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## Culture and Identity



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The CAB and the BBL affirm the distinct cultural heritage and birthright of the Bangsamoro people to their ancestral homeland and right to self-determination. Their principles include recognition, respect, and celebration of the many identities and cultures of the various peoples in the Bangsamoro.

Culture and language are covered by an exclusive power vested upon the Bangsamoro Government. The CAB's and the BBL's provisions on economy, social development, environment, governance, and justice and security are formulated in harmony with customary laws and traditions, while ensuring cultural, gender, and intergenerational inclusivity.

The BBL provides for the creation of a Bangsamoro Commission for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (BCPCH) and has specific policy recommendations relating to *Shari'ah*-compliant justice and financing, regulations and practices on *halal*, and organization of *hajj* and other religious related travels, as well as the various rights and practices of the Bangsamoro's indigenous cultural communities, including the right to *pusaka inged* (native titles).

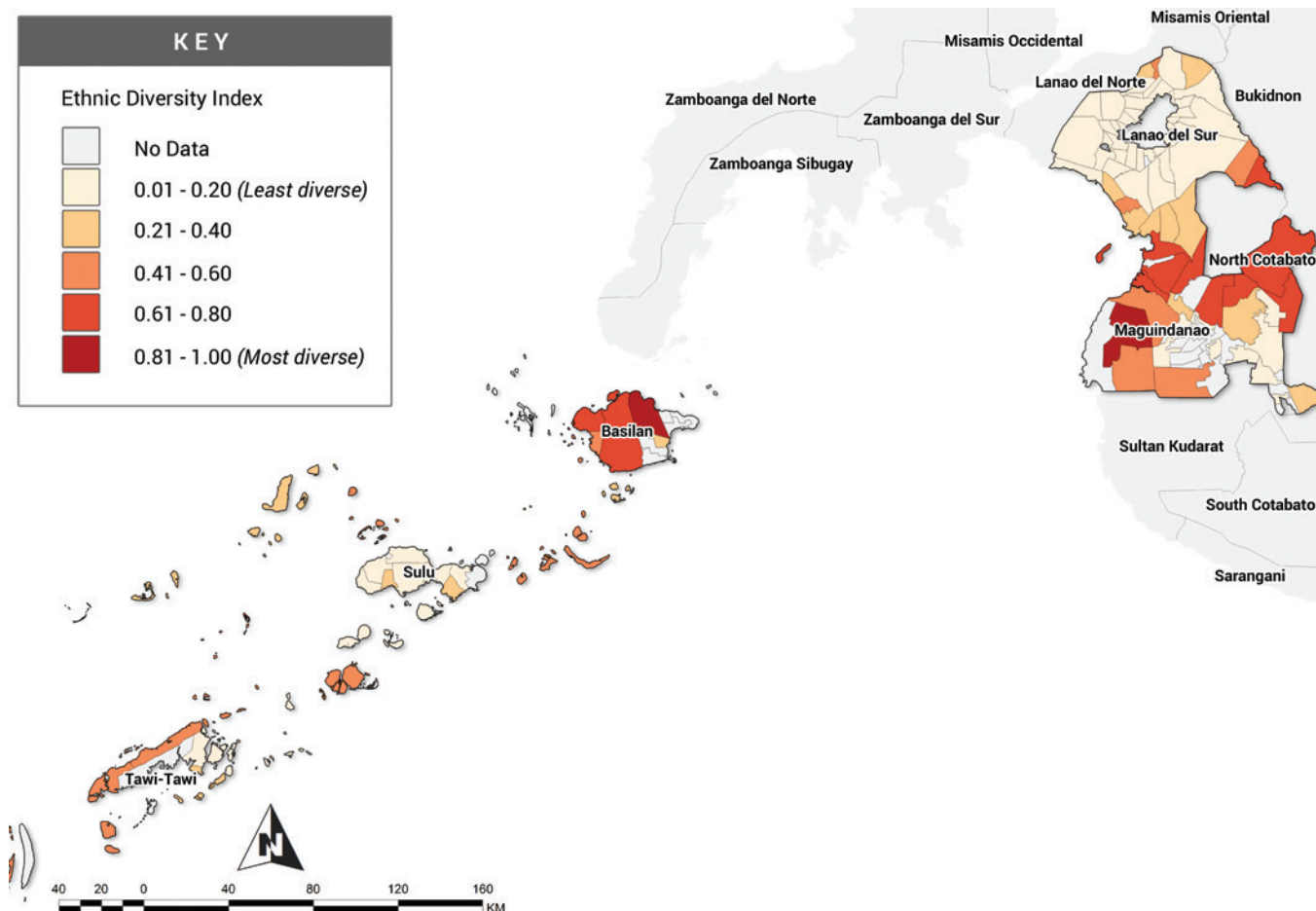
In this light, the BDP gives priority to culture and identity as critical elements of sustainable human development and peacebuilding.

