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ALIGNING CULTURAL HERITAGE INNOVATION WITH THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: PLANNING PERSPECTIVES FROM THE INSPIRE INITIATIVE

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Abstract

Contemporary planning is increasingly recognising that sustainable development is not limited to physical infrastructure and economic growth, but also has a cultural and knowledge dimension. Cultural heritage, when mobilised through innovation and digital transformation has the potential to become a strategic planning resource in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, its integration into planning frameworks is fragmented and under-theorised. This article discusses how the cultural heritage innovation can be aligned with the SDG agenda from a planning perspective, based on the qualitative case study of the INSPIRE Initiative at the Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin. Using document analysis and theory-informed thematic analysis, SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) are the SDGs that will be focused on. The findings suggest that INSPIRE is a knowledge-based planning model mobilising heritage as a development capital through education, cultural sustainability, institutions and multi-stakeholder partnerships. The article is proposing the Cultural Heritage-SDG Planning Framework and providing policy-relevant insights for those planners aiming to incorporate the cultural knowledge systems into sustainable development strategies in Malaysia.

Keywords: Cultural heritage innovation; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Planning and development; Knowledge based planning; Institutional capacity.

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary planning and development discourse is increasingly aware that sustainable development can not be achieved through economic growth and physical infrastructure only. The social, cultural and knowledge dimension of development has become an important part of developing resilient communities, inclusive institutions and sustainable cities. Within this context, cultural heritage, which for many years has been seen mainly as an object of preservation, has been progressively redefined as a strategic resource that can contribute to the development planning, social cohesion and long-term sustainability (UNESCO, 2016; Pendlebury, 2013). This shift is especially important in countries that have a rich intangible and documentary heritage where historical knowledge systems, local wisdom and cultural memory are not as widely used in formal planning processes.

The adoption in 2015 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations has helped fuel this paradigm shift even more. Although culture is not formulated as a goal in itself in the SDG framework, it is increasingly recognised as a cross-cutting enabler, supporting several of the goals, notably those concerning education, sustainable cities, institutional strength and partnerships (UNESCO, 2016; United Nations, 2015). In planning practice, this has stimulated new focus on the inclusion of cultural assets, knowledge systems and heritage innovation in development strategies. However, in spite of increasing policy recognition, the process of translating cultural heritage into operational planning instruments is uneven, fragmented and often symbolic rather than operational.

One constant difficulty is the conceptualisation of cultural heritage in planning institutions. Heritage is often seen as a static thing, often limited to conservation areas, museums or archival repositories, rather than as a dynamic source of knowledge that can provide input to current development agendas (Smith, 2006). This narrow understanding of heritage affects the ability of heritage to contribute meaningfully to spatial planning, community development and to policy innovation. As a result, planning frameworks are often seen to fail to exploit indigenous knowledge systems, historical manuscripts and cultural narratives that could otherwise enhance local identity, social legitimacy and community commitment to development processes.

In the Malaysian situation, this challenge is especially pertinent. Malaysia has a huge amount of cultural heritage, such as Malay manuscripts, indigenous knowledge traditions and historical intellectual networks evidence of hundreds of years of interaction with science, governance, medicine and ethics. Yet, these knowledge resources appear to be largely disconnected from mainstream planning and development discourse which still takes a lead in terms of technocratic, sectoral and infrastructure based approaches. While such

approaches have provided tangible economic consequences, it has also led to a social fragmentation, cultural marginalisation and increasing disconnection between development policies and community values (Yusoff & Ngah, 2019). Recent scholarship in planning studies has therefore argued for more knowledge based and culturally informed planning models especially in the Global South where development paths have to balance modernising processes with cultural continuity (Healey, 2010; Watson, 2014). Within this emerging discourse, innovation has a critical role with more than the technological meaning of the word but also as a process of reconfiguring existing knowledge systems in order to address contemporary challenges. Digital technologies, in particular, have opened new possibilities for transforming cultural heritage from passive archives into an active platform for learning, engagement and policy relevant knowledge production (Giaccardi, 2012).

