

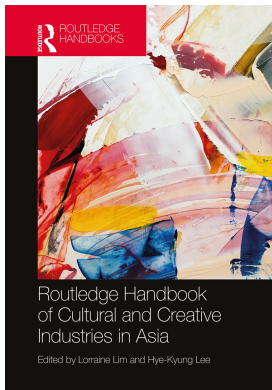
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Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the Philippines

Jason Vitorillo and Maria Sharon Mapa Arriola

Arts funding policy in the Philippines: the role of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts

The Philippines is a culturally diverse country having more than a hundred ethno-linguistic groups. The number of indigenous people in the Philippines is estimated to be 17 million (UNDP 2010). Thirty-one percent of this population is concentrated in Northern Luzon (Cordillera Administrative Region) and 61 percent in Mindanao, Southern Philippines. Intangible cultural heritage in the Philippines is shaped significantly by the country's environment as an archipelago, as well as by elements both 'human' and 'natural' including the 171 living languages from the various ethnicities (Flores 2010). Republic Act 8371, commonly known as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Acts (IPRA), of 1997 recognizes the rights of indigenous people to manage their own ancestral domain, and mandates the government to recognize, protect, promote, and fulfil the rights of indigenous people.

However, in spite of the IPRA, most indigenous communities in the Philippines still suffer from poverty, historical discrimination, and marginalization. And with these come the loss of their traditional ways of life, culture, and identity. Amid globalization, modernization, and armed conflicts, especially in Mindanao, the needs and rights of indigenous people are lost in the formulation of policies and relevant decision-making.

Intangible cultural heritage conservation projects are not new in the Philippines. In May 2001, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), the *de facto* cultural ministry and mandated to administer public funding for the preservation, conservation, and promotion of Philippine culture and arts, was informed that the Hudhud – an Ifugao non-ritual chanting practice – was proclaimed by UNESCO as a 'Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage for Humanity'. In response, the NCCA-Intangible Heritage Committee (NCCA-IHC) was created to safeguard, revitalize, and enhance the oral and intangible heritage, as well as coordinate and monitor the implementation of action plans. In order to do this, the NCCA together with the local government and non-government units, the provincial Department of Education, and the Ifugao community built the Hudhud Schools for Living Traditions (HSLT).

Articulated in Republic Act 7356 (RA 7356), an Act creating the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and establishing the National Endowment Fund for Culture and the Arts (NEFCA), the NCCA is governed by several principles. Section four of this Act defines culture being independent; free of any political and economic structures which inhibit cultural sovereignty. Culture, both tangible and intangible, is always an essential component of a community's identity. Stated in section two, the NCCA defines culture as a manifestation of the freedom of belief and of expression, and is a human right to be accorded due respect and allowed to flourish. These beliefs and expressions emulate the aspirations of the people's cultural wisdom, thereby shaping their lives and defining who they are as a community. Furthermore, as explicitly stated in Section 14.5 and 14.6 of said Act, in order for the NCCA to conserve, protect, and promote the nation's historical and cultural heritage, it should encourage the private sector to establish and maintain museums, libraries, learning centers, and archives, as well as support scholarly research into, and documentation of, Philippine cultural traditions, arts and crafts, and significant cultural movements, achievements, and personalities especially in literary, visual, and performing arts, and in mass media, as well as the various aspects of Filipino culture. All these programs and initiatives must be done in cooperation with the Departments of Education, Tourism, Interior and Local Government, Foreign Affairs, and all other concerned agencies both public and private.

According to Fairclough in the 'Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society' (Faro Convention 2015), the conservation of culture and heritage has a reciprocal relationship with the quality of life of the community (Fairclough 2009: 32). The Faro Convention defines cultural heritage in the broadest sense, considering both intangible and tangible, perceptual and physical, action performance, custom and behavior, as well as objects and buildings. The Faro Convention takes a people-centered approach in which heritage is central to the everyday, ordinary 'real' life of people, those who construct and use heritage. It therefore sees heritage as a continuing process of creating, constructing, using, and modifying heritage rather than as an object or product. It is along these lines that the NCCA safeguards the culture of the people, and develops means for communities to grow and for their culture to develop amid societal and economic changes.

