

Promoting Philippine Culture and Values

The Philippine Development Plan (PDP) pays close attention to the empowering nature of culture. Cultural awareness is a requirement for social inclusion and equity. Enhancing the social fabric toward a high-trust society entails building better relations for social cohesion among people. More and better interactions among members of a community, in turn, require awareness and appreciation of culture and values that drive people's attitudes and behavior. Culture is that complex whole of the people's way of life, which includes the knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, values, ideas, sentiments, and any other capabilities acquired by a person as a member of society. It offers a summation and distillation of the past that provides a sound basis for living in the present and marching into the future.

Culture has several dimensions; its role in development spans and intersects with multiple sectors. As such, culture is regarded as one of the pillars for achieving inclusive, sustainable, and human-centered development. Building culture into the formulation of policies and in the design of development interventions enhances the effectiveness of programs and projects because cultural contexts are recognized. Failure to acknowledge the significance of culture in shaping our society may lead to cultural fragmentation, perceived distrust toward fellow Filipinos, parochialism, perpetuation of historical injustices, and inability to collaborate for nation building.

The priority areas of the cultural agenda are: (a) safeguarding and enshrining our cultural heritage; (b) achieving equity and inclusion in access to cultural resources and services; and (c) sustaining and enhancing cultural assets to foster creativity and innovation for socio-economic growth.

Assessment and Challenges

The Philippines is a nation of diverse cultures but this is not adequately documented and existing documentation is not easily accessible. Cultural forms and creative expressions are as diverse as the number of communities existing in the country. There are 130 languages¹ spoken by 110 ethnolinguistic groups². Culture also varies according to age group, gender, spirituality, and socio-economic class – even persons with disabilities have their own culture. However, a complete assessment of the country's diverse cultures, covering both the tangible and intangible, remains a challenge because data are sparse, scattered, and not regularly gathered. Efforts to create a database are constrained by lack of cultural experts to conduct research and gather data in a culture-sensitive and ethical manner, and by lack of funding to sustain these activities.

¹ Based on the 2013-2015 Linguistic Mapping conducted by the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino.

² Based on data from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples.

Filipino identity has been undermined but there are inherent Filipino values that can be nurtured toward promoting the common good. Our colonial experience gave rise to feelings of inferiority as manifested by our culture of *hiya* or shame³. The pervasive undermining of what it means to be Filipino gave way for regional identities (e.g., Ilocano, Tagalog, Waray, Maranaw) to overshadow national pride. This led to a society that has become disconnected from its core culture and is characterized by fragmented identities. Values like *malasakit*, *bayanihan*, or *pangaddatan* that manifest *pakikipagkapwa-tao*, a way that Filipinos recognize kinship among themselves, need to be inculcated for national unity and social cohesion.

Channels of learning about our history, culture, and values have not been effective. Formal education across all levels emphasize developing literacy and skills in other fields over values education or critical teaching of history. Mainstream media failed to promote positive values in its pursuit of profit for the market-driven entertainment industry. Popular shows or movies “extol visual and aural symbols, characters, designs, replete with cultural ignorance and misinformation.”⁴ As a result, the level of consciousness among Filipinos about their own culture and embedded values remains low.

The concerns of culture extend beyond the national borders. There is also a need to consider the situation of overseas Filipinos or the diaspora of Filipinos, especially second and third generation Filipinos, in destination countries. It is important to consider that these migrants are likely to be less rooted in the Filipino culture and its history even as they also need to learn about and adapt to the culture of their destination countries.

Climate change and human-induced risks to the environment require mechanisms to mitigate their impact on communities, tangible heritage, and biodiversity. Cultural and historical structures built centuries ago that continue to stand today are tangible ties of the present generation to its past, giving life to the nation’s history in ways that the written text cannot provide. People need things that they can see, feel, taste, smell or hear in order to appreciate Philippine culture and history. Structures, monuments, and sites are some of the more easily recognizable icons. While the economic value of heritage sites can mostly be seen in the revenue generated from tourism, their greater value lies in what they symbolize for the local community and the key cultural and spiritual messages attached to them. Heritage structures can provide a sense of identity and belongingness, while recognition of their value can bring a sense of pride.

Heritage structures are vulnerable to the impact of climate change and human-induced disasters. Efforts to prevent their destruction need to be set in place. Unfortunately, conservation materials and the skilled labor required are expensive. Moreover, among national, regional, and local governments, development and modernity are often the priority over the conservation of important cultural assets of the country.

