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Documenting Wixárika Oral Knowledge with Young People Using Traditional and Digital Technologies in Art Workshops

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Introduction

The Wixárika people (plural Wixaritaari) living in Western Mexico foster an ancestral *oral knowledge* of ritual art and crafts, stories, and long epic songs. This knowledge encompasses all the historical, practical, value-based, and ritual knowledge accumulated over generations, transmitted mainly orally. (Oral communication by Miguel Muñoz de la Cruz in Kantonen, 2019, p. 266.) Over the last forty years, schools have introduced written communication alongside oral communication, and in the last ten years, digital communication has reached most of the schools in the Wixárika area. In Wixárika communities, *digital technologies* usually refer to basic text, image, and audiovisual editing programmes of computers and smartphones as well as to social media applications. Concerns about preserving oral knowledge have led many Wixárika communities to plan

community museums using traditional and digital technologies to store oral history, songs, and knowledge of craft practices.

The Wixaritaari cultivate maize traditionally in the Sierra Madre Mountains, spanning four Mexican states. There are approximately 50,000 speakers of the Wixárika language. Many live in cities, especially Guadalajara and Tepic. The autonomous administration of their communities consists of rural authorities, traditional authorities, and the Council of Elders. The traditional authorities, led by a shaman, *mara'akame*, serve five-year terms that also function as schools of traditional medicine and art.

Over the last fifty years, the Wixárika mountain range has seen roads, electricity, schools, health centres, and data networks constructed. The roads have enabled drug cartels to expand their operations into the Wixárika region. Although recent technological changes have impacted the Wixaritaari and although cartel tolls partly hinder their movement, they have developed a flourishing art using traditional and digital technologies.

As non-indigenous visual artists and researchers, we have collaborated with Wixárika communities for twenty-five years through the Finnish NGO CRASH, different universities, and since 2021, with the research project and research group *Taking Back the Museum*.[1] Following community elders and teachers' instructions, we initially taught Western visual arts techniques, running workshops in drawing, painting, photography, and videography. Students learned about cinema history from an indigenous perspective through films by Indigenous filmmakers. For the last decade, we have focused on traditional yarn painting, *nierika*, working with Wixárika artists and supporting the creation of community museums (Guttorm et al., 2025, upcoming). *Nierika* paintings, developed in the 1950s based on small ritual objects, are usually made by individual artists, and our project aims at taking this art form back to Wixárika communities.

[1] The writing of this chapter has received support of Kone Foundation through the project *Taking Back the Museum: Opening the Space of Community Museums to Recover the Art of Indigenous People* (2021–2014) of the University of the Arts Helsinki. The group includes seven Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers and four members of steering group.

Community-Based Artistic Action Research

Artistic research is conducted by artist-researchers using embodied, experience-based knowledge. We combine this with *community-based action research* methods in collaboration with Wixárika communities, where schoolteachers are familiar with action research. We acquire knowledge by working together in workshops with Wixárika artists and other researchers. We call our methodological combination *Artistic Action Research*.[2] As typical for action research, collaborative action and reflection alternate with writing, with research topics developed during the process. As typical for artistic research, the performative practice of art can function in many roles, for example as a context, motive, and/or method as well as a research outcome (Arlander, 2016; Elo, 2021).

The Wixárika taxonomy classifies things differently from the way we are used to in our work as artists. For example, the Wixaritaari usually do not distinguish between art and craft. Art extends into various activities of the Wixárika communities, from corn farming to administration. To avoid making assumptions based on our professional conventions, we return to communal reflection often during the research process. We do this by screening video footage of earlier conversations and events, and discussing it together, a practice we call Generational Filming (Kantonen, 2017).

