

# Safeguarding tango as an intangible cultural heritage through higher education in Argentina: a case study of three national universities in Buenos Aires

**Carolina Giménez Milán**

**Carolina Giménez Milán.** Argentine Lawyer and Spanish Proofreader, with a Master's degree in Business Law and a Specialization in Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility. Currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Higher Education. Holds the position of Responsible for Intercultural Affairs at Instituto Superior de Letras Eduardo Mallea in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She oversees the Department of Spanish as a Foreign Language and serves as a tenured professor for two subjects in the official tertiary career "Tecnatura Superior en la Corrección de Textos" (Associate degree in Spanish proofreading). Her research focuses on intercultural competences and global citizenship, particularly addressing Target 7 of SDG 4. This goal urges states to ensure that, by 2030, all students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development. This includes education for sustainable development, global citizenship, appreciation of cultural diversity, and the contribution of culture to sustainable development. Her doctoral research specifically concentrates on Education for Sustainable Development.

# Safeguarding tango as an intangible cultural heritage through higher education in Argentina: a case study of three national universities in Buenos Aires

● **Carolina Giménez Milán**

Instituto Superior de Letras Eduardo Mallea (Argentina)

## ABSTRACT

Tango, a binational nomination between Argentina and Uruguay, was inscribed as intangible cultural heritage (ICH) on the Representative List of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009. Recognising that cultural heritage is increasingly threatened with destruction by changing social and economic conditions, and considering that the safeguarding of this heritage at the national level often remains incomplete, UNESCO acknowledges that education plays a key role in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Safeguarding by integrating intangible cultural heritage into higher education could be an effective strategy. The paper briefly presents the concepts of intangible cultural heritage, safeguarding measures, a historical approach to tango, and a review of three curricula or degree proposals offered by

three universities in Buenos Aires, Argentina, that could be considered as safeguarding measures for tango as intangible cultural heritage. From the perspective of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the overall results framework, we interpret that the proposals of the universities under study can be considered measures to safeguard tango, intending to guarantee tango as a living heritage continuation. The three proposals include tango education, awareness-raising and, possibly, transmission.

## Keywords

tango, safeguarding measures, higher education, 2003 ICH Convention, Overall Results Framework

## Introduction

In October 2003, UNESCO adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH Convention) in Paris, which came into force in April 2006 and has been ratified by 181 states (as of June 2023).<sup>1</sup> The Convention aims to safeguard traditional cultural expressions and other manifestations of heritage classified as ‘intangible cultural heritage’.

The ICH Convention grants states the authority to determine which manifestations of heritage should be inventoried and protected through the List of Representative Intangible Heritage of Humanity. In this

regard, tango, as a nomination from Argentina and Uruguay, was inscribed in 2009 (4.COM)<sup>2</sup> on that list.

Both countries agreed to safeguard this intangible cultural heritage through the establishment of specialised training and documentation centres, the formation of an orchestra, and the construction of museums and preservation trusts dedicated to tango.

According to De Oliveira Pinto (2018, 24), the responsibility for bringing the musical heritage of tango into full public awareness ‘is given to members of communities, music ensembles, and all those who are

interested in, touched by, or actively engaged in music'. Education also plays an important role here.

In this paper, it is presented and analysed some safeguarding measures by integrating ICH into higher education within the context of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

## Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The 2003 ICH Convention, the first binding multilateral instrument for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, enhances and supplements existing international agreements, recommendations and resolutions regarding cultural and natural heritage.

The primary safeguarding measure proposed in the ICH Convention is the creation of inventories. States Parties are also urged to adopt suitable legal, technical, administrative and financial measures aimed at:

- promoting the establishment or strengthening of institutions for training in the management of intangible cultural heritage and its transmission through forums and spaces intended for its performance or expression;
- ensuring access to intangible cultural heritage while respecting customary practices governing access to specific aspects of such heritage; and
- establishing documentation institutions for intangible cultural heritage and facilitating access to them.<sup>3</sup>

It is crucial to define the meaning of 'cultural heritage'. According to UNESCO:

The concept of 'cultural heritage' has significantly evolved in recent decades, partly due to UNESCO's initiatives. Cultural heritage encompasses not only monuments and collections of objects but also traditions or living expressions inherited from ancestors and passed down to descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge, and practices related to nature and the universe, or the skills to produce traditional crafts. Although intangible cultural heritage is fragile, it is crucial for maintaining cultural diversity amidst globalization. Understanding the intangible cultural heritage of different communities fosters intercultural dialogue and

promotes mutual respect for diverse ways of life.<sup>4</sup>

UNESCO emphasises that the importance of intangible cultural heritage lies not solely in the cultural manifestations themselves but in the wealth of knowledge and skills transmitted through them from one generation to the next. The social and economic value of this transmission of knowledge is significant for minority groups and mainstream social groups within a state, and it is equally important for developing and developed states alike.

In this regard, Article 2 of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) defines 'intangible cultural heritage' as

the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces associated with communities, groups, and sometimes individuals, recognized as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is continuously recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, interaction with nature, and history, providing them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. This Convention considers only intangible cultural heritage compatible with existing international human rights instruments, mutual respect among communities, groups, and individuals, and sustainable development.

