

About ASPBAE

ASPBAE is a non-profit, non-government regional organisation with membership throughout the Asia Pacific region. It has operational relations with UNESCO. Its overall purpose is to strengthen the theory and practice of adult education as a contribution to individual and social development.

Today, ASPBAE covers a wide diversity of groups and individuals involved in both formal and non formal education, working with and through government agencies, universities, NGOs, community groups, trade unions, indigenous peoples, women's organisation, the media and other institutions of civil society. Their educational activities reflect global and regional imperatives in the promotion of people's empowerment and sustainable development.

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Executive

Summary

Overview of the Research

Since the formation of E-Net Philippines in 2000, there has been a strong advocacy focus on access to culture-based education for indigenous peoples. The term "culture-based," while being a contested term in the network, was adopted to take government to task on its promises for an education that will respect the diversity of culture, knowledge and learning systems of the myriad of indigenous peoples in the Philippines. "Culture-based" terminology also serves as a critique of the objective of public education and perspective of the government (and oftentimes of the church) to "mainstream the indigenous peoples."

While E-Net Philippines believes that indigenous knowledge should be integrated holistically in the curriculum of public education, it does not subscribe to the preservation-of-culture framework; instead, it believes in contemporary continuity of indigenous knowledge as indigenous cultures adapt to the changing contexts from outside communities. ¹ In the network's EFA consultations in Mindanao and Cordillera in 2002 through 2007, the education agenda forwarded by the indigenous peoples themselves, highlighted the imperative for their people to learn the modern/dominant languages, knowledge and skills that will further empower them to assert their rights for self-determination.

In order to achieve the 6 internationally agreed upon Education for All (EFA) goals, a tenet of E-Net's advocacy is increasing indigenous communities' access to quality and culture-based education. However, there is a dearth of materials and disaggregated data that can establish an in-depth analysis on access to education for indigenous people. The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) is the government body mandated to ensure the rights and welfare of indigenous communities, aimed specifically to facilitate their right to their ancestral land. The body also facilitates the indigenous groups' participation in governance by electing representatives to local government at different levels. Embedded in its mandate is the protection of the culture of indigenous communities which includes supporting education access. Given this mandate it is surprising that the NCIP lacks education data and has not done a national survey or case studies on education. Instead it has limited its assistance to education for indigenous children and youth to the granting of a few scholarships.

¹ Term adopted from Apo Palambungan Center – APC, an indigenous school based in Bukidnon

Executive

Summary

To argue the case for indigenous peoples, the Popular Education for People's Empowerment (PEPE), Development Action for Grassroots Learning (DANGLE) and Kasanyangan Foundation (KFI), members of E-Net Philippines, did a series of consultations with indigenous communities and wrote cases studies on education of indigenous people. These cases were written in 2004 and again in 2007 in line with the Education Watch done in partnership with ASPBAE. The cases studies examined education as experienced by a number of indigenous communities in Luzon and Mindanao and they explored various elements of education including community perspectives on its importance; quality of and access to schools and learning opportunities; educational governance structures and; curriculum and pedagogy. Based on the findings from the workshops and meetings that informed these case studies, this paper will advance a series of recommendations for improving the education of indigenous peoples in the Philippines and for realizing the achievement of the EFA goals in the Philippines.

Executive

Summary

Key Findings

Lack of access to education facilities, as well as lack of quality curriculum once a learner is able to access education facilities will continue to thwart the achievement of the EFA goals if not corrected.

Indigenous people comprised 8% of the total population in 2000. Only 46% reported having finished elementary school, 19% finished secondary school, 2% held college diplomas and 18% of indigenous people reported having no education at all. As a youthful population, 41% falling into the age bracket 0-14, their continued exclusion from education access poses a major threat to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education For All (EFA) Goals.

The case studies presented in the 4th section of this report provide further support for the view that quality education must be provided for learners and that includes relevant curriculum materials that link learning to local and indigenous, ontological understandings. Put plainly, the case studies suggest that when indigenous people are able to access education under the current provisions there are two outcomes that are most common. The first, that the learner becomes alienated from his or her

traditional culture and ways of thinking. The second, that without proper linkages between indigenous understandings and curriculum objectives, learners are unable to properly engage in education activities and feeling marginalized, drop out.

The case studies also provide support for the understanding that poverty and geography are major barriers to education access. In Lake Sebu, South Cotabato region, 87.5% of the population resides in rural locations and it is estimated that current primary enrolments are only 57%. Not surprisingly the literacy rate for the region sits at a mere 35.9%. Lack of access to education facilities, as well as lack of quality curriculum once a learner is able to access education facilities will continue to thwart the achievement of the EFA goals if not corrected. The case studies demonstrate once more the importance of EFA goal 6 on providing quality education.