It is in this larger context of planning and development that the INSPIRE (Research Institute of Islamic Product and Malay Civilisation) Initiative, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) is located as a relevant case study. Mandated by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2020), INSPIRE operationalises the concept of heritage as development capital in a progressive three-tier model of: it functions as (1) a digital archive for Islamic and Malay world manuscripts (Research Institute of Islamic Product and Malay Civilization, n.d., "Research" section); (2) a collaborative network (SDG 17) with local and international institutions (e.g., Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, 2023); and most critically, (3) a wisdom hub that actively interprets. This evolution from preservation to knowledge generation makes INSPIRE a prime empirical model to analyse how heritage innovation is translated into actionable planning resources.

Although a great number of heritage related initiatives have been developed across the region, there is a gap in the literature regarding empirical and conceptual studies that explore such initiatives explicitly from a planning perspective. Much of the available literature on cultural heritage innovation is concerned with tourism, conservation or cultural industries, with little attention given to the role of heritage-based knowledge platforms in informing planning institutions, policy formulation and development strategies (Ashworth, Graham & Tunbridge, 2007). As a result, there are often no clear frameworks that planners and policymakers can use to understand the relevance, scale and policy implications of heritage-driven initiatives.

This article aims to remedy this lack by looking at the case study of the INSPIRE Initiative as an example of cultural heritage innovation in line with the SDG agenda analysed using the tool of planning and development studies. Rather than assessing the cultural or historical content of heritage materials as such, the research aims to address the question of how heritage innovation can be

operationalised with respect to planning frameworks, and contribute to development objectives and the enhancement of institutional capacity. By doing so, the article answers calls for greater incorporation of more integrated and interdisciplinary approaches to planning that recognise culture and knowledge as a central component of sustainable development (UNESCO, 2016; Healey, 2010).

The central research problem guiding this research can be stated as follows: How can cultural heritage innovation be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals in ways that are meaningful, practical and relevant to planning institutions? To address this question, it is necessary to go beyond normative advocacy and to analyse the role of heritage initiatives as planning resources, how they relate to policy frameworks and what forms of institutional support are needed to sustain these initiatives.

Accordingly, the article aims at three key objectives. First, it seeks to analyse the conceptual background of cultural heritage innovation in the context of the present-day planning and the SDG framework. Second, it considers INSPIRE Initiative as an applied model, in relation to its mechanisms of knowledge mobilisation, institution collaboration and community engagement. Third, it identifies some of the important planning and policy implications emanating from this case, especially in terms of how such initiatives can be integrated into regional and urban development strategies in Malaysia and others that share similar circumstances.

The significance of this study is that it adds to planning scholarship and practice. By making cultural heritage innovation a planning-relevant phenomenon, rather than a marginal cultural activity, the article proposes an alternative lens through which planners and policymakers may approach heritage, in search of sustainable development. In doing so, it strengthens the case that the achievement of the SDGs does not only require technical solutions and economic instruments, but also the strategic mobilisation of cultural knowledge, institutional trust and collective memory as basic elements of the development planning.

METHODS

This study adopts the qualitative case study research method to examine the possibilities of cultural heritage innovation, which can be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the context of planning and development. The qualitative case study method is particularly appropriate for exploring complex, context dependent phenomena where institutional processes, policy interactions and knowledge practices are central to analysis (Yin, 2018; Creswell, 2014). In planning research, case studies are broadly employed to

produce in-depth information on practices, models and frameworks that may not be readily captured through quantitative indicators alone (Healey, 2010).

