

# THE ROAD TO EMPOWERMENT

## Strengthening the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act

### VOLUME II

#### Nurturing the Earth, Nurturing Life



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Also in this series

**Volume I**  
**Old Ways, New Challenges**

# Message

Indigenous peoples (IPs) in the Philippines have experienced poverty, marginalization and discrimination for many years. Hence, they are a significant target group for the International Labour Organization (ILO) under its Decent Work Country Programme.\*

A main pillar of ILO work is to pave the way for the broader social and economic advancement of women and men, their families and their communities. The ILO has two specialised programmes for promoting the rights and reducing poverty of IPs: The Project to Promote ILO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (PRO 169) and the Interregional Programme to Support Self-Reliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples through Cooperatives and Self-Help Organizations (INDISCO).

The two projects work in an integrated way to promote the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples and contribute to the improvement of their socio-economic situation, in compliance with the principles of ILO Convention No. 169, the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention of 1989. Convention No. 169 is the only legally-binding international instrument open for ratification that deals exclusively with the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples. The Philippines' Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), R.A. 8371, of 1997 reflects the spirit and intent of the ILO convention which has not been ratified in the Philippines to date.

**The Road to Empowerment: Strengthening the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act** documents the journey of Filipino IPs as they aspire to achieve decent work through the implementation of the IPRA. It also makes references to Convention No. 169 as well as to other related ILO conventions and international legal instruments. The two-volume publication comprises 13 case studies, culled from the experiences of IPs in selected communities throughout the country. The first volume deals with IP issues related to employment and discrimination, jurisdiction, customary governance, intellectual property rights, human rights and conflict resolution. The second volume contains chapters on change management, indigenous resource management, ecotourism, the role of IP women in managing ancestral domains, child labour among IPs, alternative health care, and indigenous education.

The study is published through the project, "Development and Publication of Case Studies in Support of the Implementation of the IPRA" which was implemented by the ILO SRO Manila through PRO169-INDISCO in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), implementing agency for the IPRA, facilitated the "free and prior informed consent" (FPIC) of indigenous cultural communities included in the study and organized the workshops in which research findings could be verified. Implementation of the project was made possible through financial support from the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID).

All indigenous cultural communities involved in the study provided important information in documenting their experiences. Other partners in government, civil society and academe also gave invaluable contribution in validating the case studies.

Maraming salamat sa lahat!



**LINDA WIRTH**  
Director, ILO SRO Manila

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\* The primary goal of the ILO is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

# Message

Since the passage of Republic Act 8371, also known as the “*Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act*”, UNDP has been in the forefront of providing capacity to the Government of the Philippines for the empowerment of Indigenous Peoples. The sector, which is composed of an estimated population of 12 million, is recognized as one of the most vulnerable groups in the country. Many live in far-flung upland and coastal areas and are marginalized due to limited access to social services, markets and opportunities.

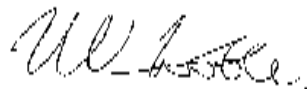
The protection, promotion, and recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples are central to the work of UN and its agencies. UN’s work with Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines has been long-running through assistance in their tenurial security, governance, capacity-building, women and children, education and in the formulation of their Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plans (ADSDPPs).

This set of case studies on Indigenous Peoples produced through the collaboration of New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID), International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNDP, provides a source of valuable empirical information based on cultural and sustainable environment practices, traditions and governance systems that can guide policy makers to be attuned to the distinctiveness of Indigenous Peoples.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) can only be fully achieved through the inclusion of all sectors. The meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples in their own development and growth is central to achieving the MDGs.

UNDP congratulates the authors of the case studies for sharing their valuable insights and analysis. My sincerest gratitude goes to the Indigenous Peoples’ Groups of the Philippines, NZAID and ILO, and to those who have helped make this initiative truly successful. Your hard work and commitment to complete this process is indeed commendable.

*Maraming salamat at mabuhay kayong lahat!*



NILEEMA NOBLE  
UNDP Resident Representative  
and UN Resident Coordinator

# Acronyms

ADECOR	Aguinaldo Development Corporation	IPEC	International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour
ADSDPP	Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan	IPRA	Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act
BALS	Bureau of Alternative Learning Systems	IRR	Implementing Rules and Regulations
BCN	Biodiversity Conservation Network	KA	Kalahan Academy
BOT	Build-Operate-Transfer	KAVS	Knowledge, Attitudes, Values and Skills
BTVE	Bureau of Technical and Vocational Education	KEF	Kalahan Educational Foundation
CADC	Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim	KLDP	Kalahan Leadership Development Program
CADT	Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title	LGU	Local Government Unit
CAR	Cordillera Administrative Region	LMAC	Lungga Mangmang Agong Centre
CI	Conservation International	MTPDP	Medium Term Philippine Development Plan
CLUP	Comprehensive Land Use Plan	NATRIPAL	Nagakaisang Tribo ng Palawan
COMPACT	Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation Project	NCIP	National Commission on Indigenous Peoples
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources	NGO	Non-Government Organization
DepEd	Department of Education	NIPAS	National Integrated Protected Area System
DESD	Decade of Education for Sustainable Development	NMYC	National Manpower and Youth Council
DOLE	Department of Labour and Employment	NSO	National Statistics Office
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development	OSCC	Office of Southern Cultural Communities
EDCOM	Congressional Commission on Education	PAMB	Protected Area Management Board
EF	Education Forum	PANAMIN	Presidential Arm on National Minorities
EFA	Education for All	PAWB	Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau
ELAC	Environmental Legal Assistance Center	PBAZ	Paaralang Bayan ng mga Aeta sa Zambales
ELF	Education for Life Foundation	PCSD	Palawan Council for Sustainable Development
FIDA	Fiber Industry Development Authority	PEPT	Philippine Educational Placement Test
ICCs	Indigenous Cultural Communities	PPSRNP	Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park
IIRR	International Institute for Rural Reconstruction	PTFPP	Palawan Tropical Forest Protection Programme
IKSPs	Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices		
ILO	International Labour Organization		
IP	Indigenous Peoples		

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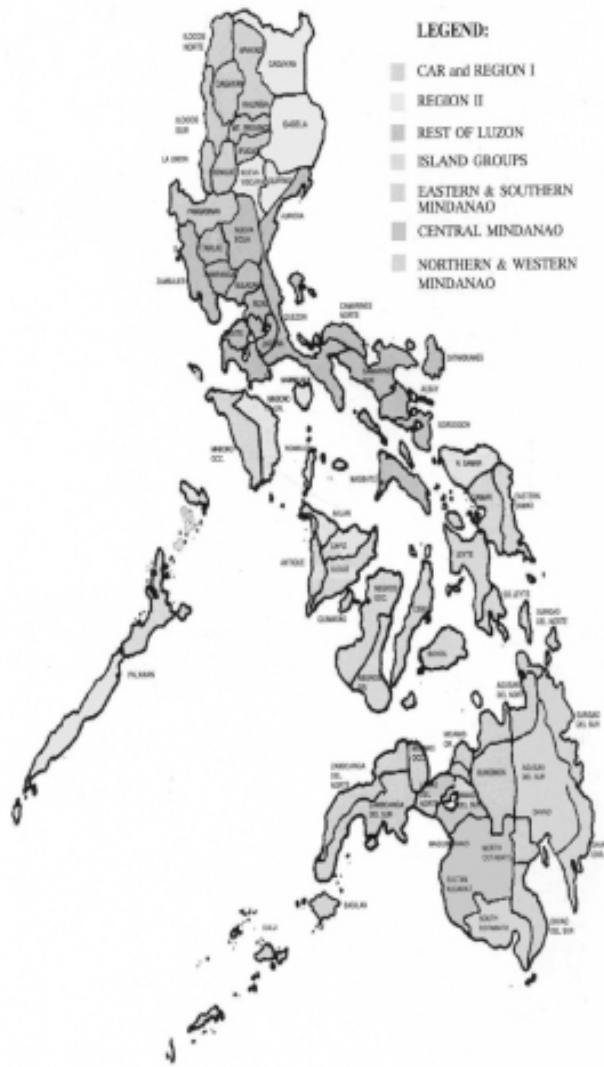
**CORDILLERA &  
REGION 1**

Bontoc,  
Balangao, Isneg,  
Tingguian,  
Kankanaey,  
Kalanguya,  
Karao, Ibaloi,  
Ayangan, Ifugao,  
Tuwali, Kalinga  
Apayao, Bago,  
Gaddang

**ISLAND GROUPS**

Agutaynon,  
Tagbanua,  
Dagayanen,  
Tao't Bato, Batak,  
Palawanon, Molbog,  
Iraya Mangyan,  
Hanunuo Mangyan,  
Alangan Mangyan,  
Buhid Mangyan,  
Tadyawan Mangyan,  
Batangan Mangyan,  
Gubatnon Mangyan,  
Ratagnon Mangyan,  
Ati, Cuyunon, Ati  
Sulod/Bukidnon,  
Magahat  
Korolanos, Ata,  
Bukidnon, Escaya,  
Badjao, Kongking

**ETHNOGRAPHIC MAP**



**LEGEND:**  
 ■ CAR and REGION I  
 ■ REGION II  
 ■ REST OF LUZON  
 ■ ISLAND GROUPS  
 ■ EASTERN & SOUTHERN MINDANAO  
 ■ CENTRAL MINDANAO  
 ■ NORTHERN & WESTERN MINDANAO

**REGION II/  
CARABALLO**

**MOUNTAIN Range**  
Agta, Kalanguya,  
Bugkalot, Isinai,  
Gaddang, Aggay,  
Dumagat, Ibanag,  
Itawis, Ivatan

**REST OF LUZON/  
SIERRA MADRE**

**MOUNTAIN RANGE**  
Aeta, Negrito. Baluga,  
Pugot, Abelling, Agta,  
Dumagat,  
Remontado,  
Bugkalot, Cimaron,  
Kabihug, Tabangnon,  
Abiyan (Aeta),  
Isarog, Itom, Pullon

**SOUTHERN & EASTERN  
MINDANAO**

Manobo, Mandaya,  
Mansaka, Dibabawon,  
Banwaon. Bagobo,  
Ubo Manobo, Tagakaolo,  
Talaingod, Langilan,  
Mamanwa, Higaonon,  
B'laan, T'boli, Kalagan,  
Tagabawa, Manobo B'lit,  
Matigsalog, Sangil,  
Tigwahanon

**NORTHERN & WESTERN MINDANAO**

Subanen, Talaandig, Higaonon, Matigsalog,  
Umayamnon, Manobo, Kamigin, Yakan,  
Sama, Badjao/Sama Laut, Kalibugan, Jama  
Mapon

**CENTRAL MINDANAO**

Aromanon, Tiruray, Bagobo, Ubo Manobo,  
Higaonon, Subanen, Maguindanao,  
Maranao, Iranon, Karintik B'laan,  
Lambangian, Dulangan



# Introduction

Indigenous cultural communities comprise one of the most dynamic and culturally-diverse sectors of Philippine society. They belong to at least 110 ethno-linguistic groups and are found in almost all the regions of the country. Most of them are found in the uplands *and* forests while some have settled along coastal areas. Many decades of exploitation, discrimination, and government neglect have marginalized the indigenous communities, and they are generally considered the poorest sector in the country today.

International and local advocacy on the rights of indigenous peoples during the past two decades focused some attention on their situation. Much has been said about the indigenous peoples' rights to self-governance and self-determination, their rights to their territories and the abundance of their natural resources, the wealth of their customs and traditions, and the wisdom of their indigenous knowledge systems and practices.

Within the Philippine context, it is recognized that there can be no true lasting peace and development unless the human rights of the basic sectors, including the indigenous cultural communities, are promoted and their concerns effectively addressed. As mentioned in the introduction to Volume 1 of this series, the country has enacted the IPRA that recognizes and protects indigenous peoples' rights. The government has also created a national machinery to implement this law.

Various international development bodies and organizations are providing assistance to indigenous cultural communities in line with the policies outlined in the IPRA. However, it is also important to look at the other side of the development equation: what are the indigenous peoples themselves doing to assert their rights, promote their own interests, and protect their culture and traditional life ways, even as they must deal with the realities of daily existence in their communities, the turbulent and unstable national political situation, and the effects of globalization? How are they facing the challenges of an uncertain future? How can they, by being true to themselves, determine their own development and, thereby, contribute to the overall effort of nation building?

The focus on conserving natural resources within ancestral domains through indigenous knowledge, systems and practices has become a global concern among both developed and underdeveloped countries. Many planners have realized the need to address the inequitable practices in conventional development models, which have only widened the gap between the rich and the poor. Unfortunately, indigenous peoples are the ones most affected by the increasing incidence of poverty.

One reason for this trend is that economic planners have tragically neglected the respect and protection for indigenous peoples' rights to their ancestral domain. For generations, ancestral domains have been the lifeblood of indigenous communities. Their cultural integrity is dependent on security of tenure to their ancestral domains and the preservation of their indigenous knowledge systems and practices (IKSP). Each is contingent on the other, inseparably integrated with the different parameters of their sustainable development. For equitable development to happen, the international community has recognized that ancestral domains can provide the proper context and environment for indigenous peoples; that cultural integrity can serve as their socio-cultural capital needed for long-term development; and that indigenous knowledge systems and practices can give flesh to action plans and programs for them, given the thrust of global and national economic policies.

The increasing interest in the integration of IKSP to national development efforts focuses on its contribution to poverty alleviation, as it serves to balance local knowledge and modern

In this second of a two-volume series, several case studies point to the crucial role of ancestral domains and IKSP among indigenous communities. These are still dynamic and very much a part of life, practiced and passed down from the old to the young for generations through rituals and traditions on indigenous resources management. Among the stories in this book are the experiences of the Kalanguya community in the northern Philippines in conserving natural resources in order to improve their quality of life, and the role of the Tawali women in managing the famous Ifugao rice terraces. In two places that have become a magnet for tourists – Sagada and Palawan – the Isagada, Batak and Tagbanua communities face an uphill battle to preserve rapidly vanishing traditions.

Given the increasing global and national concern to promote the total human development of indigenous peoples, three case studies in this volume focus on specific concerns. These are related to child labour, health services, and educational opportunities for the marginalized sector. In the same vein as the case studies on resource management, the goal here is to establish the relevance of IKSPs as valuable inputs to policy and strategy formulation towards sustainable development.

It is hoped that these stories may serve to inspire well-meaning groups and individuals that are working to bring about positive change for the long-suffering indigenous peoples in the Philippines.



*Notes on the cover: The front page shows the famed rice terraces in the Cordillera, the traditional dap-ay in Sagada, and a Batak family in Palawan. The back page shows an old photo of Sagada before tourists discovered it. (Photos courtesy of Felipe S. Comila and Jofelle P. Tesorio/Bandillo ng Palawan)*

Case Study 1  
**The Disappearing Dap-ay:  
Coping with Change in Sagada**  
By Felipe S. Comila



If there is one place in the Philippines that comes closest to the concept of Shangrila, a peaceful retreat hidden deep in the mountains, it would be Sagada in the northern Philippines.

Every year, thousands of visitors flock to Sagada for its cool climate, majestic scenery, and evergreen natural environment. The Kankanaey people who inhabit the municipality often describe the place as paradise on earth. In recent years, many changes have occurred in Sagada as a result of tourism, mass media and the entry of other outside influences. Despite the onslaught of modernization, however, its people have maintained a unique attachment to their indigenous culture. Unlike other popular tourist destinations, Sagada has retained its mystique and Kankanaey traditions continue to thrive amid the changes in their daily lives.

Sagada is one of the ten municipalities in the Mountain Province, which is part of the Cordillera Administrative Region of the Philippines. With an elevation of 1,500 meters above sea level, Sagada enjoys cool weather year-round. The coldest temperature recorded in recent years was four degrees Celsius in 1992. Its land area of 8,396 hectares stretches across steep mountains dotted with waterfalls, caves, and lakes. The municipality is composed of 19 barangays, with the total population of the indigenous Kankanaey placed at 10,575 in the 2000 census.

The Kankanaey communities in Sagada are known as Isagada, and are classified as part of the Applai ethno-linguistic group. One of the major groupings of indigenous peoples in the Cordillera, the Kankanaey people belongs to the larger community of mountain dwellers in the region known as the Igorots. Just like other indigenous peoples across the country, the Kankanaey face problems of discrimination because they are not integrated into the mainstream culture.

Historian William Henry Scott described the Isagada as freedom-loving communities “in the sense that they were composed of independent people, not that they were organized into independent provinces. They had neither king or castle *ni rey ni roque*.” In general, the Isagada do not pay much attention to popular figures such as actors and national politicians. Their admiration and appreciation of a personality is kept under control; thus, they do not approve of exaggerated actions such as openly shouting and cheering for a public figure. In contrast to many Filipinos, they seek innate beauty and have more appreciation for what people say and do rather than their external appearance.

Most of the Isagada have extended families, with the elders usually living with their children and grandchildren. Based on oral history and written accounts, early settlers usually established their *ili*, or community, in the place where they found their dog or sow with its litter. The Isagada concept of territory has found new expression in their Ancestral Domain as provided under RA No. 8371 or the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997. The law created the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) as the primary government agency responsible for the policies, plans and programs that would promote the rights and well-being of indigenous communities and the recognition of their ancestral domains. This is in line with the ILO Convention No. 169 or the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention formulated in 1989.

The gap on the traditional social strata of *kodo*, *kadangyan* and *baknang* are gradually thinning out due to education. *Kodo* are those people who work only for daily subsistence, *kadangyan* are the type of people who may not enjoy much money but own large tracts of land, and *baknang* are those who have plenty of money. They are quick to say that nobody goes hungry in Sagada as long as one is industrious. Thus, the Isagada conclude that those who do not have something to eat are those who are lazy.

The Isagada still believe in a Supernatural Being called Kabunian, even though Western religions have flourished in the town for more than a century. Spanish colonizers introduced Roman Catholicism in Sagada shortly before the 1898 Philippine revolution ended the reign of the foreign rulers. However, leaders of the Episcopal Church who arrived with the Americans in 1904 gained more influence than previous missionaries.

Most residents say Sagada owes much of its ambience and character today to the Episcopal Mission Church. The missionaries established the Saint Mary's School of Sagada in 1912, the oldest academic institution and the only private school in the municipality. With its rigorous academic standards, Saint Mary's School attracted students from all over the Cordillera region and was named the 7<sup>th</sup> best school in the entire Philippines in the 1960's. Its high-caliber graduates have gone on to occupy distinguished positions in public and private institutions in the country and abroad. The missionaries also set up the St. Theodore's Hospital and St. Joseph's Orphanage. The latter has evolved to become one of the first establishments in Sagada catering to tourists in the 1980s, known as the Saint Joseph's Inn and Restaurant.

Indigenous Filipinos usually share the view that land is important they belong to the land and not the land to them. This principle holds true for the Isagada, who consider land as sacred and something that cannot just be disposed of lightly. Usually, buying and selling of lands is confined among blood relatives; only when no relative is interested will it be sold to other residents in the area. According to one researcher, records show that no tourist, foreign or local, has managed to buy land in Sagada despite the growing number of visitors that have asked local families to sell their land. Instead, tourists who were able to build their houses in town did so on leased land.

Farming is the main livelihood of most Isagada, with vegetable gardening becoming a popular source of cash income in recent years. Limited cutting of trees is allowed in the thickly forested outskirts of northern Sagada, on the condition that the timber is only used locally.

In the 1980s, small-scale mining for gold became a popular occupation for those that could withstand its rigors, mainly in Barangay Fidelisan. The miners operate on the principle that the whole *umili*, the people in the community, owns the resource so nobody takes out more than his share or encroaches on the tunnels of other people.

In the eastern section of Sagada, trading in antiques and rattan weaving were the main sources of livelihood in the 1970s. This declined with the entry of the *wagwag* (second-hand clothes) business, which has boomed all over the Philippines. Meanwhile, central Sagada began catering to the needs of tourists and opened souvenir shops, lodging houses, and restaurants. Some residents have started offering tourist guide services, mainly in spelunking and hiking in the mountains.

One of the institutions credited with uplifting the economic conditions of the Isagada are the cooperatives, which have become an essential part of life in Sagada. Topping the list is the Sagada Multipurpose Cooperative, which was established by municipal teachers in the 1960s to gain access to credit. The cooperative expanded its membership to government and non-government employees, and later on to the self-employed.

Sagada enjoys a rural community lifestyle characterized by intimate, private and exclusive family ties. Strong kinship is displayed in their daily activities. Spontaneity, mutual help, and sharing of pleasure as well as sorrow are among the elements of their social relationship. There is a high degree of conformity with the customs, laws, morals and expectations of the group. Unity is based on similarity of objectives, traits and experiences.



Although the Isagada still cling to their primary relationships within the family and the community, changes in recent years are basically leading towards an urban community lifestyle. Social relations are expected to become impersonal, rational, formal, businesslike and contractual in the coming years, but not in the near future, according to residents. “Sagada is a mixture of different cultures and experiences, so people are flexible and they can easily adjust to situations,” said Marilou Wadingan, a teacher from Kilong Primary School in Eastern Sagada.

