



living HERITAGE

UNESCO Convention
for the Safeguarding of
the Intangible Cultural Heritage



Living heritage is e.g. • Festivities and practices • Performing arts
• Oral traditions • Knowledge on nature • Crafts • Food traditions
• Games and playing

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INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

What do sauna bathing, folk dance, rag rug weaving and snow games have in common? They are all part of living intangible cultural heritage, present in the everyday life and celebrations of the people in Finland. Living heritage reaches all forms of human activity.

Living heritage is passed on from one generation to the next, and it is dynamic and continuously developing. Intangible cultural heritage creates community spirit, strengthens creativity, and offers alternative ways of getting to know each other.

International Convention

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was adopted in 2003. The Convention aims to promote the vitality of traditions and to increase awareness of the significance of living heritage. Communities that practise their heritage are at the core of the UNESCO Convention. Best ways to safeguard are to dance, sing, knit, tell stories, and gather the products of nature – to practise and to transmit.

The significance of the Convention has been recognised throughout the world, and currently, over 180 states have signed it. Finland ratified the Convention in 2013, and the Finnish Heritage Agency is responsible for its implementation.



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The Convention in Finland

Finland as a country has committed to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. In the spirit of the Convention, its implementation starts from people and communities practising and transmitting different forms of living heritage.

Finland is implementing the Convention by promoting and supporting the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage through education, research and documentation, for example. The implementation takes place as network operations through Circles of living heritage. The aim is to support the preconditions of communities to practise their living heritage and to transfer it from one generation to the next.



Jarmo Niskala

Inventorying of living heritage

The UNESCO Convention also includes inventorying, which aims to enhance the visibility of living heritage and share good practices. In Finland, this work is carried out using the **Wiki-inventory for living heritage**, which already contains 200 examples from over 250 communities in five languages.

The Wiki presents various traditions, skills, and practices significant to small or large communities. It gives different kinds of communities an opportunity to present their own living heritage and provide new information. The inventory is a living document that is constantly being supplemented and updated. Join the work!

Elements in the Wiki may be nominated for inclusion in the National inventory of living heritage, with these nominations currently numbering 64. Elements listed in the National inventory have the possibility to be nominated for inscription on **UNESCO's international lists of intangible cultural heritage**. The Ministry of Education and Culture decides on the elements to be included in the National inventory, as well as those to be proposed for the UNESCO lists.

Finland's inscriptions on the UNESCO lists are Sauna culture in Finland (2020), Kaustinen fiddle playing (2021) and Nordic clinkerboat traditions (2021).

The UNESCO's international lists of intangible heritage already include over 600 elements from 131 countries. This treasure trove is available on the UNESCO website at ich.unesco.org/dive.

Pudasjärven kaupunki | Juha Nyman



anneleino | Pixabay



Päivi Kosonen | Museovirasto



Jeppomenueet, wiki.aaneetonkulttuuriperinto.fi.
Private photo.



Tivoli Seiterä

- 200 elements from over 250 communities in the Wiki-inventory for living heritage | wiki.aineetonkulttuuriperinto.fi
- 64 elements on the National inventory
- Four Circles of Living heritage with more than 100 organisations
- Over 120 video recordings | [Living heritage YouTube Channel](#)
- Current topics | www.facebook.com/elavaperinto
- Learning material site (in FIN/SWE) | opi.aineetonkulttuuriperinto.fi

www.aineetonkulttuuriperinto.fi/en/

READ MORE AND CONTACT US!

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