³ De Guia, Katrin (2005). *Indigenous Filipino Values: A Foundation for a Culture of Non-violence*. Unpublished paper presented at the forum Towards a Culture of Non-Violence.

⁴ NCCA (October 2016). *A Report on the Cultural Protection and Development Summit*. Unpublished report resulting from the Cultural Protection and Development Summit on October 5-6, 2016.

The current governance framework for cultural development has been inadequate in addressing the concerns of the sector. The government has consistently recognized the importance of culture in national development through landmark legislations⁵ that created the cultural agencies with clear mandates. But conflicting provisions in certain laws compromise the implementation of cultural initiatives.⁶

The underrepresentation of marginalized sectors in local councils prejudice the quality of implementation and mainstreaming of culture in governance. Culture bearers, such as the indigenous peoples, are either denied or limited in their rightful representations in local fora despite the requirement of a mandatory representative at all levels of decision-making that affect their communities.⁷

Another issue is the conflict between property rights of private individuals or entities and the cultural rights of indigenous peoples over their ancestral domain.

Existing laws include provisions on conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage, protection, recognition, and empowerment of diverse cultures. However, violations are not penalized. This concern revolves around the unethical and exploitative extraction of knowledge, skills, and practices from indigenous cultural communities or repositories of local knowledge.

Stakeholders across the country pointed out that there is no coordinating body with regional presence to promote cultural development and address concerns at sub-national levels. There is continued clamor for the creation of a Department of Culture to address the increasing needs for equitable access to cultural resources and services, enhanced cultural education, improved conservation and safeguarding of cultural resources, and culture-driven sustainable development.

Despite the legal mandates, agencies do not have adequate resources to implement programs for cultural development. Cultural agencies generally depend on contractual staff for the operation of the agencies due to lack of plantilla positions. Considering the magnitude of the responsibilities and the long-term nature of public services for cultural development, there is a need for a bigger pool of regular human resources.

⁵ RA 3873/10087 (An Act Changing the Name of the Bureau of Public Libraries to the National Library and its Amendment), RA 7104 (An Act Creating the Commission on the Filipino Language), RA 7356 (Law Creating the National Commission for Culture and the Arts of 1992), RA 7743 (An Act Providing for the Establishment of Libraries and Barangay Reading Centers throughout the Philippines), RA 8371 (The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997), RA 8492 (National Museum Act of 1998), RA 9470 (National Archives of the Philippines Act of 2007), RA 10086 (National Historical Commission of the Philippines Act), RA 10066 (Cultural Heritage Law of 2009), among other policy instruments that institutionalize government support for culture.

⁶ For example, the Film Development Council of the Philippines had been getting its funds for rewarding producers of graded films from amusement tax revenues generated by local cinemas. This is provided for under the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 9167 establishing the Council. However, in 2015, the Supreme Court declared the collection of amusement tax from local cinemas illegal as it infringes on the constitutional policy of local autonomy.

⁷ The following legal bases stipulate the mandatory representation of indigenous peoples in policy-making bodies and other local legislative councils: (a) Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997, RA 8371, Section 16; (b) Rules and Regulations Implementing Republic Act 8371, NCIP Administrative Order No. 1 series of 1998, Rule IV, Part 1, Section 6.; and (c) the National Guidelines for the Mandatory Representation of Indigenous Peoples in Local Legislative Councils, NCIP Administrative Order No. 1, series of 2009.

Strategic Framework

The 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 resonated in development plans across all levels of government. These will likewise be supported by adequate resources, capacity building for government agencies on culture-sensitivity, and increased engagement with stakeholders.

Given the cross-cutting nature of the culture agenda, the practice of volunteerism will be promoted and pursued, especially in the academe; corporate, non-government, and international volunteer service organizations; and government.

Targets

Core outcome 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*.

