

‘People-centered approaches’ for the Kamestisuhan District of Malolos, Philippines: Involvement of local communities in long-term conservation and co-management

‘People centered approaches’ di Distrik Kamestisuhan Malolos, Philippines: Keterlibatan masyarakat lokal dalam konservasi jangka panjang dan pengelolaan bersama

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Abstract

The research aims to show local residents of Malolos that reviving the Kamestisuhan District will bring benefits to the province and will demonstrate heritage’s meaning to society by engaging participants to assess people-centered approaches hoping to result in gaining support from them for its on-going use and protection. The study utilized a mixed method research design, specifically interview guide and survey, to gain local understanding of needs and opportunities of 11 conservation practitioners, 65 Bulakenyos from different localities wherein the majority are from Malolos, and 55 college students from Bulacan State University in Malolos. The results of this research show that the Kamestisuhan District of Malolos should be protected as a heritage site to maintain its identity and culture because raising awareness of cultural heritage can also open opportunities for bigger tourism plans and livelihood for locals. Media such as TV, documentaries, social media, radio, journal publications, and film can be used to raise awareness about heritage conservation. Modern media can create a more solid foundation for building the image and popularity of the district. This study concluded that stakeholders of heritage conservation believe they can effectively raise awareness about the importance of heritage if they have sufficient knowledge and money to spread information, research and promotion, conduct seminars, and engage in information campaigns.

Keywords: conservation practices; heritage conservation; Kamestisuhan District; people-centered approach

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menunjukkan kepada penduduk lokal Malolos bahwa menghidupkan kembali Distrik Kamestisuhan akan membawa manfaat bagi provinsi tersebut dan akan menunjukkan makna warisan budaya bagi masyarakat dengan melibatkan peserta untuk menilai pendekatan yang berpusat pada masyarakat dengan harapan dapat menghasilkan dukungan dari mereka untuk penggunaan dan perlindungan berkelanjutan. Studi ini menggunakan desain penelitian metode campuran khususnya panduan wawancara dan survei untuk mendapatkan pemahaman lokal tentang kebutuhan dan peluang dari 11 praktisi konservasi, 65 orang Bulakenyo dari berbagai daerah yang mayoritas berasal dari Malolos, dan 55 mahasiswa dari Universitas Negeri Bulacan di Malolos. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Distrik Kamestisuhan Malolos harus dilindungi sebagai situs warisan untuk mempertahankan identitas dan budayanya karena meningkatkan kesadaran akan warisan budaya juga dapat membuka peluang rencana pariwisata dan penghidupan yang lebih besar bagi penduduk setempat. Media seperti TV, dokumenter, media sosial, radio, publikasi jurnal, dan film, dapat digunakan untuk meningkatkan kesadaran tentang konservasi warisan budaya. Media modern dapat menciptakan landasan yang lebih kokoh untuk membangun citra dan popularitas suatu daerah. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa pemangku kepentingan konservasi warisan budaya percaya mereka dapat secara efektif meningkatkan kesadaran tentang pentingnya warisan budaya jika mereka memiliki pengetahuan dan dana yang cukup untuk menyebarkan informasi, penelitian dan promosi, mengadakan seminar, dan terlibat dalam kampanye informasi.

Kata Kunci: praktik konservasi; konservasi warisan; Distrik Kamestisuhan; pendekatan berpusat pada masyarakat

Introduction

According to Irina Bocova, Director-General of UNESCO, “cities are essential. Standing at the intersection of the past and the future – cities are places where traditions meets modernity, where the “local” and the “global” interact, where the economic, social and cultural dimensions of sustainability interweave most tightly.” The involvement of the people living in the communities of many heritage places still remains a real challenge and it is imperative to provide stakeholders with some guidance to influence increase in community participation. A people-centered approach to heritage offers long-term conservation and co-management for the good of the heritage and for the good of the community (ICCROM 2015).

Effective heritage management requires the active participation of local communities, as they are integral to the preservation and interpretation of cultural resources. In Kenya, local community involvement is essential in the management of Shimoni Caves in the South Coast because of the local knowledge they can contribute for successful conservation efforts. The study evaluates the effectiveness of the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) Act and highlights the need for a balance between community needs and heritage conservation. It argues that local communities possess valuable indigenous knowledge that can enhance cultural resource management, despite facing contemporary socioeconomic challenges. The study also advocates for flexible application of cultural resource management laws, emphasizing the need for site management plans for all archaeological sites, not just those recognized by UNESCO. It stresses the importance of integrating traditional knowledge with modern conservation practices to ensure sustainable management of archaeological heritage (Busaka et al. 2023).

Urbanization leads to increased population density, necessitating infrastructure development and resulting in vertical growth and heightened commercial activity but challenges are posed by rapid urbanization and the importance of integrating conservation strategies into urban planning such as the case in Kanchipuram in Thailand. Community engagement and economic viability are crucial, ensuring local involvement in decision-making and promoting heritage tourism to support local economies. The delineation of heritage zones is a strategic approach to protect culturally significant areas, guiding sustainable urban planning and preventing haphazard growth. This process involves community participation and considers various factors such as historical significance, local livelihoods, and environmental conditions. It represents a commitment to preserving Kanchipuram’s cultural assets while fostering community involvement in conservation efforts (BG 2023).