Modern influences are the major factors affecting the shift in lifestyles. The Isagada have become exposed to different mass media and new technologies such as television cable networks, videos, computer games, and the ubiquitous karaoke machines. No wonder then, that the people of the municipality are getting swept into the dominant pop culture just like other places in the Philippines. In particular, many young people are following the fashion and modern lifestyles that can be seen in media advertisements. The *umili* is no longer left out, as almost everybody has access to print or broadcast media.

## Tourist Attractions

Sagada is well known not only in the Philippines but also in other countries because of its varied tourist attractions. Records obtained from the tourism office show that from January to April 2005 alone, a total of 5,674 tourists visited Sagada. About one-fifth of them were foreigners. The main reasons for the tourism boom are natural tourist spots such as the caves and waterfalls, man-made and cultural attractions like the “hanging coffins” and rice terraces, the practice of age-old culture, and the unique hospitality of the people.

The exact number of caves in the municipality is not known but according to the Sagada Environmental Guides Association, there are more or less forty caves. Hence, spelunking is one of the reasons that tourists come to Sagada. In the summer of 2004, one research study found that 82.4 percent of visitors came mainly to explore the caves. From the central to the southern zones of the town, limestone formations conceal many caves that have become tourist destinations. Some of the most visited ones are as follows:

**Sumaguig Cave.** The most popular cave in Sagada, this cave can be fully explored in just two hours. Visitors descend through steep, rocky and sometimes slippery steps for about 15 to 20 minutes and are rewarded with flowing crystal clear water, interesting rock formations, cool swimming pools, picturesque mini-falls, and wide dance floors where bats make music.

**Crystal Cave.** This is connected to the Big Cave (the other name of Sumaguig Cave) and harbors sparkling stalactites and stalagmites, some of which were stolen in the past. Since then, the main entrance has been locked and visitors can only make their way in through slippery and narrow holes from Sumaguig Cave. Due to the theft, visitors are strictly monitored and they can only enter with authorized guides.

**Lumiang Cave.** In the Cave Connection tour offered by guides to the more adventurous, visitors go to the Big Cave passing through Lumiang, a former burial site piled with several coffins. The first Episcopalian missionary in Sagada, Fr. John Armitage Staunton, is known to have blessed the cave as a Christian burial site when he was unable to stop the Isagada from bringing their dead inside the caves or adjacent to the cliffs.



Rock formation inside Sumaguig Cave





**Matang Cave/Matangkib.** Because of easy access and its proximity to the town center, this is the most desecrated among the caves that were used as burial grounds. Coffins and bones are strewn around the cave floor. Since there is no need for a guide in the cave, a foreign visitor is reported to have slipped inside the cave after ignoring a sign not to cross over a railing. The cave's entrance was locked after the accident, and also due to the rampant desecration.

**Latang Cave and Sugong Cave.** These two caves boast of underground rivers. Water from Bokong Falls passes through Latang Cave before entering Sugong Cave about a kilometer and a half away. The river emerges farther down in Ambasing and irrigates the Kapay-aw Ricefields.

**Balangagan Cave.** Located farther down the Southern Zone, this cave can be reached after about an hour's hike from Sumaguig Cave. The trek may be tiring but the views inside the cave are worth all the effort. Exploring this cave takes about two to three hours. It has numerous rock formations and contains a burial jar, along with other evidence that the cave was used as a burial site in the past.

**Natividad Cave.** Discovered in the early 1990s, this cave has not yet been fully explored. It can only be visited during the summer, as the entrance is submerged in water during the rainy season. This cave is full of stalagmites and stalactites, and guides will only bring visitors here upon special request.

Other natural beauties of Sagada are the bodies of water that abound in the mountain retreat. The most popular of these are Bomod-ok and Bokong falls and Tabiyay-ew and Danom lakes. Bokong falls and Danom lake are the most accessible to visitors, as they only need a map to reach these places. Tourists can also take in the scenic views of Mount Ampacao, located between poblacion Sagada and the adjacent municipality of Besao.

In addition to its natural wonders, cultural tourism has become a huge draw in Sagada because of its rice terraces, the "hanging coffins", the Sagada Mission Compound and the *dap-ay*.

The rice terraces stretch all the way from the base to the middle section of the mountains. Traditionally farmed for subsistence, some of the rice terraces have been converted to vegetable gardens due to the demand for cash crops and the retrenchment of miners in the early 1990s.

The "hanging coffins" are suspended on sheer cliffs, which require difficult descent. This type of burial is reserved for the most distinguished or honorable leaders in the community, particularly the most prominent figure in the *dap-ay*. During their lifetime, such personages would have performed



Hanging coffins in Sagada's cliffs

meritorious acts, decided wisely on matters at hand, and took charge of indigenous rituals. Their closest counterpart in western society would be the bishops or cardinals in the Catholic tradition. Although confined mostly to men, there is a documented case of a woman who was accorded such an honorable burial, according to Arthur Bosaing Sr., one of the Sagada elders.

The hanging coffins are closely associated with the practice of *Sangadil*, the traditional way of preparing the dead for burial. This involves tying the body of the person to a death chair without any preservative. He is bound in a fetal position and wrapped in his death blanket, then tossed from one person to another rapidly, like a ball in a basketball game. Pus and blood dripping from the dead person's body are not dreaded but instead, considered good luck. After the *Sangadil*, the dead is placed in a coffin and laid to rest on the cliff side. This is no longer practiced unless especially requested while someone is still alive. Most old folk now prefer to be placed in a coffin during their wake, covered and not wrapped with their death blanket.

According to previous studies, cliff burial started in the early 1900s. The gradual disappearance of the burial practice of *sangadil* and the introduction of the modern-day cemetery ended this practice. Most of the Isagada, especially those educated under the Americans and baptized in the Episcopal Anglican Church, now prefer the cemetery as their burial grounds.

The Sagada Mission Compound, the living legacy of the Episcopal Mission Church, is often visited for its historic value. The contributions of the Sagada Mission range from education to religion, health, economic development and social work. The St. Mary's School continues to provide educational services through the financial and moral support of its alumni. The Saint Theodore's Hospital, which started as a dispensary, has become the principal medical center in Sagada in tandem with the government's Rural Health Unit. The former St. Joseph's Orphanage has been turned into a lodging house for visitors. The Sagada Episcopal Church, which trained many of the earliest Episcopalian bishops in the Philippines in its seminary, still has the highest number of members in Sagada. In terms of livelihood, the Sagada Mission also taught the Isagada the arts of weaving and sewing, exporting many textile products to other Missions abroad.

In contrast to the western-influenced church, the *dap-ay* stands as a testament to the age-old traditions of the Isagada. It is a low-roofed small building usually found at the center of an *ili*, adjacent to an open space paved with stones. Stools and back rests for the elders, fashioned out of larger stones, form a ring around the platform. Usually, a *moyong*, which is a large tree considered so sacred that no one can cut any part of it, stands on its center or side. Nowadays, though, the *dap-ay* hut is no longer built with pinewood and cogon but with galvanized iron and cement.

## Coping with Socio-economic Change

Since the early 1970s, when backpackers from all over the world started streaming into Sagada, many changes have occurred in the daily lives of its residents, particularly in the town center. For one thing, tourism placed the municipality of Sagada in the limelight, bringing plenty of media attention that helped boost its popularity. At the same time, the arrival of tourists helped open the eyes of the Isagada to the world outside of the municipality. Visitors who enter Sagada unconsciously or consciously introduce changes into the community that the local people follow if the new influence is acceptable by their own standards.

Perhaps, the biggest benefit of tourism to Sagada is the economic prosperity that it has brought to industrious residents. The town has become famous for stoneware pottery, introduced by foreign visitors David Fowler and Archie Stapleton. The Sagada Weaving and Souvenir Shop, the first of its kind in town, continues to thrive and is the only business establishment paying value-added taxes, according to records from the Bureau of Internal Revenue. Both the Saint Mary's School and Saint Theodore's Hospital have opened their facilities to accommodate the influx of visitors during the summer months and holidays. Many new hotels have also sprung up in response to tourist demand. Isagada farmers have a bigger market for their vegetables and other cash crops, filling orders from restaurants aside from selling their produce during the weekly market day on Saturdays.

Indeed, tourism has introduced the Isagada to new business opportunities such as hotels and restaurants that are financially rewarding especially during peak seasons. Yet, the Isagada have



kept the tourism industry under their control. For instance, the government's Philippine Tourism Authority was not allowed to build a five-star hotel in Sagada as it would aggravate the scarcity of water during summer and this would be detrimental to the residents. This line of thinking guides the Isagada in accepting tourism projects in the locality.

In many instances, tourists have decided to stay on for long-term residency or to build second homes in Sagada. One tourist who did so explained, "Sagada haunts me wherever I go. Even when I was enjoying the best life in Qatar with everything I need, I still longed to come back to Sagada. So, to end my agony, I quit my job and here I am." Most of the new migrants savor the genuine and not superficial friendship they forge with local people, as well as the natural environment of Sagada that is beneficial to one's health.

Their presence has resulted in many positive changes. At the Saint Mary's School for example, former tourists who now consider themselves Isagada are helping the school financially and morally. A couple of tourists from Manila introduced the practice of Solid Waste Management and set up the Material Recovery Facility in the town, which are now getting replicated in other towns in the province. Dennis Faustino, an educator who first came to Sagada in the 1970s, composed the Sagada Hymn and stayed on to become the principal of Saint Mary's School. Jorge Hernandez, an award-winning writer and international graphic designer, directed several school plays and contributed his talent towards the success of the Sagada Centennial Saga in 2004. Steve Jackson, an Australian, introduced soccer to the local youth and stays six months a year to coach the players, going back to his home country only to earn his keep.

Obviously, tourism has had a great influence on the evolving lifestyles in Sagada, which are shifting toward urbanization. According to the provincial government, Sagada was predicted to have the highest urban population in the entire Mountain Province by the end of 2004, at 26 per cent of the total provincial population. The number is expected to rapidly grow in the coming years with the continuing influx of tourists, and as the Isagada learn to associate with different types of people. "The Isagada are also influenced by what they see from tourists who come here. They say things like, *ngan di katken nan umal-alis na or dan datodi et daen* (How are these tourists different from us?) and they start to aspire for what they see from the outside and from visitors. Thus, the Isagada adopt their practices," said Fr. Moreno Tuguinay, a retired Ifugao priest from the Anglican church who studied in Sagada in high school and has become a permanent resident in town.

## The Changing Culture of the Isagada

Although most people in Sagada welcome the changes, they differ on the pace and degree by which these are happening in their midst. Some of the Isagada have adopted practices from other groups of people and infused them into their own culture. Material and non-material cultures that have been lost are getting replaced by evolving cultural practices. Whether the changes are gradual or immediate, however, they all agree that change has to go hand in hand with the preservation of Sagada's natural resources.

There are fears that outside influences could result in the loss of traditional practices. However, some Isagada believe the continued observance of customary practices is crucial to the tourism industry, as the unique culture of Sagada is one of the main reasons why tourists come to the place. At the same time, they recognize the threats to the *waned id kasin* (age-old culture) of the Isagada. Aside from tourism, these include education, religion, practicality, and migration.

Some cultural practices, such as the *obaya*, are no longer strictly imposed among tourists, since they arrive anytime and stay only for a short duration. *Obaya* is a time of rest for a day or a number of days, when people are not allowed to do their usual work in the fields nor go out of the community. Sometimes, an *obaya* forbids visitors from entering the community. The extent and duration of the *obaya* depends on the reason for its imposition, such as the burial of a community member or a traditional ritual being performed at that time. Such rituals include the *begnas*, which





signals the start of a major event like planting or harvesting rice. Due to the pressing need to earn a living, however, the observance of *obaya* even among the Isagada has waned, as many people would rather work than take time off to take part in the ritual. Earning a decent income in order to feed one's family has become more important than observing traditional practices. In the past, most of their work revolved around the rice fields, where the *dap-ay* rituals were also based. With the emergence of new



The first church built in Sagada

sources of livelihood such as vegetable gardens and employment, the link with tradition is lost and along with it, the practice of rituals such as the *obaya*.

Traditional rituals during weddings and deaths are sometimes adjusted to meet the needs of the participants as well, usually involving short cuts. Hence, instead of performing the rituals for a week, the *amam-a* (council of elders) can be talked into doing it only for a period of three days if the people requesting it need to go back to their work immediately. In weddings, the bride and groom may ask the *amam-a* to do away with the rule that the newly-wed couple cannot go out of the community for a couple of days, as this would affect their work. Almost all the Isagada believe that practices such as butchering a total of 21 pigs plus a number of chickens for all the rituals performed when somebody dies should be lessened, for economic reasons.

Unity has always been part of the Isagada culture, but changes in the value systems of the people are posing a threat to this trait as well. A customary practice that is slowly vanishing is the *ob-obbo*, or cooperative effort of a group of people, which is often done during *kaykay* (a time to prepare the fields for dry farming) or *sama* (a time to prepare the rice fields for wet farming). The historian Scott describes *ob-obbo* as follows: "For their field work, for convenience and by custom, they have to unite in groups of six, ten or even twenty persons, all relatives or friends, who work for one day for one, the next day for another, the one for whom they are working providing the food for all."

Several houses have been built through such cooperative endeavors. Bereaved families, even though they are poor, can expect help from relatives and the entire community. Neighbors and relatives provide food and free labor for a day or two, especially if the dead person's family is unable to finish important tasks that cannot be delayed for long such as planting and harvesting rice. Even the Parents, Teachers and Community Association of schools made use of this practice to finish projects that benefit students, such as building classrooms and toilets.

The *ob-obbo* practice extends to financial matters. Sometimes, a group of people would agree to collect a fixed amount each week or month, which one of the members would receive until everyone is finished down the line. It is also seen in other special events like the *babayas* (traditional marriage ritual) and when someone dies. *Supon* (gift money or contribution) to the couple or to the



dead is a means of “investment” in which the couple or the bereaved family needs to make a similar exchange in the form of money, goods or services in the future, although not necessarily for the same occasion.

In eastern Sagada, the people practice *say-at*, also known as *oton di etag* (cooking of the traditional salted meat), where each family will exchange cooked food with their relatives. This activity enhances community relations and brings the families closer to each other. The practice continues to this day due to its beneficial outcome. Furthermore, the obligation of changing the service or gift given to a couple or family is valued greatly and accepted with sincere gratitude.

Another tradition that is threatened in Sagada is that of the *dap-ay*, which is the center of political, social and religious functions in the community. It is the place of discussion for socio-economic issues, politics, values, beliefs, population concerns, the environment, opportunities and any other topic affecting the lives of the people. It is also the center of traditional ceremonies and practices. Today, it remains the venue for making decisions, especially on land matters. Decisions are based on the rule of the majority. After a decision is made, information dissemination is the responsibility of the *dumap-ay*, or the people belonging to one *dap-ay*.

All over Sagada are several *dap-ay*, most of which remain active as centers for socio-political and cultural activities. Members of the *dap-ay* are usually families living nearby. Central Sagada has 12 *dap-ay*, the eastern zone has about 15 *dap-ay*, the southern zone has nine *dap-ay*, and the northern zone has 13 *dap-ay*.

The *dap-ay* is ruled by a council of male elders known as *amam-a* who earned the distinction through age, wise decisions, and religious practice of all cultural traditions. Conflicts in the community, such as a breach in the peace and order situation, are settled in the *dap-ay*. But only minor or less contentious cases are discussed in the *dap-ay* nowadays, with most cases going to the *Lupong Pambarangay* (village court) or the judiciary. The *dap-ay* in some settlements have lost their traditional prestige as many of their elders have died out. In the neighborhood of Bangaan for instance, resident Maribel Besay said the *dap-ay* is now “good for bonfires only.”

In the past, the *dap-ay* also served as dormitory and learning institution for boys. All single males slept in their *dap-ay*, where they were taught the culture of Sagada. Smaller boys often did simple chores such as massaging the elders and keeping the fire alive. The fire keeps away the cold of the night so it is unacceptable to let the fire in the *dap-ay* go out. During the socialization of the men in the *dap-ay*, the older males pass on their knowledge of Isagada traditions to the younger ones. One of the common practices they enjoy is courting the ladies in the *ebgan*, or the female dormitory. With the onset of non-traditional education in schools and the trend of building of bigger houses, however, boys now sleep in their own houses instead of the *dap-ay*. This has further eroded the influence of the *amam-a*, who can no longer pass on their knowledge to the younger males.

Traditionally, single males also run errands for the *amam-a* or for anybody who needs help. These include calling for the *obaya*, which is done during the wee hours of the morning. However, the task is now left to the *amam-a*, for there are very few young males who are willing to perform such duties as they now have other interests. The *amam-a* keeps the essence of the *dap-ay* unchanged and the spirit of the tradition alive, but as the number of educated Isagada increases, so is the number of those who are less interested in *dap-ay* rituals.

Even as the *dap-ay* is losing its control on the Isagada, the *amam-a* is also learning to adjust to the people and to the changes in the municipality. This is seen in the practice of *dangtrey*, a community cleansing ceremony performed every ten years in Central Sagada. It is a time when the *amam-a* of each *dap-ay* in the areas of Demang, Dagdag and Patay/Poblacion come together to take part in the traditional practice. One *dap-ay* will lead the group and several *lawa* (taboo) will be imposed on the individual who will lead the whole event. Such *lawa* includes not taking a bath for a certain period of time. In the past, this ceremony was strictly done according to tradition, but there have been some revisions in recent decades. One such adjustment occurred when the *amam-a*



performed the ceremony outside the ten-year prescriptive period for the sake of a foreigner who shouldered the expenses for the ritual. The last *dangtey* was done after more than ten years.

The old men who lead the *dap-ay* and perform all the cultural practices associated with it have implicitly agreed to make things work in accordance with the changes in Sagada. The *obaya* used to be done with strict compliance to all forbidden acts, but there is now more tolerance for people who disobey traditional rules. For instance, it used to be taboo for someone go out or in the community during *obaya*, which was observed for about a week. Now, the *obaya* has been shortened to a day or three days only, and people can move in or out of the community.

Old people of Sagada often say things like “*awnit datngan yon ton nan timpo yo,*” (soon your time will come) meaning what is acceptable now may no longer be acceptable in the future. Another expression they often use when they have no choice but to accept changes around them is, “*anya ngalod*” (what else can we do?). To the old men, today is the time of the young but they still grasp whatever authority they can while they are still alive. By the time the elders of today are gone, the next batch of old men would have more lax implementation of Sagada traditions. Thus, the death of the *amam-a* will further disintegrate the influence of the *dap-ay*.

If the *dap-ay* is the dormitory for single males, the *ebgan* is the dormitory for single females. This may be the house of a widow or an unmarried elderly woman where single females sleep at night. They socialize with



Dap-ay in barangay Demang is used during decision-making rituals

other single females and entertain single males who come to court them. If the females are fond of the male visitors, they will open the door and let them in. If they do not open the door, it means that either the ladies do not like the men, or are not in the mood to entertain them. Pre-marriage agreements, such as engagements, are usually done in the *ebgan*. Sometimes, the males and the females go to the extent of debating with each other through songs or chants. Sadly, there is no more *ebgan* nowadays. Teen-age girls sleep in their own houses, and the traditional ways of wooing and courting ladies have been forgotten.

In the past, when a couple agrees to marry, the prospective husband has to perform what is known as *dok-ong* to let the parents of the girl know of their intention. In the *dok-ong*, he asks a friend to help him cut wood that he will bring to the girl’s house. In return, the woman gets food for the pigs and brings this to the man’s house. Both sets of parents will reciprocate the gestures with a *sukat di makan*, or exchange of food. Dining with each other’s relatives means that both sides accept the coming marriage. These days, however, the *dok-ong* is no longer practised. One innovation in this tradition is to let the couple work in the fields and “announce” their intention by letting the people see them together.

One of the foundations of Isagada culture is the *inayan*, a term applied to an action that is considered universally wrong. One resident describes it this way: “If the Christians and the Jews have the Ten Commandments, the Isagada sum it up in the *inayan*.” Anything that is wrong is *inayan*. An example would be “*inayan di mang-isungsungbat is inanana ya amana* (it is bad to answer back your mothers and fathers),” which is equivalent to the Christian commandment to honor one’s parents.

A similar concept is *lawa*, or taboo that touches on the belief system of the individual, and thus, may not apply to everyone. An example is “*lawa no waday matektekdag no gobbaw*” (it is bad to let something fall during a name-giving ceremony).

Many Isagada have noticed a rapid change in the values of the youth, especially their lack of reverence for older people. Traditionally, it is considered *inayan* to answer back or to disobey their elders, but the young people now seem to consider answering back and disobedience as a game. It used to be very disrespectful to pass by an old man or woman without carrying his or her load, but the young now seem to see no reason for helping the old. Obscene words are mentioned without any reservations. One resident said, *maid iyegyat di ongong-a* (the young fear nothing).

Still, some traditions have survived among the Isagada, whose lives are full of rituals from birth to death. For instance, when the umbilical cord is about to be separated from the newborn, the naming ceremony called *gobbaw* is performed. Neighbors and relatives bring gifts to the house of the newborn, and ancestors’ names are given to the baby. Thus, having the same name means that in one way or another they are related.

*Babayas* is the term for marriage ceremonies, which are scheduled in May or December. It often seems like a mass wedding, with more than one couple celebrating and everyone getting invited to the wedding party. Marriage means feeding the whole community not only once but at least two meals in one day. The celebration usually lasts more than a day, with the playing of gongs starting from the day of the wedding and ending the next day. On the night of the *papa*, or the third day of the *babayas*, the old and the young enjoy quizzing each other through riddles and other mind games.