Furthermore, this article specifies that intangible cultural heritage manifests in (among other domains):

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

While 'tangible cultural heritage' refers to physical elements produced, maintained and transmitted intergenerationally in a society, including artistic creations, built heritage such as buildings and monuments, and other tangible products of human creativity with cultural significance in a society, 'intangible cultural heritage'

refers to 'practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces associated with communities, groups, and sometimes individuals, recognized as part of their Cultural Heritage' (UNESCO 2003). Tangible and intangible heritage necessitate different approaches for preservation and safeguarding, motivating the conception and ratification of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. UNESCO conventions for the safeguarding of the Material World Heritage (1972) and the preservation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (2003) employ listing practices for worldwide identification and global recognition.

### **Tango in Argentine society: historical approximation and designation as ICH**

Born at the end of the 19th century, Argentine tango grew alongside various social and political processes in the country, eventually becoming a symbol of Argentine culture worldwide. Few music styles in history have managed to establish such a strong bond with a specific city and geographical area as tango did with Buenos Aires and the Río de la Plata region. Initially known as 'of the Old Guard', tango was a lively and physically daring suburban dance that seemed to defy the moral conventions of the Victorian era. However, the later addition of lyrics and singers, especially Carlos Gardel, along with rhythmic, melodic and instrumental transformations, gave the genre a more lyrical character. With the prominent presence of the bandoneon, piano and strings, tango expressed the sorrow and melancholy of immigrant descendants. After a period of widespread popularity, with highly successful orchestras that promoted large-scale dances, the genre experienced a prolonged crisis starting from the 1960s, from which only the revolutionary Astor Piazzolla managed to emerge. Nevertheless, from the turn of the century to the present day, tango has been reclaiming a prominent place in Argentine cultural life, largely due to the revaluation of history and popular traditions by young people.

Although historical sources indicate that tango originated in the Argentine capital, its increased visibility and significance also contributed to the construction of the Argentine national identity, leading to the concept of the 'national character of Tango' (Archetti 2003, 42). Its deepening relationship with the nation occurred in the 1990s, marked by the establishment of the National

Tango Academy through government policy (Decree No. 1235-1990) and the enactment of the National Tango Law No. 24,684 in 1996, both pivotal precedents for its future recognition as intangible cultural heritage.

For most experts, as well as society as a whole, tango as a cultural phenomenon began to undergo revitalisation in the 1990s (Cecconi 2009; Marchini 2007; mentioned by Untref-Aammba 2013, 11). The rejuvenation of tango was seen against the backdrop of its perceived decline in the 1960s, when it supposedly lost its appeal to audiences (Cecconi 2009, mentioned by Untref-Aammba 2013, 11).

In 2001, the Department of Heritage of the Ministry of Culture of Argentina proposed nominating tango to UNESCO as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. This initial attempt failed, due to the prevailing understanding of ICH at the time and the absence of a transnational regulation such as the ICH Convention (2003). As Santoyo (2010, 113) noted, in its early stages, 'intangible heritage' referred to 'traditional culture' characterised by a strong connection between 'people, identity, and tradition'. Thus, tango appeared to deviate from this notion of tradition, as it was perceived as a global, contemporary phenomenon associated with urban life. Consequently, tango did not align with the traditional view of heritage as 'reproduction' characterised by continuity, stability and autonomy. The debate surrounding tango's UNESCO candidacy reflected its cross-border nature and its urban roots, particularly in Buenos Aires, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. UNESCO's initial rejection of tango's candidacy suggested a perceived lack of local and authentic characteristics.

The second nomination, in 2009, employed different strategies within a changed context of intangible heritage production. With the endorsement of Argentina and Uruguay, the application was jointly submitted by Buenos Aires and Montevideo, introducing the concept of tango as a 'Río de la Plata expression' and inaugurating processes of shared heritage. According to Untref-Aammba (2013, 12), this regional and transnational characterisation lent tango a relative authenticity and detached it from the global dimension attributed to it in the previous submission. Moreover, this second attempt was made within the framework of the newly adopted ICH Convention of 2003, which defined 'intangible heritage' as constantly recreated by communities and emphasised pluralistic concepts of identity.

The inscription of tango from the Río de la Plata region as intangible cultural heritage in 2009 does not imply that debates ceased, as evidenced by the elaboration of new definitions by the UNESCO committee of experts in 2011. These definitions broadened the understanding of ICH, recognising it as 'traditional, contemporary, and living simultaneously', allowing for the incorporation of the urban dimension and contemporary manifestations. Additionally, the concept of identity was expanded to include continuities not only from the original source but also from recreations, displacements and adaptations resulting from movement by both sedentary and migrant groups (Untref-Aammba 2013, 12).

UNESCO's explanation of tango's inscription in 2009 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity<sup>5</sup> underscores its significance as a product of the cultural fusion in Buenos Aires and Montevideo. Tango, practised in traditional dance halls, embodies and promotes diversity and cultural dialogue, transcending national boundaries and adapting to new environments while maintaining its community spirit. The community of tango encompasses musicians, professional and amateur dancers, choreographers, composers, songwriters and teachers, reflecting its widespread embrace as a popular urban music and its incorporation into celebrations of national heritage in Argentina and Uruguay.

