

# PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION IN THE FIELD OF TRADITIONAL ARTS AND CRAFTS

## Traditional applied arts and education in the modern world

УДК 37:745+323.213

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### UNESCO Chair as a resource for strategic development of the Higher school of folk arts (academy)

**Abstract.** The article substantiates the cycle of publications of authors related to the definition and design of priority strategic directions for the development of the Higher school of folk arts (Academy). Their identification is associated with the awareness of the transition of the university to a new level of international activity.

The accumulated long-term experience of educational, research, cultural, educational, exhibition activities involves not only its generalization and analysis, but is positioned as the basic basis for the development of innovative large-scale projects, the content of which meets modern internal and external challenges.

One of these projects is the preparation of an application for the opening of the UNESCO Chair «Theory and Practice of Traditional Artistic Crafts for the Preservation of Multicultural Diversity». The authors of the article introduce the main directions that are proposed to be implemented in the activities of the new structural unit.

**Keywords:** traditional artistic ideas, professional education, development strategy, resource, UNESCO, culture, art, value, dialogue of cultures, traditions.

Every living system goes through several stages in its development, and its viability is largely ensured by the ability, during fluctuations, to find a new source of energy in the form of ideas, human resources, and other resources that initiate renewal/regeneration of the system, leading to a new phase of development [3]. I. Prigogine's ideas can well serve as the foundation for strategic planning at a

university where long-term perspective is a crucial component of effective operation.

Analysis of the activities of the Higher school of folk arts (Academy) indicates that large-scale projects become the idea generator capable of ensuring the transition of the entire system to a new, more advanced and efficient level. Such breakthrough projects include organizing a series of international educational exhibitions featuring traditional folk arts created by faculty members and students, master classes, and fashion shows titled “Splendor of Russia’s artistic heritage” in foreign countries: France, Germany, Italy, Serbia on multiple occasions, Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, including at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in 2024 [6].

From 2014 to 2024 alone, the Higher school of folk arts (Academy) established long-term partnerships with institutions such as the National Academy of Arts (Sofia, Bulgaria); German, Dutch, Swiss, and Austrian Lacemaking Unions; Creative Center for Kalofer Lace (Kalofer, Bulgaria); Museum of Lace (Horst, Netherlands); Museum of Lacquer Miniature Painting (Münster, Germany); German Toy Museum (Sonneberg); German Bone Museum (Erbach in Odenwald); Accademia Riace (Florence); University of Priština (Kosovska Mitrovica, Serbia); New Talents Milan / Emerging Talents Milan; Municipality of Marbella (Spain); Russian Centers for Science and Culture in Lyublyana and Nicosia; Russian Houses of Science and Culture in Paris and Belgrade; Belarusian State Pedagogical University named after Maxim Tank; Toraighyrov University (Pavlodar, Kazakhstan).

Equally important projects include participation in significant competitions and the designation of the Higher school of folk arts (Academy) as a federal innovation platform [6].

Despite their labor-intensive nature, both in preparation and implementation, these projects ensure the achievement of a qualitatively new result for the university, open up new 'windows of opportunity' for the institution as a whole and for participants in the educational process specifically, facilitating the possibility of modernizing university policies, fostering creative and professional growth among academic staff, administrative personnel, and students.

Monitoring the state of traditional folk arts as an essential part of global cultural heritage, along with the existing systems of professional education and training in this field, revealed the following. In those regional-historical centers of traditional folk arts where branches of the Higher school of folk arts (Academy) have been established, ongoing targeted work is being carried out to preserve, develop, and promote this art form, providing young people with opportunities to receive specialized higher education. This situation is favorable. However, in other regional-historical centers, there is evident ignorance, which predetermines local population passivity, necessitating a reassessment of the essence of this art and the creation of a professional education system tailored to these types of traditional folk arts.

All previous activities and the extensive experience gained from fruitful international cooperation by the Higher school of folk arts (Academy) have laid the groundwork for a new level of project implementation and dissemination of expertise.

One of the promising projects for the Academy is the establishment of the UNESCO Chair "**Theory and Practice of Traditional Artistic Crafts for Preservation of Multicultural Diversity**" at the Higher school of folk arts (Academy).

Let us analyze the main areas of activity of the department and the uncompensated results planned to be achieved during the project implementation.

