



FINAL REPORT

CollAsia Field Project 2021-2022



PAMBANSANG MUSEO SA BARANGAY
Bringing the Museum Collections to the Fringes

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PROJECT SUMMARY

In line with its Universal Access Program, the National Museum of the Philippines (NMP) Western Visayas goes to urban poor communities in Iloilo City through the project, "*Pambansang Museo sa Barangay: Bringing the Museum Collections to the Fringes.*"

PMB makes replicas of some Museum collections and brings them in a box, resembling a suitcase, to the urban poor communities who would not normally visit the Museum. The five boxes feature the (1) Oton Gold Death Mask; (2) three fossilized molars of elephant/stegodont; (3) miniature loom and sample woven fabrics; and (4 & 5) diorama of West Visayas Faunal Region.

The exhibition includes age-differentiated activities such as mask-making, sandbox archaeology, fossil-imprinting, colour our heritage for children and adults, leaf art, rock art, and educational games.

Since its implementation on June 25, 2022, NM Western Visayas has already brought the boxes to six communities, and reached 758 participants. In the next phase of implementation, it will travel to communities outside the city, and even to far-flung villages.

The audience usually begins without knowledge about the Museum. But after the lecture and activities, they not only demonstrate improved awareness about heritage, conservation, and the Museum but also expressed a desire to visit and see the original exhibitions.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

MAKING THE REPLICAS OF IDENTIFIED COLLECTIONS

The fabrication of replica objects (funerary gold mask, three molars, diorama of regional flora and fauna, miniature loom, and sample woven fabrics) started in May 2022, and finished in June. It took a bit of time because the objects had to be accurate, even to the last detail, since the difference between one plant/animal species from the next is sometimes minuscule (small spots in bodies of animals, color and span of leaves, the shape of claws, etc.). The audience learns to differentiate the species, habitat, and conservation status. The boxes will also be supplemental materials for school teachers, so they need to reflect the distinction and nuances of the species.

The NM Western Visayas personnel also made some of the replicas themselves to minimize the cost. They cut the production to Php 5,000 per box instead of the original Museum Boxes fabricated by NMP, amounting to Php25, 000.00.

FABRICATION AND FIT-OUT OF THE MUSEUM BOXES

The fabrication and fit-out took around three weeks to finish. The box needed to be sturdy, to withstand the constant movement from one community to another.

LECTURE

The lecture is the lynchpin that bridges the exhibition and the corollary activities. It introduces the audience to each collection and gives context to their role in preserving and conserving cultural and natural heritage.

COROLLARY ACTIVITIES

The corollary activities, like (1) Mask-making, (2) Rock Art, (3) Leaf Art, (4) Color Your Heritage, and (5) Sandbox Archaeology, enable the participants to have another form of connection with the collection – ones that are enjoyable, dynamic and in which more senses are involved.

*Photos in the Appendices

PROJECT OUTCOMES

AWARENESS ABOUT CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

One of the major outcomes of the project is the change in the level of awareness of the participants', particularly on cultural and natural heritage.

Most, if not all of these people are not even aware that Iloilo has a rich weaving tradition, much more that it hosts a number of endemic flora and fauna. The lectures, exhibition and activities allow them to learn about their region and to have a more tangible experience and connection with their heritage.

By the end of the activity, the participants are able to differentiate the female from male Visayan hornbill, identify other endemic plants and animals and recall their conservation status.

AWARENESS ABOUT HEIRTAGE CONSERVATION

The whole traveling exhibition showcases the biodiversity and rich cultural tradition of the region. This allowed the participants to have an appreciation for their heritage, and the need to conserve and promote them.

AWARENESS ABOUT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PHILIPPINES

One of the more easily measurable and clear outcomes of the project is their recently-acquired awareness of the National Museum Western Visayas. At the start of the exhibition, we ask participants whether they are familiar with NM WV, and most of them have never even heard of the name. Towards the end of the activity, the participants become acquainted not only with the name of the Museum but also with its collections.

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

The PMB project became an avenue for NM Western Visayas to establish partnerships with private and government institutions in Iloilo City. The activity became part of their corporate social responsibility and civic outreach program, and they provided the snacks as well as art materials for the attendees.

LONG-TERM OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The PMB is not a one-shot activity that will only run for the duration stated in the proposal. It is a continuing program of NM Western Visayas that will be implemented in other areas of the region for succeeding months and years.