## Measures for safeguarding ICH

'What kind of measures might prove useful to safeguard living cultural manifestations? How can safeguarding actions be made possible to protect, keep, disseminate, and revitalize living heritage?', asked Tiago de Oliveira Pinto (n.d.), Professor and Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Transcultural Music Studies and Head of Musicology Department, University of Music Franz Liszt Weimar at the SDGAcademy course *Living Heritage and Sustainable Development*.

These questions are relevant when defining safeguarding measures. In this regard, the ICH Convention establishes the following:

### Article 13: Other measures for safeguarding

To ensure the safeguarding, development and promotion of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory, each State Party shall endeavour to: (a) adopt a general policy aimed at promoting the

function of the intangible cultural heritage in society, and at integrating the safeguarding of such heritage into planning programmes; (b) designate or establish one or more competent bodies for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory; (c) foster scientific, technical and artistic studies, as well as research methodologies, with a view to effective safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, in particular the intangible cultural heritage in danger; (d) adopt appropriate legal, technical, administrative and financial measures aimed at: (i) fostering the creation or strengthening of institutions for training in the management of the intangible cultural heritage and the transmission of such heritage through forums and spaces intended for the performance or expression thereof; (ii) ensuring access to the intangible cultural heritage while respecting customary practices governing access to specific aspects of such heritage; (iii) establishing documentation institutions for the intangible cultural heritage and facilitating access to them.

### Article 14: Education, awareness-raising and capacity-building

Each State Party shall endeavour, by all appropriate means, to: (a) ensure recognition of, respect for, and enhancement of the intangible cultural heritage in society, in particular through: (i) educational, awareness-raising and information programmes, aimed at the general public, in particular young people; (ii) specific educational and training programmes within the communities and groups concerned; (iii) capacity-building activities for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, in particular management and scientific research; and (iv) non-formal means of transmitting knowledge; (b) keep the public informed of the dangers threatening such heritage, and of the activities carried out in pursuance of this Convention; (c) promote education for the safeguarding of natural spaces and places of memory whose existence is necessary for expressing the intangible cultural heritage.

Safeguarding ICH is about transferring knowledge, skills and meaning. Transmission – the communication of heritage from one generation to the next – is emphasised in the ICH Convention over the production of tangible manifestations such as dances, songs, musical instruments or crafts. Therefore, safeguarding

measures largely focus on strengthening and reinforcing the diverse and varied circumstances, both tangible and intangible, necessary for the continuous evolution and interpretation of intangible cultural heritage, as well as for its transmission to future generations.<sup>6</sup>

The ICH Convention defines 'safeguarding' as measures aimed at ensuring the sustainability of intangible cultural heritage, which include identifying, documenting, researching, preserving, protecting, promoting, enhancing and transmitting such heritage, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as revitalising its various aspects.<sup>7</sup>

While there are various types of safeguarding measures, this paper focuses on measures within education, particularly higher education. Under this framework, UNESCO has initiated 'The Programme on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Formal and Non-Formal Education' in recognition that education plays a crucial role in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. It acknowledges that intangible cultural heritage can offer context-specific content and pedagogy for education programmes, serving as a catalyst to enhance the relevance and quality of education and improve learning outcomes. This programme promotes learning and teaching with and about intangible heritage across all relevant disciplines in education.

## Measures for safeguarding ICH within higher education

At the core of the 2030 Agenda are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The universal, transformational and inclusive SDGs describe major development challenges for humanity. The aim of the 17 SDGs is to secure a sustainable, peaceful, prosperous and equitable life on Earth for everyone now and in the future (UNESCO 2017).

As highlighted in the guide *Accelerating education for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in universities*, published in 2020 by SDSN, Education for the SDGs (ESDGs), is a critical mission for universities, both because universities are in a unique position to provide this service to society, as well as because the implementation of ESDGs can bring benefits to universities.

As providers of general, professional and vocational

education across disciplines, and reaching millions of students at all stages of their lives, universities are in a unique position – and therefore have a critical responsibility – to deliver ESDGs to as many students as they can.

ESDGs integration can be an organisationally difficult process, but there are many actions that universities can take to support it. Although we have mentioned ESDGs in a general way, in this paper we will focus on the analysis of SDG 4: 'Ensure inclusive, equitable and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.' And, in particular, we will refer to SDG 7, by which states must, by 2030, guarantee that all students acquire the theoretical and practical knowledge necessary to promote sustainable development, among other things through education for sustainable development and the adoption of sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and the appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development, among other means.

Our intention is to highlight the importance of appreciating culture in all of its expressions, and the importance of protecting and safeguarding the vitality of a given cultural tradition and how higher education may collaborate with this.

We agree with Nigel Encalada (n.d.), Director of the Institute for Social and Cultural Research in Belize with responsibility for implementing the 2003 ICH Convention, when he remarked as follows at the SDGAcademy course *Living Heritage and Sustainable Development*:

Taking living heritage into education settings recognizes the importance of communities as the centerpiece in transmitting and safeguarding our living heritage. A community-centered education model ensures that the community speaks for itself and is actively engaged in passing on knowledge and skills to younger generations, who, in turn, will be able to use this knowledge to assist with continued development of society.

