

# BORDAMOS EN COMUNIDAD

## TEXTILE ART IN YUCATÁN, MEXICO

"We Embroider in Community: Textile Art in Yucatán" is a project driven by the **Government of the State of Yucatan** with support from **UNESCO** and funding from the **Fundación Banorte**, aiming to strengthen textile artisans and the tradition of embroidery in **Yucatan, Mexico**. Within its main areas of focus are:

### Safeguarding Plan for Mayan embroidery in Yucatan

The plan is a participatory document whose main objective is to protect, revitalize, and promote Mayan embroidery in the state of Yucatan, recognizing it as a cultural manifestation.

**160**

safeguarding actions

**+350**

embroiderers participated in its development

The drafting of the plan was supported in a process in which the embroiderers themselves proposed, organized, and initiated a series of actions which were then adapted to an inter-institutional cooperation framework defined by them.

**12**

municipal plans derived from the state plan

**The first State Council of Embroiderers was established to oversee the implementation of the plan.**

### Certification

As part of this safeguarding process of Maya embroidery in Yucatán, embroiderers were certified as **instructors and transmitters of traditional knowledge** in both manual and mechanical textile techniques. This certification formally recognized their expertise and their role in ensuring the intergenerational transmission of the practice.

**+200**

embroiderers have been certified

**23**

municipalities involved

**39**

participating communities

The first certificates were awarded on December 3, 2024, at the pre-Hispanic city of Uxmal, in the presence of state authorities, the State Council of Embroiderers, Fundación Banorte, and representatives from the Secretariat of Culture and the Arts of Yucatán.

### Curricular Proposal

The participating embroiderers have strengthened their capacities in various fields: from managing and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, to revaluing the historical and community meanings of embroidery in Yucatán. They have also developed pedagogical skills that allow them to serve as instructors.

As part of this process, a **curricular proposal on embroidery was designed** from which a *Manual for the training and capacity building of Maya embroidery artisans in Yucatán* was developed..

This program seeks to enable the embroiderers themselves to act as trainers, transmitting their technical knowledge and beyond their communities.

**13**

Embroiderers have been incorporated as official instructors recognized by the state