Human-centered urban planning and public participation in transforming heritage sites into sustainable community spaces is also very important. The study in Istanbul highlights the successful transformation of the Hasanpasa Gasworks into a cultural center through the efforts of the Gasworks Environmental Volunteers, showcasing the positive impact of community involvement. The study argues that adaptive reuse of heritage sites can enhance community identity and improve quality of life, reinforcing the need for human-centered design in urban spaces. The adaptive reuse of the Gasworks as a cultural center addressed the lack of public spaces in the neighborhood, enhancing community engagement and social interaction. The project prioritized public space and climate education, reflecting the community’s needs and aspirations for the area. The study illustrates that organized public participation leads to more effective and sustainable outcomes in heritage transformation projects. Local participation in heritage transformation projects yields positive results, particularly when organized through non-governmental organizations that ensure democratic engagement (Yuksel & Demir 2023).

In Corviale, Rome, the necessity of a multi-voice approach to tackle complex challenges in spatial development and heritage conservation, emphasizing the importance of incorporating diverse knowledge systems was discussed and it highlights the increasing intertwining of heritage matters with urban planning, necessitating the inclusion of local knowledge and community engagement in conservation practices. The Corviale Lab was established to facilitate community engagement and support the transformation of the housing complex, emphasizing the importance of dialogue with residents. Students conducted fieldwork that included interviews and observations, contributing to a deeper understanding of the community’s needs and the potential for urban renewal. The research underscores the value of Inquiry-Based Learning in architecture and heritage education, promoting collaborative learning and

the co-production of knowledge with communities. The findings advocate for a systematic approach to education that integrates temporal aspects and community engagement, enhancing the relevance of conservation practices in contemporary contexts (Caudo et al. 2023).

Due to demolitions and changes, historic communities are losing their identity and historical significance, which frequently results in permanent cultural, historical, and social change because of both tourism development and commercialization. A large number of these historic towns are in danger, under attack, physically ruined, or as a result of urban development, are destroyed (Martinez 2006, as cited in Estacio 2022). Heritage management for sustainable cultural tourism development among communities needs participatory governance in the implementation of plans, policy, rules and regulations (Sinha et al. 2019).

Pansoni et al. (2023) discuss the increasing vulnerability of cultural heritage (CH) due to disasters and conflicts, highlighting the need for improved preservation practices through technology, particularly AI. Ethical concerns arise from AI use in CH, including cultural biases, authenticity issues, and the potential for economic exploitation of cultural resources. The digitization process may overlook marginalized histories and reinforce neo-colonial practices, necessitating a critical examination of the methodologies employed. Issues of responsibility attribution and high economic investment in AI technologies further complicate the ethical landscape of cultural heritage conservation. As a result, they proposed an ethical framework consisting of six principles: shared responsibility, cultural continuity, economic accessibility, right to be forgotten, reliability, and centrality of physical space. Each principle addresses specific ethical challenges, promoting a participatory approach that includes community perspectives and prioritizes the preservation of tangible cultural heritage. The framework aims to ensure that AI applications in CH enhance rather than replace physical artifacts, maintaining authenticity and cultural significance while fostering equitable access to cultural resources.

Universities have a critical role to play in protecting cultural heritage because doing so helps people feel more connected to their past, improve social cohesiveness, and lessen the damaging effects especially in war-stricken areas. Institutions strive to save cultural assets and natural environments from devastation while building resilience despite oppression, as in the case of Palestinian universities. They demonstrate their resilience against Israeli occupation by preserving their cultural legacy and promoting sustainable means of subsistence. Through adaptive (re)use for cultural and educational objectives, they play a part in the preservation of cultural assets. They also encourage the preservation of individual identities, provide social mobility education, and expand campuses to save historical landmarks. Al-Quds University works to preserve Palestinian identity, narrative, and cultural legacy by implementing conservation projects in Jerusalem’s Old City. Universities generally concentrate their efforts on developing employment possibilities, promoting cultural heritage awareness, and implementing people-centered approaches to heritage conservation (Saifi 2020).

The contradiction between contemporary socioeconomic growth and the participatory nature of local historic communities is one of the difficulties in protecting living heritage sites. The case of Pingyao, China, outlines key ideas and techniques and contrasts previous conservation strategies resulting in the efficacy of the community co-creation paradigm in living historical sites. Through comprehension of heritage conservation techniques and balancing historical and contemporary values during the conservation process, the study highlights the necessity of an all-encompassing approach to heritage conservation by underlining the significance of community involvement and co-creation in the preservation of living cultural assets (Sun & Nakajima 2023). A people-centered approach is not just about increasing the participation of the members of the community but rather guaranteeing that those who are associated to heritage are a fundamental component of conserving that heritage.

In the Philippines, one of Bulacan State University’s priority areas in research is cultural heritage and preservation. The College of Architecture and Fine Arts plans to spearhead a revival campaign that can result in policy formation for similar districts in Bulacan and across the country. A manual featuring people-centered approaches will be conceptualized as a result of the study which can be adapted to 14 extension activities that can benefit not only the Kamestisuhan district but the whole of Bulacan as well.

The Kamestisuhan district of Malolos is in Bulacan, one of the provinces of the Philippines. According to Jose Roly Marcelino, history department head of Malolos City Tourism, Arts, Culture & Sports Division, there are many theories as to where the name Malolos came from. Some believed it came from ‘maraming lolos’ (many lolos – lolos is a type of plant abundant near the waters of the vicinity). Others believed it came from the word ‘paluslos’ which means flood waters coming from higher areas of Calumpit and neighboring towns. Some believed that the name Malolos came from the Spanish word ‘los malos’ (mal-evil/rebel) because of Pedro Ladia who rebelled against the Spanish rule in 1673 and led an uprising leading to his execution. In 1762, the Great Britain army (Sepoys) from India was sent to the Philippines and occupied the Spanish colonial capital for 20 months. Simon de Anda led the Spaniards and Filipinos in a battle against the British in what is now known as “Pinagbakahan” and brought the wealth of Manila to Bulacan. In 1763, the peace treaty concluded the war between Great Britain and France but news about the treaty carried by the galleon only arrived in the Philippines in 1764. Because the Chinese population was continuously growing in Manila, they were designated an area called “Parian” or a commercial district outside Intramuros because they convert their houses’ ground floors into stores. In Malolos, a small ‘parian’ or “Pariancillo” was designated for the Chinese. These Chinese businessmen married the children of the nobility (from the ‘Gat’ clan) and became the first batch of Chinese mestizos in Malolos. The batch of Dr. Bautista (Dr. Rizal’s contemporary) were the first Chinese mestizos who identified themselves as Filipinos (J.R. Marcelino personal communication in April 23, 2022).