Since its creation in 1992, the NCCA, using funds from NEFCA and other sources, has been giving financial support to the preservation and development of projects for indigenous culture and arts. The NEFCA was established exclusively for the use of Philippine cultural and art programs, projects, and activities all over the country. This fund was established through the seed capital of 100 million pesos (2.5 million USD) given by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) in 1992. From the year 2005 to 2010, the NCCA through its NEFCA Division annually proposes a budget ranging from 200 to 500 million pesos (5 to 12.5 million USD). However, the average NEFCA Project Fund released by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is only between 150 to 170 million pesos (3.7 to 4.3 million USD). Moreover, the NEFCA Project Fund is not only allocated to the projects that the NCCA is supporting. This fund is shared by all seven affiliated cultural agencies; thus, making the budget of the NCCA much smaller. The NCCA's share of the budget is further divided among its four subcommissions.¹

The main problem here is that the budget allocated for projects on culture and the arts is very small in comparison with the entire budget of the government, and yet the government demands that culture and arts must improve the quality of life of Filipinos towards national development. There is a huge discrepancy between how the national government says that it uses culture and arts as drivers for national progress and the amount of public funding it allocates to realize projects for this goal. The NCCA envisions a Filipino people and a nation

united, empowered, and sustained by its cultural and artistic life and heritage. But how can the nation realize this vision if it lacks the means to materialize it? Even though the NCCA budget, of which 70 percent goes to funding projects and programs, is equitably distributed to the four subcommissions, the SCCTA (Subcommission on Cultural Communities and Traditional Arts) only received 24,716,918 pesos (500,000 USD) from 2005 to 2007 based on the NCCA Terminal Report for said period. Putting it in perspective, the SCCTA's budget for three years is only but a 5 percent share of the total pie; and yet it serves a huge sector of more than a hundred indigenous cultural communities all over the country.

A plethora of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) conservation projects have been implemented in the Philippines in the last 15 years. In 2014, the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan for Culture and the Arts (MTPDPCA) was formulated to create policies and initiatives to address certain needs in the cultural sector. In this chapter, we will discuss the various programs for the conservation of intangible cultural heritage supported by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), and will look specifically into the rationale and value behind such support. We will also investigate how the NCCA evaluates its intangible cultural heritage conservation efforts through the Hudhud Schools of Living Traditions (HSLT) of the Ifugao indigenous community. Does the NCCA use an 'integrated approach' to ICH conservation as proposed by the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003? What impact is expected from these programs?

The cultural policy model in the Philippines

Overseeing the administration of state support for indigenous culture and arts is the Subcommission on Cultural Communities and Traditional Arts (SCCTA). It is mandated to preserve and integrate culture and its various creative expressions as a dynamic part of the national cultural mechanism. Based on this, the NCCA acts as an *architect*² who sets the agenda, guides the communities in their projects, and nourishes the culture and arts sector through grants as part of its social democratic policies framed by its societal goals, which are to improve the quality of life towards national development.

Section five of RA 7356 pushes for the active involvement of the people in a climate of freedom and responsibility to evolve and develop their culture and identity; and thereby nurture a Filipino national culture and identity. A foremost prerequisite to this pluralistic goal is to instill respect for the cultural identity of each locality, region, or ethno-linguistic community, as well as elements assimilated from other cultures through the natural process of acculturation. In the process, the NCCA adopts the *patron* model where an arm's-length mechanism of arts funding allows the communities to present their agenda and plans for their communities' cultural development. Through evaluations and recommendations from peers and other cultural practitioners, as well as from a panel of experts, the NCCA then decides on who gets to be funded. This model places part of the responsibility in the conservation, preservation, and promotion of culture and identity on the communities. Moreover, the NCCA follows an entity-relationship model, which is a common approach to 'mapping' government cultural administrations whereby entities such as agencies are actors in the cultural policy system, where the relationships are linkages between them.