PARTNERSHIPS

ICCROM

ICCROM, through the CollAsia team, gave NM Western Visayas the opportunity to apply for the grant, and guided us through the process of application and implementation of the project. Questions on deadlines and challenges that arose in the middle of implementation were also addressed by the CollAsia team.

ROTARY CLUB OF ILOILO

The Rotary Club of Iloilo is a civic organization, composed of professionals and accomplished individuals, usually involved in community services. It sponsored the meal and activity materials for Bgy. Tanza, Esperanza last July 2, 2022.

THE MEDICAL CITY

The Medical City is a private hospital in Iloilo, which the NMP tapped for the PMB project, through its Corporate Social Responsibility Department. TMC is one of the private institutions that responded to our invitation for partnership. They sponsored the art materials and loot bags for the children-attendees.

ILOILO CITY GOVERNMENT

The Iloilo City Government, through Mayor Jerry Treñas, pledged the support of the villages and barangays (smallest political unit in the Philippines) and enjoined the village officials to provide all the logistical support to ensure the success of implementation.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF ILOILO

The provincial government takes over from the City Government whenever the PMB goes out of the city. They provide vehicles and fuel for the transport of the boxes, as well as venue, sound system, and meals for the attendees.

VILLAGES/BARANGAYS

The host village is in-charge of identifying the participants for the exhibition, and takes the responsibility of providing food, tables, and sound systems for the exhibition.

ILOILO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY (ISAT-U)

NM Western Visayas entered into partnership with ISAT-U, through an internship program where students will not only learn about museum management but also assist in the implementation of PMB.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

I. CHALLENGES

Bureaucratic processes and auditing rules of Philippine government

The first challenge that the implementers faced was the fiscal procedure governing procurement. The fund from ICCROM went into government treasury and was therefore subjected to the standard procurement procedure. In the Philippines, all projects amounting to more than (Php 50,000) undergo public bidding, which normally takes about two months to complete.

Change of management in the National Museum of the Philippines

Towards November 2021, the Deputy-Director General for Museums resigned and the acting DDG had to be briefed about the project before she endorsed it for bidding and signed the procurement documents.

COVID lockdowns

The processing of documents also stalled because divisions or personnel in-charged were constantly isolating or quarantining because of COVID infections.

May 2022 election bans

It was around May when all the procurement papers were finally completed due to tremendous delays by lockdowns. Unfortunately, the NMP could not proceed with public bidding because of the election ban (which prevents government agencies from appointing personnel and entering into or closing transactions) during the election season.

Transition of administrations in local government

After the election, we had to wait until July 1, when all the local elected officials, who will be assuming half the cost of implementation (meals and giveaways), finally assumed their post and pledged support to the project before we could begin the implementation.

Limited number of staffs

The regional museum has five regular staff who have also been given multiple projects for 2022 by the management. It was a bit challenging to juggle ongoing projects and exhibition with the implementation of PMB, especially when one or more staff had to go on field or out of the station.

II. LESSONS LEARNED

Leadership of barangay (village) captain is crucial to the turnout of participants

The support of the village leader is important to the success of the exhibition because he/she is the primary factor that determines the attendance and participation of the people. If the village leader only displays perfunctory support, the people feel less compelled to attend and join the activities. The implementing team saw both spectrums of leadership engagement, and we were able to confirm that the attitude of the leader greatly impacts the reception of the people.

Cooperation and teamwork of the implementing team

The cooperation and support of the NM Western Visayas team made many aspects of the project easier to implement, such as lowering the cost of the fabrication (some staff who love to do crafts in their spare time volunteered to do the sewing of fabrics, creation of clay-based replica of stegodont molars, etc), facilitating the workshop and coordinating the overall implementation.

The need to conduct of dry-runs before the actual implementation

The multiple dry-runs prior to the pilot implementation allowed the team to adjust activities that are not working and anticipate issues that might crop up during the actual implementation.

Importance of speaking the language of the community

This does not pertain to just the actual language, but also the conventions and practices of the community. Knowing about them allowed the personnel to establish connection and rapport, especially during the lectures. In our first barangay, we spoke and acted like a normal Ilonggo (ethnolinguistic group in Panay), thinking that they could relate to us since the language is universally understood in the province. However, we soon realized that speaking the community's own vernacular and learning their own distinct customs and community nuances automatically make them take notice and listen.