The Bulakenyo propagandists began their attacks against Spain in Malolos. The newspaper Diariong Tagalog was established in 1882 by the propagandist for the revolution, Marcelo H. Del Pilar. Malolos is a town where this publication and other revolutionary endeavors likewise reached and were conducted. This city is also home to the Barasoain Church, where the first constitutional conference of 1898 took place. As a result of the Malolos Constitution, the first Filipino Republic was established, making the Philippines the first nation in Asia to have its own constitution. Republic Act No. 8754 allowed the municipality of Malolos to become a Bulacan component city in 1999 (Karganilla 1999, as cited in Buenrostro 2010).

A number of structures in Malolos were used as government offices during the first Filipino Republic. A city with a strong traditional culture, the City of Malolos has, however, lost its cultural identity as a result of industrialization. According to Filipino architects, ancestral homes are the physical embodiment of the Filipino aesthetic, which values sociability, openness, and functionality. The Bahay-na-Bato meets Filipinos’ demands and can withstand both the wet and dry seasons of the nation. Malolos is home to many historical sites and buildings that reflect the essence of the richly cultural Filipino architecture; however, the Kamestisuhan Historic District is under danger due to uncontrolled commercialization and growing urbanization (Estacio 2022).

But Malolos is not the only town in the Philippines experiencing difficulties in conserving cultural heritage; the oldest part of Manila, Philippines, is Intramuros, which was constructed by the Spanish in the sixteenth century. Since the fortress was encircled by high walls and moats, the Latin translation of the word “Intramuros” (which means “within the walls”) refers to the enclosure of the fortress. Fort Santiago is a fortified fortification system included within Santiago’s city walls built for the conquistador Miguel Lopez de Legazpi. During World War II, the US Air Force repeatedly bombed Intramuros, causing much of it to be badly damaged or destroyed; by the end of the war, the San Agustin Church was the only intact building. In 1979, Intramuros was designated as a unique historic zone, and, in the 1980s, the Intramuros Administration oversaw a significant repair. The only part of Manila where remnants of the Spanish era are still present is the walled city. Nowadays, the remains of the Spanish administration are maintained in Fort Santiago, which serves as a museum. Intramuros’ Spanish-era buildings, churches, plazas, and museums provide the best history lessons about the Spanish colonial era but pressing issues confronting its citizens on a daily basis are housing, sewage services, flooding, and traffic. Also, Intramuros’ real estate potential, with high rises and shopping malls, threatens to replace its heritage and history (Global Heritage Fund 2012).

According to the Dapitan City Official Website (nd), the Rizal Park, a popular tourist spot in Dapitan, Zamboanga City, is where Dr. Jose P. Rizal spent four of his formative years while he was exiled from 1892 to 1896, wherein a replica of the home he occupied during those years, his hospital house, the boy’s

dormitory, a guest house, even his poultry coop and comfort room can be found in this incredibly quiet and revered location. The most notable other historical site in the city is the “Punto de Desembarco”, where Dr. Jose P. Rizal disembarked after being taken to Dapitan to begin his exile in this region of the world. The first Relief Map of Mindanao was created by Rizal while he was in exile. He built the relief map as part of his endeavor to make the town plaza as attractive as those in Europe. During his stay in this country, Rizal used to attend Sunday mass at the St. James Church, which is still standing today. It is directly across from the Mindanao Relief Map. Ilihan Hill, where the remnants of the Spanish Stronghold may be discovered, is yet another notable location. It is situated in the heart of the city and provides a wonderful panoramic view of the entire area as well as the ravishingly beautiful Dapitan Bay, which is encircled by lush green mountains and has a stunning sunset that evokes feelings of melancholy and calm. Like other cultural heritage sites in the country, Dapitan is threatened by lack of conservation efforts resulting in environmental degradation and the loss of cultural assets.

According to The Freeman (2017), a daily newspaper in Cebu, resembling Malolos, the city of Silay, Negros Occidental is famous for its ancestral houses. It has 29 (highest number) ancestral houses that were designated by the National Historical Institute as National Treasures. Heritage houses contribute to the economy of Silay by being reused as museums, boutique hotels, and bed-and-breakfasts. According to La Maria (2014), in order to preserve the historical core of the city, the city government created the Silay City Heritage District Administration to create technical guidelines and implement rules and regulation for their heritage preservation. They have ordinances including Landmark Heritage Ordinance, which gives 100% tax exemption for owners of heritage structures who properly maintain their properties. Like other heritage sites, the city of Silay is susceptible to threats like natural calamities or disasters like floods and volcanic eruptions.

Cebu is the oldest settlement and also one of the most historic places in the country with its strong Spanish influence. Cebu is known as the “Queen City of the South” and home to well-preserved Spanish-colonial heritage sites like the Basilica del Santo Niño, Magellan’s Cross, and Balay nga Tisa of Carcar. Cebu is also known as one of Asia’s top islands, its social media accounts are always up to date about tourism, and its resort facilities are capable of accommodating mass tourist traffic.