The UNESCO Chair at the Higher school of folk arts (Academy) will function as a cultural, educational, and scientific center for interdisciplinary research focused on the development and promotion of unique traditions of artistic crafts at the international level.

In its operations, the Chair will be guided by the provisions of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage [1], since according to UNESCO classification, traditional artistic crafts fall under intangible cultural heritage. It will actively participate in the exchange of experiences and strengthening of cultural ties between countries.

The activities of the Chair contribute to solving tasks set forth in the program and medium-term strategy of UNESCO [4]:

–**In the area of education:** enriching the existing system of professional training for future artists of traditional artistic crafts, supplemented with resources through activation of international partnership activities with universities, museums, and research centers; development of curricula in various types of traditional artistic crafts not only in Russia but also in other countries;

–**In the area of culture:** preservation and development of traditional artistic crafts as an integral part of the world's cultural heritage, popularization of distinctive regional-historical artistic traditions; support for multicultural educational spaces as a holistic system functioning to ensure unity of cultural and educational goals, stimulating creative activity among artists of traditional artistic crafts, including those from Africa and Asia;

– **In the area of upbringing:** creating conditions and prerequisites for nurturing citizens who foster national identity while encouraging mutual understanding among different peoples based on the values of traditional artistic crafts; development of international programs for the upbringing of children, adolescents, and youth using traditional artistic crafts from various countries.

Thus, the activities of the Chair are structured into **five main areas:**

1) Training specialists in the field of development and preservation of specific types of traditional artistic crafts as a factor of national identity, including collaboration with foreign universities on teaching methods and approaches to traditional artistic crafts.

Training specialists in specific types of traditional artistic crafts as bearers of regional-historical artistic traditions within the continuous professional education system allows for the transmission and extrapolation of Russian experience (including modularly) to foreign partners as advanced and unparalleled in preserving historical-regional artistic traditions. Specific cultural and educational programs aimed at training professionals for relevant communities and groups—creators of

works of traditional artistic crafts (by type) and carriers of these unique forms of art—are expected to be developed.

2) Developing a system for introducing children, teenagers, and youth to traditional artistic crafts, including through partnerships and joint activities with members of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network and university departments in Asia and Africa.

Introducing children, teenagers, and youth involves cultural mediation activities conducted by the Chair and partner organizations, contributing to recognizing, respecting, and enhancing the role of intangible cultural heritage in society, particularly through organizing exhibitions, workshops, teleconferences, and other preparatory forms of experiencing traditional artistic crafts from regions worldwide.

These activities have already been successfully implemented by the Higher school of folk arts (Academy): in just 2023-2024, the Academy organized ten international exhibitions, including events in France, at the UNESCO Headquarters, Serbia, and Bulgaria. Since 2023, regular teleconferences with compatriots living abroad have been held, involving over 40 online countries simultaneously, during which employees of the Higher school of folk arts (Academy) conduct workshops on various types of traditional artistic crafts.

3) Preparing teachers for preschool and school educational institutions involved in introducing children and teenagers to traditional artistic crafts.

Together with foreign partners, the Chair ensures the preparation of human resources—artists specializing in specific types of traditional artistic crafts, teachers in schools and preschool educational institutions—who provide high-quality content and methodology-based introductions to children and teenagers, including within the additional education system (workshops, creative clubs, volunteer movements, children's public organizations, excursionism, etc.), to traditional artistic crafts.

The Chair's scope includes identifying partners—from preschool educational institutions to universities—interested in preparing professionals engaged in pedagogical activities at all levels of education, actualizing the cultural, educational, and educational potential of traditional artistic crafts themselves.

An instrument for implementing this direction is the International Association "Scientific and Educational Community in the Field of Traditional Applied Arts," aimed at pooling educational, cultural, and organizational resources of interested parties to popularize and promote traditional artistic crafts and manage intangible cultural heritage.

4) Researching the genesis and current state of traditional artistic crafts, identifying existing and reconstructing lost types of traditional artistic crafts, cataloguing them, and creating databases.

As a scientific and methodological center, the Chair identifies, monitors, analyzes the status, and forecasts the development of traditional artistic crafts, publishing research findings in open-access sources. These studies enable the identification and definition of various elements of intangible cultural heritage—traditional artistic crafts—present in different countries, with the involvement of communities, groups, and organizations interested in their revival, preservation, and

development. One key outcome of these investigations is regularly updated lists of intangible cultural heritage items—traditional artistic crafts—found within specific states.