The duality of being an *architect* and a *patron* promotes a consultative approach to arts funding that generates ideas from both the national government through the NCCA, and from grassroot organizations and other stakeholders. The NCCA is very keen on and takes much pride in this approach. The NCCA is unique in this regard because it is unlike cultural

agencies or ministries in other Southeast Asian countries who solely create the agenda and make decisions for culture and arts. This consultative approach encourages and empowers the communities to identify and propose which aspect of their culture will be conserved and supported. According to Dr. Jesus Peralta, the Director of the UNESCO project in safeguarding the Hudhud of the Ifugao, the NCCA does not really intervene with what the communities want, but it creates the platforms and environment for the community to make the right decisions on the conservation of its intangible cultural heritage (Peralta 2010). Through dialogues, studies and evaluations by a panel of experts, the NCCA is able to collaborate with the communities on their own capacity-building.

The NCCA provides five major types of grants that follows the core priorities or directions set by the Office of the President in consultation with the Executive Director of the NCCA. These priorities or directions revolve around the seven needs defined in the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan for Culture and Arts (MTPDPCA), namely: culture and development, culture and education, promotion of culture and arts, continued support for artistic excellence, conservation of cultural heritage, culture and peace, and culture and diplomacy.

The grant with the widest appeal is the competitive grant which is divided according to the focus of the National Committees, and given directly to the individual or group who is the proponent of the project. Second, institutional grants provide financial resources for institutionalized programs such as the Philippine International Arts Festival, National Indigenous People's Month, Filipino Heritage Month, National Artists Award, and the *Gawad Manlilikha ng Bayan* (National Living Treasures) Award (GAMABA). Third are grants for outreach programs, which are geared towards providing projects for marginalized communities. Fourth are grants for the Speakers Bureau Program, which provides the honoraria, transportation, and accommodation for experts who give training and workshops in response to the NCCA's mandates. Lastly, the NCCA also provides automatic financial assistance to affiliated agencies as governmental inter-agency support to promote synergy of efforts.

In its hybrid model, the NCCA identifies the themes, objectives, design, and activities of the institutionalized programs. On the other hand, groups or communities propose projects to the NCCA for the competitive grants, which goes through a series of evaluation by a panel of experts. However, the proponents of these projects have to make sure that their projects align with the agenda and fall under the categories set by the NCCA. This is to ensure that proposed and eventually funded projects are anchored on what the NCCA deems as its focus or goals, and that they follow bureaucratic rules, regulations, and procedures to ensure progression and development.

Examining the Hudhud Schools for Living Traditions

The project of safeguarding and transmitting the Hudhud chant of the Ifugao has six main components and was done over a span of three years. This project had several number of simultaneous major thrusts. The first thrust is geared towards the development of pride in the practice of the Hudhud. Through an intensified publicity campaign, the HSLT program works to teach, inspire, and nurture new generations of Ifugao chanters in key areas in the province. This new generation of Hudhud chanters are then encouraged to practice and perform through various opportunities and competitions, which in turn arouse interest and participation among the Ifugao communities both young and old. By giving awards to recognize and honor these practitioners of the Hudhud, especially the lead chanters and teachers of the Hudhud (*munhaw-e*), as well as key individuals in the community, the HSLT

is able to further community participation and encourage the indigenous communities to take on more active roles in sustaining the conservation efforts. To achieve this thrust, the NCCA-Intangible Heritage Committee (NCCA-IHC), in consultation with members of the community, first identified cultural bearers among the Ifugaos, and mapped and recorded the oral traditions of the community. Once this was established, the NCCA-IHC proceeded to create the HSLTs, which is an informal education system wherein the culture bearers teach the practice to the younger generation enabling them to gain deeper insights and understanding of their traditions within their proper context.