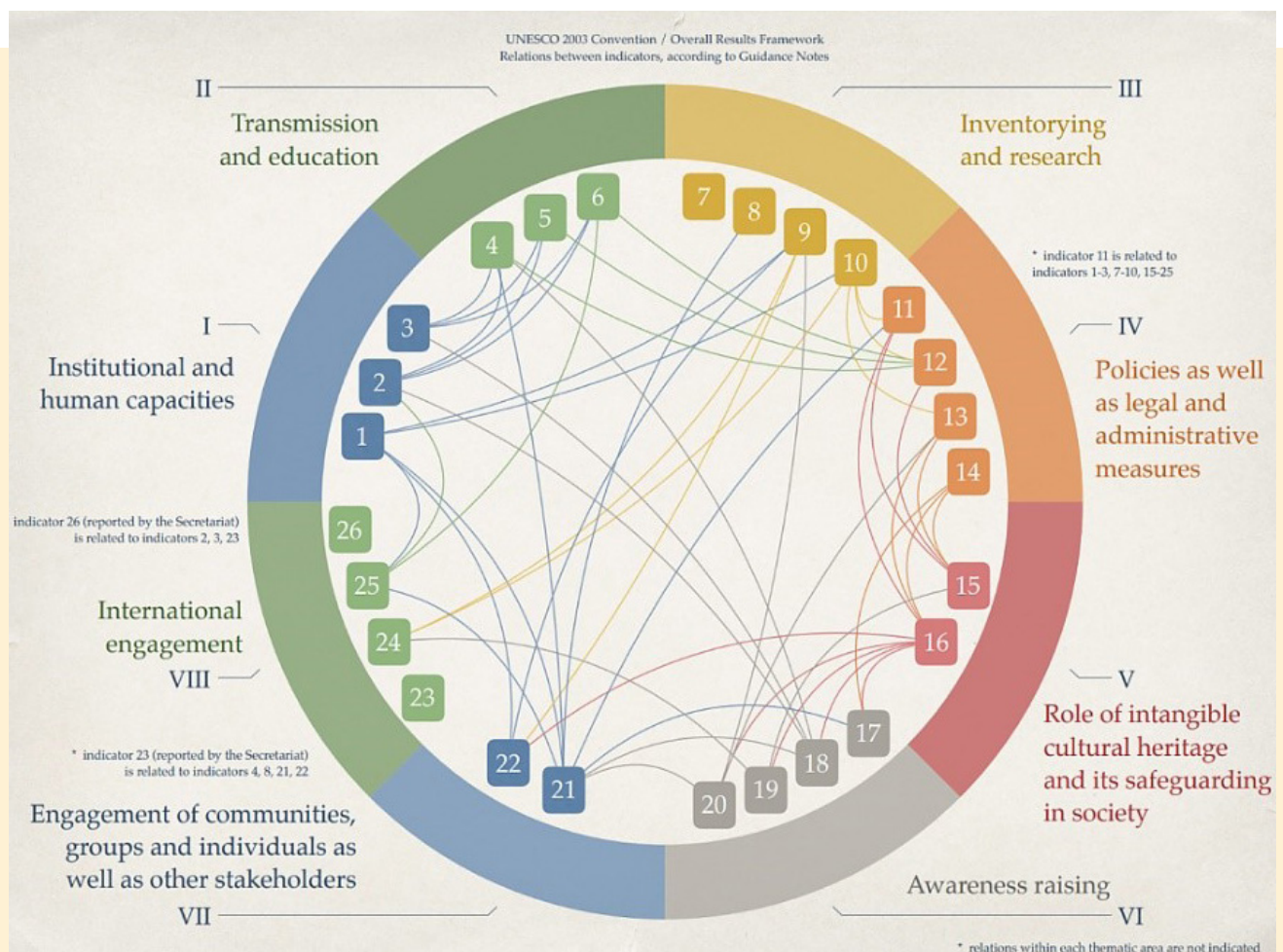
Article 2.3 of the ICH Convention explains that safeguarding measures aimed at ensuring the viability of intangible cultural heritage includes the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly

through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalisation of the various aspects of such heritage.

Similarly, Article 14 of the ICH Convention also requires that each State Party shall endeavour, by all appropriate means, to ensure recognition of, respect for and enhancement of the intangible cultural heritage in society, through educational, awareness-raising and information programmes, aimed at the general public, and in particular young people; as well as through specific educational and training programmes within the communities and groups concerned; and through non-formal means of transmitting knowledge. The recurrent idea is the use of appropriate measures to safeguard intangible cultural heritage within formal or non-formal education.

Linking education and intangible heritage is set as a high strategic priority, not only in the Convention but also according to the Overall Results Framework (ORF), a tool for measuring its impact.

In June 2018, the General Assembly of the States Parties to the ICH Convention approved the ORF (Figure 1). The aim was to devise a tool to measure the impact of the ICH Convention around the globe at various levels. The ORF contains 26 core indicators and 86 assessment factors, subdivided into eight thematic categories (UNESCO 2018). Within this framework, education was conceived as a crucial factor in safeguarding ICH, so four indicators concerning education were elaborated: core indicators 4, 5, 6 and 12 (Table 1).