Additionally, the Chair initiates specialized international scientific-practical events, allowing foreign partners to share experiences and innovations, develops comparative research programs focusing on particular types of traditional artistic crafts, and creates educational projects for diverse target audiences, thereby ensuring the preservation of cultural diversity amid globalization.

Among the annual scientific events planned are international forums such as "Traditional Artistic Crafts and Higher Education: Modern Challenges, New Opportunities, and Prospects"; "Traditional Artistic Crafts in the 21st Century: Past in Present, Present in Future"; Bartramov Readings; and telebridges titled "Splendors of Traditional Artistic Crafts Heritage". These events aim to establish sustainable scientific communication, collective generation, discussion, and expert review of ideas, helping overcome imbalances in the participation of experts in traditional artistic crafts from different countries due to economic, geographic, and social inequalities.

5) Development of international cultural and educational tourism in regional-historical centers of traditional artistic crafts.

The Chair initiates the creation of a complex of cultural and educational programs in foreign languages, offering participants a unique opportunity to explore regional-historical centers of traditional artistic crafts across the globe. This contributes to raising awareness and informing the public, especially young people, about traditional artistic crafts, as well as promoting event-driven tourism.

### **Project Goals**

#### **Short-Term Goals:**

- Develop mechanisms for collaboration and mobility among scientists, researchers, artists of traditional artistic crafts, including regular teleconferences titled "Splendors of Traditional Artistic Crafts Heritage," offline and online internships for artists and masters of traditional artistic crafts, academic staff, museum workers, and educators involved in preserving, popularizing, and promoting national cultural heritage.

- Facilitate information and experience sharing within multilateral cooperation frameworks, particularly through bilingual scientific and popular science literature publication (scientific monographs, articles), including digital open-access editions.

Additionally, a specialized website is planned to accumulate, systematize, and present information on traditional artistic crafts (historical-regional traditions, artistic technologies, product assortment, artists and craftsmen, professional education, etc.), ensuring open access to regularly updated and expanded thematic information for the global community.

- Collaborate with UNESCO chairs in preserving cultural diversity through joint expeditions to regional-historical centers of traditional artistic crafts to assess and identify the condition of these art forms, document artistic techniques, engage with craftsmen and artists, organize exhibitions to promote traditional

artistic crafts, and host interdisciplinary summer schools on traditional artistic crafts in historical-regional centers.

- Establish the Chair as a hub for transmitting, exchanging best practices, and disseminating knowledge in professional and continuing education in traditional artistic crafts. Here, teacher training and retraining programs for educators teaching traditional artistic crafts will be offered in combined offline and online formats to continuously enhance pedagogical and artistic skills throughout one's career. The Chair will offer introductory courses in various traditional artistic crafts, providing preliminary acquaintance with national traditional artistic crafts to preserve cultural diversity. Additionally, the Chair will prepare and conduct exhibitions showcasing different types of traditional artistic crafts to comprehensively familiarize the public with the essence and specifics of this art form.

#### **Long-Term Goals:**

- The Chair aims to become the world's sole center for education in traditional artistic crafts, providing methodological support, expert evaluation, collaborative development of educational materials, enabling effective career building in traditional artistic crafts as a sought-after contemporary art form. Design and implement pedagogical models for training artists in traditional artistic crafts jointly with foreign partners, responding to their needs and leveraging their educational experience and practical achievements in culture and arts.

- Promote the unique experience of the Academy internationally as a university educating students in 23 types of traditional artistic crafts and developing educational programs for artists in regions where this art exists but specialist training is lacking. During the preparation of educational programs for identified types of traditional artistic crafts, internships and practices are conducted in combined offline and online formats, student gatherings, artistic marathons, and scientific events are organized as meetings for like-minded students dedicated to developing and promoting traditional artistic crafts.