Recommendations

- Pro-poor policies in schools should be in place, including subsidies, to help poor families meet the associated costs of education including transportation to and from education facilities, food and school supplies.
- There is an urgent need for curriculum reform to ensure that curriculum can be tailored to the local context as well as providing opportunities for indigenous people to be schooled in the mainstream culture and knowledge areas.
- Priority should be given to increasing government-run facilities for early childhood education in indigenous and rural areas as well as developing more sustainable and accredited, locally-run early childhood education centers
- Better inter-agency strategies and coordination efforts should be in place to achieve EFA. The Department of Education alone cannot ensure that students enroll in and attend school. Policies by the Department of Labour and Employment, Local Government Units, National Commission on Indigenous People and the Commission on the Welfare of Children, among others, must all play their role in assisting the Philippines to meet all 6 EFA goals.
- Education programs need to be provided to meet the needs of indigenous adults who were denied education opportunities. Focusing on children alone will not suffice for correcting injustices and the decisions of the older generation often directly impact the younger generation. Without empowering adults through education there is a greater chance that poorly educated adults will make decisions that keep their children out of schools.
- More timely expansion of the Alternative Learning System by the Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS) for indigenous communities is important. Lack of resources to document stories, translate modules in local languages and develop relevant reading materials, has meant the development of ALS for indigenous communities has proceeded at a slow pace. Building from best-practices, government resources need to be directed to this type of work to expedite the formation of an expanded, diverse, culture-based and learner-centered ALS for indigenous people in the country
- There is an urgent need for institutionalization of indigenous peoples' participation in decision-making in schools and education more broadly. Community participation is likely to increase the instances of parents sending children to school.
- Lastly, urgent action is needed to support the Mother Tongue network and ensure the passage of House Bill 3719 reflecting the need for multi-lingual instruction in schools and in literacy programs.

1. Background

The complexity of problems faced by the indigenous cultural communities, as well as persistent mindsets regarding these problems, have led them to become one of the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups in the country. Indigenous people are classified by the government as a 'deprived, depressed and underserved group' along with Muslim communities, victims of armed conflict, child laborers, differently-abled, inmates and probationers, beggars, prostitutes and other ostracized groups.² Such classification suggests that the Government is neither taking into account adequately the problems faced by indigenous communities nor recognizing its own responsibility to provide for and to protect indigenous peoples.

1.1 Indigenous Peoples as a Distinct Sector

There are five characteristics that are often ascribed to indigenous peoples by way of defining them:

- (1) self-identification and identification by others as being part of a distinct cultural group and the display of desire to preserve that cultural identity;
- (2) a linguistic identity different from that of the dominant society;
- (3) social, cultural, economic, and political traditions and institutions distinct from the dominant culture;
- (4) economic systems oriented more toward traditional systems of production than mainstream systems, and;
- (5) unique ties and attachments to traditional habitats and ancestral territories and natural resources in these habitats and territories.³

The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) enacted in 1997 by the Philippine legislature defined indigenous peoples in the context of these five characteristics: "A group of people or homogeneous societies identified by self-ascription and ascription by others, who have continuously lived as organized community on communally bounded and defined territory, and who have, under claims of ownership since time immemorial, occupied, possessed and utilized such territories, sharing common bonds of language, customs, traditions and other distinctive cultural traits, or who have, through resistance to political, social and cultural inroads of colonization, non-indigenous religions and cultures, become historically differentiated from the majority of Filipinos."

²Bureau of Non-Formal Education, 2003

³ Asian Development Bank

1.2 Demographics of the Sector

^**^**^^

Indigenous peoples (IPs) have always comprised a significant percentage of the Filipino population. In 1995, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) estimated the IP population throughout the country at 12 million, which was equivalent to almost 20% of the total Filipino population in that period. In a 2000 census⁴, however, the reported IP population reached only 6.3 million. Even with the substantial decline in numbers, the sector still constituted 8% of the rapidly growing (76.5 million) Filipino population.⁵

It is important to note that IPs are present in all the Philippine Administrative Regions, with the exception of Region VIII⁶. A majority of them (61%) are found in Mindanao, a third (33%) resides in Luzon and the remaining few (6%) live in the Visayas.

In Mindanao, IP settlements are scattered in the provinces of Davao, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Zamboanga, Maguindanao, Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Misamis Oriental and Bukidnon.

In Luzon, IP communities are concentrated in the provinces of Cordillera, Bontoc, Sagada, Ifugao, and Southern Kalinga. A significant population can also be found in Cagayan Valley, Caraballo Range, Sierra Madre Range, Zambales Range, and the Island Groups of Mindoro, Negros, Panay and Palawan.

Ethnicity varies in each of the regions as distinguished by social, cultural, political and linguistic features. Approximately 150 ethnic groups in the Philippines have been recorded by the Presidential Advisor for Indigenous Peoples Affairs and 168 active languages have been identified by the Summer Institute of Linguistics.⁷

In the province of Bukidnon, for example, there are seven major ethno-linguistic groups present. These are the Bukidnon, Higaonon, Matigsalug, Talaandig, Tigwahanon, and Umayamnen.

In the ARMM region, where close to 60% of the population is indigenous, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) identified 13 Islamized ethno-linguistic groups and 18 non-Muslim Lumad groups living in the area. The Islamized groups are the Badjao, Iranun, Jama Mapun, Kalagan, Kalibugan, Maranao, Maguindanao, Molbog, Palawani, Samal, Sangil, Tausug, and Yakan. The non-Islamized groups, on the other hand, include the Bagobo, Mansaka, Mandaya, Subanen, B'laan, T'Boli, Tiruray and Manobo.

As a sector, IPs have a relatively young population. 41% of the total IP population surveyed in 20008 belongs to 0-14 age bracket while 56% belongs to the 15-64 age group.

⁴Census on Housing and Population, 2000

⁵ National Statistics Office Census, 2000

⁶ 1996 Accomplishment Report of the Office of the National Cultural Communities, as cited in ADB Indigenous Peoples Development Framework

⁷ Asian Development Bank, n.d.

⁸ Census on Housing and Population, 2000

1.2 Demographics of the Sector

Sources of livelihood still come from traditional economic activities, mainly farming. Other income sources are fishing, agriculture and forestry-related activities. A growing number of IPs are employed in sales and service-related work, or as drivers and mobile plant operators.

