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Heritage Mapping: Cultural Institutions and their Contributions to Arts and Culture Development

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Abstract

Cultural mapping is often used to inventory sites, objects, practices, and traditions, yet institutions that organize cultural memory, artistic production, education, faith, and community participation remain comparatively underexamined as heritage resources. This article synthesizes three cultural-mapping studies conducted in Calabanga, Camarines Sur, Philippines: the Dominican Laity of Blessed Imelda Lambertini, Samahang Bagong Inog sa Tanghalan (SAMBIT), and the educational institution that evolved from the Calabanga National School of Arts and Trades (CNSAT) into the Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (CBSUA). Using a qualitative, multi-case cultural-mapping design anchored in the National Commission for Culture and the Arts framework, the research combined participatory mapping, historical and archival mapping, institutional network analysis, oral-history and key-informant accounts, documentary review, and community validation. Cross-case thematic synthesis shows that cultural institutions operate through five mutually reinforcing functions: institutionalizing memory, transmitting culture across generations, producing and interpreting cultural expressions, organizing networks of participation and service, and adapting heritage to changing social conditions. The Dominican Laity demonstrates faith-based transmission through symbols, formation, evangelization, and charity; SAMBIT illustrates performance as a mechanism of identity formation, heritage safeguarding, youth development, and community engagement; and CNSAT-CBSUA demonstrates how an educational institution can become a living cultural landscape connecting collective memory, knowledge production, artistic practice, and sustainable development. The study argues that institutions should be mapped not merely as organizations with histories but as relational heritage systems linking people, places, symbols, practices, narratives, artifacts, and public purposes. A Cultural Institution Heritage Cycle—Map, Validate, Connect, Safeguard, Transmit, Activate—is proposed to translate documentation into policy, education, cultural programming, digital archiving, heritage interpretation, and community development. The findings broaden local heritage discourse by positioning cultural institutions as active infrastructures of cultural continuity and sustainable place-making.

Keywords: cultural mapping; cultural institutions; heritage safeguarding; SAMBIT; Dominican Laity; CBSUA; collective memory; Calabanga; arts and culture; sustainable development

1. Introduction

Heritage is sustained not only in monuments, landscapes, artifacts, and ritual practices but also in institutions. Organizations provide continuity: they gather people around shared purposes, establish routines, transmit values, preserve records, authorize symbols, mentor successors, stage performances, mobilize resources, and connect community memory to present action. A parish-based lay movement, a theater organization, or a university may therefore become culturally significant even when its primary mandate is religious formation, artistic development, or education. What makes such an institution a heritage resource is not simply longevity. Its significance emerges from the relationships it creates among people, places, narratives, practices, material objects, and collective aspirations.

Cultural mapping offers a useful method for making these relationships visible. Cook and Taylor (2013) describe cultural mapping as a community-centered process for identifying and recording what communities consider culturally important. In the Philippine setting, this approach is strengthened by the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009 (Republic Act No. 10066), which encourages local governments and communities to identify, document, promote, preserve, and revitalize heritage resources. The completed Calabanga studies from which this article was developed likewise treated mapping as more than inventory-making: the process combined local knowledge, documentary evidence, institutional histories, and community validation to understand the significance of cultural resources.

The need to map institutions is particularly important in local heritage work. Conventional inventories tend to privilege the visibly old, architecturally distinctive, materially rare, or formally designated. Yet communities also inherit organizational traditions. A cultural group may preserve repertoires, costumes, scripts, devotional practices, teaching methods, or networks of mentorship. A religious association may encode values in symbols and ritualized forms of service. A school may become a repository of collective memory while continuously transforming its programs, campus, technologies, and social functions. These forms of heritage are dynamic rather than static. They persist precisely because institutions repeatedly reinterpret their purposes in response to new generations and changing conditions.

Cultural institutions also occupy an important place in sustainable development. Heritage can strengthen social cohesion, cultural identity, community resilience, education, local creativity, and tourism when safeguarding is linked to public participation and community benefit (Fabbricatti et al., 2018, 2020; Hoang, 2021). Cultural institutions can serve as infrastructures for this work because they already possess networks, leadership structures, recurring activities, and mechanisms for transmitting knowledge. At the same time, institutions face vulnerabilities: weak documentation, leadership succession, changing participation, limited funding, loss of archival materials, technological disruption, and the tendency of development planning to prioritize infrastructure and economic concerns over cultural continuity (Chukwurah et al., 2025; Eppich & Grinda, 2019).