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Research Design

The research is designed as an exploratory and analytical case study, with the INSPIRE Initiative as a bounded system of activities, institutional arrangements and development-oriented programmes as its object. Rather than aiming for statistical generalisation, the research looks to aim for analytical generalisation whereby findings from the case are used to inform discussions about planning frameworks, policy integration and sustainable development strategies at a broader level (Yin, 2018). This approach is in line with the goal of the study, which aim to understand how and to what extent cultural heritage innovation is an innovation that is relevant as a planning resource.

A qualitative design is also justified by the nature of cultural heritage innovation itself which involves interpretive processes, knowledge mobilisation and institutional collaboration that are best examined through document analysis and thematic interpretation (Giaccardi, 2012). By placing the analysis in the context of established planning and SDGs discourses, the study results in the gap between empirical observation and conceptual reflection.

Case Selection: The INSPIRE Initiative

The INSPIRE Initiative was chosen as the case study on three major criteria. First, it symbolizes a structured and ongoing attempt to incorporate cultural heritage, especially manuscript based and indigenous knowledge, into the contemporary development agendas using digital innovation. Second, the initiative is part of an institutional framework involving universities, public agencies and community stakeholders, which makes it relevant for planning and policy analysis. Third, INSPIRE explicitly ties its activities to the goals of sustainability, education, community empowerment and institutional collaboration which fit closely with key targets in the SDGs.

In planning research, such information-rich cases are of special value regarding understanding emerging models and practices, which may inform

policy learning and institutional adaptation (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The selection of INSPIRE is therefore not so much to view it as an exceptional or an isolated initiative as it is to see it as relevant as a representative example of heritage-based innovation, which has planning implications.

Data Sources

Data for the study was obtained from a range of qualitative sources to ensure the robustness of the analysis through data triangulation. The primary sources include:

- i. Document analysis, including institutional reports, programme descriptions, strategic plans and project documentation and public communications relating to the INSPIRE Initiative. These documents give insight into the objectives, operational mechanisms and development orientation of the initiative.
- ii. Policy and planning documents, such as national development plans, cultural policy statements and frameworks relating to SDGs, placing the initiative in a broader context of planning and governance; and;
- iii. Secondary literature such as academic studies on cultural heritage, planning theory, sustainable development and knowledge based development models.

Document analysis is an established method in planning and policy research, especially in the analysis of institutional intent, governance arrangements and strategic alignment with policy objectives (Bowen, 2009). The combination of several document types enables a more complete visitation of cultural heritage innovation (how it is framed, justified and operationalised).

Analytical Framework

The analysis is guided by a thematic analytical framework on mapping the activities and characteristics of the INSPIRE Initiative against selected SDGs that are most relevant to planning and development. Based on the literature and the stated objectives of the initiative four SDGs were identified as the main analytical lenses: SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

The analytical process had three major stages. First, relevant data sections were identified and coded based on thematic categories such as knowledge mobilisation, digital innovation, engagement in the community, institutional collaboration and relevance to planning. Second, these themes have been discussed regarding the targets and principles linked to the selected SDGs.

Third, interpretations of the findings were informed by planning theory specifically concepts concerning knowledge-based planning, institutional capacity and culturally informed development (Healey, 2010; Watson, 2014).

This kind of theory-driven thematic analysis allows the study to go beyond descriptive accounts to an interpretive understanding of the contribution of cultural heritage innovation in the framework of underlying planning objectives. It also enables to identify enabling factors and constraints affecting the integration of heritage initiatives in formal planning and policy framework.

Reliability, Validity and Weaknesses

In order to increase the credibility and reliability of the study, several strategies were used. Data triangulation across multiple sources helps to mitigate the risk of single source bias and enhances consistency of interpretations. The application of tried and tested frameworks in planning and SDGs further justifies analytical validity as this anchors the findings in recognised theoretical and policy discourses (Creswell, 2014).

Nevertheless, there are some limitations to the study. As a single case study, the findings are context-specific, and may not be directly transferable to all planning environments. In addition, since document-based data is relied upon, informal practices and tacit knowledge may not be fully captured. These limitations are recognized as inherent to exploratory qualitative research and these are managed by focusing the results as analytical insights rather than prescriptive solutions.

