

Chapter 7

Promoting Philippine Culture and Values

UNESCO defines culture as a “set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group” encompassing “art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.”¹ Values, a subset of culture, are “beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable.”²

Culture and value systems have a great influence over development. People use their values when making decisions in economic, religious, vocational or professional pursuits. When positive and productive values are shared, they build internal cohesion thus helping the country to grow and develop.

While there are positive aspects of the Filipino culture, there is a need to have a common and shared culture and identity to anchor and drive development initiatives. Due to the archipelagic nature of the country, Filipinos tend to be regionalistic. The Filipino culture is also a product of years of the intermingling of Malayo-Polynesian, Chinese, Hispanic, and American cultures. These resulted in diverse cultural expressions in terms of language, art, cuisine, religion, literature, dance, architecture, and others.

The Regional Development Plan supports and adopts the initiatives outlined in the Philippine Development Plan to develop a strong and desirable culture and values among Filipinos. Thus, there is a need for a common identity and at the same time for the country to maintain and take pride in the diversity of cultures across regions.

Assessment and Challenges

The Philippines is a nation of diverse cultures but this is not adequately documented and existing documentation is not easily accessible. There is a need to do an expert study on the culture of the peoples of the region. Cultural forms and creative

expressions are diverse among provinces and communities in the country. This is also true in Central Visayas. Culture also varies according to age group, gender, spirituality, and socio-economic class; even persons with disabilities (PWDs) have their own culture. But to do this is a challenge because of the need for expertise and funds for data collection.

¹ UNESCO, *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (Paris: UNESCO, 2001)

² *Business Dictionary*, s.v. “values”, accessed March 8, 2017, <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/values.html>.

To some extent, the true Filipino identity has been weakened. But there are still inherent Filipino values that can be nurtured so these can be used toward promoting the common good. The Philippines' colonial past made Filipinos feel inferior as manifested by our culture of *hiya* or shame. Instead of being proud to be Filipino, many often retreat to their regional affiliations or identities (e.g., Cebuano, Bol-anon, Ilonggo, Tagalog). This minimizes the need for national identity and pride. A culture of fragmented identities often leads to discord and mistrust. Values like *malasakit*, *bayanihan*, *pakikipagkapwatao*, which are ways that Filipinos recognize kinship among themselves, need to be inculcated for national unity and social cohesion.

There is a need to inculcate into the Filipino mind the country's history, culture, and values. Our education system has not been effective on this regard. Formal education emphasizes developing literacy and skills; there is very little emphasis on values education or critical teaching of history. Mainstream media also do not promote positive values as they are driven by profit. So does popular shows or movies. Thus, most Filipinos do not have strong conviction of their own culture and values.

Heritage structures are vulnerable to the impact of climate change and human-induced disasters. The 2013 Bohol earthquake and Typhoon Yolanda exacted heavy damage not only to lives but also centuries-old churches and structures in the region. Restoration efforts are slow not necessarily because of lack of funds but because there are no skilled artisans who can take on the work. Moreover, the conservation of important cultural assets is not the priority of national, regional, and local governments.

The impact of climate change and people's ignorance about the value of cultural and historical structures built centuries ago are serious threats to their preservation. These structures are tangible