Following Indigenous research methodologies (Smith, 2012; Virtanen et al., 2021), we rely on the oral knowledge of Wixárika experts.[3] However, some ritual artistic knowledge remains hidden from us as non-Wixárika researchers (see Guttorm et al., 2025, forthcoming). For this chapter, we interviewed Neikame Julio Ramirez Carrillo, PhD, a linguist and educator, and ‘Uutɨama Apolonia de la Cruz Ramirez, a teacher of textile crafts and Wixárika grammar. We also draw on earlier discussions and data collected through Generational Filming with teachers and students at Tatuutsi Maxakwaxi School, where we have discussed the ethics and

[2] Artistic Action Research has been developed by individual artist-researchers in case-studies for example in the research group *Socially Responsible Artists and Art Institutions* of the *ArtsEqual* research project 2016–2021, see Lehtonen and Pöyhönen (2018), L. Kantonen (2019), Kantonen and Kantonen (2017c, 2019), https://sites.uniarts.fi/en/web/artsequal/research-groups/socially-responsible-arts-institutions-and-artists.

[3] As we speak minimal Wixárika, many cultural meanings escape us. We discuss with the Wixaritaari in Spanish, mixing in our talk Wixárika greetings and concepts of rituals and art, that we have learned from the literature, e.g., Neurath (2013).

aesthetics of video and film (Kantonen & Kantonen, 2017a; Maestros y estudiantes wixaritaari, 2017).

While our primary goal is to practise and understand traditional and contemporary art in collaboration with Wixárika communities, other knowledge, such as educational insights, emerge from this collaboration. We ask: How does craft-based and digital art function in the collaborative artworks created by the young Wixaritaari in art workshops? How do they use new audiovisual and digital media to document oral knowledge? We begin with a historical overview of video workshops in Mexico and discuss formal and informal art education in Wixárika communities. Drawing on our experiences, we write about the art workshops facilitated at educational institutions in three communities. Finally, we return to documenting and storing Indigenous heritage.

Earlier Experiences of Documenting and Recording the Traditions of Mexico's Indigenous Peoples

The art and traditions of the Wixaritaari have been documented in photography for over a century and in film for over half a century. The Wixaritaari's interest in recording their traditions was awakened a few decades ago and became more concrete through community museum projects since the 2010s. Audiovisual recording plays a crucial role as communities have realised the disappearance of oral information. Similar developments have occurred among other Indigenous peoples in Mexico (González Cirimele, 2015; Rufer, 2017).

The diffusion of audiovisual media among Mexico's Indigenous peoples was driven by state ideology called indigenism. From the 1920s onwards, after the revolution, there was a desire to integrate remote regions into the national mestizo identity. The father of indigenism, anthropologist Mario Gamio, defined the ideal as a Mexican mestizo nation valuing its Indigenous roots. Indigenism aimed to bring civilisation to 'backward' villages by assimilating Indigenous peoples into the nation through education. Indigenism became a reality in 1948 with the establishment of the National Institute of Indigenous Affairs (INI) (Aguirre Beltrán, 1992; Cusi Wortham, 2013, pp. 38–39). From the founding of INI to the end of the 1970s, educated mestizo teachers travelled to Indigenous villages to teach Spanish and civic skills, aiming to train Indigenous promoters

who would ‘redeem’ their people by acting as intermediaries between the dominant population and their community (Cusi Wortham, 2013, p. 47).

The second phase began with the creation of the Archivo Etnográfico Audiovisual (AEA) in 1977. Integrationist indigenism was replaced by participatory indigenism inspired by Marxist sociology (Garnica Quiñones, 2021, p. 196). The INI set up radio stations broadcasting in Indigenous languages and supported Indigenous political movements’ self-determination efforts (Cusi Wortham, 2013, pp. 48–49). The AEA hired documentary filmmakers and anthropologists to film rituals, lifestyles, and social issues. These filmmakers aimed to create an authentic audiovisual archive for future researchers and expert audiences. Indigenous peoples were not the primary audience for these films.

The Wixaritaari were a popular subject for filming, with many films focusing on the pilgrimage to the Wirikuta desert. AEA’s Juan Francisco Urrusti filmed *mara’akame* Tepú in his home village in the 1980s and in Mexico City in the 1990s. When these films were screened in Tsikwaita in 2014, ‘Uutɨama, Tepú’s granddaughter saw them for the first time and expressed disappointment that the filmmakers never returned to show their works.