This article examines three institutions mapped in Calabanga, Camarines Sur: the Dominican Laity of Blessed Imelda Lambertini, Samahang Bagong Inog sa Tanghalan (SAMBIT), and the institution that developed from the Calabanga National School of Arts and Trades (CNSAT) into the Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (CBSUA). The cases were selected from a common heritage-mapping project because they represent distinct but interconnected institutional domains. The Dominican Laity is a faith-based organization whose history, symbols, spiritual formation, and service practices connect religious charism to everyday community life. SAMBIT is a performing-arts institution that began as a school-based theater guild and developed into a broader cultural platform for education, performance, heritage transmission, and community engagement. CNSAT-CBSUA is an educational institution whose changing legal identities and mandates demonstrate how a school can become a living cultural landscape and repository of collective memory.

Taken together, the cases allow a stronger question to be asked: What do cultural institutions actually do for heritage? Rather than treating them simply as containers of culture, this article conceptualizes them as active systems that organize memory, participation, creativity, knowledge, identity, and adaptation. This perspective is consistent with approaches that understand heritage as a socio-cultural process rather than as a fixed collection of objects (Konsa, 2013). It also resonates with the ecological view of heritage advanced by Brabec and Chilton (2015), in which cultural resources are embedded in wider relationships and environments.

The article has four objectives. First, it synthesizes the historical trajectories and cultural contributions of the three mapped institutions. Second, it compares their significance across historical, social, political, economic, spiritual, scientific/educational, and aesthetic dimensions. Third, it identifies cross-cutting mechanisms through which institutions sustain arts, culture, and community memory. Fourth, it proposes a practical framework for translating cultural mapping into safeguarding, transmission, cultural programming, and sustainable community development.

The central argument is that cultural institutions should be mapped as relational heritage systems. Their significance lies not only in origin dates, founders, buildings, or formal mandates, but in the continuing relationships through which they make culture meaningful and transmissible. This reframing has implications for local cultural inventories, heritage policy, curriculum development, archives and museums, cultural tourism, arts programming, and community-based development.

2. Cultural Institutions, Cultural Mapping, and Living Heritage

Cultural institutions preserve and produce meaning. They may hold archives and objects, but they also sustain routines, norms, repertoires, ceremonies, pedagogies, and relationships. Tramontana (2014) and related literature cited in the source studies position cultural institutions as centers through which communities preserve collective memory and cultural expression. Aguas (2016), in discussing Filipino relational values, provides a useful cultural lens for understanding why institutions embedded in community relationships can become durable carriers of identity. Their importance is therefore simultaneously material and relational.

Cultural mapping is especially appropriate for examining such institutions because it links documentation with participation. The process does not assume that significance is obvious from the outside. Instead, it asks community members, practitioners, custodians, elders, alumni, students, and local leaders to identify what matters, why it matters, and how cultural resources are connected. Besmonte (2023) and Rabang (2015) underscore the usefulness of mapping for identifying cultural significance, while Noh and Imron (2025) emphasize the role of cultural institutions in cultural dynamism and community engagement. Mapping thus becomes both a research method and a form of cultural governance.

A key implication is that institutional heritage should be understood as living heritage. Living heritage depends on continued practice, transmission, reinterpretation, and participation. Religious symbols have meaning because communities continue to teach and use them. Performances remain heritage because artists rehearse, stage, revise, and transmit them. Institutional memories remain socially relevant because alumni, faculty, students, and communities narrate them and attach present-day meanings to them. Heritage conservation, from this perspective, cannot be limited to preventing physical deterioration. It must also safeguard knowledge, participation, organizational memory, and opportunities for cultural practice.

This dynamic view also helps explain why adaptation does not necessarily weaken authenticity. SAMBIT's use of digital platforms during the pandemic, for example, may be understood as a continuation strategy rather than a departure from heritage. Similarly, the transition from CNSAT to CPC, CSSAC, and CBSUA altered the institution's legal and academic identity while preserving an underlying relationship with the community. Cultural continuity can therefore coexist with institutional change. Holtorf's (2018) resilience perspective is useful here: heritage may be sustained not by freezing institutions in time but by enabling them to adapt while retaining meaningful connections to core values and memories.

Heritage institutions also intersect with development. Hoang (2021) argues that preserving and promoting heritage values can support sustainable development. Fabbricatti et al. (2020) connect heritage communities with resilience, while García (2021) highlights culture's role in post-crisis recovery. The

Calabanga cases illustrate these relationships at an institutional scale. Faith-based service strengthens social bonds; theater develops skills, civic participation, and cultural pride; a university produces knowledge and community programs. Cultural heritage in these contexts is not a decorative supplement to development. It is a social resource through which communities organize meaning, capability, and cooperation.

