In support of the International Day of Intangible Cultural Heritage

unesco Intangible Cultural Heritage

International Cooperative Alliance
Alliance Coopérative Internationale
Alianza Cooperativa Internacional

COOPERATIVE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Cooperation that Echoes through Time

Cooperatives in the International Decade of Culture for Sustainable Development

Friday 30 October 2026 • 13h–14h30 CET • Online

This event is part of a broader series of activities related to the ICA Cooperative Cultural Heritage, and is organized to mark the UN International Day of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Purpose and expected outcomes

- Mark the International Day of Intangible Cultural Heritage; Connect experiences from cooperative cultural heritage initiatives across regions, examining the relationship between livelihoods, cultural identity and community stewardship.

- Launch the knowledge and information brief on intangible cultural heritage and cooperatives and discuss its implications for policy and cooperative practice.

- Identify priorities for cooperative contributions to the Decade, including partnerships and practical ways to support intergenerational transmission.

Participation

ICA members, cultural practitioners, young cooperators, educators, researchers and institutional partners are warmly invited.

Register for the webinar | Explore cooperative cultural heritage

Draft programme

Cooperation that Echoes through Time: Cooperatives in the International Decade of Culture for Sustainable Development

13h–14h30 CET | 90 minutes

TIME (CET)	SESSION AND PROPOSED CONTRIBUTIONS	RESOURCE
13h00–13h05	Opening: Intangible Cultural Heritage and Cooperatives	ICA Global Office Secretariat
13h05–13h12	Cooperative Cultural Heritage in Action: Chairperson of the ICA Working Group on Cooperative Cultural Heritage	**Tiago Schmidt**, Chairperson ICA WG on Cooperative Cultural Heritage
13h12-13h20	Marking the UN Intangible Cultural Heritage Day 2026 with Cooperatives	**Lutz Möller**, Deputy Director-General, German Commission for UNESCO

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TIME (CET)	SESSION AND PROPOSED CONTRIBUTIONS	RESOURCE
13h20–13h50	Living heritage through cooperative stories by Heritage custodians and cooperative representatives *Moderated by **Helena Gorroño**, Vice President for Europe at the ICA Youth Committee*	- **Prof. Jieun Kiaer,** Young Bin Min-Korea Foundation Professor of Korean Linguistics on the Haenyeo Culture of Jeju Islands, Republic of Korea - **Prof. Colombia Pérez Muñoz**, Director, Institute of Social Economy and Cooperativism. Director, UNESCO Chair in Social and Solidarity Economy - **Miles Hadfield** Digital Editor, The Co-operative News, UK - **Maissan Hassan**, Head of Collection Development at the International Institute of Social History, The Netherlands - **Waltteri Katajamaki**, Social and Solidarity Economy Specialist, ILO COOP/SSE Unit
13h50–14h00	Q/A from the floor	
14h00-14h05	The Culture of Cooperation in the United States	**Erbin Crowell**, Executive Director Neighbouring Food Cooperatives Association, USA; Board Member, DotCoop LLC.
14h05-14h15	Knowledge and Information Brief launch on Intangible cultural heritage and cooperatives	**Ritika Khanna**, International Consultant, Intangible Cultural Heritage
14h15-14h20	Contextualizing Cooperative Cultural Heritage for thought leaders and development labs	**Prof. Harekrishna Misra**, Vice Chair, ICA Asia and Pacific Cooperative Research Committee
14h20–14h25	Closing reflections on Cooperatives in the International Decade of Culture for Sustainable Development	**Osamu Nakano**, ICA Board Member and member, ICA WG on Cooperative Cultural Heritage
14h25-14h30	Group Photo	

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Information note

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), together with its Working Group on Cooperative Cultural Heritage, invites members, and friends & partnering organization to a global webinar on cooperatives in the International Decade of Culture for Sustainable Development 2027–2036. Marking the International Day of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, observed on 17 October, the event will explore how cooperative enterprise can help communities sustain living traditions and pass them on to future generations.

The webinar forms part of the ICA Cooperative Cultural Heritage programme's efforts to connect the recognition of cooperative heritage with practical action for its safeguarding and transmission. Drawing on some experiences represented in the programme's heritage (intangible) list, it will examine how cooperatives enable communities to sustain cultural practices, support livelihoods and engage younger generations in their renewal. These experiences will inform the discussion of the policy brief on intangible cultural heritage and cooperatives, linking community practice with the implementation of UNESCO's 2003 Convention and the opportunities presented by the International Decade of Culture for Sustainable Development.

UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage provides an international legal framework for sustaining living traditions, knowledge and skills through safeguarding, education and international cooperation. UNESCO reported 185 States Parties in June 2026, reflecting its widespread acceptance. Article 11 requires States to identify heritage with the participation of the communities concerned, while Article 15 requires them to endeavor to secure the widest possible participation of those who create, maintain and transmit it, and to involve them actively in its management. The Convention therefore establishes shared obligations while allowing countries to determine appropriate domestic measures. This approach resonates with the ICA Statement on the Cooperative Identity, which expressly includes meeting members' cultural needs and aspirations.

The International Decade of Culture for Sustainable Development (2027–2036), proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly and led by UNESCO, offers an opportunity to strengthen culture's place in development policy and practice. Cooperatives can make a distinctive contribution by connecting cultural continuity with sustainable livelihoods and democratic community ownership. Through enterprises rooted in local knowledge, traditional crafts, food systems and cultural expression, they can help heritage bearers sustain their practices, retain control over their work and pass their skills to younger generations. Cooperative education and participation can also transmit the values of mutual help and shared responsibility through everyday experience. For the cooperative movement, the Decade is an invitation to work with communities, public authorities and cultural institutions to ensure that those who sustain living heritage have a meaningful voice in its future and share equitably in the opportunities it creates.

Contact

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