

PR: Legarda: Culture mapping a must for LGUs – 16 September 2021
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Legarda: Culture mapping a must for LGUs

Three-term Senator and Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda, principal author of House Bill No. 10057, also known as the Cultural Mapping bill, lauded the approval of the bill on third reading during the regular session of the House of Representatives.

The bill seeks to amend Republic Act No. 10066, also known as the "National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009", to mandate the conduct of cultural mapping in all Local Government Units.

Legarda, who first filed the proposed measure in 2014 in the Senate during the 16th Congress, maintained that the enactment of this bill into law will further enrich our cultural heritage in the most effective way. She worked with DepEd to train teachers with culture mapping and provided support to NCCA's culture mapping activities since 2014.

The bill defines cultural mapping as "the approaches employed to identify, record and use cultural heritage resources and activities for building and empowering communities."

"The UNESCO considers cultural mapping as a vital tool and technique in providing society an overall framework in the preservation its cultural heritage, either tangible or intangible. The documentation of these cultural elements covers a wide range of areas-built heritage such as architecture, tangible heritage such as traditional dwellings, intangible heritage such as indigenous skills and natural heritage. The fundamental goal of cultural mapping is to educate and help the nation visualize its rich heritage while allowing for reflection of what it stands to lose as a result of its collective apathy," Legarda explained.

Prior to the passage of the bill, Legarda already initiated the conduct of cultural mapping in her home province of Antique in 2018, in coordination with the University of the Philippines Visayas, Department of Education Antique, and various LGUs of the province. Furthermore, as Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Finance, Legarda sponsored the allocation of funds for cultural mapping in the province of Bohol, also under the DepED budget.

In Antique, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) together with the University of the Philippines Visayas conducted cultural mapping workshops and fieldwork in the province. Members of the community, representatives from the academe, teachers and tourism officers from LGUs were gathered to discuss the significance of culture and mapping tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The output of the workshop and fieldwork is an initial profile and listing of significant cultural heritage in Antique.

"Conscientious restoration must take into consideration the sensibilities and shared memories of the community. Antique has a rich trove of natural and cultural treasures, and it is important to understand our surroundings and where we come from. It is high time for us to document and make sure that these treasures will not be forgotten," Legarda said.

The most salient provision of the Cultural Mapping bill mandates LGUs to conduct a comprehensive cultural mapping of their areas of jurisdiction. The LGUs are tasked to mobilize and establish partnerships with concerned government agencies to ensure prompt and effective implementation. LGUs would be allowed to seek assistance from NGOs, cultural organizations, academic and private institutions.

"Our culture and heritage are vital components of our unique identity. In the same way that we spend money and dedicate manpower to promoting tourist sites, we should extend the same effort in identifying, documenting, exhibiting and restoring our cultural heritage," Legarda concluded. ***

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