Table 1: Mapping of Data Sources, Analytical Themes and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Data Source	Key Data Focus	Analytical Theme	Relevant SDG	Planning Relevance
INSPIRE institutional reports and programme documents	Objectives, programme design, implementation strategies	Knowledge mobilisation and heritage innovation	SDG 4 (Quality Education)	Supports lifelong learning, knowledge-based development and educational planning
Digital manuscript platforms and heritage	Digitalisation processes, content accessibility,	Digital innovation and cultural sustainability	SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)	Enhances cultural identity, place-making and

Data Source	Key Data Focus	Analytical Theme	Relevant SDG	Planning Relevance
innovation outputs	user engagement			community resilience
Strategic plans and collaboration records	Institutional partnerships, governance structures	Institutional capacity and collaboration	SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)	Strengthens institutional legitimacy, governance and trust
Inter-agency and community engagement documentation	Multi-stakeholder participation, network formation	Partnership and stakeholder integration	SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)	Facilitates integrated planning and cross-sectoral coordination
National development plans and SDG policy frameworks	Alignment with national and global sustainability agendas	Policy alignment and development integration	SDG 11, SDG 16	Ensures coherence between heritage initiatives and planning policies
Academic and policy literature	Conceptual framing, comparative insights	Knowledge-based and culturally informed planning	SDG 4, SDG 11	Provides theoretical grounding for planning innovation

Table 1 illustrates the analytical mapping between data sources, thematic categories and selected Sustainable Development Goals. This mapping provides a structured framework for examining how cultural heritage innovation within the INSPIRE Initiative aligns with planning-relevant sustainability objectives. By explicitly linking empirical data to SDG themes, the analysis ensures conceptual clarity and policy relevance within a planning and development

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Heritage Innovation and the SDG 4: Quality Education

One of the most obvious points of correspondence between the INSPIRE Initiative and the Sustainable Development Goals lies in its contribution to SDG 4 (Quality Education). Within planning and development discourse, education is increasingly being seen as not merely referring to formal schooling, but as an ecosystem of lifelong learning and access to knowledge and intellectual power (UNESCO, 2016). From this perspective, the digitalisation and activation of

manuscript heritage carried out by INSPIRE is a kind of educational innovation that is going beyond the conventional curricular frameworks.

Rather than addressing manuscripts and heritage materials as specialist or elite knowledge that is restricted to archives, INSPIRE redefines them as resources for learning for students, educators and the wider public. This approach is consistent with the emerging planning literature that emphasises on the role of knowledge infrastructure in supporting inclusive development (Healey, 2010). By making heritage accessible as digital platforms and interpretive content, the initiative plays a role in lowering barriers to access knowledge, especially to those communities that may be marginalised by geographic or institutional location.

From a planning perspective, this educational dimension has more general implications. Knowledge-based development models state that learning environments, both formal and informal, play a crucial role in the formation of human capital and social resilience (Watson, 2014). INSPIRE's activities therefore address SDG 4 not only through preserving cultural knowledge but also through putting that knowledge in a development-oriented learning ecosystem. This is a challenge for planners to reconsider education-related indicators, going beyond school infrastructure and including cultural knowledge platforms as part of planning strategies for human development.

Cultural Heritage Innovation and the Achievement of SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and Communities

The aligning with SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) can be seen in the way that INSPIRE contributes to the cultural sustainability, place identity and community cohesion. Sustainable urban and regional development is increasingly recognising that physical infrastructure is not enough to build communities that are liveable and resilient; cultural meaning, historical continuity and social attachment play equally important roles (Pendlebury, 2013).

Through its focus on heritage innovation, INSPIRE assists in the preservation and reinterpretation of cultural memory as a living part of the present-day development. Digital heritage platforms in this sense serve as tools of place-making, both in the re-enforcement of common narratives and collective identity. Planning theory has proposed that such narratives are a must if it is to facilitate community participation and long-term stewardship of urban and regional environments (Smith, 2006).