**Figure 1**  
Overall Results Framework for the 2003 ICH Convention  
Source: © UNESCO / A. Vaivade

**Table 1**  
ORF indicators concerning education.

ORF indicator	
4	The extent to which both formal and non-formal education strengthen the transmission of ICH and promote respect for ICH.
5	The extent to which ICH and its safeguarding are integrated into primary and secondary education, included in the content of relevant disciplines, and used to strengthen teaching and learning about and with ICH and respect for one's own and others' ICH.
6	The extent to which post-secondary education supports the practice and transmission of ICH, as well as study of its social, cultural and other dimensions.
12	The extent to which policies as well as legal and administrative measures in the field of education reflect the diversity of ICH and the importance of its safeguarding, and are implemented.

Source: Authors' own elaboration from UNESCO (2018).

We will focus our analysis on indicator 6 and its assessment factors (Table 2).

**Table 2**  
ORF Indicator 6, Assessment factors.

Assessment factors	This indicator is assessed on the basis of two country-level factors monitored and reported by each State Party:
	Post-secondary education institutions offer curricula and degrees (in fields such as music, arts, crafts, technical <i>and vocational education and training</i> , etc.) that strengthen the practice and transmission of ICH.
	Post-secondary education institutions offer curricula and degrees for the study of ICH and its social, cultural and other dimensions.

Source: Authors' own elaboration from UNESCO (2018).

According to UNESCO's guidance notes to Indicator 7, Indicator 6 contributes to SDG Target 11.4, 'Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage', by emphasising the practice and transmission of ICH. It also complements SDG Target 4.7, particularly insofar as study of ICH's social, cultural and other dimensions can promote 'appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development'. Contributions to other goals such as SDG 8 on productive employment and decent work for all – in particular, SDG Target 8.9 – are also pertinent for this indicator.

UNESCO also emphasises that this indicator focuses on post-secondary education as a platform for either transmitting the skills and knowledge of ICH or teaching

about ICH in society. Like Indicator 4, it is concerned with practice and transmission, although higher education is the specific context here. Similarly, it complements the focus of Indicator 5 on primary and secondary education by concentrating on higher education. Educational policies, legal frameworks and administrative measures fall within Indicator 12.

As mentioned earlier, all safeguarding measures aim to ensure the viability of intangible cultural heritage, and educational institutions can play a crucial role in this by integrating safeguarding measures into higher education.

Regarding the assessment factors of Indicator 6, we will examine how some universities in Buenos Aires are supporting and preserving tango, an intangible cultural heritage originating from this region, and ensuring its accessibility for future generations.

## Tango safeguarding measures within universities in Buenos Aires, Argentina

For this research we have chosen national universities within Buenos Aires, since, as we have mentioned, this is the city where this musical genre was born. It is important to remark that the higher education system of Argentina is organised regionally to facilitate planning and articulation. According to the regulations (MEYD Resolution No. 280/16), there are seven regions, each coordinated by a Regional Council for Higher Education Planning (CPRES) made up of the education ministers of the provinces included in the region and the rectors of the universities, both public and private. The CPRES, among other functions, act as a coordination and consultation body for the higher education system, coordinating extension activities and

cultural development, and carrying out dissemination actions related to the planning of higher education.

In this research, we will analyse curricula and degree activities related to tango published in each institutional website that can be considered as safeguarding measures offered by three national universities belonging to the Metropolitan CPRES within the City of Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de las Artes, Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires and Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero.

It is important to highlight that the activities described below correspond to institutional strategies and are not attached to a national plan of intangible cultural heritage. In this sense, even though there is a bill (2020) through which it is proposed to include tango transversally in the curricula of all educational levels, it has not yet become a national law. In accordance with the recitals of this bill, adding tango to the curricula will not only be acting in favour of the promotion of tango by giving it greater presence among citizens from an early age, but also would 'be improving the quality of our education, giving it another element of roots, an element that runs through the entire history of our country, its various regions and complex social processes of notable relevance and necessary addressing'.

### ***Universidad Nacional de las Artes (National University of the Arts)***

#### ***Undergraduate degree: Bachelor's Degree in Folklore, focusing on Tango Studies.***<sup>8</sup>

This is a four-year university programme, comprising a total of 3040 hours. The degree provides scientific, technical and artistic knowledge necessary for research in folklore and artistic expression, particularly in relation to tango dance.

*Professional profiles:* Graduates with a Bachelor's Degree in Folklore with a specialisation in Tango Studies possess scientific training and practical skills necessary for understanding the complexities of this national dance form, especially within an urban context. They are equipped to engage with socio-cultural realities, revalue traditional/popular cultural heritage, and contribute to the representation of citizen and national identity.

The training offered by this degree programme ensures comprehensive support for professional development. The

practical experience in tango dance, along with acquired technical proficiency, prepares graduates for national and international careers in artistic expression, creation, management and tango research.