The second major thrust of the NCCA on the HSLT is to ensure its sustainability by engaging provincial and other local government offices in the programs. Doing so allows continued research into the Ifugao culture, and in the process documents other versions of the Hudhud. One such engagement is with the provincial Department of Education that is eyed to develop a curriculum where the teaching of the chant becomes a permanent feature in schools outside the HSLT.

Lastly, to elevate the chanting of the Hudhud into a continuing social practice instead of a mere performance for competitions and demonstrations, the NCCA created the Hudhud Perpetual Award and established the Perpetual Hudhud Trophy, in effect, creating an aspiration among new generations of chanters, and again building a sense of pride on the practice of their culture. The creation of the Hudhud Perpetual Award was also a step towards moving away from merely popularizing the Hudhud in the communities, but to recognize the practice in its cultural and social context.

The proclamation of the Hudhud as a 'Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage for Humanity' necessitated the NCCA to form a permanent body to organize and execute an action plan for the Hudhud conservation. An ad hoc committee, the Ifugao Intangible Heritage Subcommittee (IIHSC), was organized in Kiangon, Ifugao soon after to assist the NCCA in the preservation and propagation of the Hudhud. The safeguarding and transmission of the Hudhud was a three-phase program. In its first year, which is the Assessment Stage, policies and programs were analyzed and formulated; libraries for archiving were identified; a local research base was organized; cultural bearers and practitioners were contacted; a methodology in recording, archiving, and publishing was established; and meetings to train field specialists were organized. In the same year, the Department of Education (DepEd) – Division of Ifugao assisted the IIHSC in selecting five sites for the HSLT.

In its second year, which is the Collection Stage, the IIHSC held several consultative meetings with field specialists, organized field operations to research on and document the Hudhud practice, and did overall coordination of the project. This was highlighted by a two-day seminar workshop conducted by the HSLT Coordinator to teach the HSLT lead teachers in the operations of the HSLT and test the learning guides, which are articulated in the *Hudhud Teaching Guides*. This culminated in the organization of the first Hudhud Festival where each HSLT performed an episode of the Hudhud.

In the last year of the project, which was the Policy and Development Stage, aside from an on-going implementation of all intangible heritage conservation efforts including the HSLT, the NCCA worked on the institutionalization of the program in the provincial government structure. One of the critical steps initiated by the NCCA-IHC in this regard was to replace the Ifugao Intangible Heritage Subcommittee with the creation of the Ifugao Intangible Heritage Executive Committee (IIHEC) composed of the representatives of the Office of the Governor, Department of Education–Division of Ifugao, Ifugao Central Heritage Office, National Museum, and the private sector. Through the IIHEC, policies, local ordinances, and other legal instruments were formulated to support such institutionalization of

the HSLT. As a result, the Ifugao Research Center was established with technical assistance from the National Museum to look into the research and documentation of all the intangible heritage of the Ifugao.

According to Jesus Peralta and Cecilia Picache, the Director and Planning Officer respectively of the project for safeguarding and transmitting the Hudhud chant of the Ifugao, in retrospect the project was a success because it was able to address the immediate and long-term cultural needs of the Ifugao, and raised awareness and transmitted the Hudhud among the communities. Specifically, it was able to integrate the Hudhud Schools for Living Tradition in the curriculum of the Department of Education–Division of Ifugao, and was able to institutionalize the Hudhud Festival. It was also able to institutionalize the Hudhud Perpetual Award into the cultural program of Ifugao. It published and distributed two children's books on the practice to libraries, cultural institutions, and research centers. And most importantly, the NCCA-IHC and IHCSC were able to turn over the project to the Department of Education–Division of Ifugao for continued implementation of the HSLT and Annual Hudhud Festival, thus ensuring its sustainability.