Cebu continues to be a popular tourist destination globally. The presence of natural land marks and its abundance in relevance to culture and history, as well as the sincere warmth of the Cebuanos supports the sector as a resource in the province that generates income. As a result, Cebu is a powerful player in boosting both domestic and international tourism (Basallo 2018). However, unsustainable urbanization threatens the economic viability of Cebu City by increasing negative externalities that raise the price of environmental risks, traffic congestion, pollution, and social and physical segregation.

According to the official website of the city government of Vigan (Vigan City nd) and UNESCO (nd), Vigan has sustained Spanish-inspired architecture, which has made the place unique in the Philippines for its long surviving history. Calle Crisologo, a 500 meters long street, lined with antique houses, shops, and old churches, is one of Vigan’s most famous places. The city developed programs for conservation which includes legal, planning, and management frameworks; mapping heritage assets; education and training programs for heritage management; and a large number of publications disseminating the history and heritage. Vigan has preserved its authenticity. The heritage structures continue to serve as homes for the owners on the top floors and as places of business on the lower floors. In 2014, Vigan was recognized as one of the five walkable and bikeable cities in the Philippines and was included in the New 7 (seven) Wonder Cities of the World. Its Mestizo district was also inscribed in UNESCO World Heritage list in 1999, but the city is very dependent on weather for tourist activities having a very low tourist rate season during June, July, August, September, and October.

Some historic districts in the Philippines are more fortunate than others. One example is Panay in Iloilo. According to the Iloilo City Brief Profile in the 2021-2029 Iloilo City Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the construction of the railroad across Panay and the expansion of the road system in Iloilo during the American Era 1898–1946 helped the city’s economy grow. When the sugar industry developed, many Ilonggos who had become wealthy began to construct enormous homes and mansions in Jaro. The

emergence of Sugar Baron Mansions was attributed to these Ilonggos, also known as the Sugar Barons. In the Calle Real business sector, they further constructed commercial structures. During this time, a variety of architectural styles, including Neoclassical, Art Nouveau, and Art Deco, flourished.

The goal of the Iloilo City CLUP Plan for 2021–2029 is to preserve cultural assets (City Planning and Development Office 2021). It will ensure that the distinct cultural identity and character of the Ilonggo heritage are preserved while building Iloilo City to the greatest international standards. In the past, for instance, a large number of the population resided in small settlements centered on or adjacent to district plazas, which are surrounded by neighborhood amenities such as a church, health center, police station, market, and shops. As new growth areas are created at the city's periphery, the layout preserves this distinctive town layout with Spanish influences throughout the city's seven districts. In urban rehabilitation efforts, the communal living that these neighborhoods foster is recreated.

Although frequently experiencing active volcanic activities, another place with the most intact heritage conservation is Taal. Taal Volcano Protected Landscape is a popular destination and one of the top priority biodiversity protection locations in the Philippines. Also in Taal is the Basilica of St. Martin de Tours, built in the year 1575 and known as the largest Catholic cathedral in Asia. Data from the Tourism department show that, of the 7.05 million overnight visitors to Calabarzon in 2018, roughly 2.079 million came from the province of Batangas. The town of Talisay, which serves as a gateway to the crater lake of the Taal Volcano, hosted more than 595,000 visitors. The little town in Batangas named Taal is beautifully endowed with preserved buildings and a great history. It serves as the Philippines' inspirational cornerstone and pillar of identity. Taal has a rich heritage and culture that will teach you more about the development of a nation and its citizens (Noble & Laforga 2020).

Taal Heritage Town is popular with tourists and travelers because it is home to the Basilica of St. Martin of Tours, well-preserved ancestral homes and historical sites, balisong knives, and the Barong Tagalog (national costume of male Filipinos), as well as food items and delicacies like tapa, longanisa, empanada, tawilis, and panutsa that can be purchased there. In addition, Taal draws tourists because of its unique customs and celebrations, including the Mutya ng Taal, El Pasubat Festival, veneration of Our Lady of Caysasay, recital of luwa (chant) in her honor and that of the saints, and obtaining water from the enchanted Well of Sta. Lucia, as well as the fact that Taaleos are gracious and courteous, quick to respond and work well with others. In addition to being primarily devout Catholic Christians, Taaleos are also known for their warmth and hospitality, responsiveness and cooperation, humility and pride in their role in Filipino history, and good oral communication abilities (Castillo et al. 2015).

The research aims to show Maloleños (local residents of the city) that reviving the Kamestisuhan District will bring benefits to the province and will demonstrate heritage's meaning to society by engaging participants to assess people-centered approaches, hoping to result in gaining support from them for its on-going use and protection. Specifically, the study is also aimed to gain local understanding of needs and opportunities for Maloleños so that such change brings long lasting benefits to the community and to understand how locals take responsibility in maintaining their heritage by traditional or established means and to involve them in defining values and assessing significance.

Research Method

Appropriate people-centered approaches used by other countries were identified through the literature review and the benefits and challenges encountered by these approaches that may lead to effective conservation strategy for heritage districts. Interviews with the City Government of Malolos as formative research were also conducted to frame the problem and outline the capacities and benefits that practitioners, policy-makers/institutions, and communities can gain from their contribution in conserving the Kamestisuhan District of Malolos.