In the Malaysian context where rapid urbanisation has often seen returns in the homogenisation of space, initiatives such as INSPIRE provide alternative pathways in the sustainable development of a community. This is relevant to local studies, for example those from Ismail and Ahmad (2021), showing how the integration of cultural heritage in urban planning can help develop place identity and community resilience in historic cities, such as George Town. By bringing

manuscript heritage and local knowledge into public discourse, the initiative plays a role in developing cultural distinctiveness without detaching from modernisation. This balance between continuity and change is one of the key principles of SDG 11 and a constant challenge for planners working in fast developing regions.

Importantly, and in contrast to the notion that the relevance of INSPIRE to SDG 11 is in the physical conservation results, it is in its capacity to integrate cultural sustainability into development thinking. This increases the scope of planning activities beyond zoning and land use, so that planners tend to focus on integrating intangible cultural dimensions in urban and regional strategies.

Cultural Heritage Innovation and SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Effective Institutions

The link between cultural heritage innovation and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) is less obvious at first, but is also as important from a planning and governance point of view. Strong institutions may be characterized not only through administrative efficiency, but also through legitimacy, trust and social embeddedness (United Nations, 2015).

Cultural knowledge is a part of what INSPIRE contributes to these dimensions as a public resource that strengthens institutional credibility. Through the involvement of communities, academics and public agencies in heritage-based knowledge-related programmes, a sense of community ownership, and openness is created. Planning research emphasizes that institutions seen to be culturally disconnected tend to find it difficult to win people's trust, which undermines policy implementation (Healey, 2010).

Furthermore, heritage innovation is also supportive of SDG 16 on promoting inclusive narratives and historical awareness as an essential part for social cohesion in plural societies. This is echoed in the work of Omar and Mohd Noor (2020) and the emphasis that they lay down on the role of community participation in heritage conservation as a means of strengthening institutional legitimacy and public trust in Melaka. Rather than giving precedence to one authoritative discourse over the other, digital heritage platforms do not dismiss the possibility of interpretive plurality, including the possibility for institutions to play a facilitative role rather than as mere regulator. This participatory orientation is familiar to the current generation of governance models which focus on collaborative planning and deliberative processes (Watson, 2014).

From a policy perspective, the INSPIRE Initiative is a clear example of how cultural heritage can serve as an institutional asset, providing solid social ground on which planning decisions are made. This reframing presents a challenge for planners in that it requires them to think about governance capacity

in such a way that they not only think about the technical capacity, but also the cultural legitimacy, and the continuity with the past.

Cultural Heritage Innovation and the SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

The best match between INSPIRE and the SDG is arguably SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Contemporary planning is increasingly relying on cross-sectoral collaboration because complex development challenges go beyond the capacity of single institutions (United Nations, 2015). INSPIRE is a good example of this approach with the multi-stakeholder model that brings together academic institutions, government agencies, cultural organisations and local communities.

Such partnerships are not just operational arrangements, but act as knowledge networks to facilitate the circulation of expertise, resources and legitimacy. Planning literature emphasises on the importance of relational capacity, which is the ability of the institutions to work across the boundaries in achieving the sustainable development outcomes (Healey, 2010). INSPIRE's collaborative structure therefore contributes to its relevance as a planning-oriented project, as opposed to a cultural project per se.

The partnership dimension is also an aspect of policy scalability. Heritage initiatives tend to get stuck at the pilot stage because of fragmentation and lack of coordination of institutions. By having collaboration as part of the core structure, INSPIRE has shown the value of heritage innovation in relation to enduring and scaling it across wider development ecosystems. This has direct implications for planners who are looking to operationalise SDG 17 in the national and regional development frameworks.