However, safeguarding requires governance and resources. Eppich and Grinda (2019) emphasize financial sustainability, while Othman and El-Hanafy (2018) point to partnerships and social responsibility as possible mechanisms for heritage support. For local institutions, sustainability also depends on archives, leadership succession, intergenerational recruitment, documentation standards, digital preservation, and policy recognition. The present synthesis therefore treats cultural mapping as the beginning of a safeguarding cycle rather than the end product of documentation.

3. Methods

3.1 Research design and setting

The study employed a qualitative, comparative cultural-mapping design. It synthesized three completed institutional mapping studies undertaken in Calabanga, Camarines Sur, under the broader program *Exploring Cultural Landscapes and Heritage: A Mapping of Calabanga and the San Miguel Bay Communities towards Sustainable Development*. The mapped cases were the Dominican Laity of Blessed Imelda Lambertini, SAMBIT, and the educational institution whose trajectory extends from CNSAT to the present CBSUA-Calabanga. The original studies were implemented from August 2024 to May 2025 in partnership with the Local Government Unit of Calabanga.

A multi-case approach was appropriate because the cases differed in institutional purpose while sharing a common cultural landscape. The Dominican Laity represented religious and spiritual organization; SAMBIT represented organized artistic production and cultural education; and CNSAT-CBSUA represented formal education, research, extension, and institutional memory. Comparison across these domains made it possible to identify both case-specific contributions and recurring mechanisms of cultural continuity.

3.2 Cultural-mapping framework

The research was guided by the cultural-mapping framework and standard CMAP forms used by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. Across the original studies, documentation focused on three broad components: background information, historical account, and cultural significance. The mapping process sought to establish not only when and how each institution emerged but also how it became meaningful to the community through historical, social, political, economic, spiritual, scientific or educational, and aesthetic dimensions.

Three complementary strategies were used. Participatory mapping engaged members of the cultural institutions, local leaders, elders, students, alumni, and other community stakeholders. Purposive selection prioritized participants with direct knowledge, experience, custodial responsibility, or long-term association with the institutions. Historical and archival mapping traced institutional origins, transformations, significant events, practices, and associated cultural resources using records, photographs, local histories, institutional documents, commemorative materials, and other available sources. Institutional network analysis examined relationships among organizations, cultural actors, schools, religious groups, government offices, community partners, and other stakeholders that support the circulation of knowledge and resources.

3.3 Data sources and collection

Data collection combined documentary review, oral-history and key-informant accounts, field observation, focus-group or group validation activities, and examination of institutional symbols and cultural

outputs. For CNSAT-CBSUA, the documentation included institutional records, annual or commemorative publications, photographs, government documents, local histories, and accounts from administrators, faculty, alumni, elders, cultural workers, and custodians of institutional memory. For SAMBIT, sources included organizational history, productions, performances, cultural participation, community engagements, alumni involvement, and accounts of its development from a student theater guild into a broader cultural institution. For the Dominican Laity, historical accounts were examined together with the organization's visual identity, spiritual symbols, establishment narrative, formation, evangelization, and service.

The approach recognized that institutional heritage is distributed across multiple forms of evidence. A formal document may establish an institutional transition, while an oral history may explain how that transition was experienced. A logo may function as a compact visual theology. A performance repertoire may reveal how a theater organization selects and transmits cultural memory. Institutional landscapes and recurring activities may likewise carry meanings not captured by administrative records alone.

3.4 Analysis and validation

The original studies used content and thematic analysis to organize the collected materials in relation to the research objectives and NCCA significance categories. For the present article, a second-level cross-case synthesis was conducted. Findings were compared to identify recurring functions, points of difference, and relationships among institutional history, cultural production, community participation, and heritage transmission.

Validation was an important component of the mapping process. The source studies report that CMAP outputs were presented twice to NCCA experts during validation and were subsequently subjected to community validation. The community validation involved 30 cultural workers, including teachers, elders, local leaders, and youth representatives, with the participation of three national and local historians. This layered process was intended to strengthen the accuracy, credibility, confirmability, and local legitimacy of the mapped information.

3.5 Ethical considerations and scope

The original studies state that the research followed ethical principles approved through the University's Research Division. The present article is a synthesis of those completed studies and does not introduce new human-participant data. Interpretations were kept within the evidence contained in the mapped cases. Because the cases are institutionally different and were documented through qualitative cultural mapping rather than standardized impact measurement, the findings should not be interpreted as causal estimates of social or economic impact. Their value lies in contextualized explanation, heritage significance assessment, and cross-case conceptualization.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Three institutional pathways into heritage

The three cases demonstrate that institutions become heritage through different pathways. The Dominican Laity becomes culturally significant through faith, symbolic identity, formation, and service. SAMBIT becomes significant through artistic production, performance, mentorship, cultural participation, and community engagement. CNSAT-CBSUA becomes significant through institutional longevity, educational transformation, collective memory, knowledge production, cultural organizations, and public service. Despite these differences, all three cases show that heritage is generated through repeated relationships rather than through age alone.