In terms of education, less than 50% of the IP population finished elementary education. Only 19% graduated from secondary schools and a mere 2% have a college diploma. According to the same survey, about 82% (5.16 million) of the total population have reached only elementary level, 70% (4.41 million) are literate, with males (71%) having only a slight advantage over females (70%).

^

1.3 Geography and Socio-Economic Indicators of Indigenous People

Indigenous peoples in the Philippines live in ancestral territories situated in watershed areas, mountain ranges, plateaus and deep valleys. Because of their geographic location, many of their basic socio-economic needs are not fully provided for by government. Infrastructures to provide basic necessities such as food, water and sanitation are missing. Opportunities for livelihood are limited. Access to public education and health services are also low. There are efforts to provide alternative systems of education but even these are not sufficient to respond to all the education needs of indigenous people. Appropriate and culturally-responsive education programs have been introduced with the assistance of church-based organizations, non-profit organizations, and well-informed members of the communities and while continuation and replication of these initiatives are highly encouraged the problem of sustainability is crucial to consider.

An Asian Development Bank assessment of poverty showed that "for much of the last decade, the rate of growth of the income threshold in indigenous peoples' regions is faster than the national rate, and also faster than the [National Capital Region] NCR rate. This implies that the inflation rate in the indigenous peoples' regions is higher than even in the NCR for the greater part of the last decade."¹⁰

⁹ Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines: Development Issues and Challenges, Erlinda M. Capones, NEDA

¹⁰ Asian Development Bank Poverty Assessment Report in Indigenous Communities, 2002.

1.3 Geography and Socio-Economic Indicators of Indigenous People

The paper further detailed out that:

curiously, since the most important contents of the basket are food items, the cost of the market basket has risen faster in the agricultural regions, where food is produced, than in the NCR. If one can generalize from the experience of the Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR), the problem appears to be structural defects such as in the service sector: finance, trade, transport, storage, and communication. These defects affect the distribution of goods and services, which is reflected in higher prices. Poverty incidence, using the threshold income, allows us to distinguish between the poor and the non-poor, but while poverty incidence tells us how many are poor it does not reflect the depth of poverty.¹¹

Poverty is further propagated by the disparate and inadequate social services in far-flung indigenous communities. The ADB study used two indicators as proxy for welfare level: availability of basic education and health services in indigenous peoples' regions. It showed that at the regional level, there appears to be a match between population distribution and available services. But the location of the services reveals that they have an urban bias, which widens the disparity and further deepens rural poverty.

Table 1. Location of Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines

Region	Indigenous Population	Total Regional Population	Proportion of Indigenous in Regional Population (%)	Proportion of Regional Pop in National Total (%)
CAR	1,252,962	1,254,838	99.9	1.8
Region II	1,014,955	2,536,035	40.0	3.7
Region X	1,470,296	2,463,272	59.7	3.6
Region XI	2,107,285	4,604,158	45.8	6.7
Caraga	874,456	1,942,667	45.0	2.8

Sources of basic data: Total population, NSO (1995); Estimated IP population, ONCC and OSCC (1989) cited in IBON Facts and Figures, Vol.24, 15 April 2001

Table 2. Annual Poverty Thresholds and Incidence of Poor Families, Regional vs. National: 1988, 1991, 1994, and 1997

	1988		1991		1994		1997	
Region	Poverty Threshold PerCapita (P)	Poor Families (%)	Poverty Threshold PerCapita (P)	Poor Families (%)	Poverty Threshold PerCapita (P)	Poor Families (%)	Povert Threshold PerCapita (P)	Poor Families (%)
National	4,777	40.2	7,302	39.9	8,885	35.5	11,319	31.8
CAR	5,116	41.9	8,332	48.8	10,853	51.0	12.836	42.5
Region II	4,573	40.4	7,035	43.3	8,316	35.5	9,880	32.1
Region X	4,523	46.1	6,433	53.0	7,938	49.2	10,440	47.0
Region XI	4,876	43.1	6,544	46.2	8,201	40.3	10,503	38.2

Source of basic data: Technical Working Group on Income and Poverty Statistics, National Statistics and Census Board

^{*}Annual per capita income required to satisfy nutritional requirements (2,000 calories) and other basic needs

^{*}Proportion of poor population families (individuals in families) whose annual per capita income falls below the poverty threshold to total population.

2.1 Social Factors

Indigenous communities often live under severe cultural and social stress. Lack of opportunity, cultural discrimination, inadequate social support, loss of land or difficulty integrating into the dominant culture contribute to low self-esteem and loss of identity that can give rise to depression, alcohol and substance abuse and suicide. Indigenous children are also at risk for human trafficking, sexual and labor exploitation and the impact of armed conflict and civil unrest.¹²

2.2 Land Rights

Living in upland areas or locations distant from urban centers limit IPs' access to dominant political and social structures. Indigenous communities have retained many practices in governance systems – in terms of leadership, mediating conflicts and sharing of land use. While they retain community relations through traditional norms and systems, they have also engaged the mainstream governance systems and in some local government units were able to sit as representatives to argue for the IP concerns. However, such participation remains a token representation and government structures and leaders remain dominated by lowlanders who compete for land ownership with indigenous communities, and thus are insensitive to and are even remain adamantly against indigenous welfare and concerns. Because of this and other related administrative concerns of government, issues of land rights neither receive immediate response nor are they given due attention by the concerned agencies. The right to ownership of their ancestral domain and the right to develop the land and benefit from it continue to be major concerns of indigenous cultural communities. While provided for by law, proper dispensation of land titles and certificates elude many of these cultural communities.

