based in their indigenous religion. Even non-ritual practices were affected, including the distinctive call-and-response hudhud chanting. Many factors contributed to the decline of the chanting of the hudhud, particularly the rise of new generations that are more inclined to contemporary practices and who tend to look down on old ones that are considered primitive. Technology has also changed the ways that Ifugao plant mountain rice or observe funeral wakes: previously, chanting the epic was the most natural recourse for the women to ease their planting labour, tedium, and dreariness or to keep awake during a long watch. Today, this is being replaced by the use of television, transistor radios, videos and compact discs. As a result, the hudhud chant had fallen into an endangered state when it was nominated and proclaimed by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2001. Young people were not taking up the tradition, and it was rarely performed in its traditional contexts of rice-planting and wakes.

Consequently, the safeguarding project was aimed at encouraging transmission of hudhud to young generations, through a multi-pronged strategy centred in the Hudhud Schools for Living Traditions, modelled after successful heritage education programmes used previously elsewhere in the Philippines. To support that transmission strategy, basic documentation of hudhud was required, especially in order to reflect the tremendous local diversity of hudhud traditions (and to avoid the risk of standardization or canonization). A broad awareness-raising programme was needed, both within Ifugao and elsewhere in the country, to create an environment of respect for hudhud as a priceless expression of heritage. And the school-based instruction programme was to be balanced by efforts to sustain hudhud as a living tradition by encouraging its performance in traditional contexts such as rice-planting and funeral wakes.

The specific objectives of the safeguarding programme were therefore defined as follows:

- (a) Provide support to intangible cultural heritage custodians and practitioners in their efforts to safeguard and transmit this heritage to future generations.
- (b) Build links between cultural heritage custodians, practitioners and scholars to encourage the former to participate in academic research on their cultural heritage.
- (c) Establish a database to document the various forms of the chant in the different parts of the culture area.
- (d) Raise awareness of young people in the community of the important role they play in ensuring the maintenance of their cultural heritage.
- (e) Provide support and training to the local community in key areas of the province.
- (f) Encourage community participation in practicing, preserving and promoting the hudhud through chanting competitions and training.
- (g) Raise public awareness and appreciation of the rich cultural heritage of the Ifugao and the significant role of the hudhud in Filipino culture through information campaigns, public performances and exhibitions.

In retrospect, it can be seen that the project was well-designed to address the immediate and long-term cultural needs of the Ifugao people. It provided for a judicious balance between transmission activities, research and documentation, and general awareness-raising. Although few would claim that the safeguarding programme fully solved the problems it attempted to address, it clearly changed the nature of the initial problem by reversing the decline of interest in hudhud and stabilizing its viability as a living tradition. While the world has changed too dramatically for hudhud ever to regain the central place it had in Ifugao culture a century or two ago, the safeguarding effort has succeeded in changing its status

from endangered to viable, albeit within limited contexts and on a smaller scale than had once been the case.

(b) Outputs produced and problems encountered

The project consistently achieved or exceeded its expected results, as can be seen from a summary presentation:

Expected results	Actual results
Encouragement of culture bearers and practitioners to propagate and preserve the hudhud.	Tremendous support was mobilized among Ifugao communities and hudhud singers, both old and young.
The documentation, recording, translation and publication of hudhud compilations in print and other forms of multi-media to document, and promote the hudhud.	Documentation and transcription of 17 narrated and chanted hudhud, one narrated hudhud and one chanted hudhud; and translation into English of one complete hudhud.
Establishment of data bases on the various forms of the hudhud, the practitioners and culture bearers of intangible heritage.	Registry of Culture Bearers includes two hundred culture bearers (hudhud chanters, high priests, ritual practitioners, etc.).
Establishment of five schools for living tradition in Banaue, Kiangan, Mayoyao, Hingyon/Lagawe, and Asipulo.	Nineteen Hudhud Schools for Living Traditions in the seven municipalities of Ifugao, namely Asipulo, Banaue, Hingyon, Hungduan, Kiangan, Lagawe, and Lamut, with an average of 30 students per school.
Training of young generations to take over and perpetuate the hudhud practice in the province of Ifugao, and the metropolitan centres of the country.	More than one thousand elementary students in Ifugao trained in hudhud chanting.
Integration of the teaching of hudhud in the local school programme.	Hudhud has been fully integrated into the language arts curriculum in Ifugao Province. The Province has now assumed financial responsibility for sustaining the Hudhud Schools for Living Traditions and related safeguarding activities (Executive Order 16/S.2008, signed by Governor Teodoro B. Baguilat, Jr. on 24 January 2008).
The holding of competitions in hudhud chanting and the encouragement of its practice in its proper cultural context.	Annual hudhud competitions organized in Ifugao; <i>Hudhud Perpetual Award</i> established as an annual recognition of performances in cultural context.

Expected results	Actual results
<p>The promotion of the hudhud in other parts of the country.</p>	<p>Hudhud multimedia packets have been distributed in the 19 HSLT, 80 local government units and barangays in Ifugao, 94 public and private school libraries in Ifugao, 532 municipal public libraries nationwide, 100 Philippine embassies and consulates abroad, cultural organizations, media, select participants in national and international conferences (intangible heritage, indigenous peoples, and traditional arts), universities and research centers nationwide, etc.</p> <p>Two children's books were published: <i>Pumbakhayon: An Origin Myth of the Ifugao Hudhud</i> and <i>Halikpon: A Retelling of an Ancient Ifugao Chant</i>. Four hundred sets of books were distributed in public schools libraries in Ifugao through the DepEd-Division of Ifugao. Other recipients were the National Library and other institutional libraries in Manila, cultural agencies, 100 Philippine embassies and consulates abroad, etc.</p>

The major impediment in the project's implementation was encountered at the beginning, when political conditions in the Philippines and provincial elections in Ifugao in May 2004 required a delay in the inception of the project from May 2003 until **January** 2005. Despite the delayed start the project activities were nevertheless completed by the end of 2007, within 36 months of inception (save a UNESCO monitoring mission that could be scheduled only in April 2008). Although the delay in starting was frustrating, the circumstances ultimately turned out favourably for the project because the Governor who had supported its development from 2001 to 2004, although turned out of office in 2004, was re-seated in May 2007 and could ensure the institutionalization of the HSLT under the province's own budget in his executive order of January 2008.