The Dominican Laity case begins in 1992, when Sr. Bertilla Boscardin, OP initiated a lay formation effort in response to concern about children's prayer formation. Teachers were enlisted to explain the Rosary, turning a perceived spiritual need into a community-based formation activity. In 1993, the initiative received ecclesiastical support from Archbishop Leonardo Z. Legazpi, OP, DD, giving the group formal legitimacy and a foundation for continued growth. The case demonstrates how a small formative initiative can become institutional heritage when it acquires continuity, shared identity, recognized authority, recurring practices, and intergenerational purpose.

SAMBIT's institutional pathway began in 1988 at the Calabanga National School of Arts and Trades. Its early development was rooted in student theater and the pedagogical use of performance. The production *Mga Kaluluwang Nagdurusa* is identified in the source study as an early point in the group's artistic trajectory. Workshops, script development, mentorship, and administrative support enabled the organization to move beyond a conventional school club. Over time, it developed a repertoire that included theater, community productions, religious performances, festivals, outreach, and cultural education. Its continuity across the institutional transitions from CNSAT to CPC, CSSAC, and CBSUA is especially significant: the cultural organization persisted while the host institution changed names, mandates, and status.

The CNSAT-CBSUA case presents the broadest institutional trajectory. Established as a vocational institution through Republic Act No. 4420 in 1965, CNSAT addressed educational access and livelihood-oriented training. Its later transitions into Calabanga Polytechnic College, Camarines Sur State Agricultural College, and eventually CBSUA reflected changing national and regional priorities in education, agriculture, workforce development, research, and community service. The heritage significance of this trajectory lies in accumulated memory and adaptive continuity. Each transition added new functions without erasing the institution's relationship with Calabanga.

These pathways suggest that institutional heritage can emerge through at least three processes: ritual continuity, creative continuity, and developmental continuity. Ritual continuity is visible in the Dominican Laity's formation and spiritual practices. Creative continuity is central to SAMBIT's repeated production and reinterpretation of performance. Developmental continuity characterizes CNSAT-CBSUA's ability to transform organizationally while remaining a locally meaningful institution. In practice, these processes overlap. SAMBIT performs religious traditions; the university hosts cultural organizations; the Dominican Laity uses visual symbolism and educational formation. Institutional boundaries are therefore porous, allowing heritage to circulate among faith, education, art, and civic life.

4.2 Institutionalizing memory

The first cross-case function is the institutionalization of memory. Cultural memory becomes more durable when it is attached to organizational structures, recurring events, symbols, records, spaces, and roles. Institutions provide mechanisms for remembering beyond the lifespan of individual participants.

For the Dominican Laity, memory is condensed into symbolic forms. The mapped study emphasizes the black-and-white Dominican visual identity and the logo's cross fleury, star, lily, and dog carrying a torch. The cross represents Christian commitment; the star evokes truth and guidance; the lily signifies purity; and the torch-bearing dog recalls a Dominican legend associated with preaching and the spreading of faith. These symbols function as more than graphic identifiers. They communicate a narrative of institutional identity and provide members with a portable visual vocabulary for remembering the Order's charism. Appiah-Kubi and Bonsu (2020) help situate this within the broader missionary role of lay participation, while Park et al. (2012) support the understanding of logos as carriers of organizational information and meaning.

SAMBIT institutionalizes memory differently. Its archive is distributed across performances, scripts, costumes, choreographies, photographs, alumni recollections, festival participation, and community productions. A theatrical institution remembers through repetition with variation. Productions such as the Living Rosary, *Panuluyan*, and *An Pasyon ni Kristo* connect performance with religious and community memory. Each staging can reproduce inherited narratives while also adapting them to new performers, audiences, spaces, and social circumstances. The institution therefore stores memory not only in documents but in embodied practice.

CNSAT-CBSUA institutionalizes memory through its campus, records, organizational transitions, alumni, academic traditions, cultural groups, and community engagements. Its transformation across several institutional identities is itself a heritage narrative. The source study interprets the university as a repository of collective memory and a living cultural landscape. This is an important extension of heritage thinking: an educational institution can be historically significant even when its buildings and programs continue to change, because memory is also carried by relationships, narratives, routines, and shared experiences.

The implication is that institutional archives should be conceived broadly. Heritage documentation should include administrative records and photographs, but also oral histories, repertoires, symbols, ritual scripts, costumes, digital media, institutional landmarks, and testimonies of participation. A purely documentary archive would underrepresent SAMBIT's embodied heritage; a purely material inventory would miss the Dominican Laity's symbolic and spiritual meanings; and a building-focused inventory would fail to capture CBSUA's institutional memory.

