



WHERE CULTURE MEETS LAND IN KYRGYZSTAN: COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE FOR SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE STEWARDSHIP

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The presentation explores how intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Kyrgyzstan shapes and sustains cultural landscapes, drawing on the field research (2020–2022) that investigated the initiatives and successful experiences of the traditional communities.

The main focus is on understanding how local communities create meaning in landscapes and how this contributes to sustainable stewardship

KYRGYZSTAN: COUNTRY PROFILE



Total area: **199,951 km²**
7.4 million people

93 % - mountains
4% - glaciers

2.000 – lakes
over 40.000 – rivers

9 million ha - pastures

INTANGIBLE HERITAGE AS LANDSCAPE KNOWLEDGE

- Intangible heritage includes rituals, oral stories explaining their origins, and rules of respectful behavior
- Seasonal pastoral migrations reflect ecological knowledge adapted to local environments
- Practices such as yurt-making and feltwork use natural materials and carry symbolic meanings tied to the landscape
- These forms of knowledge guide how communities interact with land and maintain balance



TANGIBLE- INTANGIBLE SYNERGIES

Communities shape the landscape through repeated cultural activities, creating paths, gathering spaces, and ritual areas

These synergies strengthen the resilience and continuity of cultural landscapes

Physical places and intangible meanings are inseparable: without practices, sites lose significance; without places, practices lose context





TOWARD HOLISTIC STEWARDSHIP

- This includes integrating spiritual, cultural, and ecological meanings into management
- Community voices and practices should guide landscape planning and conservation
- The holistic approach combines natural features, cultural identity, and living traditions

COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION

Revitalization of traditional practices, pilgrimages, and ceremonies reflects strong community-led safeguarding

Sustainable safeguarding requires recognizing landscapes as living heritage systems

Youth engagement and informal transmission remain essential to continuity





CONCLUSION

Intangible heritage is essential to understanding and safeguarding Kyrgyz cultural landscapes

Communities create, maintain, and transmit the meanings that define these places

Sustainable stewardship depends on supporting living traditions and local knowledge

The Kyrgyz case illustrates how tangible–intangible synergies strengthen resilience, identity, and continuity



THANK YOU

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