2.3 Armed Conflict

Being at the borders and peripheries of development, IPs have become vulnerable targets of human injustice. Armed conflict, development aggression, human rights violations and the right to stay in their territories and not be displaced unnecessarily, are common and complex issues among IPs that have deep socio-cultural impacts. Continued exposure to these problems coupled with the inability to resist such interventions could lead to the disintegration of IP communities. The continuation of the current situation makes it likely that for some tribes, their cultural identity will be completely lost in a matter of a few generations.

¹² UNICEF - Innocenti Digest No. 11 Ensuring the Rights of Indigenous Children, 25 February 2004

2.4 Self-Determination and Governance

The 1987
Constitution
explicitly mentions
the recognition
and promotion
of the rights of
indigenous cultural
communities.

There is also the issue of self-governance and political participation. The capacity of tribal leaders or council of elders to govern the tribal community in the face of increasing demand for external engagements is a concern that needs to be addressed internally by IP communities. This is especially important given its implications on the issues of representation and participation in development processes.

In principle, IPs are recognized by the State. The 1987 Constitution explicitly mentions the recognition and promotion of the rights of indigenous cultural communities. Recognition is discussed "within the framework of national unity and development" (Article II, Sec 22).

In practice, however, indigenous peoples are often excluded from participating in development processes. Not only are they not properly represented they also rarely benefit from them. More often than not, IPs are at the disadvantaged or losing end when the implementation of development takes place. Based on surfacing of issues done during consultations with E-Net Phil members, IPs said mineral extractions, logging, construction of bridges and dams, hydropower plants and even the development of areas for tourism are some of the most common development issues involving IPs and ancestral territories.

The issues confronting IPs are complex and cross-cutting which limits the ability to point to a single source of marginalization. However, the need to build the capacity of IPs for self-determination is one particular issue that can be considered as an important avenue for mitigating their vulnerability. Current capacity is a crucial factor that has kept IPs from participating fully in the larger society and becoming contributing members of the country, especially in a political context where most power-holders have accepted the status quo and indigenous peoples have remained on the margins of participation.

Self-determination or self-governance refers to the right of IPs to pursue their economic, social, and cultural development; promote and protect the integrity of their values, practices and institutions; determine, use and control their own organizational and community leadership systems, institutions, relationships, patterns and processes for decision making and participation.¹³

¹³ IPRA—National legislation of the Philippines.

2.4 Self-Determination and Governance

Zimmerman points out that empowerment can only occur if the community has the motivation

The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) is grounded on the principle of self-determination. It is considered a landmark piece of legislation both by government and non-government organizations in the Philippines, concerning ethnic and cultural minorities. It is comprehensive and covers the rights and responsibilities of IPs on issues relating to ancestral domain, self-governance and empowerment, social justice, human rights, and cultural integrity.

Under the IPRA, IPs are given the right to exercise authority over their own land, govern their own people, implement their own justice system, regulate the entry of migrants in their ancestral lands, and declare their territories as zones of peace during armed conflicts. They are also given the freedom to establish and control

their own educational programs, using their indigenous language and traditional learning systems. Continuity and development of indigenous knowledge, systems and practices are also provided for in the law.

The National Council for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), serves as the primary government agency that is mandated to implement the policies under IPRA and at the same time ensure the protection and promotion of IP rights. It is a national agency with provincial representatives coming from indigenous peoples themselves.

However, even within the legal framework of IPRA, IPs in the Philippines find it difficult to assert their human and constitutional rights. On the one hand is the ineffective implementation mechanism provided by the government; on the other hand is the lack of capacity of indigenous peoples to fully comprehend and appreciate the law, preventing them from using it to their full advantage.

At the crux of this matter is the issue of empowerment. Zimmerman (2000) points out that empowerment can only occur if the community has the motivation, the skills and the resources to engage in activities that can improve community life. In the case of indigenous peoples, this means that to assert their rights will require the development of necessary skills to comprehend the full magnitude of IPRA and strengthening their capacities for problem-solving and decision-making, without external agents facilitating the process for them.

2.5 Philippine Legislation and Policy Relevant to Indigenous Peoples Education Rights

The universal call to focus on the right to education has not been limited to children, but has extended to adults and dates back to the 1948 UN General Assembly and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It is at this point that the advocacy for literacy and education is put forward. Education has always been considered as a great equalizing factor in societies. The universal call to focus on the right to education has not been limited to children, but has extended to adults and dates back to the 1948 UN General Assembly and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As a sector, IPs are singled out and given particular attention with regard to education. In the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education, article 5c of the proclamation explicitly mentioned that "it is essential to recognize the right of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities, including the maintenance of schools and, depending

on the educational policy of each State, the use or the teaching of their own language." This international declaration has been supported by the Philippines as the 1987 Constitution provides clear support and commitment to various international declarations pertaining to education.

In terms of access to public education, the State is mandated to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education and take the appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. With regard to the particular needs of IPs and other marginalized sectors, the "State shall encourage the formation of non-formal, informal and indigenous learning systems, including self-learning, independent, and out-of-school study programs. Further, the State shall recognize, respect and protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions and institutions. It shall consider their rights in the formulation of national plans and policies."

Consistent with these mandates, the then Department of Education, Culture and Sports was called to "develop and institute an alternative system of education for children of indigenous cultural communities which is culture-specific and relevant to the needs and the existing situation in their communities." The Department was also tasked to accredit and support non-formal but functional indigenous educational programs conducted by non-governmental organization in said communities.