4.3 Transmitting culture across generations

The second function is transmission. Cultural institutions become durable because they create pathways through which newcomers learn roles, values, knowledge, and practices. Transmission is not incidental to institutional heritage; it is one of its defining processes.

The Dominican Laity's origin narrative is itself a transmission story. The concern that children needed deeper prayer formation led to the involvement of teachers and the explanation of the Rosary. Formation subsequently became connected with Dominican values of prayer, study, preaching, and service. The institution thus operates through structured learning that moves religious knowledge from doctrine into everyday practice. Lay participation bridges formal ecclesial tradition and ordinary community life, consistent with Fukushima's (2011) discussion of Catholic lay involvement and Miranville's (2019) treatment of lay religious engagement.

SAMBIT's transmission is artistic, social, and pedagogical. Members learn through rehearsal, workshops, script development, performance, collaboration, and mentorship. The source study links participation to employability skills, social competence, youth leadership, and community contribution. Theater becomes an experiential curriculum in which artistic technique is inseparable from discipline, cooperation, interpretation, and public engagement. The existence of an alumni association strengthens this intergenerational chain by enabling former members to remain part of the organization's community and service network.

The university case expands transmission into formal and nonformal education. CBSUA transmits disciplinary knowledge through instruction, but its cultural significance includes research, extension, cultural organizations, student life, and institutional traditions. The presence of SAMBIT within the university demonstrates how formal education can provide infrastructure for intangible cultural heritage. Cultural organizations give students opportunities to learn practices that may not be fully represented in formal

curricula. The source study therefore recommends integrating heritage education across curricular and co-curricular programs.

Across the cases, transmission is most sustainable when three elements coincide: knowledgeable bearers, opportunities for practice, and institutional support. Documentation alone cannot substitute for these conditions. A digitized script that is never performed, a symbol that is no longer explained, or an institutional history that students never encounter may survive as information but lose its function as living heritage. Safeguarding must therefore protect both content and the social conditions that allow people to learn and use it.

4.4 Producing and interpreting cultural expression

The third function is cultural production. Institutions do not merely preserve inherited culture; they actively create, interpret, stage, and circulate cultural expressions.

SAMBIT most clearly illustrates this function. Its evolution from a school-based theater guild to a community-engaged cultural institution shows how organized artistic practice can create a platform for local narratives, religious traditions, dance, music, original scripts, and community issues. The source study describes an expanding repertoire and participation in regional and national cultural events, including PASUC and NCCA-related activities. Through these engagements, local performers encounter wider artistic networks while presenting Calabanga and Bicolano cultural expressions to broader audiences.

The artistic process also has interpretive power. Performance selects what to represent, how to embody it, and what meanings to foreground. Religious productions may reinforce devotion; community plays may raise social questions; folkloric dance can represent rural life and environmental relationships. The source study notes that SAMBIT productions incorporate local narratives, flora, fauna, rituals, and environmental awareness. Cultural production thus becomes a mode of heritage interpretation.

The Dominican Laity also participates in cultural production, although its outputs are primarily spiritual and symbolic rather than theatrical. Its logo translates theology and institutional history into visual form. Formation activities translate Dominican spirituality into local practice. Evangelization and charity turn institutional values into public action. These processes demonstrate that cultural expression includes symbolic and performative dimensions beyond the conventional arts.

CBSUA functions as an enabling institution for cultural production. Student organizations, cultural programs, research, extension, and public engagements provide platforms where culture can be documented, studied, staged, and reimagined. The source study identifies SAMBIT's participation in Sayaw Pinoy and PASUC arts and culture activities as examples of this role. A university can therefore be both a heritage object and a heritage actor: it has a history worth preserving while simultaneously generating new cultural knowledge and expression.

This productive function complicates the idea that heritage conservation is oriented only toward the past. Cultural institutions safeguard heritage partly by creating new work. New scripts, performances, research outputs, exhibits, digital stories, and educational materials allow inherited meanings to enter contemporary public life. Cultural continuity is therefore creative rather than merely repetitive.

4.5 Organizing participation, networks, and public service

The fourth function is relational. Institutions connect people who might otherwise participate only as individuals. Network analysis in the source studies was therefore particularly important because it revealed the flows of knowledge, legitimacy, resources, and collaboration that sustain heritage.

The Dominican Laity links lay members, teachers, children, religious leaders, parish communities, and the wider Dominican tradition. Its formal recognition by ecclesiastical authority strengthened its legitimacy, while its service orientation linked spirituality to community needs. The case demonstrates that institutional significance may depend on vertical relationships with larger structures and horizontal relationships within the locality.