When someone dies, about 18 to 24 pigs and a number of chickens are usually required to be butchered until all the ceremonies are finished after a year or more. Nowadays, if the bereaved family cannot afford it, the ceremonies may be finished in less than a year. One of the reasons for the change in practice is the fact that pigs are now ready to be butchered within a couple of months, unlike before when the Isagada only used native pigs that matured more slowly. Also, the color of the pig is no longer as important, unlike before when only black pigs were used. Some people recalled that in the past, if there is no black pig then the *amam-a* would use coal to color it black to “deceive the *anito* (spirits).”

In the case of a husband or wife who dies, the remaining spouse used to be considered an outcast and treated as if the death was his or her fault. During the *ngilin*, or period of mourning when many rituals are performed for the dead, the widow or widower stays in the corner and is not allowed to roam around or go out of the house. These days, most Isagada no longer subscribe to this practice.

Total seclusion as a form of punishment for men and women who commit adultery, who used to be ostracized by the *umili*, is also losing adherents. A person who is left by the spouse is considered “unclean” unless he or she performs *daw-es*, a kind of “cleansing” ritual. After that, the individual is again accepted in the community.

Some of the major changes in the lives of the Isagada occurred when religious groups started making inroads into the community. Their rituals were said to have originated with *Biag*, whom they consider as their ancestor. When the Christian sect *Sapilada* arrived, the new belief system became popular in the southern zones because it freed the people from expensive rituals and allowed them to prepare anything that the bereaved can afford, like dried beans, during the wake of the dead for instance. This paved the way for other influences from various groups including the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Anglicans, Episcopalians and the Roman Catholic Church. The teachings from the new religions clashed with the rituals that the Isagada had been practicing, and even though some people attempted to blend local culture with the new faiths, the pressure to conform to the new belief system won out in the end. As one resident admitted, the *dap-ay* in the settlement of Kilong is no longer very influential as the socio-political activities of the people shifted to the Roman Catholic church.





When the western religions came, headhunting as a form of defense against invaders also became just part of the history of Sagada. The Isagada are peaceful by nature, and conflicts are usually settled through the prayer of *palanga*. An agreement for two parties not to harm each other, the *palanga* is equivalent to the peace pact in other parts of Mountain Province. Another type of peace pact, the *Peden*, is resorted to when both parties agree to end a conflict, so that each party can safely enter the other's territory. Conflicts in Sagada usually revolve around boundary disputes or water sources.

In the arena of politics, many residents say money has changed the rules of the game. "Before, even the poor can run, because the politicians are judged by their abilities and what they have done in the past, their characters and achievements," said one resident. "But now, running for an office is only for those with money." Despite this trend, however, others have also noted that *inagi-an*, or the politics of relatives, still persists. This means that a politician with more relatives has better chances of winning an election.

In the process of change, many cultural artifacts are often lost. One very glaring change in Sagada is the gradual disappearance of the *inatep*, following the introduction of galvanized roofing during the American colonial period. The *inatep* is the cogon-thatched native house, the traditional dwelling of the Kankanaey of Sagada. Its doors are so low that one should stoop before entering the house. Destroyed or rotten cogon roofs are repaired during summer. Inside, it is neither too hot nor too cold. Some types of *inatep* have a ground floor that serves as living room, kitchen and dining area. There are separate corners for sleeping, for pounding rice, and for keeping chickens at night. It also has an attic called *baeg*, which serves as a storage room for rice and other grains. Another type of *inatep* known as the *kubo* only has a ground floor serving as kitchen, dining area, sleeping area, and living room. Today, most houses in Sagada are made of more permanent materials such as wood, galvanized iron, and cement.

Inside the house, the use of wooden and bamboo-woven utensils is also a thing of the past. Some utensils that are no longer used or made are the *apagan*, *bangkito*, *gimata*, *sayosey*, and *gayag*. Plastic ware and utensils made of silver, ceramics, and aluminum that are bought in the market have replaced these wooden or woven materials. Indeed, as resident Jorge Hernandez said, "The convenience of consumerism has invaded Sagada."

In farming, new technology has replaced many traditional methods. Instead of using simple farm implements such as the spade or *aklo*, a wooden curved tool, to prepare the land for planting, some farmers now use machines. The *lakem*, a tool placed between the fingers to cut the rice stalks one at a time, has given way to the more convenient method of harvesting rice by the handfuls with the use of a sickle. Many farmers no longer pound rice to separate the grains from the chaff; instead they use a thresher or whip the grains between the spaces of a *saplitan*, a wooden device with slats.

In the material culture of the Isagada, several objects of utility have been turned into objects of art. Spears and shields, or the *balaka* and *topil*, are now used mainly for rituals and decorations and no longer as hunting gear. "The *gosi* is now an object of art - antiques - not anymore for making and storing of *tapuey* (rice wine)" said Julio Mangangey, an administrative assistant of Ankileng Elementary School in Southern Sagada. Traditional musical instruments such as the *kaleleng*, *diwas*, *ghestong*, *tabil*, and *kolisteng* are only played for entertainment during special occasions, and not as part of everyday life. Most Isagada regard their material culture only as proof of their history that they need to keep for its sentimental value, and no longer for utility purposes.

Even the native food of the Isagada has undergone transformation. Some traditional foods, such as *etag* (salted pork) and *tapuey* (rice wine), are now produced for commercial purposes so that anyone can buy them in the market. Meanwhile, other native food such as the *tengba*, *tinagawtaw*, and *pinapak* are slowly becoming part of history. Only a few of the Isagada still cook or make such delicacies. Young Isagada people say traditional food such as the *pinuneg* has been replaced by the lowlanders' *longganiza* (a kind of sausage) and *tengba* has given way to *bagoong* (shrimp paste).



Typical Filipino fare such as the national dish called *adobo* (meat stewed in soy sauce) are now commonly seen on special occasions like weddings, alongside the traditional boiled meat of the Isagada.

In fashion, traditional garb such as the *penet* (upper body garment) and *koba* (g-string or hat made from the bark of koba tree) have been changed to Western clothing. The *gateng*, or Isagada skirt, is supposed to be worn below the knee with the rear ends of its *bakget*, the traditional belt, flowing at the back like a tail. These days, women seldom wear the *gateng* correctly, usually preferring to wear it above the knee. Only a few men can be seen wearing their traditional garb, the *wanes*. In the southern zone of Sagada, some men would even perform in rituals wearing modern garb. For men, fashion in Sagada has changed from “show-it-all”, as the *wanes* only covers the butt and mid-section, to “cover everything” with long pants and shirts. Meanwhile, women shifted from “cover everything” to “show-it-all.” The combined influence of the mass media, tourism, and the love of fashion has changed the Isagada’s taste in clothes.

Among the young people, indigenous games such as *gagtin*, *buwag*, and *dangpil* are no longer in vogue. Some indigenous terms such as *paluka* (slippers) and *agyod* (good) have gone out of use, and only the old folk still know their meaning.

However, there are still instances when tradition prevails over modern influences. When representatives from the mobile phone operator Globe Telecom tried to persuade the people of Sagada to allow them to build a cellular site in Bato, which is a sacred place for the performance of rituals and a source of water, the people refused. “*Et no ipapati da, nan umili nan mangdadael*, (And if they will insist, the community people will be the ones to destroy it) recalled an old man of Barangay Demang, Eduardo Bete. “We can be open-minded to change but we also know how to say NO to more disadvantageous change for we have strong beliefs and a strong culture that were implanted in the Isagada,” said Siegrid Bangyay, a tourist guide at the same time one of the pioneer potters of Sagada.

## Managing Changes the Kankanaey Way

To cope with changes in the community as a result of influences from the tourism industry and other modern trends, the Isagada have responded with various strategies.

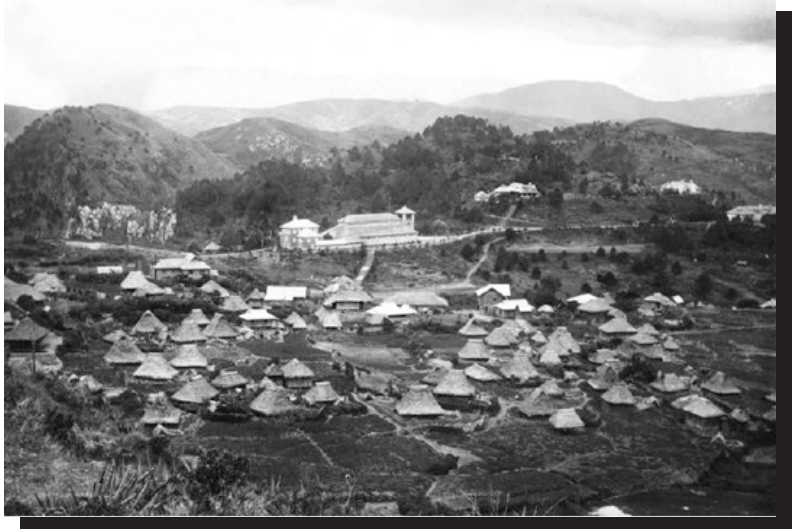
The principal coping mechanism of the Isagada is to acquire formal education in order to keep up with the modern pace of life. A common advice heard from residents is this: “*Men-oskila ka ta adim aped ton kaykaykawawaten nan tuping*” (You go to school so you will not just keep on working on the ripsaps of the fields). Women no longer suffer discrimination in seeking educational opportunities, unlike in the past when they were relegated to house work and farm labor. When the old women of today are asked why they were unable to go to school, they often say, “I had to look after my younger siblings.”

Even as it benefits many Isagada, higher education has its drawbacks. Students seldom come back to the municipality, preferring instead to practice their profession elsewhere. Those who return have a different appreciation of their culture, with scientific explanations taking the place of traditional beliefs. For instance, modern treatment for the sick has replaced the need to “feed” or make offerings to dead ancestors, who were once believed to be trying to get the attention of their living relatives through various ailments. Educated members of the community are also less likely to subscribe to traditional taboos or superstitions. One example is the prohibition against talking when one is planting corn or beans in one’s yard; most Isagada will now say that planting has nothing to do with talking.

With many of the educated Isagada moving out, the population in Sagada has hardly grown, only adding 211 inhabitants between the 1995 and 2000 census. The latest figure stands at 10,575 people. Lack of job opportunities in Sagada, where they could apply what they have learned in school, has driven many residents to migrate to other places. Often, elderly parents choose to join



their children in making a new life somewhere else. At least three councilors in Baguio City, the major urban center in the Cordillera region where Sagada is located, come from barangays in the municipality's eastern zone. One of the most prominent weaving entrepreneurs in the Philippines, Leonarda Capuyan, also comes from Sagada. Like many small towns in the Philippines, Sagada has to deal with its "brain and labor drain"



Houses surround the old Mission church in contested land

problem as most of its lawyers and doctors would rather serve in places like Baguio City instead of returning to their hometown.

Other reasons for the Sagada diaspora have something to do with religion, mining, and land issues. The *Kumbaba*, a breakaway sect from the Roman Catholic Church, is responsible for the mass resettlement of its followers from Sagada to the village of Lipay in the municipality of San Gabriel, in the lowland province of La Union. Gold mining also had its share of out-migrants, with Isagada workers finding their way to other parts of the Cordillera in search of job prospects, and eventually settling down in their new milieu. Lastly, a land-buying spree in the municipality of Tabuk, in neighboring Kalinga province, resulted in a new hometown for many Kankanaeys from Sagada.

In other parts of the country, many Isagada families who ventured into the secondhand clothes business have found new homes elsewhere, ending their previously dire existence as mendicants especially during Christmas time. Abroad, many of the educated Isagada are scattered in various corners of the globe in search of employment and better lives.

The diaspora of the Isagada has brought massive changes to the town. Those who go out of the community for economic, social or educational reasons usually bring home the influences they acquired outside, often resulting in positive changes for the community. Doris Aragon, a teacher of Sagada Central School, observed: "Mass media and exposure to the outside world helped influence the Isagada. When Isagada OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) come home, they bring back the culture of the place where they stayed." Financial aid from Isagada workers abroad also opens more opportunities for their family members back home.

However, most of the people who go out of the community do not forget where they come from. Even when the Isagada are in other places, they still practice cultural traditions and rituals. Isagada organizations in other countries are sometimes shown performing traditional dances using improvised gongs when they come together. People from particular zones in Sagada have created an organization in Baguio and Manila, which helps raise funds for the community they left behind. Ironically, some of the people who are promoting the preservation of Isagada culture are staying somewhere else, their cry likened to a voice in the wilderness since they are already following another culture. One example is the Isagada in the United States who still want to preserve traditional performances while they dance to rock music.

As their economic conditions improve, there is a seemingly endless cycle among the Isagada to use their craving for material things as a reason to work abroad and leave their family and the

community behind. One resident commented, “The Isagada cannot clearly distinguish their needs from their wants. A television set becomes a need, for example, since a neighbor has his or her own set.” To meet their material needs, many of the Isagada entered into businesses outside the place or started looking for better-paying jobs.

Within the community, other sources of financial help have helped the Isagada meet their needs and cultural obligations. These include cooperatives, community sharing of labor such as *ob-obbo*, and private lending from well-off individuals. The availability of financial options has allowed the Isagada to maintain full-time jobs, like teaching, and still keep their farms in a productive state with hired labor from other towns. One of the peculiar aspects of life in Sagada is that anybody whose farm is deserted or laid to waste, due to pursuit of other economic activities, is subjected to ostracism. Hence, the fields have to be well-tended despite modernizing trends.

At the extreme end, there are those who would rather do away with tradition and change their values altogether. Those residing in the central zone of Sagada are observed to be more individualistic than those in other zones. Some of the Isagada rarely or do not do all the needed rituals, with the justification “*mabalin obpay mamaid di*” (so that particular practice can be eliminated). Others would rather not perform rituals to appease the spirits so they could sell their pigs instead for economic gain. The only thing that compels the traditional-minded Isagada to observe their customs is the fear of the unknown, or what their dead ancestors might do to them.

In their daily lives, many Isagada have adopted new technologies as a result of changes in their hometown. Many children no longer experience cutting firewood, as the Isagada would rather use Liquefied Petroleum Gas in cooking. Others simply buy what they need. One resident observed, “*Maid et mangaiw id wani isnan bilig, nan mangaiwan da et sin tindaan* (Nobody is getting firewood now from the mountains, instead they get wood from the stores). Indeed, the convenience brought by consumerism has motivated the people of Sagada to change their ways. For one thing, it is easier to bring the *palay* (rice grains) to the milling house rather than pound it with the traditional mortar and pestle. Many people now enjoy electric appliances, such as washing machines, that make life easier for them. Mobile phone communications has made it easier to keep in touch with relatives outside Sagada. Internet is also available, although not on a regular basis. The Sagada Multi-purpose Cooperative provides cable television service to those who can afford it.

In adjusting to new trends, one factor that has guided the adaptation mechanism of the Isagada is the idea of practicality. In the past, social ostracism had been a very effective tool in keeping the Isagada from easily accepting change, to the extent of hurling insults at the people or groups introducing changes in the community. One example is the entry of other Christian denominations, which many people had resisted by ostracizing those who joined the new church groups. Lately, however, there has been a gradual acceptance of the newly introduced churches. As one teacher said, “I don’t teach and do things that are not practical.” Eventually, the Isagada simply went with the flow and adapted to the changing religious climate.

Others responded with acculturation, as seen in the changes in folk Christianity in Sagada. Age-old traditions are intertwined with Christian ceremonies, as seen in rituals for the dead, for instance. The dead is brought to the church for mass before burial, but traditional rituals are still performed after the burial. One elder also observed that most of the Isagada go to church, but also go to the *dap-ay* after church. These same Isagada would attend all church activities but at the same time perform all customary rituals. Those who have lived in Western countries still perform *senga* when they come back.

In the realm of governance, the waning influence of the traditional council of elders has resulted in the sharing of decision-making powers with parallel authorities such as elected local officials and school officials. Matters such as breach of peace may be brought either to the *dap-ay* or directly to the village court. However, there are cases, such as land disputes, that can never be settled without the presence of the old men and women who could testify to the truth of the claim.





## Managing Changes through Development Plans

The Isagada believe in the principle that development has to include genuine involvement and participation of all members of the community. This means the transformation of socio-cultural structures, such as education, and all aspects of human relationships. In order for the Isagada to cope with rapid changes, both infrastructure and human development are needed.

To most people, education remains the primary means for helping the Isagada adjust to their changing environment. Barangay captain Jaime Tigan-o of Suyo in Southern Sagada said, “The Isagada should invest on education so their minds will be broadened and they will not wait for dole-outs from the government or of the church, but instead develop the *ili* based on their present resources and needs.” Investments in quality education are needed, particularly in providing and repairing school buildings. Literacy for all is the top priority, but the curriculum also has to include the cultural and spiritual values of the Isagada. The educational system needs to instill discipline so that residents will learn to follow the law. More attention and importance has to be given to the youth in order to divert them from vices. The municipal government could initiate youth-oriented projects such as a sports center and inter-school sports competitions.

As a way of coping with economic difficulties, the people of Sagada are looking for livelihood opportunities that will make them more financially productive. Income-generating projects designed for mothers, out-of-school-youth, and even office workers are needed. Cooperatives need to strengthen their services to members. In addition to the development of cottage industries, the Isagada also need to be taught how to market their products.

Since farmers are found all over Sagada, farm-to-market roads have to reach the most remote fields so that produce can be shipped out. A pond or a tank that would ensure continuous supply of water to the farms is also needed. Cooperatives for gardeners and other farmers should be organized to assist them in acquiring farm supplies and in marketing their products. One resident commented, “The farmers should develop their leadership and diplomatic skills so they will know how to market their products even outside the province.” For those who have chosen to preserve the bio-farming practices of their ancestors, the Department of Agriculture could be tapped to bring their methods up to par with modern trends.

In the area of ecotourism, most Isagada believe that environment and tourism programs should never be separated. The preservation of nature, especially the remaining pine trees, and reforestation should be given priority attention. Local village councils should guard their mountains and hills strictly and restore any burned tracts of land. The people of Sagada are all too aware that preservation of the mountain resort is its best attraction to tourists.

At the same time, Sagada has to give proper attention to the development of ecotourism, considering that it contributes greatly to the town’s economy. Cable cars going down to Fidelisan would encourage more tourists to explore the Bomod-ok Falls and Tabiyay-ew lake. Making the caves and other scenic spots accessible to all persons could attract more tourists. Moral and financial support for the Sagada Environmental Guides Association is needed from the Municipal Government and other concerned agencies, as they are the front liners in rescue operations, clean and green activities, peace keeping, and protecting and preserving natural resources. Each resident should have a working knowledge of their resources as well, so that they can serve as ‘walking dictionaries’ whenever a tourist asks a question about the scenic spots in Sagada.

For economic development to gain momentum, revitalization of values is needed in Sagada. Unity and cooperation among all sectors is necessary for instilling a sense of identity derived from the good values and practices of their ancestors. Social cohesiveness and compassion that emphasizes physical, cultural and psychological oneness, and not individualism, should be developed in the community. Elected officials should work for the good of the people in the municipality. Among the youth, there is a suggestion that the Sangguniang Kabataan (Youth Council) of Sagada



be made the banner organization for all youth sectors. The council of elders also need to be empowered so they can assert their leadership and lead the young generation in bringing back traditional values. One of the rules they want to strictly implement and continue is the liquor ban throughout Sagada. They believe this will give the husband more time for the family, and there would be less fights due to financial constraints.

In terms of social services, health ranks among the top priorities of the Isagada. Rural health units need to be set up in remote barangays, which only have midwives stationed there, and not just in the center of the municipality. Saint Theodore's Hospital, the only hospital in Sagada, was able to hire a resident doctor after it became a foundation. The municipal health officer only stays in the Rural Health Unit in town.

The water system of Sagada also needs to be improved. Many residents said the complete development of the water system in the municipality is long overdue. According to them, several creeks in the northern forests of Sagada are flowing towards the province of Abra. Tapping these creeks would greatly minimize the problems of the Isagada regarding lack of water.

The main roads in Sagada need concreting while the opening of the Tangeb Road, which passes through the Mission Compound, to public transport would boost economic development. Roads or cemented pathways going to the different barangays should be constructed to improve transportation and mobility.

The use of idle lands in the center of the community, like that of the Mission Compound, could bring more income to the Municipality. Leasing these idle lands will be one way of using it productively, suggested one resident. The Mission Compound may also be developed as a Heritage Park with the help of the government. This should include the restoration of the shingle buildings constructed during the time of the Americans.

Indeed, change is an inevitable thing in this world. Coping with and learning to manage change summons the highest form of attention, and the Isagada are doing what they can to ensure that their responses will redound to the greater good of their hometown.

Teacher In-Charge Sixto B. Daluyen Jr. of Sagada National High School summed up the sentiments of many Isagada who are working to maintain Sagada as a mountain paradise forever. "*Nan ili et ili tako kayet*" (this community is still our community). Even though young professionals move out to look for greener pastures, they would still have a place to come back to," he said.

