

Making Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) relevant to the Youth

Guiding identity development in young adults through ICH exploration



Master Thesis
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WERKPLAATS
IMMATERIEEL
ERFGOED

Gratitude

I have been counting my blessings for all the wonderful people who have in some way or the other contributed to this project.

As I always said throughout the last few months, "I found my dream team!" Mieke, Arnold and Jorijn, you've been my cheerleaders throughout the project. Your enthusiasm and interest in this project made me feel confident to keep going even on challenging days.

Mieke, thank you for planting the seed of "indigenous ways of knowing" in my heart. For being one of the few people in IDE who understood how much I yearned to work on this topic. Thank you for believing in my work and supporting me to jump into the unknown.

Arnold, thank you for seeing the positives in every setback I had and for sharing your knowledge so openly with me. I always feel calm after our conversations.

Jorijn, thank you for the confidence you showed in my big plans from the very first meeting. You introduced me to intangible heritage and watched this project and me grow with utmost patience. Even from a country away and not having met in person yet, I could feel the warmth with which you opened the doors of WIE to me.

To the team WIE, I want to express my gratitude to each one of you who made the time amidst very busy days for participating in the research, providing feedback and connecting me to your network.

Thank you to the numerous friends and peers who contributed to this project with the same excitement as mine. Ashwita and Krishna, thank you for the chai, long conversations and reflections you both happily made the time for. Jessica, Priyanka, Milene for checking on me often and listening to everything I have had to say.

All those who participated in the research and became sounding boards, I am grateful for all the love you showered me with.

Girish, there aren't enough words to express how lucky I feel to have you by my side. Thank you for making sure I eat well, sleep enough, get out often and for encouraging plenty of breaks!

To my family back home - Mom, Dad and Bhagyashri, I am here because of you. Thank you for supporting my dreams!

I appreciate you!

Personal Motivation

Coming from a country of expansive diversity, cultural heritage was like colours in my life. I treasured it through my interests in crafts, performing arts and food.

Although I was raised in a big metropolitan city Mumbai, I was lucky enough to meet the right people at the right times who exposed me to the value of culture and heritage. Not by imposing it upon me but by planting a seed in my mind.

In my journey through architecture school, I often questioned why I was studying about practises that we knew were not really "life-friendly" or "planet-friendly". Then, I did not have the answers to the questions in my mind, nor did I understand the discomfort I was feeling fully. Why is design only addressing humans? Do I account for those who do not have the same privileges as I do? What about the trees, the birds and the animals that are adversely affected by the built environment? Why am I using materials that will become earth debris in the next 100 years? Am I really contributing to the sustenance of the planet? Why are these questions so hard to answer? What could I do?

To put it mildly, architecture school was difficult. I am an architect by qualification, but I hardly resonate with that label. What I am very thankful for is how architecture studies gave me the ability to recognize the interconnectedness in everything around and oriented me to think in systems. Not only was I able to understand the dynamic relationships in my environment, but I also understood the true meaning of symbiosis.

The next few years shaped how I would think about design. An architectural outcome seemed like the very end. I wanted to start at the root of the problem. I envisioned myself as a change maker, to the seemingly redundant patterns that I was observing around me - gender biases, colonial remnants in actions and behaviours, education that hardly taught emotional intelligence among many others.

I could not see things in isolation anymore. But I knew I had to start small. I carried the discomforting questions with me, finding answers alongside my journey from the Art Village to TU Delft, on to Tribal Wisdom and now here: to Intangible Heritage.

With this graduation project, I was able to piece together my passion and profession. My passion to bring to the forefront the lost culture and traditions of our communities to the modern world. My profession in strategic design daring me to be a creative problem solver, to co-create with the community. Together, to make small but considerable contributions to the socio-cultural fabric of what we call our heritage, to design not just for humans but for the planet.

I started with three intentions, hoping my work would be driven by them...

For myself: To be brave to show up as myself, unafraid to share my thoughts, opinions and work.

For the entourage: To have awareness in each action, making decisions for the community and future generations with respect to the previous generations.

For the planet: Good health - for body and land, for mind and living, and for spirit and energy

With these intentions set out, I am here at another milestone on my journey. It has transformed me to be more sensitive but stand my ground, to be experimental but to remember my roots. I hope this graduation report plants a seed in you too, to create everlasting life for our legacies, our ancient culture in the modern world. I do it with design strategy and systemic thinking. How will you?

Reading Guide

Abbreviations

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ICH	Intangible Cultural Heritage
WIE	Werkplaats Immaterieel Heritage (Workshop Intangible Heritage in English)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

Definitions

UNESCO Convention	An international convention or treaty is an agreement between different countries that is legally binding to the contracting States.
Youth (young adults)	Persons who are 18-30 years old, experiencing transitions related to emerging and young adulthood. Also referred interchangeably as young adults in this thesis.
Adolescents	Persons who are between 13-18 years old. Also referred to as teenagers or teens.

Quotes

"Quotes are shown in coloured text in quotation marks followed by the source."

Source, Country or Organization

How to read this report?

Intangibility is an abstract topic to grasp. To help the reader, I attempt to utilize visual and textual metaphors and examples to make the ideas and explanations relatable for someone who is encountering the subject of intangible heritage for the first time. These examples are extracted from the workshops conducted, peer conversations and readings carried out for this project. Of course, these metaphors and examples may not be an apt portrayal to some minds depending on their context. Nevertheless, I hope for the reader to be able to get the essence of the subjects I write about in this report.

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“Indigenous technologies are not lost or forgotten, only hidden by the shadow of progress in the remotest places on earth.”

Wade Davis

in the foreward of

LO-TEK Design by Radical Indigenism by Julia Watson

Executive Summary

This report journeys through the research and design processes, activities and outcomes of the project that brings young adults closer to their intangible heritage and cultural identity. Intangible cultural heritage (or ICH) being at the core of this project, is a fairly new and lesser known concept. With its presence in daily life as traditions, rituals, languages, know-hows, belief systems and the like, it forms the very essence of culture and of people's identity. At the focus of this project is the intent to guide and enable young adults/youth between 18-30 years to explore ICH such that it incites reflection and sharing, which in turn make the young adults realize their culture and identity.

Chapter 01 introduces the project and its context. It gives a closer look into the collaborating organization, Werkplaats Immaterieel Erfgoed. Further the chapter outlines the research questions and the approach.

Chapter 02 familiarizes the concept of ICH and how one can recognize it. Further, it places the importance of ICH in today's times. The deeper meaning of relevance reveals what guides relevance in the youth. The context of the youth in relation to ICH is explored to understand why ICH should matter to the youth and indicators that show otherwise.

Chapter 03 dives into research with the young adults through participatory workshops and with two key groups in the ICH ecosystem - the propagators and custodians through interviews. With the youth's needs related to ICH explored and the perspectives of the propagators and custodians considered, a criteria for design is formulated from the key insights.

Chapter 04 introduces an identity framework that makes the layers of cultural identity clear against the global identity the youth have today. Key insights points towards tapping into global identity and deepening the reasons to focus on identity development in the next stages.

With a bridging chapter 05, the design goal is reframed to enable identity development among the young adults through ICH explorations.

Chapter 06 dives into design space, wherein the target context for such a goal is identified for design. The design activities' outcome leads to an experience to explore, share and reflect on Hidden Culture while traveling solo and living in hostels. The various components of the design proposal are elaborated upon with the rationale for the design.

In Chapter 07, the results of testing conducted to evaluate the desirability, feasibility and viability are described and further recommendations are suggested for development.

Chapter 08, aimed at the stakeholders of this design proposal, clarify the exchange value that it can bring to them. Next, a concise development plan is suggested.

Chapter 09 concludes this report and this project with some final thoughts and reflections.

01

Introduction to the project

- 1.1 Background
- 1.2 Project Goal and Research Questions
- 1.3 Collaborating Partner
- 1.4 Approach

Chapter 01: Introduction to the Project

This chapter is an introduction to this thesis. It familiarizes the reader with the context and scope of the project. Further, it explains the research and design approach the project takes.

1.1 Background

Culture is believed to be an essential part of each person's personality. Simply put, culture can be viewed as a set of rules, values, behaviours, mutually created and/or agreed upon by a group of people (Neuliep, 2020; van Boeijen & Zijlstra, 2020). It makes us feel a part of certain groups or communities. Earlier the groups and communities we associated with were smaller. But today we move in the scale of millions as a society (Harari, 2014).

The connectedness we feel with groups of people today is not limited to the ones we physically interact with everyday. We are able to connect with each other over the long distance, expanding our view on the cultures we are part of. Today, culture is viewed not just from a local or communal lens but also from a global or popular lens. Popular culture dominates our everyday life. We are part of large groups, where getting lost is so easy. Even if it is online (Loundy, 2020). However, the exposure and access a person has to the world's information¹ popularizes some cultures worldwide, while some slip into oblivion.

The cultures that do slip into oblivion are part of our daily lives but as passive back-of-the-mind thoughts, behaviours and actions. They have been part of our life as we grew up, subconsciously imbibed through the influence our family, peers and the environment have on us. They seem invisible. They cannot be clearly defined. They are intangible.

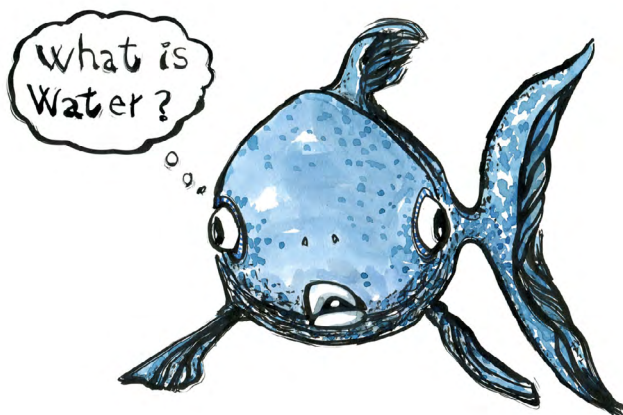


Fig 01
Metaphor

Similar to a fish who does not know its in water, it is difficult to for us to see our own culture.

Source: Edward T. Hall in *Beyond Culture* (1976)

In this thesis, we engage with the concept of intangible cultural heritage. Culture that is present in the form of language, knowledge, beliefs, expressions or practices (UNESCO, n.d.-b). Culture that brings us together as people.

At the same time, the challenge we are faced with relies on the current decisions we make about our intangible cultural heritage. Do we choose to go with the global currents of popular trends? Do we carry the intangible culture that shaped us with us? To carry our culture with us, we need to know it closely. But we seldom know our culture the same way as our parents or grandparents did (see Schep, 2019).

We carry global experiences with us and these experiences play a role in shaping us constantly. Evidently, with the increasing experiences, questions about our identity also keep confronting us – Who am I? The most vulnerable among those confronted with this question are the adolescents and young adults. In the transitory phase of being an adult, the most distinctive exploration the young adults take on is to clarify their their sense of self² (Arnett, 2014). These days, this endeavour can be a struggle, even more so with the connectivity and “profiling” on the internet, where they decide to show up as themselves (or not).

It is now about an individual rather than an individual in reference to their entourage. Showing up as yourself in real life can be vastly different from showing up as yourself online (Baltezarevic and Baltezarevic, 2016).

As the world progresses into its modern ways, globalization connects us all and technology makes life convenient and fast paced (Marie, 2019). However, in the last few years, globalization has posed a threat to both - the social behaviours of the youth and in turn their relationship with their intangible cultural heritage. For intangible heritage to live on, it needs to be practiced and actively transmitted (Blake, 2009) to the next generations (ie, the youth). A prolonged presence online means the youth's disconnect to the people in their “real”, physical, social environments (Quaglio & Millar, 2020). This leaves the transmission of our intangible heritage contingent on the elders³ who wish for their knowledge to be carried on, on those in the heritage field who may be closely working with such elders or stewards of the knowledge and a few heritage-aware youngsters who seek knowledge beyond the given.

1. Information gained through various sources on the internet or travel.
2. As defined by APA Dictionary of Psychology, sense of self is “an individual's feeling of identity, uniqueness, and self-direction”.
3. Elders are those who have committed or have been bestowed by their community the responsibility to share their knowledge on culture, tradition, beliefs and so on. Elders can also be present in the form of our own ancestors.

1.2 Project Goal and Research Questions

As established above, the youth have an estranged relationship with their intangible cultural heritage (ICH here onwards). The project, therefore, spotlights **finding the relevance of ICH in the lives of youth who are between 18 to 30 years of age**.

The goal is to make ICH relevant to the youth such that it can help them construct their sense of self. But ICH itself, a concept introduced by UNESCO in 2003, is an abstract concept to understand. Therefore, this project intends to answer to the research question:

RQ1 – How can youth be supported in finding ICH relevant?

The objective is to make the instances of intangible culture associable, relevant and meaningful for the youth. For this, just knowing about ICH is not enough. It must be understood and communicated in a way such that the youth finds meaning and value for themselves in the ICH.

The youth is one stakeholder in an entire ecosystem of heritage (see fig. 02). For a holistic perspective on the youth's ecology⁴ various voices in the system are engaged to capture their perspective. Among the multiple stakeholders related to heritage (as seen in fig. 02), 3 main groups of actors are identified. For the purpose of this thesis, they are broadly grouped as:

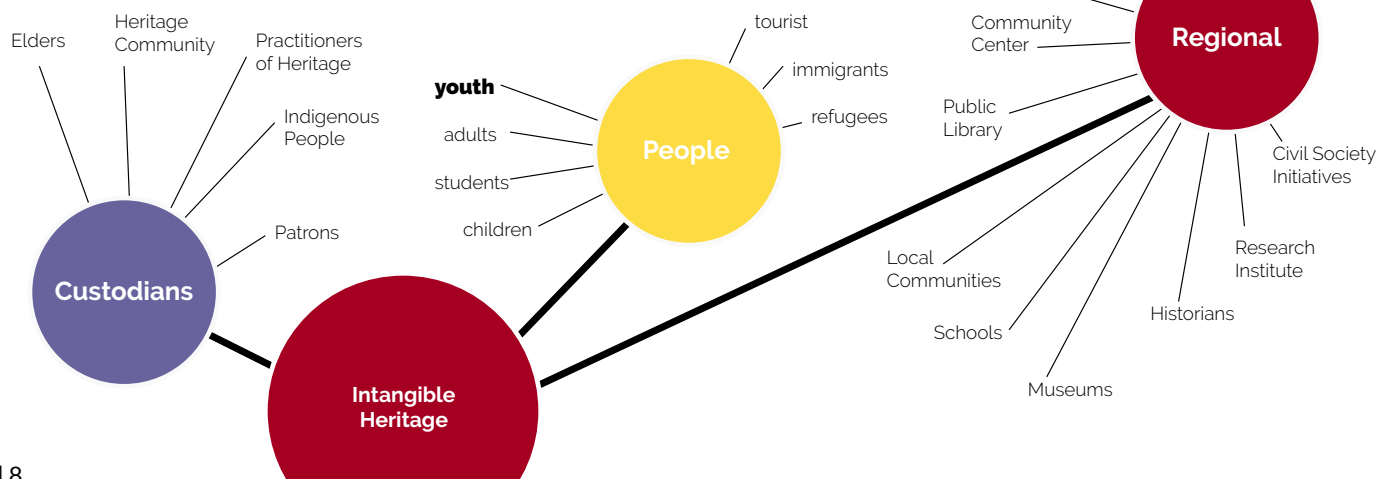
Propagators, who are organizations, institutes, foundations, groups or individuals actively attempting to inform and educate the public at large about some form of ICH. They can either be formally or informally organized parties that portray the ICH to the people. Their scope of work is led by the intention that more people know and care about cultural heritage in order to motivate safeguarding action. Many times, they also take responsibility to identify ICH and safeguard it alongside the custodians.

To bring in the propagators' perspectives, we need to understand their current approaches and challenges they face while engaging the youth with ICH. Therefore, the research question can be formulated as:

RQ2 – What challenges do the propagators experience while engaging the youth with ICH?

Fig 02

Ecosystem of intangible heritage as understood throughout the project



Custodians of Intangible Heritage are those individuals or communities who (attempt to) 'live' the heritage or own the heritage - they are the practitioners and carriers of the knowledge. They actively try to transmit their ICH in order to safeguard it. They are driven by the urge to share with their own communities, the next generations and others. They create, maintain and transmit ICH.

Although custodians often work closely with the propagators, it is observed that they rarely operate with a strict institutional agenda. They mainly navigate through transmission of their ICH based on instinct and sensitivity. For this reason, it is assumed that their approach towards the youth is slightly different. The research question therefore focuses on:

RQ3 – How can we identify and integrate the desires the custodians have for the youth and ICH?

It is important to note, many times, the custodian's maintenance and transmission roles also make them a cusp of propagator and custodian. The reason this overlapping role is addressed in the custodian section is because the propagators do not create ICH. Moreover, the propagator characteristics adopted by the custodian may stem from a need that formal organizations or institutes do not address.

4. Ecology is the direct and indirect relationship the youth is surrounded by in their life.

Youth⁵ who are nescient experiencers of Intangible Heritage, unaware of the concept. For this project, the youth are young adults between the age of 18-30 years, who are in a transitory period of life.

As Smith & Dowse (2019) put it, transitory periods refers to the time when a young person is faced with multiple:

- critical moments related to family, education and relationships,
- liminal moments or feeling trapped in-between, or
- meaning making moments which reinstate equilibrium and stability.

These essential moments contribute to the development of the sense of self for a young person (Erikson, 1968). Although building the sense of self was earlier associated with adolescent years, more recent studies have observed the conception of this exploration occurs in emerging adulthood, between ages 18-25 (Arnett, 2000). Furthermore, "social norms guiding the transition to adulthood have weakened considerably, producing greater variability in pathways to adulthood that are often prolonged" (Benson & Elder Jr, 2011), indicating the transitions upto the 30s.

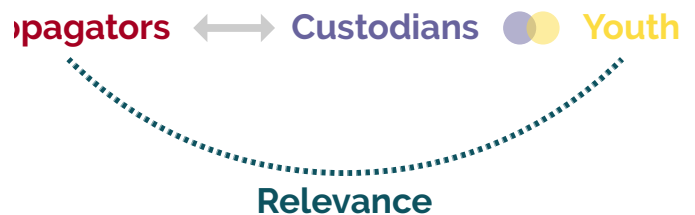
The youth represent a very large group. To make this project manageable and achievable in the timeline of 100 working days, the project engages with the youth who have experienced a context with an international group of people (especially in Delft).

5. There is no agreed upon definition of the youth internationally. The youth in this project are young adults between 18-30 years.

In the context of Strategic Design, this project aims to propose new ways to make the youth between 18 to 30 years aware of ICH such that the concept is introduced to them in a manner that suits their current scenarios and needs.

Scoping therefore to the main research question:

How can propagators of Intangible Cultural Heritage create relevance for the youth who might encounter any form of intangible cultural heritage?



1.3 Collaborating Partner

The project was initiated in collaboration with a partner who is an expert in and propagator of intangible heritage - Werkplaats Immaterieel Erfgoed (WIE). They bring in the experience and expertise in the heritage field to support the research activities and further the co-creation and execution of the design solution.

[Werkplaats Immaterieel Erfgoed](#) is a Belgium based NGO, actively working as an intermediary between policies, professions, practitioners related to intangible heritage and the larger society. Translating various voices and representing in-context realities during the policy making, their objective is of empowering the ICH fields. WIE functions as a hub for ICH projects, serving their networks in Flanders and internationally.

The networks are supported further with WIE's involvement in developing methodologies for inspiring safeguarding actions for ICH, providing guidance through workshops and training to living heritage practitioners and by being a connector.

WIE is also a UNESCO accredited NGO, which ties their work closely with the UNESCO 2003 Convention for Safeguarding ICH. They give form to what the Convention stands for, on ground. Collaborating partner to this project, WIE aspires (in their policy plan) for the years 2019-2023 to "broaden the visibility, image and awareness of intangible heritage socially" (Werkplaats Immaterieel Erfgoed, 2019).

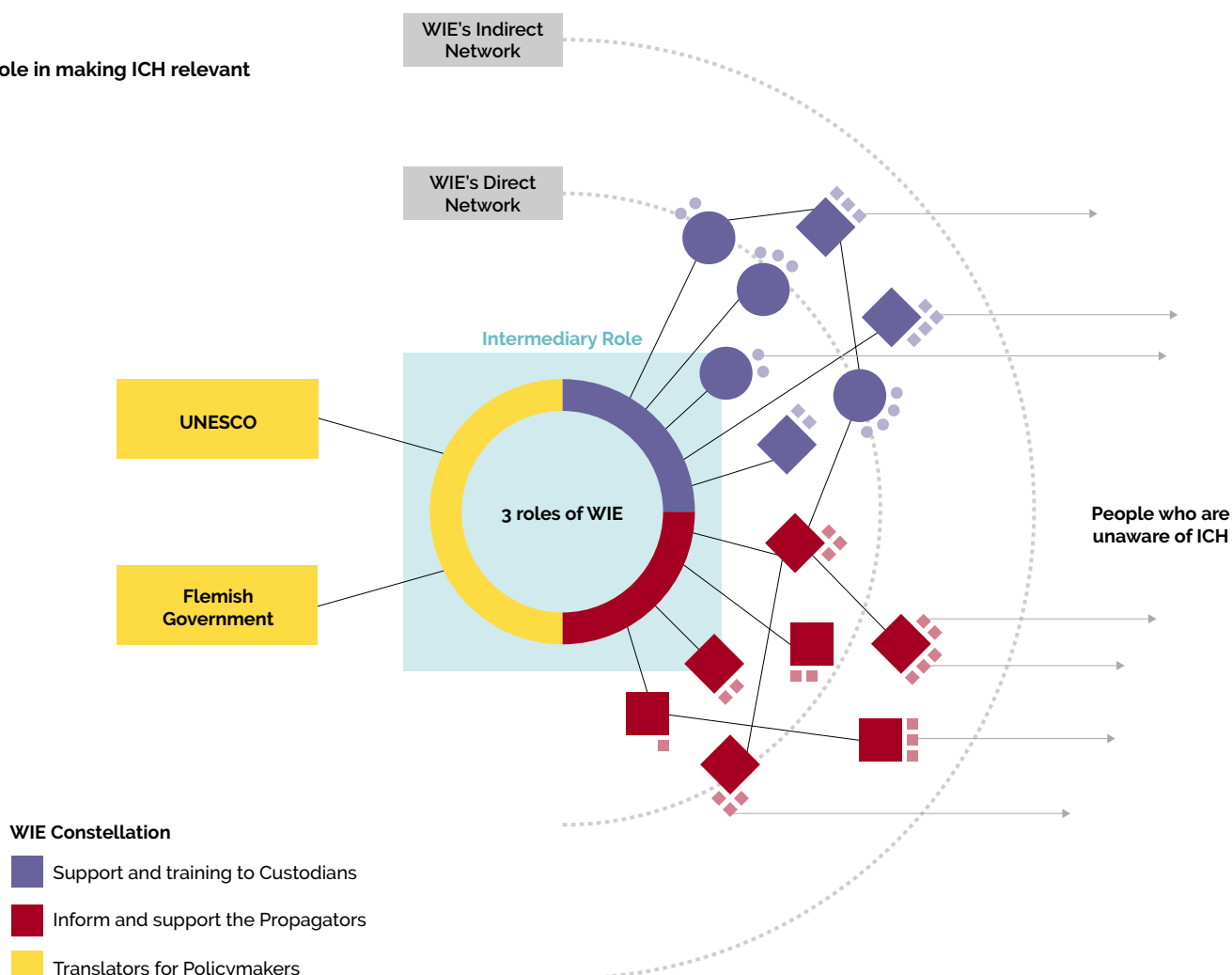
Werkplaats Immaterieel Erfgoed (WIE) has extensive experience working with living heritage. Their intermediary role in the field allows them access to governing bodies, professionals and practitioners. However, their connection to people unaware of ICH (and therefore, the youth) is indirect, through the network of their network (see fig. 03). WIE's key contribution resides in informing and supporting the heritage field to be relevant to society with an emphasis on living cultures.