The study utilized a mixed-method research design. Interview guide as well as survey questionnaires were developed to gain local understanding of needs and opportunities so that such change brings long lasting benefits to the community. The questionnaire was divided into sections about respondents' awareness,

attitudes and perceptions, and factors affecting participation. Eleven conservation practitioners, 65 Bulakenyos from different localities wherein the majority are from Malolos, and 55 college students from Bulacan State University in Malolos were surveyed to identify how they can see more reason to safeguard the Kamestisuhan district and to help them understand how they can take responsibility in maintaining their heritage by traditional or established means. Quantitative data gathered were computed and described while qualitative data were content analyzed.

Results and Discussion

Using a Likert scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, survey respondents were asked to rate their level of general awareness of heritage conservation and results show that they are very aware of the concept of heritage conservation with a mean rating of 3.5. Respondents’ concept of heritage is that it is the historical significance and content of a particular place, such as an artifact from the past or a person’s sense of family identity. It is a part of culture that is passed down to society, has a historical structure, is a symbol of identity, is part of history that reminds us how great cultures and cities evolved, has historical importance and purpose, is preserved in honor of the historical values and stories it holds, and is something to be remembered, among others.

The majority of respondents believe that preservation of heritage is important is important because heritage is the full range of our inherited traditions, monuments, objects, and culture, and is essential for preserving important places, traditions, and culture. It is the “precious relic” of the past and serves as a reminder of our culture, history, practices, and ancestral roots. When asked about their level of awareness about the district using a Likert scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, results show that respondents are aware about the Kamestisuhan District of Malolos with a mean rating of 3.54.

Table 1.
Kamestisuhan District structures respondents are familiar with

| Structures respondents are familiar with | Total=121 | Percentage |
|--|-----------|---------------|
| Barasoain Church | 79 | 65.29% |
| Casa Real | 38 | 31.40% |
| Basilica Minore (Cathedral) | 35 | 28.93% |
| Old Bridge | 31 | 25.62% |
| Meralco Office | 29 | 23.97% |
| Ruins of School of Women Malolos | 22 | 18.18% |
| Alberta Uitangcoy House | 17 | 14.05% |
| Don Antonio Bautista House | 17 | 14.05% |
| Dr. Luis Santos House | 16 | 13.22% |
| Tiongson House | 15 | 12.40% |
| Germogenes Reyes House | 12 | 9.92% |
| Casa Tribunal De Malolos | 1 | 0.83% |
| The Secretaria De Fomento | 1 | 0.83% |
| The Adriano House | 1 | 0.83% |
| Eden Cinema | 1 | 0.83% |
| Reyes-Tantoco House | 1 | 0.83% |
| Adriano-Velasquez Mansion | 1 | 0.83% |

Total exceed base of 100 due to respondents’ multiple answers

Source: Processed research results

When asked about the Kamestisuhan structures they are most familiar with, Table 1 shows respondents’ top answer is Barasoain church. Likewise, when asked about the Kamestisuhan structures they have visited, Table 2 shows respondents’ top answer is still Barasoain church.

Table 2.
Kamestisuhan sites that respondents have visited

| Sites that respondents have visited | Total=121 | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Barasoain Church | 76 | 62.81% |
| Casa Real | 34 | 28.10% |
| Basilica Minore (Cathedral) | 27 | 22.31% |
| Old Bridge | 23 | 19.01% |
| Meralco Office | 19 | 15.70% |
| Ruins of School of Women Malolos | 13 | 10.74% |
| Don Antonio Bautista House | 10 | 8.26% |
| Tiongson House | 10 | 8.26% |
| Alberta Uitangcoy House | 6 | 4.96% |
| Dr. Luis Santos House | 6 | 4.96% |
| Germogenes Reyes House | 6 | 4.96% |

Total exceed base of 100 due to respondents' multiple answers

Source: Processed research results

The majority of respondents believe that it is important to raise awareness about cultural heritage because cultural heritage is a great treasure and pride for Filipinos, as it connects them to their traditions, customs, religion, beliefs, and sense of community. Preserved structures add beauty and pride to a community, and promote a strong cultural identity among residents of different generations. Raising awareness of cultural heritage can also open opportunities for bigger tourism plans and livelihood for the locals. When asked about their perceptions of Kamestisuhan district, respondents cited that Kamestisuhan District is a Spanish-preserved heritage found in the center of Malolos and it serves as a cradle for Filipinos, particularly women, who fought for independence, but is fading due to lack of preservation, conservation and promotion.

As Filipinos, respondents feel that Kamestisuhan District in Malolos is an undervalued tourist destination due to its lack of preservation, accessibility, support and promotion. It was once a cradle for Filipinos, especially for women, who fought for freedom during the Spanish regime. The National Historical Institute has designated it as a National Historical Landmark and a Heritage Town. It is the pride of locals, but, unlike the heritage houses in Vigan, its beauty and history are not well-preserved.

All respondents believe that the Kamestisuhan District of Malolos should be protected as it is essential to preserve our cultural legacy in order to maintain our identity and culture. Giving protection and awareness to it would not only elevate/promote tourism, but also engrave identity to its locals. For the respondents, the most pressing issue needed to be addressed is that the Kamestisuhan District of Malolos is being forgotten by generations due to the neglect of its buildings and lack of discipline toward cleanliness. The rapid development of the infrastructures may lead to the disappearance of the tradition and culture, so the government should develop and implement appropriate plans and policies for the preservation of cultural sites. This would increase public awareness and understanding on the value of their heritage and history.

According to respondents, various media like TV, social media, radio, journal publications, and film, can be utilized to raise awareness about heritage conservation by using them to promote the importance and history of Kamestisuhan District, as it reflects the norms, culture and values of the Filipino people. It can be a bridge to inform and raise awareness of heritage conservation, and should be discussed more often on mainstream media. Modern media can create a more solid foundation for building the image and popularity of Kamestisuhan, and can influence the young generation to raise awareness through their own "social media" skills.