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Case Study 2

# Seeking Kabunyan's Blessing: Indigenous Resource Management among the Kalanguya People

By Maximo B. Garming



Throughout their cultural history, the Kalanguya people in the northern Philippine island of Luzon have utilized their indigenous knowledge systems and practices to advance their rights and protect their ancestral domain. They have also affirmed their capability to participate in the development process, particularly in local governance.

Indigenous peoples were recognized as important actors in sustainable development during the 1992 Earth Summit, when governments across the globe included traditional practices in the implementation plan for biodiversity conservation. In 2002, this was reaffirmed with the Johannesburg Declaration in the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

In the Philippines, the Constitution guarantees the rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral domain. Together with international agreements, including ILO Convention 169, this led to the enactment of the Indigenous Peoples Right Act (IPRA) in 1997. Among other things, the law created the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), which is mandated to assist in the formulation of Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plans (ADSDPP) in various communities that are part of its constituency.

These legal instruments have served as springboards for addressing the adverse impact of modernization on IPs brought about by the forces of globalization. Empirical observation has revealed many of the negative effects of globalization. This includes worsening mass poverty among indigenous communities because of the structural and macro-economic policies of governments, which favor the conversion of ancestral domains to commercial enclaves, large plantations, dams and mining operations. Without their ancestral domains, indigenous peoples are further marginalized in the formulation of development policies. They are deprived of the opportunity to participate in making decisions regarding local governance that substantially and directly affect them. With most countries adopting the Western-oriented formal educational system, many indigenous practices are gradually losing favor with the younger generation.

In recent decades, there has been a resurgence of pride in indigenous identity and cultural integrity, but the influence of the Philippines' Western-style educational system is threatening to erode these gains. Recognizing these trends, the IPRA law clearly advocates the following rights:

1. Respect for IPs cultural integrity as an important element of social cohesion and development.
2. Indigenous knowledge, systems and practices are integral to environmental protection and conservation.

The Kalanguya people are valiantly exercising these rights in their continuous struggle to protect their ancestral domain in the northern Philippines.

## Land of the Kalanguya

The ancestral domain of the Kalanguya community covers 20 barangays in the towns of Sta. Fe and Aritao in Nueva Vizcaya province, four barangays in the town of Caranglan in Nueva Ecija



Kalanguyas of Tinoc, Ifugao performing the Kalanguya Dance

province, and one barangay in the town of San Nicolas in Pangasinan province. It covers a total area of 58,437 hectares, including the 14,730-hectare Kalahan Agro-Forestry Development Project located in the western parts of Santa Fe and northeastern section of San Nicolas that was awarded to the community in 1974.

What inspired the Kalanguya people's historical struggle in the defense of their rights to ancestral domain are the rich natural resources found in the area. In the pre-colonial era, it is said that their forefathers told

stories passed from generation to generation about their experience of survival and unrelenting quest in protecting their natural resources.

For the Kalanguya people, their foremost natural resource is the land. This includes agricultural land, forestland, gold reserves and other mineral deposits, and built-up areas such as land occupied for residential, parks and open spaces institutional, commercial, industrial, and transportation purposes. About half of the ancestral domain is utilized for agriculture, with rice and corn produced alternately. Their main vegetable crops include beans, tomatoes, carrots, sweet peas, *gabi* (a type of root crop) and ginger.

Forest areas represent 70 per cent of the Kalanguya territory consisting of watersheds, grasslands, and bush lands. Among their forest resources are tiger grass, cogon, rattan, oak trees and timber trees, flora and various wildlife. Some of the land is utilized for cattle grazing and gardening, and also as solar dryer and recreational areas.

The second natural resource of the Kalanguya people is their rich culture and traditions, which have nurtured their total development as a people for many generations. The preservation of their cultural integrity is the centerpiece of their economic and political life, as well as their social and religious life. They value community solidarity, economic equity and adherence to indigenous rituals that are integral to their everyday life.

## Belief Systems

Rituals are the lifeblood of the Kalanguya culture. These practices give meaning to their concept of an abundant life that was taught by Kabunyan and passed on from generation to generation through the wisdom of their ancestors.

Kabunyan is addressed as a benevolent Supreme Deity, the source and creator of all things. They pray to Kabunyan for an abundant existence, which is defined as spiritual fulfillment, material satisfaction and social security. If one of these experiences becomes dysfunctional, the concept of abundant life cannot be realized in its true and pragmatic sense. The rituals show that these experiences constitute a world order. Hence, their rituals are considered as the fibers that interweave the different worldviews of the Kalanguyas into one cosmic universe.

The rituals reveal the deeply religious nature of the Kalanguya people. They believe in the "unseen" (*agmatibew*) that live beyond what they see with their eyes. While they pray to Kabunyan for blessings, they also make offerings to both good and evil spirits (*bibbiyaw*) to protect them from

all evil deeds and undesirable behavior. The Kalanguyas believe that evil spirits belong to persons who led a bad life before they died. They roam around and inflict sickness on the living, before they go to a place of suffering destined for them. On the other hand, those who have led a good existence are destined to co-exist in harmony with the supernatural world of Kabunyan.

The religiosity of the Kalanguya people holds true to this day. In a story about their first ancestors, a Kalanguya farmer fell asleep after complaining of poor harvest from his farm despite his hard work. In his sleep, a man appeared to him and told the poor farmer not to be discouraged. The man began teaching the farmer how to lead an abundant life. He showed the farmer the blue skies and described it as the source of rain and sunshine. He described the fertile agricultural lands in the beautiful mountains and valleys. He showed the farmer that the thick forests were the fountain of a continuous flow of water for the valleys and gushing rivers. As the farmer wondered in awe, the man revealed himself as Kabunyan, and he had heard the farmer's complaint. Kabunyan admonished the farmer to take care of what had been shown to him, as they are the sources of abundant life for generations to come. When the man woke up, he ran home and shared with his family what he experienced during his sleep. After that, they offered thanksgiving rituals and expressed their deep faith in the benevolence of Kabunyan.

The term ritual is called "*baki*" and its root word is derived from the name "*Ka-buni-yan*", which means that "*ibaki*" (to perform rituals) is always addressed to Kabunyan. The Kalanguya perform rituals to give thanks to Kabunyan, or to ask His blessings through the intercession of ancestors (*nengketey*) for protection from bad acts of evil spirits as well as treatment for better health. It is strongly believed that rituals are not effective when the teachings of Kabunyan and traditionally established socio-cultural norms are not properly observed.

## Rice Rituals

The rice rituals (*Hanga Ni Pagey*) of the Kalanguya community provide a fresh dimension in agriculture. These have long been embedded in their agricultural cycle and traditional farming practices. Rituals are performed during the clearing and preparation of rice paddies (*ipannal*), during the planting season (*bagam*), and during harvesting and post-harvesting period (*lahinang*).

The *ipannal* stage takes place during the months of October and November. It begins with the *hippawa tan hihhudun alak* in which a group of rice field owners clean and repair eroded irrigation systems in preparation for the planting season. The *lamon ni hapnakkan* follows, when women clean and prepare the paddies for the seedbeds. Lastly, the men do the *liak tan pehed ni hapnakkan* or fixing of dikes and repair of collapsed stonewalls.

During the *ipannal* period, two native chickens are butchered in a ritual that also includes *bubod* (rice wine). One chicken is offered to Kabunyan and the other to the ancestors, because of their attributes as non-harmful and innocent animals. Meanwhile, the *bubod* is considered a healthy drink, as it is the by-product of fermented rice and has a high nutritious content and revitalizing effect. Offering chickens and *bubod* as ritual symbols would, therefore, mean healthy crops that are free from pests and harmful animals.

The *ipannal* ritual is also a prayer for rain. Among Kalanguya farmers, rain that comes through prayers is miracle rain or production rain. Their concept of irrigation revolves around rain, which provides the Kalanguya farmer with water for their rice and other agricultural crops. The ritual is also a request for Kabunyan to keep the soil and the seedlings that are about to be planted free from pests. It is the belief of the Kalanguya farmer that rain is effective in washing away pests that infest the planted rice. Rainwater, therefore, protects the rice farm and provides subsistence to sustain the life of the Kalanguya.

On the third month after the *ipannal*, the *balnat* (planting of rice seedlings) in the *hapnakkan* (rice paddies) takes place. It begins with *hihhapnak* in which rice field owners, usually the women,





“Kalanguyas of Tinoc, Ifugao performing the Kalanguya Dance”

sow the palay seeds on the prepared paddies. The farmers will only bring out the preserved palay seeds called *binantol* from the rice granary for sowing when there is a full moon, in the belief that this will make the seeds grow to the size of the full moon when they germinate, and also for the seedlings to grow robustly. After sowing the seeds, the farmers undertake general cleaning of the entire rice field. Women help one another through the cooperative system called *ubbo* in cleaning

the weeds along stonewalls and slopes. This general cleaning is called the *hillamon*. Meanwhile, the men fix the dikes, repair eroded and collapsed stonewalls, and turn the soil in order to allow water to flood every paddy that is ready for planting. This general preparation is called *hippitew di payew*.

On the second month of the *balnat*, which takes place around the latter part of January, women start transplanting the seeds to the rice paddies. Again, the cooperative system called *ubbo* is applied in helping each rice field owner to transplant the seedlings until all the paddies have been filled up. This activity is called *hibgay*, and it lasts until February. During this planting season, a *balnat* ritual similar to what is done during the *ipannal* is performed. Two chickens are butchered as offerings to Kabunyan and the ancestors to provide sustained rainwater and continuous flow to the irrigation systems for the growing rice plants. The farmers also pray to let the planted rice grow healthy and undisturbed from pests until they are harvested.

This ritual, however, requires a period where the *ime* (fasting or abstinence in certain activities as prescribed by the ritual) and the *ngilin* (abstinence from certain behavior that are inconsistent with established social norms) are observed. In the *ime*, the chicken meat is served only to an old widower. If he is not around, the meat is hung in the kitchen for the cockroaches and rats to eat so they will not go to the rice fields and consume the plants. The widower should not eat rotten meat or food from aquatic sources such as fish or shells, because the strong smell will attract rats that would follow him when he goes to the rice fields. Moreover, the widower should not carry a bolo when he goes to the rice fields, as the farmers believe that the sharp weapon may attract rats with sharp teeth that the rodents would use to cut the rice plants.

During the *ngilin* until harvest time, the widower is not supposed to sleep with a woman. It is believed that engaging in sexual acts is a sensual and immoral behavior that may defile the purity of the ritual. Thus, the non-observance of this particular tradition would harm the harvest. Moreover, immoral behavior during the ritual period will result in tragic phenomena, such as illness or death in the family that would incapacitate the farmer and his clan, rendering them unable to work in the farm.

Three months after the rice is planted, when the crop is about to flower, a thanksgiving ritual called *kulpi-an* is performed. The name is derived from the term *kulpi* which is a social gathering of farmer families, relatives, friends and neighbors to give thanks to Kabunyan for the healthy rice crop after months of hard work. The *kulpi* is celebrated with native games like the *bultong* (wrestling) and the *bahliw* (singing and chanting) to set a jolly mood. The chanting includes prayers for more

bountiful harvests to come. Two chickens are offered to Kabuniyan and ancestors for the flowering rice and the maturing rice stalks to bear fat grains. If the seedlings are big and growing robustly, the *pingil* ritual is done. A chicken is dressed and offered to the gods of harvest to make the seedlings plentiful for transplanting. After the *kulpi*, one to two days are set aside for all the men to go fishing in the river for *udingan* (freshwater fish).

If the rice paddies are infested with worms, a pest control ritual called *paad* will follow. Four chickens are brought to the rice granary where they are butchered and cooked. The chicken broth is put in a vat (*gambang*) while the ritualist, together with household members, offers a prayer to Kabunyan to give the chicken broth the power to decimate worms and pests. No one drinks the broth, which will be used for spraying to kill pests and worms. Relatives, friends and neighbors are invited to take part in spraying and dispersing the chicken broth in their rice paddies. The farmers believe that when one rice stalk is treated with chicken broth and the worms die, all the other worms and pests in their rice fields will also die.

Complementing the *pa-ad* is the *patug* where farmers get rice stalks with pests and then offer them to Kabunyan to kill the pests. While praying, the rice stalks with pests are soaked into a jar of *bubod* to make sure that the pests get drunk and die.

Another ritual called *badad* is performed to prevent harmful insects (*dangew*) from seeping into the growing rice grains. A chicken is butchered and its blood is placed into a broad leaf (*bamwang*) while prayers are chanted to drive away insects from the rice fields. After the prayer, farmers are invited to get part of the *bamwang* leaf, which is believed to be a ritual plant, and to throw them into the rice fields.

The *badad* signals the end of the planting rituals and the start of the waiting period for the harvest season. This period is called *ti-eggew* and it takes place during the dry months from March to June. While waiting, the men prepare their bolos and make new *kaingin* (slash and burn farms) for sweet potatoes through the cooperative practice of *ubbo* or *daj-nga*. The latter is a traditional practice of voluntary service rendered among the Kalanguya people in the municipality of Tinoc without any expectation of reward. After clearing the hillside, some men go to other places to find temporary employment and return home just before harvest time. Some engage in barter trading. Women clean the weeds between the rice seedlings and on the slopes of the rice fields, an activity called *higkagawkaw tan hilba*. Others do the *hiw-waklit* or clearing of the surroundings in order to prevent wild rats from entering the rice fields. From May to early June, the farmers guard the ripening grain from the attacks of *maya* birds.

During these months, the first thunderstorm or monsoon rains are expected to come. Before this occurs, they observe the *dam-al ono latang*, a one-day holiday for all farmers so they will not go to the rice fields or *kaingin* as a respect to the gods of the sky-world that sent rains.

Just before the harvesting period, another set of rituals is performed. One is the *kaltod ono inggitaw*, which is a prayer for the protection of the crop from pests especially when the plants are bearing grains. The second ritual is the *hinalaman*, which is done on the night before the harvest. Four chickens are butchered and offered to appease bad or jealous (*ma-ame*) spirits so they will not disturb agricultural activities that would result in a poor harvest. The chickens represent the four bad spirits coming from *daya* (east), *padaan* (south), *hagud* (north) and the sky-world who intend to steal or destroy the grains. The third ritual called *a'bek* follows, and this is a festive celebration for bountiful harvest. The *a'bek* symbolizes the swaying of rice stalks in a merry mood.

The fourth ritual is the *nabugbugan in pagey*, a prayer to prevent rice grains from falling off the rice stalks. Rice field owners who own granaries and wide paddies observe this ritual. Ten chickens or more are butchered in order to interpret the readings of the bile. Five of the chickens are offered to Kabunyan in thanksgiving and to ask for plentiful harvest. One chicken each is offered to the following:

- Evil spirits so they will not place obstacles for good harvest;
- Cruel spirits so they will not give trouble during the harvest;

- *Pati* who is believed to be the god of all harvest tools and materials, to see to it that these are properly utilized and to protect the workers from getting hurt;
- *Wigan* who is believed to be the caretaker god of rice fields, asking him to maintain the fruitfulness and productivity of rice fields;
- *Iddaya* who is believed to be the god of the rice grains, to give thanks and ask for a continuous plentiful harvest.

Other chickens are offered to ancestors, with the bile of each dressed chicken critically examined by a ritualist (*mabaki*). The declaration of the *mabaki* of good bile would mean the approval of the unseen spirits or gods of all cravings and appeals. All butchered chickens are cooked, and the *mabaki* will first call the unseen spirits and ancestors to partake of the prepared rice and meat before the gathered people begin to eat.

During the harvest, the families who own granaries (*alang*) prepare chickens and pigs to be offered to Kabuniyan to pray to make the harvest plentiful. Before the dried grains are stored in the *alang*, two rituals are performed. One is the *toldag*, which is done so that the rice inside the *alang* will not be stolen or destroyed by worms. The other ritual is the *huj-keb ni kintib*, in which the *mabaki* implores Kabuniyan to guard and keep the *alang* free from pilferage and destruction so that the rice would be enough for family consumption until the next harvest. After the harvest, three women would select the good rice grains (*bin-i*) that would be used in the next planting season.

The final ritual is the *baklay* (rice cake making), which is usually done after the rice is harvested. Rice cakes are cooked and served to give thanks to *Kabunyan* and the ancestors for their blessings and protection.

All throughout the year, the *in-apoy* ritual is performed whenever rice is taken out of the granary. It is a prayer for the sustained robustness of rice grains. Four chickens are offered to the gods of harvest to ensure that the *palay* is consumed gradually. This ritual can be repeated as the need arises.

## Forest Rituals

The Kalanguya people recognize that the foundation of their cultural history is the forest, and their culture started from the cultivation of rice terraces. This traditional edict has its roots in the wisdom of the stories from old folks in the village of Ahin in Tinoc, Ifugao province, where a woman built the first rice field. In the story, the favor of the gods was given to a woman. When the woman received this blessing, she gave thanks and vowed to take care of the rice field. In order to sustain its productivity, the woman got seeds to plant and prayed to forest spirits or the “unseen” to provide continuous flow of water to irrigate the rice field.

According to Kalanguya belief, the blessing given to a woman as culture-bearer signifies “taking good care” and “productivity.” This story illustrates how the Kalanguya people view the forest as a provider of abundant life. The forest is where the Kalanguyas live, and therefore, every Kalanguya is duty-bound to conserve and utilize its resources in order to sustain the sources of their livelihood. They view the forest as an integral component of agriculture, as it is a natural source of water to irrigate rice paddies and vegetable gardens. Over the years, the forests have provided them with food, medicinal herbs, lumber and housing materials. This explains why the traditional rice culture of the Kalanguyas is strongly related to and dependent on the sustained preservation of the watershed. The forest is the “*litteng*,” meaning “everything is there,” the Kalanguya concept of quality of life and abundant life. It is no surprise then, to find their deep respect for nature as seen in their forest rituals and practices, which gradually developed from their day-to-day communion with the forests. Some of these traditional rituals are still observed today.

There is the *hapwak*, a hunter’s belief that *Kabunyan* and other forest spirits own all the forest fauna and flora. Humans are only stewards and not the owner of any forest. Therefore, if a



hunter catches a wild animal, it is considered a favor from the “unseen.” A thanksgiving ritual is performed, with an offering of any internal part of the animal like the liver or gizzard, in order to avoid any stomach-related sickness. A bird hunter must also leave one or two bird foundlings of any species in the nest so they can multiply. The Kalanguya believe that if a hunter gets all the foundlings, the mother bird exacts a curse on him and the small birds would all die.

There is also the *ha’lat*, a belief that the hunter has to replace what he has taken from the forest that he is not allowed to take, in order to prevent a curse from forest spirits. To avoid getting sick, he would have to butcher an animal and offer it to the forest spirits.

Another ritual is the *baknaw*, which is associated with the Kalanguya concept of forest land use. To the Kalanguya tribe, the forest has four uses: the *bel-ew* or thick forests; *naduntog* or forest with people; *kallahan* or forest with all kinds of trees except pine trees; and the *ibelbel* or forest with pine trees. Believing that forestlands are controlled by the *agmatibew* unseen, a Kalanguya cannot just occupy a forest area. The *baknaw* ritual is performed to find out if an individual is allowed to build his house in a certain piece of land. An *ungot* (coconut shell) filled with water is placed inside a hole within the perimeter of the target area. If the water in the *ungot* becomes less the following day, he cannot stay in that particular place. If the level of the water remains the same, then he can stay. The favor of getting accepted to dwell in that area would oblige him to convert the site into productive use.

There is also the *ipuhulan huta nandueng*, a ritual performed to cure a person from an illness that he contracted while cutting trees in the forest without asking the permission of the *agmatibbew*. This ritual is closely associated with the belief that some forest areas are sacred because these are the domains of forest spirits. Therefore, one cannot just cut trees or burn them, as the person will get sick or something tragic will befall the cutter. If the person gets sick, an *agba* (diviner) is summoned to perform the *pihhek*, a ritual to determine the cause of the sickness, through the use of a native chicken egg and a bolo. The egg is placed over the sharp edge of the bolo. If the egg stands still, it indicates that a bad spirit has caused his affliction. When this happens, a ritualist is called to tell him what offerings are needed to appease the bad spirits, and a ritual is performed to treat the afflicted person.

When hunting animals for food, a ritual called *padit* or *keleng* is done. Any catch is not safe without giving *atang*, an offering to the “unseen” who are believed to be the owners of the forest and also the proprietors of wild animals. Otherwise, the hunter gets sick or dies as a consequence. The ritual is also performed to appease bad spirits in the forest to spare a hunter from possible death. Two big native pigs are butchered as a counter-offering to forest spirits.

## Indigenous Forest Management

The forest management practices of the Kalanguya are similar to those with the Tuwali tribe living near the villages of Wangwang and Binablayan in the town of Tinoc. These include the following:

***Kiyew-wan.*** This is a forest area, either communal or private, which is maintained because it serves as watershed for the irrigation of the rice fields. It also serves as a source of fuel and other forest products like honey and rattan.