The need for flexibility in all aspects of implementation

Before implementation, we already assigned activities per group and age level. However, we soon found out that it was wrong to simply assume about the interests of the group, and instead, we now allow each participant to choose which activity they want to engage in after the lectures.

QUOTES ON THE PROJECT

- *“We used to pass by the Museum, but we would always hesitate to go inside because the building looks intimidating. We didn’t know entrance is free and that everyone is welcome”*
- *“I’m happy to see you in this activity. Now I know what a museum all about is and what it holds inside it.”*
- *“We are grateful to the Provincial Government for sponsoring this activity and including our village as one of the pilot areas of the National Museum.”*

*More quotes in the final video

FUTURE PLANS

The National Museum Western Visayas plans to expand its target areas to include those from the rural villages, outside the city.

Several inaccessible communities belonging to the indigenous peoples groups (Panay Bukidnon) will be scheduled.

A separate proposal will also be submitted to other agencies, focusing on the materials for the corollary activities (paints, crayons, puzzles, etc.) and fabrication of one more box dedicated to the lifeways of the Panay Bukidnon.

APPENDICES



The Pambansang Museo sa Barangay exhibitions are contextualized through a lecture that are tailored to the level of the youngest listeners. The adults are also able to relate since most of the information being discussed are new to them



Each topic is prefaced by a game to sustain the children's attention as well as ease them into the next part of the lecture. Here you can see a participant playing the "What's in a Box Game," where she was made to guess the content of the box without saying it. This game prefaced the topic on stegodonts.



The museum staff ushering the children to the boxes



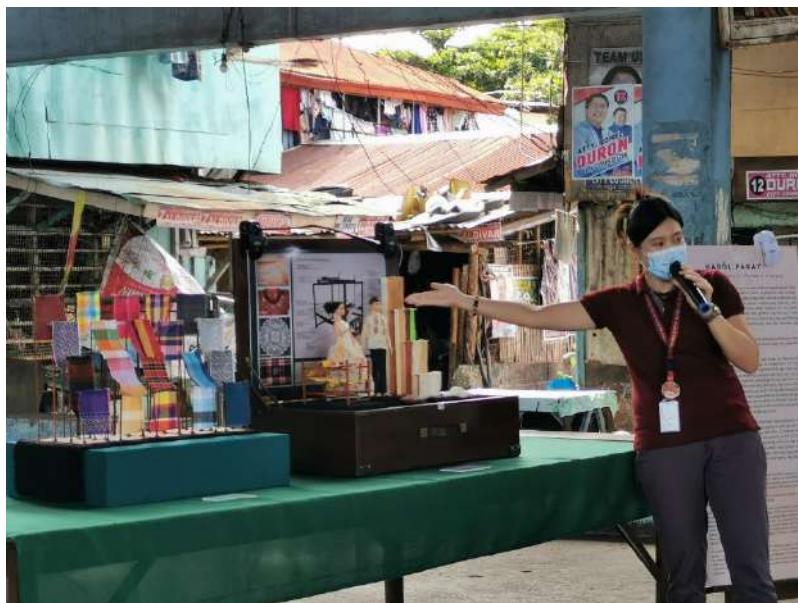
After the lecture, the participants are invited to have a closer encounter with the museum boxes. They are also given chance to ask questions and learn more about the objects



The kids are curious about the origins of the textiles, and wanted to know how the threads from cotton or other fiber source are turned into beautiful woven patterns. The loom that is included in the box allows them to imagine the transformation of threads into fabrics with complex designs.



The children also become familiar with endemic species of plants and animals in the region – including their habitats, their importance to the ecosystem, and their conservation status.



The Museum staff explaining about the objects in the box.



Close encounter with the boxes.



Once they had their fill of the boxes, the participants proceed with the corollary activities. Here is a participant of Rock Art shows off her rendition of the Visayan hornbill.



One of the corollary activities is Sandbox Archaeology. The participants are taught how the stegodont mollars and Oton Gold Mask were recovered from archaeological sites in the country.