¹⁴ 1987 Constitution

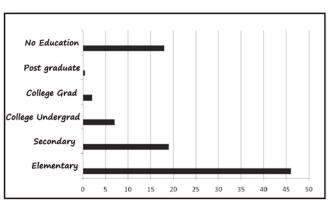
2.5 Philippine Legislation and Policy Relevant to Indigenous Peoples Education Rights

Consequently, under Rule 6, Section 8 of IPRA, the NCIP, Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the public and private schools are mandated to collaborate, in consultation with IPs, towards the development of appropriate education-related programs and projects. These include (1) the development of curricula and appropriate teaching materials and resources; (2) the equitable distribution, selection and implementation of scholarship programs; (3) identification of appropriate career development; (4) training of teachers for IP communities; (5) construction of school buildings in IP communities; (6) inclusion of IPs' resistance to colonization in the academic curricula, in the context of IPs assertion and defence of their freedom, independence and territorial integrity and culture; and (7) establishment of schools for living traditions and cultural heritage.

2.6 Realities of Education Access of Indigenous Peoples

Amid all the well-intentioned policies, the Government's political will to ensure culture-based education for all indigenous peoples remains to be seen. The National Census of 2000 showed that seven out of ten indigenous peoples are literate, with males (71%) having a slight advantage over females (70%). This data on literacy may still be overstated considering that the national census measures literacy through self-reporting. The case studies done by PEPE attest to the inequities and difficulty in accessing education by indigenous groups.

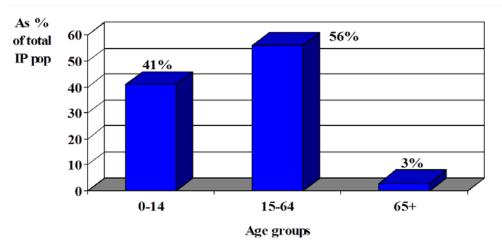
Overall, based on the same census, education access and levels of completion of indigenous peoples can be summarized in the chart below:



Indigenous Peoples Levels of School Completion (%)

2.6 Realities of Education Access of Indigenous Peoples

Of the 6.3 million indigenous peoples in 2000, 46% of them have graduated from elementary while 19% have finished secondary. Glaringly, 18% have no education at all compared to a mere 2% who have graduated from college. Considering the relative youth of the indigenous population the current situation will result in a serious rise in uneducated people unless urgent attention is paid to the provision of access to quality education.



Key factors that have hindered access include: poverty, social exclusion and remoteness. Despite identifying these critical factors which limit educational access, the NCIP's intervention for education has been limited to providing scholarships. From the period 1999-2004, the grantees of scholarship grants reached a mere 50,000 with an annual target of approximately 10,000 (Please see attached table of grantees by region).

2.7 Education Integrated with Indigenous Knowledge

The right to education emphasizes not only access but "access to quality education." Defining quality of education is very much linked to the worldview that an education subscribes to. In the current global context, the Philippine government has designed the formal education system to produce graduates who are "globally competent" with the standardized curriculum hinged on competencies in English, Math and Sciences. This standardized education, however, when applied to all localities can be detrimental. Adherence to the hegemonic framework of knowledge and learning is contributing to the demise of indigenous knowledge.

The educational function of traditional institutions has long since been taken over by the school system of the state. In her analysis of the exclusion of indigenous knowledge in Sierra Leone Dr. Kroma aptly described what is similarly happening in the Philippines. According to Kroma,

the pupils entering school today are entering a new world, both physically and intellectually, a world which lies outside the traditional boundaries of their communities. In this situation, schooling may be said to undermine indigenous knowledge in three ways. First, it fails to put forward indigenous knowledge as worthwhile subject matter for the learning process. Second, it limits the exposure of children to the local knowledge of their communities. Third, it creates attitudes in children that militate against the acquisition of local knowledge.¹⁵

Schooling tends to promote Western-type knowledge and values at the expense of local knowledge and values. Young school-leavers develop negative attitudes towards local knowledge, which makes it difficult for them to acquire this knowledge, even for purposes of local activities. The cumulative effect will be future generations who lack the most elementary and necessary knowledge of their own culture.

Formal education promoting Western notions of wealth and preparing students mainly to compete in the global labor market fails to teach conceptions of indigenous understandings of poverty and well-being. In a study done by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) the Lumads of Mindanao when asked whom they consider as poor, referred to squatters who have no land; the Bajao, who are the most oppressed group; street children; prostitutes; underpaid workers; evacuees; and marginalized farmers

¹⁵ Dr Siaka Kroma. Department of Teacher Education, Njala University College, Sierra Leone

2.7 Education Integrated with Indigenous Knowledge

and fishers. The Lumad responses cover a broad range and mix of indicators, most of which share the Western perspective that lack of or absence of material belongings were key indicators of poverty. However, traditional understandings of poverty also include: powerlessness and dependency, ignorance of indigenous knowledge systems, loss of affinity with ancestral domains and failure to belong.

Thus, according to the Lumads, poverty is manifest in the loss of belief in and practice of the indigenous culture. Some possess limited knowledge while others stop learning and fail to cultivate indigenous knowledge systems (Manobo— parabian-gantangan). A distinction is also made between those who are poor in terms of indigenous knowledge and those who have such knowledge but fail to recognize and promote it.

It is no wonder then that for many indigenous parents, sending their children to school presents a dilemma: on the one hand, their children are freed from having to experience, as they have, being cheated by lowlanders just because they do not know how to read, count, or write; on the other hand, with education comes new needs, wants and outlooks; e.g., certain "selfish" desires are being kindled in the children. To address this dilemma and give due recognition to the worldviews of the indigenous peoples, integrating local knowledge to ensure quality education for their learners can never be overemphasized.