***Muyong.*** This is a forest lot or communal forest usually inherited by any individual or family where various water-producing trees are planted and preserved. Cutting of these trees, such as *wakar* (vine) and *bikal*, is strictly prohibited. Several varieties of hardwood trees are also planted for future use. As an indigenous technology in regenerating forests, the *muyong* is similar to the *imong* (orchard management) in the province of Kalinga where a variety of trees and other forest resources are planted and maintained. There are big hardwood trees for housing construction, soft trees for making coffins, trees for firewood, fruit trees, and water-producing trees. One can also find



bamboo that is used for building houses and making baskets, tiger grass for making broom, coconut trees for lumber and making brooms, and rattan for weaving baskets. Below the trees is a small grazing area with a watering hole for the *carabao* (water buffalo), to prevent the animal from going astray. Alongside the planted trees, an open fertile area may be used for planting agricultural crops for supplementary food consumption.

In case the *muyong* cannot provide the needed lumber for housing, a communal forest is established and maintained in the village to serve as alternate source of lumber. It is an unwritten law among the Kalanguya that inside the *muyong*, one is not allowed to cut water-bearing trees. Selective cutting is encouraged for trees that are used for housing, fencing, and others. Root crops and fruit-bearing trees are also planted inside the *muyong*.

**Stonewall building.** This indigenous forest practice is as old as the Banawe Rice Terraces, and is used to control soil erosion.

**Gen-gen.** This traditional method showcases the Kalanguya's ingenuity in utilizing sloping areas for agricultural purposes. This system involves making horizontal parallel ridges from top to bottom of a sloping area, resembling several layers of steps. The ridges serve as traps for small amounts of surface soil that are prone to erosion.

**Ken-ken.** These are fire lines established on forest perimeters to protect trees from fires.

Reforestation is not a new concept to the Kalanguya tribe. Younger generations are always reminded to plant trees in place of harvested ones or those felled by strong winds so that the water source is protected even during lean periods. Fair warning is sometimes told in jest and in a philosophical manner for the planters "not to plant trees that will outlive them," referring to the pragmatic attitude that one has to enjoy the fruits of his labor before he dies.

The concept of a watershed finds resonance in the Kalanguya's long-held knowledge that the forest is a source of water for agriculture. Specific trees and non-wood resources are identified for planting in the watershed for their economic or health values. Some of these are:

**Towel** – This tree is a rich source of water and is naturally abundant in mountain areas adjacent to any water tributary like rivers, creek and rivulets. Its lumber is good for making coffins, and it attracts bats that are caught for food.

**Alnos** – This exotic tree is a good source of oxygen and nitrogen.

**Alimit** – This water-producing tree also attracts squirrels.

**Gipa** – The leaves of this wild tea are boiled and taken as an energy drink or for stomachache.

**Tikleg** – A variety of oak tree, this is used to build native houses and easily thrives anywhere. Its seeds are used to trap wild pigs.

**Tagadew or tiger grass** - Its intricate root system is good in preventing soil erosion. It is also an excellent material for making house brooms.

**Ewoy or rattan** - This indigenous vine is used for making chicken coops. Its fruit is edible and is a good source of vitamin C.

**Buwa** – This betel nut has high calcium content and is chewed to make teeth strong and white.

**Bulo** – This bamboo is used as a pail or water container. It is also used as housing material, especially for walls. Its intricate root system makes it effective in preventing soil erosion.

**Uyuk** – This tree bears sweet fruits that attract domestic bats, which are used for food.

**Tibanglan** – A hardwood tree found in cold and shaded places, especially in thickly forested mountains and along creeks, it is known as a durable material for making log cabin posts.

When replanting, the Kalanguya make sure that trees belonging to similar species are classified and grouped according to their common uses. These are:

**Gabgab.** This watery and soft tree is planted near springs to maintain the water level.

**Piwi, alummit, lablabeng.** These are soft trees bearing fruits that are eaten by squirrels. They also give water and help prevent soil erosion.

**Ganabah, addupong, balanith, konda-dannum.** Known for their light colored wood, these are commonly used to make *duyu* (a round wooden soup bowl) and *iduh* (spoon).

**Alandueng, alin-new, hu-kah.** The bark of these indigenous trees is used to make cages for keeping chickens. They can be used also to bundle palay and for constructing native shelters.

**Pit-pitong, laj-mayen, pirwith, pa-lad, konna-kun, udkulan, buhong, bollitih.** These are fruit-bearing indigenous trees that attract birds and other wild creatures, which are hunted and trapped by the Kalanguya. Some of the edible fruits are also used for human consumption. These trees are preserved for watershed purposes as well.

**Dalakan, tabangawen. belbel, ticleg, baltic, kaw-wahi.** These tall and big trees are utilized for construction and fuel use. Charcoal from its wood is used in blacksmith shops.

## Life Cycle Rituals

Kalanguya traditional practices promote positive values such as ecological balance, camaraderie, solidarity, family oneness, and community volunteerism. These values are buttressed with the community's role as stewards of the environment, a religious calling that is rooted in the Kalanguya's strong belief in the powers of Kabunyan and the supernatural world in directly affecting ecological functions. They believe in unseen spirits that roam the forest and act as guardians of the mountains, rivers, minerals and other natural resources.

The following are some traditions within the Kalanguya life cycle that are related to indigenous resource management:

**Pahang.** This ritual is performed to ensure continuous blessings from the gods and prevent evil spirits from harming family members. For example, when a family member feels lazy or gets thinner for no apparent reason, the *pahang* is performed to ask the gods and good ancestors to take care of the victim.

**Inuuban.** When a family member travels to other places, this ritual is performed to ask the gods to ensure safe journey and protection from danger.

**Hangbo.** Dreams serve as indicators for the Kalanguya people. It may influence the direction of their lives. Any member of the family who has dreamt that a dead ancestor gave him something for safekeeping performs this ritual to make the dream come true. The act of giving during the dream indicates protection and material wealth, which the family requests through the *hangbo*.

**Keleng.** This is a symbol of greatness in the Kalanguya custom. It is a series of repeated festivals organized according to the level of greatness a couple can afford. A couple that performs all the levels of *keleng* will be considered among the richest and respected leaders and elders in the village. A Kalanguya elder affirms that to be rich is to perform more of the *keleng* rather than the accumulation of economic wealth. The rich Kalanguyas who perform this ritual share the bounty of their harvest through the festivities.

**Bahliw.** This ritual is performed to add to the merry-making during the *keleng*. It is a poetic dialogue between elders and other leaders that are chanted and answered, with a group of women and men repeating the verses. The *bahliw* also refers to the joyful chanting of blessings received in life, or a sign of welcome for visitors to be blessed and to enjoy their stay in the community.

**Dahada.** This house blessing ritual is performed before the family occupies a newly constructed house. Big native pigs and chickens are butchered for offering to the gods, so that the occupants would be blessed with material wealth, peace and harmony.

**Tagibel.** When a person gets sick after coming back from gathering firewood or cleaning the *kaingin* in the forest, it is believed that the fairies or *bibiyew* have taken hold of his soul. The *mabaki* is sought to perform the *tagibel* and seek the fairies' mercy to release the soul of the person. This ritual is also performed when the bones of a deceased person is brought out to be cleaned,



which may be the cause of sickness in the family. The *mabaki* offers native pigs, clothing, and blankets to the spirit of the deceased person so that the sickness will go away.

## Social Rituals

To the Kalanguya people, social rituals are the means by which they can share their unity, concern and togetherness with other people. These traditions strengthen their kinship bond, as members of one family coming from the same grandparents. It is common knowledge that the Kalanguyas support this practice and recommend its use due to its built-in values that promote peace and harmony in the family and community, which are essential factors for growth and development. Some of these social rituals are:

**Balhan** – In times of need, families solicit help from relatives in the form of cash, animals or food. This enhances the value of concern for one another and promotes family closeness.

**Tongtong** – The highest arbitration body in the village handles civil disputes, petty crimes and even the most heinous crimes. The overall decision comes from the *lallakay* (council of community elders) through a consensus that is deemed final. The *tongtong* starts when the offended party or any of his/her immediate family calls the attention of the *lallakay*. When the offenders do not plead guilty to the offense, the following processes are done:

- **Bagto** – the suspects are made to hit each other in public by means of *puh-lak* (runo shoot) or a camote or egg of equal weight. The *lallakay* will invoke their *ibayok* (prayer), then have one suspect sit with his back against the other, who will throw and try to hit him with *puh-lak* or camote or egg. When the seated suspect is hit, he is adjudged guilty. The same process is performed on the other suspect, and when he is also hit, then a tie is declared and both are acquitted.
- **Duo** (boiling water) – the suspects are made to take out a coin or an object with their bare hands from a jar or pot of boiling water. Whoever is scalded is adjudged guilty.
- **Galgal ni bagah** – suspects are made to chew rice and spit it out. Whoever has wet chewed rice is guilty. The one with dry chewed rice is innocent.
- **Bultong** – body wrestling match that is used to settle disputes, especially in land conflicts. *Bultong* can be played also as friendly games or sports to promote camaraderie among the youth.

**Awil** – a gift of chicken or duck, usually for small children, visiting a relative for the first time. In return, the person visited shows deep gratitude through a gift of live native chicken that will be taken care of and not butchered by the recipient.

**Honesty** – prevalent among the Kalanguya, this value finds expression in keeping their houses and granaries unlocked to allow visitors to cook food. In the past, travelers who were hungry could just enter a house along the way and eat cooked food. Granaries where harvested palay was stored were not locked because stealing was not a problem. However, this is no longer widely practiced today due to the influx of non-Kalanguya immigrants to the area.

**Man-ili** - this is the organization of household heads in a village that determines the sharing of meat from butchered pigs, cows and/or carabaos. Members of the *man-ili* gather in the household that will perform the *dah-nga* to accomplish a project such as construction or repair of a house, or hauling of a sick person to a faraway clinic or hospital.

**Dah-nga** - rendering free labor to neighbors in the construction of native houses, hauling palay, bringing a sick person to a clinic or hospital, and other similar activities.

*Ubbu* - traditional practice of helping one another in the field or kaingin. This is a give-and-take practice wherein someone goes to work in the field of his neighbor and in return, the neighbor will come to work in one's rice field or kaingin at another time. The only condition is for the person who needs help to feed the volunteers and serve them rice wine or liquor.

## **Sustaining the Tradition**

Forest protection, watershed conservation, traditional agriculture, and rituals are integrative ecological variables that form the essence of the Kalanguya people's culture. This is manifested in their indigenous knowledge systems and practices that they have cherished as living traditions for generations. As a matter of policy, these Kalanguya traditions need to be given substantial consideration in development planning so they can continue to fulfill their quest for abundant life. The following are several issues that need to be addressed and some proposed solutions coming from the Kalanguya people that are managing their ancestral domain:

### **1. Absence of consolidated data on Kalanguya culture and development**

Various non-government organizations, people's organizations, government agencies and international development institutions have come up with research studies and academic papers about the Kalanguya people. There is a need for proper annotation and documentation of these studies, which can be stored in an effective and efficient data banking system for the use of policy makers and interested agencies.

To sustain interest in cultural studies, a Kalanguya School of Living Traditions may be established with multi-sectoral support from the international community, government and the private sector. It has to be duly registered so it can acquire the legal personality to engage in comprehensive development work for the Kalanguya people. It could also help indigenize the local school curriculum in terms of integrating positive values, beliefs and practices.

### **2. Vanishing culture of the Kalanguya people**

An inventory of resource persons on Kalanguya socio-cultural studies from community elders whose scarce wisdom, especially their indigenous knowledge and experiences, will be utilized to the maximum towards the preservation, promotion and revitalization of the Kalanguya culture and traditions is needed. Together with a pool of academic and professional experts, their role can be institutionalized in order to sustain the conduct of further studies on Kalanguya culture and development. Primers on the various aspects of Kalanguya culture and traditions may be prepared and used as teaching aids and references in schools within the ancestral domain.

A Legislative or Executive agenda in which the IKSPs of the Kalanguya people would become made part of the mainstream formal educational system and brought at par with modern scientific knowledge could also be initiated. Sadly, the Western-based Philippine educational system promotes knowledge transformation that leads to the marginalization of indigenous peoples. Given this trend, the basic elements of the current educational curricula need to allow the integration of indigenous knowledge and learning. As a matter of policy, it is time to adopt a pro-indigenous people's educational system. Kalanguy traditions need to be conferred value and importance because there is much to learn from their judicious use of natural resources.

### **3. Ecological Disturbance and Environmental Degradation**

Relevant areas of the Kalanguya people's IKSPs may be put into good use as viable strategies in the conservation of natural resources within their ancestral domain. For instance, the community can make a commitment to adopt and propagate the *muyong* concept within the Kalanguya territory. Policy makers should recognize the significance of the *muyong* as an indigenous method of forest regeneration and environmental protection. This would help educate





poor indigenous farmers and encourage them to adhere to their traditional rice cultivation practices. Rituals play an important role in traditional Kalanguya agriculture as coping and adaptation strategies in response to ecological changes. Moreover, rituals reinforce the productive coordination of agricultural activities to ensure abundant harvest.

Polonpon Bahay, a 78-year old farmer and ritualist from Manamtan village in Bambang, emphatically recommended the practical enterprise and productive contribution of traditional rice farming. He said the farmers have tried lowland rice technology, but despite higher production, many farmers are getting hungry because of high production costs as well. With traditional agriculture, farmers do not get hungry because it can sustain food supply. However, he lamented that traditional rice cultivation in Manamtan was discontinued because the bigger sizes of the grains could not fit modern milling machines.

Robert Tayaban, the Provincial Administrative Officer of Ifugao province, who has done many research studies on Kalanguya culture, also recommended the revival and preservation of traditional rice agriculture. He said the Kalanguya people, especially poor farmers, should become aware of the ecological disturbances brought about by the modern agricultural technology. This includes the use of commercial inputs such as costly inorganic fertilizers and pesticides. Unfortunately, he noted that there are more giant earthworms thriving in the rice fields, forests, irrigation systems, and vegetation. Water in paddy fields is affected because the destructive earthworms penetrate the earth, causing dryness. Moreover, the traditional mudfish that are raised for food consumption are adversely affected. Tayaban said the ecological disturbance has resulted in the migration of farmers to other places because their dwindling production could not sustain food supply and their families' needs. The out-migration also led to the decreasing labor force in Kalanguya villages, especially in Lagawe and Kiangan. Ecological degradation has also reduced rice production in rice terraces, as the massive and indiscriminate application of commercial fertilizers and pesticides tremendously reduced the fertility of the rice terraces. He said it is important for the Kalanguya people to recognize and keep in mind that their culture started from the cultivation of rice terraces, side by side with protecting and regenerating forests for watershed purposes.

#### **4. Poverty alleviation and the structural development model**

The importance and relevance of IKSPs as valuable inputs to development policy formulation and implementation need to be revitalized in order to address the poverty of the Kalanguya people and improve their quality of life. Towards this end, a databank needs to be established for the preparation of a development framework and the formulation of policies that are culture-sensitive.

More productive linkages and networking with concerned institutions for a development partnership with the Kalanguya people need to be promoted. An effective coordinative mechanism and collaboration with concerned international, national and local institutions from the public and private sectors in the implementation of development policies, programs and projects intended for the Kalanguyas is necessary.

Follow-up activities are needed after the Planning workshop on Resource Utilization for ADSDPP Formulation of the Kalanguya ancestral domain in December 2003. Clear implementing guidelines on how to monitor and evaluate the plan's activities based on the workshop results and findings have to be formulated.

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Case Study 3

# Sharing Space: The Impact of Ecotourism on the Batak and Tagbanua

By Raoul M. Cola



In a radical departure from previous notions that nature must be conquered, more and more people are turning to the conservation of ecological spaces that are threatened by human actions in the name of poverty reduction. This trend has ushered the invention of market instruments that are transforming natural spaces and species into commodities used for a fee, without altering their essence. Instead, the user's fee goes to the protection of the natural environment.

One of these instruments is eco-tourism, which has been increasingly used to conserve nature and culture in a sustainable manner. It is usually undertaken in areas with unique physical, biological and cultural features that attract tourists. Income from tourism activities in the area is used for its preservation and maintenance. In addition, eco-tourism provides a more balanced regional environment, adequate supply of water, wider employment, entrepreneurial opportunities, and additional government revenues.

Within national parks, eco-tourism is considered a giant stride in meeting the twin concerns of biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development. The concept is considered particularly appropriate in developing countries where parks are carved out from swaths of territories long used for human habitation and livelihood. Eco-tourism redeemed park management from the fence-and-fine model that placed environmental protection above the lives and welfare of people.

Many long-term users of territories demarcated as parks are indigenous people. The establishment of parks in indigenous people's territory can be an instrument for the government to protect and preserve it, as prescribed in Section 7.4 of ILO's Indigenous and Tribal People Convention 169 of 1989. In some areas, eco-tourism has become a suitable option in resolving conflict between parks and people. However, in many cases, eco-tourism has its own economic and cultural systems that differ widely from traditional systems. These divergent systems are illustrated in the experience of the Batak and Tagbanua peoples that inhabit sections of the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park, in the western Philippine province of Palawan.

## **Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park**

Situated along the western coast of Palawan island, the park lies some within the political boundaries of Puerto Princesa City, the provincial capital. (At A Glance, next page)

It is one of the 99 areas included in the country's National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS). In the law that created NIPAS, a protected area is defined as "identified portions of land and water set aside by reason of unique physical and biological significance managed to enhance biological diversity and protected against destructive human exploitation."

The park takes its name from its principle feature – an underground river that flows beneath a block of limestone karst and out to the South China Sea. From the estuary, visitors can take a kayak

### AT A GLANCE

#### **PUERTO PRINCESA SUBTERRANEAN RIVER NATIONAL PARK**

Area	22,202 hectares
Prominent Features	8.2-kilometer underground river, limestone rock formations, 70 endemic plant and animal species, excellent coastal habitats
Date of Establishment	26 March 1971 - initial area, 12 November 1999 - expansion area
Legal Basis	Presidential Proclamation 835 (1984), Memorandum of Agreement between DENR and Puerto Princesa City Government (1992), and Presidential Proclamation 212 (1999)
Host Barangays	Cabayugan, Marufinas, Tagabinet
Eco-tourism Activities	Underground River Tour, Hiking, Mangrove tour, Swimming
Visitors' fees in 2005	Php 3 Million
Operating Cost in 2005	Php 6 Million
Number of Personnel	43

upstream to see the stalactite and stalagmite formations inside the cave. About 1.5 kilometers of the 8.2-kilometer river is open to visitors. The highest part of the block is Mt. St. Paul, and its exposed sides form towering limestone cliffs that conceal a number of caves.

A reserve of the country's biodiversity and endemism, the park's forested landscape harbors 70 species of plants and animals found only in the Philippines. At least four threatened species are found in the park: the Palawan Flying Fox, Philippine Cockatoo, Palawan Racket-Tailed Parrot and Palawan Peacock Pheasant. Its marine resources have not undergone thorough inventory, but the park's mosaic of mangrove forests, seagrass meadows and coral reefs are largely considered healthy. Overall, scientific studies have shown that the park's environment is still very good.

The park was originally known as St. Paul's Subterranean National Park, which was declared through Presidential Proclamation 835 in 1971. When the NIPAS law was passed in 1992, St. Paul's Park became one of its initial components. Under the law, the Department of Environment and National Resources had the task of reviewing the suitability of the parks in the initial list for protection, and soliciting the views of stakeholders regarding their protected area status. But through a Memorandum of Agreement, the DENR transferred to the Puerto Princesa City Government the full management of the park in 1992. Seven years later, Presidential Proclamation 212 changed the name of the park and expanded its size from the original area of 3,901 hectares to 22,202 hectares, including a marine reserve. It was also designated as a World Heritage Site in 1999.

The park's highest policy-making body is the Protected Area Management Board, which has members from various sectors including indigenous peoples. Through the Park Management Office, the park supervisor appointed by the city mayor manages the day-to-day operation of the park. All the staff are contractual employees. The City Environment and Natural Resources Office (City ENRO), although it operates separately, provides advice to the Park Management Office on technical matters. Meanwhile, the DENR shares responsibility for conserving the natural resources of the park. Since the early 1990s, the park has received financial assistance from external donors including the Palawan Tropical Forestry Protection Programme (PTFPP) funded by the European Union and the Debt-for Nature-Swap program arranged by World Wildlife Fund.

In 1999, the PAMB adopted the park's management plan, which was supposed to have a three-year horizon but remained in use until 2005. The park's mission in the plan is as follows:

- Ensure that the river remains naturally clean and unpolluted, and maintain its flow through appropriate management of the catchment inside and outside the park;
- Conserve the natural ecosystems inside and outside the underground part of the river and in its catchment through carefully controlled land use, in cooperation with



stakeholders particularly local communities, visitors, and the tourism industry;

- Protect the surrounding forest to maintain the biodiversity within the park;
- Protect endangered and endemic species.

The mission is translated into seven programs: (1) ecosystem management; (2) park protection and law enforcement; (3) research and monitoring; (4) public awareness and community relations; (5) tourism and visitor management; (6) regional integration; and (7) institutional development organization and administration.

Tourism is an essential component of park management, and this is translated into the goal of the program to “maximize the benefit of tourism and visitors to the park.” By hiking through the forest, boating along the mangroves, exploring the underground river, and snorkeling in the coastal waters, the visitors are easily impressed by the park’s biological significance. The program was divided further into two subprograms. Inside the park, the staff maintains the underground river as the main attraction, with a target of 50,000 visitors annually. Outside the park, limits are set on the daily number of visitors, tourism facilities are regulated so these will not encroach on sensitive habitats, and visitors are informed about entry conditions to minimize the impact of tourism.