INSPIRE as a Knowledge Based Planning Model

Taken together, then, the alignments with SDG 4, 11, 16 and 17 place the INSPIRE Initiative in the position of a knowledge-based planning model as opposed to a conventional heritage programme. Its significance cannot be attributed to the amount of the digitised materials and the amount of activities that have been conducted, but rather in the way that it reconfigures the notion of cultural heritage as a form of development capital.

This model connects with emerging planning paradigms that focus on learning, collaboration and cultural intelligence as building blocks of sustainable development (Watson, 2014). By integrating heritage innovation into education, community development, institutional governance and partnerships, INSPIRE shows a holistic approach that is close to that of the integrated nature of the SDG agenda.

However, there are also several challenges presented in the discussion. The process of integrating heritage innovation into the formal planning systems is still limited by regulatory frameworks which ascend physical development

indicators. In addition, maintaining cross-sectoral partnerships requires the support of institutions and policies over the long term. These challenges make the need for planners to come up with new evaluative tools and policy mechanisms that recognise the legitimacy of cultural knowledge as a component of development planning.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of the INSPIRE Initiative proves that cultural heritage innovation can be used as a strategic planning resource, if it is institutionally supported, digitally enabled and linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. This section presents some of the important policy implications and planning recommendations based on the case study with relevance to planning institutions, local authorities and development agencies in Malaysia.

Changing the Policy of Cultural Heritage as Development Capital

A key policy implication of this study is the importance of reorienting cultural heritage in terms of planning as a form of development capital, as opposed to a sectoral or ancillary issue. Existing planning instruments and plans, such as structure plans and local plans, tend to focus on physical infrastructure, economic indicators and land use efficiency. While these dimensions are critical, the results show that the cultural knowledge systems cannot be ignored if sustainable development strategies are to be long-term and socially legitimate.

Therefore, planning policies should explicitly recognise the contribution of cultural heritage innovation; in particular of knowledge-based and digital heritage initiatives to human development, community resilience and institutional strength. This may be operationalised including cultural knowledge indicators in planning assessments, e.g. accessing heritage-based learning resources, community participation in cultural programmes and institutional collaboration around heritage innovation (UNESCO, 2016). Such indicators would enable planners to assess the outcomes of development in ways beyond physical and economic indicators.

Incorporating Cultural Heritage Innovation in Planning Instruments

A second implication is that of heritage innovation in formal planning instruments. While heritage has been addressed in many cases by conservation guidelines or special zones, the INSPIRE case demonstrates the potential of non-spatial knowledge-based heritage initiatives to support planning objectives.

Local authorities and planning agencies might want to consider including heritage innovation strategies as part of structure plans, local plans and sectoral development policies. For example, digital heritage platforms may be aligned with education planning, programmes for developing communities and

smart cities. This approach involves bringing heritage out of policy silos and into mainstream development planning.

From the point of view of governance this integration needs inter-departmental coordination, especially to the planning units, cultural agencies and educational institutions. The INSPIRE Initiative is a great example of how such coordination can improve policy coherence and limit fragmentation, a long-term challenge in development planning (Healey, 2010).

Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Governance using Heritage Innovation

The convergence of the innovation of cultural heritage and the SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) appear to indicate that heritage-based initiatives can build institutional capacity if they are placed in a governance framework. Cultural knowledge in which institutions are engaged are more likely to be perceived as legitimate, inclusive and responsive to community values.

Policy frameworks should therefore support planning institutions to take a participatory and cultural approach. This may involve supporting heritage knowledge platforms as tools for public engagement, consultation and policy communication. By using stories and knowledge from culture and history, the planners can increase the public's understanding of development policies and create trust between institutions and communities (United Nations, 2015).

In addition, capacity-building programmes of planners and public officials with exposure to cultural heritage innovation and knowledge-based development models. This would provide planning professionals with the conceptual and practical tools they need to bring cultural dimensions into policy formulation and implementation.