In 2004, through the efforts of some civil society groups, the Department of Education issued a Memorandum providing for the issuance of Permit to Operate Elementary Schools for indigenous peoples and cultural communities. This was in response to the growing need for government accreditation of alternative and culture-based education programs already established in indigenous communities.

¹⁶ Tarrobago, Arnold. PEPE Case Study of the Marist Education Program in Ransang. 2004.

3.1 Kankana-ey and Ibaloy in Atok, Benguet

There remains a wide disparity between the poverty situation in urban and rural areas. In 1997, the incidence of poor families in urban areas was 14%, while that in the rural areas was 55%. This disparity is attributed to the slower growth of average income in the rural areas (32%) compared with urban areas (72%) from 1994 to 1997. In fact, in 1997, 42% of Cordillera families, or around 110,000, were living below the poverty threshold of P12,836. This means that almost half of all Cordillera families did not have sufficient income to meet their food and nonfood requirements. The 1996 Minimum Basic Needs Survey conducted by local government units in Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR) that the greatest unmet needs in the Cordillera are income and employment, followed by water and sanitation, then by basic education and literacy.

The Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey of 2003 revealed that the Government needed to put more efforts in bringing education to CAR. In terms of simple literacy (i.e., able to read and understand a simple message in any language or dialect), CAR scores poorly, with only 89% literacy rate. On education for children, studies across the Cordillera region show that the most common aspiration of farming families is a college education for their children, despite their inability to bear the costs. It is common to find farming households selling a

piece of land or a precious heirloom to pay for their children's school expenses. Consequently, expenditure for agricultural production is sacrificed. Respondents explain that a college degree for their children is their passport out of farming. This finding suggests that some farmers in the village see the attainment of the "good life" as being outside the confines of their village. Indeed, out-migration is a common phenomenon all over the Cordillera.¹⁷

In a workshop organized by the Popular Education for People's Empowerment (PEPE) and the local organization Association of Bonglo Local Educators (ABLE) in 2005, two major gaps in education were identified. The first was limited participation of children in ECCD -The Department of Education figures show that in Atok, only 50% of the grade one entrants experience pre-school learning. In part this may be due to the limited access of students living outside of the town centre to existing ECCD programs initiated by the government. The problem of access is further exacerbated for IP children, who, without any exposure to the school environment through ECCD, are particularly vulnerable as they begin primary school where the curricula is not tailored to their context and, therefore, the subject matter is largely alien to them. 18

This issue of curricula which is not suited to the learner's context was the second

3.1 Kankana-ey and Ibaloy in Atok, Benguet

gap in education that was identified by the workshop participation.¹⁹ Many children already in school lack interest in pursuing excellence in English, Math and Science. According to teachers, linking these subject matters to local knowledge may facilitate an understanding of these concepts.

Previously, the community elders took charge of this educative function through community rituals. However, as this role shifted to become the purview of teachers with the establishment of formal schools the community values, beliefs and practices did not find their way into the curricula in a conscious or deliberate fashion. At the workshops, teachers lamented that much of the Department of Education policies on lesson planning and medium of instruction tie their hands when it comes to discussions of local

knowledge as it relates to the subject matter.

An outcome of the workshop was the suggestion that these linkages could be provided for students through afterschool classes where the community contributes to the quality of learning of their children by bridging what is learned in school with what is being experienced While this outcome in the community. would provide a temporary measure to assist students, it is necessary to consider sustainable options wherein the government recognizes its responsibility to the provision of quality education for all citizens and realizes that quality education will have much to do with the relevance of curricula to a learner's circumstances. The linkages between subject matter and community values should be an integral part of the daily learning environment.

3.2 Ayta in Floridablanca, Pampanga

The Aytas in Floridablanca are communities that have relocated in the lowland after the Mt. Pinatubo eruption. What used to be resettlement areas have now become the permanent residents of thousands of Aytas. Aytas are marginalized from their land and feel their traditional culture and ontology is similarly being marginalized. To combat this decay of culture and tradition, the outcome of a

2006 workshop and research project was a discussion of the integration of indigenous knowledge within formal education. It is believed that this integration will provide Ayta communities access to quality and relevant education for them to pursue their community's development. Quality and relevance mean increasing Ayta children's understanding not only of the usual learning competencies in school

¹⁸ Documentation of the Workshop on "Integrating Indigenous Knowledge into the Education System, PEPE, 2005.

¹⁹ Ibid.

3.2 Ayta in Floridablanca, Pampanga

but of their identity as Ayta. It is believed that this linkage of traditional knowledge to school competencies will help restore Aytas' self-confidence in the new generation. Further, it is envisioned that curriculum material on Aytas be taught to non-Aytas, serving to increase the perceived value of Ayta culture within the Philippines more broadly.