The allure of the subterranean river and rigorous attention to visitor management made the subprogram inside the park successful, as seen in the growing number of visitors. In 1993, the subterranean river received 1,837 visitors (*See Table 1*). This number jumped to 34,596 visitors in

<b>Item</b>	<b>Foreign</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number of Visitors in 1983</b>	<b>1,062 (58%)</b>	<b>775 (42%)</b>	<b>1,837</b>
<b>Number of Visitors in 2004</b>	<b>5,227 (15%)</b>	<b>29,369 (85%)</b>	<b>34,596</b>
<b>Annual Growth Rate 1983-2004</b>	<b>19 %</b>	<b>175 %</b>	<b>85 %</b>

2004. If the current annual growth rate will continue, the 50,000 target of the management plan will be realized within two years.

Outside the park, the subprogram encourages nature-related tourism in surrounding communities. At least two non-government organizations trained local residents to manage eco-tourism activities in the vicinity of the park between 1997 and 2002. The Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC) organized six groups for promoting tourism products including mangrove tours, waterfall visits, rock climbing, trekking, spelunking, rafting and beach-based activities. The Conservation International initiated the Mangrove Paddle Boat Association, which is still operating although at a smaller scale than when it began. The other groups are beset with problems related to capital, logistics and permits.

Visitors’ fees and an annual allocation from the city government sustain park operations. The park collects about three million pesos per year, or about half of its operating costs. All visitors’ fees are deposited in a trust fund, which is under the control of the PAMB.

Since the park began full-scale operations in the 1990s, migrants have flocked to the area, as seen in the high population growth rate in the three barangays hosting the park. As park tourism began to create more economic opportunities, the combined population in Barangay Cabayugan, Marufinas and Tagabinit more than doubled from 1,657 in 1980 to 3,829 in 2000. This followed the general trend in Puerto Princesa City, which had an even higher population growth rate of 5.8 per cent in the last decade, compared to 4.7 per cent in the park’s barangays. The national growth rate in the same period was only 2.3 percent.



In general, Palawan has a high in-migration rate, but the park’s income-generating opportunities have no doubt pulled settlers into its host barangays, mainly for commerce and services. Some 30 lodging houses and restaurants operate in sitio Sabang in Cabayugan, while 29 vendors sell everything from beach wear to souvenir items. Ten passenger jeeps and 37 motorboats provide transport services.

## Ancestral Domains within the National Park

Two indigenous communities, the Tagbanwa and Batak, have inhabited the forests within the park’s vicinity long before settlers arrived from other provinces. They are distinct ethno-linguistic groups, but they interact closely. The home range of both groups is central and northern Palawan, although the distribution of the Tagbanwa is wider than the Batak. The Tagbanwa have generally lighter skin and live in villages subdivided into hamlets. The Batak have darker skin and are organized as highly mobile bands that often stay in temporary campsites. The Tagbanwa occupies lower forested areas, while the Batak are found mainly in the upper slopes. In 2000, registered Tagbanwa in Palawan numbered 16,157 while only 364 Batak people were recorded.

If the theory of migration is used in determining their provenance, the Batak are Australoid-Sakai and the Tagbanwa are proto-Malays who came to the Philippines some 25,000 to 30,000 years ago from mainland Asia through land bridges. However, no irrefutable evidence has been found

to support it. What is certain, based on physical evidence, is that there were people in Palawan between 24,000 and 22,000 BC. Anthropologists have found a skullcap and the portion of a jaw in the Tabon Caves in southern Palawan from early inhabitants, and artifacts indicate they had similarities with the resource uses of present-day Tagbanua.

One of the artifacts found in the Tabon Caves was a varnished and red-lipped goblet, evidence that almaciga resin was used in Palawan as early as 5000 B.C. The remains of the food consumed during the period reveal that the sea and forest were widely used as food sources, as they still are today. Spoons made of chambered nautilus shells, identified by modern-day Tagbanwa as rice scrapers, reveal that people in Palawan cultivated rice as early as 500 B.C.



Courtesy of Dr. Gert A. Gust, adapted from Department of Tourism map

The Spanish and American colonial governments attempted to change the resource use patterns of the Tagbanwa and Batak people through the introduction of agriculture and encouragement of in-migration to Palawan. The Americans even carried out a policy of assimilation, persuading indigenous communities to live in settlements where they could have access to public education. The Tagbanwa and Batak were displaced from their homeland, but they continued to be dependent on forest and marine resources for their survival.

In 1967, the government put up the Presidential Arm for National Minorities (PANAMIN), which pursued a policy of isolation, putting the Batak in a reservation in Barangay Cabayugan. The settlement was depopulated in three years. Next, the Bureau of Forestry banned slash and burn cultivation, the principal source of livelihood for the Tagbanwa and Batak, even as Palawan was opened to commercial logging, mining and forestland grazing.

Studies have shown that the characteristic response of the Tagbanwa to outside intervention is conflict avoidance and selective adaptation. Although there were instances in the past when the Tagbanwa fought the Muslims, for the most part they fled or gave in to the invaders. From these encounters, they adopted a number of Muslim ways but did not convert to Islam. When the Spaniards came, they allowed their children to be baptized and allied with the colonizers against the Muslims. When the Americans took over their land and migrants started occupying the lowlands, the Tagbanwa simply moved inland.

The Batak tend to avoid conflict more than the Tagbanwa. They normally reside in higher elevations, where they rarely encounter outsiders. However, they interact frequently with the Tagbanwa and have adopted some of their ways, including cultural elements coming from outside groups. In addition to their language, most of the Batak also speak Tagbanwa.

In 1996, the Batak and Tagbanwa were able to recover their home range within the park when they obtained two Certificates of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADC) from the government. One is the Cabayugan CADC, which belongs to the Tagbanwa and covers 5,902 hectares. The other CADC in Kayasan covers 7,530 hectares and belongs to both the Tagbanwa and Batak. Together, the two CADCs comprise 61 per cent, or majority, of the park's expanded area.

The Cabayugan CADC is in the hands of the group Tinig ng Katutubong Kabayugan (Voice of the Indigenous People of Cabayugan). The area stretches from lowland forests to the sea, and has about a kilometer of shoreline. Farms and housing clusters are interspersed with the forest.

The Samahan ng mga Katutubo sa Kayasan (Association of Indigenous People of Kayasan) holds the other CADC. Forests from lower to higher elevation cover the area in Kayasan, a ward (*sitio*) of Barangay Tagabinit. Farms, settlements, and roads have encroached into the forest. The boundaries of the ancestral domain and the park's core zone overlap in the higher elevation.

Both indigenous groups want to convert their CADC into a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT), made possible under the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997, to ensure their ownership of their home range. But they have yet to file an application with the Palawan office of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, which implements IPRA, due to lack of funds and an assisting NGO. The NCIP's work and financial plan places the cost of the two CADCs' conversion at half a million pesos. This includes the addition of the 100-hectare former Batak reservation in the Cabayugan CADC area that the Tagbanwa were able to recover from a private individual, who had previously claimed it.

Although they have gained appreciation of the ancestral domains, lowlanders still enter the area of both CADCs. The Cabayugan CADC has 96 Tagbanwa households and 20 households belonging to in-migrants. The Kayasan CADC area has 54 Tagbanwa households, 14 Batak households, and 15 households of outsiders. In general, the Batak and Tagbanwa enjoy a harmonious relationship with the lowlanders, who serve as their economic and cultural intermediary with the outside world. Lowland farmers have employed some Tagbanwa as seasonal wage laborers, and



have even intermarried with them, cementing relations between the two cultures. Each CADC area has 10 mixed marriages.

There appears to be some confusion in the leadership and management of the CADC areas. Both are supposed to have an Ancestral Domain Management Plan that would serve as a guide for resource users and ensure the socio-cultural integrity of the indigenous people. However, no copy of the plan was readily available, none of the lowlanders had read it, and no one among the ordinary Tagbanwa mentioned the plan.

Traditionally, the Tagbanwa and Batak are strongly organized as kinship groups that inherit the status of their forebears. The recognized title of the highest leader among the Tagbanwa is *masikampo*, and they also have a tribal council called *sugid-nen*. However, PANAMIN organized the Council of Elders in 1979 to perform these leadership functions. Among the Batak, leadership is informal and defined by kinship, age, experience, charisma and knowledge of survival skills and traditions. The identity of a group is often associated with the name of the oldest member and location of a campsite. This leadership pattern instills cohesion among members.

When their CADC applications were processed, the leadership structures of the Tagbanwa and Batak were reorganized to create the formal Western-type organizations that currently manage the ancestral domains. Each has a Board of Directors and set of officers (e.g. President, Vice-President and Treasurer), even though the department order that granted CADCs had allowed indigenous peoples to retain their traditional socio-political structures.

The relationship of the Council of Elders with the leadership structure of the organizations is unclear. Because of the limited number of people with recognized capabilities in the community, some are holding two positions in the organization. The layers of leadership structures have confused the ordinary Tagbanwa. Meanwhile, among the Batak, the sedentary ones recognize the leadership of the Tagbanwa and the mobile ones have remained egalitarian. Nonetheless, it seems that the Tagbanwa's traditional Council of Elders has prevailed. The council still meets frequently to help resolve the groups' problems.

## Indigenous Peoples and Park Management

The NIPAS law provides protective measures for indigenous people in the process of establishing and managing a protected area. These include the requirement of an ethnographic study, recognition of their ancestral lands within national parks so they will not be resettled, guidelines for their protection, and their participation in the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) of established parks. The implementing rules and regulations of the NIPAS law lays emphasis on partnership with stakeholders, including the indigenous people, as a basic policy in park management (*See Table 2 on page 35*). All these legal provisions are generally observed in the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park.

In the park's PAMB, which is its highest decision making body, two out of the 17 members are from the CADC organizations. Among the staff, five are half-Tagbanwa. No full-blooded Tagbanwa or Batak is employed as park staff as they do not meet qualifications. Park rangers, who are trained on community management, have the most interaction with indigenous people.

Five of the park's seven programs contain strategies that affect the lives of the Batak and Tagbanwa. The ecosystem management program includes zoning, which requires integration with resource uses in the ancestral domains. The program on park protection and law enforcement is in charge of management agreements with communities and developing community rangers, both of which have yet to be implemented among the indigenous peoples. The research and monitoring program requires baseline data from existing sources covering ethno-cultural classes, occupations and land uses, but this has yet to be compiled. The public awareness and community relations program educates local residents on park rules, and to a certain extent, this has been done through close coordination with village officials and people's organizations in the area. The program on

**Table 2: NIPAS Provisions Regarding Indigenous Peoples**

Section	Provision in the Implementing Rules and Regulations
1	<u>Basic Policy.</u> It is further acknowledged that the effective administration of NIPAS will require partnership between government and other interested parties including the indigenous peoples communities.
3	<u>Establishing Initial Component of the System:</u> The general public...indigenous communities ... shall be informed through the various media: (i) the presence of protected areas within their locality; (ii) result of initial screening by DENR, (iii) the NIPAS law; (iv) other relevant documents pertaining to NIPAS; Census and registration of protected area and buffer zone ... should establish basic census data, ethnographic and tenure status of migrants and indigenous communities. If the area is still judged to be suitable for inclusion ... involve the indigenous cultural communities in the planning process. Conduct public hearing on the proposed inclusion of each area. The DENR shall notify the public...ensuring that affected...indigenous communities are notified.
6	<u>Establishment of Buffer Zone.</u> Indigenous cultural communities ... must play a role in developing the plans, policies and rules of buffer zone management.
8	<u>General Management Planning Strategy.</u> The GMPS shall...provide for the protection of indigenous cultural community domains and interests... the PAWB shall solicit the assistance of NGOs in GMPS preparation particularly ...in indigenous cultural community concerns.
10	<u>Protected Area Management Zoning.</u> Cultural communities ... shall be part of decision making in zone establishment and management planning... Management objectives and strategies shall be developed ... provided that ...these shall not restrict the rights of indigenous communities to pursue traditional and sustainable means of livelihood within their ancestral domain.
12	<u>Content of management Plan and Manual.</u> The content of the Management Manual shall include...site management strategy ... ancestral domain and rights..
45	<u>Identification of Indigenous Cultural Communities.</u> The protected area staff shall immediately locate any indigenous cultural communities that may exist in or near the site and identify themselves to the tribal leaders.
46	<u>Determination of Ancestral Claims.</u> The evaluation of ancestral domain claims shall follow the procedures set for in Department Administrative Order Series 1991.

tourism and visitor's management encourages suitable nature-related tourism in surrounding communities in order to spread the benefits of the industry, but precautions are maintained in exploring these activities among indigenous peoples.

The management plan acknowledges that an “economically and socially healthy local community is fundamental to a healthy park”. But it also prevents the park management office from getting involved in community development, stressing that this is the concern of other government offices. It recommends that any intervention for the Batak and Tagbanwa must adhere to the following: develop a very limited number of activities successfully, select one or two for each ancestral domain for further development, involve the local community, and conform to the CADC Management Plans.





## Resource Use of the Tagbanwa and Batak in the Park

To the indigenous people within the park, the abundance of its resources is no longer what it used to be. Under their management, the park's resources had remained plentiful, but rapid changes began with large-scale logging at the turn of the 20th century. Government personnel and migrants from other parts of the country arrived, using the same exploitation methods that depleted the resources in their places of origin.

Nevertheless, the resource use of the Tagbanwa and Batak in the park still generally follows old patterns, with variations indicating adaptation to the unfolding changes in the environment. This is seen in the one-year resource use cycle in the Cabayugan and Kayasan CADC areas.

Their main economic activity is the cultivation of swidden fields. However, food harvested from the farm is never sufficient, with rice harvested in August normally consumed by December. Fishing, hunting, foraging, handicraft making, collection of non-timber forest products and wage labor complement the farming effort. Each activity is timed to the natural rhythm, access to ecological zone and availability of labor.

Rice is the most important crop in the swidden fields. Although 20 varieties of rice are reported, only two or three are planted at any time. Clearing of the field begins in April so that it is ready for planting when the rain comes in May. By August, rice is harvested. Short-term crops such as cassava and sweet potatoes are harvested from September until January. Bananas and vegetables are planted and harvested throughout the year. In this way, the swidden field serves as food storage for the indigenous communities.

While waiting for short-term crops to mature from June to August, the Tagbanwa collects wild fruits such as mango, rambutan and durian. Forest fruits also fatten the wild pigs, which start to breed in January and are hunted starting August. In the past, dogs were used in hunting and rituals were performed to court the favor of the spirits. But this method has since been replaced with "pig bombs" made of firecracker powder and matchstick heads. Both the Batak and Tagbanwa utilize this method, as well as traditional traps. However, hunting among the Bataks is not seasonal, and they search the forest for a wider variety of wild animals throughout the year.

In Kayasan, collection of non-timber forest products coincides with the start of the dry season in November, when the steep slopes at higher elevations become less slippery. Although rattan and almaciga resin are collected throughout the year, it is more intense during the dry months. Both commodities are important sources of cash income for indigenous communities.

Gatherers place the almaciga resin in sacks, each containing about 50 kilograms, and carry their heavy loads down to the settlement. A jeepney comes once every two months to bring the product to the buyer in the city center. With each jeepney loading about 50 sacks, this means Kayasan produces about 25 sacks a month. At an estimated 500 pesos per sack of resin, the value of one month's production of resin in Kayasan would be around 12,500 pesos.

The rattan buyer goes to Kayasan once a month. Each rattan pole fetches about 5 to 6 pesos. Since 1996, the organization of Tagbanwa and Batak in Kayasan has been getting a share from the resin and rattan sold: 25 centavos for every kilogram of resin, and 15 to 25 centavos for every rattan pole. The collection reached 5,000 pesos in 2005, but the chieftain who is also the treasurer spent the money when he got sick and has yet to repay it.

Hunting in Cabayugan lasts until December. There is no resin to collect in Cabayugan because logging wiped out the almaciga trees in the 1970s. But they collect rattan between February and May. During these months, rattan collection is easy because the forest floor is already very dry and the undergrowth has thinned down. Some of the rattan harvest is sold while some are used to make baskets, which are sold in souvenir shops. They sell the rattan poles in Sabang, the park's commercial area located some eight kilometers from the Tagbanwa settlement. They also collected

palm leaves and bamboo, which are cut into strips and dried. The palm leaves are woven into mats while the bamboo strips are fashioned into panels called *sawali* that are used in building houses. Most of these handcrafted products are made year-round and sold mainly to outside markets and tourists.

Wild honey is gathered in both Cabayugan and Kayasan. This is done between March and June in Cabayugan and between February and May in Kayasan. The slight difference of the schedule is due to the variation of the flowering season of their ecological zones. Two types of honey are gathered in Cabayugan: one sourced from bees that build their hives in branches from March to May, and the other from bees that build their hive in holes from May to June. To gather honey, one needs a bolo for cutting the undergrowth, a container for the honey and coconut husk to smoke the hive. A maximum of three hives may be found in a day trip, each one yielding between 1.5 to three gallons of honey. Two-thirds of the yield is sold in the city center, with one gallon fetching 200 pesos. However, the seller risks arrest if caught with the honey without a permit. Income from honey helps the Tagbanwa family to buy food while waiting for the crops in their swidden field to be harvested.

Fishing is done in the two CADC areas but there are variations. In Cabayugan, fishing in the river is done from December to March, when floods have subsided and the fish are believed to be clean. The activity stops in April when the trees shed their leaves, which rot in the river when the volume of water becomes very much reduced during the dry season. It is believed that fish caught in the river with rotting leaves is dirty. Hence, fishing shifts to the sea. Since some parts of Cabayugan are along the shoreline, fishing is done frequently from April to August, and tapers down the rest of the year due to strong winds. Only gleaning is done throughout the year. An average of five kilograms of fish are caught per trip, three of which are sold and the rest brought home for consumption. Most households have boats, with fishers using hook and line and nets. Up to four persons work together to build a boat, which starts with the selection of timber in the forest, choosing the measurement of a tree trunk's diameter, and inspecting its quality. A boat made of *baan* wood lasts for four years while one made of *malapog* lasts only for two years. A hole in the trunk will not make a good boat, according to the Tagbanwa.

In Kayasan, the Tagbanwa also fish in the river using hook-and-line, net and spear. From February to June, they venture out to sea when the water is calm, but this is done only two or three times a month because their settlement is far from shore. The Batak in Kayasan fish only in the river, between December and January, when there is less danger from floods. They build a temporary dwelling along the riverbank using the leaves of wild bananas.

Between April and July, lowlanders often hire the Tagbanwa to clear their fields and plant rice and corn for 100 pesos per day. The Tagbanwa fit this opportunity to earn cash into their schedule for other activities.

The resource use of the Tagbanwa and Batak shows the variety of eco-systems that they use, each one serving as their lifeline and insurance against hunger (*See Table 3*). If one ecosystem will not deliver, the other ecosystems can still be relied upon for food security. Being a generalist rather than a specialist in terms of resource use is one of their survival strategies, not only in ecosystems but also with species. Multiple species are used from each ecosystem.

They have attuned their skills not only to extract but also to sustain various ecosystems. They can harvest non-timber products and game from a forest without depleting these resources. They cultivate swidden fields while allowing the soil to restore its fertility. They fish and glean in rivers and coastal areas without altering these ecosystems. They use natural resources without destroying the regenerative mechanism of the environment. The use of multiple ecosystems and species guarantees survival not only for people, but also of plants and animals.

The closer the ecosystem to the settlements, the more it is used. This is seen in the resin gathering activity of Tagbanwa and Batak in Kayasan where it is abundant, and fishing among the

**Table 3: Ecosystems and Indigenous Resource Use in the Park (2005)**

<b>Ecosystem</b>	<b>Tagbanwa in Cabayugan</b>	<b>Tagbanwa in Kayasan</b>	<b>Batak in Kayasan</b>
Primary Forest	-	Collecting rattan, resin, honey, fruits and tubers; Hunting	Collecting rattan, resin, honey, fruits and tubers; Hunting
Secondary Forest	Collection of rattan, resin, honey, fruits, tubers, bamboo; Hunting; Farming	Collection of rattan, resin, honey, fruits and tubers; Hunting; Farming	Collection of rattan, resin, honey, fruits and tubers; Hunting; Farming
Lowland farms	Wage labor	Wage labor	-
River	Gleaning and Fishing	Gleaning and Fishing	Gleaning and Fishing
Mangrove	Gleaning and collecting honey	Gleaning and collecting honey	-
Inter-tidal Flat	Gleaning	Gleaning	-
Marine waters	Fishing	Fishing	-
Lowland Settlement	Trade and barter	Trade and barter	Trade and barter

Tagbanwa in the coastal villages of Cabayugan. The positive correlation between proximity of ecosystem and intensity of use speaks of their ability to adapt to their natural environment. They also adapt fast to man-made ecosystems, learning to earn as wage laborers when the lowlanders developed farmlands and developing more handcrafted products when markets became available. However, the Tagbanwa in Cabayugan have managed to sell more products and honed their trading skills due to easier access to the market in Sabang. The Batak are more dependent on hunting and foraging, as they inhabit higher elevations. But as their skills develop, the Batak people are gradually settling down as agriculturists.