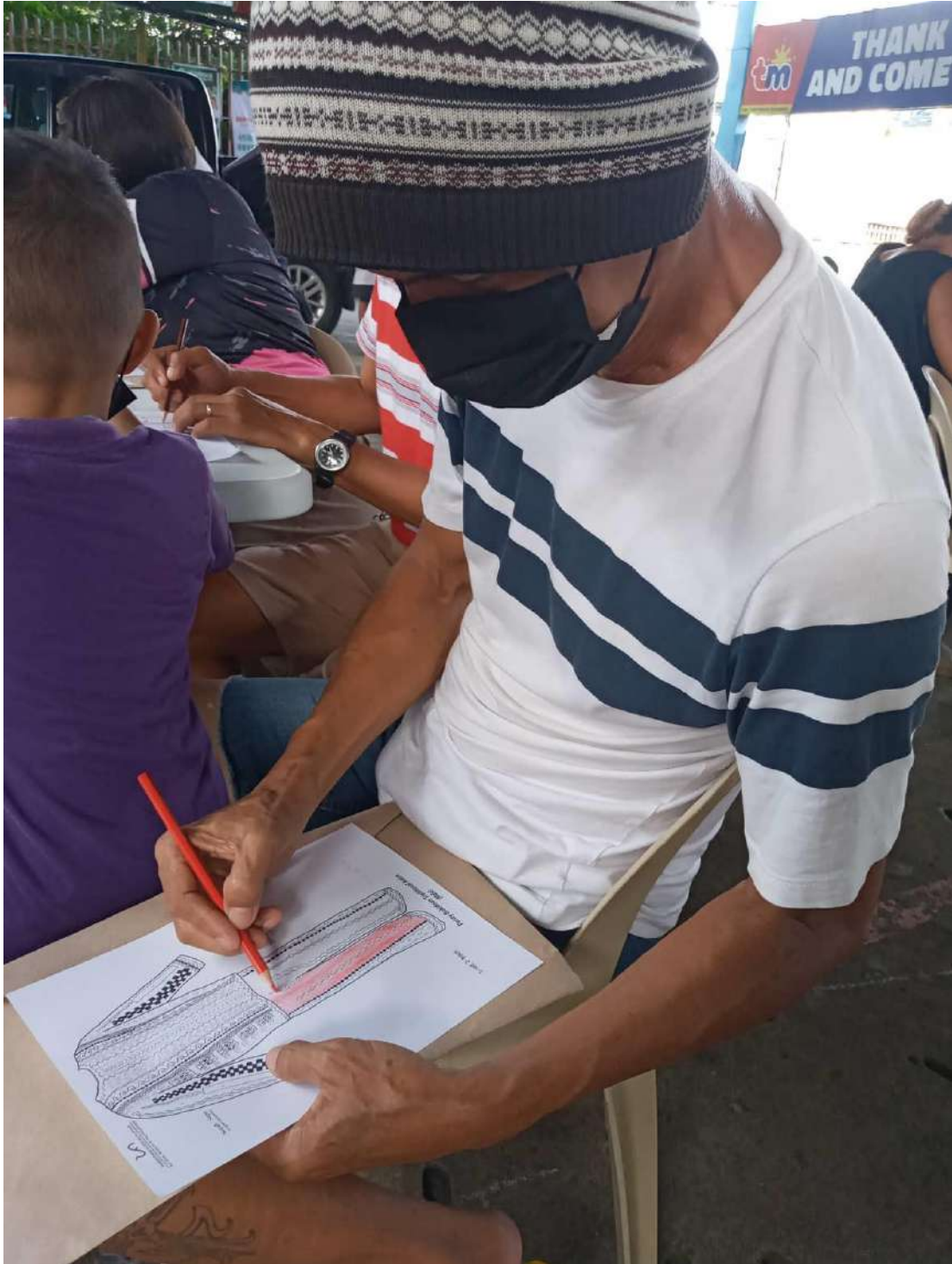
The participants hard at work on their Leaf Art.



Here the participant shows off his Leaf Art using the dried leaves of endemic trees in the region



Although rare, sometimes fathers and grandfathers would join the activities. Usually they only stayed for the tour of the boxes and the lecture, but here we see a grandfather color the sheet differentiating the stegodont from an elephant.



Another father coloring and learning about the traditional garments of an indigenous community in Panay, the Panay Bukidnon.



The new Deputy Director-General, Jorell Legaspi, helping the staff assemble the “loot bags” or giveaway items given to the children and winning groups. The prizes were provided by the partner agencies.



The staff packing the prizes for games and contests that take place during the lecture.