Doing this involves engaging a workforce who are, themselves familiar with Ayta culture and knowledge. Having non-Ayta teachers presents a number of problems including long distances for teachers to travel to get to schools where they teach and language barriers between teachers and students. Presently, most teachers in Ayta communities do not speak the Ayta language and are unable to facilitate the students' learning, such as in learning the alphabet, e.g. illustrative examples used in phonetics should use Ayta words. This barrier between teachers and students has resulted in lower language test scores for Ayta students.²⁰

3.3 T'boli in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato²¹

The T'boili indigenous communities live mainly in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato and are among the Lumads in Mindanao. Lake Sebu is located at the southeastern part of South Cotabato province, approximately 47 kilometers away from Koronadal, the provincial capital, and about 6 hours away by bus from Davao City, the capital of Region XI. Lake Sebu was established as its own municipality by virtue of Batas Pambansa Bilang 249 in November 11, 1982. After years of struggle for recognition, rights of indigenous cultural communities and claims for their ancestral lands and domains, the indigenous peoples of Lake Sebu (T'boli and Ubo

Tribes) were awarded by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claims (CADC) and Certificate of Ancestral Land Claims (CALC) in 1993. The issuance of CADC and CALC prescribes the rules and regulation of the ancestral land and domain claims of the country's indigenous cultural communities.

The latest National Census and Statistics Office report (1990) places the population of the municipality at 34,350 persons in 6,692 households (average of 5.13 males for every 10 females). In terms of total population, there are 17,478 males

²⁰ Report on the Workshop on Culture-Sensitive Education for Ayta Communities, DANGLE, 2006.

²¹ Kasanyangan Foundation Mindanao (KFI) profile on Lake Sebu, 2002

3.3 T'boli in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato

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and 16,872 females. Only 12.5% of the population (4,268) resides in Lake Sebu, the urban center in the municipality. The remaining 87.6% (30,082) reside in rural areas. Distributed by age, the population is: around 51% (17,534) of 15-65 year olds, 47.5% (16,331) 0-14 year olds and 1.5% (485) within the 65+ category. This means that the majority of the population falls into the productive or independent range which by law is defined as 18 years old and above.

According to 2005 records of the Lake Sebu municipality and Department of Education statistics, only 10,400 (29.24 percent) of 35,600 total school-age

population are enrolled in the pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. The elementary level has the highest number of school-age children but only 8,954 (70.20%) are currently enrolled. However, this high percentage of enrollees in the elementary level can be deceiving. One teacher claims that most of the pupils do not attend school regularly. An estimated 70 percent of enrolled children, she further revealed, could attend classes only three days out of the five-day-class in a week because some of them had to help in farm activities,

housekeeping and taking care of younger siblings while their mother wove *tinalak* for their livelihood. Or the children had to help the head of the family earn money for the family's food.

The secondary level comes next with only 14 percent. The tertiary level has the least number of enrollees: 151. In preschool, only 11.10 percent of the children are enrolled. The participation rate of

only 29.24 percent of the total school age population is too low. This means that out of 100 persons who are supposed to be in school only 30 are actually attending school. The higher the level of education,

the lower enrollment becomes. The data table shows that the tertiary level has the lowest rate at 1.45 percent.

A significant number of drop-outs in high school (124) is alarming since it has brought down the enrollment rate by 12 percent compared to the previous year (2004). Increase in non-formal education may indicate absorption of the out of school youth, but this theory needs to be validated. Moreover, there is definitely an increase of 21 among OSY since 2004. They now number 473.

3.3 T'boli in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato

Age Group *Estimated Population	Lake Sebu	Enrollment	Participation Rate (%)
1-4 years (Pr School)	6,113	678	11.10
7-12 years (Elementary)	12,261	8,634	70.40
13-16 years (Secondary)	6,786	945	14.00
17-24 years (Tertiary & Vocational)	10,440	151	1.45
Total	35,600	10,400	29.24

The influx of varied cultural and economic lifestyle from Filipinos in other parts of the country when the Philippine government opened Mindanao for occupation and development has changed tribal life ways rapidly and displacement and economic disorientation led to disenfranchisement of most tribal people. Further, when Lake Sebu was created as a municipality and a secondary national highway to the region was established, the result was a drastic change of ownership of ancestral land, making the marginalized Ubo and Tboli tribes even poorer by removing their control of their land and the subsistence they drew from it. This cash expense draws money away from what could normally go to school fees and transportation and/or boarding costs, as most schools are located in specific and often times distant locations.

Traditionally, the Ubo and Tboli tribes depended on their elders for their education. The elders used many forms

of educational approaches to mold their youth in many practical aspects of life, from food gathering to health and spirituality.²² Tbolis for example believe that they acquire knowledge by imitating movements and sounds of things around them until they specialize in one form and become an expert.

This understanding of the modes of knowledge transmission shares many links to formal models of transmitting knowledge particularly in vocational learning arenas where the job of an apprentice is to watch and imitate the routine undertakings of a trade in order to become a highly competent practitioner. Recognizing and fostering these types of linkages between traditional culture and formal schooling can offer the means by which Ubo and Tboli, as well as other traditional peoples, can keep their indigenous knowledge alive and flourishing while participating in the formal education sector.

²² KII of community tribal leaders

The education situations of indigenous communities point to the urgency of enforcing the national laws that protect marginalized communities and pushing for policies and strategies that will break the persisting disparity in access and quality of education. E-Net Philippines pushes for the following policy agenda to improve access to quality culture-based education of indigenous communities:

Pro-poor policies in school

There should be subsidies for families to cover indirect costs of education like transportation, food and school supplies. Contributions for various school expenses should also be waived. This requires the National Department of Edudcation to provide higher budget allocations for Maintenance and Operating Expenses for schools in communities with high concentrations of indigenous communities.

Curriculum reform

New curriculum should be based on local knowledge which will require documentation and the development of new learning materials. The Department of Education should invest in multi-cultural education that will enable the learners to understand both their own culture and the modern/dominant culture. Doing so will equip learners with confidence to engage in one's community and outside. Members of the dominant culture should, likewise be exposed to introductions of traditional cultures to build understanding from the outside, as well.