WIE fulfills 3 main roles as illustrated in the figure:

1. **They are translators between the field and policymakers sharing ground realities during policymaking.**
2. **They provide support and training to custodians to maintain and transmit their ICH.**
3. **They inform and support other propagators with new developments and connections on ICH.**

This thesis project tackles WIE's aspiration of broadening the awareness and visibility of ICH, especially aimed at the youth of 18-30 years as they are the group who are more challenging to reach. The research therefore is intended to uncover the reasons for their low accessibility and rekindle new connections with them.

Fig 03
WIE's role in making ICH relevant



1.4 Approach

During the course of this thesis project, participatory methods guided the process leading to the results explained in this report. Divided into 2 main phases (illustrated in fig. xx), the research phase and the design phase. Each of them followed iterative cycles, wherein the problem and solution spaces evolved simultaneously (Dorst & Cross, 2001). The iterative approach enriched the findings, sufficiently answered the research questions and subsequently informed the design itself.

Phase 1: Research

In the research phase, a context exploration into ICH and relevance was followed by deeper research to answer the established research questions. Iterative cycles of workshops and interviews with the stakeholders were facilitated, accompanied with moments for reflections and analysis to generate insights. As the research insights clarified the youth's needs related to ICH, a parallel framework was created to explain the relationship between the youth's identity and heritage.

The research methods employed were based on the research goal that informed the next stage in the process. Below, a tabulated overview (table 01) outlines the research goals, the method used and the further process it informed.

Bridge

The research phase concluded with a criteria for design (explained in chapter 04), a reframed design goal and design drivers that prioritized the most important results.

Phase 2: Design

The design phase marked the second phase of the process. Another round of iterative cycles included quick ideation and testing of probable design solutions. This initial exploration led to the selection of ideas to be developed further as concept proposals. The concepts, later integrated into the final proposal, were prototyped and evaluated with target youth users and the WIE team.

Similar to the tabulated overview (table 02) of the research methods, a variety of methods guided the design phase. Below, a tabulated overview outlines the design process goals, the method used and the further process it informed.

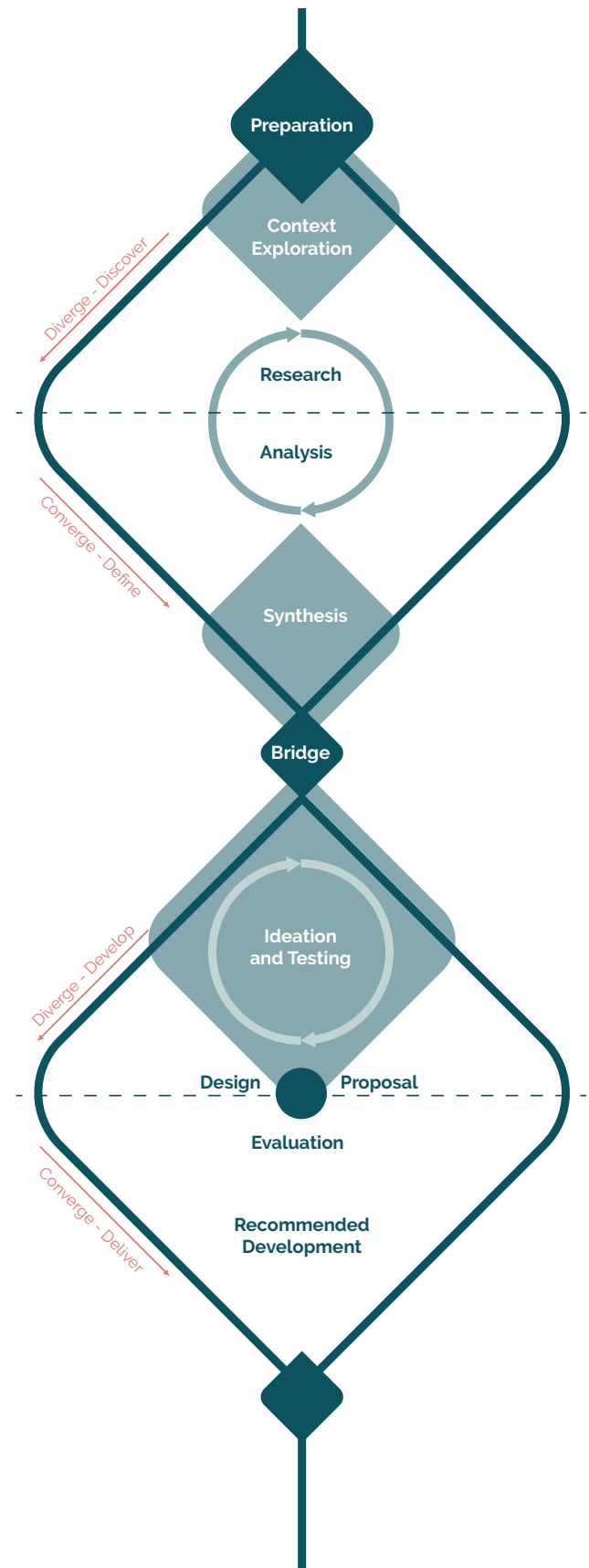


Fig 04
Project Approach
with 2 phases -
Research and Design

RESEARCH GOAL(S)	METHOD(S) USED	INFORMS
Gain substantial understanding of ICH through existing theory and networks. Understand what it means to be relevant to the youth.	Literature research on ICH and relevance Expert interviews	Guidelines for research design, translated into workshops with the youth participants
Stimulate tacit knowledge generation about the relevance of ICH in the youth's lives through personal examples. Answer RQ1 – How can youth be supported in finding ICH relevant?	Workshops with the youth participants	Criteria for design
Understand how propagators and custodians experience making ICH relevant to the youth. Identify opportunities for intervention by exploring examples of previous experiences and best practices. Answer RQ2 – What challenges do the propagators experience while engaging the youth with ICH? Answer RQ3 – How can we identify and integrate the desires the custodians have for the youth and ICH?	Interviews with propagators and custodians	Criteria for design
Translating research insights into a communicative explanation Visualizing and explaining the relationship between ICH and identity	Analysis and Synthesis	Design direction

Table 01

Overview of research methods used for this project

DESIGN PROCESS GOAL(S)	METHOD(S) USED	INFORMS
Generate ideas based on the defined design direction	Brainstorming	Selection of ideas for further development
To iterate and refine ideas, gain early input on selected concepts from the stakeholders and intended users Give the feel of the context and interaction with the design	Storyboarding Storytelling	Final concept design proposal
Gain input and feedback on the concept design proposal for further development from intended users and stakeholders. Understanding the value that concept design proposal brings to the intended users and the stakeholders.	Interviews with propagators and custodians	Development Guidelines in the form of a visual roadmap towards implementation
To provide guidelines for next steps after concluding as a graduation project	Roadmapping	Further development of the proposal

Table 02

Overview of design methods used for this project



Understanding the context

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Understanding Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)
 - 2.2.1 ICH (Un-) awareness
 - 2.2.2 Characteristic features of ICH
- 2.3 Why is ICH important today?
- 2.4 Youth in focus
 - 2.4.1 Factors guiding relevance
- 2.5 Why should ICH be “relevant” to the youth?
- 2.6 Indicators of the youth moving away from ICH
- 2.7 Conclusion

Chapter 02: Understanding the context

This chapter presents the foundational knowledge acquired during the context exploration. First, a deep understanding of ICH is gained through identification of its characteristics. Second, the importance of ICH is explored in the present day. Third, the key factors guiding relevance are outlined. Finally, focusing on the youth and relevance, the mutual benefits of a budding a close relationship between ICH and the youth are investigated. The essential pointers for the participatory research were drawn from the contextual study.

2.1 Introduction

To build the foundational knowledge on this subject, the context exploration was led by a research for design approach wherein the study is done “to learn specific information about the situation for which the design is made” (Stappers & Giaccardi, 2017). Since there was tremendous information made available by the heritage community, after a preliminary literature research and desktop research, I chose to speak to two experts in the field of ICH to get a well-rounded understanding of the topic. Alongside, the work of Nina Simon (Simon, 2016) on relevance was explored to establish what it means to be “relevant” to the youth.

Next, the importance of ICH in the lives of the youth and why ICH in turn also needs the youth was investigated. In addition to reading about ICH, speaking to ICH experts expedited having an overview of the work done over the past several years in the field and the ongoing themes. These activities aided the preparation for the next phase which focused on engaging with the identified groups - youth, propagators and custodians.

Further, by asking myself “What does this (newly gained knowledge) mean for the thesis project?”, the information was interpreted and placed back in the context of youth and ICH.

This preparation was the bedding to design the research to delve deeper into the needs of the youth with regards to their ICH. The exploration helped understand the vastness of this topic of study and therefore also to set the boundaries for the scope of this project.

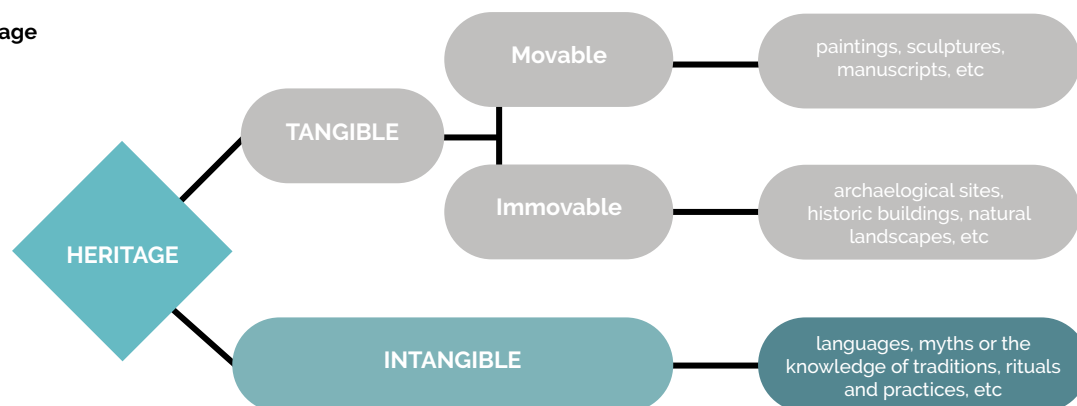
2.2 Understanding Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

On scrutinizing the definition of “heritage”, its evolving character comes forth. The initial definitions focused and interpreted heritage merely on inheritance of monuments, artefacts or things and/or possessed an intent for conservation. Since then, the comprehension of what encompasses heritage has broadened - to natural environments, social factors and cultural values, expressions and memory (Ahmad, 2006; Loulanski, 2006; Vecco, 2010).

Today cultural heritage comprises inheritances both in forms - material and immaterial. Distinguished as two main types- tangible heritage and intangible heritage. Tangible heritage, as categorized by UNESCO (UNESCO, n.d.-a) , consists of movable (paintings, sculptures, coins, manuscripts, etc), immovable heritage (archaeological sites, historic buildings, natural landscapes, etc) and underwater heritage (shipwrecks, underwater ruins and cities, etc). It is easy to grasp the concept of tangible heritage mainly because of its concreteness and physical existence in our lives. With its physical form, tangible heritage (usually) remains after people and communities dissolve.

Intangible heritage (oral traditions, languages, rituals, etc) on the other hand, can dissolve if left untransmitted. These invisible practices of heritage are part of our lifestyle, they live as people live and move with people. Intangible heritage is part of peoples' daily lives (Kurin, 2004) in a state of flux. Mainly transmitted orally, intangible heritage is what makes up the memorised or experienced narratives and discourses of people's knowledge of skills, practices, rituals, languages, the stories, and other ways of knowing.

Fig 05
Forms of Heritage



2.2.1 ICH (Un-)Awareness

As they are invisible cultural practices, most people seem unaware of the concept although they may be practicing some form of ICH in their daily life. A reason for people's unfamiliarity with ICH could stem partly from the fact that the concept itself, introduced with the UNESCO's 2003 Convention for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, has only been around for less than 20 years.

"I know from my work at IE NL as an advisor that the term is not loaded yet. Many know what heritage means, just as inheritance in English - that when someone deceases you inherit their assets. Therefore in my work, I sometimes even work around the term "intangible heritage" because I don't feel it helps just yet."

Propagator from Immaterieel Erfgoed NL and Erfgoed Jong

Another reason could be the term itself. Intangible Cultural Heritage is a relatively new, all-encompassing set of words for what people have commonly known as their community's rituals, beliefs or practices related to traditions, folklore, knowledge about the environment and the universe among other identifying terms (Lenzerini, 2011). The UNESCO Convention for ICH also evolved from the usage of these more commonly known terms and can be seen in the chronology of how the convention came to be through the formative programmes, reports and recommendations (See fig 06 on the Timeline towards the ICH convention). With the intention to be inclusive to the living heritages on a global scale, the all-encompassing "Intangible Cultural Heritage" was adopted.

UNESCO's definition of ICH (UNESCO, 2018)

"Intangible Cultural Heritage" means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

The "intangible cultural heritage", as defined in [the] paragraph above, is manifested inter alia in the following domains:

- oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- performing arts;
- social practices, rituals and festive events;
- knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- traditional craftsmanship."

Redefining the scope of cultural heritage, the UNESCO Convention played a pivotal role in acknowledging various groups who have transient cultural expressions. The Convention invited an inclusive discourse in recognizing diversity at the global level. The effort ensured the visibility of ICH as a critical part of our social landscape.

As mentioned earlier, there is no one standard definition of what "heritage" is (Ahmad, 2006). Much like the definition of sustainability that evolves every few years. The evolution results in changing perceptions and operationalization of what sustainability means to different actors. No two people have the same understanding of sustainability, nor a similar practice. Similarly, to understand ICH based on a definition is ineffective and simply not enough. Instead, it would be useful to recognize the characteristics of ICH.

"There is always a dilemma on how to use this ICH language. It is a specific discourse which is dictated by policy."

Propagator from Werkplaats Immaterieel Erfgoed



Fig 06
Timeline towards the
ICH Convention

2.2.2 Characteristic features of ICH

Before we go into further details of the context of this project, it is important to understand what ICH is to be able to identify it and familiarize ourselves with its features.

ICH is the narrative (of the tangible)

Intangibility can be explained, simply, as impossible materiality. When something is intangible, it is implied as it is abstract or not easy to explain. However, the intangible in ICH can be rather confusing. Intangible is connected to the tangible in an interdependent way (Kurin, 2004; van Zanten, 2004).

"Intangible culture is the discourse or narrative of the tangible. The tangible cannot exist without the intangible. The stories, discourses or narratives were captured in songs, paintings, etc so that even a lay person could understand it."

Custodian from India

A meticulous explanation of the interwovenness of the tangible with the intangible can be found in the tangible examples of the Ragamala miniature paintings from India (Khetarpal, 2019). The ragamala paintings are a visual depiction capturing the essence of sound and melodies. These paintings not only capture the scene and mood but also the time of the day and/or the season a raga (a melodic framework) is sung.



Fig 07
Example of Ragamala Miniature Painting
(Video Source: Dulwich Picture Gallery)

Supporting excerpt of explanation on [The Heritage Lab](#)

"The Raga is sung when the sun rises and dawn breaks. You can spot Surya, the sun god mounted on his 7 headed horse, rising to a female offering a lotus petal. The temple and its empty walls depict that it is so early that on one else has woken up yet. The painting conveys a sense of calm that you feel early in the morning with no distractions of routine life."

ICH is expression of identity

The narratives or stories capture the human mind to "make sense of our world and share that understanding with others" (Rose, 2011). We tell stories in many ways – through dance, myths, proverbs, games among others. Although the link between identity and heritage is "yet to be fully understood" (Smith & Akagawa, 2009), it would seem that these expressions, unique enough to become synonymous with certain groups or communities, become how the individuals in a group relate to each other.

I would argue that over time, it gives people identity by being part of legacies of their peoples, as a way to be recognized and acknowledged in the larger world. It gives a sense of continuity as people are associated with stories of their ancestors, a representative part of history or a notion of being living history. It gives a sense of authenticity making people realize their uniqueness from others, while respecting the uniqueness of others.

ICH is living heritage

ICH is heritage living in the form of peoples' practice and hence also known as Living Heritage (van Zanten, 2004). It is transmitted from a person to another, in communities or through the community elders. The custodians are the practitioners of heritage ensuring it is carried forward in action and practice to the current and future generations.

Hence, if the future generations stop practicing these living forms of heritage or no longer remember it to pass it to their next generations, loss of ICH is bound to happen. The most prominent example is the extinction of languages, which hold wisdom about nature related practices, natural medicines or resource management techniques.



Fig 08
News article covering the risk of losing knowledge of medicinal plants due to the loss of language (Source: The Guardian)

ICH transforms constantly

Deemed the "cultural equivalent of biodiversity: ICH is a range of creative solutions that people have come up with over time to address how and where we live together" (Neyrinck & Nikolić Đerić, n.d.). In other words, ICH serves guidelines for survival. But as times progress, not everything may be practical for the present day. Extracting from the workshops conducted with the youth participants (elaborated in chapter 03) is the example of bullfighting, which has had a ritualistic meaning in the past but today it is considered a violation of animal rights.

As ICH expert Marc Jacobs⁶ elucidated drawing from Diana Taylor's work that an individual encounters three main choices that concern decision-making about heritage when considering its preservation:

1. **Acceptance of what was and reproducing the heritage as is. The practice or expression is frozen, only to be emulated as the ancestors did/do.**
2. **Recognize the heritage created years ago lies in present times. Therefore, it is interpreted, adopting what is useful and transforming it to suit the current preferences.**
3. **Finding the heritage impractical, challenging it and further rejecting it.**

Having these choices, it is important to convey, there is no right or wrong decision for whatever an individual chooses based on their relationship with the heritage. However, Living Heritage, by the UNESCO definition, falls under the second categorization, wherein it is always transforming in its social context. Which implies that it constantly mutates with contemporary practices to evolve into its new interpretation pertinent today's ways of knowing.

6. Jacobs, M, (2021, March 10). Personal interview

ICH is ephemeral

Based on the decisions one makes about their heritage, it can influence how the heritage is experienced today. That is, taking into account whether and how it lives on. But without the community or individuals who choose to practice it, ICH fades away.

Diana Taylor addresses this subject with the example of ephemeral performances in her book *The Archive and the Repertoire* (2003). She questions the "ongoingness" of what is chosen to be kept frozen by the archiving. The choice when made towards freezing the intangible heritage can mean it becomes unrecognizable when accessing it again in the future when the memory has faded and it is no longer in practice or part of people's lives. Therefore ICH, although reproducible, is ephemeral and is, in my view, best experienced in a live space real time.

ICH is open to interpretation

The transformative nature of ICH also suggests that it has meaning when the people give it a meaning by practicing it. Which means people interpret it and place it in their frame of reference. Since each of us have different ways to express ourselves, we have our own interpretations and understanding. That means even if one shares the same form of intangible heritage with a group, it could lead to a different habitude, a variety of outcomes and possibilities. For instance, a song sung in one community may be a chant in another.

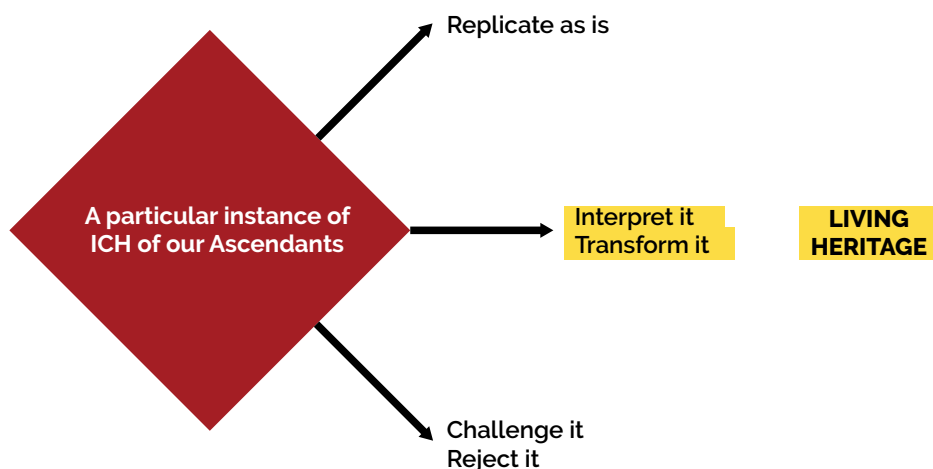
ICH fosters social relationships

ICH provides a sense of community through continuous recreation (Blake, 2009) happening between a group of people. As living heritage is transmitted through people, it weaves a fabric of relationships wherein sharing together happens. Especially crucial to intergenerational relationships, ICH stimulates understanding those in different phases of life and learning from them.

In summary, these features of ICH are co-dependent and share an interconnected dynamic with each other such that the elements cannot be seen or understood in isolation. This suggests that ICH needs to be considered as a system of things.

Fig 09

Decisions on Freezing, Transforming or Rejecting heritage



2.3 Why is ICH important today?

Many of the global issues are the aftermath of overuse – of the natural resources, mass manufacturing machinery or handheld technologies. Repercussions of such excessive use are beginning to glare at us in various forms of imbalances we feel in the society. In these disturbed times, ICH is the key to introspect on our actions.

Intelligence in local knowledge

Living heritages hold knowledge developed over years through trial and error and observations. From living in a symbiotic relationship with nature. Extensive ecosystems of knowledges hold the practical and sustainable wisdom to solve some of the complex global problems we face today. Looking at the example of forest fires occurring frequently due to the rise in global temperatures. Local communities have known for years how to manage dense landscapes. Yet, many times, there is either disregard or negligence in paying heed to the local knowledge in favour of scientifically proven or Western dominated techniques (Nikolakis & Roberts, 2020). This shows an evident imbalance in perspectives intensifying the need to acknowledge ICH in the form of local ways of knowing of the people, which at times may not have been scientifically proven yet but does have a profound sense of living in symbiosis with the planet.

Globalization, Hybridity, Homogeneity

UNESCO (2018) considers ICH the "mainspring of diversity in the face of growing globalization". Globalization potentially confronts to acknowledge the disparities that we exist within. Such as white people caring about and supporting the Black Lives Matter movement or Asians being interested in the US Elections. Although these realizations bring people together to respect vastly different social tensions it also increases the visible polarisation at the political and policy fronts (Neyrinck, 2017). The counter debate to globalization as a diversifying phenomena is that of globalization inviting hybridity within cultures. With realization of transformatory Living Heritage, this hybridization can be looked at as a "process of de-contextualising followed by a re-contextualising within a new context" (citing Burke from Neyrinck, 2017).

Thus, globalization can take away the very thing that makes people diverse - their culture and heritage. Although those who were born before the onset of fast paced globalization at the least knew what it was to experience ICH, the ones who were born when or after globalization hit have entered the world of hybridity. People's own ICH thus takes a less prominent space in their lives (Baltezarevic et al., 2019).

Boundless hybridity could also mean that in a few years, a majority will not know about their ICH. This cultural phenomena of global interconnectedness raises concerns about homogenization of cultures from around the world. Even though it can be heavily debated that globalization has made cultural exchange easier, I would argue there is an underlying stream of dominant discourse that favours what is popular or trending. Usually known as cultural imperialism, the most distinctive example is that of media such as Hollywood that exerts "cultural influence over the rest of the world" (Drysen, 2016).

If what makes us authentic (our culture) is forgotten, all of us will go after the same things dictated by trends. Therefore, ICH becomes even more important today than it was earlier.

2.4 Youth in focus

Young adults of today live in a super hybrid and diverse world. Therefore, having the youth's attention to their own ICH is not only challenging but also a continuous effort in quickly changing realities. Thus, the project's focus is on making ICH come alive in the minds and hearts of the youth of ages between 18 to 30 years. It spotlights the relevance of ICH in the youth's lives.

But what does it mean to be relevant?