The project's ability to successfully surmount such obstacles is a testament to the sensitivity and patience of the Philippine implementing agency, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and to the team of local and national experts who constituted the Intangible Heritage Executive Committee (IHEC) responsible for its day-to-day management. Successfully balancing the perspectives of the (national) Department of Education, (provincial) offices and elected officials, Manila-based researchers and Ifugao-based practitioners, the IHEC ensured local ownership of the project while bringing in external expertise not readily available in the province. NCCA's careful monitoring of the project throughout its implementation ensured that results were achieved, local requirements respected, financial accountability maintained and national-level visibility attained.

The intensity of local support for the project was also a key to its success. The Governor's executive order to sustain the programme using provincial resources was the culmination of a close multi-party partnership among the NCCA, the Department of Education, teachers, parents, municipal officials, hudhud elders and students. The project had a high level of visibility within Ifugao and the top-to-bottom support of the local community, who fully embraced it as *their* effort.

(c) Objectives achieved or likely to be achieved in the near future

A review of the objectives outlined in section (a) above, together with a comparison of the expected and achieved results in section (b), make it clear that the project achieved its immediate objectives and has made an important contribution to addressing the development problem of ensuring the viability of hudhud as a living tradition in Ifugao. The decision of Ifugao's provincial government to assume financial responsibility for the HSLT and related activities at the conclusion of project support from the UNESCO/Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage further ensures that the achievements of the project will be sustained long after the external intervention has ended.

(d) Findings and lessons learnt

What is perhaps the most important achievement of the HSLT programme has not been readily apparent from the project document or annual implementation status reports: the project's success in maintaining the diversity and local specificity of each community's own hudhud style and repertoire while mainstreaming the hudhud as a subject in a formal education curriculum. A recurrent challenge in global efforts to formalize the transmission of intangible heritage—particularly when it enters the context of formal education—is to maintain its internal diversity and avoid standardization in which one version supplants others. The HSLTs, in their pedagogical methods, did not completely avoid the risk of standardization (the primary learning method was memorization of texts provided by the point teachers). However, the pedagogical creativity of the local point teachers in each HSLT and their efforts to teach hudhud as it was actually sung by the grandmothers of the students being trained constitute an important model for other similar efforts.

For each school, a designated “point teacher” took on the responsibility of teaching the classes. Some were also their school's resource teacher for music (which is included prominently within the elementary curriculum, contrary to the experience in many nations). Many were themselves experienced hudhud singers. In each case, the project involved the point teacher recording a master hudhud singer in the village—often, her grandmother or aunt—then transcribing the text and, in some cases, preparing an English translation. (In the Philippine elementary curriculum, English receives more instruction time than Filipino language and literature, and in Ifugao it is often used in preference to Filipino.)

The pedagogical methods were diverse. Typically, teaching aids were simple: handwritten hudhud texts on poster paper (in some cases, the reverse side of old calendars), hand-drawn illustrations of the episode being taught. In several cases each student had her own text to read (either photocopied or handwritten), but in most cases they read together from the board. Hudhud entails a responsorial performance, in which one singer—the *munhaw-e*—sings a phrase and then the other singers respond in chorus. In the performances, one girl took on this role. In the classes, the teacher might divide the class into halves and one half would take the *munhaw-e* role (singing in chorus) while the other half responded. In other cases, the hudhud elder whose song was being taught also joined the class to assist the teacher; sometimes she sang the *munhaw-e* role while the students responded.

Through this utilization of “appropriate technology” (blackboards, handwritten posters, inexpensive photocopies), each teacher was able to teach a version of hudhud as it was sung in the school's own village, in the dialect of the students and with the local specificities of each style preserved. Within an overall framework of coordinated project management and regular communication and networking, teachers were nevertheless encouraged to devise their own solutions rather than relying on any kind of standardized text or single teaching methodology. At the same time, of course, they were not left alone to find their own ways the project team and Ifugao Division of the national Department of Education provided careful support at all stages.

(e) Recommendations

The Philippines has a good bit of accumulated experience in safeguarding ICH—particularly its effective Gawad sa Manlilikha ng Bayan or National Living Treasures Award and most especially its Schools for Living Traditions, of which the Hudhud Schools for Living Traditions represent the most sustained and concentrated effort. The careful work of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts in implementing the Japanese FIT-supported safeguarding project deserves wider international attention, and NCCA might consider preparing a dossier for recognition as a best practice under Article 18 of the Convention. The Philippine experience with mainstreaming intangible heritage into primary and secondary school curricula is particularly noteworthy and UNESCO should look to Philippine experts as participants in future expert meetings on heritage education and other topics. NCCA and the UNESCO National Commission for the Philippines (Unacom) should also consider how the Philippines might take a more active role in the governance of the 2003 Convention—if not as a Committee member then at least as an active observer at Committee sessions—so that the other States Parties to the Convention can benefit more fully from the experience of the Philippines.