The benefits and challenges of the NCCA's consultative approach

The Hudhud Schools for Living Traditions (HSLT) is just one of many ways to conserve intangible cultural heritage. When a program or project provides a platform for cultural transmission or exchange from one generation to another, one can argue that a community is continuously being built and in the process this community defines who it is. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the HSLT has been integrated into the provincial curricula of the Department of Education–Division of Ifugao. This integration allows for a collective undertaking in building the Ifugao community, and reinforces the grassroots aspects of the approach taken by the NCCA – that it is the community that decides on what aspects of and how it will conserve and develop its culture and practices within its socio-cultural context. This emphasizes the importance of intangible cultural heritage enabling different groups to assert their cultural identities, thereby allowing humanity to maintain its diversity (Kurin 2004). The integrated approach is very important in the efforts on community building and identity construction because it puts people at the center of cultural activity and conservation efforts. It protects the environment and circumstances on which the community recreates its cultural expressions. Although the difficulty of defining and keeping what is authentic is always present, the integrated approach nevertheless helps the community to recognize and respond to this issue. Therefore, the HSLT is a concrete example that highlights the very mandate and models of cultural funding of the NCCA, that unlike the other subcommittees, the SCCTA focuses on cultural preservation rather than on the economic gains from cultural tourism. The indigenous community is the core value of the program.

However, in spite of the achievements and success of the HSLT, and evidences of a consultative approach taken by the NCCA-IHC in the process of identifying cultural bearers, mapping the Ifugao intangible heritage, and creating the HSLT, one can still question whether the integrated approach used in the Hudhud HSLT project ensures that the voice and sentiments of the community are indeed heard. In the midst of institutionalizing the HSLT, where can we hear the voice of the Ifugao community, and is it this voice that dictates the direction of the conservation efforts?

This then puts into question the dual approach in the model of arts funding of the NCCA. Because of its duality as an architect and a patron, the NCCA needs to balance on one hand a top-down approach where certain themes, directives, or agenda are set in place, and such

become the guiding framework in which projects are considered for support; and on the other hand a grassroots approach where it allows the communities to propose an idea or concept of a project or program that will benefit them. As Dr. Peralta argued, the NCCA does not intervene with what the communities want, but in the process of creating the platforms and environment for the community to voice their thoughts, these are funneled into a framework set by the NCCA; and thus, must abide by the political and bureaucratic purposes of such framework. Such a situation, it can be argued, is even more marked in the process of institutionalization where the different governmental agencies are the ones setting the agenda as they see fit. One only needs to look at the composition of the IIHEC to see this issue, and ask if there is any value in institutionalization for the communities.

According to Mark Dela Cruz of the Program Monitoring and Evaluation Division of NCCA, to address this issue the NCCA requires from field monitors regular reports, both verbal and written, with photo documentations and at times video recordings, to document the voice and sentiments of the community (Dela Cruz 2016). On top of this, the NCCA appoints community cluster representatives who are elected by the members of their respective clusters to officially represent them within the structure of the NCCA. These representatives hold an important role in this cultural engagement. They hold the responsibility as well as the power to voice the issues and concerns of their respective communities, bring them to the attention of the NCCA, and propose resolutions together with their fellow representatives.

Furthermore, Dela Cruz shares that field monitors who are assigned to the HSLT conduct their own monitoring and reports in written and video formats, and present these during the committee meetings of the NCCA. They then cascade agreed resolutions to the communities where the communities then discuss the details of the resolution with the lead of their community cluster representatives. The NCCA also holds special gatherings for indigenous people such as the Dayaw Cultural Festival and School for Living Traditions Summit for the purpose of bringing the communities to discuss pertinent issues.

