

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 10248



Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines has a strong cultural and creative base, and traditional cultural expression remains one of the living foundations of that economy. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, the country's creative economy reached PhP 1.94 trillion in 2024, accounting for 7.3 percent of GDP, while creative industries employed 7.51 million Filipinos.¹ Republic Act No. 11904, or the Philippine Creative Industries Development Act, likewise declares it a policy of the State to promote and support the development of Philippine creative industries by strengthening the capacities of creative firms, artists, artisans, creators, workers, and indigenous cultural communities.²

Nevertheless, many heritage-based enterprises are under pressure not only from market competition, but from a more basic threat: the weakening of intergenerational skills transfer. A recent Philippine case study on cultural MSMEs found that many traditional enterprises face difficulties in attracting younger generations, maintaining a skilled workforce, and planning for succession, even when market demand and cultural value remain present. The same study emphasized that the decline of artisanal skills and the absence of formal training pathways are among the major constraints on the long-term sustainability of weaving, embroidery, food traditions, and other heritage-based enterprises.³

¹ Philippine Statistics Authority, "Philippine Creative Economy Expands by 8.7 Percent in 2024, Accounted for 7.3 Percent of Gross Domestic Product," press release, March 20, 2025.

² Republic of the Philippines, Republic Act No. 11904, Philippine Creative Industries Development Act, July 27, 2022.

³ June Ann J. Casimiro, Karenina B. Romualdo, and Via Shane R. Santiago, Innovation Strategies in Traditional Cultural Expressions MSMEs in the Philippines: A Case Study, PIDS Discussion Paper Series No. 2024-48 (Quezon City: Philippine Institute for Development Studies, December 2024).

This proposed measure responds directly to that structural gap. The Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028 seeks to reinvigorate job creation, reduce poverty, strengthen MSMEs, expand domestic production, foster regional industrialization, strengthen academe-industry linkages, and improve access to science, technology, and innovation. A national traditional arts apprenticeship and succession program advances these goals in a concrete and place-based way: it creates livelihood opportunities, supports labor-intensive community enterprises, strengthens local supplier bases, and preserves skills that are both culturally significant and economically productive.⁴⁵

This proposal, moreover, is consistent with global safeguarding practice. UNESCO has long emphasized that traditional craftsmanship depends on transmission from generation to generation, and that one proven way of reinforcing such systems is to support instruction and apprenticeship.⁶ UNESCO-supported programs in Uzbekistan, for example, have combined traditional craftsmanship training with design and entrepreneurship in order to improve craft quality, develop creativity, and create sustainable income opportunities rooted in heritage.⁷

Other countries have likewise adopted practical apprenticeship models for heritage skills. In Scotland, the government reported support for a traditional skills programme and a Historic Skills Investment Plan to increase the number of apprentices developing the skills needed to conserve and manage the historic environment.⁸ In the United States, the National Park Service runs the Traditional Trades Advancement Program, under which participants receive immersive, hands-on training alongside experienced practitioners in trades such as masonry, carpentry, monuments, and woodcrafting to preserve cultural resources and build career pathways.⁹ These examples show that heritage apprenticeship is not merely a cultural project; it is also a workforce, enterprise, and local development strategy.

For young Filipinos, this bill creates paid pathways into skilled work and entrepreneurship. For master artisans, it recognizes teaching and transmission as valuable labor deserving public support. For families and communities, it helps sustain

⁴ National Economic and Development Authority, *Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028 Primer* (Pasig City: NEDA, 2022).

⁵ National Economic and Development Authority, *Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028*, Chapter 6: Revitalize Industry (Pasig City: NEDA, 2022).

⁶ UNESCO, “Traditional Craftsmanship,” *Intangible Cultural Heritage*, accessed April 23, 2026.

⁷ UNESCO, “National Training in Traditional Craftsmanship, Design and Entrepreneurship for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Uzbekistan,” April 4, 2024.