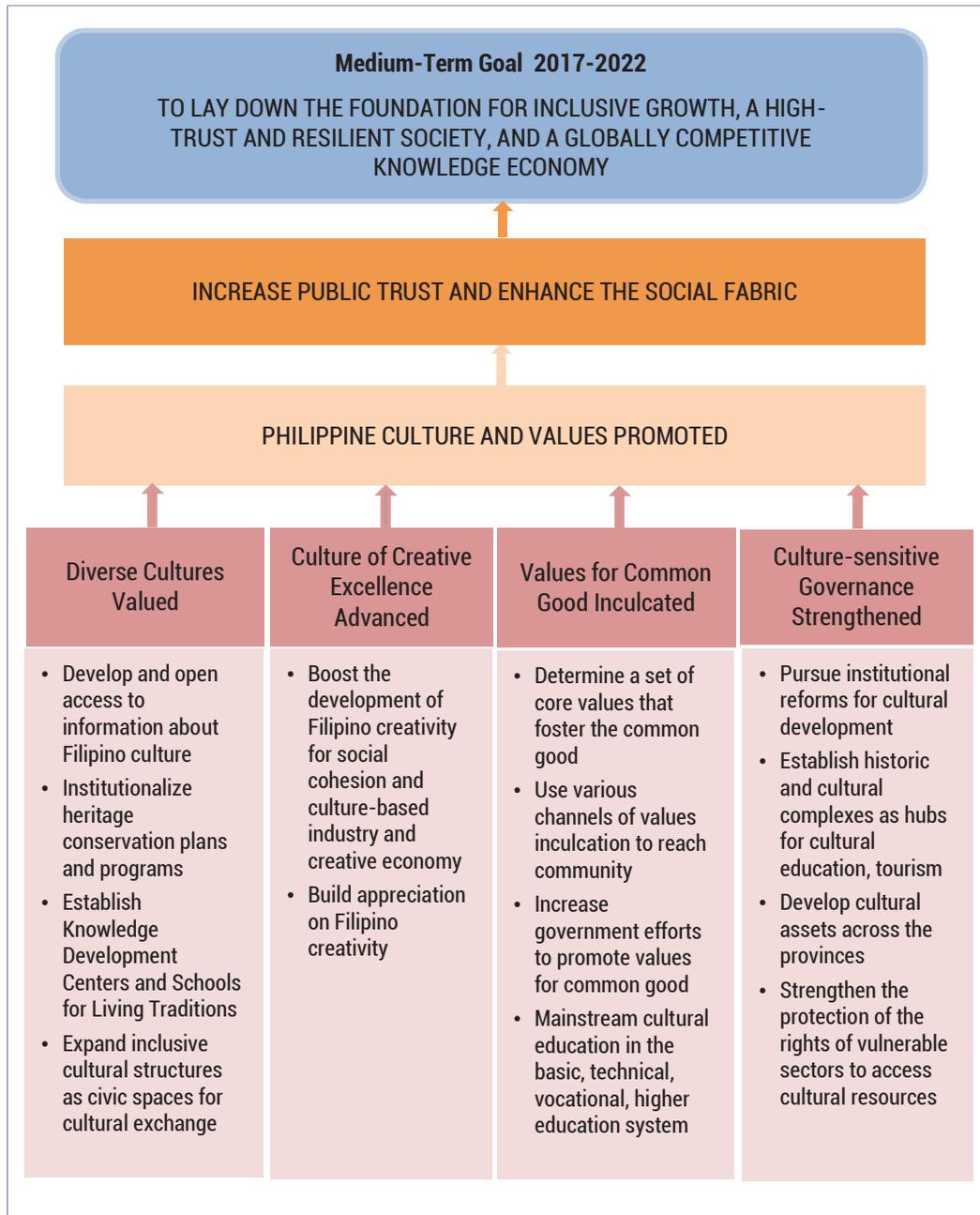
link to our past, giving life to the nation's history in ways that the written text cannot provide. The economic value of these heritage sites cannot be measured only in terms of the revenue generated from tourism. Their greater value lies in what they symbolize for the local community and the cultural and spiritual messages attached to them. Heritage structures provide a sense of identity and belongingness, while recognition of their value brings a sense of pride.

A working and effective governance framework for cultural development is needed. Admittedly, the government recognizes the importance of culture in national development. This is evident in landmark legislations that created cultural agencies, and legislations that call for the conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage, protection, recognition, and empowerment of diverse cultures. However, violations such as the unethical and exploitative extraction of knowledge, skills, and practices from indigenous cultural are not penalized. There is no coordinating body with regional presence to promote cultural development and address concerns at sub-national levels. Despite the legal mandates, agencies do not have adequate human and financial resources to implement programs for cultural development.

Strategic Framework

The RDP adopts the PDP framework for cultural development where government will increase the level of cultural awareness, inculcate values for the common good, cultivate creativity, and amplify national pride among Filipinos. These will be reflected in development plans across all levels of government. (*see Figure 7.1*) These will likewise be supported by adequate resources, capacity building for government agencies on culture-sensitivity, and increased engagement with stakeholders.

Figure 7.1 Strategic Framework to Promote Philippine Culture and Values, 2017-2022



Targets

Core outcome and output indicators that will be monitored to ensure progress toward increasing the level of cultural awareness, inculcating values

for the common good, cultivating creativity, and strengthening culture-sensitive governance and development are presented in *Table 7.1*.

Table 7.1 Plan Targets³ to Promote Philippine Culture and Values, 2017-2022

INDICATORS	BASELINE		END OF PLAN TARGET
	YEAR	VALUE	
Increased level of awareness of Filipino values, cultural diversity, creativity and culture-sensitivity			tbd
Enhanced tolerance and respect for others			tbd
Inclusion of culture in local development plans			tbd
Heightened pride of place and pride of being Filipino			tbd
Reached the target beneficiaries to be provided support			

Note: tbd - to be determined

Strategies

Diverse Cultures Valued

The people in Central Visayas will learn to appreciate and be aware of their own respective cultures. This strengthened awareness of their sub-culture should lead them to value their cultural heritage, ensure its preservation, integrate these into their lives, and most importantly recognize the need to belong to a national community with a common identity. To achieve this desired outcome, the following strategies will be implemented:

Develop, produce, disseminate, and open access to information about Filipino culture. Learning materials will be developed to raise awareness about the country’s cultural diversity. With the RDC in the lead, various agencies will collaborate to disseminate these information materials to their respective stakeholders, including overseas Filipinos (OFs) who may be reached through the Philippine embassies abroad, or anybody interested in learning about the country’s diverse cultures.