SAMBIT's network is wider and more visibly cross-sectoral. Its history involves students, faculty mentors, administrators, alumni, local communities, religious organizations, civic partners, cultural agencies, festivals, and audiences. Community engagement transformed the organization from a school-centered group into a cultural catalyst. The source study describes its use of theater in public campaigns, workshops, community events, and collaborative projects. Such networks expand the social reach of cultural practice and make artistic work relevant to community concerns.

CBSUA's network includes local government units, development agencies, cultural organizations, alumni, researchers, communities, and educational partners. Its research and extension functions create channels through which knowledge moves beyond the campus. The institution's cultural significance is therefore partly produced through connectivity. Its value to Calabanga cannot be understood solely by examining what happens inside classrooms; it also lies in how the university participates in local and regional development.

These findings support an ecological understanding of heritage. Cultural institutions rarely safeguard heritage alone. They rely on partnerships, recognition, audiences, resource flows, and community trust. The practical unit of safeguarding should therefore be the network, not only the organization. Mapping should identify who holds knowledge, who provides venues, who funds activities, who authorizes practices, who documents them, who teaches them, and who receives or interprets them.

4.6 Multidimensional significance

The original studies assessed institutions across multiple dimensions of significance. Cross-case comparison shows that these dimensions are interdependent rather than separate.

Historically, each institution records a particular trajectory of Calabanga. The Dominican Laity documents the local development of a lay Dominican community from the early 1990s. SAMBIT documents the evolution of a performing-arts organization from 1988 across changing educational and social contexts. CNSAT-CBSUA embodies more than five decades of educational transformation beginning in the 1960s. Together, they form an institutional history of faith, creativity, and education.

Social significance is evident in participation and belonging. The Dominican Laity creates a community of formation and service. SAMBIT provides a space for youth, alumni, artists, and communities to collaborate. CBSUA supports social mobility, student development, community extension, and public engagement. These institutions generate social capital by repeatedly bringing people together around shared purposes.

Political significance is most visible where institutions shape civic participation, governance relationships, or public discourse. SAMBIT's community performances and public campaigns can carry social commentary and civic messages. CBSUA's partnerships with government and development agencies position it within local and regional governance. Even faith-based organizations may contribute indirectly to civic life by cultivating service, ethical formation, and organized participation. Political significance in this context does not mean partisan activity; it refers to the institution's capacity to influence public values, participation, and collective action.

Economic significance is less directly measured in the source studies and should therefore be interpreted cautiously. The strongest evidence concerns capability-building, cultural events, local participation, education, and potential linkages to cultural tourism and community development. Heritage scholarship suggests that cultural institutions can contribute to local economies through cultural programming, employment, tourism, and skills development (Hoang, 2021; Tahseen & Al-Jumaily, 2020). For the Calabanga cases, these remain plausible development pathways rather than quantified economic impacts.

Spiritual significance is central to the Dominican Laity and important to SAMBIT's religious productions. The Dominican symbols, formation, prayer, preaching, and service explicitly organize spiritual identity. SAMBIT's Living Rosary, *Panuluyan*, and *An Pasyon ni Kristo* demonstrate how performance can mediate communal devotion. CBSUA's spiritual significance is less direct, but the institution provides social spaces in which cultural and religious traditions may be expressed through student and community activities.

Scientific and educational significance is strongest in CBSUA, whose mandate includes instruction, research, extension, agriculture, fisheries, environmental sustainability, and knowledge production. SAMBIT also contributes educationally through embodied learning, arts training, interpretation, and behavioral or social development. The Dominican Laity uses formation and study as mechanisms for religious education. Thus, all three institutions are pedagogical, though their forms of knowledge differ.

Aesthetic significance is especially visible in SAMBIT's theater, music, dance, costumes, staging, and scripts, as well as in the Dominican Laity's visual symbolism. CBSUA contributes aesthetically through cultural programs and the meaningful character of institutional spaces and landscapes. Aesthetic value is therefore not confined to fine art objects; it can emerge from performance, symbolism, place, and institutional presentation.

4.7 Adaptation, resilience, and digital continuity

The fifth cross-case function is adaptation. Institutions persist because they respond to changing environments. Heritage safeguarding that ignores adaptation risks protecting forms while losing functions.

SAMBIT provides the clearest example. The source study notes its expansion into digital platforms during the pandemic. Social media and online channels enabled the organization to extend reach and maintain cultural engagement when conventional performance spaces were disrupted. This shift also democratized access to cultural content and demonstrated that digital practice can become part of heritage continuity.

