

MAKATI POBLACION HERITAGE CONSERVATION PROJECT



EMPOWERMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT HISTORY
SUSTAINABILITY **CULTURAL STRATEGY** CONSERVATION
HERITAGE PARTICIPATION REGENERATION COMMUNITY

1. Context

Makati is known as the Philippines' most progressive city, being home to the country's most affluent families, most foreign corporations operating in the country, and diplomats. It has a night-time population of over half a million, but it increases up to three million during the day, as people from other localities come to work, do business or shop. Makati is also a popular urban tourist destination.

The project promoters particularly noticed the existence of old houses, churches, and the narrow but charming streets of the area. Environmental planners were also amazed to discover that rituals and



customs from the Spanish era still thrived in the area. Deliberations shifted to how the city could build on this appeal and make it work, and not working towards a sleek and cosmopolitan central business district.

This led to the idea of preserving these cultural practices to ensure that the unique character and genuine “soul” of the Makateños would not be lost to more contemporary and generic ways of urban life, especially among the young. The initiative had to correspond with an urban renewal to maintain an appropriate environment for practices and to showcase the centre of Makati’s history and culture.

The city government formulated a Development Agenda known as Makati 21 and Makati BEST. Among its pillars of development was ‘Best Place to Live In’ which promoted pride of place and a safe, healthy, and liveable environment. Heritage conservation was identified as one of the projects for this pillar. It became a key program in the next phase of growth as it focuses on its past in an attempt to keep the vitality and attractiveness of the city to investors and tourists which may bring about greater economic and social development.

THE PROJECT AIMS TO INTEGRATE CULTURE IN LOCAL DEVELOPEMNT AND TO ADDRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE, CITIZENSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY.

2. Makati and culture

The Constitution mandates the state to foster the preservation, enrichment, and dynamic evolution of the Filipino culture. Makati has long recognized the importance of culture to local governance when in 1973, the Trade and Tourism Center was created. It was tasked to spearhead year-long programs and projects that promote Filipino arts and culture. The persistence of community-driven, centuries-old Catholic customs and traditions in the old town led to the formulation of the Makati Poblacion Heritage Conservation Plan. This was a document product of a series of stakeholder consultations and discussions, capacity-building measures benchmarking activities, and active dialogue with local



and international partners. It serves as the roadmap for the city's conservation efforts in the heritage district.

The project is in line with the goals of Agenda 21 for culture to give an emphasis on integrating culture in local development and to address the importance of the relationship between culture, citizenship, and sustainability. For the past years, Makati City has integrated cultural preservation and heritage conservation as an identified priority project under Makati 21. To “create a long term vision of culture as a basic pillar in their development” has been considered by the City Government, as based on Makati 21. This is anchored on what Agenda 21 for culture is aiming: to empower local governments towards sustainable cultural development. The project is also highly participative and inclusive of all stakeholders. Constant dialogue and consultations underscore the weight of the people's voice at all levels of planning and implementation. Making the community economically progressive through the strengthening and support of MSMEs and institutionalizing the project through ordinances, guidelines, and administrative arrangements align the project with Agenda 21's goal of sustainability.

3. Objectives and implementation of the project

1.1. Main and specific goals

The Makati Poblacion Heritage Conservation Project aims to serve as a model of community development and management, which builds upon the area's historical and cultural heritage assets to heighten the sense of pride and addressing the social and economic challenges and opportunities of urban growth.

The goal of the project is to promote cultural and economic development in the city. For this, MPHCP has set the following objectives for itself: (1)Encouragement of the resident stakeholders to be an active partner in the project; (2)Establishment of a heritage-based tourist destination that would promote not only the culture of Makati but of the country; (3)Enhancement of the existing land use, infrastructure and overall socio-economic condition of the neighbourhood; (4)Improvement of security, transport and traffic and overall environmental welfare and conditions; (5)Synergistic growth with the established commercial centers of the City around it; (6)Productive linkage with the



expanded services and commerce of neighbouring urban centers across and along the Pasig River;
(7) Optimization of city development funds and other sources through the implementation of a commercially viable project that opens up opportunities for residents.