The third phase began in 1988 when President Carlos Salinas de Gortari implemented neoliberal policies allowing the sale of Indigenous communal land and later signed a free trade agreement with the United States and Canada. The INI set up a training centre near the city of Oaxaca, where Indigenous people were selected for eight-week courses each year in technical video equipment management and substantive instruction on how to use editing to build a story. At the end of the course, the participants took home a VHS-quality filming and editing kit to take back to their communities. There, the responsibility for making the videos and teaching was passed to local actors.

The course organisers aimed to create a specific Indigenous video style. The aims and implementation of the courses contradicted each other. The communities wanted to use video specifically in the political struggle of Indigenous peoples, but the organisers wanted to avoid political activists attending the courses. The teachers of the courses, documentary film professionals, had radical ideas to develop Indigenous video expression, but in a short time, the questioning of conventional practices caused so much confusion that the teaching from then on focused on conventional filmmaking and documentary skills. The emphasis on

existing reality in the narrative prevented the emergence of fictional video (ibid., pp. 70–72).

The Zapatista uprising in Chiapas in early 1994 paralysed the INI. Despite its good intentions, the INI lost credibility among the Indigenous peoples when the state army killed and imprisoned Mayans in Chiapas. After ten days of armed fighting, Chiapas was frozen for a decade in a low-intensity war. The conflict between the Zapatistas and the Mexican state continues in the 2020s. After the courses, the most vibrant Indigenous video remained in video cooperatives in the states of Oaxaca and Chiapas, where Indigenous peoples comprise a significant proportion of the population.

At the turn of the millennium, the PRI party lost its first election, and the right-wing National Action Party (PAN) came to power. In 2003, PAN established the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous People (CDI), replacing the INI. In 2018, the Morena party created the INPI, The National Institute of Indigenous Peoples. With the changes of the government, the leadership of the leading agencies has also changed, with agencies being abolished or new ones being created. Short-termism characterises the nature of state action about Indigenous peoples. As of the 2020s, no consistent state support exists for Indigenous audio-visual production, however, some Indigenous communities and video collectives produce videos independently or with the support of universities and NGOs. In the following, we describe the emergence of video filming and other digital technologies in the context of art education in Wixárika communities.

Art Education at Home, at the *Tuki* Temple, and in Apprenticeship

In Wixárika communities, arts and crafts are associated with a good life. Women are particularly expected to master weaving looms, embroidering clothes and bags, and making beadwork from small glass beads (Schaefer, 1989, 2015), though skilful male embroiderers and bead workers are not uncommon. Handicrafts are an essential expression of Wixárika identity and a livelihood. Through art, Wixárika children and young people engage with ancestral knowledge, learning to perceive space, time, and significant symbols. The Wixaritaari often depict their world as a diamond, with the most important pilgrimage site, the Wirikuta desert, to the east, and the Pacific Ocean, Haramara, to the west.

Children are introduced to various art forms at home and through family ceremonies at the *xiriki* temple and community maize cycle ceremonies at the *tuki* temple. Offerings, including a beaded squash bowl *(xukuri*), a zigzag-painted arrow (*iiri*), small yarn paintings (*nierika*), embroidered human figures, a *tsikiri* cross made of wooden sticks and yarn, and small ceramic animals, are taken to sacred sites. These items play a role in ceremonies, with the *xukuri* bowl used to transport sacrificial blood and sacred water from springs to bless people and objects.

In October–November, during the Tatei neixa harvest ceremony, or Drum feast, children are introduced to their divine ancestors at the *tuki* temple. *Mara'akame* leads them on an imaginary pilgrimage to Wirikuta with drumming and singing, resting at sacred places. Children shake their rattles in a circle to the drumbeat, each receiving a *tsikiri* cross with coloured yarns representing their years. This ritual teaches them the importance of ritual objects and their identity.