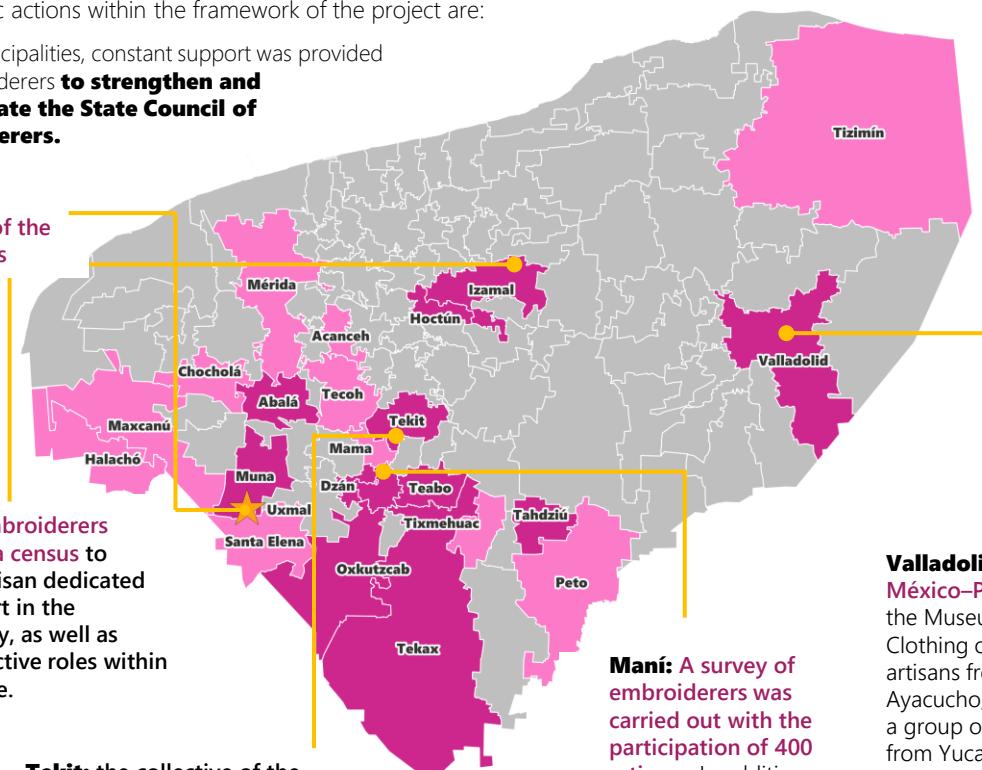


The project included the participation of embroiderers from 23 municipalities with the most textile art representation in Yucatán. Some specific actions within the framework of the project are:

- In all municipalities, constant support was provided to embroiderers **to strengthen and consolidate the State Council of Embroiderers.**

### **Uxmal:**

**Handing of the certificates**



**Izamal:** Embroiderers promoted a census to identify artisan dedicated to textile art in the municipality, as well as their respective roles within this practice.

**Tekit:** the collective of the embroiderers Co'ox Chuy, inaugurated a point of sales in collaboration with the Municipality of Tekit.

**Maní:** A survey of embroiderers was carried out with the participation of 400 artisans. In addition, the Maya-Yucatán Embroidery Store & Museum was inaugurated.

**Valladolid:** Binational México-Perú Encounter. At the Museum of Ethnic Clothing of Mexico (MUREM), artisans from Cajamarca, Ayacucho, and Lima met with a group of embroiderers from Yucatán. **This exchange was built upon a first meeting held previously in Lima Perú.**

Embroiderers from 12 municipalities participated in a survey that analyzed their use of their income, with a focus on their relationship with the education of their children and other factors associated with school dropout rates.

## Impact

- **Official recognition of embroidery as heritage:** The Maya-Yucatecan Embroidery was declared intangible Cultural Heritage of the State of Yucatán, acknowledging its historical, cultural, and community value.
- **Participatory development of a state safeguarding plan:** The first State Plan for Safeguarding Maya Embroidery in Yucatán was drafted with the participation of more than 350 embroiderers from key municipalities in the development of textile art in the state. The plan includes a series of actions organized into strategic lines and thematic protection measures.
- **Creation of a representative body:** The State Council of Embroiderers was established, composed of representatives from different municipalities, as a participatory body for the monitoring and implementation of the safeguarding plan from within their respective communities.
- **Recognition of knowledge and capacity strengthening:** A professional profile was developed, from which a key process was implemented to formally recognize more than 200 embroiderers in the state as instructors and masters of the technical and cultural knowledge linked to Mayan embroidery.
- **Creation of community and economic spaces for embroiderers espacios:** The establishment of embroidery houses and points of sale for artisans was promoted.
- **Capacity strengthening for safeguarding:** Skills were developed around intangible cultural heritage, with the aim of valuing traditional techniques and protecting collective knowledge.
- **Cultural transformation from a gender perspective:** Efforts were promoted to make responsible masculinities visible and foster attitudes committed to eradicating machismo and violence against women.

# SAFEGUARDING PLAN OF MAYAN EMBROIDERY IN YUCATAN

The plan was developed with the main objective of **strengthening the development of Maya artisanal embroidery in Yucatán -an art that has given identity to Yucatean society and that has already been declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of the state-. The plan promotes the appreciation, protection, and the revitalization of embroidery through adequate cultural, educative, social, and economic policies to ensure its viability in both the present and the future.**

## Developmental Context

- Embroidery is a living ancestral practice in Yucatán, and has a strong presence in multiple municipalities of the state.
- Yucatán holds the greatest technical diversity in the country, with 34 of the 44 stitches that exist in Mexico.
- Embroidery is closely tied to the identity, economy, and spirituality of the Mayan communities.
- The practice faces threats such as the loss of knowledge, unfair competition, digitalization, lack of recognition, as well as gender-based violence.