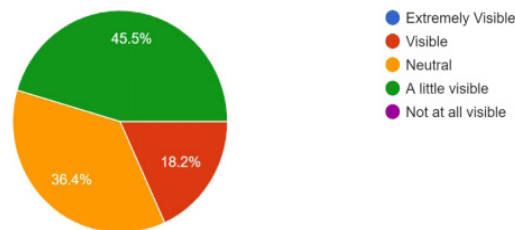


Figure 1.

Level of visibility of participation of community members in heritage conservation according to practitioners

Source: Processed research results

Figure 1 shows what practitioners believe is the level of visibility of participation of community members in heritage conservation. They believe that this (a little visible) level of visibility of participation of community members in heritage conservation is due to low level of awareness due to lack of programs, lack of knowledge, and lack of appreciation for cultural heritage buildings. They also believe that stakeholders of heritage conservation can be effectively involved in raising awareness about the importance of heritage if they have sufficient knowledge and money to spread information about heritage conservation activities, research and promotion, conduct seminars, and engage in information campaigns. Education, community awareness lecture series, and lectures and trainings should be imparted to increase awareness.

In China, maintaining people-place linkages is significant to the issues that excessive tourism poses to heritage protection. Tourism affects nearby communities and promoting it and preserving historical sites must coexist. It is also crucial how story recording and participatory documentation are to capture the social aspect of locations. Additionally, moving toward community-led projects is significant to the physically present community within the historic site. How the local community might maintain historical links while creating new ones with historical sites and the glocal community approach in addressing continuity problems and widening the viewpoint on heritage sites is very valuable (Chen & Wang 2024).

Community participation in Xianrendong's Ethnic Cultural and Ecological Village under the project's theoretical model has profound implications for Chinese ethnic minority cultural heritage management. It provides rural ethnic societies with an alternative to development either under outside control or direct incorporation into a national unified plan. However, the self-interest of local culture and goodwill in conserving it are not enough to achieve sustainable heritage management in China. Pre-tourism consultations and training are important, and the local community should be given access to mentorship and guidance (Xu 2007).

In the case of Lalbagh, India, where heritage resources are well-maintained, the role of community is marginalized. Hence, this study can be a vital proposition to commence an initiative for the communities to vigorously contribute in heritage resources conservation for sustainable cultural tourism development. Also, there is a lack of sustainable heritage planning and management in Lalbagh region, thus there is an immediate need to create a participatory framework in the process of cultural tourism development by implementing plan and policy and improving existing rules and regulations, in order to achieve sustainable heritage management (Sinha et al. 2019).

Based on the results of interviews with conservation practitioners, it shows that formal education can help students understand and appreciate the historical, philosophical and sociological relevance of Kamestisuhan District. Teachers can create or include heritage subjects in their lesson plans, give factual information and encouragement to be engaged, and revisit the history of Malolos. Universities offering courses like Architecture, History or Social Sciences can integrate this topic to their course curriculum or add lessons on the subjects related to this topic to induce awareness of their community. Moreover, academe, museums, LGUs, and other similar entities can help in raising awareness about

the Kamestisuhan District's heritage conservation through media vehicles; they should also provide more linkages with local tourism, and that they should crystalize their plans on heritage conservation and share those to the community members. They should also conduct information campaigns and provide seminar tours in the district.

Conservation practitioners also think that enhancing visibility and awareness of Kamestisuhan District can lead to income generating activities like LGU supporting the restoration and conservation of the Kamestisuhan and affiliate it with the annual Singkaban Festival and provincial programs to promote local tourism. Increasing the value of the structures through visibility enhancement can promote local tourism, with programs such as tours, film showing, souvenir production and other income generating activities. This can lead to economic uplift.

Cultural preservation in the Kamestisuhan District of Malolos with people-centered approaches

Stories/dialogue in museums about Kamestisuhan, digitization of private archives and training of junior guides

Respondents believe that stories and dialogue can help promote heritage conservation by increasing the quality of stories/dialogue in museums. Creative ways of storytelling such as historical "mini" theatre plays, interactive apps, and art materials can be used to introduce the district. This will be very beneficial as public participation in contemporary society can be practiced in different forms, for instance, holding public meetings, conducting surveys, hosting open houses and establishing citizen's advisory committees (Chan 2016).

Digitization of private archives should promote tourism, and Kamestisuhan District should have a website to guide prospective tourists. Museums should use a common software, use an appropriate system, purchase or seek sponsorship for digitization tools, and use high technology for drawing production and archiving documentation. It could take inspiration from the Japanese concept known as "Society 5.0" which aims to empower a human-centered society powered by advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and big data to improve everyone's quality of life. It describes a future in which advanced technologies augment human prosperity and comfort by removing obstacles to information access and fostering equal opportunities for learning and exploration. Using AI, big data, and VR tools to provide cultural heritage experiences to people can raise awareness about the significance of preserving history and offer compelling ways to interact with the past. Although there are obstacles to overcome, such as low adoption of VR and content variety, the potential of VR animation and technology in cultural heritage preservation offers a promising avenue for motivating future generations and bridging the gap between tradition and innovation (Setiawan 2021).

Another people-centered approach is training of Junior Guides to conduct site tours around the district. Respondents believe that Junior Guides should be provided with on-site experience and training to encourage young generation to be aware of the cultural heritage of Kamestisuhan district. Museum docents should also be familiarized with the history of the district to teach tourists about the place. Local governments should provide immediate training for safety and information dissemination, use of audio-visual presentation, sufficient budget for training and workshop-seminar series and benchmarking.