Institutionalize and intensify heritage conservation plans and programs. Protection of tangible heritage areas and sites will be undertaken through comprehensive conservation plans, while recognizing that it is a shared responsibility of

every Filipino. The RDC will ensure that initiatives in preservation of buildings, structures and other tangible cultural heritage assets are reflected in the budget of concerned agencies and programs and projects are developed and implemented for the purpose.

Establish Knowledge Development Centers (KDCs) and Schools for Living Traditions (SLTs). The RDP will support the PDP’s strategy to establish KDCs in the region to document, conserve, and protect tangible and intangible cultural heritage in the region for posterity, as well as to enrich the people’s knowledge and sense of ownership of various elements of Filipino culture. SLTs have been the safeguards of intangible heritage since 1995 because they ensured its transmission to the next generations of indigenous peoples and the Bangsamoro. These schools will thus be expanded to educate more people who wish to learn skills from the various culture bearers.

Expand inclusive cultural structures as civic spaces for dialogue and cultural exchange. Cultural infrastructure and facilities will be used as venues for fostering social cohesion and valuing cultural diversity. Cultural structures, such as museums, cultural centers, archives, libraries, art galleries and other cultural facilities, will be made more inclusive to allow dialogue and cultural exchange.

³ There are no current baselines and targets for the indicators because data remain to be gathered and established through a national survey. These will be made available on the plan’s midterm update in 2019.

Culture of 'Pagka Maayong Mangamot' or Creative Excellence Advanced

The RDC and concerned line agencies shall implement initiatives to promote and support a culture of creative excellence. These initiatives and interventions shall permeate various levels of public consciousness as the foundation of a globally-competitive knowledge economy.

Boost the development of Filipino creativity as a tool for cohesion and impetus for a culture based industry and creative economy. To develop the value of creative excellence, learners in the academe need to appreciate at a young age the importance of inventiveness and creativity; push for inter-disciplinary collaboration among public and private sectors to boost innovation in various areas; nurture certain mindsets — an entrepreneurial spirit that rewards industry and smart work-giving primacy to design in reinforcing cultural and national identity, generating solutions through innovation, and valuing intellectual property; foster a culture that values arts, science, technology, and innovation; integrate it with values that foster the common good and appreciation of diverse cultures, so that creativity is developed together with core values resulting in the constructive pursuit of solutions to social ills.

Build appreciation of Filipino creativity. To realize the potentials of the creative process, the agents of creativity will be empowered and supported by an institution that will encourage the production of creative works, invest in human development of its stakeholders, support their products, and develop the industry (see also Chapter 9). It will provide due recognition to the contribution of the culture sector and other stakeholders concerned with heritage and creativity, to the social and economic life of the country.

Values for the Common Good Inculcated

Instilling values for the common good into the consciousness of all citizens in Central Visayas will

provide the needed positive and transformative change that will eventually lead to a high-trust society.

Determine a set of core values that foster the common good. As in the national plan, the RDP will give priority and importance on values that are common to Filipinos and that are important for social cohesion and inclusive development. These could include: discipline, persistence, and grit, as well as a positive disposition for which Filipinos are known. Other values that many Filipinos share are *Pagkamalikhain* (creativity), as evidenced by Filipino ingenuity, and *Malasakit* (roughly translated to compassion or empathy), as evidenced by the readiness and willingness to help, especially in times of calamities. Establishing the core values, however, does not preclude the freedom of different cultural communities from defining their own values. CHED, DepEd, and the academic community in the region shall collaborate to pursue this initiative.

Use various channels of values inculcation to reach all community members. Once established, families, local communities, civil society organizations, workplaces, formal and informal education systems, and media platforms in the region will be tapped to ultimately inculcate the core values in the general population.

Increase government efforts for promoting values that foster the common good. To reach the population, the production of information materials on the identified set of values will be intensified. Projects, activities, and programs that promote these Filipino values will also be created, implemented, integrated, and reviewed across all levels of government.