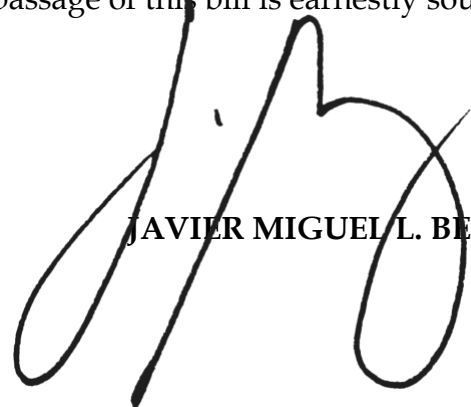
⁸ Scottish Government, *Programme for Government 2019 to 2020*, “Improving Outcomes Through Our Public Services,” September 3, 2019.

⁹ U.S. National Park Service, “Traditional Trades Advancement Program,” *Historic Preservation Training Center*, accessed April 21, 2026.

cultural MSMEs, local employment, and regional identity. For the State, it offers a practical way to align heritage protection with economic development. International labor research also shows that apprenticeship systems rooted in enterprises can be cost-effective because training already occurs where tools, materials, and production knowledge exist, while apprentices gain practical skills, work discipline, client exposure, and employability.¹⁰

This bill therefore seeks to establish a National Traditional Arts Apprenticeship and Succession Program for cultural MSMEs, with paid apprentice slots, master-artisan teaching grants, school-to-enterprise pathways, LGU-supported community training centers, and enterprise succession support. In doing so, it affirms a simple but urgent principle: that the survival of Filipino traditional arts requires not only recognition, but deliberate investment in the next generation who will practice, sustain, and build livelihoods from them.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ

¹⁰ International Labour Organization, *Upgrading Informal Apprenticeship: A Resource Guide for Africa* (Geneva: ILO, 2012).

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House Bill No. 10248

Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL TRADITIONAL ARTS
APPRENTICESHIP AND SUCCESSION PROGRAM FOR CULTURAL
MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs), PROVIDING
FUNDING THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress
assembled:*

SEC. 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the “*Traditional Arts Apprenticeship
and Succession Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to:

- a) Preserve and promote Filipino cultural heritage through sustainable livelihood systems;
- b) Ensure the transmission of traditional skills across generations;
- c) Support cultural MSMEs as engines of community-based economic development; and
- d) Make traditional arts trainable, bankable, and economically viable for Filipinos.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* - For purposes of this Act:

- a) Traditional Arts refer to skills and practices rooted in Filipino cultural heritage, including but not limited to weaving, embroidery, carving, pottery, metalcraft, and culinary traditions;
- b) Master Artisan refers to a recognized practitioner with demonstrated expertise and experience in a traditional craft;
- c) Apprentice refers to an individual undergoing structured training under a master artisan;
- d) Cultural MSMEs refers to micro, small, and medium enterprises engaged in traditional cultural expressions;
- e) Succession Planning refers to the process of transferring skills, knowledge, and enterprise ownership to the next generation;
- f) National Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program (NTAAP) refers to the national program established under this Act that provides structured apprenticeship, training, and enterprise support for traditional arts;
- g) National Living Traditions Apprenticeship Track (NLTAT) refers to the flagship component of the Program focused on endangered or high-value traditional skills through intensive mentorship and training;
- h) Centers of Living Traditions refer to designated or established community-based hubs that serve as venues for training, production, innovation, and preservation of traditional arts;
- i) Cultural Enterprise Continuity Fund refers to the fund created under this Act to support succession planning, enterprise transition, and sustainability of cultural MSMEs;
- j) School-to-Enterprise Training Pathways refer to structured linkages between educational institutions and cultural MSMEs that facilitate apprenticeship, immersion, and employment opportunities; and
- k) Accreditation refers to the formal recognition granted to master artisans, enterprises, and training centers that meet the standards set by the implementing agencies under this Act.

SEC. 4. *National Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program.* - There is hereby established a National Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program (NTAAP) to institutionalize a structured system of skills transmission for traditional arts.