1.2. Development of the project

Several entities took an important role in the realization of the project. The cultural mapping activity was done with the FEATI University College of Architecture and funded by the Spanish Program for Cultural Cooperation through Instituto Cervantes, Manila. The Senior Citizen Council of Poblacion was invited to participate in the processes leading to the formulation of the Conservation Plan, with the collaboration of a local NGO called the Tourism Organization of Poblacion. Metropolis (an international organization of cities) provided technical advice in the areas of urban planning, conservation, financing, and others. Experts from Barcelona, London, Île-de-France and Algeria assisted in the workshops and drafting of the plan. Finally, a local planning firm, Consultants for Comprehensive Environmental Planning (CONCEP, Inc.) assisted the drafting of the Conservation Plan.

CONSERVATION IS COMMUNITY-FOCUSED RATHER THAN TOURISM-FOCUSED. WHEN IMPROVING COMMUNITY LIFE, CULTURAL TOURISM NATURALLY FOLLOWS.

Even national cultural agencies have also been involved and set to provide with technical knowledge. The National Museum of the Philippines identified heritage structures within the city and included these in the list of pending cultural properties for consideration for declaration as Important Cultural Properties or National Cultural Treasures.

The conservation plan is for the benefit of all sectors of the local community that includes City of Makati officials and local residents. It is done with local residents in mind, to conserve and to foster the existing sense of neighbourhood, improve the existing quality of life and shared traditions, and provide additional income sources. Conservation should thus be community-focused rather than tourism-focused which tends to cater to what is perceived as tourist preferences. On the other hand, if the cultural aspect of conservation is strengthened so that the hardware and software of conservation successfully improve community life, cultural tourism will naturally follow.



4. Impacts

1.1. Direct impacts

Impacts on the local government

The project had an impact on the local government regarding how they consider culture and heritage as part of policymaking for sustainable development. It exposed the deficiency of cultural policies and development guidelines in the city and realized the importance of culture for development. It has also made the city realize its lack of technical and non-technical experts in the field of conservation.

Impact on culture and local cultural actors of the city/territory

MPHCP has awakened the interest of residents in Poblacion's role in Makati's history and culture. The centuries-old Lenten and fiesta rituals continue to be led, with greater pride. Technology and innovations have been creatively applied to the practices without losing their substantial meaning.

Impact on the territory and its population

Awareness has been the greatest impact on the city so far. People have started to take interest in Makati's history. Media has also steadily taken notice of these traditions and has highlighted the juxtaposition of the cosmopolitan character of Makati with its old-world charm in various features and coverage.

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSIDERABLY IMPACTS POSITIVELY ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS.

Transversal impacts

The project has considerable impact on the economic and social aspect of the community since this invigorates the cultural traditions and enhances cooperation between the community and the local government. In terms of economic impact, preservation of traditions and culture promotes tourism



which, in turn, encourages micro, small, and medium enterprises to operate. Economic activity increases and opportunities for livelihood open up for the residents. Its social impacts translate to the inclusive participation of the citizens towards the project and activities relating to the cultural protection and promotion of heritage sites, as well as cooperative partnership between citizens and the local government. As to gender equality, women have begun to take on roles in the various cultural events traditionally done by men. The number of women and members of the LGBT community who have either direct or indirect impact to the project and cultural life in the city has significantly increased. As to the environmental impacts, the heritage project has anchored itself on a transport master plan which involves the Makati Green Route Program and Inclusive Mobility Project for the Heritage District as these schemes will entice people to use public transportation and other alternative transport modes.

AWARNESS HAS BEEN THE GREATEST IMPACT. PEOPLE HAVE STARTED TO TAKE INTEREST IN MAKATI'S HISTORY, NOT JUST ITS STATURE AS THE FINANCIAL CAPITAL.

1.2. Continuity

Given that the customs and traditions of Makati have endured amidst the rapid modernization of the city in the past century, it may be safe to deduce that these will be carried on way into the future. This is because the knowledge is passed-on to the young, although sometimes incomplete or deviated from the authentic. Institutionalization will guarantee sustainability. Development guidelines will be passed and capacity building measures for cultural workers and advocates will be continuous. Initially, the local government will continue to appropriate funds for the district's operation. However, as is proposed in the Conservation Plan, instruments for its financial independence and self-sufficiency will be studied and eventually implemented.

5. Further information

The city of Makati was a nominated candidate for the second 'UCLG International Award - Mexico City - Culture 21' (January-May 2016). The awards jury produced a final report in June 2016 and asked the UCLG Committee on Culture to promote this project as a practical example for the implementation of Agenda 21 for Culture.

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