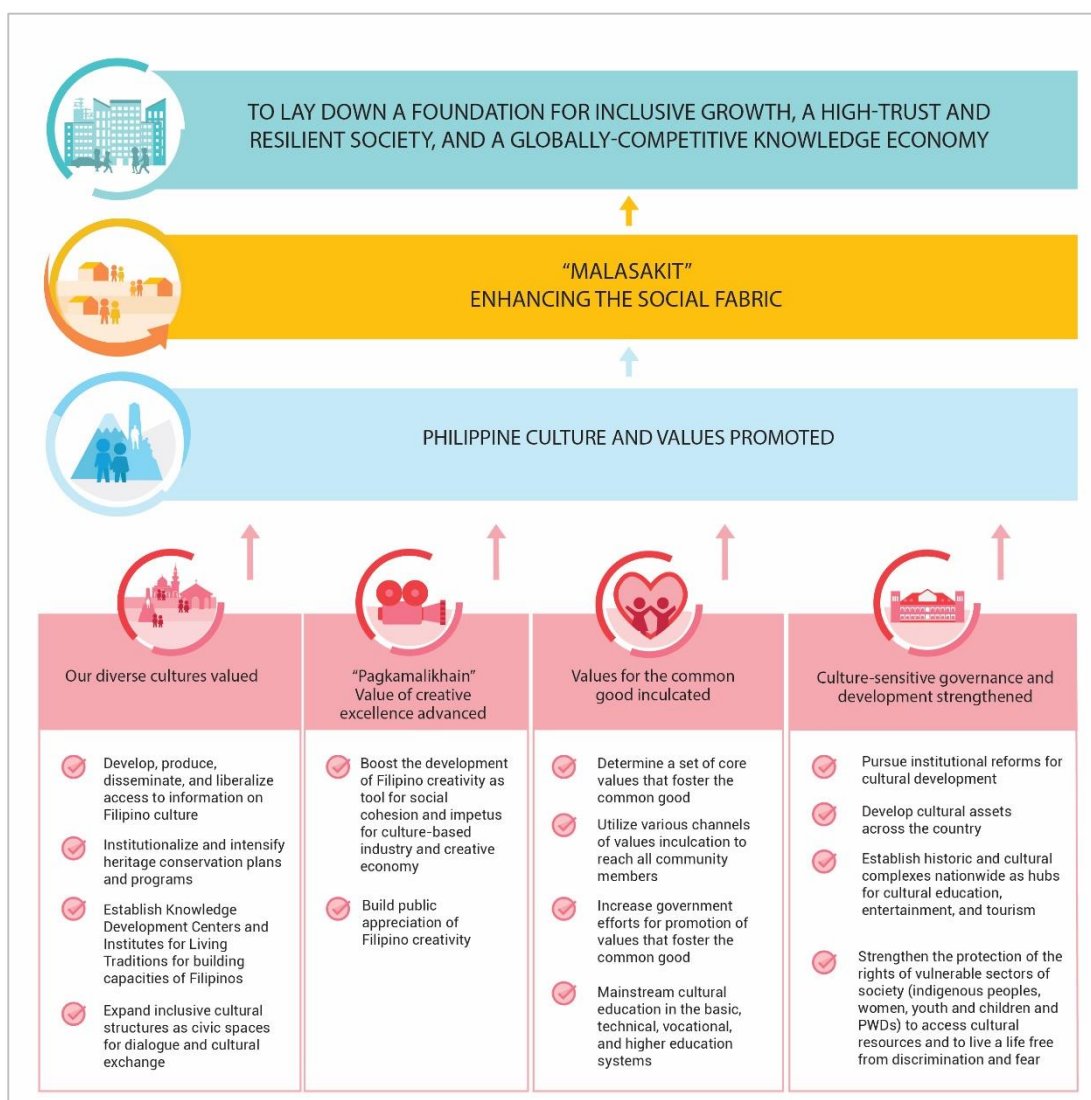
Table 7.1 Plan Targets⁸ to Promote Philippine Culture and Values, 2017-2022

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 all development plans in key growth areas according to the National Spatial Strategy			tbd
Heightened pride of place and pride of being Filipino			tbd
Reached the target number of beneficiaries (individuals, groups, organizations, communities) who were provided support			tbd

⁸ 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. A more detailed set of indicators can be found in the PDP's accompanying Results Matrix.

Strategies

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



Subsector Outcome 1: Our diverse cultures valued

Only with strengthened awareness of the different cultures in the country can Filipinos have the capability to integrate their cultural heritage into their lives and contribute to national development. Different segments of society must have a general consciousness that they belong to a national community. They should be aware of their heritage and be determined to ensure its preservation. It necessitates the establishment of mechanisms for recognition such as historical markers and a database of tangible and intangible cultural assets. Valuing cultural diversity therefore requires its recognition, protection, safeguarding, and promotion. To achieve this, the following strategies will be implemented:

Develop, produce, disseminate, and open access to information about Filipino culture. Under this PDP, learning materials will be developed in order to raise awareness about the country’s cultural diversity. 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 will be undertaken through comprehensive conservation plans, while recognizing that it is a shared responsibility of every Filipino.