Children are encouraged to try crafting as soon as they show interest. Nowadays, many young people learn crafts by exploring online photos and practising with friends. Ambitious youth may apprentice with an older craftsman or *mara'akame*, and after five years, they may be initiated as craft makers (Eger, 1978; Schaefer, 1989, 2015). The apprenticeship involves forming relationships with people, ancestors, celestial bodies, plants, and animals (de la Cruz Ramírez, 2014, p. 17).

Every five years, the Council of Elders selects twenty-six married couples as traditional authorities.[4] Guided by a *mara'akame*, their five-year term serves as a school of traditional medicine and art at the *tuki.* Each authority, or *rukuriikame*, specialises in at least one art form, such as violin playing or textile handicrafts. Recently video filming has been included in the possible art forms, at least in the community of Tsikwaita (Kantonen & Kantonen, 2017c). After one or two terms, an authority may receive the *nierika*, the gift of seeing and initiation, as a *mara'akame*.

Uutiama stresses that digital technology is a way of documenting, teaching, and storing traditional art. In recent years, she says, universities have offered to film ceremonies arranged by the traditional authorities. Some *mara'akames* have welcomed the proposal on the condition that the community will control the recorded data. Uutiama believes that

[4] The number may vary in different communities.

the recording would strengthen the Wixárika art education and understanding of how traditions change and evolve:

> I think it would be good to have videos that would allow us to observe the changes that have taken place in the ceremonies. For example, we could have a recording of a ceremony and, ten years later, a new recording of the same ceremony so that we could compare the recordings and analyze, for example, why a part of the ceremony has been omitted or forgotten. (‘Uutɨama, oral communication 22.2.2024)

Digital Technologies in Art Education

In Wixárika communities, formal education has introduced a distinct youth phase between childhood and adulthood within a generation (Rojas Cortés, 2012). 30 years ago, teenagers married young and started working in adult jobs. Today, thanks to electricity and telecommunications, young people engage with global youth culture and social media, often using smartphones for photos and videos. At the same time, they engage with ancestral knowledge gradually taking responsibility of ritual tasks.

Traditional authorities and the Council of Elders play crucial roles in supporting Indigenous language, culture, and well-being. Elders, familiar with the children’s families and artistic inclinations, often serve as school advisors, guiding interested youths to skilled artists and craftspeople for supervision. Neikame notes that access to global knowledge through the internet has diversified teachers’ skills and enhanced formal arts education for Wixárika youth:

> Some teachers in the communities are familiar with technology and know how to use it […]. Those who know the technology make room in the curriculum and teach children how to use digital devices: computers, video cameras, projectors, and internet sites, and guide them to explore and make presentations using the devices. But not all of them. Teachers need to be trained to teach. Videos are made in secondary school and upper secondary school, less frequently in primary school. Even short films have been made. It all depends on the teacher: if the teacher is good, the children will learn [...] (Neikame, oral communication 26.2.2024)

The Internet has also helped students appreciate their unique ancestral traditions. Many young people express the spiritual content of their culture digitally through video exercises. According to ‘Uutɨama, digital devices have improved the teaching of traditional arts:

> In the past, it was difficult for young people to learn to weave on looms. Nowadays, students use their mobile phones to take photos of every process step and practice these steps at home. By the next class, they have it all down pat. [...] About half of the students will master loom technology after high school so that they can teach it to their children and grandchildren. Craft knowledge is not going to disappear in the foreseeable future. (‘Uutɨama, oral communication 22.2.2024)

However, teaching materials and digital devices are limited. Every six years, after elections, new education projects are initiated, and schools are equipped with new programmes and devices. These efforts are often short-lived. The new administration usually disregards the previous projects, and teachers are left without training to use or maintain the technological tools and equipment. Neikame explains:

> All schools have […] at least one computer and a data projector. More than 60 percent of the schools do not have an internet connection. For example, out of the 13 schools that I am responsible for, only four or five have a working Internet connection. The best-equipped schools have a satellite connection. But if the devices are not protected, they quickly start to deteriorate. Problems always arise from interruptions when governments change. [...] There are no professional technicians in the communities, so the teachers and the children’s parents have tried to maintain the devices themselves. (Neikame, oral communication 26.2.2024)

Neikame aims to increase teachers’ and students’ awareness of data risks by teaching them data protection. Students, and often not even teachers, have the means to analyse social media information or identify false information critically. They may not understand how the information they publish can be used. In the worst case, school children’s information can fall into the hands of organised crime.