In terms of professional scope, the Bachelor's Degree in Folklore with a specialisation in Tango Studies qualifies graduates to:

- (a) Professionally perform tango dance across various media platforms and communication channels to promote this genre of urban folklore.
- (b) Manage, coordinate and produce outreach activities aimed at promoting the cultural identity of tango in both public and private organisations dedicated to fostering national cultural heritage.
- (c) Conduct research in Folklore and Tango Studies to contribute to the development of cultural identity, aesthetic expression and innovative interpretations.

The curriculum of this undergraduate degree includes courses such as:

- Origin and development of tango; Traditional Argentine attire; Argentine regional history; Legislation and commercialization of cultural heritage; Tango and literature; Tango and music; Tango I, Tango II
- Lunfardo (Tango slang) I; Tango and media; Tango and cinema; Tango III, Tango IV
- Choreographic interpretation of Tango I, Choreographic interpretation of Tango II.

This proposal from the National University of the Arts encompasses both practical training in tango and theoretical study of its social, cultural and other dimensions, reinforcing the practice and transmission of tango as well as its scholarly investigation. The proposal includes both assessment factors mentioned above (see [Table 2](#)): 6.1 as a degree offer that strengthens the practice and transmission of tango; and 6.2 as a degree for the study of tango and its social, cultural and other dimensions.

It has been confirmed that this undergraduate degree is currently available to students. Consulted via email, the Student Office of the Department of Folklore at this university indicated to the authors of this paper that the 2024 school year began in March with annual enrolment. This means there will be no admission of new students in

August 2024, so the next cohort of students will begin in March 2025.

### ***Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires (National University of Buenos Aires)***

#### ***Course: Tango, Waltz and Milonga.<sup>9</sup>***

For young people and adults (no age limit). For students and general public. Once a week (1.5 hours) from April to November. The course will seek to bring young people and adults closer to tango through music and communication.

The foundation of the proposal is articulated on the university's website at the Faculty of Law section: One of the most important objectives of education at its different levels and modalities is the dissemination of one's own culture. Modernity and technological progress have allowed the entry of new cultures through the media, achieving easy access to distant ones.

Radio, television, social networks and different internet sites are the means that privilege certain cultures over others, but no longer as access bridges but rather as hegemonic. In this way, the culture itself is not only at risk of being disseminated but also of being known and accepted.

The tango is part of our identity. The lyrics of the tangos take us back to the beginnings of the city, to the banks of the Río de la Plata, to the ships that disembarked from some distant place loaded with goods and personal stories. It is the reflection of the life of Buenos Aires itself, of its history and its people.

Through its lyrics and music, it will be possible to inquire about its own history, get closer to the customs and life of the '*conventillos*' (popular housing of that time), and understand the transformations that society has undergone up to the present day.

Declared in September 2009 as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO, tango has achieved worldwide recognition.

For these reasons, the Public University of Buenos Aires fulfils the primary function of being a link to promote the approach of citizens to their roots, enabling access to music and dance that are part of their identity.

Tango is a body language that understands a world

of infinite possibilities. Tango is the dance of expression, feeling and communication with the other.

Far from being a dance structured by steps, tango has the virtue of being a couple's dance that develops together with another, through bodily dialogue. Knowing and understanding brands both in the driving and led role is one of the main perception and communication tasks that we must learn. Through different body techniques and movement proposals, tango will emerge as a consequence of communication and listening.

The seminar will be developed through exercises to register the body itself (axis, balance, displacements, supports) and in pair work based on movement sequences.

The work methodology will be completed with the knowledge and mastery of the technique of tango, waltz and milonga and in the acquisition of different steps that will allow participants to achieve greater autonomy and freedom in social dancing.

Within the objectives of this course, we would like to highlight the following: promote an understanding of the language of tango dance; encourage listening to tangos; foster musical awareness in each participant; and facilitate an understanding of one's own culture and provide technical knowledge for tango, waltz and milonga.

Other objectives are also mentioned, as follows: provide tools for understanding and perceiving one's own body; appreciate the body as an instrument of expression; encourage self-confidence; promote gender integration; foster communication among participants; enable expression through movement and body language; value team work; facilitate adaptation to different partners; promote respect for oneself and others' bodies; create a supportive and educational environment; encourage group cohesion; generate a space for individual and collective creativity; value active listening and sharing within the group; cultivate freedom of expression and enjoyment through movement; and assess personal and group production.

We believe this proposal of National University of Buenos Aires falls within assessment factor 6.1 (see [Table 2](#) above) because it is an institution that offers a course that strengthens the practice and transmission of tango.

Consulted via email, the University Extension Directorate at the Faculty of Law of this university informed the authors of this paper that this course is currently (March 2024) unavailable. When queried further, the university responded that this was 'for other reasons' than a lack of interested students.

### ***Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero (National University of Tres de Febrero)***

#### ***Undergraduate degree: Diploma in Tango Dance Teaching.***<sup>10</sup>

This is a 1.5-year tertiary course for undergraduates, comprising 384 hours of workload.

Graduates from the Tango Dance Teaching Diploma will possess the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform in cultural, educational and social fields in which tango as dance is inserted or where it is desired that it be incorporated.

The foundation of the proposal is articulated on the university's website: Tango is an outstanding, authentic and genuine expression of our popular culture, which identifies us not only in our country, but also represents us all over the Planet ....