Relevance, as explained by Nina Simon (2016) in her book – the Art of Relevance, is making something meaningful to people by decoding "what matters?" to them, inviting them to "open doors" to the meaning behind the door. Relevance here refers to the process of relating, gauging and interpreting whether or not it will be valuable to walk through the open door.

In the context of the youth, relevance would be a determining factor on what they will attend to. Among the many competitors for the youth's attention, the youth assesses if something is useful, required, appealing or cool enough for them. However, being relevant can be tricky as what matters to one person can vastly differ from what matters to their friend. Woodham (2014) attributes the "relational" nature of relevance to the fact that "individuals don't pursue the same goals and don't unanimously share the same model of the world".

Simon (2016) builds on the works of relevant theorists Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber who specify two criteria must be satisfied to achieve relevance:

1. The new information should yield positive cognitive effect
2. The effort required to obtain the new information should be low

Based on this, we can draw the factors that guide relevance.

2.4.1 Factors guiding relevance

Human curiosity

Kuiper and Allan (2016) in their lecture on Relevance Theory and Pragmatics stress one of the fundamental qualities of humans is to be curious. Driven by curiosity, people constantly seek out new information to enhance their perception of the environment. Either by validating previous assumptions or inferring from the new information received, people are attempting to achieve relevance.

Imaginative Effort

When high effort is expected of the potential audience, Simon (2016) warns "relevance goes down". The people are forced to imagine the "leaps" or effort it would take them to see meaning in pursuing the offering behind the locked door.

Hence, relevance needs to be "an exercise in empathy - in understanding what matters to your intended audience, not what matters to you" (Simon, 2016).

Familiarity as a catalyst

Although relevance, according to Simon (2016), is not about familiarity, familiarity can be a catalyst as it "encourages cycles of repetition as it offers alternatives to effort and risk", especially when there is no previous connection to the experience or information offered.

Constant renewal

What we "see as appealing, or open to us" (Simon, 2016) is often a combination characterised by the people who are part of our lives such as "parents, teachers or peers" and "societal norms". As we move through life experiences, we transcend these influences learning from the previous doors we open to find relevance. So, it is not enough to be relevant once but to keep renewing the relevance.

Although this project intends to bring ICH and the youth closer to each other in a gratifying relationship of meaning, this will only happen if youth feels like ICH matters to them.

2.5 Why should ICH be "relevant" to the youth?

It was confirmed by Bloomberg research that in 2019, Generation Z and Millennials combined would be the largest generation on the planet (Gherini, 2018). Evidently, this young population are today's decision makers and future elders. The generation ready to lead, change and transform, the youth are now making decisions about their heritage. However, to make an informed decision, the youth needs to know that ICH exists and even they have it. My observations throughout this project reaffirmed that most young adults do not know about their ICH. Due to the disconnect between the youth and their ICH, the youth's purview seldom considers ICH while making decisions. This can be attributed to ICH being a new concept but it is not very accessible yet.

Between the age of 18 and 30, the youth seeks to "make life happen" with several milestones in education, career, relationships, in investing, settling down and/or gaining varied experiences. ICH can enrich these life experiences with practical knowledge, abilities and know-hows.

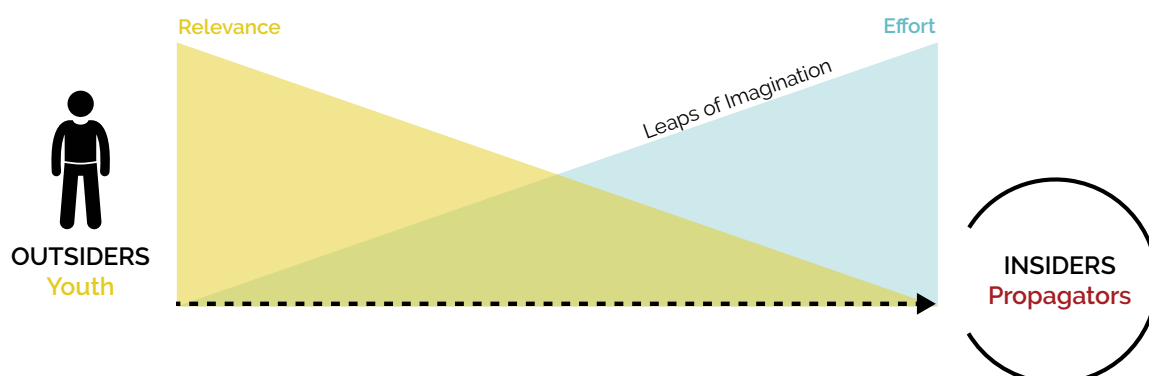
The youth are also active members of the society. They are the ones who can put knowledge of ICH into practice and implementation. Their high connectivity and social access can spread awareness and knowledge even faster, effectively and efficiently.

In the transitory phases of their life, the youth are moulding their thoughts and beliefs, developing their identity and sense of self. ICH is intrinsically linked with identity and can aid the youth in the finding or reinforcing their identity.

These reasons suggest that the connection between the youth and their intangible heritage thus becomes a rather important one. However, today's events and happenings signal otherwise. The youth seem to be headed in a direction further away from ICH. Observing the indicators can provide an overview of the youth's vantage point, which can help design the research to understand their relationship with ICH and further their needs related to ICH.

Fig 10

Relevance decreases as effort increases



2.6 Indicators of the youth moving away from ICH

Today's youth are digital natives. The first generations since the onset of fast-paced globalization, contributing to humanity and the planet. Subjected to a continuous flow of increasing connectivity, once connected online it's easy to get pulled into the internet vortex (Moran & Salazar, 2018).

Overexposure

The youth today is said to be exposed to more information in one day than their ancestors saw in their lifetime (Vince, 2013). Distributed in attention to each task, their minds are continuously occupied. Experiencing life without connectivity is equivalent to not having time to deal with boredom or emotions (Zomorodi, 2017).

"We're training and conditioning a whole new generation of people that when we are uncomfortable or lonely or uncertain or afraid we have a digital pacifier for ourselves that is kind of atrophying our own ability to deal with that."

Tristan Harris, former design ethicist at Google and co-founder of Centre for Humane Technologies (Source: The Social Dilemma, Netflix Documentary)

Overexposure can also be interpreted as the excessive exposure the youth has to world information and therefore the Western soft power⁷. This can lead to finding their own culture "uncool" or "boring".

Mass shift in popular culture

Although globalization as a phenomena, brings people closer through communication, it also escalates circumstances of "cultural prevarication and the imposition of certain cultural models over others" (Lanzerini, 2011). As more youth get used to the standardized common practices, the richness and variety of cultural diversity thus wanes, making humanity more and more homogenous. As stated before, the nuances that come with "living" heritage when lost, lead to a loss of authentic and peculiar expressions of individuals or communities. ICH thus takes a back seat, becoming another brick in the wall.

Fragmented Identity

The media consumption can also make the youth feel disconnected with their own culture and identity. This can make the gap between the youth and their community larger, especially with the older generations such as parents and grandparents.

"I used to watch FRIENDS [referring to the sitcom] while growing up in India. I found it easier to relate to the characters in the show. It was very different from the life at home."

Youth Participant, 28

2.7 Key Learnings

With the context explored, the learnings taken for further research with the youth were set out:

ICH is a difficult topic to grasp, as it is a multi-layered concept. Therefore, it needs a substantial amount of guidance to understand it sufficiently. During research activities, setting aside enough time for explanations and questions is essential.

Knowledge about ICH is tacit. Therefore, speaking about ICH may be easier with an anchor in personal examples as both ICH and relevance are abstract topics.

Each person has experienced their own ICH. It is also linked to their own culture and identity. Hence, it is essential to work with examples of ICH.

Relevance is relative. For each example, it is necessary to understand when it matters and when it does not.

2.8 Conclusion

In conclusion to the chapter, one of the key factors to the youth's distancing from their cultural heritage is the unawareness of their own ICH. Intangibility by itself is a difficult concept to grasp and highly susceptible to being warped or forgotten when the knowledge is not passed through the generations. ICH is ephemeral and is open to interpretation which further reinforces the idea of its delicate nature.

The youth's overexposure to information and shift in cultural preferences have fragmented their identity, leading to estrangement from their own culture, identity and subsequently from themselves. But, the youth are the future of the society, the leaders and decision makers of tomorrow. Making ICH relevant to the youth is an important step to reinforce the intrinsic identity of the young adults for a more aware and conscious future.

7. "Soft Power is the ability of a country to get what it wants through attraction rather than coercion. By tapping the tool of Soft Power, a country can earn respect and elevate its global position." (Ghani, 2021)

03

Exploring relevance between the youth and their ICH

3.1 Introduction

3.2 ICH in the youth's life

3.2.1 Approach: Workshops

3.2.2 Youth's needs related to ICH

3.3 Challenges with meeting the youth's needs

3.3.1 Approach: Interviews

3.3.2 Perspectives of the Propagators and Custodian

3.4 Key Takeaways

3.5 Conclusion

Chapter 03: Exploring relevance between the youth and their ICH

The main considerations for making ICH relevant to the youth are discussed in this chapter. The participatory research approach taken to discover the youth's relationship with their ICH is explored. Next to that, interview insights from the custodians and propagators help gain a holistic perspective of the existing challenges related to the youth and ICH in the heritage field. The chapter concludes with the youth's needs essential to making ICH relevant in their lives.

3.1 Introduction

Having gained a deep understanding of ICH and having uncovered the reasons the youth and ICH may mutually benefit from a close relationship, we go further into the project into locating the youths' needs with regards to building this relationship. Simultaneously, the propagators and custodians current engagements with the youth, the challenges and wishes are also investigated. Specifically, the three sub-research questions are explored through participatory workshops with the youth and semi-structured interviews with the propagators and custodians.

RQ1 – How can youth be supported in finding ICH relevant?

RQ2 – What challenges do the propagators experience while engaging the youth with ICH?

RQ3 – How can we identify and integrate the desires the custodians have for the youth and ICH?

A simultaneous analysis phase helped in making sense of the findings and learnings from the research carried out in the research phase. The findings also helped in iterating the workshops during the research phase. An analysis (Appendix C) was done again to form a collection of findings called themes. The themes are frequently occurring patterns observed in the research.

3.2 ICH in the youth's life

3.2.1 Approach: Workshops

ICH being rooted in context and personal experiences, the research with the youth needed to stimulate the generation of insights through discussion that help the participants observe and reflect on their interactions with ICH examples from their own lives. Known as generative technique, the approach regards the youth as the "expert of their own experience" to elicit sharing "their feelings, opinions and anecdotes" (Hao et al., 2017).

The design of the workshops with the youth takes inspiration from a generative technique called Research through Design, wherein the use of design activities leads to the generation of knowledge (Stappers & Giaccardi, 2017). Especially when researching for the non-obvious or tacit knowledge residing in peoples' experiences, needs or values, it can be challenging for the participants to reflect on the "abstract qualities that people are not often used to talking about directly" (Sanders et al., 2012).

The main goal of the workshops was to tacit knowledge generation about the relevance of ICH in the youth's lives through personal examples.

Answer RQ1 – How can youth be supported in finding ICH relevant?

Method

From the guidelines for research established in the previous chapter, three workshops (Appendix B) were designed and conducted several times. Observations and insights gained from conducting the first and/or second time led to decisions to either continue, discontinue or iterate on the workshops to conduct again.

It was decided that further research would be conducted with youth participants in Delft and those who had international exposure to make the project manageable.

The invitation to recruit the youth participants was accompanied by a small description of ICH and how their participation can inform the research. Interested individuals could indicate their level of participation based on time and format (online or offline).

A total of 20 young adults participated in the workshops. They represented diverse backgrounds from Spain, Basque, Netherlands, India, Romania, Indonesia, Mexico, China, Bolivia and Italy.

In preparation the participants were asked to think of and bring to the workshop 3 examples of intangible heritage that represent their unique culture and identity. Each of the three examples were used as an inlet to deconstruct the relevance of their ICH in their life now.

- What makes them value each example?
- What makes the examples matter to them?
- What examples do they pass by?

The workshop materials were analysed based on themes or clusters of similar information. The captured insights led to an overview of the reasons ICH is relevant or not to the youth.

Limitations

The participants were mainly recruited through the personal contacts and agency of the researcher. Thus, none of the youth participants had the disturbed backgrounds experienced by a refugee or a young immigrant. Youth who have had experiences of instability may have a different kind of connection to their ICH and to that of the new country.

3.2.2 Youth's needs related to ICH

Collected from the workshops conducted with the youth participants, the main insights supporting the RQ1 are elaborated below.

Sharing with someone from a different perspective

The main emphasis in every workshop when discussing any form of ICH example was clearly on the spirit of sharing of the experiences or memories the youth had had with their example. A majority of the participants confirmed that to have a meaningful personal connection with ICH, mainly relies on having someone to share their heritage with. Mentioning that deliberate realization only occurs when asked, they explained sharing or communicating about the heritage puts the heritage in the front of their mind, which otherwise may usually be a back-of-the-mind consideration. It brings to the mind the question, "What is typical for my community?".

Two main instances were pointed out wherein ICH takes a prominent space in their current lives.

- When introducing an outsider to their heritage

"I need to have to explain to an outsider [of my culture] to be aware of what's typical for my culture, what's worth sharing and preserving."

Youth Participant, Netherlands

- When thinking of "what" to pass on to their future generations

"Till I have children, I don't feel I will be settled in one place. My culture, it'll be mixing and blurring with other cultures."

Youth Participant, Spain

The participants discussed being part of many groups, but they do not specifically spend time with groups that understand "their" heritage. As global citizens, the youth seems to be constantly met with a dilemma between the western perspective which focuses on individual expression and the eastern perspective which is oriented towards a community expression.

"I am always thinking as an Indian - what to cook, what to watch, who am I going to talk to... But when I am outside, I have to be "western". It is important for me to be with people from the Netherlands, to learn about them and what they do."

Youth Participant, India

During the workshops itself, many times the participants expressed that they hadn't thought about their intangible heritage with such intent to share what matters to them about their culture. Thus, the workshop setting provided the space to introduce their heritage to another person (either other participants or the researcher) and prompted the youth to share about their ICH.

From this, it is clear that sharing is one of the core needs of the youth to be prompted towards thinking and speaking about their ICH. However, for sharing ICH one needs to think about what is typical for their culture and identity. This happens when a youth is sharing with someone who is not from the same background, encountering someone who is different from them or with a different perspective.

Reinforcing Identity

A recurring observation in the workshop was that of self-image. The participants discussed where their heritage gives them an opportunity to be accepted in social groups. Not just was the acceptance in a social setting responsible for the self-image or self-esteem of the youth participants but also the idea of being able to stand out in a group. This points to the social aspect of identity. They told each other stories about constantly seeking new experiences to carry with themselves as a narrative to their personal identity to share with others. Examples of wearing clothes and ornaments from their culture or territory especially to invite conversations or give the other person a sense of who they are came up. A participant shares:

"I often wear this blouse [holding up a blouse with local embroidery] because it represents my love for colour. I can share why I wear it. It's like I can wear my story."

Youth Participant, Mexico

With such examples, it became evident that often ICH is regarded as important by the youth if there is pride associated with their ICH. As the youth participants discussed wanting to share their culture-related stories with others they stressed on wanting to have interesting and unique stories to tell about themselves. This implies that they want to be different from each other.

Nonetheless, the participants also shared their desire for new experiences, they also wished to meet different people. They clarified that they are in search of others (from different cultures) who can expand their purview of the world.

An indirect link to identity and recognizing the value of cultural traditions was made in one of the workshops. The participants speculated that when they see value and power in ICH practices, they long or yearn to have it as part of their life (therefore, also identity) because having it means life could be different. I observed two specific manifestations in their examples:

1. The youth finds ICH useful in life today.
2. The youth realizes, "others don't have it, I have the privilege"⁸.

This confirms that ICH strengthens the sense of identity among the youth to feel unique about themselves.

Safe space

As the youth felt pride and uniqueness associated with their heritage and identity, many also discussed the presence of unpleasant memories, the misalignment of their ICH with their current values and the rigidity associated with examples of heritage.

Pleasant and unpleasant memories both have a role in how the youth perceive their ICH. One participant tells the story of his memories with bullfighting:

"My grandfather and father would take me to watch the bullfights when I was younger. I don't say this normally but I really enjoyed it. But as a child I did not know what was wrong with it. But the memories with them, I cherish those. The global setting is more like, "you should forget about it because it is embarrassing". "

Youth Participant, Mexico

8. Youth participant from Romania

This example shows that if the youth has good memories of their ICH even if they don't practice today, the participants cared for that example of ICH. The idea that came up in the ongoing discussion was to **keep the memory but lose the practice**. Similarly, if the youth have memories of shame or pain associated with ICH, it may be remembered but not practised too. The case in point was depicted in another workshop by a participant who empathized with the circumstances of women a few years before, about the practice of wives fasting in India for the long life of their husband. During the discussion, the participant indicated that these memories are important to know this "other side of my culture":

"I was raised around educated women and I was never forced to do anything. But it is important to know these stories, so that we do not carry on or preserve traditions that diminish women by keeping inequality alive. Karvachauth (the name of the fasting tradition) is still practised by many today - it shows there are different goals for boys and girls, men and women."

Youth Participant, India

It is apparent that the significance of ICH is lower when unpleasant memories are associated with it. But it cannot be overlooked that such instances of ICH are also linked to the person sharing them and therefore, the identity of the youth. Hence, **for such discussions, a safe space is required to speak about ICH practices that could be looked down upon by others. There is hesitation and fear to share it.**

3.2.3 Key Learning

Provocateurs instead of Propagators

During the research, it was observed that the design activities themselves were an intervention. The position of the designer or researcher nudging a person to think about their ICH examples was enough to get the train of thought started. This led to the insight that ICH propagation needs provocateurs, rather than propagators, who can introduce the concept and start these conversations by asking the right questions.

This insight points to the "translation" of ICH in an easy and relatable manner. This role entails having knowledge of both worlds - that of the heritage field and that of the youth. The translation is required to dissipate the tensions that may arise due to a difference in language and attitudes, reinstating the role of a safe space and guidance.

ICH frozen in time

The biggest demotivators of relevance was the aspect of the youth participant's example of ICH being stuck in time, only to become archaic or impractical for the current time. When living heritage gets too religious or puts restrictions, the evolution stops. Here the role of memory becomes evident. Revisiting the bull fight example, it may seem like a shameful practice to the ones without a memory attached to the practice. But the memory lives in the minds of the community even if the practice dies out.

3.3 Challenges with meeting the youth's needs related to ICH

3.3.1 Approach: Interviews

This section reflects the combined insights from the interviews with the propagators and custodians on challenges they experience when attempting to engage the youth with ICH.

With the semi-structured interviews, the main goal was to create a safe space for an equal exchange during the conversations. The propagators and custodians represented the groups the youth have limited access to and vice versa. Some insights from the workshops with the youth were shared during the conversations as a researcher representing the youth. Reciprocity drove the dialogues wherein both, the researcher and the propagator or the custodians, did not assume a dominant role.

Method

Eleven semi-structured interviews were conducted with those from heritage organizations who were identified as propagators of ICH and six with those who were identified as custodians. The propagators and custodians were identified based on the description of research groups established in the scope of the project (see section 1.2). Conducted remotely via video calls with both the groups, the conversations were guided through a set of prepared questions (see Appendix D). The focus remained on their previous and current approaches and involvement with engaging young adults in ICH as well as the challenges they have faced/ are facing in their own work and/or at their organization.

3.3.2 Perspective of the propagators and custodians

Collected from the workshops conducted with the youth participants, the main insights supporting the RQ2 and RQ3 are elaborated below.

Time of distance

The main finding that stood out in a majority of the interviews with both propagators and custodians was that they did not actively seek the young adults.

The propagators mentioned actively only seeking adolescents of ages below 20 years. One of the main reasons that propagators did not seek the youth between 18 to 30 years was attributed to their observation that "the youth seems to take a distance from ICH during this phase of their lives"⁹. The distance was linked to the "life making" activities the young adults are involved with at this time. A disconnection was identified here illustrating that propagators reach individuals in an educational setting and then later when the individuals have surpassed their young adulthood. It appears that the young adults may be more difficult to reach since they are no longer in school and therefore harder to place.

Custodians, however, did not specifically have a focus on the young adults. Most of them admitted to having little to no outreach for the young adults. Custodians with a focus on tradition or teachings (such as Native American Hopi wisdom teachings) believed that a person needs to be "ready" for the knowledge the custodians have to offer. They let the youth be "busy" with the life building activities in the 18-30 ages, acknowledging that "they are important phases in a youth's life".

9. Propagator from WIE

"I don't reach out to the youth. In Hopi [tradition], you 'walk your talk', I am a living teaching. My reach is the people I meet. If someone is interested, I will notice."
Custodian, Hopi Elder in Netherlands

On the contrary, the custodians whose ICH was skills or practice-related (such as celebrating the festival of Nowruz) explained that they explicitly did not wait for the person to "seek" the ICH. Rather, they stay open to anyone who wishes to participate in the practice. They believed that the practice can aid life building activities.

We can assume that the young adults, still in various transition stages to adulthood, are on their individual journey. It might be difficult for them to even realize that ICH can be efficacious to their life building activities since they are unaware of its existence. Therefore, it is important that young adults encounter ICH in spaces or contexts they prioritize in their twenties.

Not knowing where to start

As the propagators and custodians do not engage with the youth, as they mentioned, they are faced with a dilemma about where to start. Mainly, it starts at making the ICH offering, which is specific to a context or locality. The propagators and custodians consider the youth global citizens who have interests inclined to popular culture. Both the groups admitted to having less experience with the tools and platforms used by the youth today. Therefore, their communication with the youth is limited.

Another reason mentioned was the lack of insights to appeal to the youth. On further investigation, it seemed that the low motivation to research on the youth was inflated because of the lack of funds and people. Research is considered a substantial investment by both groups.

It can be concluded that the estranged relation between the propagators and the youth for reasons like lack of resources play a significant role in hindering the youth's involvement in ICH.

Heritage needs youth, youth needs heritage

The relationship between the propagators and the youth was concisely put by one of the interviewees as the classic "elder and seeker" or "guru and disciple" relationship. Both sides have their reasons. On the one hand, propagators come from a place of sheer experience and expertise in the field. They accept the slow pace of propagating ICH. But they also seem unreachable by the youth as they tend to stick to tried and tested methods and techniques. On the other hand, the youth need instant gratification. They feel entitled to be heard and recognized for their time and efforts. Both sides need each other but there is a need to understand each other's perspectives.

Furthermore, most of the propagators acknowledged that organizations and institutions have heritage professionals who are either seen holding on to authority and control or welcoming newness and innovation. The variability in approach seems to stem from the need to uphold quality and reputation within the field.

Another reason mentioned was that the propagator 'tasks' usually end up taking most energy. These tasks were responsibilities related to producing the necessary standard documents and reports. The propagators working at an institutional level spoke of being highly understaffed, underfunded, and the employees underpaid. It was apparent that the propagators who work in the heritage field usually contribute because of their passion for cultural heritage. Thus, having new and young team members was not actively pursued.

On asking further about the involvement of young adults in their ICH related works, it became clear that the ongoing professional involvement of the youth in propagating organization is usually only on a volunteer, intern or a campaign basis, many times without sufficient compensation. My understanding points to the fact that young adults need more professional and financial security. Therefore, such an approach to youth engagement may give a feeling of "temporarily needed". In my opinion, to engage the youth, small but incremental strides need to be made to bring in youth participation at the professional and organizational level.

The interviewed propagators reasserted that the heritage community is often hanging on to their tried and tested methods. My assumption is that, for the newer times we are in, the youth adults seldom absorb what is being propagated. The audiences the propagators are trying to reach must be represented within the governance of heritage organizations to invite new ideas and new energies - a strategy also endorsed by Simon (Simon, 2016). The young adults can be the insiders who lead and usher the age groups they know, understand and represent best.