### A. Context: The Diverse Culture in the Bangsamoro

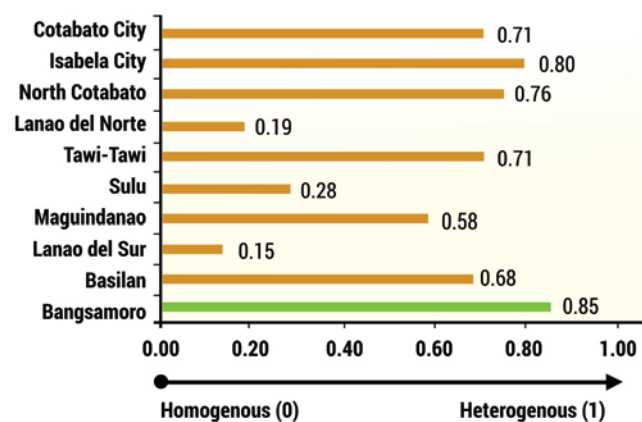
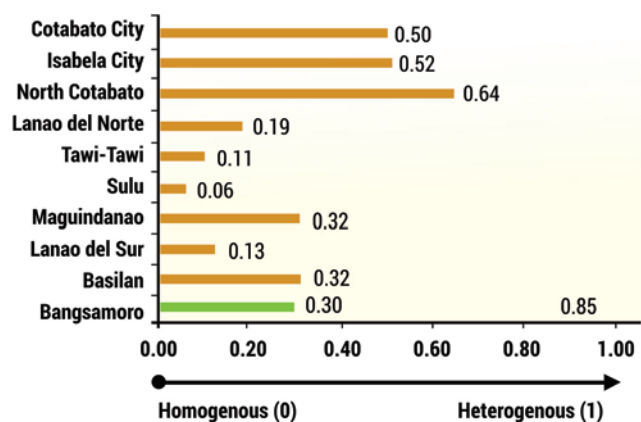
The Bangsamoro society consists of 13 Muslim ethno-linguistic groups,<sup>122</sup> about 20 non-Islamized indigenous peoples (IP) groups, and settlers of various origins (see **Map 14**). The CAB and the BBL define the Bangsamoro identity in terms of those who at the time of conquest and colonization centuries ago were considered natives or original inhabitants of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago and its adjacent islands, including Palawan, and their descendants whether of mixed or full blood shall have the right to identify themselves as Bangsamoro by ascription or self-ascription.

The BBL specifies the historical governance structures of the Moro Sultanates of Sulu, Maguindanao, Kabuntalan, and Buayan, the Royal Houses of the Maranao, while guaranteeing the freedoms and rights of settlers and of IPs.

**Figures 29 and 30** illustrate the high level of ethnic and religious diversity in the Bangsamoro. In the spirit of unity and social cohesion, the Bangsamoro's cultural diversity highlights the need for inclusivity and localized solutions, while preserving its rich heritage and knowledge practices. Further details on the ethno-linguistic groups in the Bangsamoro are provided in **Annex F (Cultural Diversity in the Bangsamoro)**.