CBSUA likewise adapted educational delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic and continued to orient itself toward quality, environmental management, research, and sustainable development. The institution's resilience lies in organizational capacity: it can change delivery systems, programs, technologies, and partnerships while maintaining its public educational role. This supports the argument that resilience is a cultural value as well as an operational one.

For the Dominican Laity, adaptation is visible in the continuing translation of an older religious charism into contemporary lay life. The institution exists precisely because Dominican spirituality is enacted outside the cloister and within ordinary social contexts. Its continuity depends on the capacity to make inherited values meaningful to new members and changing community needs.

Digital continuity emerges as a major safeguarding opportunity across all three cases. Archives can preserve photographs, scripts, oral histories, institutional documents, symbols, recordings, and timelines. Virtual exhibits and digital storytelling can widen access. Yet digitization should not be mistaken for complete safeguarding. Digital files require metadata, curation, storage, migration, permissions, and

institutional responsibility. More importantly, digital archives must reconnect to practice, education, and community use.

4.8 From three cases to an institutional heritage ecology

The strongest cross-case finding is that cultural institutions form an ecology. The Dominican Laity, SAMBIT, and CBSUA do not occupy isolated cultural domains. Faith influences performance; educational institutions provide space and mentorship for arts organizations; cultural organizations contribute to the identity of educational institutions; local government and community partners support institutional programs; alumni carry institutional practices into other settings.

This ecology can be described through five interacting functions: memory, transmission, production, participation, and adaptation. Memory gives institutions historical depth. Transmission moves knowledge and practice across generations. Production keeps culture active and interpretable. Participation connects institutions to communities and networks. Adaptation enables continuity under changing conditions. Weakness in one function can affect the others. Poor archives weaken memory; lack of recruitment disrupts transmission; inadequate funding constrains production; weak partnerships reduce participation; resistance to change undermines adaptation.

The ecology perspective also clarifies why cultural institutions deserve explicit recognition in local heritage inventories. If mapping focuses only on tangible sites and discrete traditions, it may overlook the organizational infrastructures that keep those resources alive. Institutions often provide the rehearsal rooms, meeting structures, teachers, custodians, archives, audiences, legitimacy, and partnerships that make heritage sustainable.

4.9 A Cultural Institution Heritage Cycle

Based on the synthesis, this article proposes a six-stage Cultural Institution Heritage Cycle: **Map, Validate, Connect, Safeguard, Transmit, and Activate**.

Map means documenting institutional origins, transformations, people, places, symbols, practices, records, repertoires, artifacts, landscapes, and associated narratives. Mapping should include both tangible and intangible resources.

Validate means subjecting the documentation to documentary cross-checking, expert review, and community validation. Heritage significance should not rest on a single narrator or institutional claim.

Connect means identifying the network through which heritage is sustained: bearers, members, alumni, schools, parishes, government units, cultural agencies, researchers, audiences, funders, and partner organizations.

Safeguard means establishing concrete measures for archives, digital preservation, physical collections, oral histories, succession, funding, governance, intellectual property, and risk management. Safeguarding should protect both resources and the conditions for practice.

Transmit means integrating institutional heritage into formation, curriculum, workshops, mentorship, rehearsals, exhibits, publications, public lectures, heritage walks, and intergenerational activities.

Activate means using documented heritage responsibly for contemporary public value: cultural programming, creative production, community development, research, cultural tourism, digital storytelling, policy formation, and place-making.

The cycle is deliberately iterative. Activation generates new cultural outputs that should themselves be mapped and validated. Transmission creates new bearers and interpretations. Institutional change creates new

archival records. Heritage management therefore becomes a continuing institutional practice rather than a one-time inventory exercise.

5. Implications for Heritage Policy and Practice

The findings have direct implications for local cultural governance. First, cultural inventories should include institutions as a distinct and analytically meaningful category. An institutional entry should document more than the organization's name, date of establishment, and officers. It should identify the institution's cultural functions, associated practices, significant persons, material collections, symbols, spaces, networks, vulnerabilities, and transmission mechanisms.

Second, Calabanga can strengthen heritage safeguarding by developing institution-based archives. The source studies specifically recommend documentation and digital preservation. For CBSUA, a university heritage center, museum, or digital archive could preserve institutional records, photographs, artifacts, oral histories, student traditions, cultural organizations, and milestones. SAMBIT would benefit from a systematic performance archive containing scripts, production notes, photographs, video recordings, posters, costumes, choreographic documentation, awards, and alumni narratives. The Dominican Laity could preserve founding accounts, formation materials, visual symbols, photographs, testimonies, and records of service and devotional activities.