Current communication and follow-up

During the interviews, it was evident that propagation to the youth is often limited in communication. For instance, a museum experience on ICH ends after the visit to the museum is over. This is to say that there are no actionable anchors for the youth to hold onto or takeaway. There are no clear follow ups after the engagement at the museum. I observed that seldom effort is made to make a lasting impact with clear actions points to keep the youth engaged for the long term.

Although the propagators are experts at delivery, they are not experts on the content (which is usually the custodian of ICH). Here the challenge arises when the curation stops at executing the plan. When the youth does encounter the ICH, the questions the youth have may not be sufficiently answered. However, the presumption is that the propagators may also feel low responsibility towards the questions of the youth as the questions are not raised by the propagators themselves. I speculate that the propagators seldom put themselves in the youth's shoes.

As we see, it is important to not only communicate about ICH in a relatable manner but also connect it to the youth's life to address the questions they may have or the discussions they are having outside. This way, by making ICH familiar to them would increase the likelihood of the youth feeling connected with the example of ICH.

Fear of offending

During the workshop, the youth participants also spoke of the fear of misappropriating ICH practices. Without the original meaning, the practice may be seen as imitative or suggestive. While a small percentage of custodians are very sensitive about the dilution and new approaches, other custodians believe that the original value of ICH should not be misunderstood or distorted. The stories and explanations can have different forms, expressions or interpretations. Meaning the original message of the teaching may stay the same but whether it is delivered through a verse, a game or a ritual. This reinstates the need for not just a safe space but also sharing among the custodian and youth about the ICH, to understand the custodian's view on the evolution of their knowledge and practice.

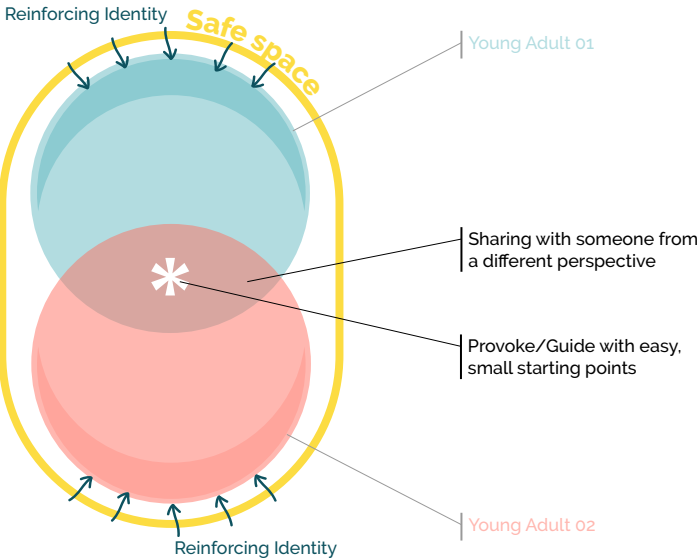


Fig 11
Visual Summary of insights and key takeaways

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DESIGN
Design should be set in a context that the youth frequents and feels familiar with, to enable the youth to see parallels in their life and ICH <i>(from 3.3.2)</i>
Design should cater to making it easy for the propagators and custodians to get started with engaging with the youth. <i>(from 3.3.2)</i>
Design should allow for young adults to participate in ICH related activities and practices. <i>(from 3.3.2)</i>
Design should prompt a dialogue between the custodians and the youth. <i>(from 3.3.3)</i>

Table 03
Overview of the considerations for the design

3.4 Key Takeaways

The tables below summarises the main insights from the previous sections, identifying the criteria for design and considerations for design. Criteria earmarks the goals the design must meet in order to make ICH relevant to the youth, while considerations are factors to take into account while designing (table 03 and 04).

3.5 Conclusions

In summary, with this chapter we answer the three sub research questions. Uncovering the youth's needs, we see ICH is relevant in their lives when they share their experiences and memories to those who are outsiders to their heritage, they reinforce their identity and self-image to feel belonging by sharing their uniqueness in a safe and non-judgemental space.

Parallely, we discover the challenges faced by custodians and propagators due to the growing gap between the generations, a general fear of offending each other and distorting the value of the ICH through misinterpretation and misappropriation.

One of the main lessons was that rather than propagators, creating relevance of ICH among the youth needs provocateurs. Collectively, these insights led to the formation of design criteria and considerations. Youth's needs are translated into design criteria and propagator's challenges are translated into considerations.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGN
Sharing with those from a different perspective Sharing about ICH happens in a diverse context. That's when the youth thinks about their cultural identity. <i>(from 3.2.2)</i>
Reinforcement of identity through sharing Prompting the conversation on ICH inherently leads to speaking about identity – which is important for the youth to reinforce their sense of self. <i>(from 3.2.2)</i>
Safe space for the sharing A safe space is necessary for the sharing as there is possibility for tension, difference of opinions or conflict that could arise with certain controversial ICH practices. <i>(from 3.2.2)</i>
Nudging or guiding the youth into thinking about ICH Sharing can be prompted by someone who understands both – youth and heritage to get the youth started with thinking about ICH. <i>(from 3.2.3)</i>

Table 04
Overview of the criteria for the design

04

Identity and ICH

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Identity Framework
- 4.3 Other epiphanies for design
- 4.4 Key Takeaways
- 4.5 Conclusion

Chapter 04: Identity and ICH

This chapter brings together identity related research insights together and visualizes the relationship between identity and heritage. Captured in a framework, the chapter elaborates on how a person realizes during their various life-stages up until young adulthood that identity given from ancestry, territory or nationality is different from identity one experiences in a globalized world they live in today. Further, this chapter makes clear the rationale to focus on identity for the rest of this project.

4.1 Introduction

Throughout the research phase, identity and the ICH examples often went hand in hand. While making sense of the connections of the various themes elaborated in the previous chapter, an understanding about identity and how it is experienced by the young adults in relation to their heritage became clear. I was able to create a framework to illustrate my analysis pointing towards the relationship between ICH and identity. This version of the framework presented here emerged through iterations based on my conversations with people and gathering their perspective.

Identity explained by Howard (2000) is how one "locates themselves" in a social context. Identity and its relation to heritage can be perceived very differently in a globalized context, mainly because earlier "societies were more stable, identity was to a great extent assigned, rather than selected or adopted" (Howard, 2000). Today social influences from their peers and media nudges young adults to know themselves better while meeting the demands of constant fast paced changes around them.

The youth between 18-30 years is constantly constructing their identity as they are transitioning from teenage to young adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Benson & Elder Jr, 2011; Erikson, 1968). As they are in the life making phase, building a sense of self helps them make autonomous decisions (Benson & Elder Jr, 2011) by choosing to shape their behaviour. This is also a time in the youth's life when they are trying to feel secure with themselves, moving from dependence to self-reliance (Whitney-Thomas & Moloney, 2001).

While finding their authentic identity, personal conflicts arise from the years of conditioning they were subjected to from childhood to adolescence. Many times this conditioning could be a result of the assigned or given identity (such as gender, ethnicity, language, nationality, etc), out of which some reflect instances of intangible heritage.

Therefore, personal identity development is the challenging part, it needs the know-how and interactions to help reflect on the development process. Getting started can be challenging too. How might one "locate themselves" in a global social context? Often, it can be too confronting to think about:

- How did I get here?
- Where do I want to go?

There could be multiple answers today as compared to the stable or linear answers our ancestors could once give. Here is where an identity crisis can happen.

This framework also intended to address the propagator and custodians dilemmas related to making context-specific or local ICH relevant to young adults who are global citizens and have a global identity.

4.2 Identity Framework

It is useful to understand how the youth is introduced to various identities right from their formative years, how it is layered as they grow up with new identity labels and where they place themselves today. The overview on a person's identity is also intended to support the design of the new touchpoints in reconnecting the youth and their ICH.

This framework (fig xx.) helps to visualize the various components, when put together, construct a person's current identity.

4.2.1 Historic Identity

Historic Identity makes up the identity one already has by birth, by family or by lineage. A child when born has no control over this identity. They start by merely and merrily replicating the family's identity. One of the youth participants gives her example saying:

When I was younger than adolescent, I followed. First my mom chose for me, what I wore or what I did. Then when I grew a bit older, I started making these decisions myself (choosing my own piñata) but I was also subtly following what everyone was doing, what my favourite TV show had and other such things. That's when I started to have a sense of who I am and what I want to portray about myself and what I liked.

Youth participant, Mexico

Many times, historic identity is heavily influenced by what the family does and chooses as a whole. When reflecting on it, it seems imposed. Pointing out to examples of the given (or at times, imposed) identity labels were those that were intertwined with religion. Thus, substantial part of many discussions with the youth was a debate on religious connotations being intertwined with heritage

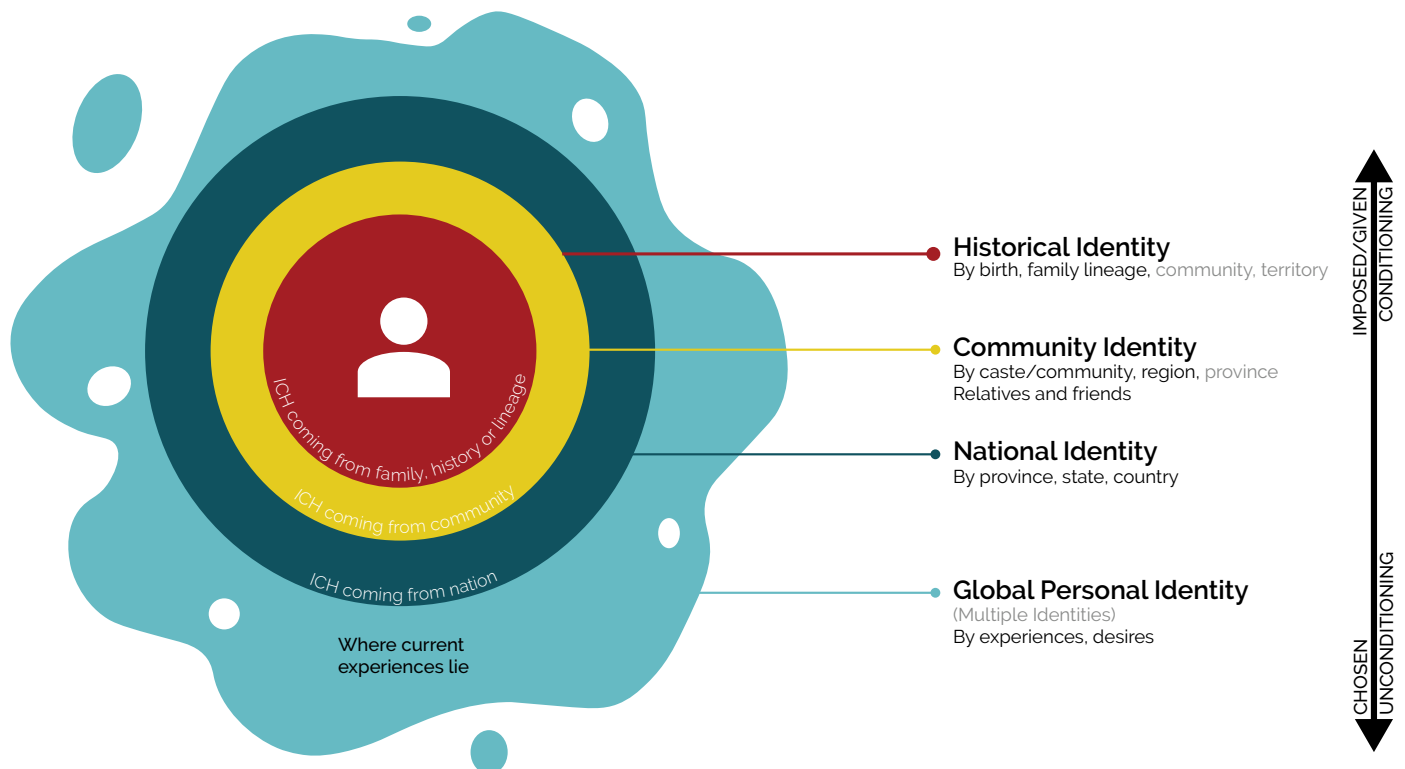


Fig 12
Identity Framework

It is worth recalling an observation that when a child comes across ICH stemming from their historic identity, many questions arise about the ICH. Extracting from another story of a participant, who as a young girl, often questioned, "Why is mom not allowed to touch the plants or make food every few days?" My interpretation is that ICH then makes sense in the mind when these questions are answered by the family member based on the need - is the child looking for an emotional, spiritual or intellectual answer to reason with their curiosity? The role of a living elder becomes crucial here. The elder senses the child's need and provides an appropriate answer. The elder can also answer oncoming follow-up questions. When the reasoning is clear, the ICH expression seems sensible.

While the same ICH when looking back as an adult, needs to align with the personal values and belief systems of the person. Therefore, ICH served as a piece of a religious event or activity that affected the adoption of the practice by the youth too. The belief system and faith of an individual were the deciding factor when living cultural practices intertwined with religion.

4.2.2 Community Identity

As the child grows up, new facets of identity start to come into play with the groups they become part of - relatives, friends. This identity reinforces that a person is part of a community, region or territory and sometimes the caste they are told they belong to.

A youth participant from China explained the story of how she realized she was part of a bigger whole (than her immediate family) after the local government urged its people to use the Henan dialect.

"I cannot speak the Henan dialect although I was born here. I knew about it from when I was a child, but this knowledge about it was not passed generation to generation but by others around me."
Youth Participant, China

Here is where tensions can start to arise as one starts getting exposed to identity labels. The labels sometimes define what ICH is practiced by one versus another. Think of it as compartmentalization - putting someone in the confines of one category. When this categorization becomes evident, people seek different behaviours than their immediate community. An example would be a teenager who wants to do different things than their parents to break free from the ICH that does not make sense to them or does not make them "cool" in their peers or the groups they belong to.

4.2.3 National Identity

On the way to adulthood, one also starts to realize that they are part of yet a bigger category that comes with their state, province, country or continent.

Here tensions or appreciation for being part of a collective identity surface. Terms related to race and nationality are used, such as "native", "black", "asian", "Surinamese", "latino". The use of these identity labels typecast the person. What about a person who was born and raised in the Netherlands but the parents' home country is India? Is this person Indian or Dutch? Selasi (Selasi, 2015) also addresses the "limiting traps that the language of coming from countries sets, the privileging of a fiction - the singular country, over reality: human experience" in her TED Talk 'Don't Ask Where I'm From, Ask Where I'm A Local'. She explains that a country becomes home because of the experiences a person has in various places.

4.4.4 Global Personal Identity

Where one is today is influenced by experiences in the historic, community and national identities in varying proportions. Global personal identity is where the current experience and desires lie. It is a shape-shifting, amoeba-like identity where one chooses for themselves. It allows a person to leave behind what they don't find relevant and integrate what they find interesting to make part of themselves. This adapting and transforming identity often gives an impression of the various identities a person is made up of.

Every person has a historic, community and national identities in different proportions based on their situations and experiences in life so far. Another aspect of this framework is that the proportions change as the person changes. For each person, this framework is authentic and dynamic to where they are now, from the vantage point of today. Borrowing from Yunkaporta's metaphor of a kaleidoscope of identities (Yunkaporta, 2020), these identities are always a part of us. It depends when and how you see the patterns in the interplay of imposed and chosen identities.

The youth is either resonating with ICH based on conditioning or is trying to uncondition themselves as they discover their personal belief systems. According to me, finding instances of ICH relevant is tied with the alignment of the living heritage with their personal values and belief systems.

Limitations of the framework

The framework comes with the limitation that it does not consider all realities in this project. For example, it does not account for those who have disturbed situations - refugees, second generation immigrants or those who kept moving through their lives, estranged from their roots. Even though the identity framework would be useful to them too, the research participants were not representative of those with disturbed or displaced backgrounds. Having said that, the framework either needs to be validated with them or new research should be conducted to consider their connections with ICH.

Fig 13
Metaphor
Seeing your different identities
through a kaleidoscope

4.3 Other epiphanies for design

4.3.1 Start with Global Personal Identity

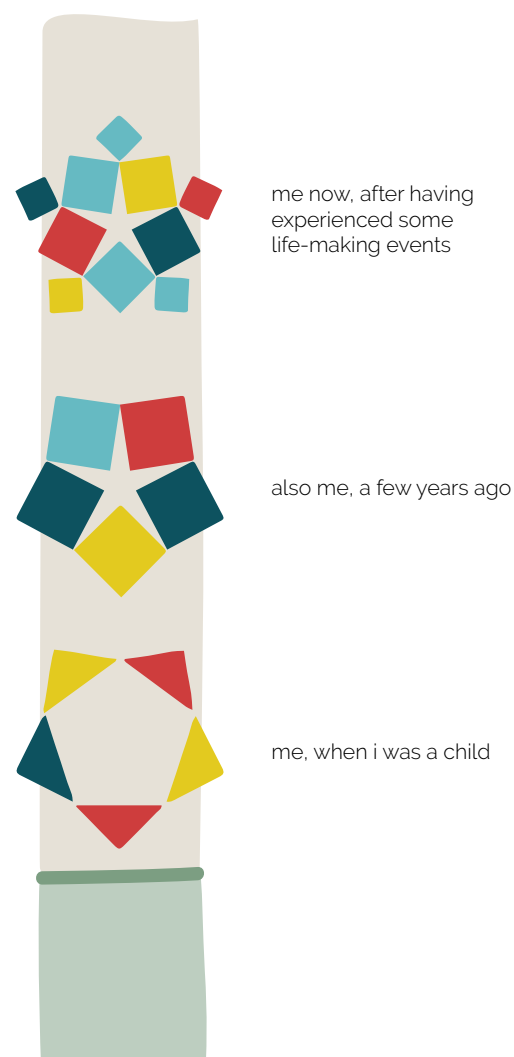
Each example from the participants resounded a connection with their personal values and conditioning. No matter if they chose to leave an ICH practice behind, the rationale for association or disassociation with ICH came from the combination of how they wish to portray themselves to their social networks and their desires or ambitions for themselves. Having a sense of their own/original cultural heritage acted as a template to define and display their identity.

Which means, for the design to be interesting and relevant enough for the youth who are global citizens, it needs to be introduced through their current experiences and desires which lie in their Global Personal Identity. For example, asking the youth to come for a traditional music event may not be as appealing as coming for a fusion musical festival.

4.3.2 Time and Space for Reflection

Developing identity needs an individual's own pace. Depending on the past influences and current context, each individual requires a set of tools. These tools can enable the youth to self-pace their identity development in a safe space devoid of the social pressures.

Developing identity is also aided by the youth's own experiences. Allowing them to stumble upon new discoveries while rediscovering themselves. Interactions with new people drive these experiences. These interactions thrive on talking and sharing with others. The questions also posed by others kick-starts a sub-conscious reflection.



4.4 Key Takeaways

The table below builds on criteria and considerations for design established in the previous chapter. Identifying them criteria for design and considerations for design. Criteria earmarks the goals the design must meet in order to make ICH relevant to the youth, while considerations are factors to take into account while designing.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DESIGN
Design should be set in a context that the youth frequents and feels familiar with, to enable the youth to see parallels in their life and ICH <i>(from 3.3.2)</i>
Design should cater to making it easy for the propagators and custodians to get started with engaging with the youth. <i>(from 3.3.2)</i>
Design should allow for young adults to participate in ICH related activities and practices. <i>(from 3.3.2)</i>
Design should prompt a dialogue between the custodians and the youth. <i>(from 3.3.3)</i>
Design should tap into the current needs and desires of the youth as a way to get to ICH. <i>(from 4.3.1)</i>

Table 05
Overview of the consideration for the design + the additional insights gained from this chapter

4.5 Conclusion

In summary, as much as identity is intrinsically woven with heritage, so is identity development. This chapter brings forth the trajectory of identities given at birth to when the person reaches young adulthood where they choose their identity as per their frame of references, desires and exposures. From the formative years, identity is layered with newer identity. First, historic identity, then community identity, on to national identity. Each of these identities have ICH intertwined with them. However, the youth's current desires and experiences lie in the global personal identity. Therefore, it is important to tap into the current desires and experiences of the youth as a way to their ICH. Ample self paced reflections contribute to the youth's discovery of their own ICH and therefore their identity. The combination of sharing and reflection on ICH can drive identity development.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGN
Sharing with those from a different perspective Sharing about ICH happens in a diverse context. That's when the youth thinks about their cultural identity. <i>(from 3.2.2)</i>
Reinforcement of identity through sharing Prompting the conversation on ICH inherently leads to speaking about identity – which is important for the youth to reinforce their sense of self. <i>(from 3.2.2)</i>
Safe space for the sharing A safe space is necessary for the sharing as there is possibility for tension, difference of opinions or conflict that could arise with certain controversial ICH practices. <i>(from 3.2.2)</i>
Nudging or guiding the youth into thinking about ICH Sharing can be prompted by someone who understands both – youth and heritage to get the youth started with thinking about ICH. <i>(from 3.2.3)</i>
Self-paced reflection on own ICH leads to reinforcing identity Time and space are essential when reflection on identity which could be guided by a tool or set of tools they can use by themselves. The tool(s) serve as the guide. <i>(from 4.3.2)</i>

Table 06
Overview of the criteria for the design + the additional insights gained from this chapter

05

Bridge to design

- 5.1 Reframed design goal
- 5.2 Design Drivers
- 5.3 Visual Summary

Chapter 05: Bridge to design

This chapter is a transition from the research to the design phase. Before getting started with the design phase, this bridging chapter articulates a reframed design direction based on the learnings from the previous chapters. Further a visual summary reinstates the requirements for design as established earlier in the criteria and considerations for design.

5.1 Reframed design goal

Initially the formulated brief focused on finding the gaps between propagators and the youth. After the analysis, the emergent theme was that ICH is inherently linked with the identity of an individual, which can be reinforced by sharing own examples of ICH with others and by reflecting on it. Therefore, the new design goal can be stated as:

To enable and guide young adults who are global citizens with identity development through sharing and reflection while exploring ICH.

Evidently, the design deliverable is aimed to be a self-paced guide to exploring ICH for young adults experiencing global citizenship. This exploration in turn makes the young adults realize the cultural nuances in their own identity. The two main mechanisms to enable this are sharing and reflection - sharing their own ICH with others and reflecting on their experiences with ICH.

5.2 Design Drivers

Based on the insights gained from the research phase, the established criteria for design and the reframed design goal, a set of priorities were defined to drive the design phase.

First

- The design should enable the youth to reconnect with ICH to enrich their personal development and build an identity of choice. *(from 4.3.1)*

Second

- The design should be connected to other parts of the youth's life to enable adoption. *(from 2.4.1 and 3.3.2)*
- The design must provide direction to the question "What can I do with this newly received knowledge?". Therefore, it should be layered to self-prompt action, recurrence and reciprocity on the ICH. *(from 3.2.2)*

Third

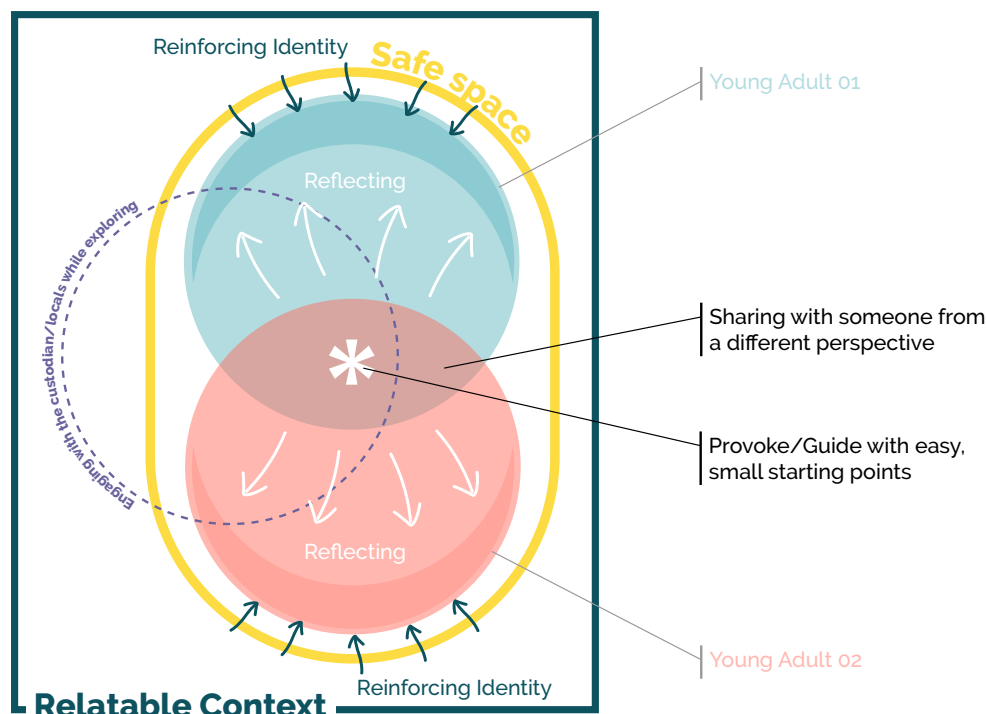
- The design must mutually reinforce the stakeholders involved. An equal exchange is necessary to keep the partners and the youth involved and interested. *(from 3.2.2)*
- The design should give clarity on:
 - WHO the ICH is relevant to?
 - WHAT is relevant to the youth group when considering a particular instance of ICH?*(from 2.4.1 and 3.3.2)*

5.3 Visual Summary

The visual below illustrates the criteria for design established in chapters 03 and 04.