- Create and execute innovative scientific projects focused on advancing each type of traditional artistic craft, their relevance in contemporary society, and within the creative industries sector. Develop models for preserving and developing traditional artistic crafts with socio-economic justification for their demand in today's society. A distinct focus of these scientific projects is the creation of variable pedagogical models for engaging youth in traditional artistic crafts and teaching specific types within professional education systems, incorporating elements of local living cultural heritage and cultural and creative self-expression, as well as endogenous knowledge (according to UNESCO's Framework Program for Education in Culture and the Arts, February 13-15, 2024, Abu Dhabi [5]). Relevant didactic components and teaching methodologies are determined by the Chair in conjunction with partner organizations.

- Participation of Chair staff and partner organizations in scientific projects enhances their academic and professional effectiveness by forecasting and defining vectors for the development of traditional artistic crafts in artistic,

technological, and socio-economic aspects, thus increasing the resilience of historical-regional centers of this art.

- Organize a system of scientific forums, conferences, creative meetings, seminars, and webinars addressing issues related to the preservation and development of traditional artistic crafts as part of the world's cultural heritage, collectively seeking solutions to identified problems, and stimulating discussions within the scientific, pedagogical, and artistic communities on ways to advance and improve education in traditional artistic crafts.

- Elevate the network publication "Traditional Applied Arts and Education," established in 2011, to international status. The publication is intended to become a specialized scientific discussion platform, offering opportunities for colleagues worldwide to publish research on traditional artistic crafts from various countries, enhancing authors' academic impact, and indexing the network scientific journal in as many databases as possible.

- The Chair, in collaboration with foreign partners, systematically advances and implements cultural and educational programs within the context of tourist cultural-educational activities. This is accomplished by granting access to regional-historical centers of traditional artistic crafts, encompassing educational institutions, museums, libraries, heritage sites, landmarks, and notable places located within these centers, as well as arranging encounters with local artists.

**Expected results at the national, regional, and international levels:**

1. Expansion of educational programs for future artists in traditional artistic crafts: at the national level—from 23 to 28 (higher education level): Ural-Siberian painting, leather and fur processing (Omsk region, Omsk city), Chukchi bone carving (Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, Anadyr city), Khokhloma painting (Nizhny Novgorod region, Semenov city), Gorodets painting (Nizhny Novgorod region, Gorodets city), metalworking (Nizhny Novgorod region, Pavlovo-on-Oka city); at the regional level—2 (in collaboration with CIS partners); at the international level—2 (in collaboration with partners from China and Africa) through the creation of comprehensive educational programs and instructional materials necessary for their implementation. This approach ensures accessibility to higher education, invests in the development and improvement of authentic cultural expression at the national, regional, and international levels.

2. Creation of a package of cultural and educational programs (including cultural and educational excursions) aimed at familiarizing different target groups—children, teenagers, young adults, senior citizens—with traditional artistic crafts, utilizing the resources of our partners. This ensures maximum engagement of children, teenagers, and young adults in prosocial cultural activities, as well as lifelong enhancement of creative skills in traditional artistic crafts.

Indicators of effectiveness include the number of children, teenagers, adults, and seniors participating in cultural and educational programs and becoming involved in traditional artistic crafts; the number of cultural and educational programs developed with partners; the number of scientific, pedagogical, and

creative workers involved in designing and implementing programs at the national, regional, and international levels.

3. Thematic research on various types of traditional artistic crafts within the geographical scope of the project, including the discovery of historical types of different crafts, systematization of the developmental paths of traditional artistic crafts in foreign countries, compilation and presentation of obtained results at scientific events (reports, presentations at conferences and forums) and in academic publications (research articles, scholarly monographs). This helps coordinate the efforts of specialists towards achieving sustainable development goals for traditional artistic crafts as an art form and for regional-historical centers of traditional artistic crafts at the national, regional, and international levels.

Indicators of effectiveness include the number of discovered historical types of traditional artistic crafts; the number of territories with sustained and accelerated development—regional-historical centers of traditional artistic crafts; increased popularity of traditional artistic crafts in contemporary society; the number of scientific publications and presentations at international scientific events.

4. Organization of a series of international exhibitions titled "Splendors of World Artistic Heritage," along with workshops on specific types of traditional artistic crafts, contributing to the preservation and development of regional-historical, cultural, and artistic heritage. This initiative provides opportunities for disseminating knowledge about this aspect of global cultural heritage, promoting multi-faceted international research collaborations in the realm of traditional artistic crafts at the national, regional, and international levels.