Increased access to ECCD for indigenous communities

The current policy of one day care centre per village is not practical for indigenous communities that cover expansive area. Government should make available services and support to help indigenous communities build their community-based ECCD sustainably while at the same time ensuring an up-scaling of access to government run ECCD programs that are attuned to the local context.

Inter-agency strategy

The Department of Education alone cannot compel the children and youth to remain in school. Policies of the Department of Labor and Employment, the National Commission on Indigenous People, Local Government Units, the Commission on the Welfare of Children, Tech-Voc Agency, Department of Health should work in conjunction to arrest and reverse the increasing number of children and youths who are not attending or completing school and who are not receiving an education.

Intergeneration education

Education programs across ages –indigenous communities have been deprived of education through generations. Poverty, social realities, parents' decision in education of children and confidence to participate in community decision-making are factors that impede access to education.

Expanding the Alternative Learning System (ALS) of The Department of Education for IPs

The Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS) has started the production of ALS modules for Indigenous communities. However, because of the lack of resources to document stories, translate modules in local languages and develop relevant reading materials, this initiative is proceeding at a slow pace. The NCIP together with BALS should work together with the various CSOs providing indigenous education programs to push for this work. Similarly, given the difficult circumstances and different learning needs of marginal communities, there is a need to expand the framework, learning strategies and curricula of the government's ALS.

The non-government organizations and people's organizations have been very effective in adapting the curriculum of the Department of Education by infusing it with content that is appropriate to age levels and contexts of learners. Building from these best-practices, government resources need to be directed to this type of work to expedite the formation of an expanded, diverse, culture-based and learner-centered ALS for IPs in the country.

Local participation

The integration of indigenous learning into public education should involve learning processes that tap indigenous elders and local facilitators as resource persons. In areas where there are large concentrations of indigenous communities, such reform is important to ensure the continuity of learning from home to school of indigenous learners, break the divide between "upland" and "lowlanders" and to instill respect for indigenous identities in school (instead of discriminating the "lumads").

Mobilizing resources for affirmative action for the marginalized and IPs

The national Education for All Committee should push for education programs for disadvantaged groups and consequently affirmative budget allocation for these programs to benefit communities with high education deficits.

Institutionalizing indigenous people's participation in decision-making in school and education as a whole

Most indigenous organizations are not registered according to the regulations of the Local Government Code of 1991 for participation in the local governance processes; this is in keeping with their belief in their own governance structures. Measure must be taken to ensure that despite this, parents and communities are participating in education decision-making as it has been shown that parents and community participation can increase the chance of children remaining in school.

Mother Tongue Instruction and Passage of HB 3719

The Philippine Constitution has declared Filipino as the country's national language and English as the country's official language and this was affirmed in 1974, 1987 and 2003. The Bilingual policy enforced since the 1970s under former President Ferdinande Marcos instructs that:

"children ages 5-12 will learn language, science, mathematics, history and culture using both Filipino and English In the primary level, 40% of learning is taught in Filipino while 60% is taught in English. At the intermediate level, Filipino is used in 45% of the curriculum while English is used in the remaining 55%."

Mother Tongue Instruction and Passage of HB 3719



Currently, there are three bills submitted by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture for review by the House of Representatives pertaining to this issue. House Bills No. 230, 305 and 446 advocate the strengthening of English as medium of instruction. House Bill 1138 promotes the use of Filipino language as the official language of instruction in the schools while House Bill 3719 supports the establishment of a multilingual education and literacy program.

The strong civil society advocacy in recent years, backed up by evidences that show effectiveness in learning outcomes by using mother tongue language instruction convinced Department of Education Secretary Jesli Lapus to sign the Department of Education Order No.74 series of 2009 instituting Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MLE) in July 2009. However, this Memo puts the responsibility of ensuring finances for MLE implementation to local government units and it remains to be seen if the commitment of financing from national government comes through. In Philippine politics, it is often difficult to make local government units accountable to national laws due to differences in resources available and differing political will of local government officials.

Taking into consideration the goals of Education For All and the urgency to come out with stronger legislation ensuring relevant programs of education for IPs in order to achieve such goals, E-Net Philippines has joined the Mother Tongue network to help lobby for House Bill 3719. The Bill reiterates the need for mother tongue instruction from Grades 1-3 while introducing English and Filipino as subjects; with students moving on to English and Filipino instruction as they progress from Grades IV to VI. Such a bill is in line with the findings of the Summer Institute of Linguistics "Lubuagan Research" in the Philippines where it showed that students' critical thinking in Math, Science and English is effectively enforced when they start with mother tongue (Language 1 or L1), then moving on to using Language 2 such as English and Filipino.

5. Conclusion

Despite the passage of IPRA in 1997 which specifically recognized and protected the rights of indigenous people, there is still a long way to go to ensure equality for indigenous people. Particularly in their accessing of basic social services such as education, case studies highlight the dramatic need for more, better and better quality education and facilities.

Providing good quality education, across the generations, can combat the poverty and isolation that has contributed to the marginalization of the Philippines indigenous communities to this point. Quality education will contribute to the transmission of cultural knowledge while providing education on par with mainstream programs in knowledge areas including math and science. Quality education allows learners to start from familiar foundations and scaffold literacy through the provision of literacy programming in the mother tongue.

Achieving Education For All will never be a reality in the Philippines unless measures are taken to ensure that all segments of the population, including indigenous cultural communities are provided with the opportunity for education. There must be interagency cooperation within the Filipino Government to ensure that polices are working in confluence to assist parents and children, alike, in accessing their right to education.