Fig 14

Visual summary of design criteria



06

Design space and Proposal

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Target Users
 - 6.2.1 Identifying target users
 - 6.2.2 Archetypes
- 6.3 Iterative Approach
- 6.4 The Hidden Culture Experience
 - 6.4.1 Experience
 - 6.4.2 Journey
 - 6.3.2 Rationale
- 6.5 Conclusion

Chapter 06: Design space and Proposal

In this chapter the solution space is explored. After another set of iterative cycles undertaken to generate ideas, the ideas are tested to make a selection of ideas for further development. This chapter elaborates the design proposal of the Hidden Culture experience.

6.1 Introduction

With the design goal stated, the next step was to make the future vision come alive in a tangible form. In order to do this, it was necessary to select a manageable context given the limited time for this project. First, the target user group was identified. Further, following idea generation, two concepts were selected for development. The selected concepts were integrated into one proposal based on the tests conducted with the youth participants. The final proposal was prototyped into a tangible form on a UI software called [Figma](#). During the evaluation, the interactivity of the prototype brought the concept to life and made it easy to relate with. The final concept proposal of the 'Hidden Culture Experience' is explained in detail as the manifestation of the design goal.

6.2 Target users

6.2.1 Identifying the target users

To identify the target user group, 7 people were asked the open ended question: **What is/was important in your 20s?**

Three popular answers emerged among many important things:

- Travel and exploration
- Relationships (friends, dating)
- Career or study related decisions

The preliminary ideation started with brainstorming and drawing ideas within each of the 3 identified important aspects of the 20s. I realized that the groups of users were still too broad, with distinct needs related to what they found important in their 20s. Therefore, it became necessary to scope further to not one user group.

Travel and Exploration

I deliberately chose to work within the context of travel and exploration as it fit with the criteria of encountering diverse perspectives. The youth during their 20s yearns to "explore a variety of possible life directions in love, work, and worldviews" (Arnett, 2000). The people who participated in providing insights on what is important in their 20s admitted that their "explorations during travel help expanding horizons" on how they perceive the world and themselves in it.

"As a 23 year old, I am still figuring out what I am, what I like and what I want. I have started doing more stuff alone. I have travelled alone. It was scary but also exciting, at times even lonely. I became way more independent. Before that I would never have imagined going to a restaurant alone and eating by myself. It definitely changed me, I think I grew up a bit. It made me open and accepting but I also learnt what is important to me."

Solo traveler 1, Netherlands

In addition, the decision to focus on solo travellers was taken, specifically having observed the common trend correlating solo travel with "finding yourself" among the young adults. This user group fit naturally as they seemed to have been on an identity reinforcing journey already.

"People always told me that when you travel you learn about yourself. Every time I travelled in India, I never felt I was learning about myself. On my first solo trip in my 20s, it was the first time it hit me that "I AM someone else", that I was defined by other things - I looked different, I would have to give some background about myself, explain what it means to be a Punjabi and where in the my country is my city located and why all of this was unique. Explaining all this to someone else made me realize "oh, I am this person".

And everytime someone would make a comment saying, "You're not Indian enough". I would wonder what this means? So, not only did I find a sense of self but I also felt like I was defending and protecting my identity."

Solo traveller 2, India

Solo traveller in this context refers to a young adult who has chosen to travel alone. Further the main characteristics of the solo traveller were determined. First, the solo traveller is characterised by the need or urge to travel by themselves in Europe. They are driven by the need to interact with the new place. Although comfortable being on their own, often a subtle (depending on the person) need to interact with people may also be present. They are looking to build their own collection of experiences and memories, free from the influences that they usually have in daily life. They value a different perspective on life because it expands their horizons. Consequently, their understanding of their own life becomes layered.

6.2.2 Types of Solo Travellers

From the stories of the people I informally spoke to, certain solo travel behaviours came forth. Some preferred to be independent during their explorations while the others sought company or made friends along the way. Some preferred to stay away from their phone while the others were digitally connected. As expected, their age correlated with their preferences. The axis below shows the different kinds of solo travellers.

This overview helped in the design phase to contextualize various scenarios and how their journeys could differ. It was also essential to understand these different kinds of solo travels to make the design offering nuanced.

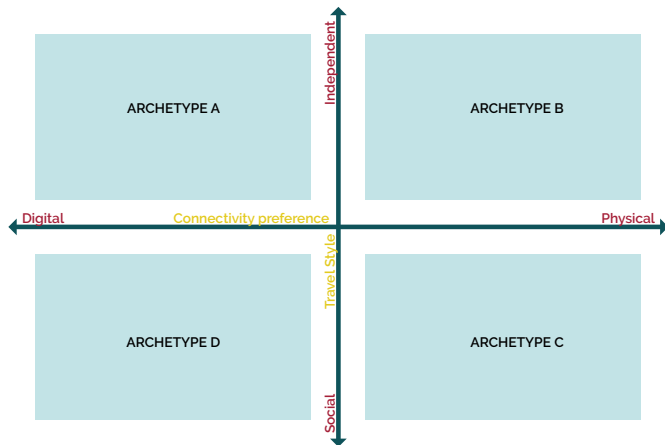


Fig 15

Solo travellers can be further distributed in to archetypes to distinguish their behaviours and interaction journeys

6.3 Iterative approach

Adopting another iterative cycle of ideating, designing and testing, a number of ideas were generated by brainstorming. Following that, two intermediate concepts were selected for further improvement based on quick conversational feedback from WIE and the youth. The initial ideas can be found in Appendix E.

6.4 The Hidden Culture Experience

From the early testing it became clear that both selected concepts had their strengths and drawbacks. Based on the feedback received during the testing, I decided to combine the two concepts, such that they complement each other. Staged in this section is the final concept and design proposal called the Hidden Culture Experience.

6.4.1 Experience

Since this proposal is an experience, it has several entry points for the solo traveller to come in contact with the Hidden Culture Experience. These entry points are specifically created to invite various types of solo travellers (elaborated in section 5.2.2), catering to preferences between digital or physical and social or independent for ICH exploration.

The experience has 3 main functions, to enable:

- Sharing and Reflecting
- Exploring and Reflecting
- Realizing and reinforcing identity

6.4.2 Journey

To explain the intricacies of the experience, we journey with three characters - Hari, Blaze and Skye (Appendix F), in this section. These characters are based on the archetypes of solo travellers described in section 5.2.2. The goal of the experience is to give our youth characters a taste of reflection on their own ICH and sharing about their ICH with those from different perspectives while they explore and travel.

*It is important to note, these journeys are best case scenarios (further addressed in section 8.2).

We will understand their journeys in the following order:

1. When and how do they come in contact with the entry point for the experience?
2. How do they join the experience?
3. What does their participation look like?
4. How to maintain their experience?
5. What happens when they are done with the experience?

First contact with the experience

Each character embarks onto the Hidden Culture Experience through one of the entry points. There are three entry points - two offline and one online. The entry points bring the young adults in contact with the experience. Therefore, these are different for different individuals depending upon their needs and behaviours.

Joining the experience

On having the first contact with the experience, the youth can voluntarily choose to join the experience. Therefore, there needs to be sufficient information available for the youth to consider joining the experience. This stage already gives them an insight on how they can participate in the experience.

Participating in the experience

Once the youth does decide to join the experience, they can now participate in sharing and reflecting on their own ICH or exploring ICH around them.

Maintaining the experience

After having participated in the experience by sharing and reflecting or exploring, the youth is urged to explore other aspects of the experience or discover other entry points.

Next steps

These next steps either lead the youth to continue the experience or we assume that they have completed their solo travel.

The next 2 spreads take the reader through the journey of the established characters one by one.

6.4.3 Rationale

An experiential offering is proposed for a number of reasons. First, as we understood in chapter 2, ICH is a contextual system of things. While travelling too, travelers immerse themselves in several cultural experiences - such as food, famous landmarks, the history, recommended spots, etc. Similarly, the Hidden Culture Experience proposes to explore ICH through travel and exploration by immersing oneself in the many forms and facets of ICH existing in the city or town of the travel. While doing so, the experience allows the young solo travellers to enrich their ICH explorations of the city through interventions for reflection and sharing.

To put in a few words: The Hidden Culture Experience enables young solo travellers to explore the hidden culture outside in their environment and inside (the culture they come from).

Naming it "Hidden Culture"

In the research and early iterations, it became clear that the youth did not find the term "intangible heritage" relatable. ICH is culture that one does not often recognize easily. While receiving informal feedback, a young adult said, "It should be something I have to find or discover". Thus it was necessary that the terminology used and the name of the offering is associable to youth. A common observation of the terminology used on travel blogs or apps refer to "hidden gems", imply that they are not easy to find but they exist nevertheless. "Hidden" encapsulates that meaning, adding mystery yet simplifying the word "intangible" so that more young adults feel motivated to participate.

Look and feel

Borrowed from Nina Simon's metaphor of "giving outsiders a key" to our door to unlock relevance (Simon, 2016), the logo represents a keyhole (see fig 18). Another meaning to the keyhole symbol comes from a journey and a destination on the horizon. The colours used are representative of new energies and youth.

Starting Offline

The offline experience starts in a travel hostel. Hostels are particularly chosen as the hosting partners because it is a setting where people encounter diverse people by default, making them multicultural hotspots for young people.

Here, the youth come across two of the offline entry points - the coaster at the hostel bar/cafe and the brochure at the check-in/reception/common area.

The coasters are created to provoke sharing of personal ICH by reflecting on past experiences. The coaster has a question and some place to write on one side and a QR code on the flip side (see fig 16; Appendix H). Depending on the person, they can share either offline by writing their answer on the QR code and adding it to a wall of coasters at the hostel or they can share online by scanning the QR code which takes the user to the same question on a [landing page](#). Examples play an important role to get started to think and reflect on ICH. Therefore, in both cases, existing examples in the form of others' answers are visible on the wall of coasters and on the landing page (on the WIE hosted website). While the coasters on the wall have examples from the people who have visited the bar/cafe, the ones on the landing page show answers of all the users who have answered the same question from

different parts of the world.

Should the solo traveler make or arrive with a friend, the coaster could be a conversation starter at the wall or at the bar, thus encouraging sharing and reflecting. Moreover, each person should have a randomly picked coaster with a different question to keep the conversation going.

The brochures are a physical alternative to encourage discovering ICH experiences in the city/town. It gives the user the experience of moving around the city like a local. The brochure is interactive such that it helps to collect memories by encouraging the youth to engage with the place, jotting down when and what time did they experience a particular example of ICH and who did they meet prompting to spark a conversation with the locals or custodians (see fig 22; Appendix H).

To further enrich their local exploration, some parts of the brochure are left empty so that the user asks for recommendations from the locals, from the receptionist of the hostel or other travelers.

The offline experience is aimed at those who prefer non-digital experiences. But several reasons came up (during the evaluation discussed in the next chapter) so as to render the offline experience beneficial and even necessary.

1. Travellers from other countries may rely heavily on WiFi or the availability of internet connection. It would be a missed opportunity to only focus on the digital experiences.
2. Although travel today is hard to imagine without a phone, some travelers do not prefer a fully digital experience. They would eventually go on to an app if required.
3. Some travellers are actively avoiding connection, the ones who prefer to not have their phone around at all or on airplane mode.

Starting Online

When starting online, the solo traveller's entry point is the app. Even though the app supplements the offline experience, it can still be considered an individual entry point. Meaning, it could get found on the app stores or be recommended by a solo traveler to another.

The app contains all the three requirements to make ICH relevant to the youth and thus has three core components - for sharing, for exploring and for reinforcing identity (see Appendix H).

Sharing by scanning QR code on coasters

When a user comes across a coaster, they can directly scan through the Hidden Culture App as well. It takes the user through the same experience of sharing as the landing page (fig 23).

Exploring ICH around them

This feature allows the user to have an experience similar to that of the brochure. In addition to locating the nearest ICH explorations around them (fig 19), it gives an option to view the detailed description of selected exploration, provides day and time selection and encourages adding themselves to a group to experience the ICH together (fig 20). Joining a group prepares the youth to meet and share their experiences together.

Hari's Journey (Archetype B)

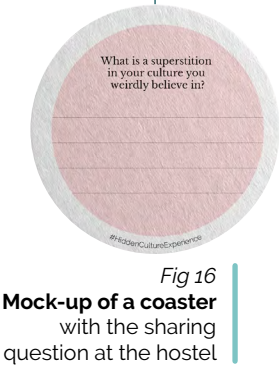
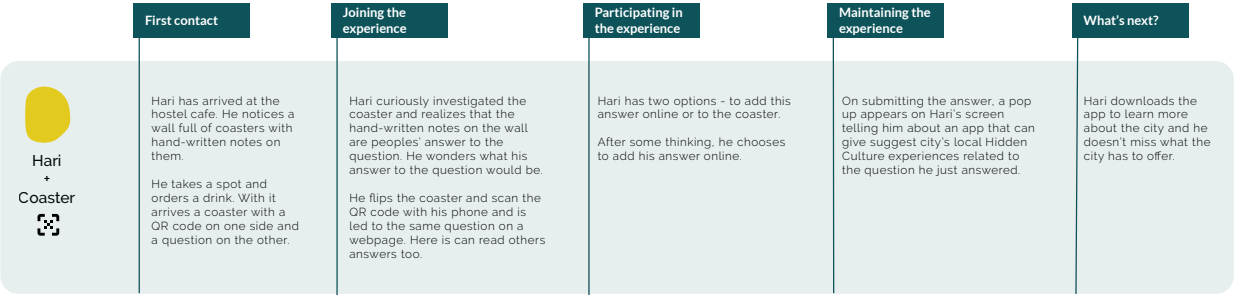
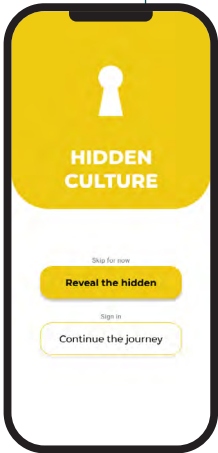
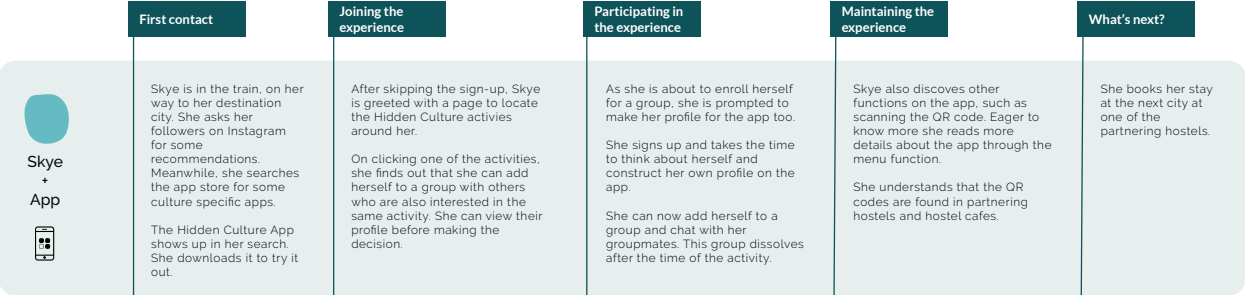


Fig 16
Mock-up of a coaster with the sharing question at the hostel



Fig 17
Landing page on the WIE website

Skye's Journey (Archetype D)



(from left to right)

Fig 18
Opening screen of the app

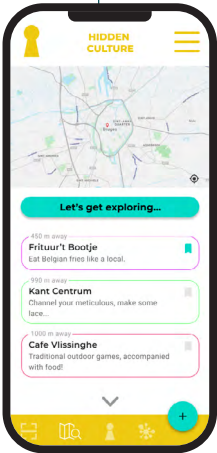


Fig 19
Exploration screen on the app

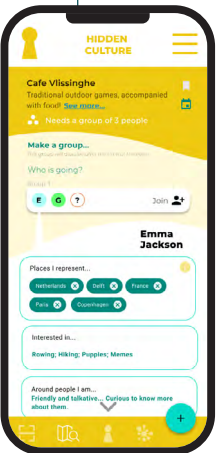


Fig 20
App screen showing the features to select a day and time from the calendar, make a group, view profile

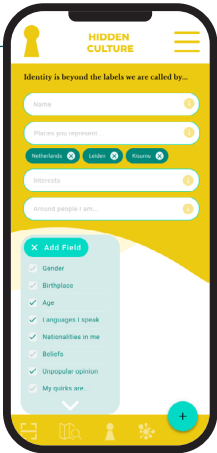
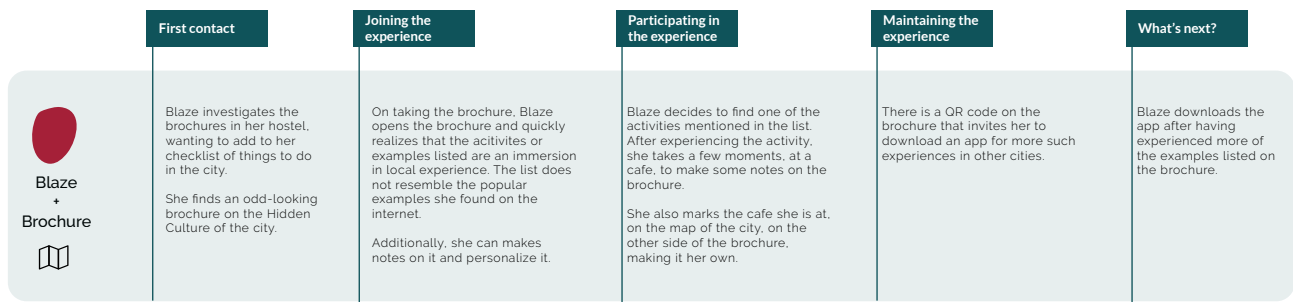


Fig 21
App's profile building screen with options to add fields and check what they mean.


Blaze's Journey (Archetype C)




HIDDEN CULTURE
Cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. As per UNESCO, it also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

Often called Intangible Cultural Heritage (or ICH), this hidden culture is present in peoples' daily lives in a state of flux. Mainly transmitted from one person to another, it is what makes up the memorised or experienced narratives and discourses of people's knowledge of skills, practices, rituals, languages, the stories and other ways of knowing.

Learn more



Download the Hidden Culture App



Are there some examples of your hidden culture? Something you grew up with?

A place for your thoughts


How to use this brochure/map?

Every time you visit a place, you can document the day, the time and the person you met.

📅 Date you visited

🕒 Time you visited


👤 Person you met


1  Draw your interpretation of the place you visited in this box. It could be a depiction of the feeling, the place or the people. Something that was meaningful to you.


Scribble something or draw your interpretation


Taking pictures? Use #HiddenCultureExperience


location-specific


1 
KOOS ROZENBURG
Stories captured in antiques
A quaint collection of antiques, each with a story retold by the knowledge keeper and custodian.


2 
DELFTSE MOLEN DE ROOS
Standing tall, running strong
One of the only windmills, out of 18, that still runs to grind organic grains.

3 
STROOP WAFELS
Warm, caramelised goodness best eaten freshly made
Saturday market at the centrum is a treat, literally! You can truly understand the Dutch with a coffee in one hand and a stroopwafel in another.


4 
DE KOPEREN KAT
A beer tastes better when you brew it yourself
As a student town, Delft offers a treat not only to experience drinking the craft beers but also brewing and tasting in a dedicated tasting room.


5 
NIKSEN
Guilt-free moments to appreciate 'doing nothing'
Make some time to just be idle, or do something without purpose.

6 
GEZZELIGHEID
A cozy feeling that cannot be explained in words
Only to be felt, it is a pleasant mix of togetherness, comfort, having fun and contentment.

7 
BROODJE KAAS
What the Dutch call a grab-and-go all day meal
Feel the hustle of this student town, while eating a simple cheese sandwich on the go.

mark it on the map
your discoveries of ICH
Add your own discoveries or recommendations...

8 

9 


10 

Fig 22
Interactive brochure that leads the offline experience

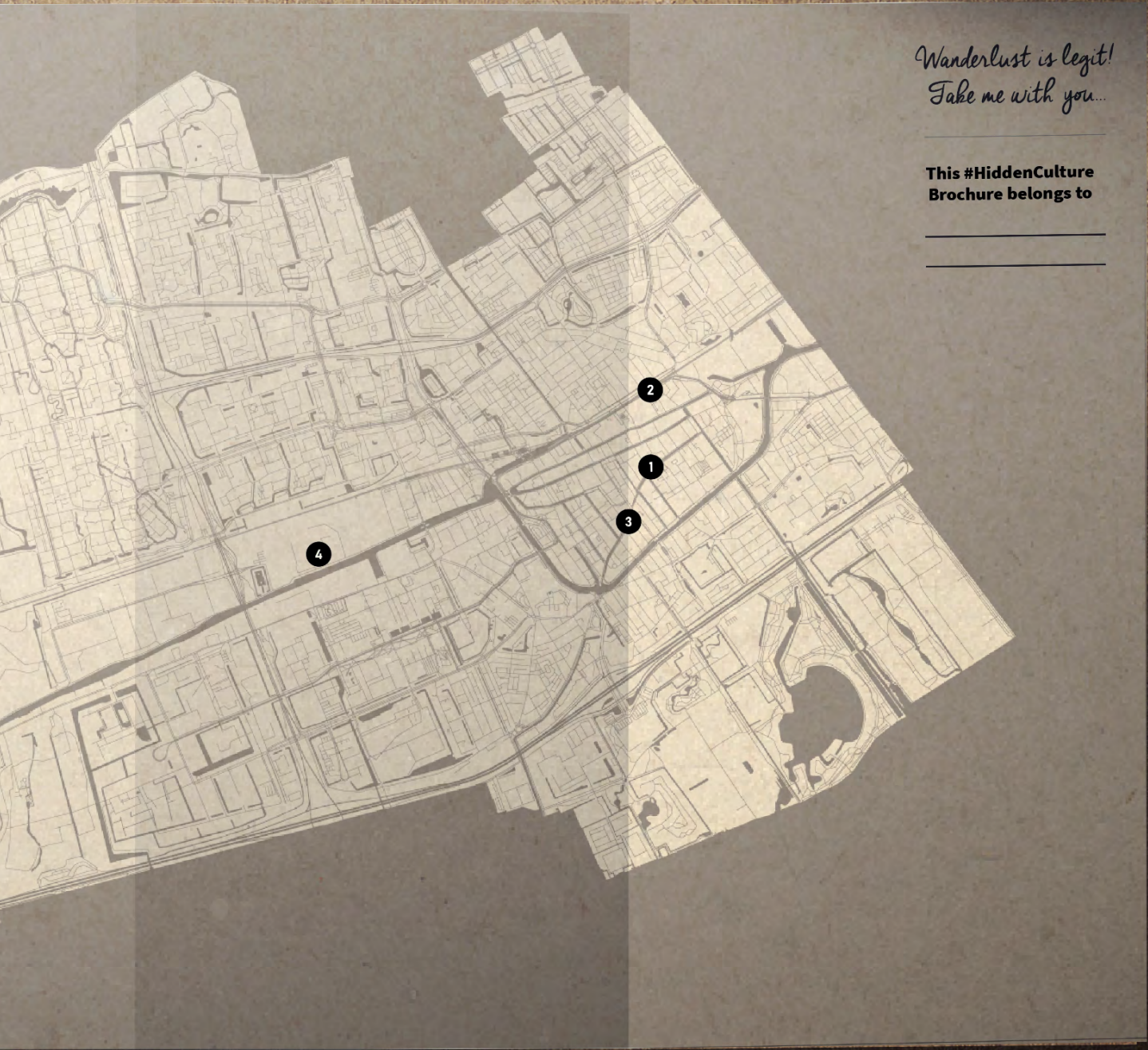
Fig 23

Mock up of all 3 starting points of the Hidden Culture Experience - coaster, brochure and app



DELFT





*Wanderlust is legit!
Take me with you...*

**This #HiddenCulture
Brochure belongs to**



Before joining a group, the user can view the profiles of those already in the group (fig 20). In addition, the app prompts the user to make their own profile to be able to join. This ensures that the group members know who they will be meeting. Once the group is made, the members can have a group chat on the app. An important remark reminds the user that the group dissolves after the time of the event to ensure privacy and safety of the traveller.