Indicators of effectiveness include number of exhibitions, number of workshops.

#### **Educational development as a result of the Chair's activities.**

A scalable typological model of continuous professional education in the field of traditional artistic crafts has been developed, covering 23 specific types of crafts, ranging from secondary vocational to higher education. This model helps retain young people in regional-historical centers of traditional artistic crafts—such as villages, towns, and small cities—where they transform the social environment through their artistic and creative activities, ensuring the sustainable development of these art centers and distinguishing high art from primitive handicrafts.

**Local level:** Artists of traditional artistic crafts locally transform the cultural environment of these art centers, making them territories of advanced sociocultural development.

**National level:** The Department contributes to the consolidation and mutual understanding among nations through the preservation and popularization of cultural diversity in traditional artistic crafts, creating conditions for intercultural dialogue.

**Regional level:** Cultural and educational projects in traditional artistic crafts form the basis for interstate relations among countries in the region.

**Global level:** The Chair creates unique models for the conservation, development, and promotion of traditional artistic crafts as part of the world's intangible cultural heritage.



### **Contribution of the Chair to the sustainable development agenda.**

The Chair 's activities help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals:

- *Ensuring inclusive, equitable, quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for everyone* – The Chair creates effective conditions for involving children, teenagers, adults, and elderly individuals in traditional artistic crafts from around the world, informing them about ethnic-cultural and national heritage, instilling respect for it, and encouraging some young people to choose a career in traditional artistic crafts.

- *Making cities and settlements open, safe, resilient, and sustainable* – The Chair attracts attention to regional-historical centers of traditional artistic crafts, facilitating accessible education for residents of remote regions, such as villages, towns, and small cities, developing cultural and educational tourism, and bringing together local communities through the common cause of preserving, developing, and promoting traditional artistic crafts. Openness, resilience, and sustainability of regional-historical centers of traditional artistic crafts are enhanced by international exhibitions, which effectively introduce people to various types of these crafts and create a positive image of the inhabited areas.

- *Encouragement of responsible consumption and production patterns* – The Chair trains specialists—artists in specific types of traditional artistic crafts—who are able to manually produce environmentally friendly, safe, and culturally appropriate products that meet the demands of modern society.

### **Stability**

The activities of the Chair will remain relevant because they facilitate access to higher education in the field of traditional artistic crafts, equal access to educators, teachers, and scientific and pedagogical workers, as well as artists working in traditional artistic crafts, to authentic forms of national and regional cultural expression through mastery of the largest possible number of artistic languages—corresponding to the variety of traditional artistic crafts. The Chair will continue to promote knowledge and best practices in its domain by organizing working sessions, seminars, and other events in collaboration with the UNESCO Secretariat and its respective divisions. To expand the network of international and regional partners, the Chair may leverage their experience and academic reputation to build relationships with other institutions and organizations working in this field. Intersectoral collaboration between the Chair and its foreign partners ensures stable collective idea generation—like-minded individuals engaged in the preservation, development, and promotion of traditional artistic crafts in all their diverse forms, contributing to the sustainable development of culture, professional education, and the stability of regional-historical centers of these crafts, typically located in rural areas and small towns around the world.

### **Beneficiaries of the Project**

- Students at all levels of education, either studying or pursuing professional education in the field of traditional artistic crafts;
- Teachers whose educational and training activities involve preparing students for careers in traditional artistic crafts;
- Museums exhibiting works of traditional artistic crafts;

- Scientific and pedagogical workers researching traditional artistic crafts;
- Enterprises producing traditional artistic crafts products, which can improve the quality of their goods by hiring highly qualified graduates from universities;
- Professional unions uniting artists creating traditional artistic crafts, who gain valuable experience and networking opportunities through participation in exhibitions, masterclasses, and consultations;
- Members of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network.

The project proposed by the Higher school of folk arts (Academy) supports the mission, mandate, and priorities of UNESCO, aiming to sustainably develop cultural traditions, maintaining their significance and appeal to modern society. The ideology and core activities of the Chair support the creation of conditions for cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

And most importantly – the Chair contributes to forming an international coalition of like-minded individuals: partner organizations, as well as individual artists, scholars, teachers, museum staff, and students who are interested in preserving, developing, and promoting traditional artistic crafts in every country.

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