We shall next describe how the ancestral oral knowledge and audiovisual art have been connected in art workshops.

Tsikwaita

The community of Tsikwaita in Jalisco established the Tatuutsi Maxakwaxi[5] secondary school in the mid-1990s, dissatisfied with state and Catholic education (Centro educativo bilingüe Tatuutsi Maxakwaxi, 2014). The Wixárika language is spoken at home, at school, and in the administration. The school teaches Wixárika, culture, arts, and Indigenous rights, alongside regular subjects, with a curriculum developed by authorities and parents with ITESO university educators (de Aguinaga, 2015; Liffman, 2011; Rojas Cortés, 2012). In the 2020s, the school became a state school, but teaching continues almost unchanged.

Visual arts are a compulsory subject for one hour per week, and textile crafts are optional for two hours per week. Many children make crafts during recess, and some craftwork and all student videos are stored at the community museum Tunúwame (Kantonen & Kantonen, 2017b), which also hosts a copy of a *tuki* temple with the sacred names of traditional authorities. The museum collects ancestral knowledge, particularly about the manufacture of handicrafts.

Art and craft education has been accompanied with video art workshops run with universities and NGOs.[6] In 2015–2016, CRASH workshops with the Sembrando video collective of the Autonomous University of Nayarit (UAN) involved young people interviewing and filming experts in oral tradition and crafts. In a 2020 ITESO University workshop, students created a fictional video about a young girl who struggles with traditional handicrafts and makes a pact with the Kieri plant. Kieri promises to help her if she follows its instructions. Her inability to meet the pact's demands leads to mental illness and suicide, highlighting a serious issue in nearby communities. In 2019 and 2024, we facilitated *nierika* workshops with artist Gregorio Sandoval on the community's past, present, and future. Young people created yarn paintings that formed a large mural depicting a path with footprints, ancestors, sacrificial objects, modern buildings, and vehicles of transportation.

At first glance, the murals look like typical colourful children's paintings. However, as the youngsters talked about them, we began to

[5] The name can be translated as Great-grandfather Deer Tail.

[6] In addition, art workshops have been organized by the ITESO University's Programa Intercultural Indígena programme, Guadalajara University's media researcher Sarah Corona, and the artist group Colores de la Tierra, among others.

understand that they contained information about rituals and ceremonies. The young people call plants, animals, and celestial objects their relatives and family members, and feel love and duty to them. For example, the footprint on the road is not just a footprint, but a 'pathway', 'following in the footsteps of ancestors' (Neurath, 2013), a 'Wixárika way of life', and a 'lifelong quest for knowledge'. The deer is their big brother and guide on the path of the ancestors, and it can manifest itself also in the form of corn, and peyote cactus, which often appear side by side in the pictures. When asked how they could influence their community's future, one group replied they should respect the deer, implying regular ceremonies and pilgrimages to the Wirikuta desert for rainfall and environmental health. The discussion demonstrates that they do not just appreciate ancestral knowledge as cultural heritage but follow its advice as guidance in their daily lives and express it in their art.

Tepic

Tepic, the capital of the state of Nayarit, with half a million inhabitants is located near the coast of the Pacific Ocean. The Autonomous University of Nayarit UAN, where many Wixárika and Na'ayeri young people study, has an Indigenous programme including the video collective Sembrando, whose members have won awards at Indigenous video and film festivals. For example, K1paima Norma Robles[7] is one of the first Wixárika students who has made documentaries. *Moises y la Muerte* tells an intergenerational story about a boy who overcomes his fear of death with the help of his grandmother and later tells his story to his own grandchildren. The auto-biographical short film *Kpaima*, directed by Robles together with Panda Hernández, shows how a Wixárika woman can break out of the restrictive gender roles of the traditional Wixárika community, and at the same time, respect the ancestral spiritual traditions giving offerings at sacred places.