Differences in the resource use patterns between the Tagbanwa in Cabayugan and the Tagbanwa and Batak in Kayasan show that no two indigenous people groups are similar, and even the same indigenous people in two places evolve different patterns. Hence, any intervention must be customized to a group in a particular place in order to be responsive. The ability of the Tagbanwa and even the Batak to adapt to environmental changes speaks of their great resilience.

Behind the survival strategies of the Tagbanwa is the worldview that physical, social, economic and spiritual environments are one. The natural ecosystems have spirits with dominion over various resources. People can use all ecosystems and their resources as long as they do not offend the spirits. One can avoid the wrath of the spirits by avoiding parts of the ecosystems considered their abode, the indigenous version of strict protection zones. A ritual is performed to gain the favor of the spirit or appease it if it is angry prior to the utilization of any major resource, such as swidden fields and fishing areas. All rituals involve offerings to the spirits, praying for their favor and interpreting their response. The rituals demonstrate the view that ecosystems and its resources are not the possession of people but of the spirits. Everyone can use these resources with the assent of the spirits, but such use must be prudent or the spirits will withdraw their favor. The view that the natural world is actually a spiritual world and people and spirits share it underpins resource conservation as the survival strategy of the Tagbanwa and Batak.

Rituals are performed not only to harmonize the activities of people with those of the spirits, but also to cement the relationship of people within the kinship group and among kinship groups. Harmony is important to the Tagbanwa and Batak. Its absence represents the collapse of the natural order of things and their entire life support system. To attain harmony, the interests and relationship of all users of the environment must be tied up together in concord. This view guides their adaptation to the changes in the environment. They adapt to a new situation as long as it does not break their harmony. The breakdown of such harmony is the ultimate threat to survival.

## Responding to Ecotourism

The view of the environment as an economic instrument to sustain its own maintenance and protection is translated into eco-tourism activities in the park. The paying public utilizes the natural environment for their own pleasure and not as a source of food or basic necessities. This view contrasts with the multidimensional view of Tagbanwa and Batak of the environment. Hence, eco-tourism directly and indirectly generates unplanned and planned changes. The result shows the impact of eco-tourism and the park as a whole on the indigenous people.

The demand for various support services from eco-tourists spins off unplanned changes in the communities around the park. These services include transport, lodging, food provision, souvenir items, and guiding. The mélange of service providers later became organized into formal groups based on the type of service they provide. Some, such as the Sabang Tourism Network, are self-organized. The park management organized others such as the Sabang Sea Ferry Service Cooperative, but city-based NGOs using funds from international donors organized many of the groups.

The park supported these organizing efforts in order to facilitate decision-making and coordination of activities revolving around common interests. Many donors funded the creation of these groups mainly to reduce their dependence on extractive activities and enhance park protection while enhancing their source of livelihood. There are now seven service-provider groups in Cabayugan, where ecotourism activities are centered (*See Table 4*). Most are active, and many have cross membership.

The number of groups and membership size reveal the degree of unplanned changes wrought by eco-tourism, and the exclusion of indigenous people from these changes. Out of 164 members in these groups, only six come from indigenous communities. All six are Tagbanwa, and only three are considered active. Most members of these groups arrived in the area only after the park was established. The indigenous people who were in the area first have largely missed the direct economic benefits from eco-tourism. Obviously, they are unable to excel in a setting where the environment is used purely as an economic instrument.

The need to enhance the benefits of indigenous people from natural resources while ensuring environmental protection has not escaped the attention of international funding agencies. These include the European Union, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF). They have implemented three projects in the CADC area in Cabayugan and five in Kayasan, with varying responses from indigenous projects on the planned changes.

The CADCs in Cabayugan and Kayasan were both delineated under the Biodiversity Conservation Network Project. One of its economic ventures was a community-managed rattan trading operation that was set up in order to by-pass the rattan traders, who were believed to be shortchanging the gatherers. The traders serve as middlemen between the indigenous people and rattan furniture makers. However, the operation failed because the indigenous people did not have the values and skills for trading, or the technology to prepare the rattan poles for the market. Furthermore, the operation did not provide the indigenous people the social and economic security that they obtained from the traders.

**Table 4: Service Providers in the Park (2005)**

Name	Type of Members	Year Organized	Number of Members	Number of IP Members
Sabang Vendors Association	Souvenirs, fish and rice vendors	2001	29	1
Sabang Tourism Network	Resort, lodges and restaurant operators	1997	30	None
Cabayugan Tourism Association	Community Tour Guides	2002	18	None
Mangrove Paddleboat Boat	Mangrove Tour Guides	2000	5	None
Sabang Seaferry Service Cooperative	Transport Boat operators	1998	37	None
Kambingan Association	Goat farmers	1997	35	5
Sabang Jeepney Divers Association	Jeepney Drivers	1998	10	None

Other projects suffered the same fate. A water supply system that the PTFPP built to solve the chronic water shortage in Cabayugan is non-functional. The coffers of a cooperative retail store and rattan trading enterprise, both set up under the UNDP Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation Project, is drained.

Kayasan is the setting of more projects than Cabayugan, with one project on community eco-tourism and three on livelihood with a variety of components.

The Environmental Legal Assistance Center implemented the UNESCO Community-Based Sustainable Tourism Project between 1997 and 2000. It identified a core group for community-based sustainable tourism and packaged hiking, wildlife watching and river rafting as products to sell to eco-tourists. Around 15 persons were trained as guides with courses on basic ecology, paralegal and community tourism. They managed to do four tours, with each tourist paying P500. But the operation stopped due to the realization that they have to develop the products to sell and make the customers satisfied. Hiking trails had to be improved and footbridges installed on the river. The camping area needed toilets, a kitchen, cottages, information station and a tent site. They also needed to invest in a raft for river rafting, but had no capital to develop the ecotourism venture. The guides have gone back to swidden farming.

The livelihood projects did not fare any better. The PTFPP introduced exotic fruit trees such as durian from Davao and trained the indigenous people on grafting procedures, but these did not deliver the promised return. The UNDP's Community Management of Protected Areas Project assisted in the distribution of carabaos and pigs, procurement of farming equipment, construction of a rice barn, and fish feeds but the outcome of these activities is not known.

The most recent initiative is the EC-UNDP Small Grant Program for Protection of Tropical Forest-Assisted Community Based Project. It has five components: five-year development planning; tree nursery and planting; livelihood support of carabao, fertilizer, and silkworm culture; training on cooperative formation; organizational development and management; and community-based monitoring of selected social and environmental indicators. So far, results are not encouraging. The users of fertilizers and other farm inputs realized that their traditional practices were better, as the



increased production failed to offset the high cost of inputs. Silk culture suffers from the insufficient production of cassava leaves, which is used to feed the worms, and decreasing membership among trained silk weavers. Only one remained out of twenty, as the weavers resisted the practice of planting cassava out of season and weaving silk throughout the year. Doing so would have disrupted their multi-activity livelihood cycle which does not only support them economically but also binds them to their community. Only the tree nursery is operational, and trees have been planted.

From these experiences, it is clear that the Tagbanwa and Batak have marginal participation in providing ecotourism-related services. The interventions in enterprise management also met very modest success, as these are not consistent with their survival strategies.

Being a service provider or an entrepreneur will turn the indigenous people into specialists rather than generalists. Both occupations require spending most of their time and investing most of their effort on a single income source. This gamble is too risky, in spite of the potential higher return. Where surplus is very limited or non-existent, one cannot take such risks. Among generalists, a lower but certain return weighs more than a higher but uncertain return. Research has shown that this concept of security is common among small cultivators. Thus, a combination of swidden cultivation, forest products collection, wage labor, hunting and fishing will never be swapped for vending souvenirs. Spreading, not concentrating, your risk is the key to security.

Also, a service provider or entrepreneur has to compete with similar practitioners for clients and income. This creates adversarial relationships that jeopardize social harmony. Earning from one's clients is also considered predatory. Among the Batak and Tagbanwa, the exchange of goods between two persons is more of an exchange of social credits that cements personal ties than an economic transaction. Financial gain can be cast aside if it will weaken personal ties. Thus, the tender of the cooperative store would willingly give credit to a relative in need even with the knowledge that there is very little chance of repayment. After all, this relative may someday be in the position to help when the tender will be in need. The social credit that the tender obtained is the security needed, not the profit of the cooperative store. Cooperation and not competition generates security.

Business operations involving upland mono-cropping, such as cassava plantations, goes against conservation as the survival strategy of the Batak and Tagbanwa. The practice rapidly exhausts the soil and does not give it time to restore its fertility. This also increases erosion because a crop will be deprived of the support of other crops in holding the soil. The reliability of the soil as food provider is reduced. Apart from unnecessarily risking one's food supply and restricting dietary options, producing one type of crop will undercut one's position in the food-sharing network. If the other households have enough cassava for instance, the cassava farmer has nothing to share with them, thereby losing the social credit that should have been earned. Thus, conservation generates both environmental and social security.

The experience of the indigenous people with unplanned and planned changes in the park provides



Dr. Ronaldo Fajardo, OSITC

Tourists enjoying lamp-lit view inside the underground river cave



a clear warning against intervention that assumes universality of certain worldviews. Any intervention conceived to enhance the security of a group operating under a different worldview could increase their vulnerability instead. An intervention is only effective in the physical and social setting where it evolved. The recognition of the differences in worldview is the main reason for using the principle of self-determination as a guide in relating with indigenous peoples.

## **Good and Bad Effects**

Although the Tagbanwa and Batak have largely stayed in the sidelines of the tourism boom in the park, they are not immune to its effects, which are both good and bad.

One positive effect in both Cabayugan and Kayasan is broader awareness of the outside world arising from more intense interaction with people of various cultural backgrounds. This has made the indigenous people realize the variety of beliefs, systems, organizations, ways of living and technologies in other parts of the world. In Kayasan, they have also realized that tourism can operate side by side with environmental protection. In Cabayugan, tourism has more practical benefits, mainly as a market for their vegetables and handicrafts.

The adverse impact in Cabayugan is the indigenous peoples' lack of control regarding the entry of outsiders. Tourists often hike around the CADC area, which is closer to Sabang. The Tagbanwa feel that the easy entry of outsiders exposes their flora and fauna to bio-piracy. In Kayasan, the Tagbanwa feel that outsiders are pressuring them to change their beliefs and way of life. The visitors often question their belief in spirits and try to convince them to give up their spiritual heritage. One Tagbanwa woman said their belief cannot be given up, because it is the essence of being a Tagbanwa. If the belief is lost, one's soul will not be a Tagbanwa anymore.

So far, most interventions introduced in Cabayugan and Kayasan have been aimed at increasing their income. But very little is invested on social services that will uplift the well-being of the indigenous people.

While the main road traverses Cabayugan, the center of Kayasan is about eight kilometers away from the major trading center of Sabang. The distance and lack of farm-to-market road isolates Kayasan from the market and retards production.

Literacy is low among the Tagbanwa and Batak, with the school in Kayasan offering only Grade 1 to 3 classes. One teacher handles 54 students. The CADC area in Cabayugan has no school at all. The nearest school offering complete elementary education is in the center of Cabayugan, about a kilometer away. In this school, Tagbanwa children mix with the better-dressed and better-fed children of the lowlanders, thereby engendering inferiority complex. The regular curriculum in these schools totally ignores indigenous culture.

Health and sanitation services are wanting as well. The indigenous people in the two CADC areas suffer from high incidence of disease, mainly diarrhea and malaria, compared to lowlanders. Low level of sanitation and limited access to health services are the culprit. While Kayasan has a communal faucet, the Tagbanwa in Cabayugan still rely on open sources for drinking water. The scarcity of mosquito nets increases their vulnerability to malaria. When they get sick, they do not go to the satellite clinic until their diseases are in an advanced stage due to the distance.

Studies have shown that the Tagbanwa and Batak have a vast knowledge of medicinal plants, but traditional healers have dwindled. There were five medicine men in Cabayugan in 1976 but only two were left in 2005.

The result of their high vulnerability to preventable diseases is high mortality, especially among children. Three out of 10 births among the Tagbanwa result in the infant's death. Among the Batak, seven deaths occur in every 10 births. Neonatal death is rare among infants of lowlanders. But none of the intervention-providers seems to have heard their desperate cry.

The Tagbanwa in Cabayugan said that while livelihood is important, their urgent need is clean drinking water. It is ironic that the source of the water supply in Sabang is within the Cabayugan

CADC. Consumers in Sabang have signed a Memorandum of Agreement to pay the Tagbanwa a water fee, but none has been received. In Kayasan, their top priorities are health services and improved transportation to move their products faster to the market. It is very clear to them that a sound body and a sound market are fundamental to development. If intervention providers can help them have both, they can very well take care of their own livelihood.

## **Realizing IPRA in the Park**

The condition of indigenous communities in the park mirrors the status of IPRA implementation. To measure the extent in which the Batak and Tagbanwa have enjoyed their rights under IPRA, their experiences with regard to 18 provisions in the law are examined in this section.

### ***Rights to Ancestral Domain***

Efforts in this arena have not gone far, as the law has to contend with continuous social processes that are moving faster than the implementation of IPRA. These factors include increasing in-migration from the lowlands, interventions with weak sustainability, and vanishing indigenous knowledge on resource management.

### ***Right of Ownership***

The NCIP is working for the conversion of the Cabayugan and Cayasan CADC into a title, which would secure their ownership over the ancestral domain. However, the agency has no funds to pursue the task and no NGO is assisting the community. The 100- hectare PANAMIN lot in Cabayugan has yet to be included in the ancestral domain. Hence, the Batak and Tagbanwa have not yet realized their right to ownership over their ancestral domain.

### ***Right to Develop Lands and Natural Resources***

Due to the absence of a title and the requisite Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan that goes with it, there is no clear long-term direction on how to manage the resources within the Batak and Tagbanwa territory. Lowland migrants and NGOs that are implementing foreign assisted projects are developing lands using non-indigenous technology, setting the trend for land development. Unless the indigenous people formulate and implement their own plan, their right to develop natural resources will be constrained.

### ***Right to Regulate Entry of Migrants***

One of the negative effects of eco-tourism is that the commercial activities it generated have attracted more lowlanders into the park and have increased pressure on ancestral lands. As a result, the indigenous people have given up part of their traditional territories to migrants. Regulating their entry is weak and barely exercised due to a confluence of factors. One is inter-marriage, through which lowlanders have taken hold of land within the CADC areas. The outsiders have managed to do this because the Batak and Tagbanwa do not have a strong sense of territorial boundary. This is rooted in their worldview that natural resources cannot be owned and must benefit everyone. While a sense of boundary is developing among their leaders, it may take time before this becomes a group norm. The result is the absence of a traditional institutional mechanism that secures territorial boundaries. The delineation of CADC areas is the first step in inculcating a sense of territorial boundary among the indigenous people, but more has to be done.

The park management is doing its share in regulating the entry of migrants through its patrols along the boundaries. The city government also provides security of ancestral domain from migrants through its Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

### ***Right to Safe and Clean Air Water***

The Tagbanwa and Batak have a traditional system for safeguarding their water resources that is undocumented, but can be gleaned from their practice of seasonal river fishing and regard of critical water sources as spirit abodes. Their integrated water management system has yet to be described and incorporated into a long-term plan for their ancestral domain. Clean and safe drinking water would reduce the high incidence of diarrhea in CADC areas. One foreign assisted project has set up a water supply system in Kayasan, an initial step in promoting this right.

### ***Right to Claim Parts of Reservations***

In a groundbreaking resolution, the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development has restored the right of the Batak and Tagbanwa to gather almaciga resin in the park's core zone, which overlaps with the ancestral domain. However, the decision poses a conflict with the NIPAS law, which provides that strict protection zones "shall be closed to all human activity except for scientific studies and ceremonial or religious use by indigenous communities." This is one area where the NIPAS Law has to be reconciled with IPRA.

### ***Responsibilities to Maintain Ecological Balance***

The Tagbanwa and Batak are exercising this right by using their traditional resource management system in their ancestral domain. Largely undocumented, the system has been ignored in most interventions and outsiders are unaware that some of these practices are described in the CADC Management Plan. These interventions were unfortunately purveyed by well-meaning aid institutions, NGO and government agencies who failed to do a thorough and competent due diligence. Many outsiders condemn the swidden cultivation system of the indigenous people without understanding its built-in and intricate conservation mechanism. Such understanding is needed so that outsiders can follow the traditional system and avoid introducing methods that are not suitable to the natural and cultural setting in the ancestral domain.

### ***Right to Self-Governance and Empowerment***

The indigenous people in Cabayugan and Kayasan CADC areas have relatively strong representation in decision-making bodies, including two in the park's management board, but this has brought in meager benefits in terms of social services. Indeed, giving one's free prior and informed consent do not suffice to strengthen self-governance. The indigenous people still have to develop the capability of understanding the procedural, substantive and psychological components of decision-making used in mainstream society. This is the only way they can tap into the process and protect their interests better.

The park management office, PAMB, city government, barangay government, NGO and foreign assisted projects are helping the indigenous communities exercise this right. Close coordination between the park management office and indigenous leaders enable them to make joint decisions at the informal level for day-to-day operations. The city council has an indigenous peoples committee that translates their concerns into legislative agenda. The barangay government of Cabayugan and Tagabinit consults the indigenous people leaders, who joined in drafting the Barangay Development Plan of Cabayugan. All the NGOs that implemented foreign-assisted projects conducted planning and capability-building activities to fulfill this provision as well.

### ***Right to Participate in Decision-Making***

Through their membership in the PAMB, the Batak and Tagbanwa are given a voice in making decisions about park management. The Indigenous Peoples Committee represents their interest in the city council. They also have substantial participation in barangay government, which invites them to meetings and other community activities.

### ***Right to Determine and Decide Priorities for Development***

Without the ADSDPP, the indigenous people have no strong tool to systematically articulate their priorities in development. It is more difficult for them to screen interventions introduced from outside if they have no internal guidelines. Assisting agencies and organizations often find it difficult to plan activities that are consistent with the priorities of the indigenous people.

### ***Recognition of the Role of People's Organizations***

Although the layers of leadership structures have caused confusion to the indigenous people and outsiders, their organizations appear to be working somehow. The NCIP has yet to consult the two organizations regarding capability-building guidelines for their members.

### ***Establishment of Means for Development and Empowerment***

Although the indigenous people are represented in decision-making bodies, their capability has to be upgraded. The limited social services available to them indicate lack of proper mechanisms for empowerment and full development. Past government initiatives and religious conversion have weakened their indigenous institutions.

### ***Social Justice and Human Rights***

These can only be fully attained when the indigenous people become capable of functioning well in formal organizations. Without this trait, they will continue to be denied access to opportunities in employment and business. Nevertheless, some NGOs continue to assist the Batak and Tagbanwa in building their capability to assert themselves. Government agencies have also contributed their share in upholding the indigenous peoples' right to social services through roads, the satellite clinic, water supply facilities, and schools.

### ***Freedom from Discrimination and Right to Equal Opportunity and Treatment***

Limited formal education and lack of familiarity with lowland systems have curtailed the indigenous peoples' access to social services, employment and livelihood opportunities.

### ***Right to Basic Services***

Social services that could improve the economic conditions in the two CADC areas are limited. Worse, the Batak and Tagbanwa have to compete with lowlanders the meager services available at the barangay level. Due to inherent disadvantage, the indigenous people are losing in the competition. Even with foreign assistance, the share of the indigenous people groups is miniscule compared to that of the lowlanders got. Questions have also been raised on the suitability of outside intervention to the cultural setting of the Batak and Tagbanwa.

### ***Cultural Integrity***

The imposition of outside beliefs and practices, on the assumption that these are better than indigenous ways, has undermined the cultural integrity of the Batak and Tagbanwa. The best way to protect their cultural integrity is to educate outsiders, particularly assisting agencies, about the high functionality and unique character of their practices and how these have evolved in the places where these are used.

The park management has established a museum and information center as its contribution in promoting the culture of the indigenous peoples in the park. However, the schools in Kayasan and Cabayugan have not done much in the area of cultural education, although they have had some positive impact on the indigenous people. Foreign assisted projects attempted to improve indigenous agro-technical systems, but the sustainability of their effort is in doubt.



### ***Protection of Indigenous Culture, Traditions and Institutions***

The almost unregulated entry of lowlanders into CADC areas, including religious proselytizers, has weakened cultural practices. These lowlanders bring in new practices that displace traditional ones, and also change the natural and social setting of indigenous culture. Past government policies have also played a role in weakening cultural integrity.

### ***Educational Systems***

Tagbanwa children attend schools that are using the regular curriculum. Batak children do not go to school, as they move with their parents in the quest for food.

### ***Recognition of Cultural Diversity***

Indigenous people's groups are usually represented in workshops on park management. Their culture is also showcased in the visitors' center, and information about them is given to visitors. The exposure of park visitors to the museum is perhaps the only positive contribution of eco-tourism to IPRA implementation. This creates awareness and appreciation of the culture of the Tagbanwa and Batak.

### ***Rights to Religious Cultural Sites and Ceremonies***

The belief system that Christian missionaries introduced has rendered many of the indigenous religious cultural sites and ceremonies irrelevant.