However, there is a problem here with regards to the dual approach in the hybrid model of the NCCA. As Madden (2009) correctly notes, it is not necessarily the set-up of an additional institution but the actual degree of independence from the government that makes for effective civil society participation, and thus good governance in cultural policy. Thus, when we look into the factors that impact arts funding, the complexity in intangible heritage conservation, cultural policy, and cultural governance of institutionalized initiatives such as the Hudhud Schools for Living Traditions, Holden's ecology concept (2016) seems most appropriate. This is because it recognizes the multi-dimensionality of culture within a society and state apparatus become increasingly important in many low-income countries or those emerging in conflict (Brennert 2016) – which parallels the situation of indigenous people in the Philippines. The ecology lens is a viable tool to analyze cultural governance, and is appropriate to apply in the context of the Philippines, because the ecological approach argues for the need of cultural policy to concern itself with a broad set of concerns from a national to a regional or local scale. This approach asks questions about relationships and connections, causes, and effects (Holden 2016). The ecology concept highlights interdependencies where governance looks at how interdependencies are managed, and culture defines the terms of such management.

The problem with cultural governance, as summed up by Holden (2006), is that cultural policy is a closed conversation among experts. Politics has struggled to understand culture, and failed to engage with it effectively. This issue stems from the fact that cultural governance is still a concept that defies precise definition. Baltà, Copic and Srakar (2014) argued that if the term is defined as 'governance of culture' then it is composed of two sub-areas: the new approaches to the formulation and implementation of sectorial cultural policy that

are inspired by the interaction of the state, the civil society, and the market; and the improvements in the steering and supervision of cultural organizations that lead to efficiently, expertly, independently, and transparently-operating cultural organizations.

On one side of the wide concept of cultural governance is a narrow sense of a sectoral concept of governance that points to cultural policy based on the relationship of culture and administration. This also concerns the governance of cultural institutions, which entails the direct and indirect involvement of government (Baltà et al. 2014). Mercer (2012: 4) argues that even in the narrow sense cultural governance should be put in a broader political context referring to the burning issues of the modern world: the shift from government to governance as ‘our joint and uneven terms of engagement with the complex field of economic, social, political, and cultural power relations in which we are all “stakeholders”’. The focus then is not how cultural policy empowers civil society, or in the context of the Ifugao, how the government through the Hudhud Schools for Living Traditions empower the communities. The focus should be shifted to how the communities, in a collaborative manner, work with the government in shaping and articulating cultural policy.

Moreover, the duality approach – not necessarily the consultative approach – can create confusion that may lead to various problems, misinterpretations, or misrepresentations of communities. Although the implementation of the Hudhud Schools for Living Traditions goes through several evaluation and assessment processes, and representations and conversations with various stakeholders, there still is the concern as to whether what is presented at the discussion table truly represents the needs and concerns of the communities. Bernan Joseph Corpuz (2010), the head of the Planning and Policy Office of the NCCA, explains that the vision of the committees is aligned to the vision of the government. Both visions are married and weaved in this duality approach, which is framed and guided by the main thrust of the government on development of communities and their cultural practices. Corpuz (2010) further explains that if programs proposed by the communities through the committees do not align to this governmental thrust, then the NCCA cannot and will not give funding or technical support. Fortunately, what the culture and arts sector often, if not always, identifies aligns with the government’s goals specifically on the development of the Filipino national culture and identity.

But this clearly shows the assumption of the NCCA that the culture and arts sector will identify initiatives that align to the government’s goals. What happens if the indigenous communities wish to push for something different and not aligned to the government’s goal, then will public funding and support stop?

It is precisely this kind of mindset – that community initiatives or projects should align to the national agenda in order for them to be funded or supported – that is a cause of concern, and in effect takes away the democratic process of cultural governance. It also seems to leave the planning for culture and the arts to chance, hoping that it aligns with the government’s goals so that it will receive funding, or that the culture and arts sector deliberately aligns its projects to secure funding regardless of their actual value to the community – basically playing the funding game. This brings into question if the communities seek to make their projects aligned with government interests to gain funding rather than working out what they actually need or want.