This is also an important feature considering the solo travelers who are staying in hotels that haven't partnered with the Hidden Culture Experience.

Reinforcing identity

Using the basis of the identity framework developed earlier, the app has a profile page wherein users can build their profile (fig 21). Although the profile does build on the basic details about a user, it deviates from asking limiting questions such as "Where are you from?" or "What's your nationality?" Instead the questions are framed to allow the user to deeply think about their identity from the cultural lens.

The identity profile serves two purposes. First, to help the user realize that they are not defined only by demographics or the identity labels that were given to them. The user is encouraged to think about who they are with respect to their cultural background. Second, the identity profile is a helpful way to give the others teaming with the user for ICH explorations a gist of who they are going to meet.

The power of the identity profile lies in its openness to share your chosen identity. It allows the user to think about what part of their identity they want to bring to the app or show to others and how they want to show it. For example, the field "nationalities in me" enables the user to show the various nationalities they could be made up of. Emma's mother is from the Netherlands and father is from India. Although Emma may hold an Indian passport, she still represents both nationalities.

Therefore, the parts to share the given identity is also open to multiple possibilities to reflect the global identities young adults represent today. The fields provided (such as nationalities I represent, my unpopular opinions, my beliefs) mean to start a reflection in the user's mind about their identity.

Tying online and offline together

As stated earlier, the online and offline experiences support each other to suit the needs of the solo traveler. These some such support features are elaborated. Further, some additional features that were thought of but not prototyped are described to be considered for the next round of prototyping.

Landing page

Hosted by WIE on their website, the landing page (Fig 17) links the offline QR code on the coaster to a sharing online. Before leaving the landing page, it prompts the solo traveler to download the Hidden Culture App by linking it to a familiar experience and basing it on human curiosity (see section 2.4.1). For instance, after having answered a question on superstitions, the prompt asks the user if they would like to explore ICH related to superstitions around them and thus leads them to downloading the app.

Tags

The linking of various (theme-) related ICH experiences are made possible by using tags on the listings. Continuing with the example, if a user clicks on the tag "superstition", the app suggests more examples, about other superstition-related ICH in the current city or other cities.

Additional features (considerations for the development)

1. Sending new discoveries to the app

The youth can submit their own observations, recommendations or discoveries of ICH experienced during travel, which in turn adds to the app at a content-level. The heritage organizations also largely benefit from the suggestions coming from the youth to expand their collection of ICH examples, to discover ICH in need of safeguarding or map the cultural identity of their city/town.

2. "See more" on the organization's page

The app gives more information about a particular listing on clicking the "see more" function. For instance if WIE curates the ICH experiences of Bruges, Belgium, on clicking see more it would take the user to an in-depth view of the experience by giving detailed information, videos and images.

3. A social, featured collection

The Hidden Culture Experience has an Instagram page featuring the photos of the Hidden Culture Experiences documented by the youth using #HiddenCultureExperience. This collection is intended to increase visibility of ICH and the outreach for the experience.

4. Scanning the brochure discoveries

The app allows scanning the section of self-made discoveries or recommended ICH experiences on the brochure. Using an optical character recognition (OCR) tool integrated with the app easily converts handwritten text to editable text.

5. Network of discoveries and answers shared

This feature shows a networked map auto generated using the tags, from the several layers of information available on the app, such as the travelers answers to the sharing questions, the ICH experiences curated by local heritage organizations and the ICH discoveries submitted by the youth themselves.

6.5 Conclusion

Presented in this is the concept design proposal. Out of the recurring themes that arose while identifying the target users, "travel and exploration" is the fitting theme because it fits the possibility of encountering diverse perspectives in the user group. The Hidden Culture Experience is an enriching offering that enables solo travellers to immersively explore the hidden culture of their travel destinations and introspect on their own ICH in the process of sharing it with fellow solo travellers. The entry points and tools for the solo travellers to provoke sharing their ICH, reflecting and initiating conversations with other travellers and/or custodians are coasters, brochures and an app, where the coasters and brochures encourage offline and in-person sharing reflecting and exploring whereas the app in addition to the former connects solo travellers through the online platform. The experience in total ultimately aims to reinforce the youth's identity by exploring ICH in the place of their travel.



Evaluation

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 With Solo Travellers
 - 7.2.1 Method
 - 7.2.2 Results
- 7.3 With WIE
 - 7.2.1 Method
 - 7.2.2 Results
- 7.4 With other stakeholders
 - 7.2.1 Method
 - 7.2.2 Results
- 7.5 Recommendations towards development

Chapter 07: Evaluation

The chapter describes the results of the tests conducted to evaluate whether the concept proposal of Hidden Culture Experience meets the design goal and the criteria established earlier (in chapters 03, 04 and 05).

7.1 Introduction

The goal of the evaluation was to identify the feasibility, desirability and viability of the design proposal. The reframed design goal and the criteria for design were used as a base to evaluate against. The desirability of the experience was tested with solo travelers, the feasibility with WIE and the viability with other stakeholders.

As time was limited, the evaluation plans were created simultaneously to the concept development. Therefore, the tests were conducted with preliminary prototypes.

7.2 With Solo Travellers

7.2.1 Method

The tests were conducted with four youth participants who have travelled solo before, in their 20s. The tests were set-up to give the youth a 'feeling' of the context. Therefore, the solo travellers were asked to imagine themselves in the various scenarios (similar to the journeys in section 5.4.2) while being guided by the researcher. As the entry points to the experience were introduced in the guided story, it was shown alongside on a laptop and explained. Furthermore, the participants were given a blank sheet of paper to note any details they didn't understand or were unsure if they would remember.

The youth were given moments to react to the experiences with each entry point - the coaster, the brochure and the mobile app. Following this, the participants were asked questions (Appendix xx) related to their imagined experience. The entire test was conducted online via a video call and lasted for 30-40 mins.

Limitations

The experience of coaster and brochure was not evaluated in the hostel context it is aimed to be set and used in. Additionally, although the coaster and brochure are the physical parts of the experience, intended to be used by those who prefer a physical experience, during the tests they were shown on a laptop. Therefore, these evaluations are based on an imagined or visualized experience rather than a lived experience.

7.2.2 Results

Overall the experience was found desirable by all participants confirming they would use it. Commenting on the name Hidden Culture, one participant felt that it gave her a sense that the app has "the real people not the touristy stuff".

Coaster

The desirability to interact with the coaster heavily depended on the solo travelers mood and situation. One participant mentioned that it depends also on the question. Referring to the question on superstition used in the prototype, she expressed the willingness to interact because she found the question itself fun.

"It can go both ways. If the questions are fun, I would answer it."

User A, 23, Netherlands

On asking the users how they would share their answer (physically or digitally), the responses pointed towards them making these decisions at that very moment. One of the users pointed out that to put the answer on the wall she would need to take the initiative herself and be a self-starter as she is alone.

"It depends on how I feel at the moment. I would answer [the question] while I am waiting for my food or drink. But I don't know if I would go up to the wall at that point to put my coaster on it."

User B, 27, Germany

Brochure

The brochure was consistently liked by all the users. One of the major motivators to use the brochure came from its interactivity.

"I like the map, I can make my notes on the back of it and really make it my own."

User C, 27, Turkey

One of the suggestions that came forth was to make some filled brochures visible as examples.

"I would start it but I do not know if I would see it through to the end. Maybe if someone else fills it up with me, it would be fun. Looking at someone else's filled in brochure would tell me it works and then I would try more of the recommendations."

User B, 27, Germany

"I love the activity part which is different from other digital maps. I am not just marking want to, love to go or saving or putting a reminder. It's better than pictures, it makes it special. When I am back, I can immediately refer to it and share my experiences with my friends. It could be my own lookbook of my trip."

User D, 37, India

Two of the four participants were not sure if they should carry the brochure with them after their journey. Questions like "Do I keep it?" and "Do I have to put the filled brochure on the hostel wall?" came up.

What was unclear about the brochure was how the brochure would help the youth reflect on their ICH.

App

From the desirability point of view, a user in their late twenties said, "In general I don't like apps. But in this specific domain of solo travel, it might be a success. As a solo traveller, it could give newness to the travel experience."

To a certain degree, two users felt inhibition and the social pressure of joining a group with strangers. But participants appreciated the chat function as they felt less nervous about meeting someone they do not know. The ability to chat was also deemed useful in case it was hard to find the group members in a new city.

With regards to filling the identity profile, the users appreciated the new way to think about and share their identity but initially it was hard for them to understand what to fill in. Therefore, examples are absolutely necessary in this experience.

One of the younger users, User A, wanted the coaster-related answers she submitted to be shown on her profile page to add more depth to her cultural identity. This could be an interesting integration in the future prototypes of the app.

"I love it! It sounds really fun. I like that it gives the feel of carrying a Lonely Planet that gives insider clues."

User A, 23, Netherlands

Overall, the perception of the experience was that it was fun and not forced.

7.3 With WIE

7.3.1 Method

The test for feasibility of the Hidden Culture Experience was conducted with four members of the WIE team through a 1.5 hour video call. As three of the team members were not aware of the research and design process carried out earlier. First, the WIE team was presented with the main research insights and the criteria for design. Next, they were taken through the journey of the user and the design rationale. Post the presentation, the team members reacted based on their impression of the proposal. Finally, a few questions were posed to the team about the feasibility and an open discussion was had.

The main focus was to check with the WIE team about their capacity to develop the proposal further with other stakeholders and understand if the proposal aligns with WIE's current works and efforts.

7.3.2 Results

From the first reactions, it was evident that WIE found the proposal feasible for further development and implementation.

Initially, the discussion raised concerns and their apprehensions about the unclear links to the WIE website, the implications of using the word "hidden" and the need for a deepened focus on identity development. The team also wanted a more explicit connection made to intangible heritage such that it becomes a conscious connection in their minds that what the youth experiences as Hidden Culture is indeed ICH.

Further, highlighting some of the parts they appreciated. First, speaking of the offline part of the experience, one team member explained echoing the team's opinion:

"We sense it is a societal tendency to get tired of downloading another app. Some young people are getting tired of apps too. For further development, it is to keep in mind that it's good to have an offline base as well."

Jana, WIE team

Next, on the app, the possibility to search for a date was deemed helpful from the point of view of the custodians. This was seen to hugely benefit the custodian as more people would visit them, especially bringing to them a younger footfall.

"A lace maker who gives workshops only when a minimum of five people present. It would be interesting to have five people from different hostels." It gives an idea of "on this day, I can buy the lace but also watch the practitioner make it and give an explanation"."

Sarah, WIE team

Another feature that the team found useful was the ability to receive the youth's observations in the form of ICH discoveries. The team thought it would also help them identify new examples around their city, eventually to be added to the collection of examples on their website.

Focusing now on the capacities of WIE to see this concept proposal come to life. WIE agreed that this was a manageable project for them to take on as a team. Earlier in the project, they had voiced their concerns regarding the involvement of the hostels and their responsibilities. The developed concept proposal presented during the evaluation also seemed manageable to the team. They acknowledged that the reduced responsibilities on the hostel's end would also allow WIE to train the hostel based on their capacity and small team.

Regarding the app, WIE mentioned that they have the capacities to monitor it and add to it at the content level. However, the development, they mentioned, was not in their current capacities. This reinforced the need for strategic partners to this project as this proposal is intended to be a collaborative effort. The team also suggested partners they would approach to make the development and implementation of the proposal viable.

On the alignment of the concept design proposal with their current work, WIE mentioned to have already been working on a file/study to bring together all kinds of articles, viewpoints, studies and researches developed related to ICH and tourism. The concept, as mentioned by a teammate working on this file, was "one of the most feasible concepts" she has come in contact with. She further mentioned that "tourism is not just consuming but it also has to be a sustainable industry" and that the concept brings forth a sustainable take on the industry, society and heritage communities (especially for the custodians).

This project, in their view, seems to address the problem areas related to sustainable tourism and youth engagement, wherein ICH is not commercialized.

Finally, making some suggestions about the identity development part, they thought that this aspect of the experience could be explored in more depth. They wished to learn from the experiences of the youth as well and recommended adding questions such as "What strikes you here about this experience?" or "How is this experience different from what you know?".

"What's strange about eating french fries? But it is strange for someone who has come from another country and finds that there is an entire restaurant that only sells french fries. That's typical here in Belgium. Many places have french fries as something extra, here it is basic."

Jorijn, WIE team

They thought that sometimes the app should prompt such self discovery questions. Asking the youth these questions could be confronting, they agreed, but would also give them a nuanced view on their identity.

7.4 With other stakeholders

It would take multiple stakeholders to offer the Hidden Culture Experience to solo travellers - such as local heritage organizations, custodians, hostels, city governments among others. Alongwith WIE, these stakeholders were identified.

7.4.1 Method

The concept proposal was tested with three people - one hostel owner, one researcher from a regional government tourism office and business development coordinator for a heritage organization.

Similarly to the test conducted with WIE, the stakeholders were presented with the concept proposal. After which they reacted based on their impression of the proposal. Finally, a few questions were posed to the stakeholder about their willingness to collaborate and the value a partnership would bring to them. The tests conducted with the stakeholders were of 30 mins.

Limitations

Due to the limitations in time, the tests conducted with the stakeholders represent singular opinions. As a proposal that would come to life with collaborative efforts of multiple hostels, multiple city governments, multiple heritage organizations, etc., it needs to be validated with a representative number of stakeholders who bring different voices in the ecosystem together.

7.4.2 Results

Hostels

When the hostel owner was presented with the concept proposal, he found it interesting but was skeptical about being an early adopter. Referring to his observations as a hostel owner, he found that sharing and reflecting happens almost naturally in a hostel environment.

On asking about his apprehensions, he pointed out that in recent times many companies and startups have been approaching hostels to reach their target audiences (young adults) and sell/market their offering. He stressed about wanting to retain his guests and engage them in the activities the hostel plans. In general, the interest of the hostel was to have a direct link to their guest.

On the other hand, he speculated that the idea of having coasters could help them get more engaged with their guests and that they could host hostel activities around it on the low-selling days to bring more people to their bar. He also remarked that "the concept is an impressive example to see how you can get people connected both online and offline".

In the end, he concluded that he would want to see the Hidden Culture experience become implementable on a day to day basis for a hostel by seeing a successful example before he adopts it for his own hostel.

Regional Government Tourism Office

The research from the government tourism office found the concept proposal a good offering for those visiting their region searching for a deeper dive in the local life, for those who are looking for more than just the highlights.

Referring to the design approach taken, he said:

"Certainly very interesting how you approach the scope of ICH without narrowing it down to any one domain or theme (like processions or festivals). You look at the daily lives of people. We often think a lot is obvious but when people are coming from abroad, it's not."

On funding and development as a partner, he informed that the tourism office has been keenly focusing on heritage and digital, and that they would be interested in subsidizing a project as such.

He recommended focusing on strengthening the offering in multiple countries and their city governments.

Local Heritage Organization

The role of the local heritage organizations is seen at the content and curatory level to identify and offer examples of ICH from their localities or regions to the Hidden Culture Experience.

By and large, the concept proposal was liked by the heritage organization. Their representative found that the proposal thought about the holistic experience of the solo traveler rather than focus on one aspect.

Moreover, she appreciated that collaboration becomes easy because at the content level the lists of examples already exist.

She had concerns about curating for a younger audience. She mentioned that most colleagues and volunteers that work in such local heritage organizations are retired or elderly. She worried that a translator would be required who could work on both ends. For example, this translator would need to understand the custodians offering through the propagators and then make the information available in a youth-friendly way for the Hidden Culture Experience.

The representative also pointed out that their contribution could also be in connecting more heritage organizations and expanding the network to make the experience available across more regions.

7.5 Recommendations towards development

Iterating the Hidden Culture Experience

1. **Usability tests** should be conducted in the intended context (of a hostel), with an iterated prototype to validate whether or not the experience brings about the sharing and exploring as expected. This step is essential as it will indicate the behaviour of the users and provide insights on further improvement to the experience.
Some of the questions to be answered are:
 - Do the users scan the QR code and submit their answer on the landing page or write their answer and add the coaster to the hostel wall?
 - Once on the landing page, do the users download the Hidden Culture app when prompted?
 - Do the users choose to take the interactive brochure when they go about exploring the city?
 - If the brochure is taken on explorations, do the users fill it and make it their own?
2. An initial opening or home screen should be added to the mobile app to give information on how to use the app and what they can expect here. On opening the app for the first time, a **"take a tour" pop up** should be added to familiarize the user with the workings of the app. This is intended to address the apprehensions users might feel about joining a group or filling their profile.
3. On the identity reinforcement front, as WIE suggested an addition of post-exploration sharing could be made with the question, **"What strikes you here about this experience?"**. However it is important to acknowledge the possibility that the youth may avoid these questions at first or feel discomforted by them. In a new country or city, do the youth want to be confronted with such questions? Initially, it may be reasonable to avoid such a question as they are on their self discovery journey. Or by making it an extra layer that is optional (such as choosing to be on app on self discovery mode in the beginning).

Acknowledging the gap between generations

In the hands of the ICH pioneers, there is no doubt that the Hidden Culture Experience will have immersive content and execution. Knowing that, I also recognized throughout the project that the communication between those in heritage institutes/organizations and young adults suffers when both do not understand each other. I highly recommend each of the collaborating stakeholder to bring young adults into their organization and on to the forefront of executing this offering. Bringing in young adults should not be limited to a temporary position (such as an intern, campaigner or ambassador). It must rather be looked at as an equal, long-term partnership with sufficient financial remuneration that provides them the much needed stability they look for. As they self-represent the target group of young adults, they can be the essential translators needed in the heritage field to make heritage accessible, relatable and exciting.


7.6 Conclusion

The evaluations were conducted with the solo travellers, WIE, a hostel owner and regional government tourism office and a local heritage organization to determine the feasibility, desirability and viability of the experience. Based on the evaluations, it can be concluded that all of the above parties found this experience to be desirable, interactive and crucial..

While testing with solo travellers, it was found that the coasters have certain variables like the participant's mood, the situation they are in and the question on the coaster itself which may provide alternate results. The brochure however is considered very interactive and useful.

Through an evaluation with the WIE, the Hidden Culture Experience was considered feasible to develop further. As the project aligns and resonates with WIE's current work with sustainable tourism, ICH and connecting with the youth, there is an underlying interest in carrying out the project to fruition.

It was insightful to know that sharing and reflecting are naturally occurring aspects in hostels and the coasters and brochures could be catalysts for better engagements with and between guests. The evaluation of the experience with the stakeholders suggests that they would be interested to collaborate at various levels in the further development of the proposal.



008

Towards delivery and development

- 8.1 Value Proposition for different stakeholders
 - 8.1.1 Strategic Partners
 - 8.1.2 Development Partners
- 8.2 Recommended Development Plan
- 8.3 Conclusion

Chapter 08: Towards delivery and development

This chapter is intended for the stakeholders. With the design space explored, this chapter explains the value and benefits the Hidden Culture Experience brings to its stakeholders. Reiterating that the experience would need a collaborative effort, this chapter enlightens the reader on the value exchange and shared meaning the proposal brings to its stakeholders.

8.1 Value Proposition for different stakeholders

The Hidden Culture Experience is aimed at solo travelers, who are therefore the primary users of the offering. Young adults travel to encounter new settings and environments to expand their worldview. Through the Hidden Culture Experience young adults on solo travels are provided with moments to collect memories by immersing themselves in local or hidden experiences. These experiences nudge the young adults to share and reflect. In the journey to find themselves in their 20s, the Hidden Culture Experience cultivates a self-paced journey to realize and reinforce their identity through ICH exploring.

Solo-travellers

The Hidden Culture Experience brings value to the youth solo travelers in the connection it builds with the other youth travelers and the locals through the exploration of ICH, which are fun and have a spirit of discovery. Enriching their itinerary or must-dos, it brings meaningful travel and immersive interactions while encountering diverse perspectives.

Keeping with the spirit of discovery, the Hidden Culture Experience encourages self-exploration such that the youth feels comfort in finding themselves in the abyss of identity and culture. The experience subtly nudges the youth to reflect on their own intangible heritage by sharing about it.

8.1.1 Strategic Partners

Curating, creating and implementing such an experience needs an ecosystem of partners who are hosts, funders, developers, experts and more.

The Hidden Culture Experience begins at hostels, who are hosting the solo travellers and are the vessel that contains the physical part of the experience - the coasters meant to elicit sharing and reflection and the brochure to drive explorations.

Hostels

Young adults typically prefer hostels for their inexpensive nature but there is bigger value for the solo travellers to book at a partnering hostel. The Hidden Culture Experience hopes to make the partnering network of hostels a place where solo travelers find the most authentic local and personal experiences.

The partnering hostels get embedded in a large network of Hidden Culture partners including the support of city governments and heritage organizations, who are key stakeholders when travel and tourism is concerned. The partnering hostel is tagged as one of the few places that host the Hidden Culture Experience (especially where the youth can find the coasters and brochures).

The coasters retain young adults and invite more conversations to the common spaces of the hostels, a feeling of "something different is happening here", which incites deeper, more titillating conversations making the youth think. The visibility and popularity of the hostel typically increases and is advantageous to the hostels. This offering brings in new traffic, makes the hostels more than just an inexpensive and clean stay, rather the hostel is looked at as an attractive multicultural hub.

City and the Government

The Hidden Culture Experience is subsidized by multiple governments and regions in various European countries. It brings the city its own identity through the eyes of the locals and through the eyes of the youth. Moreover, it brings local custodians of intangible heritage a drive to keep practising their heritage. Rather than tourism that commercializes, the offering brings the focus on sustainable tourism, living culture and the youth's attention.

(An example of a strategic partner here would be Visit Flanders.)

Custodians

The custodians often find it challenging to appeal to the younger generations. The Hidden Culture Experience brings a younger footfall to the custodians to pass on their knowledge. It is not with the intention that the next generation will carry on the practice. It rather invites the transmission of knowledge. It may not pass in the same lineage but gives the custodian the enthusiasm from young adults who are there to listen and learn from them.

The offering brings the younger generations to the custodians instead of custodians having to seek the youth. This brings new life to their work and new motivation to keep going.

