

## Chapter 8

# Folk Culture: An Intangible Cultural Heritage to Communicate in Kindergarten

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter discusses the pedagogical importance of folk culture in early age and introduces the Hungarian legal frame and regulations regarding the introduction of folk culture in Hungarian kindergartens. It looks at four surveys addressing the kindergarten teachers' and parents' attitudes regarding that. Hence the topic of adapting folk culture in the contemporary pedagogical program of kindergartens in Hungary are investigated from diverse perspectives. The chapter concludes in possible methods monitored and evaluated in practice of Hungarian institutions, through which folk cultural elements can be effectively adapted to the everyday programs in kindergartens. Hence the results and suggestions can be seen as tools for effectively communicating intangible cultural heritage for young generation, ensuring the inheritance of such values in the future as well.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The UNESCO 2003 Convention characterized intangible cultural heritage to be realized in “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” (UNESCO, 2001). Almost as synonyms for *intangible heritage*, the terms *tradition* and *collective memory* are often used that further connected the notion of folk culture and intangible cultural heritage both in Hungary and abroad as well (Sonkoly 2005, p. 60). The Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices of UNESCO have 630 elements to be included in 2022 out of which the vast majority (570 elements) can be connected to a single community (not multinational). This might have also triggered the notion that professionals researching folk culture elements became also intangible cultural heritage experts. In case of Hungary, most of the intangible cultural heritage elements both on the national and internationally recognized ones are elements of folk culture (both Hungarian and minority ones too). Accordingly, it is safe to say that in case of the heritagization of any folk culture element, the given communities’ intangible cultural heritage asset got enriched.

By playing folk games, singing folk songs and rhymes, or by listening to folk tales, children’s physical development (like movements and senso-monitoring capabilities), communication- (in terms of articulation) and social skills (such as cooperation and sharing) can improve indirectly. All of these activities provide joy to the children making the learning and improving processes an experience that lacks of any directed or forced learning step. However, the task is not as simple on the practical level, because globalization and everyday life in 21<sup>st</sup> century does not involve these practices or the knowledge about and valuation of folk culture. Parents prefer to prepare their children for contemporary tasks and challenges (such as information technology skills and foreign language knowledge) as early as possible. Moreover, via mass media, children are targeted with such programs, stories and activities that do not incorporate elements and evaluations of the local culture. Furthermore, due to the characteristics of modern age, when members of local communities are changing often and rapidly, the inheritance of local customs and traditions is challenged as well.

Based on Shannon and Weaver model of communication (Shannon, 1948, pp. 379-423), the communication chain of folk culture in our contemporary world has been interfered on many levels. The “sources” (those who knew and practiced local traditions) pass away without forwarding the know-how, the “receivers” also frequently change their locations and cannot become engaged with the local culture. Many times, the “message” is evaluated outdated or is not understood at all, (partly) because the “channel” of communication is not efficient, and the “noise” (like the contemporary skills required for successful education and employment) is much stronger, and more influential than the “message”.

The current chapter investigates this complex topic of communicating folk culture in kindergartens by analyzing the situation of Hungary. However, the topic is adaptable internationally, as the effects of any community’s folk culture element on child development (including community belonging, identity formation and the transmission of social rules and regulations among generations) is the same (Denac & Žnidaršič 2018, pp. 2856-2862; Zalar 2020, pp. 133-149; Huiyu 2018, pp. 757-760). Moreover, intangible cultural heritage elements are connected to communities and not to any tangible, built or material object. Accordingly, smaller than nation communities, even in threaten state of existence can safeguard and inherit these valued, community identity forming elements (Stampur, 2014; Agbenyega, Tamakloe & Klibthong 2017, pp.112-126; Cajete 2017, pp.112-130). As individuals and communities can live

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