Third, heritage education should connect institutions rather than treating them as separate case studies. A local curriculum or public-history program could present Calabanga's cultural landscape through institutional routes: faith and devotion, arts and performance, education and knowledge, civic organizations, and community development. Students could conduct oral-history projects, curate exhibits, map institutional networks, or participate in performances and heritage walks. Such approaches would turn local history into experiential learning.

Fourth, institutional heritage should be integrated into cultural and creative programming. SAMBIT already demonstrates the capacity of performance to translate heritage into public experience. Similar collaborations could bring together the university, religious groups, local government, artists, writers, historians, and community organizations. Cultural mapping outputs can become scripts, exhibits, interpretive panels, podcasts, digital stories, festivals, workshops, and community tours, provided that interpretation remains evidence-based and respectful of community meanings.

Fifth, sustainability planning should include succession and resource continuity. Cultural institutions can become vulnerable when knowledge is concentrated in a small number of founders, senior members, or custodians. Mentorship systems, documentation protocols, alumni networks, youth recruitment, and shared governance can reduce this risk. Financial sustainability also matters. Partnerships with local government, educational institutions, cultural agencies, and responsible private-sector supporters may provide resources without displacing community ownership.

Finally, heritage-sensitive development should recognize institutional spaces and landscapes. Campus redevelopment, new facilities, or changes in community venues can unintentionally erase memory. Before significant physical changes are made, institutions should identify historically meaningful spaces, landmarks, trees, gathering areas, performance venues, chapels, archives, and other cultural features. Adaptive reuse principles can help retain historical meaning while accommodating contemporary functions (Foster, 2019; Kaya et al., 2021).

6. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This synthesis is based on three qualitative cultural-mapping cases within one municipality. It does not represent all cultural institutions in Calabanga, and the cases vary substantially in size, mandate, documentation, and organizational structure. The source studies prioritize heritage significance and community interpretation rather than standardized measurement; consequently, claims about economic impact, participation growth, learning outcomes, or tourism effects should not be read as quantified causal findings.

Institutional histories also depend on the survival and accessibility of records and on the memories of participants. Oral accounts may contain selective recollection, while institutional documents may privilege official narratives. The use of archival cross-checking, NCCA expert review, and community validation strengthens credibility but cannot eliminate all gaps.

Future studies can expand the institutional map to include parishes, civic associations, museums, schools, creative groups, cultural councils, cooperatives, and other organizations. Social-network analysis could be developed more formally to visualize flows of people, knowledge, funding, and collaboration. Longitudinal research could examine how participation and transmission change over time. Digital humanities methods could support interactive institutional timelines and linked heritage databases. Comparative work across municipalities in the Bicol Region could also test whether the five functions identified here—memory, transmission, production, participation, and adaptation—are transferable to other cultural landscapes.

7. Conclusion

The cultural institutions of Calabanga demonstrate that heritage lives through organization. The Dominican Laity of Blessed Imelda Lambertini, SAMBIT, and CNSAT-CBSUA differ in mandate, scale, and cultural expression, yet each converts shared values into durable social practice. Their histories show how faith communities, arts organizations, and educational institutions can become repositories of memory, sites of cultural production, mechanisms of transmission, networks of participation, and platforms for adaptation.

The Dominican Laity illustrates how symbols, formation, prayer, preaching, and service translate religious charism into local cultural life. SAMBIT demonstrates how theater can move from school-based artistic training to community heritage work, linking performance with identity, spirituality, youth development, civic engagement, and intergenerational participation. CNSAT-CBSUA shows how an educational institution can become a living cultural landscape whose transformations mirror wider changes in community aspirations, educational policy, knowledge production, and sustainable development.

These findings support a broader understanding of cultural mapping. Institutions should not be documented merely as organizational profiles. They should be mapped relationally: through the people they form, the memories they hold, the practices they sustain, the symbols they use, the spaces they inhabit, the cultural expressions they produce, and the networks through which they serve communities. Such mapping reveals the infrastructures behind cultural continuity.

The proposed Cultural Institution Heritage Cycle—Map, Validate, Connect, Safeguard, Transmit, Activate—offers a practical pathway from documentation to action. Its purpose is to ensure that cultural mapping does not end in an inventory. Mapped knowledge should inform archives, education, policy, cultural programming, digital preservation, heritage interpretation, creative practice, and community development.

For Calabanga, recognizing cultural institutions as heritage resources expands the field of what is worth safeguarding. It acknowledges that the community's cultural inheritance is carried not only by old structures and inherited traditions but also by organizations that continually teach, perform, remember, serve, and adapt. When these institutions are documented and supported as living heritage systems, arts and culture become not remnants of the past but active resources for identity, resilience, creativity, and sustainable futures.

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