## Participative diagnostics

The plan was developed on a participatory diagnosis in 12 of the most-represented municipalities in relation to textile art, as part of which the following were achieved:

- An inventory of products, uses, and meanings of embroidery in both daily life and in ceremonial contexts.
- A map of key actors that influence the practice.
- A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of embroidery as an activity.
- A characterization of knowledge transmission: how it is taught and learned between generations of embroiderers.
- The creation of a registry of stitches.

## Action List

More than 350 participating embroiderers in the development of the plan formulated a set of actions organized into 10 general safeguarding measures:

1. Documentation and investigation
2. Identification and definition
3. Preservation and protection
4. Promotion and valorization
5. Tourism, sales, and fair trade
6. Inclusion and gender policies
7. Education and transmission
8. Visibility and dissemination
9. Updating and revitalization
10. Socialization

Among the proposed actions were:

- Carrying out inventories of techniques, products, and festivities.
- Creation of specialized manuals in both Maya and Spanish
- Certification of embroiderers and technical training.
- Support for fair trade and visibility in tourism.
- Inclusion of men and people with disabilities.
- Creation of embroidery houses and points of sale.
- Promotion of embroidery in schools and media.

Subsequently, actions proposed by the remaining 11 municipalities were also incorporated.

## Developmental Context

The embroiderers chose their representatives to form part of the State Council of Embroiderers, an organism whose creation was promoted by its participants to follow up on the safeguarding plan and to foster future implementation through collaboration with authorities and strategic actors. The first Council was established with 24 members.

# CERTIFYING THE EMBROIDERERS

The Government of the State certifies artisan women as official teachers and instructors of traditional knowledge, in a ceremony held in Uxmal with the presence of authorities and international organizations.

On December 3rd, 2024, the Government of the State of Yucatán held a ceremony at the pre-Hispanic City of Uxmal to **award certificates, issued by the Ministry of Public Education of the Government of Mexico, to 206 Maya women embroiderers**, officially recognizing them as teachers and instructors of traditional knowledge. This certification validates their skills in both manual and mechanical textile techniques and represents a significant step forward in the protection and valorization of the state's intangible cultural heritage. With this certification, embroiderers can now be hired as teachers in schools, cultural centers, museums, universities, research centers, and other institutions.

The event was headed by the Governor of the State of Yucatán, Joaquín Díaz Mena, and was attended by federal, state, and municipal authorities, as well as representatives from UNESCO and Fundación Banorte.

Among the state institutions present, the Secretariat of Culture and Arts of Yucatán stood out for its active role, having supported and promoted this project from the very beginning, working in coordination with other state government agencies to strengthen Maya-Yucatanese embroidery as both cultural heritage and a driver of development.

The certified artisans actively participated in the drafting of the State Safeguarding Plan for Maya Embroidery in Yucatán. Coming from 39 communities across 23 municipalities including Dzitnup, Kanxoc, Kimbilá, Muna, Tekit, and Tahdziú, these women were recognized not only for their fundamental role as guardians of a living tradition that constitutes a pillar of Yucatanean cultural identity.





## CURRICULAR PROPOSAL

With the support of ICATEY and UNESCO, the training of instructors in Maya embroidery in Yucatán is being promoted through a specialized manual and pedagogical workshops, strengthening the community transmission of textile knowledge.

A curricular proposal for the teaching of traditional embroidery was designed through the collaboration between the Institute for Job Training of the State of Yucatán (ICATEY) and UNESCO. Based on this proposal, the ***Manual for the Training and Capacity Building of Maya Embroidery Artisans in Yucatán*** was developed, consisting of nine modules that cover topics ranging from the history and cultural value. Using this manual, a specialized workshop was held to train a group of embroiderers selected as future instructors. Subsequently, these artisans received additional training focused on developing pedagogical skills, with the goal of replicating knowledge within their communities.

As a result, these instructors led a workshop for the bearers of textile knowledge, held from June 23 to 25, 2025. To date, **13** **embroiderers have developed their own curriculum as instructors**, with the aim of soon joining training activities in coordination with ICATEY.



## How to learn more:

Scan the following QR codes or click the following links.



[Webpage of the project](#)



[Report of the process](#)



[State Plan for the Safeguarding of Maya Embroidery in Yucatán](#)