Mainstream cultural education in the basic, technical, vocational, and higher education systems. Promotion of these core values can take advantage of the reform of the basic education system through the K to 12 curriculum. The desired outcome of the reform is to ensure that students are equipped with not only functional literacy skills but also with the values necessary to

become productive members of society. In particular, the reform identified the need to instill ethics among students – particularly focusing on virtuous behavior.

Culture-sensitive Governance and Development Strengthened

The government plays an important role in a nation's cultural development. It shall provide the needed resources to ensure the preservation and development of Philippine culture, and the exploration and understanding of Philippine history. In addition, local governments can support community initiatives to include culture in their local development plans.

Pursue institutional reforms for cultural development. The RDC will support the national initiative to create a coordinating body that will streamline services and activities. This will enable a systematic launch of cultural initiatives nationwide. Mechanisms will be built to improve the capacity of the culture sector in the fields of governance and legislation. This means improving infrastructure support for cultural agencies and strengthening the implementation of relevant policies.

The RDC and concerned agencies will collaborate to review existing legislations to assess whether the measures are still appropriate given the technological, political and social developments, and whether established mechanisms remain relevant in addressing issues such as those brought by climate change or human-induced disasters. Penalty clauses in applicable and relevant laws and regulations will also be based on a solid framework for cultural development.

Culture-sensitivity will be enhanced in government bureaucracies so that policymakers will not only focus on deriving economic benefits from cultural assets, but also recognize the intangible value of the creative process that pushes its citizens to imagine, create, and innovate.

Establish historic and cultural complexes as hubs for cultural education, entertainment, and tourism. These historic and cultural complexes will help showcase the best of the region for cultural tourism, which can contribute to economic growth.

Develop cultural assets across the country. Considering the island configuration of the region, the need to develop cultural assets is essential to broaden people's access to cultural resources and activities.

Strengthen the protection of the rights of vulnerable sectors (indigenous peoples, women, youth and children, and PWDs) to access cultural resources and live a life free from discrimination and fear. Citizens must appreciate the principles behind cultural protection and become proactive defenders of culture themselves. Civil society, the academe, media, and other agencies of the culture sector will contribute to these efforts, but government needs to create the enabling environment for conserving and enriching the collective memory of the nation.

There is also a need to engage and seek the participation of indigenous cultural communities (e.g. the Eskayas in Bohol, and the Atis in Negros Oriental) in the formulation of policies and measures that concern their communities and their environment. Indigenous knowledge and practices provide valuable insights and tools for ensuring environmental sustainability.

Legislative Agenda

The RDP shall support and provide the regional dimension, data, and information on the legislative agenda for promoting culture and values found in *Table 7.2*.

Table 7.2 Legislative Agenda to Promote Philippine Culture and Values, 2017-2022

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA	RATIONALE
Modernization Act for the National Library of the Philippines	Establish the charter of the National Library of the Philippines to promote full intellectual and cultural development of the Filipino. It will also standardize public libraries and ensure their funding.
National Museum of the Philippines Act	Strengthen the National Museum.
UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity	Ratify the declaration
Commemoration of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act	Declare a national, non-working holiday for the recognition and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples.
Strengthening the Conservation and Protection of the National Cultural Heritage	Amend the Heritage Law (RA 10066). Update its provisions on jurisdictions.
An Act Providing for the Welfare Protection of Artists and Cultural Workers	Protect and promote the rights of artists and cultural workers (e.g., conservationists) to be considered as persons actually engaged in cultural work and to benefit from all legal, social and economic advantages pertaining to the status of workers.
Establishment of Kawanihan ng Pagsasalin/Bureau of Translation	Establish an institutional mechanism for accreditation and professionalization of translators in Filipino and other Philippine languages
Establishment of the Kandungan ng mga Wika at Kultura	Establish a cultural complex in Rogongon, Iligan City comprising training centers, languages laboratories, language park, and <i>balay-wika</i> (languages museums)
Establishment of Local Culture and Arts Councils and Allocate Funding similar to the Gender and Development (GAD) Fund or Special	Establish offices for culture and arts in LGUs, with a mandate to protect and promote local cultural heritage and arts.
Establishment of Institute for Cultural Heritage Conservation of the Philippines	In line with the implementation of the Cultural Heritage Law (RA 10066), there is a need to come up with an institute that will offer trainings and workshops on cultural heritage education through formal, alternative and informal education. This will emphasize the protection, conservation, preservation, and safeguarding of cultural heritage and properties. It is envisioned to be an institute on Philippine conservation that offers education programs on methods and approaches that adhere to accepted international standards of conservation but adaptable to Philippine setting.
Public Art to Infrastructure	Allocate a certain percentage of the budget for any building to public art as part of infrastructure. An example is a space for art installations in infrastructure projects.