What if the community’s definition of Filipino culture and identity is different to that of which the government subscribes to or identifies, then will such a definition be set aside? This is very problematic given the Philippine’s geographical nature and ethno-linguistic composition. There is potential here for the culture and arts sector to go against the very mandate and purpose of the NCCA, and this raises the questions of whose value is actually being valued.

Landry and Matarasso, in the British context, defined democratization of culture as a perspective that focuses on the ‘civilizing value of the arts’ and prioritizes the general public’s access to mainly European forms of high culture (Landry and Matarasso 1999). With this perspective, the government funds projects, programs, or platforms that give audiences access to arts and culture experiences that otherwise they would not have access to due to lack of income or resources. In the case of the Hudhud Schools for Living Traditions, this perspective pushes for the funding of such programs to invigorate the community and give them the means to transmit the cultural practice for the greater community to learn and experience. The success of this policy and efforts is measured by the socio-economic and demographic attendance to major cultural works. Thus, the NCCA looks into: (1) the increasing number of Schools for Living Traditions in the region or province; (2) the increasing number of students who attended and are attending the HSLTs; (3) the increasing participation of adults and children to the annual Hudhud Festival and chanting competitions; (4) the growing number of cultural bearers or *munhaw-es*; and (5) the creation and institutionalization of the Perpetual Award Trophy for the practice to perpetuate.

This is not to say that these should not be the indicators of success of an intangible cultural heritage conservation project. Instead it raises questions about how true and relevant these numbers are to the communities, and about the preservation of its cultural practices and identity. This is still a top-down approach to culture, and in some ways the authorities are imposing or dictating the success of the initiative on the community. The NCCA’s consultative approach is in question if such is the case of monitoring the development and evaluating the success of the HSLTs and other intangible cultural heritage conservation projects. Success is therefore argued as not simply about providing the public audience or members of the community an access to arts and cultural works and practices, but more importantly it recognizes the role and voice of various cultures and communities, and includes this in the decision-making processes in policy making.

Gattinger (2011) opens three main ideas for debate and discussion on these perspectives. First, democratization of culture and cultural democracy can be most effectively pursued by public arts funders if they do so through the lens of governance and multi-level governance. In this context, governance means encompassing, non-hierarchical, decentralized, and collaborative policy-making approaches between interdependent public, private, and civic actors (2011: 4). This perspective pushes the NCCA to engage in more long-term collaborations with local government units, cultural agencies and institutions, the Department of Education, non-government organizations, private corporations, and most importantly the communities. It takes this ecosystem of stakeholders to plan on what intangible cultural heritage will be conserved, and whether it is of interest and relevance to the community – not necessarily to set aside its economic value, but more for its intrinsic value. Such policy will also somehow unburden the Philippine government through the NCCA to shoulder the financial and technical needs of the HSLT. Because otherwise it may be difficult for the NCCA to sustain the operations of the HSLT, and in this debate may be counterproductive because cultural change works at a faster pace, actors change, and resources remain scarce or limited.

Second, public arts funders should carefully analyze the possible repercussions for democratization of culture and cultural democracy of making fundamental changes to existing governance arrangements between business, government, and society (Gattinger 2011: 4). Third, public arts funders would do well to identify the multi-level governance arrangements best suited to pursuing democratization of culture and cultural democracy. This involves identifying the most supportive coordination arrangements for democratization of culture and cultural democracy and identifying which aspects of democratization of culture

and cultural democracy should be pursued by which level of government (Gattinger 2011: 5). Thus, there is a need for the NCCA and other stakeholders to develop a more comprehensive, robust, and comparable methodologies and a more critical evaluation framework for evaluating the HSLT, which will acknowledge the complex issues associated with intangible cultural heritage conservation, and ensure that the voice of the community is always heard.