Local Heritage Organizations

Custodians work closely with propagators of heritage to keep their practice alive and to seek visibility. Therefore local heritage organizations make the perfect content partners. They draw from the works and research done for years to collect and maintain their local legacies. The local heritage organizations bring the forgotten culture back to people. Their expertise in content and data available are translated into an offering for the youth.

(Examples of local heritage partners are WIE and Erfgoedcel in Belgium; Erfgoed Huis, Kenniscentrum Immaterieel Erfgoed, De Stads Wandeling in the Netherlands.)

8.1.2 Development partners

Here, we take an example to understand how a particular stakeholder can enrich the development of the experience with their previous experience and expertise.

A partner such as Use it Maps could serve as the development partner wherein their expertise in making alternative, non-typical maps could be utilized in the creation of the maps on the brochure and the app. Use-it Europe is an essential partner to be pursued as their intent is in line with the concept proposal which is for the young people, by the young locals. Currently, Use-It maps are freely available and printable for numerous cities in Europe, accessible and downloadable from their website. As a strategic partner to the Hidden Culture Experience, it is likely that Use-It Europe is able to provide an online, digital real time version of their maps to a wider audience in Europe. This partnership could bring to Use-It Europe a larger audience who are more inclined to exploring digital means with this new collaboration which further benefits them to connect with more regions in Europe and the local organizations in those regions.

(Another example of development partner could be De Canon van Nederland.)

8.2 Recommended Development Plan

To bring this concept proposal to life, outlined below is a development plan. The suggested approach towards implementation and the steps to get there are elaborated.

1. Prototype

As mentioned early, the app screen shown above should be considered a conceptual prototype. Another round of prototyping is required to get to the refined design. This is an essential step, strongly recommended that it should not be skipped. Another round of prototyping should be aimed at testing usability and therefore user prototypes should be developed. This testing will provide insights on whether the app is used in the intended manner and will help make the decision on its further development and piloting.

For this project, only three user journeys were created to explain the proposal. Therefore, during the prototyping stage, more users' journeys need to be created for understanding more comprehensively how different kinds of solo traveller go through the experience.

2. Development

The next step would be to iterate based on feedback received and thereafter get the app developed. Alongside, the questions on the coasters that are both relatable and cultural should be curated. Additionally, the brochure must be created for the cities or regions wherein the experience will be piloted in the next stage. This is also a period to reach out to the partnering stakeholders to involve them in the pilot and create a funding strategy.

3. Pilot

The pilot(s) can be anchored within WIE and its network in Flanders. With the pilot, the value that the Hidden Culture Experience brings to its users and stakeholder will be clarified further. I would recommend a pilot stage for 2-3 months to get a sufficient understanding on how the entire ecosystem of users and partners works together.

4. Deliver

Towards the end of the pilot running successfully, run through the feedback the Hidden Culture Experience receives in the real world to make any amends if required. Simultaneously, bringing in and forming a dedicated team of 5-6 people together to keep operations running will be crucial.

5. Scale up

If the operations do not suffer for the next 3-4 months, the team can propose the experience to new regions and governments. Later, the Experience can be established as a public-private organization that different cities and governments can onboard.

8.3 Conclusion

The Hidden Culture Experience brings different values to different stakeholders. It was crucial to assess this because they are examples of making collaborative projects come to fruition. However, the value the experience brings to the stakeholders needs to be assessed as indicated in the recommended development plan alongside running other usability tests with the next iteration of the prototype.



009

Final thoughts and Reflections

- 9.1 Reflecting on the Project
- 9.2 Personal Reflection

Chapter 09: Final thought and reflection

In this chapter, the report concludes as I reflect on the project as a whole addressing the highlights, realizations and my personal journey.

9.1 Reflecting on the project

I initiated this project with WIE driven by the desire to bring design to intangible heritage. With this graduation project, I wished to make a small but considerable contribution communicated using design activities as a vehicle.

Bringing a design approach to intangible heritage

Far from how I expected it to be, it was the design process rather than the deliverable that I now believe enriches this graduation journey. Hence, keeping in mind the 100 working days spent on this project and practicalities, this concept proposal is one way I could make the research tangible. There could be other ways. The main takeaway of this project lies in the insights it has generated into the youth's mindset regarding ICH. For the propagators and custodians, it is an invitation to participate with the youth and more importantly, an invitation to be creative.

A strategic design approach to heritage innovation can only come when those in leadership positions support newer ways to approach complex, societal problems. This project hopes to be an example to invite strategic design practice to heritage.

Triggering self-paced realizations of ICH

One of the biggest realizations during the project for me was that speaking about heritage is episodic. It is not a topic of discussion all day, everyday. Thus, it cannot be micromanaged. The design hopes to have found moments where it can be triggered. Even if it is not triggered, at least the young adults know about intangible heritage. The visibility and the concept of ICH is introduced to them, which was the motive to initiate this project.

Similarly, for identity development through ICH, the experience cannot ensure identity development. Development of identity can only be facilitated through a trigger such as the Hidden Culture Experience and the small journeys that lead the youth to realize their identity.

The focus is to share, reflect and explore ICH, which further puts the focus back on the person who is exploring ICH. Therefore, it encourages the spirit of travelling and not tourism. This concept brings together the part that is missing, that is, the relation between heritage and identity. And what does it mean to have a global identity and relate back to your heritage.

Accessing heritage

Another aspect that crossed my mind many times during the project was that of access. It was easy for me as a researcher and designer for the project. However, if a young adult with little or no connection to the heritage field were to discover something about a language, unless it is on the internet, the access and exposure they would need is not easy for them to get. My observation circles around the fact that when it is an intangible heritage, it is hard to reach such information.

Impact of the project

Considering the short time span of the project, I have personally reached more than 100 people - for interviews, to discuss my work with them, for research, to share my knowledge, to bring more people awareness. With the passion I had for this project and the topic, I immersed myself. Throughout the last few months, I could see the difference I was making. People asked me about the project again, they remembered the concept of ICH and they expressed how they went back questioning identity, their roots or how their work is intertwined with some specific ideas related to living traditions.

As a young person myself, singularly if I could stir up a thought or even nudge multiple people, I want to bring your attention to the numerous young people like me who care about knowing living heritages, experiencing them and making the contributions they can to keeping these legacies alive. I want to urge you to bring more young people to these near-forgotten legacies. We can all be provocateurs.

Workshops

The highlight of this project were the workshops with the youth. I could sense at the end of every workshop, nobody wanted to leave. These conversations about heritage were stimulating for the youth participants. They created space for reflection, discussions and acknowledgement of differences. I would urge WIE to have and train youth partners who can create such spaces that are stimulating to speak about heritage.

9.2 Personal Reflection

At the end of the graduation journey, I can say that this project came to me at the perfect time and stage of my life. I left Mumbai two years ago to come to Delft, only to be confused and confronted with my own identity struggles and dilemmas. This project gave me so much encouragement to feel comfortable in who I am, to find my own authentic identity compass.

As in any project, there were ups and downs, happy and productive days and then some dull ones. One of the biggest realizations for me as a designer was my aversion to simplifying complexity. I wanted to solve all problems, all at once. I had to unlearn that sometimes solving a problem is not solving one. I realised early on that I am a researcher at heart, I find and I share. Funnily, as someone who enjoyed the intangible, I had a hard time making my work "tangible". As a "strategic designer" my mind was set on creating a method, framework or toolkit. Through the mid of the project, it finally started kicking in that I was resisting designing what the process demands. I was feeling like a failure as a designer.

Driven by purpose, I also noticed how hard I am on myself. At some point, I conceded to the flow of my body and mind. Routines are for some days, but most days I enjoyed flowing and going where my work took me. Here is where my creativity flourished.

As I spoke to more and more people about this project, the more their interest grew in the final results. Almost as if, as the designer, I have all the answers. With reflection and rumination on some successful past projects, I realized that as a designer I never had all the answers. This project too is an excellent example of that. When I started this project, I had very surface level knowledge about ICH and I still know very little about it.

Finally, coming past the pressure of having all answers, I can happily accept that I do not have all the answers. My strength lies in the design process and aligning the various actors to work together. I facilitate the creative process in the pursuit of a co-created solution.

10

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Appendices

Appendix A: Project Brief
Appendix B: Workshops
Appendix C: Analysis of Workshops
Appendix D: Interview Scripts
Appendix E: Interactions and Experiments
Appendix F: Archetypes of the journey characters
Appendix G: Evaluation Plan

Appendix A: Project Brief

DESIGN
FOR our
future



IDE Master Graduation

Project team, Procedural checks and personal Project brief

This document contains the agreements made between student and supervisory team about the student's IDE Master Graduation Project. This document can also include the involvement of an external organisation, however, it does not cover any legal employment relationship that the student and the client (might) agree upon. Next to that, this document facilitates the required procedural checks. In this document:

- The student defines the team, what he/she is going to do/deliver and how that will come about.
- SSC E&SA (Shared Service Center, Education & Student Affairs) reports on the student's registration and study progress.
- IDE's Board of Examiners confirms if the student is allowed to start the Graduation Project.

! USE ADOBE ACROBAT READER TO OPEN, EDIT AND SAVE THIS DOCUMENT

Download again and reopen in case you tried other software, such as Preview (Mac) or a webbrowser.

STUDENT DATA & MASTER PROGRAMME

Save this form according the format "IDE Master Graduation Project Brief_familyname_firstname_studentnumber_dd-mm-yyyy". Complete all blue parts of the form and include the approved Project Brief in your Graduation Report as Appendix 1 !



family name Kandade 4841
initials _____ given name Poornashri Umesh
student number 4764862
street & no. _____
zipcode & city _____
country _____
phone _____
email I _____

Your master programme (only select the options that apply to you):

IDE master(s): ☐ IPD ☐ Dfl ☒ SPD

2nd non-IDE master: _____

individual programme: _____ (give date of approval)

honours programme: ☒ Honours Programme Master

specialisation / annotation: ☐ Medisign

☐ Tech. in Sustainable Design

☐ Entrepreneurship

SUPERVISORY TEAM **

Fill in the required data for the supervisory team members. Please check the instructions on the right !

** chair Mieke van der Bijl-Brouwer dept. / section: DOS / MOD
** mentor Arnold Vermeeren dept. / section: HCD / HICD
2nd mentor Jorijn Neyrinck
organisation: Werkplaats Immaterieel Erfgoed (WIE)
city: Brugges country: Belgium

comments
(optional)

⋮

Chair should request the IDE Board of Examiners for approval of a non-IDE mentor, including a motivation letter and c.v.



Second mentor only applies in case the assignment is hosted by an external organisation.



Ensure a heterogeneous team. In case you wish to include two team members from the same section, please explain why.

APPROVAL PROJECT BRIEF

To be filled in by the chair of the supervisory team.

chair Mieke van der Bijl-Brouwerdate 17 - 03 - 2021

signature

Mieke
van der
Bijl-
Brouwer

Digitally signed by
Mieke van der
Bijl-Brouwer
Date:
2021.03.17
15:49:40
+01'00'

CHECK STUDY PROGRESS

To be filled in by the SSC E&SA (Shared Service Center, Education & Student Affairs), after approval of the project brief by the Chair.
The study progress will be checked for a 2nd time just before the green light meeting.

Master electives no. of EC accumulated in total: 30 ECOf which, taking the conditional requirements into account, can be part of the exam programme 27 EC

List of electives obtained before the third semester without approval of the BoE

WM1115TU Dutch Elementary 1 3,0 EC

☒ YES all 1st year master courses passed

☐ NO missing 1st year master courses are:
name J. J. de Bruindate 18 - 03 - 2021

signature

J. J. de
Bruin,
SPA

Digitally signed
by J. J. de
Bruin, SPA
Date:
2021.03.18
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FORMAL APPROVAL GRADUATION PROJECT

To be filled in by the Board of Examiners of IDE TU Delft. Please check the supervisory team and study the parts of the brief marked **.
Next, please assess, (dis)approve and sign this Project Brief, by using the criteria below.

- Does the project fit within the (MSc)-programme of the student (taking into account, if described, the activities done next to the obligatory MSc specific courses)?
- Is the level of the project challenging enough for a MSc IDE graduating student?
- Is the project expected to be doable within 100 working days/20 weeks?
- Does the composition of the supervisory team comply with the regulations and fit the assignment?

Content: ☒ APPROVED ☐ NOT APPROVEDProcedure: ☒ APPROVED ☐ NOT APPROVED

comments

name Monique von Morgendate 29 - 03 - 2021

signature

Making Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) relevant to the youth

project title

Please state the title of your graduation project (above) and the start date and end date (below). Keep the title compact and simple. Do not use abbreviations. The remainder of this document allows you to define and clarify your graduation project.

start date 05 - 03 - 2021

20 - 08 - 2021

end date

INTRODUCTION **

Please describe, the context of your project, and address the main stakeholders (interests) within this context in a concise yet complete manner. Who are involved, what do they value and how do they currently operate within the given context? What are the main opportunities and limitations you are currently aware of (cultural- and social norms, resources (time, money,...), technology, ...).

As time passes, the elders within our communities depart from our life, taking with them the wisdom built over a lifetime. Their death signifies the loss of heritage living in the form of people, forming the intangible ingredient to the culture we inherit from and experience through our ancestors. Tangible heritage is perceptible or physical heritage. Such as historical buildings, paintings, artefacts, clothing that remain after people and communities dissolve. Whereas, intangible meaning that which we cannot physically touch, feel or experience dissolves if left untransmitted. Think about languages, myths or the knowledge on traditions, rituals and practices.

Communities that hold extensive ecosystems of knowledges are met with challenges to carry their legacies and heritage forward, in the face of rapid urbanization and human development (Marrie, 2019). These knowledges hold the wisdom to solve some of the complex problems we face today. While indigenous techniques seem widely accepted and recognised by governmental authorities and citizens, intangible knowledges still remains a concept not many understand and often goes unnoticed, as they are considered living or dynamic, constantly evolving as it is passed down generations (UNESCO, 2019).

Werkplaats Immaterieel Erfgoed (WIE), a UNESCO-accredited* NGO established in Belgium, aspires (in their policy plan) for the years 2019-2023 to "broadening the visibility, image and awareness of intangible heritage socially" (Werkplaats Immaterieel Erfgoed, 2019). WIE works with organizations from Flanders and within their international networks, mainly serving as a pace-setter for projects involved in supporting Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). Developing methodologies, communicating interpretations and inspiring safeguarding actions for ICH, they inform their network. In addition, they provide guidance through workshops and trainings to stimulate learning and sharing practices related to ICH.

But the concept of ICH is relatively new and difficult to brand (or translate) in a way that people with no conscious relationship with ICH can understand. The objective is to make the instances of intangible culture associable, relevant and meaningful for people. Therefore, through this project, it will be essential to identify and engage various voices in the system to capture their perspectives. Broadly, the voices can be grouped as:

- Propagators are formally and informally organized parties developing the importance of ICH. They consist of authority figures or institutions such as UNESCO, museums, NGOs and/or researchers.
- Custodians of Intangible Heritage such as (indigenous) communities that own it, guard it or transmit it to future generations.
- The people who are nescient experiencers of Intangible Heritage, unaware of the concept.

The focus will be to identify the gap between authorities and decision-makers on what is propagated about ICH, the guardians or custodians of the ICH and the nescient people.

One of the crucial factors to consider while researching relevant topics is maintaining sensitivity towards the custodians. A participatory approach is required. However, it may be limited to digital means owing to the COVID-19 circumstances.

*UNESCO's 2003 Convention for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage

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introduction (continued): space for images

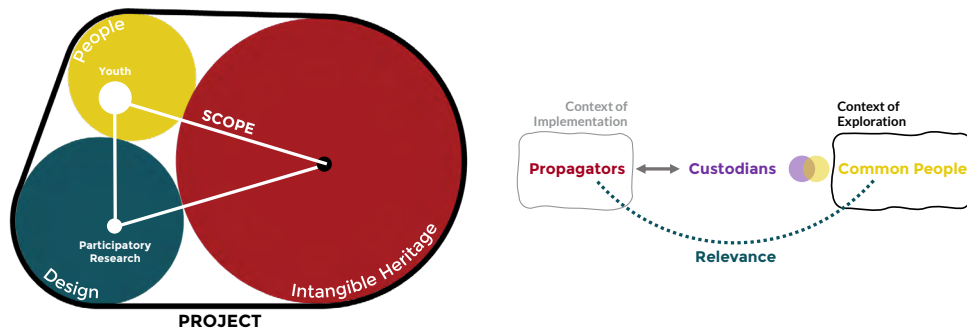


image / figure 1: Intangible Cultural Heritage and its interaction with various groups

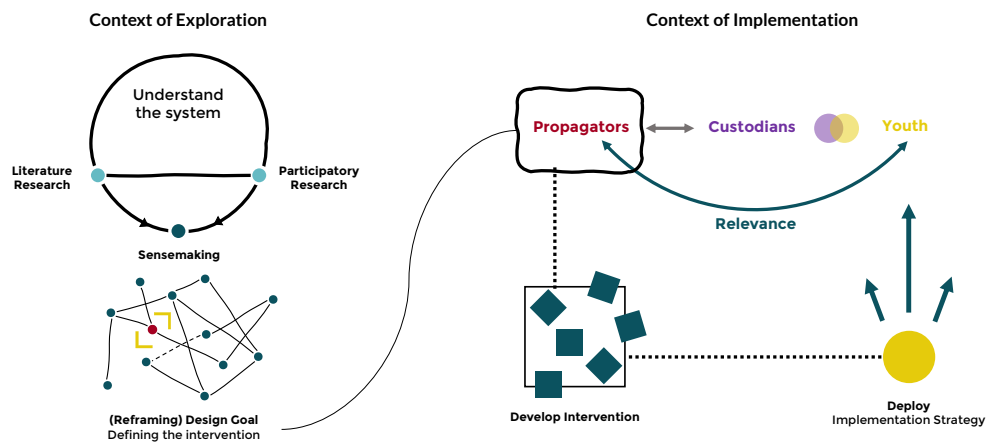


image / figure 2: Research and Design Process

PROBLEM DEFINITION **

Limit and define the scope and solution space of your project to one that is manageable within one Master Graduation Project of 30 EC (= 20 full time weeks or 100 working days) and clearly indicate what issue(s) should be addressed in this project.

ICH transmitted from generation to generation, provides "a sense of identity and continuity", according to UNESCO. With globalization, however, rising cultural homogeneity poses a threat to living heritage (Schep, 2019). This is especially important when considering the current and next generations. Therefore, this project focuses on understanding how the ICH can be "relevant" to the youth as the carriers of ICH in the coming future.

The project is narrowed to the youth by also keeping in purview the agency and access of the collaborating team and partners. TU Delft proves to be an excellent international environment to conduct participatory research to gather various perspectives on finding where ICH connects with the youth.

Furthermore, the project will build upon the works of Nina Simon, an expert on "Relevance" in the cultural context (Simon, 2016), as a guiding framework to design the research to be conducted in the initial phases.

One of the key elements here is determining what matters to the youth and identifying gaps between what is exchanged at the end of an interaction between the propagators, custodians and the youth. What do propagators project as the offering to the youth? What form, on the custodian and peoples end, does the propagated ICH take after the engagements and interactions?

The exploration phase will conclude with a redefined scope for the solution space to begin with the design intervention.

ASSIGNMENT **

State in 2 or 3 sentences what you are going to research, design, create and / or generate, that will solve (part of) the issue(s) pointed out in "problem definition". Then illustrate this assignment by indicating what kind of solution you expect and / or aim to deliver, for instance: a product, a product-service combination, a strategy illustrated through product or product-service combination ideas, In case of a Specialisation and/or Annotation, make sure the assignment reflects this/these.

The main research question is: How can propagators (UNESCO, Museums, NGOs, Researchers) of Intangible Cultural Heritage create relevance for the youth who might encounter any form of intangible cultural heritage?

The main research question (RQ) is supported by the following sub RQs:

On the youth level:

- How does the youth relate their ICH today?
- How will ICH matter to the youth?

On the propagator level:

- What are the challenges with making ICH relevant to the youth?
- What approaches are currently used to make ICH relevant to the youth?

These sub RQs will clarify the problem areas and consequently, for whom the intervention will be proposed. As intangible heritage is context-specific, a framework or method will be developed.

Keeping in mind the stakeholder, Werkplaats Immaterieel Erfgoed (WIE), an implementation strategy will be developed to help put the developed framework or method to use.

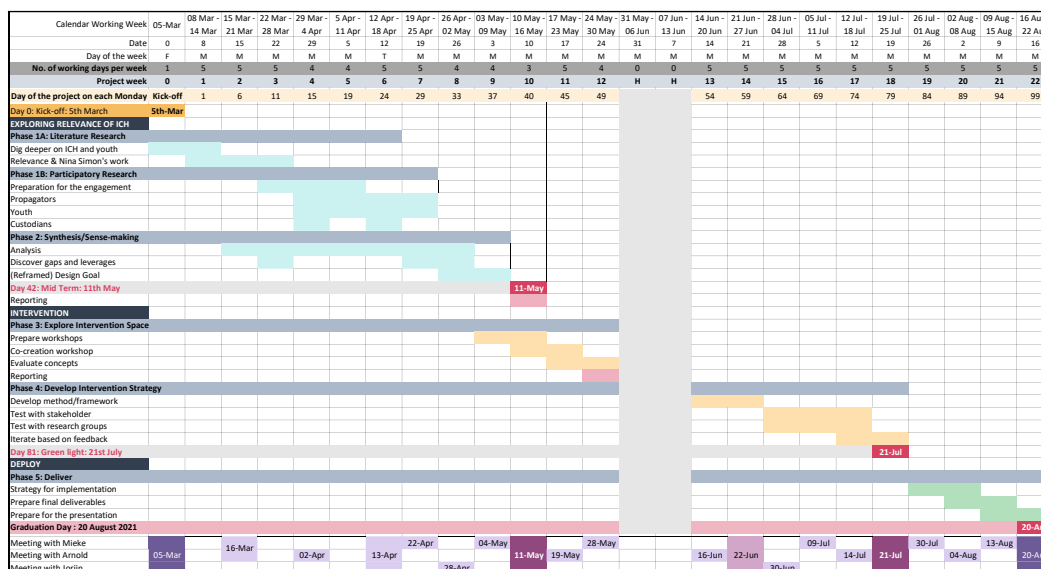
Personal Project Brief - IDE Master Graduation

PLANNING AND APPROACH **

Include a Gantt Chart (replace the example below - more examples can be found in Manual 2) that shows the different phases of your project, deliverables you have in mind, meetings, and how you plan to spend your time. Please note that all activities should fit within the given net time of 30 EC = 20 full time weeks or 100 working days, and your planning should include a kick-off meeting, mid-term meeting, green light meeting and graduation ceremony. Illustrate your Gantt Chart by, for instance, explaining your approach, and please indicate periods of part-time activities and/or periods of not spending time on your graduation project, if any, for instance because of holidays or parallel activities.

start date 5 - 3 - 2021

20 - 8 - 2021 end date



The first quarter of the planning are days are dedicated to exploring the problem space. Through literature review and participatory research with the propagators, youth and custodians, the sub RQs will be answered in depth.

Parallel to the research, the sense making phase will start to take shape through analysis. The synthesis phase will conclude the second quarter of project with a re-framed design goal to inform the design intervention.

The next phase on exploring the intervention space will focus on co-creating the solution space with the youth groups, propagators and custodians through workshops. Based on the insights of the workshops, the final design and an implementation strategy for the propagators will be delivered at the end of the project.

A two week holiday is planned in the month of May. In these weeks, I will take a small break from graduation. I wish to take a week to finish and hand in my Honours Thesis Report. The break in the second week is meant to rejuvenate me for the last few weeks of the graduation project.

Although the Gantt Chart shows 22 weeks, the planning takes into account public holidays in certain weeks reducing the 5 working days per week to 4 or 3 working days per week. The number of days, as mentioned in the row "Day of the Project on each Monday", are leading to count the 100 working days for this graduation project.