**Map 14: Ethnic Diversity Index (2010)**

Source: PSA-CPH (2010), DSWD-NHTS (2010), PhilGIS (2013)

**Figure 29: Ethnic Diversity in the Bangsamoro (2010)****Figure 30: Religious Diversity in the Bangsamoro (2010)**

Note: The numbers are estimates using index of fractionalization as a measure of social diversity along various social cleavages such as ethnicity and religious affiliations

Source: BDP-CPT estimate (using PSA-CPH 2010 data)

Initiatives that recognize and preserve Bangsamoro culture and identity are scarce, leaving much of its language, historical narratives, and artifacts to be eroded by time and modernity. Many important historical figures, events, and places are no longer in public memory, especially for the younger generation. The practice of indigenous sports and games, music, visual art, literature, dance, and crafts have been largely relegated to the margins. There are no codified rules and regulations on burying the dead, and so graves are scattered without designated *maqabir al-'aam* (public cemeteries).

The cultural implications on sustainable human development are immense. Traditional health practices are still prevalent in remote areas in the absence of adequate public services. There have been no significant measures to align mainstream health service delivery with those through the *waliyan* (midwives) and *taligamot* (traditional healers).

Some initiatives toward the use of indigenous mechanisms for conflict resolution and peacebuilding have yielded positive results. However, traditional leadership structures and titles, while prevalent, are largely nominal and have limited interface with present governance structures.

The enhanced scope of powers vested in the Bangsamoro Government as embodied in the BBL therefore provides an opportunity to address these institutional and developmental concerns, including IP rights.

## B. Strategies

In line with the UNESCO definition of culture as “inclusive of creative expression, skills, traditional knowledge and the cultural resources that form part of the lives of peoples and societies, serving as bases for social engagement and enterprise development,” all plans, policies, and programs in the Bangsamoro will necessarily be framed in the context of cultural sensitivity and inclusivity, as a means of addressing longstanding sources of dissatisfaction among Bangsamoro communities.

The sectoral goal is, therefore, to support practices and build foundations for institutions that preserve and strengthen the Bangsamoro’s diverse cultural resources and heritage, in line with the objectives of sustainable human development and peacebuilding.

In achieving this goal, the strategy on culture and identity is articulated around the following three objectives:

1. To assist communities to identify and preserve their cultural resources, traditions, values, and practices;
2. To establish and strengthen cultural institutions to protect, conserve, nurture, and promote Bangsamoro’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage; and
3. To promote creation and sustainability of local culture, heritage, and art groups through various forms of incentives and assistance.

### B.1. Conservation of Cultural Heritage

As described in the BBL, the BCPCH will be created primarily to record the history of the Bangsamoro people and to establish and sustain the cultural institutions, programs, and projects in the Bangsamoro component areas. To assist the BCPCH in the full exercise of its functions upon creation of the Bangsamoro Government, multiple studies will need to be conducted during the transition period. These will include:

- a. Formulation of a comprehensive framework for heritage, culture and the arts in the Bangsamoro, including the various elements of indigenous sports and games, music, visual art, literature, dance, crafts, tribal attire, holidays, and languages, among others.
- b. Generation of baseline data on heritage, culture and the arts in the Bangsamoro, including the provision of research grants to cultural and academic institutions.
- c. Feasibility of establishing public museums and libraries, including a Bangsamoro Museum to

take charge of collation, collection, preservation, and promotion of remaining relics and artifacts of Bangsamoro culture. This will include retrieval of artifacts that may be stored in museums and national archives both in and outside the Philippines.

Quick-impact projects will be implemented during the transition period in line with confidence-building and stabilization components of the CAB, as well as with the requirements of transitional justice during normalization. This may include installing historical markers to commemorate the Bangsamoro struggle, and building *maqabir al-'aam* (public cemeteries) in priority sites.