The NCCA is now in a conundrum. There are two potential approaches which the NCCA can pursue in the future. On the one hand, the NCCA can adopt a democratization of culture perspective and on the other it can be open to a more pluralistic approach to intangible cultural heritage conservation. Given the duality of its approach, and the strengths and weakness of its funding model, it remains to be seen how the NCCA will balance both perspectives.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that more often than not cultural practitioners and creators focus on satisfying the policy demands of the NCCA to gain its support. But the reality is, the NCCA will not be able to truly support communities until it has a broader and clearer articulation of what a ‘democratic’ consensus is. Using the argument of Holden (2006), publicly funded programs for culture and the arts generate three types of value: intrinsic value, instrumental value, and institutional value. But politics, in this case the NCCA, cares more about the social outcomes – Peralta (2016) argues that the NCCA does not look at the economic implications and viability of the HSLT – but the communities may have a completely different set of concerns, which may result in a misalignment of programs to the concerns they are designed to address; thus resulting in a dysfunctional system.

Holden (2006) argues that the ‘cultural system’ has become a closed conversation between professionals and politicians, with too much emphasis placed on satisfying funders, rather than on achieving the self-generated purposes of the cultural organizations themselves, or on engaging the public. The solution therefore is a better understanding of the different types of value that culture public creates, and understanding what is important to the communities and the NCCA. The community and other stakeholders, both private and public, have to be accountable.

In all its efforts in forming national committees to safeguard and transmit intangible cultural heritage, specifically the Hudhud chant through education and research, documentation and awareness, and capacity-building, one can definitely argue that the HSLT program is a resounding success. The NCCA’s consultative approach as a mechanism for cultural democracy and governance allowed the voice of the Ifugao community to be heard. There is a clear recognition of this voice and an alleviation of the cultural value without the pressure to compare to other values nor for justification. There is a clear pattern that fosters participation in different levels by the community. The approach taken by the NCCA through the HSLT allowed democratic participation that generated a sense of belonging in the conservation efforts. But more evaluative study needs to be done on a long-term basis because the articulated success is from the lens of the NCCA, using its own evaluation tools and methods. We would be curious to know if such success holds true in the eyes of the indigenous communities.

The Faro Convention promotes a broader, living heritage aligned with a sense of place, landscape, sustainability and comprehensiveness, and context, but which might not allow us to ‘keep’ everything physically (Fairclough 2009: 34–5). This now is an approach that the NCCA, together with the other stakeholders of the HSLT, needs to critically consider if it wishes for the sustainability of the HSLT and the SLT program. Moreover, the language of cultural policy must be scrutinized. The NCCA needs to further its mean to understand the

communities' needs and desires to create value for themselves. Although its consultative approach and 'hybrid' model addresses these, such an approach and model need to be reviewed, evaluated, and developed to be more responsive to the communities. What are the other means for the communities to generate their preferences and ideas, and contribute to the creation of cultural value? The NCCA therefore needs to realize that solutions to intangible cultural heritage conservation issues are best generated by people who are closest to the issues because they deal with the dynamic relationships and changes on the ground, rather than from a national office in Manila.

Notes

- 1 The NCCA has four subcommissions made up of 19 national committees composed of artists and cultural workers from both the public and private sector, representing different cultural and non-government organizations. The four subcommissions are: Subcommission on the Arts (SCA), Subcommission on Cultural Heritage (SCH), Subcommission on Cultural Dissemination (SCD), and Subcommission on Cultural Communities and Traditional Arts (SCCTA). The SCCTA is further divided into national committees on Northern Cultural Communities, Central Cultural Communities, and Southern Cultural Communities.
- 2 Models of cultural policy. Adapted from Harry Hillman-Chartrand and Claire McCaughey (1989) 'The arm's length principle and the arts: an international perspective – past, present and future,' in Cumming, M. and Schuster, M. (eds.), *Who's to Pay for the Arts? The International Search for Models of Support*.

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