Institutionalising Multi-Stakeholder Partnership for Sustainable Development

The importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships in operationalising planning on a SDG-aligned process is underlined under the INSPIRE Initiative. Effective partnerships go beyond ad hoc collaboration and require institutional mechanisms to support a long-term engagement, sharing of resources and decision-making.

Planning policies should, therefore, give formal recognition and support for partnerships between academic institutions, cultural organisations, community groups and public agencies. This may include the setting up of joint planning committees, joint funding schemes or knowledge-sharing platforms that will enable continued interaction. Such arrangements are in line with modern planning paradigms that emphasise collaborative governance and networked planning (e.g. Healey, 2010).

Moreover, partnerships grounded in cultural heritage innovation provide planners with a way of bridging the gap between technical planning processes and community knowledge and lived experiences. This integration increases the relevancy and acceptability of development strategies, especially in cultural diverse situations.

Cultural Heritage-SDGs Planning Framework Development

Based on the findings, this study proposes the development of a Cultural Heritage-SDG Planning Framework as a planning guide for planners and policy makers. Such a framework would explain the role of heritage innovation in the context of achieving more than one SDG at once, offering a way of structuring how to integrate policies.

Some of the key components of the framework may include:

- i. Knowledge mobilisation - using heritage resource for education, learning and innovation (SDG 4).
- ii. Cultural sustainability - heritage narratives in the urban and regional development strategies (SDG 11).
- iii. Institutional legitimacy - drawing upon cultural knowledge to support governance and the public trust (SDG 16)
- iv. Partnership mechanisms - supporting cross-sectoral cooperation and policy coherence (SDG 17).

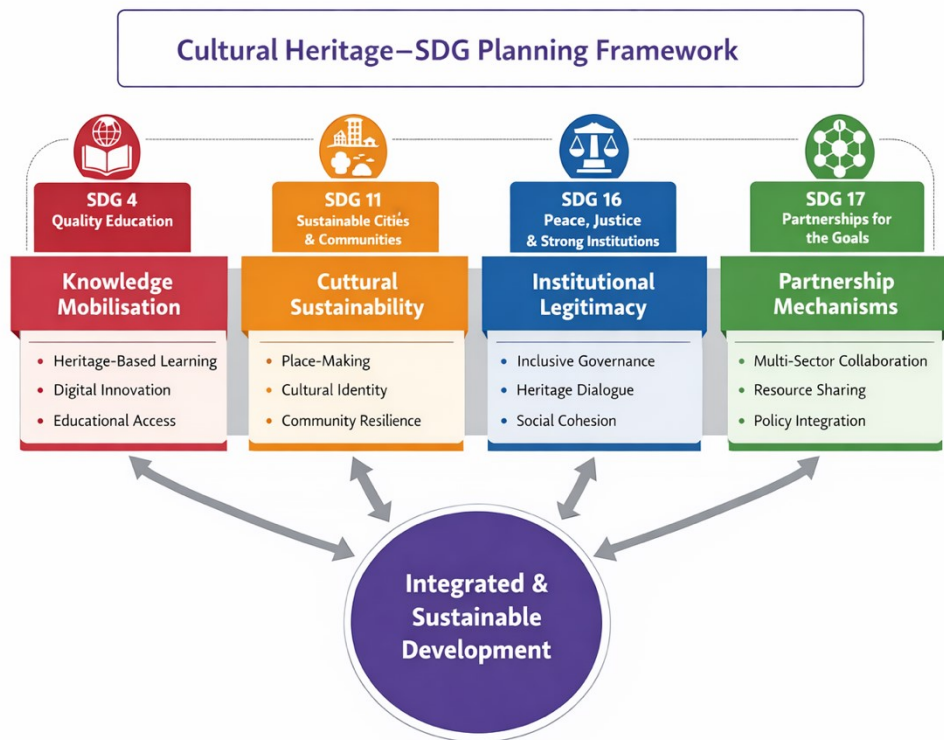
By adopting such a framework it is possible for planning institutions to move to more integrated, culturally informed and sustainable development models. This approach is not alien to Abdullah and Hassan (2019) who suggest a knowledge-based development framework that makes cultural sustainability a key element of urban planning in Malaysia.