### B.2. Culture and Education

In accordance with BBL provisions on establishing an educational framework that will be relevant to the needs, ideals, and aspirations of the Bangsamoro, efforts will be undertaken to support cultural initiatives that can enrich the Bangsamoro educational system, including:

- a. Provision of grants for textbook and module writing that will commemorate the Bangsamoro struggles;
- b. Support for establishment of an Institute of Bahasa Bangsamoro, in order to develop a Bangsamoro language;
- c. Revival of Bangsamoro cultural sports;
- d. Establishment of schools of living traditions; and
- e. Support for artistic excellence.

### B.3. Culture and Development

The mainstreaming of Bangsamoro culture and identity in governance and development is at the heart of the BBL and the BDP, as evidenced in the structure and function of the proposed Bangsamoro Parliament, as well as the inclusion of such culturally relevant mechanisms as *Shari'ah*-compliant finance and justice, among others.

This will be realized through the mainstreaming of cultural sensitivity in the actual implementation of such

policies and programs throughout the transition period, to ensure that all development interventions are designed with a “bottom-up” framework in mind.

Culture has to be seen also as a key resource for the Bangsamoro. Weaving, brass-making, and other indigenous handicrafts and metal crafts should be revived and promoted, used to develop cultural tourism and other related public-private partnerships, in tandem with the improvement the institutional, infrastructure, and security bases for investment.

Likewise, the health system will be strengthened, by providing birthing facilities and forming partnerships among Muslim religious leaders and traditional and western-trained midwives, and to optimize the mix of modern and traditional reproductive health elements, while remaining respectful of history and culture.

### B.4. Promotion of Culture and the Arts

Bangsamoro heritage, culture and arts will be popularized through the media and by encouraging indigenous cultural activities (such as the use of traditional attire, musical instruments, and cuisine) in schools, offices, and community gatherings.

### B.5. Intercultural Exchange and Cooperation

Grants and scholarships for regional, national, and international intercultural exchange and cooperation will be created, in line with the development priorities of the Bangsamoro Government.

### B.6. Culture and Peace

This includes grants for the conduct of dialogue initiatives, youth peace camps/trainings, and other cultural projects that can support peacebuilding and unity among Bangsamoro communities.

## C. Summary of Priority Programs

A summary of the priority plans and programs for the transition can be found in **Table 27**.

**Table 27: Priority Culture and Identity Programs**

Objectives	Priority Programs	Components
Assist communities to identify and preserve their cultural resources, traditions, values, practices	<b>Quick-Impact Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historical markers</li> <li>Bangsamoro public cemeteries (<i>maqabir al-'aam</i>)</li> </ul>
	<b>Conservation of Cultural Heritage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy work on the creation of the Commission on the Preservation of Cultural Heritage</li> <li>Establishment of Bangsamoro Peace Memorial Museum</li> </ul>
Establish and strengthen cultural institutions to protect, conserve, nurture, and promote Bangsamoro's tangible and intangible cultural heritage	<b>Culture and Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants for textbook writing on Bangsamoro culture, history, language, arts, etc.; and establishment of Schools of Living Tradition</li> </ul>
	<b>Support for Artistic Excellence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants and incentives for community artists/artisans, researchers, cultural workers</li> </ul>
Promote creation and sustainability of local culture, heritage, and art groups through various forms of incentive assistance	<b>Culture and Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for and mainstreaming of various culturally-responsive development initiatives: <i>Shari'ah</i>, <i>halal</i> and <i>hajj</i></li> <li>Social marketing and advocacy</li> <li>Cultural tourism, Public-Private Partnership</li> </ul>
	<b>Culture and Peace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dialogue/intercultural initiatives</li> </ul>

## NOTES

- 122 Dwyer and Guiam (2010) identified them as the Maguindanaon of Cotabato provinces; Meranaw of Lanao; Tausug of the Sulu archipelago; Sama of Tawi-Tawi; Yakan of Basilan; Iranun (between Maguindanao and Lanao Sur provinces); Jama Mapun of Cagayan de Sulu islands; Kalagan of Davao provinces; Kalibugan of Zamboanga Peninsula; Melebuganon of Palawan; Palawani of Palawan; Sangil of Sarangani; and Badjaw (Sama Dilaut), originally from Sulu Archipelago. Also refer to Lingga (2010).