Establishing collaboration with various parties and sectors

According to respondents, the Kamestisuhan District can consider looking for partners to help promote Malolos heritage and provide merchandise to boost tourism. Local government can tie up with local entrepreneurs to expand the market and generate income, but participatory conferences should benefit conservation and not only entrepreneurs.

When asked about their suggestions about a Kamestisuhan Educational Program, respondents cited that the Kamestisuhan education program should be imposed around Malolos area first, encouraging students to visit and learn about the district from an early age. Free lessons and seminars should be offered for

those who want to learn, and the government should play its part specifically for educational materials and instructors. Printed materials such as flyers and comics strips should be used, and organizations should sponsor rehabilitation of houses.

In Thailand, the proposed master plan for the historical district Sukhothai to promote creative tourism was highly effective, because it facilitated community leaders and other stakeholders to apply their practical knowledge to work together. It involved all stakeholders – encompassing local residents, community leaders, personnel from state agencies, travelers, hospitality business operators, advertisers, and staff members working at tourist attractions – via the principles of co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration. However, it also posed the challenge where there is an urgent need for training in higher education institutions that should include developing management skills or teaching standard methods, either the concept of interdisciplinary conservation of heritage sites or operations in the development of tourism needs (Kangkhao 2020).

Respondents’ inputs about a possible Kamestisuhan bank of materials showcasing a heritage building materials museum and mini workshop, include museum organizes guided visits and workshops for citizens to learn about the techniques and evolution of materials used in the local built heritage. Organizations should also use the money to construct or restore heritage buildings.

Empowerment of local house owners (workshops/seminars)

When asked about their suggestions in empowering local house owners, respondents believe that the Kamestisuhan district aims to give livelihood to the locals and educate them about the importance of conserving heritage sites through webinars and workshops. The local people should be encouraged to participate in this conservation in exchange for benefits from the administration, such as protection, financial funds for house preservation, and a door-to-door talk or seminar. Additionally, expert lecturers can offer owners capability trainings and a tax holiday/incentive if they agree to a conservation seminar-workshop.

If people feel no pride, no satisfaction, nor feeling of belonging, they will not feel attached to their city, like in the case of Old Havana, as different factors lead them to be ignored by making efforts to make the city more suitable for the tourists, not for the locals (Fernández 2021). Maloleños should be given the highest level of participation, which is spontaneous participation, in which local residents have the power to make decisions and control the process of development (Marzuki et al. 2012, Zhang et al. 2013, as cited in Rasoolimanesh et al. 2017).

Converting the ruins of Casa Tribunal into an art/cultural hub

Respondents also believe that converting Casa Tribunal into a cultural hub would help promote its historic significance and open doors for opportunities, while also helping the “ruins” adapt to its present environment and norm. However, they should look at the case of an adopt-a-site program in Zimbabwe, where oral interviews and discussions were conducted with selected participants and reviewed the unpublished reports and memorandums of Chibvumani national monument that are kept at Great Zimbabwe Conservation and Research Center. However, the program still lacked a firm base as a strategy for effective management and conservation of heritage sites. This was due to its failure to take into account the spiritual values attached to the site (Mawere et al. 2012).

Chalk painting competition around Kamestisuhan borders and Creation of a Kamestisuhan Heritage Conservation Group

Utilizing chalk painting as a people-centered approach to conserve Kamestisuhan district is a good idea to help the youth develop their creativity for heritage conservation. This event will attract more tourists and observers, as well as benefit local young and aspiring artists who want to be part of something that would mean a lot to their community. To create a “noise” online, the district should tap the fine arts school within Malolos. Respondents also believe that forming a Heritage Conservation Youth Group to promote Kamestisuhan and raise youth awareness of heritage conservation needs collaboration with stakeholders to ensure a consistent take on long-term conservation.

Kamestisuhan citizens dialogue

Another people-centered approach is a Kamestisuhan citizens' dialogue which respondents mentioned as an important tool to promote heritage conservation, as it can help to spread awareness and educate people about the site. It can also be used to link heritage conservation to local festivals and bi-annual events, and to involve local government, learning institutions and professional organizations in dialogue and seminars. As in the case in Malaysia's Geopark concept, wherein geopark-based activities provide opportunities to encourage social learning from local community and stakeholders on heritage conservation. Local community members are engaged in activities that would strengthen their sense of belonging as local custodians toward promoting sustainable resource utilization in balancing conservation with development. They provide a platform for discussions in order to stimulate interactive sessions and optimize the potential of educational and outreach activities toward sustainable resource utilization and conservation of heritage resources (Halim & Ishak 2017).

In the landscape zone of the Bisotun World Heritage Site, the community engagement strategy involves monthly training courses for local authorities to enhance their understanding of cultural heritage values. A capacity-building program is being implemented to ensure community voices are heard in the management planning process. Local stakeholders reported 97 issues related to unauthorized construction and illegal excavations during a three-month monitoring period. Challenges with using social media for reporting include difficulties in categorizing information and providing precise locations for reported issues. The Research Base is developing a mobile application called iCommunity to facilitate a people-centered approach in heritage conservation. The app aims to enhance stakeholder engagement in decision-making and participatory monitoring by providing precise location data and facilitating communication with experts (Nasrolahi et al. 2021).

Utilisation of the Kamestisuhan display center, contemporary art park, and cultural fair

A mini museum or display center is another approach to promote the Kamestisuhan district. Scale models of heritage structures can be displayed in the capitol building and university, and local artists can participate. Also, a contemporary art park will help to boost tourism in the Kamestisuhan district, with competitions, artworks, and miniature builds. Collaborations with "local artists" and festivals will help to showcase talents and highlight the district. A cultural fair about Kamestisuhan is another approach to utilize wherein locals can celebrate with events such as an arts and crafts fair, fashion show, food parks, bazaars, art competitions, and incorporation with festivals to spread awareness and create an annual program to involve local artists, students, and interested parties.