The Program shall:

- a) Provide paid apprenticeship opportunities for Filipino youth;
- b) Facilitate structured, hands-on training under master artisans;
- c) Support cultural MSMEs in developing future skilled workers; and
- d) Ensure the continuity of endangered traditional skills.

SEC. 5. *National Living Traditions Apprenticeship Track.* - A flagship component of the Program, to be known as the National Living Traditions Apprenticeship Track

(NLTAT), is hereby established to focus on the preservation of endangered and high-value traditional skills.

Under this Track:

- a) Priority shall be given to crafts and practices at risk of decline or extinction;
- b) Master artisans shall be paired with selected apprentices under an intensive mentorship arrangement;
- c) Enhanced stipends, training support, and production assistance shall be provided;
- d) Centers of Living Traditions shall be established or designated in key cultural communities; and
- e) Graduates may be certified as advanced practitioners or future master artisans.

SEC. 6. *Program Components.* -To ensure effective implementation, the Program shall include the following components:

- a) Paid Apprenticeship Slots, which shall provide government-supported stipends and training opportunities for apprentices;
- b) Master Artisan Teaching Grants, which shall support artisans engaged in training and mentorship activities;
- c) School-to-Enterprise Training Pathways, which shall integrate apprenticeship opportunities into secondary, technical-vocational, and higher education systems;
- d) Community Training Centers, which shall serve as shared facilities for instruction, production, and innovation; and
- e) Enterprise Succession Support, which shall assist family-run and community-based cultural MSMEs in business continuity and generational transfer.

SEC. 7. *Cultural Enterprise Continuity Fund.* - There is hereby created a Cultural Enterprise Continuity Fund to support the long-term sustainability of cultural MSMEs.

The Fund shall be used to:

- a) Assist enterprises in succession planning and ownership transition;
- b) Support mentorship and intergenerational knowledge transfer;
- c) Encourage youth participation in cultural enterprises; and
- d) Provide advisory and capacity-building services for enterprise development.

SEC. 8. *Lead Implementing Agencies.* - The Program shall be implemented through a coordinated, multi-agency approach. The following agencies shall have primary responsibilities:

- a) The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) shall lead enterprise development and program coordination;
- b) The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) shall establish training standards and certification systems;
- c) The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) shall ensure cultural integrity and recognition of artisans;
- d) The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall integrate relevant programs into curricula; and
- e) Local Government Units (LGUs) shall provide local implementation, facilities, and support.

SEC. 9. *Accreditation and Certification.* - To ensure quality and accountability, an accreditation and certification system shall be established.

Such system shall include:

- a) Recognition and accreditation of master artisans;
- b) Accreditation of participating enterprises and training centers; and
- c) Certification of apprentices upon completion of training programs.

SEC. 10. *Incentives.* - To encourage participation, the State shall provide appropriate incentives to qualified participants.

These may include:

- a) Access to government grants, financing programs, and technical assistance;
- b) Eligibility for tax incentives, subject to existing laws and regulations; and
- c) Priority in government procurement and cultural promotion initiatives.

SEC. 11. *Integration with National Development Frameworks.* - The implementation of this Act shall be aligned with existing national development strategies to ensure coherence and efficiency.

Accordingly:

- a) Programs under this Act shall be integrated with the Philippine Creative Industries Development Plan pursuant to Republic Act No. 11904;
- b) Implementation shall support the goals of the Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028; and
- c) All implementing agencies shall ensure that initiatives are complementary and non-duplicative of existing programs.

SEC. 12. *Appropriations.* - The amount of Five Hundred Million Pesos (₱500,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated for the initial implementation of this Act.

Such amount may be sourced from:

- a) The General Appropriations Act;
- b) Existing budgets of implementing agencies; and
- c) Grants, donations, and partnerships from public and private entities.

Funding for the Program shall thereafter be included in the annual General Appropriations Act, subject to evaluation and expansion requirements..

SEC. 13. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the implementing agencies shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

SEC. 14. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 15. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 16. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,