In the two-week contemporary art workshop *Arte Contemporaneo indígena 'Yeiyari'* we conducted with the Sami artist-researcher Hanna Guttorm and Wixárika artists Gregorio Sandoval, Yolanda Ortiz, and Juan Aurelio Carrillo Rios in 2023, the participants made sound art, installation, performance, video art, poetry, yarn paintings, and beaded gourd bowls. Half of the workshop participants were Indigenous teachers and students

[7] Today, Robles works at the Autonomous University of Querétaro.

from UAN University and members of the Sembrando collective. Finally, we built a collective yarn painting installation named in *yeiyari*, 'the footsteps of the ancestors', at the UAN University Library.

The name *yeiyari* reflected the path of each participant's personal life. Sandoval guided the painting of a path and footprints with yarns according to the Wixárika colour scheme and the cardinal directions so that the colours of the footprints corresponded to the colours of each cardinal direction. The Indigenous participants, whether they had done yarn painting before or not, composed pictorial motifs on and beside the path: corn cones, deer, peyote cacti, *tuki* and *xiriki* temples, *tsikɨri* crosses, and feathered tools of a *mara'akame*. They creatively linked the images into stories. In contrast, we non-indigenous participants found it more difficult to find visual themes that illustrated our life path. Mestizos from Tepic identified sacred sites near Tepic, some of which were related to Catholic culture, while others were common to both Catholics and Wixaritaari.

The finished yarn paintings were placed on the floor of the exhibition space in a rhombus according to the cardinal directions. A *xukuri* bowl was placed in the middle of the painted boards, and ceramic miniature models of Wixárika, Sami, and Mestizo sacred places located in different cardinal directions were placed outside them. The video running on the monitor placed to the west of the painting represented the sacred place Haramara, located on the shore of the Pacific Ocean, from where the ancestors at the beginning of time left on their first pilgrimage to the east, towards the Wirikuta desert. In this way, the installation with crafted objects and media art became a three-dimensional pluriversal map.

Puwarika

The predominantly agricultural community of Puwarika is in the Western Sierra Madre Mountains in the state of Nayarit, about two and a half hours drive from the city of Tepic. Most of its inhabitants are Wixáritaari, but mestizos also live in the area. For several decades, the state board of education required teachers to teach only in Spanish. Gradually, the home language in most families also changed to Spanish. The school's current teachers strive to revitalise the Wixárika language and traditional oral stories through songs, plays, and craft. The generation of children's parents, who have learned during their school days that modern life can only be talked about in Spanish, often finds it difficult to understand why schools

want to return to an almost forgotten language and revive old stories.

We worked with sixth-graders in the mornings and evenings for two weeks. The parents of the children were also invited, and almost all joined the workshop in the evenings to create yarn paintings entitled *Our Community Past, Present, and Future.* The motifs chosen by the children were like those in Tsikwaita. Some of the children documented their work on video. Juan Aurelio Carrillo Rios, one of the traditional authorities, observed that during the workshop, a change took place in the children: they began to show interest and ask questions about traditional Wixárika knowledge. The children's enthusiasm spread to the adults, and even parents who no longer spoke the Wixárika language or take part in community ceremonies made paintings with their children depicting the ceremonies and the actors of oral histories: animals, plants, and ancestors.

Puwarika's traditional authorities, representatives of the Council of Elders, and educational authorities including Neikame participated in both the opening and closing ceremonies of the workshop. At the opening, the head of traditional authorities urged adults to speak Wixárika to their children and grandchildren. 'It's never too late to start!'

Oral Knowledge in the Art Workshops

The oral knowledge of the Wixaritaari has traditionally been documented using craft-based technologies. The main characters and places of oral stories appear in the yarn paintings. The Grandfather Fire, the five differently coloured daughters of the Corn Mother, and the Big Brother Deer appeared in the mural, at the beginning of the ancestral path in Tsikwaita and Puwarika, and the sacred site Haramara was one of the subjects of the paintings in both Tepic and Puwarika. The same places and the same actors appear in beaded bracelets and in the embroidered festive dresses. Many of the same motifs are also present in the videos filmed by the young people, by the pupils in Tatuutsi Maxakwaxi School and in *Kpaima*, by Robles and Hernández.