Other suggestions for the conservation of Kamestisuhan heritage

When asked about other suggestions for people-centered approaches to conserve Kamestisuhan, respondents cited promoting heritage through social media platforms, making infographics, and providing spots for local artists and vendors on cultural fairs. Investing in marketing and promotional platforms is also essential to inform and educate the people, and return on investment needs to be clarified to ensure success. When asked about their possible contribution to the conservation of Kamestisuhan District, respondents believe they can help. Some are willing to support its promotion and encourage other young people and adults to support it as well. Through participation and word-of-mouth, it will help spread awareness and attract tourists.

In the guidebook of Community Involvement in Heritage Management, other people-centered approaches mentioned are: Belgium's Red Star Line Museum, Finland's Open Albums, Amsterdam's Heritage Days, Germany's Visible World Heritage borders, Armenia's Urban Walks, Warsaw's World Heritage Interpretation Centre, Berlin's Information station with café and exhibition at the Hufeisensiedlung, Netherlands's the Amsterdam Canal Ring, De Beemster Polder, the Defence Line of Amsterdam, USA's World Heritage Education Program, Germany's Lodge for young people – voluntary year in monument preservation, Latvia's Ziemeļblāzma Culture Palace, Germany's Unionviertel Creative Quarter, Ukraine's Youth activist school, Québec's Table de concertation du Vieux, and Stralsund's World Heritage Advisory Board, among others (Göttler & Ripp 2017).

When asked about their level of willingness to participate in conservation of Kamestisuhan as an extension activity, respondents rated their willingness as moderately willing with a mean rating of 3.49. The reason for this level of willingness to participate is the respondents’ belief that it is their duty to help with the enrichment of the arts and culture of their city, province and country. As locals, they are willing to take part on this project to help promote heritage conservation of the Kamestisuhan District and feel that part of their responsibility is to help develop and keep the culture/story of their city. Responsibilities in school and distance from the place can be a conflict, but some are still willing to help when they have the means. They believe they must value the place and have a genuine understanding of their past.

In Vietnam’s cultural provinces, combining financial incentives with instructional support to encourage long-term youth involvement in the preservation of cultural assets is valuable because it fosters a sense of ownership and dedication to tradition, also, youth involvement in cultural heritage preservation is essential to its sustainability. The maintenance of youth involvement in historic conservation initiatives has been found to depend critically on skill development, educational support, funding possibilities, recognition, and awards. Policymakers can develop focused interventions and policies that are suited to the particular setting of Vietnam’s cultural provinces with the help of the study’s insights (Nguyen & Nguyen 2024). However, in Malolos, respondents’ level of willingness to participate in the conservation of Kamestisuhan if compensated is still moderately willing with a mean rating of 3.41. While one-time financial compensation is considered to be a short-term mechanism which is not sustainable in the long term. An ongoing compensation mechanism is required that rewards the community for participation in heritage conservation (Han et al. 2016).

Conclusion

Locals view heritage as a part of culture that is passed down to society, has a historical structure, is passed down in generations, is a symbol of identity, is a place where history resides, is part of history that reminds us how great cultures and cities evolved, has historical importance and purpose, is preserved in honor of the historical values and stories it holds, and is something to be remembered. For them, cultural heritage is a great treasure and pride for Filipinos, as it connects them to their traditions, customs, religion, beliefs, and sense of community. Raising awareness of cultural heritage can also open opportunities for bigger tourism plans and livelihood for locals. From the literature review, 14 people-centered approaches were selected as possible projects to strengthen conservation of the Kamestisuhan district. These are: Stories/Dialogue in museums about Kamestisuhan; Digitization of private archives; Training of Junior Guides; Chalk painting competition around Kamestisuhan borders; Kamestisuhan Display Center (mini museum with scale models); Collaboration with entrepreneurs to promote Kamestisuhan; Kamestisuhan Education Program (tie-up with formal and informal sectors); Kamestisuhan Bank of Materials (heritage building materials museum and workshop); Empowerment of local house owners (workshops/seminars); Converting the ruins of Casa Tribunal into an art/cultural hub; Creation of a Kamestisuhan Heritage Conservation Group; Kamestisuhan Citizens Dialogue; Contemporary Art Park; and Kamestisuhan Cultural Fair.

The Kamestisuhan District of Malolos should be protected as a heritage site to maintain its identity and culture. The most pressing issue is that it is being forgotten by generations due to neglect of its buildings and lack of discipline toward cleanliness. To address this, the government should develop and implement appropriate plans and policies for the preservation of cultural sites. Media such as TV, documentaries, social media, radio, journal publications, and film can be used to raise awareness about heritage conservation. Modern media can create a more solid foundation for building the image and popularity of the district. Stakeholders of heritage conservation believe that they can effectively raise awareness about the importance of heritage if they have sufficient knowledge and money to spread information, research and promotion, conduct seminars, and engage in information campaigns. Community awareness lecture series, and lectures and trainings should be imparted to increase awareness. Teachers can create or include heritage subjects in their lesson plans, give factual information and encouragement to be engaged, and revisit history of Malolos. Academes, museums, and other similar entities can help in raising awareness through media vehicles, linkages with local tourism, and information campaigns. Increasing the value of the structures through visibility enhancement can promote local tourism, with programs such as tours, film showing, souvenir production and other income generating activities.

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