UNESCO has designated tango as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, signifying the importance of recognising this cultural expression of our people.

The majority of those who teach tango dance, both domestically and internationally, are instructors. They possess knowledge of movements, steps, figures and sequences, along with the skills and abilities of dancers. However, they often lack comprehensive training in psychological, pedagogical and didactic aspects necessary for effective knowledge transmission.

The Diploma in Tango Dance Teaching addresses this gap by providing additional training in various aspects of tango, including its history, music, poetry, lyrics and vocal techniques. Graduates of this programme will acquire the knowledge and skills required to excel as tango dance instructors, with distinctive competencies.

Through a comprehensive understanding of tango's diverse expressions and specialised training in psychological, pedagogical and didactic principles, graduates will be equipped to effectively teach tango

dance. They will also be capable of initiating projects to preserve and transmit tango, inspiring young people to engage with it and fostering intergenerational integration. This will enable tango to thrive across all social and generational demographics.

The curriculum of the Diploma in Tango Dance Teaching encompasses the study of tango as a dance form, supplemented by exploration of its historical context, musical elements, lyrics and poetry.

The objectives of this diploma include: to enhance pedagogical knowledge to enable graduates to teach tango dance; to gain insight into and understanding of various forms of urban music; to develop the ability to appreciate musical diversity; to acquire knowledge of the origins, history and evolution of tango, considering the political, economic, and social events that influenced its development as a manifestation of popular culture; to recognise stylistic differences among orchestras and to analyse tango lyrics in order to understand the history and sociology of this urban art, considering the approaches and processes that shaped its artistic movements; and to develop skills in interpretation and analysis to apply learned concepts to milonga and waltz dances.

This proposal of National University of Tres de Febrero includes both assessment factors mentioned in [Table 2](#) above: 6.1 as a degree offer that strengthens the practice and transmission of tango; and 6.2 as a degree for the study of tango and its social, cultural and other dimensions.

It has been confirmed that this undergraduate degree is currently available to students. Consulted via email, the Director of the Diploma in Tango Dance Teaching at this university informed the authors of this paper that the 2024 school year began in March, and it has not yet been confirmed if new students will be admitted in August 2024.

## **Conclusion**

Recognising that the processes of globalisation and social transformation, along with the conditions they create for renewed dialogue among communities, also lead to the disappearance and destruction of intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO 2018) is a crucial step in understanding the importance of safeguarding measures.

All safeguarding measures aim to ensure the viability of intangible cultural heritage and can vary in scope and scale. They range from developing policies or inventories on ICH to creating safeguarding plans for specific elements of ICH.

Integrating ICH into higher education can be a powerful strategy, especially considering that linking education and intangible heritage is set as a high strategic priority. Therefore, music educators in schools and higher learning institutions in Western and other countries have emphasised the importance of fostering a deeper understanding not only of musical structures but also of the meanings in music from a global perspective (De Oliveira Pinto 2018, 145).

In this context, the academic proposals of the universities presented in this research could be recognised as safeguarding measures aiming to ensure the continuation of tango as a living heritage. These proposals encompass tango education, awareness-raising and, potentially, transmission. Students learn not only about tango but also about its historical aspects, music, lyrics and poetry, while promoting intergenerational dialogue between older and younger people, with tango as the centrepiece of intangible cultural heritage.

It is important to highlight that the three universities under study emphasise the significance of revaluing tango and reclaiming traditional and popular cultural heritage as valuable and representative of citizen and national

identity. For Argentina, as a state committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, offering culturally relevant education is crucial when seeking to integrate intangible cultural heritage into education. A culturally relevant education that includes ICH aligns well with Target 4.7, which aims to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development and to appreciate cultural diversity. Furthermore, it would be noteworthy if such academic proposals, currently part of institutional strategies of some universities, were to form part of a national plan for safeguarding tango through higher education programmes.

As Barsky (2018, 20) asserts in reference to the integration of tango into formal education in Argentina, it can be observed that the realm of higher education appears to have largely overlooked the genre, especially tango dancing. Few institutions and academics support research initiatives in this area, unlike the attention given to the preservation and promotion of other folk dances considered as national cultural expressions. In this sense, we believe that the analysis of safeguarding measures for tango as ICH within these studied universities can serve as an example for other educational institutions to develop similar proposals.

In conclusion, future research could include an analysis of the effective attendance and enrolment of students in each of these university proposals to assess the specific impact of these measures as safeguarding strategies. 🇺🇪

## ENDNOTES

1. Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Number of States Parties 181. <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/convention-safeguarding-intangible-cultural-heritage#item-2>
2. Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Committee (4.COM) – Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 28 September to 2 October 2009. <https://ich.unesco.org/es/4com>
3. UNESCO legislation. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/legislation-00034>
4. What is Intangible Cultural Heritage? <https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003>
5. Tango. UNESCO. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/tango-00258>
6. Safeguarding without freezing. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/safeguarding-00012#:~:text=Safeguarding%20intangible%20cultural%20heritage%20is,songs%2C%20musical%20instruments%20or%20crafts>
7. Overall results framework for the 2003 Convention. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/overall-results-framework-00984>
8. Universidad Nacional de las Artes. Licenciatura en Folklore mención Tango. [https://folklore.una.edu.ar/carreras/licenciatura-en-folklore-mencion-tango\\_19481#](https://folklore.una.edu.ar/carreras/licenciatura-en-folklore-mencion-tango_19481#)
9. Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires. Tango, vals, milonga. <http://www.derecho.uba.ar/extension/cursos/programa/arte-y-expresion/tango-vals-y-milonga/2618>
10. Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero. Enseñanza de Baile de Tango. <https://untref.edu.ar/carrera/ensenanza-de-baile-de-tango>