Implications for Malaysian Planning Practice and More

For Malaysia where development planning is carried out in a culturally rich and plural social setting, the implication of this study is particularly pertinent. Integrating cultural heritage innovation into planning practice provides a way of achieving the SDGs in a way that is locally based and socially sustainable. At the same time, the insights gained from the INSPIRE Initiative are transferable to other contexts in the Global South where similar problems of cultural marginalisation and institutional fragmentation continue to exist.

Ultimately, the policy implications outlined in this section support the argument that the planning for sustainable development must involve not only a spatial dimension and an economic dimension, but also a cultural dimension and a knowledge foundation of society. Cultural heritage innovation, if well

integrated within planning and policy frameworks, is a valuable yet under-used resource for the further implementation of the SDG agenda.



CONCLUSION

This manuscript has contributed to a conceptual and strategic re-thinking of cultural heritage as a crucial driving force in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and not a side or symbolic concern. By proposing the Cultural Heritage-SDG Planning Framework the study shows that heritage - by mobilising knowledge systems, institutional legitimacy, cultural sustainability and strategic partnerships - can serve as an integrative axis for inclusive and sustainable development.

The framework puts knowledge mobilisation in the foreground as a fundamental pillar, and brings cultural heritage to the intersection of SDG 4 by rethinking of heritage as a living epistemic resource. Through teaching, digital innovation and public involvement, heritage goes far beyond the preservation of archives, to become a means of inter-generational learning and capacity building

for society. This shift is of particular relevance in the context where the deployment of indigenous knowledge, traditional wisdom and historical memory, has been marginalised for a long time within formal development paradigms.

Equally important, the pillar of cultural sustainability enhances the role of heritage in the construction of resilient communities, sustainable urban and rural environments in relation to SDG 11. By taking the concepts of place-making, cultural identity and community participation into account in the development planning, heritage comes out as a stabilising force that can contribute to strengthening the sense of social belonging, while counteracting the homogenising pressures of globalisation. This perspective criticises models of sustainability that focus on the technocratic dimensions of human well-being at the expense of the cultural dimensions of human well-being.

The framework further highlighted institutional legitimacy to be a key condition for sustainable development which speaks volumes in connection with SDG 16. Heritage-based governance if based on inclusiveness, dialogue and social cohesion helps to strengthen public trust and credibility on policy. In this regard, cultural heritage is not only an object of protection, but also normative resource that supports the work of ethical governance, conflict mediation and participatory decision-making.

Finally, the focus on partnership mechanisms is reflective of the need for multi-sectoral partnership that is called for by SDG 17. There are synergies needed between academic institutions, government agencies, civil society, cultural practitioners and international partners in order to have effective heritage-led development. The framework shows that such partnerships are not add-ons, but structural enablers which ensure heritage initiatives are able to scale along with being financially viable and achieving long-term policy integration.

Taken together, the Cultural Heritage-SDG Planning Framework is meant to be the conceptual as well as the practical planning tool. It offers a coherent framework for policy makers, researchers as well as development practitioners to integrate cultural heritage initiatives in the global agendas for sustainability without being too prescriptive or abstracted from local contexts and epistemologies. More broadly, according to the paper, the concept of sustainable development without a cultural grounding is at risk of becoming socially fragile and ethically hollow.

Future research may consider testing this framework empirical in different socio-cultural contexts, evaluate the applicability of this framework in digital and post-pandemic development contexts, and refine its indicators to evaluate policy contexts. Nonetheless, this manuscript proves that cultural heritage, if well planned and institutionally supported, has a transformative potential in changing an integrated, inclusive and truly sustainable development agenda.

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