In the workshops, the young people created both craft and video art in parallel. Often, the same youngsters are interested in both. In video workshops in Tsikwaita in 2015 and 2016, oral histories and handicrafts were captured on video. In Tsikwaita and Puwarika, yarn painting workshops taught yarn painting and video recording at the same time. In Tepic, yarn painting and video were presented in the same installation, which was set

up according to the Wixárika rhomboid map of the world. During the creation process, the young people shared traditional stories and concepts in Wixárika language with each other and discussed Wixárika values such as respecting the deer.

How does art function in the lives of young Wixaritaari? We are conscious that as non-Wixárika researchers we can never fully understand the many significations, yet we have seen that they highlight serious urgent issues such as suicide and restricted gender roles. They express artistically the values they follow daily on the pathway of ancestors, the *yeiyari*. They map their sacred places and cardinal directions. They share concepts and stories in the Wixárika language.

Documenting and Storing Ancestral Knowledge

How do the Wixaritaari use new audiovisual and digital media to document oral knowledge? This is a question directed more to the authorities, teachers, and education planners. Neikame points out that the spiritual knowledge of the Wixaritaari is the source of ancestral oral knowledge and art:

> Communities need to become aware of our spiritual specificity. If we don't recognise our uniqueness, it will disappear. We must learn spirituality as children, adolescents, and school children, and if we are parents, we must teach it to our children; it is the most important thing to teach them. If it is forgotten, in ten or fifteen years, it will disappear, and we will no longer have the spirituality that our ancestors lived on, which prevailed in the communities in which we have lived and grown up. The divine ancestors that our grandparents left us would disappear forever. That is why I believe it is most important for young people to learn awareness and the art of thinking. May our spiritual culture and worldview be preserved! (Neikame, oral communication 26.2.2024)

Neikame recognises that some older members of communities are reluctant to use new technologies, fearing that they will badly influence young people. In his view, technology as such neither promotes nor repudiates the traditional lifestyle of the Wixárika but is a matter of how much adults care about and guide young people. It is up to adults to teach young people to follow the *yeiyari*, the path of the ancestors, to speak Wixárika to them, and to take them to ceremonies. The Wixaritaari can learn from other people and work with them, however, it is up to adults to teach young people

how to filter useful information from the web to help them understand the world better.

Neikame finds it important to record oral knowledge using digital technologies, such as audio recordings and videos, in addition to craft technologies:

> Our grandparents only transmitted information orally. They could not write. They transmitted oral information through handicrafts. But when they move to another world, there will be no one left to interpret their knowledge of the craft, even if it physically exists. That is why we must be familiar with different ways of storing information, including digital ones. They will allow us to continue to learn about craft technologies in the future, and generations who have not yet been born will be able to access and continue to interpret [the crafts] made by their ancestors. The transmitters of oral knowledge often produce many versions and vary them according to their understanding. But once knowledge is preserved in archives, it stays there. It doesn't change. (Neikame, oral communication 26.2.2024)

However, the questions of storage, use, and data protection must be resolved before recording can begin. The community authorities argue that the videos should be kept in the hands of the community and not the university. The problem, as Neikame has pointed out, is that the technology used in communities is often outdated, and users are not trained in the equipment's maintenance or data security. Recorded data is, therefore, at risk of being lost. It would be essential to train the indigenous data recorders and agree to store data in a repository that would support their data sovereignty.

The Wixaritaari have begun to establish community museums to document and store their oral knowledge. In Tsikwaita, a *mara'akame* dreamed of a museum twenty years ago. That dream came true in May 2024, when several *mara'akames*, consecrated a school classroom converted into a museum building and the circular temple built next to it, on the wall of which places are reserved for ancestors.

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