## REFERENCES

- Archetti, E. P. 2003. *Masculinidades: fútbol, tango y polo en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Antropofagia. [https://www.academia.edu/35667491/Archetti\\_Eduardo\\_Masculinidades\\_Futbol\\_tango\\_y\\_polo\\_en\\_la\\_Argentina\\_Antropofagia\\_2003](https://www.academia.edu/35667491/Archetti_Eduardo_Masculinidades_Futbol_tango_y_polo_en_la_Argentina_Antropofagia_2003)
- Barsky, J. 2018. *Tango y Educación*. Colección UAI-Investigación.
- Bill. 2020. Ley de protección, difusión y promoción integral del Tango. Honorable Congreso de la Nación Argentina. <https://www4.hcdn.gob.ar/dependencias/dsecretaria/Periodo2020/PDF2020/TP2020/5822-D-2020.pdf>
- Cecconi, S. 2009. *Territorios del tango en Buenos Aires: aportes para una historia de sus formas de inscripción*. Iberoamericana IX.
- Decree No. 1235/1990. Academias Nacionales. Academia del Tango. 1990. Poder Ejecutivo Nacional de Argentina. <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/decreto-1235-1990-3697>
- De Oliveira Pinto, T. n.d. Module 3: Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Chapter 2: Safeguarding measures. SDGAcademy course *Living Heritage and Sustainable Development*. UNESCO. <https://courses.edx.org/courses/course-v1:SDGAcademyX+ICH001+3T2022/8f9765477b6f454fa7ee376ffa723a68/>
- De Oliveira Pinto, T. 2018. *Music as living heritage. An essay on intangible culture*. Berlin: EMVAS. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338788730\\_Music\\_as\\_living\\_heritage](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338788730_Music_as_living_heritage)
- Encalada, N. n.d. Module 5: Intangible cultural heritage for sustainable livelihoods and inclusive social development. Chapter 2: Intangible cultural heritage and education. SDGAcademy course *Living Heritage and Sustainable Development*. UNESCO. <https://courses.edx.org/courses/course-v1:SDGAcademyX+ICH001+3T2022/8f9765477b6f454fa7ee376ffa723a68/>
- Law No. 24.684. Tango patrimonio cultural de la Nación. 1996. Honorable Congreso de la Nación Argentina. <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/ley-24684-187292>
- Marchini, J. 2007. *El tango en la economía de la ciudad de Buenos Aires*, OIC, GCBA.
- Resolution MEYD No. 280/16. 2016. Ministerio de Educación y Deporte de la República Argentina. <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/resolucion-280-16-5963b400a5e5d.pdf>
- Santoyo, A. 2010. *Del folclor y el patrimonio cultural en Colombia. Reflexiones críticas sobre dos conceptos antagónicos*. En: *Patrimonio y cultura en América Latina. Nuevas vinculaciones con el estado, el mercado y el turismo y sus perspectivas*

- actuales*, edited by J. Hernández López, M. Rotman and A. González de Castells. México. <https://www.erigaie.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Santoyo-2010.-Del-folclor-y-el-patrimonio-cultural-en-Colombia.pdf>
- SDSN. 2020. *Accelerating education for the SDGs in universities: a guide for universities, colleges, and tertiary and higher education institutions*. New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). [https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/be6d1d56/files/uploaded/accelerating-education-for-the-sdgs-in-unis-web\\_zZuYLaoZRHK1L77zAd4n.pdf](https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/be6d1d56/files/uploaded/accelerating-education-for-the-sdgs-in-unis-web_zZuYLaoZRHK1L77zAd4n.pdf)
  - UNESCO. 1972. *Conventions for the Protection of the Material World Heritage*. Paris: UNESCO. <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>
  - UNESCO. 2003. *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. Paris: UNESCO. [https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003\\_Convention\\_Basic\\_Texts-\\_2022\\_version-EN\\_.pdf](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf)
  - UNESCO. 2009. *Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee: 4.COM 13.01*. <https://ich.unesco.org/es/4com>
  - UNESCO. 2017. *Education for Sustainable Development Goals Learning*. Paris: UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247444>
  - UNESCO. 2018. *Basic texts of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage: 2018 edition*. Paris: UNESCO. [https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003\\_Convention\\_Basic\\_Texts-\\_2018\\_version-EN.pdf](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2018_version-EN.pdf)
  - Untref-Aammba. 2013. *Cátedra UNESCO de Turismo Cultural. Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial, identidad y turismo*. Argentina. <https://heritagesofmigration.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/workshop-tango-espac3b1ol-final.pdf>