Establish Knowledge Development Centers and Schools for Living Traditions for building the capacities of Filipinos. Knowledge Development Centers will be established to document, conserve, and protect tangible and intangible cultural heritage for posterity, as well as to enrich the people's knowledge and sense of ownership of various elements of Filipino culture. Schools for Living Traditions (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 in order to allow for dialogue and cultural exchange. The use of embassies for the regular engagement of Filipinos abroad in cultural initiatives will be institutionalized. Such facilities allow for the continuity of the intangible cultural heritage, practices as well as other creative expressions.

Subsector Outcome 2: Values for the common good inculcated

Instilling values for the common good into the consciousness of all citizens 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. While there will always be conflicts of interests and differences in beliefs and principles, there are values that are common to Filipinos and that are important for social cohesion and inclusive development. Values that are embraced by various Filipino communities will be identified. Among them are discipline, persistence, and grit, as well as having 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.

Because there is no existing baseline to serve as a starting point, there is a need to examine how social values are tackled in all institutions, such as schools, government, media, among others.

Utilize 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 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, particularly as regards the development of “21st century skills.”⁹ The desired outcome of the reform is to ensure that students are equipped with not only functional literacy and 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.

In addition, other means and channels for values formation will be utilized through the collaboration of several agencies in order to cover all stages of human development.

Subsector Outcome 3: *Pagkamalikhain* or creative excellence advanced

A culture of creative excellence needs to 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. Learners in the academe need to appreciate at a young age the importance of inventiveness and creativity. Inter-disciplinary collaboration among public and private sectors will boost innovation in various areas.

The country should also 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. It is also imperative to foster a culture that values arts, science, technology, and innovation. *See also Chapter 14.*

Advancing the value of creative excellence will be integrated with the inculcation of values that foster the common good and appreciation of diverse cultures, so that creativity is developed together with core values. This will then result 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.

Subsector Outcome 4: Culture-sensitive governance and development strengthened

The government has an important role to play in a nation’s cultural development. It can 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.

⁹ Department of Education. December 2013. *K to 12 Gabay Pangkurikulum: Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao*. Accessed on January 17, 2017. Retrieved from: <http://www.deped.gov.ph/sites/default/files/Edukasyon%20sa%20Pagpapakatao%20Curriculum%20Guide%20Grade%201-10.pdf>

Pursue institutional reforms for cultural development. A coordinating body that will streamline services and activities must be established. 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.

Existing legislations need to be reviewed 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 nationwide as hubs for cultural education, entertainment, and tourism. This will help in showcasing the best of the Philippines for cultural tourism, which can contribute to economic growth.

Develop cultural assets across the country. Considering the geographic situation of the country, development of cultural assets is necessary to broaden 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 sector¹⁰ can contribute to the 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 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. This is an intangible heritage inextricable from the country's biodiversity heritage. *See also Chapter 5.*

¹⁰ UNESCO broadly defines the “culture sector” as a demarcated policy domain which is mainly concerned with heritage and creativity. It is comprised of individuals, organizations, and institutions that are responsible for the transmission and renewal of the diverse manifestations of human intellectual and artistic creativity, including the arts and cultural expressions: “Culture as a sector of activity includes, but not exclusively, cultural workers, artists and other creative professionals; commercial (for-profit) businesses; not-for-profit firms in the arts and culture; public cultural institutions, such as museums and galleries, heritage sites, libraries etc.; education and training institutions in the arts; government agencies and ministries responsible for arts and cultural affairs; NGOs and civil society involved in cultural activity.”

Legislative Agenda

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.
Film Industry Development Act	Include film appreciation, construct local cinematheques, replace the Metro Manila Film Festival with a national film festival in December, encourage the production of films by providing incentives.
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 the Department of Culture	Reorganize the National Commission on Culture and the Arts into the Department of Culture and the Arts, define its power and functions. Strengthen the National Endowment for Culture and Arts.
Establishment of <i>Kawanihan ng Pagsasalin</i> / Bureau of Translation	Establish an institutional mechanism for accreditation and professionalization of translators in Filipino and other Philippine languages
Establishment of the <i>Kandungan ng mga Wika at Kultura</i> in Rogongon, Iligan City	Establish a cultural complex 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 Education Fund	Establish offices for culture and arts in LGUs, with a mandate to protect and promote local cultural heritage and arts.
Establishment of an 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.