MOTIVATION AND PERSONAL AMBITIONS

Explain why you set up this project, what competences you want to prove and learn. For example: acquired competences from your MSc programme, the elective semester, extra-curricular activities (etc.) and point out the competences you have yet developed. Optionally, describe which personal learning ambitions you explicitly want to address in this project, on top of the learning objectives of the Graduation Project, such as: in depth knowledge a on specific subject, broadening your competences or experimenting with a specific tool and/or methodology, Stick to no more than five ambitions.

I am deeply passionate about the subject of Traditional Knowledge. I have been trying to simplify it to understand it, only to realize that it is a complex web of elements connected to each other. As a designer, I tend to look at simplifying and solving one problem. With this project I hope to design for and with complexity without having to take a reductionist approach.

Studying for the master during COVID has brought this realisation that strategic design cannot be done in isolation. During this graduation journey, I want to think about "what future do I want to create with others?". To see wholes instead of parts and how they are interconnected by inviting and welcoming new perspectives.

Another area of personal development and learning for me is not being afraid to share my work with others. I do believe writing helps me sort my thoughts out clearly. Therefore, I wish to adopt a reflective practice through the project to increase my confidence in my own work. Ultimately, I hope I have the courage to write and share boldly.

References:

Marrie, H. (2019). Emerging trends in the generation, transmission and protection of Traditional Knowledge. Indigenous Policy Journal, Vol. 30(No. 1), 449. <http://www.indigenouspolicy.org/index.php/ijp/issue/view/38>

Schep, M. (2019). Intangible Cultural Heritage in Urban Contexts. Kenniscentrum Immaterieel Erfgoed Nederland. https://www.immaterieelerfgoed.nl/image/2020/9/5/intangible_cultural_heritage_in_urban_contexts_def_5_9_2020.pdf

Simon, N. (2016). The Art of Relevance. Museum 2.0.

UNESCO - What is Intangible Cultural Heritage? (n.d.). ICH UNESCO. Retrieved January 22, 2021, from <https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2019). Living Heritage and Indigenous Peoples. <https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/Brochure-indigenous-people-201904-EN.pdf>

Werkplaats Immaterieel Erfgoed. (2019). Immaterieel Erfgoed Is Overal. <https://immaterieelerfgoed.be/files/attachments/.1718/beknopt-beleidsplan-WIE.pdf>

FINAL COMMENTS

In case your project brief needs final comments, please add any information you think is relevant.

Appendix B: Youth Workshops

Goal of the Workshops

To give an opportunity to the youth to reflect on their own knowledge and practice of ICH to inform the self-recognition of what ICH instance is relevant and what is not.

Workshop Approach

3 workshops were designed and conducted several times. Observations and insights gained from conducting the first and/or second time led to decisions to either continue, discontinue or iterate on the workshops to conduct again.

The invitation was accompanied by a small description of ICH and how their participation can inform the research. They could indicate their level of participation based on time and format (online or offline).

In preparation the participants were asked to think of and bring to the workshop 3 examples of intangible heritage that represent their unique culture and identity.

Each of the three examples were used as an inlet to deconstruct the relevance of their ICH in their life now.

- What makes them value each example?
- What makes the examples matter to them?
- What examples do they pass by?

Participants

A total of 34 youth participants signed up to join the workshop by filling a form shared with them as alongside the invitation for participation. 20 youth joined the workshops either physically or virtually. 3 participants were part of multiple 2 different workshops.

Reflective Learning through Iterations

The workshops were iterated throughout by planning reflections moments. These reflections were planned when the results produced during the workshop intuitively seemed surface-level, repetitive, time-consuming and/or generic.

Reflection 01

The workshops themselves were an insight into the mindset of the youth. As the first workshops were conducted, it became apparent that the concept of ICH needed extensive explanation. Sensitizing the participants before the workshops was considered but decided against as it was observed that it takes time to "get into the zone" to think about ICH and ask clarifying questions immediately.

Another observation during the 1-hour workshops was the lack of depth. The insights remained surface-level when the group sizes were 3-4 participants and time was short. Owing to this, the questions and discussion remained general.

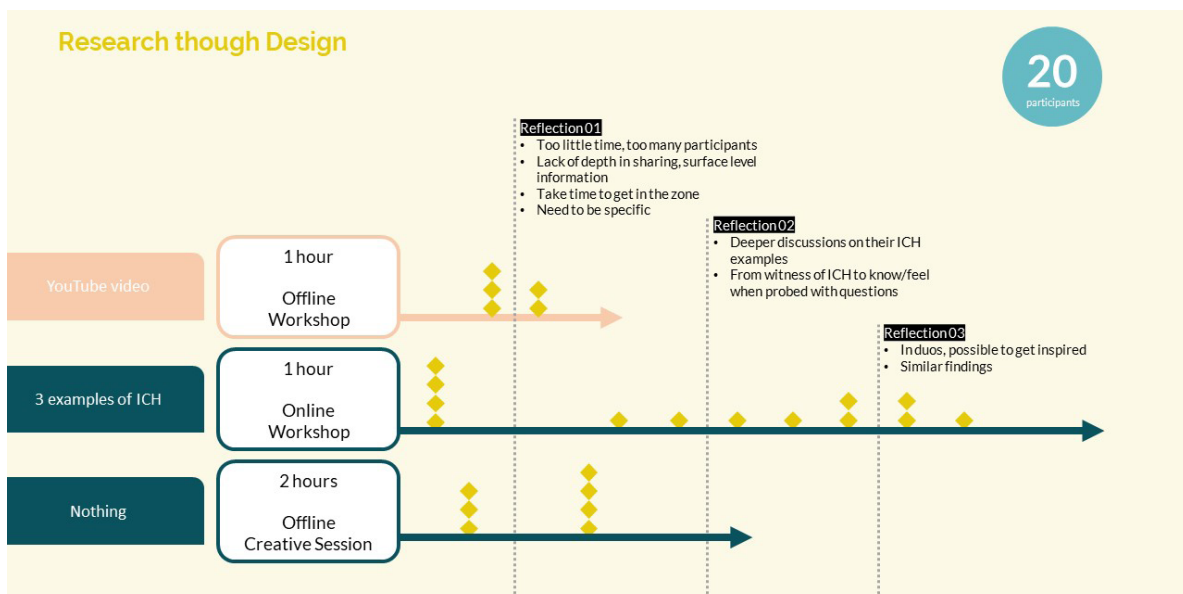
Based on these points, the workshops were improved to dedicate more time to each person in an online setting.

Reflection 02 & 03

After the second set of workshops, the importance of specific probing questions was realized. The participants could explain their feelings and emotions related to their ICH examples. Deep insights were gained.

The workshop was conducted individually as well as in duos. In duos, it was observed that the participants were intrigued and inspired by each others' examples. They were probed by each other's questions and could reflect together. The facilitator's role was only necessary to get started with an intention to discuss ICH and to occasionally nudge with questions.

After the third set of workshops, similar insights came up and therefore the research with the youth participants was ended.



Appendix B: Youth Workshops

Online Workshop/Instances



TIME	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	ADDITIONAL INFO
00:00 0'	Preparation	Think of 3 mediums (it could be an object, a story, a thing and/or a game or anything else) that are unique to your culture and identity as an individual or as part of a community. ☐☐ Bring it with you to the online workshop.	Feel free to ask me question if the preparation is not too clear.
00:00 3'	Welcome everyone	Thank you for participating Permission to record Introduce yourself and the observer (purpose of the observer) Share the purpose of the session	Check if all participants are presents.
00:03 5'	Introduce yourself and the project	Name, origin, study programme, etc. Explain the graduation project scope Take questions	Explain title But what's intangible? Tangible (monumental, static, perceptible) while intangible (ephemeral, dynamic, knowing). Usually intangible is on the back of tangible. Examples of ICH - Language, oral traditions, etc. ICH Important because - Sense of identity and continuity in a globalised world Focus on Youth (global citizens) - Homogeneity, uniformity - What makes us different from each other? ICH fairly new concept and difficult to understand (like sustainability, changing definitions) Therefore, a gap > Graduation Project
00:08 2'	Take a screenshot and place on Miro	Get in the mood for sharing around a bonfire Traditional storytelling Send Miro link Add a screenshot picture of yourself	Feel free to discuss, stop someone and ask questions Check if everyone understand working with Miro
00:10 3'	Add 3 instances of your unique culture/ identity to Miro	Could be as a photo, image, text of the instance or a resprestative of the story you want to tell.	
00:13 16'	Tell your story with the 3 instances	Introduce yourself, origin Share about yourself through your unique culture and identity instances (4 mins per person)	Others, feel free to ask questions
00:29 3'	What PERSONALLY matters to them about their instances	I got this from someone/somewhere, through some influences. Think about: For each instance, why does this heritage matter to me or not matter to me? Add to Miro (yellow post-its) Clear, or any questions?	For yourself Is it relevant to me? Yes, why? or No, why not?
00:32 10'	Discussion what matters and what doesn't	Did you agree all the instances you put on Miro matter to you? What doesn't matter to you? Why?	

TIME	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	ADDITIONAL INFO
00:42 3'	What matters in a GROUP/COMMUNITY mindset when these instances are concerned	Add to Miro (green post-its) Think about: For each instance, why does this heritage matter to US or not matter to US as a group?	Give an example
00:45 10'	Discussion what matters and what doesn't	Did you agree all the instances you put on Miro matter to you? What doesn't matter to you? Why? When will it matter to you? Why?	Dig deeper, use examples to each other experiences. When answers get repetitive, transition to the next question.
00:55 3'	Transition to the end	Thank yous If something comes up, please share it with me More participation	
00:58			

TOTAL LENGTH: 00:58

Appendix C: Analysis - Workshops

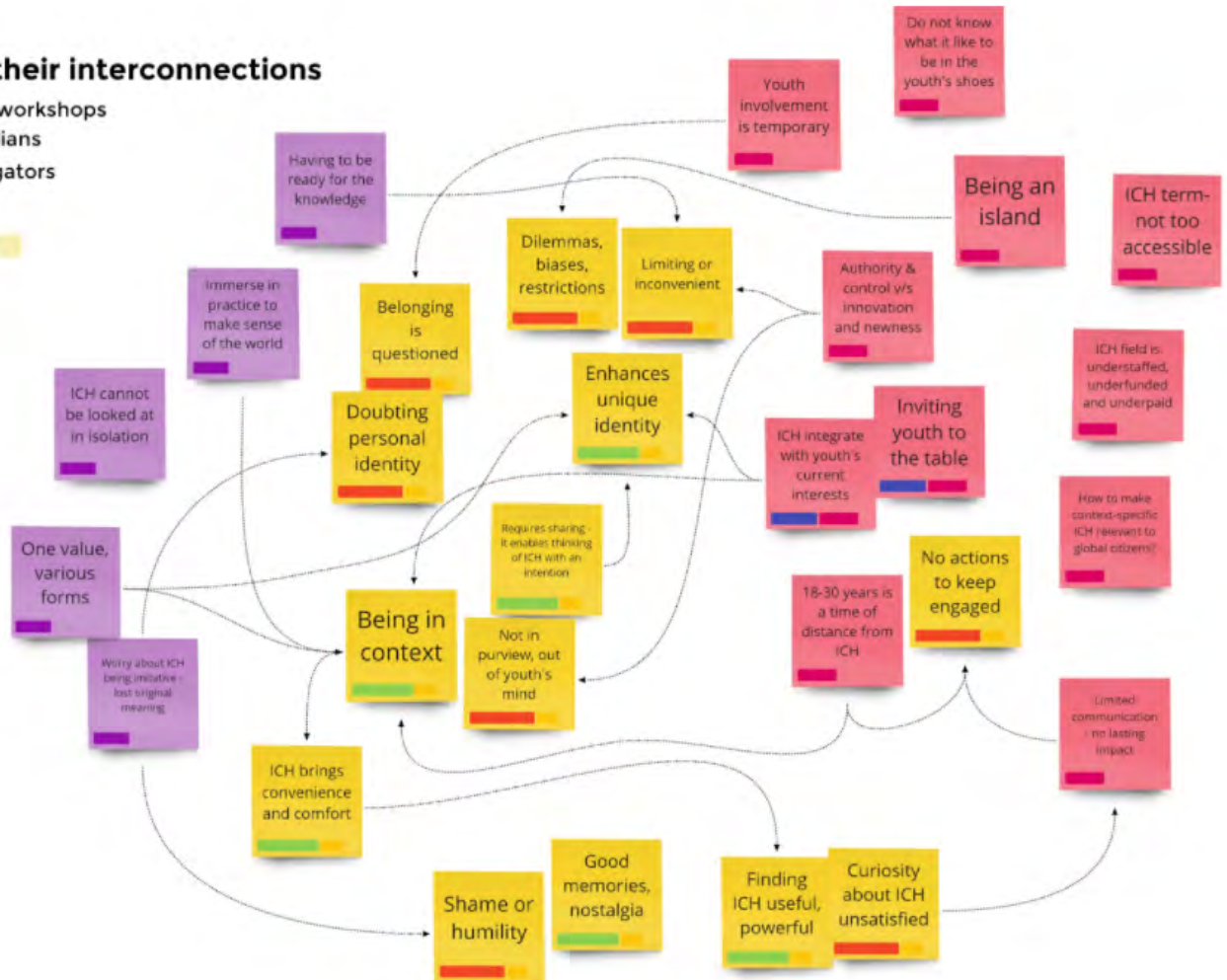


Appendix C: Analysis - All themes

Themes & their interconnections

- From youth workshops
- From custodians
- From propagators

affects



Appendix D: Interview Scripts

Propagators

Introduce yourself & the project

Professionally

Background

Inspired to set up this project

The purpose of meeting with them and expectations

Their introduction

What's their role in the organization?

Scope of work?

What do you see is the understanding of ICH around you?

What is the current involvement of youth (ages 18-30) in your work?

In your organization and staff

How are they compensated?

Do you actively seek the youth out? Why?

What does the youth need to do to reach you?

How important is it to your organization that ICH becomes relevant to the youth?

How do you see the relationship between Intangible Heritage and youth?

Is the youth well represented in the Heritage Sector according to you?

According to you, what are the challenges/barriers propagators need to overcome themselves to ensure continuity of their work?

From the examples you have seen in the past or are around you, what is stopping the youth from seeing relevance in ICH?

Custodians

Introduce yourself & the project

Professionally

Background

Inspired to set up this project

The purpose of meeting with them and expectations

Their introduction

What kind of a custodian are you? What do you teach? How?

What do you see is the understanding of ICH around you?

What is the current involvement of youth (ages 18-30) in your work?

How do you reach them?

What are your wishes for the youth?

What can the youth do for you?

What's your view on the dilution, transmission and interpretation of ICH?

What challenges do you face?

Appendix E: Iterations & Experiments

Initial Experiments

Experiment #1: Identity beyond the obvious

Intended Outcome

Establish a connection between ICH and identity with a playful and relevant example. It was aimed at making the youth think about their identity beyond the obvious by making a dating profile with examples of their ICH.

What did the participant have to do?

Thinking/ reflecting on how their intangible culture shapes their identity.

Iterations

Cycle #1

A group of 3 participants offline were asked to draw their own dating profile.

Learnings

It was hard for the participants to think about themselves from the lens of heritage.

Once there was a flow it was harder to stop.

A template would have helped the participants who got caught up in making a very "proper" profile. They judged it too often in terms of how they looked.

The downside of this experiment is that the participants started doubting their own identity. Especially the ones who did not have very specific examples to talk about.

Cycle #2

4 individuals were asked to fill in a dating profile template with guiding questions provided on Miro to think about their identity beyond the obvious.

Learnings

As cycles were done individually, the aspect of sharing was missing.

The group discussions in the first cycle seemed very useful to get people to ask each other questions and illicit examples from their heritage.

Key Takeaway

The main point to raise here is that the reflections on identity remained superficial. What is required here are deep reflections on ICH. It is clear that reflections beyond the obvious are needed. In the first cycle, this was possible through the facilitator's intervention. It is evident that for reflection beyond the obvious some kind of guidance is needed.

Experiment #2: Human Libraries for Culture

Intended Outcome

Sharing about ICH by delving into a common theme that everyone on the table is familiar with.

What did the participant have to do?

Roleplay and sharing your cultural (heritage) experiences with others who experienced the same theme differently.

Iterations

Cycle #1

A group of 3 participants offline were asked to have a conversation on loss of innocence.

Cycle #2

A group of 5 participants offline were asked to have a conversation on cultural cliches.

Key Takeaway

- This experiment needs a probe or a prompt to get started given by the theme.
- First the meaning of the theme was discussed for each participant. The participants respected the diverse definitions each person had and came to a common understanding of the theme.
- It was easy to draw parallels with someone else on the table and find what's common.
- As this experiment was timed for only 20 minutes the conversation needed guidance to bring it back to ICH examples. Initially before the intervention, what ICH is had taken a backseat.
- A facilitator's intervention seemed to break the ongoing conversation on the table. A small prompt or a reminder could help in bringing the conversation back to intangible heritage.

Experiment #3: Future History

Intended Outcome

Reflect on something intangible and how it would affect the past and future generations.

What did the participant have to do?

Reflecting on a contrast with 3 scenarios in a group.

Iterations

Cycle #1

A group of 3 participants offline were asked to have a conversation on:

Scenario 1

What would a scene look like if your grandparents' grandparents had an iPad?

Scenario 2

How would their having an iPad have changed your present?

Scenario 3

You are the ancestors of the future with the iPad. How does your having an iPad affect the future generations (grandchildren's grandchildren)?

Key Takeaway

The experiment trailed here was difficult. The idea to think about how history impacts you and then think about how you impact the future failed.

Selected Concepts

Concept 1 - Storyboard



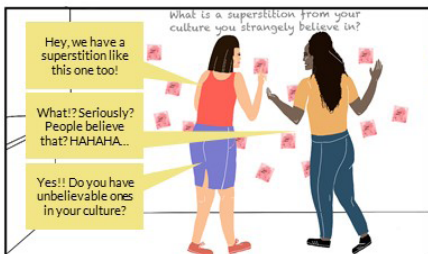
Robin has embarked on a solo travel to the Netherlands. She is finally at her second destination Delft at the hostel her friend recommended.



She checks in and receives an interactive brochure of cultural immersion experiences near the hostel. She tries to take it all in at once – the excitement, the curiosity combined with the little prayer that the dorm and the bathrooms are clean.



Upstairs she makes a friend, Alex who is returning from a walk around the city. They get talking while Robin investigates the brochure.

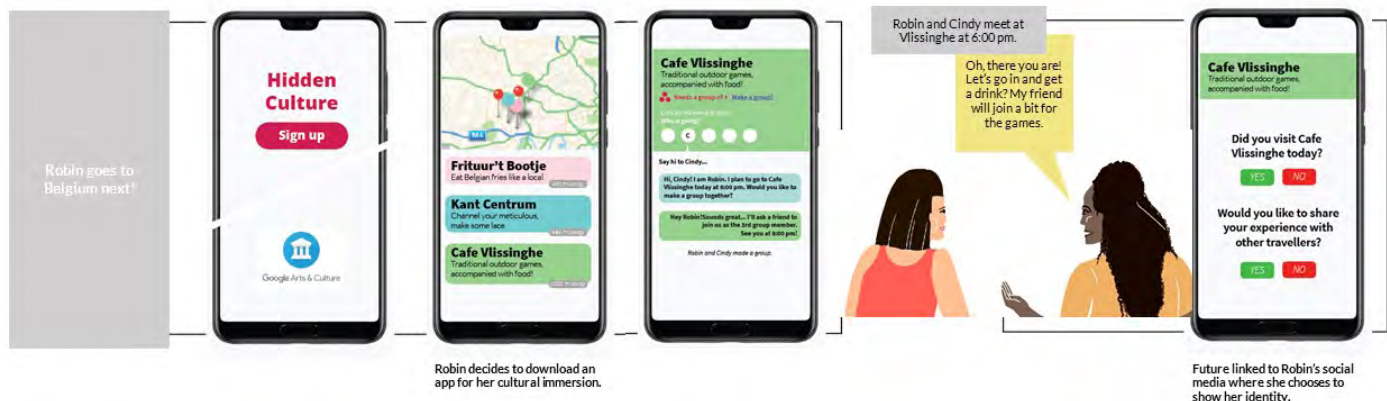


A quick decision to grab a bite at the hostel café brings Robin and Alex to the common area downstairs again. Robin notices a wall with cards and curiously asks, "Oh, what's this wall?" Both get reading the small cards with stories and experiences on them, mentioning when they find something similar to their past experiences.

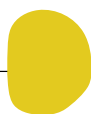


Robin makes a quick mental notes to bring her card down next time and add her story.

Concept 2 - Storyboard



Appendix F: Archetypes of Hari, Blaze and Skye



HARI

Hari is an expat in his late 20s, has a stable job but get bored of routine quickly. He often takes trips to neighbouring countries to break away from the monotony he feels. He is always looking to learn something new while travelling specifically to gain a different perspective on life.

Behaviours

Prepares an itinerary with a must-do-everything attitude.

Driven by the fear of missing out (FOMO), he makes the most of his time and money spent during the travel.

Prefers to be alone but does not avoid company. He just gets socially awkward.

Rarely uses his phone while travelling except to find his way to his destination.

Needs

To know the historical significance of the places he visits.

To feel an adrenaline rush or a sense of adventure.

To get local recommendations from friends or people he meets during the travel.



BLAZE

Blaze is a recent graduate in her mid-20s. She has lived with her family all her life. Trying to find her authentic self amidst the influences of others, she yearns for some alone time. She overcomes her apprehensions and has decided to travel alone for the first time.

Behaviours

Self-paced and easy going, prepares a checklist of things to do but not too rigid.

Hopes to make friends along the way to tag along for activities.

Uses her phone on travels but would be happy to be away from it.

Explores the food to make a connection with the place.

Needs

To find the most authentic local experiences.

To carry a book and pocket board games wherever she goes to keep herself occupied.

To be in a clean and comfortable space to be at ease.

As a woman, safety is a concern.



SKYE

Skye is an under graduate student in her early 20s. Her travel plans are usually spontaneous, based on what she sees on social media. She is extroverted and has learnt a lot about other cultures already through her online friends.

Behaviours

Doesn't stick to a fixed schedule on travels, steps out and explores on the go.

Looks for online tools to support her during her travels.

Makes friends easily and blends into existing groups.

Captures what she does on her phone and shares on social media.

Needs

Clear and concise information.

To know the environmental impact of her travel, that she is making sustainable choices.

Constant internet connectivity

Appendix G: Evaluation Plan

Solo Travellers

Aim: To evaluate whether the Hidden Culture Experience is desirable to the solo travellers.

Type of Evaluation: Guided visualization + personal interview

Desirability

Does the traveller want to engage with the entry points - coaster, brochure and app?

What motivates the traveller to engage with the experience?

Functionality

Does the experience enable and guide:
reflecting on their own ICH?
prompt sharing their ICH?
exploring the ICH around them in the form of activities or as people's stories?
realization/ reinforcement of the traveller's identity?

WIE

Aim: To evaluate whether the Hidden Culture Experience is feasible for WIE.

Type of Evaluation: Presentation of work + discussion

Capacity

What are your current capacities as an organization to see this experience come to life and implemented?

Explain:

The Hidden Culture Experience is an effort led by WIE to work collaboratively with other heritage organizations around Europe. Each city/town in collaboration with their local heritage organization can add their ICH listings to the app to put their city/town on the app. That way, WIE does not have to develop all the content by themselves. Rather WIE trains the other organization on the use of the app, provides templates for the brochure and coasters, etc.

Where do you see yourself in the ecosystem for this experience?

Who could be strategic partners to this project in terms of further development and funding?

Alignment when current work

How does this experience tie in with your current work?

Other stakeholders

Aim: To evaluate whether the Hidden Culture Experience is viable for WIE's partners.

Type of Evaluation: Presentation of work + discussion

Value

What value does the experience bring to your work?

Would partnering to make this experience happen be feasible for you?

Does the partnership contribute to your work?

Appendix H: Coasters



Appendix H: App flow



Appendix H: Brochure (Back)