## **Local Government Services for Indigenous People**

Among the numerous agencies that have assisted the Batak and Tagbanwa, only the barangay government and the city government have long-term development plans that cover indigenous concerns. Since they generate their own funds, they are highly capable of sustaining projects such as the roads and clinic. The plans serve as the basis in allocating funds, ensuring continuous support for activities that will benefit indigenous people. In the city government's Area Development Framework, indigenous people and their culture are recognized as part of the city's assets. However, some of its weaknesses also directly affect the indigenous people such as high in-migration, fragile environment, uncoordinated and unregulated development, and inadequate infrastructure and social services.

To attain its vision of making Puerto Princesa a "model city in sustainable development," the local government seeks to "promote high degree of citizen and private sector participation in attaining balance between development initiatives and environmental protection." Emphasis is placed on tourism as the base for investments in agriculture, trade and commerce. Priority actions in the national park include upgrading of transport facilities, post-harvest facilities, improvement of farming techniques, irrigation, land titling, regulation of tourism, improvement of the clinic, and better visitor management. The impact of these actions on indigenous people will have to be studied.

Overall, the city government's social and development plan also specifies actions that will affect the lives of indigenous people. These are focused on the following areas: agriculture, tourism, commerce, industry, traditional use areas, education and manpower training, health and sanitation, social welfare, and culture and arts. Some activities are explicitly intended for indigenous people. These include scholarships for students from indigenous communities at the secondary and tertiary level, the integration of indigenous culture in school curriculum, and dissemination of heritage management techniques.

While these actions constitute evidence of the city government's commitment to allocate resources for indigenous people, the appropriateness of some actions has to be reassessed. For instance, one proposed activity is to organize and educate the gatherers of non-timber forest products

on the sustainability of the forest economy. This is aimed at indigenous people in the city's 120,472 hectares of CADC areas. However, the activity ignores the fact that indigenous people are organized in their own way and have been practicing sustainable methods that they could teach to other forest users instead.

## **How to Reconcile IPRA with Ecotourism**

The experience of the indigenous people in Cabayugan and Kayasan yields lessons not only on eco-tourism and park management but also on IPRA implementation. It demonstrates that eco-tourism may not be good for indigenous people if it is not managed properly. The park management has shown that indigenous people can complement its operations and even enhance tourist attractions, but there are gaps that need to be plugged.

### ***Rights to Ancestral Domain***

The delay in the conversion of the ancestral domain certificate into a full-blown title due to the limited capacity of the NCIP has to be remedied. The city government can lend a hand to the NCIP at the local level in beefing up its capacity to get the title processed. In turn, the national office of the NCIP needs to review and simplify the prescribed process of ADSDPP formulation so that it will suit the varying conditions of indigenous peoples groups and NCIP field offices. The NCIP can take on an oversight role, and deputize more capable government and non-government organizations to assist in ADSDPP preparation.

The IPRA law requires projects introduced in ancestral domains to submit an Environmental Conservation and Protection Program to the NCIP. This was not done in the two CADC areas, and even if it were, the competence of the NCIP to evaluate the environmental merit of any program would be doubted. A review team composed of experts can be formed for this purpose instead, with functions similar to the review team of the environmental impact system (EIS) under the DENR. However, the NCIP and the DENR would need to avoid duplication of this requirement. Along with this, the ADSDPP and park management plan must also be harmonized.

Scientific research on the extent of indigenous resource use and its impact on the natural environment need to be done. The pressure on the core zone from the indigenous people is expected to increase, as more migrants take over parts of ancestral domain. The social and biological monitoring system of national parks must cover ancestral domains within the protected area. Information obtained from these documentary sources will guide the park management and indigenous people in coming up with more complementary protection measures. Briefing materials on indigenous resources use practices may also be produced to enhance appreciation among lowlanders, assisting agencies, park staff, and eco-tourists on the role of indigenous people in conservation.

### ***Right to Self-Governance and Empowerment***

The imposition of new leadership and organizational structures among indigenous people must be avoided. Traditional governance must be maintained to avoid confusion. Among the Batak, decision-making is decentralized to the kinship groups, so the autonomy of this process must be left alone. Local government units can help promote their empowerment through the creation of an indigenous peoples desk that will be devoted to their concerns.

The process for obtaining Free and Prior Informed Consent from indigenous peoples, as prescribed in the IPRA law, must be reviewed and revised. Existing procedures have isolated the indigenous people from development resources and put them at the losing end in the competition for social services. The process must be made more practical through a mechanism that will adapt it to the wide variety of decision-making processes among indigenous people. The distribution pattern, resource use cycle, existing government practices and the internal strengths of indigenous culture



must be considered in reviewing the process. For instance, Section 5 of the IPRA Implementing Rules and Regulations prescribes the holding of a community meeting or assembly, but this can be close to impossible for groups such as the Batak whose campsites may be distributed up to 15 kilometers apart and who are constantly moving around their forest domain. A house or farm visit may be one option instead.

Training on indigenous peoples management among relevant PAMB members, park management staff, and local government officials must be done to optimize the participation of the Batak and Tagbanwa in park management. For instance, meetings involving the indigenous people must be managed differently. Formality among strangers (versus kindred informality), open debate (versus indirect communication) and competition of various interests (versus cooperative exchange) are outside their comfort zone. Groundwork that includes substantial incubation time must be embedded into the decision-making process to draw out their widely shared preferences.

Assistance to indigenous people has to match their needs and capability. The mismatch may be a result of poor characterization of their social and economic setting, especially since many project implementers are outsiders. Donors must allow the indigenous people to determine, design, implement and monitor the project as part of the FPIC process. A manual on project management among indigenous people must be generated to guide development workers, local government personnel, and park staff so they can avoid using strategies that apply only to lowland groups.

### ***Social Justice and Human Rights***

The indigenous people cannot operate as entrepreneurs in a market created by eco-tourism, but they can be producers of commodities. Better access to social services such as health and education can enhance their capability to take advantage of economic opportunities. The local government and NGOs are the main service providers for indigenous people, but foreign donors need to work more with the park management to ensure sustainability. Local agencies have to initiate plans for improving the delivery of services to the Batak and Tagbanwa, while the NCIP can take an oversight role in preparing and implementing the plan. Indigenous communities must also be oriented and provided with a manual on where and how to access social services.

### ***Cultural Integrity***

The ignorance of outside entities on indigenous culture and their false sense of cultural superiority are behind their actions that undermine indigenous culture. Hence, there is a pressing need to undertake thorough social characterization for any outside intervention. A manual to guide outsiders in working with indigenous peoples is also needed.

An educational system established and controlled by indigenous people does not come easily. As a remedial measure, the officers and teachers of regular schools where their children study must be oriented on indigenous culture and how to relate with indigenous people. Batak children require special attention, and a school would have to be designed to suit their availability.

The park management plan, which is revised regularly, must include a thorough study of the conservation strategies of the Batak and Tagbanwa so these can be incorporated into the plan. This component is crucial in park management, considering that indigenous resource use is inseparable from biodiversity conservation.

Respected institutions and individuals must undertake participatory research on indigenous knowledge, systems and practices using standard social science methodology. Data from these studies would help correct the mismatch between project intervention and the setting. The City Agriculturist's Office must be part of the research so that more suitable farming intervention can be done. Guidelines on religious conversion activities among indigenous people must also be formulated and implemented to safeguard indigenous belief.

## Balancing Ecotourism and Indigenous Peoples' Rights

Ecotourism and the indigenous people in a protected area operate under two different economic systems, but these may interface depending on the social organization in the locality. The simpler the social organization of the indigenous people, the smaller is its interface with the economic system of eco-tourism. The extent of interfacing has a significant bearing on the participation of the indigenous people in the establishment, operation and closure of eco-tourism activities.

### *Planning Phase*

1. Determine the type of social organization of the indigenous people within the eco-tourism area. There are five types: band, kindred, village, rank organization and chiefdom. Each type has its own mode of settlement pattern, decision-making structure, degree of relationship with the market, and entrepreneurial capability. Review the literature written about the ethnic group in question to find out its social organization.
2. Validate the social organization category of the indigenous group in the field. Through physical observation, assess their settlement pattern and production mode. Through key informant interviews, establish their decision-making structure and degree of relationship with the market. The level of entrepreneurial capability can be also discerned through both methods.
3. Conduct a baseline study on the indigenous people using standard social science methods with the community leaders or household heads. The choice on whether to use surveys or ethnographic methods depends on the type of social organization. Surveys are easier to administer in more complex social organizations. The indicators must include demographic characteristics, resource use, production and income, access to services, health and sanitation, gender participation and attitude towards various aspects of tourism activities. Results from the study can be used as inputs in making decisions on the participation of indigenous people in ecotourism activities, and also as basis for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the venture.
4. Undertake groundwork activities through house visits and small kinship group meetings. Validate the results of the survey and explore their possible participation in ecotourism activities in accordance with the findings of the study.
5. Present the results of the study and groundwork activities in a community meeting. Revalidate the result and present the options available to the group (*See Table 5*). For each option, identify their capability and constraints.
6. Identify suitable eco-tourism activities in particular areas if these will be done within the ancestral domain, and ensure that these are consistent with the activities outlined in their ADSDPP. If there is no plan yet, find out the current resource uses and customary rules in the area so these can be considered in planning appropriate eco-tourism activities. For bands and kindred groups, foraging and swidden areas must be fully secured from any tourism activity.
7. Build a consensus around preferred options that respond best to their immediate and deeply felt problems and maximize the use of community resources including knowledge and skills. The selected options must be consistent with their cultural and social pattern, involve as many indigenous people as possible in implementation, and spread extensive benefits. Discuss possible sources of assistance, including outside donors.
8. Prepare an indigenous peoples participation plan that will set the activities, resource requirements, assisting agencies, an sustainability mechanism (organization, human resources capability, systems and financing). Management of the activities must be consistent with the existing leadership structure.
9. Discuss the final plan with the indigenous people through various modes. Based on their feedback, the plan may be refined to suit their conditions.

### ***Operation Phase***

1. Follow the agreed plan. If there are changes due to new challenges and opportunities, discuss these with the indigenous people and facilitate decision making in such a way that the best solutions can emerge from the group. Present them with options from available information and experiences of other groups. Build consensus around a preferred option.
2. Monitor the impact of the activities at least once every three years. Use the indicators and methodology of the baseline study to ensure comparability with monitoring data.
3. Process the monitoring data and transform these into clear and coherent information that can be presented to the indigenous people in a meeting. Ask them to interpret the information and adjust the plan's implementation based on what the data means to them.
4. Present options in the adjusted plan. Discuss the capability and constraints of the indigenous people in handling the adjustment. Refer them to the experience of other groups who made similar actions. Point out the lessons from the experience and build consensus.
5. Monitor the day-to-day implementation of activities through constant contact and discussion with key implementers. Conduct field visit as often as possible so that immediate issues can be readily resolved.
6. If the ecotourism activities are consistent with their cultural and social patterns, these will become part of their routine. If there are issues that persistently interrupt the operation, review their cultural and social patterns to draw out clues that would point to a solution.

### ***Closure Phase***

1. Ecotourism activities may be closed for various reasons — financial losses, management failure or environmental imbalance. Whatever the case, an exit plan must be prepared for the indigenous people at least two years before the projected closure.
2. As part of the exit plan, review the baseline and monitoring data to assess the changes in the lives of the indigenous people as a result of ecotourism.
3. Analyze the data with the indigenous people using various modes that are appropriate to their social organization. Identify the gaps in their socio-economic patterns that will be created due to the loss of eco-tourism activities.
4. Provide options on how to fill the gaps or at least mitigate their impact. Lessons may be drawn from the experiences of other groups that went through a similar economic loss.
5. Build consensus and write down the exit plan based on discussions with the community.
6. Monitor the situation in the community to find out how the indigenous people are adjusting to the closure of eco-tourism activities. If there are pending issues, get the local government and other support institutions involved in responding to the community's concerns.

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Case Study 4  
**Tuwali Women:  
Partners in Managing the  
Ifugao Ancestral Domain in Kiangan**  
By Evelyn S. Dunuan



According to Ifugao mythology, the Ifugaos are the direct descendants of *Wigan* of the sky-world. It is said that *Wigan* looked upon the earth and saw the verdant and fertile valley of *Kay-ang* (now called Kiangan) by the *Ibulao* river, and thought it wasted without any inhabitants. Thus, one night, *Wigan* carried his son *Kabbigat* and daughter *Bugan* and placed them in the valley. *Kabbigat* and *Bugan* learned to live together as husband and wife and had many sons and daughters. The gods of the sky-world taught them how to hunt in the forest, how to till the land, and how to fear the gods. In turn, they taught their children how to farm and hunt, raise domestic animals, and perform rituals to appease the gods. They also taught their descendants to hold feasts in celebration of bountiful harvests, good health, and victories in war. They learned to sing the *hudhud* legends and recite the *ton-ton*, the narration of the Ifugao genealogy that can trace the line of ancestry to at least twenty-seven generations, the longest among the Cordillera peoples. They came to be known as people from the hills (*i-pugo*). Eventually, the term evolved to the present day *Ipugaw* (as used locally) or *Ifugao* (as popularized during the American period).

As time passed and the Ifugao tribe increased in number, they became identified among themselves by the place they came from or the peculiarity of their dialect. For instance, those whose forebears originated from the place called Ayangan, located in present-day Mayoyao municipality, are called *I-Ayangan* (literally “from Ayangan”) or simply *Ayangan*. Those who come from Kiangan are described as “*mun-tuwali*” (those who speak *tuwali*); hence, they are now called *Tuwali*. However, their generic identity is *Imipugo* or the modernized term *Ifugao*, according to community elders.

Today, research shows that the Ifugaos are among the most widely known and studied indigenous peoples of the Philippines. Anthropologists and other social scientists have written volumes about the Ifugao people, who have gained international renown for two highly acclaimed masterpieces: first, for their ingenuity in building the Ifugao rice terraces, and second, for their *hudhud* epics. No less than the United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recognized both Ifugao institutions as part of the world’s cultural heritage.

Romantically described as “stairways to the skies,” the world-famous Ifugao rice terraces are believed to be at least two thousand years old. The Ifugao ancestors used bare hands and crude implements to carve terraces on the forbidding mountainside, creating narrow winding paddies for the cultivation of rice, their staple food. Many scholars have acknowledged the rice terraces as one of the major accomplishments of human greatness, not just for their panoramic beauty and engineering ingenuity, but also because the Ifugao ancestors who built them lived and worked as free men. In contrast, other man-made wonders were erected largely through slave or bonded labor. These rice terraces, though endangered by the ravages of time and change, have sustained the existence of Ifugaos for generations; many of the other ancient man-made wonders were erected as tombs for dead kings and queens.

The *hudhud* epics tell the story of the Ifugao people – the valor and exploits of their heroes, the beauty and virtues of their maidens, the ways of their ancestors, the interventions of their gods. These are among the longest in Asia and are chanted from memory. Today, the *hud-hud* epics form part of the intangible heritage of the Ifugaos.

The Ifugao tradition of self-reliance in managing their natural wealth lives on in the women of the *Tuwali*-speaking community of Kiangan in Ifugao Province. This case study describes the role of the *Tuwali* women of Kiangan in sustaining the productivity of their land and resources from the past to the present, so that policy makers may benefit from their practices that remain relevant in modern times. It also looks at gender roles among the *Tuwali*, to see if the Ifugao people have traditional concepts and practices of equality between the male and female members of the community.

Part of the backdrop for this study are the basic human rights of women guaranteed under Philippine laws and international human rights agreements, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Within societies and communities, women generally comprise at least half of the population. Yet, in most developing societies, women are still considered a marginalized sector despite the advancement of women's rights and concerns worldwide. In the Philippines, women from rural areas and indigenous cultural communities are still largely perceived to be economically unempowered. Most of the time, they also lack adequate representation in governance.

The other context of this study is the assault on indigenous customs and traditions in resource management, especially in their ancestral domains, in the era of globalization. Due to the demands of world trade and the Philippines' economic situation, national policy makers and planners are pushing for a shift from traditional use of ancestral lands and domains to commercial agriculture and large-scale mining, among other industries.

There are conflicting elements between the government's economic policies and its environmental goals. The indigenous knowledge systems and practices (IKSP) of the country's indigenous peoples are acknowledged as vital factors in the sustainable management of land and other natural resources. The Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Priority Program stressed that:

*“A basic element of the country's social reality is the presence of more than 100 ethno-linguistic groups, which comprise at least 17% of the Philippine population. Many of these groups have natural resource management practices that are consistent with ecological principles and promote conservation. The cultural plurality of Philippine ethno-linguistic groups is a defining element of biodiversity in the country and the indigenous knowledge systems of the upland and sea-based communities provide a wealth of conservation opportunities.”*

It is hoped that the results of this study would help the country's planners reflect on the vital role of indigenous peoples in preserving the ecological integrity of their ancestral domains and most of the Philippines' dwindling natural resources, as seen in the experience of the *Tuwali* women of Kiangan in Ifugao province.

## A Brief History of the Ifugaos

**Spanish Period.** Some chronicles report that the earliest forays of the Spanish colonizers into Ifugao territory happened around the mid-1750s, when military expeditions retaliated against head hunting Ifugaos who raided the Christianized lowland towns in the Cagayan valley. But Spanish rule could not gain a foothold in Ifugao due to the fierce resistance of the people. It was not until a century later when the Spaniards were able to enter Ifugao territory and managed to stay for some



time. Historical records show that Spanish friars first entered the Mayoyao area sometime in 1851, and the Lagawe area in 1852. They arrived in the Kiangan area in 1864. The Spanish friars were able to baptize and convert some families into Catholicism and put up missions.

In addition to their missionary work, the Spanish friars taught the Ifugao people the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic. However, only a few Ifugaos learned Spanish and became literate in other languages. Spanish friar Father Juan Villaverde was credited with building the first road that opened Ifugao to the lowlands. However, the Spaniards' influence was cut short when the country was ceded to America in 1898.

**American Era.** American rule started in Ifugao in 1901. The political territory now known as Ifugao province was established earlier as a sub-province of Mountain Province in the Cordillera range. At that time, Mountain Province and other non-Hispanized areas had been placed under the control and supervision of military governors. The Americans created a bureau for the governance of non-Christian tribes and waged what it called "pacification campaigns" in these areas, which had continued to defy American rule. In Ifugao, the American military governors learned to be more diplomatic and adapted themselves to the people. Thus, there were only a few bloody military expeditions in retaliation against tribesmen who attacked or raided American outposts.

Soon after their arrival, the colonizers were able to set up a civil government in Ifugao, with the help of American teachers and missionaries. Kiangan is one of the five original Ifugao communities that were established as political districts. It became the political and educational center of Ifugao for many decades.

The Americans formalized the public school system for primary and elementary grades in Kiangan in 1904, and in the following years, in Banaue and Mayoyao. American Protestant missionaries also established the Ifugao Academy in Kiangan in 1930, the first private high school in Ifugao.

Ifugao became an independent province when Mountain Province was divided by legislative act in 1967. The sub-province of Bontoc retained the name Mountain Province. Ifugao Province is bounded on the north by Mountain Province, in the east by the Magat River and Isabela Province, on the south by Nueva Vizcaya Province, and in the west by Benguet Province. It has a land area of 251,778 hectares spread over 11 municipalities, namely: Aginaldo, Alfonso Lista, Asipulo, Banaue, Hingyon, Hungduan, Kiangan, Lagawe, Lamut, Mayoyao, and Tinoc.

The estimated Ifugao population of about 180,000 is comprised of "sub-tribes" or ethnolinguistic groups known as *Tuwali*, *Ayangan*, *Kalanguya*, *Hanglulu*, and *Henanga*. The Ifugaos in Kiangan comprise the biggest *tuwali*-speaking community in the province.

## The Municipality of Kiangan

Kiangan is located in the heart of Ifugao Province, around 10 kilometers from the provincial capital of Lagawe. Generally mountainous with a rugged terrain, Kiangan's elevation ranges from 500 to 1,500 meters above sea level. The lowest points are those along the Ibulao River while the highest peaks are found in the mountain ranges of Santo Domingo, Mount Capugan, Mount Nazaragay and Mount Anapawon (the highest at 1,492 meters). It has a temperate climate, with a short dry season from January to April, and a long wet season from May to December.

The original territory of Kiangan was reduced considerably in the late 1950s when its southeastern portion became Lamut Municipality and its southwestern portion became Hungduan Municipality (which later gave birth to Tinoc Municipality). In the early 1990s, the southernmost portion of Kiangan was also sliced off and became Asipulo Municipality. As a result, Kiangan's land area was trimmed down to an estimated 20,419 hectares. It has 15 barangays: Ambabag, Bagingue, Bokiawan, Bolog, Dalligan, Duit, Hucab, Julongan, Lingay, Mappit, Mungayang, Nagacadan, Pindongan, Poblacion and Tuplac.



Roughly 12,733 hectares of Kiangan's territory or 62% of the land is considered to have agricultural potential. These are distributed as follows: prime agricultural land - 5,245 hectares; Agro-forest area - 1,855 hectares; and grasslands - 5,603 hectares.

However, less than half or only 36% of the potential agricultural land is cultivated, according to the Municipal Agricultural Office (MAO). These agricultural lands include irrigated rice paddies, rain-fed rice paddies, vegetable gardens, and land planted to root crops. Some agricultural lands have been left idle or used as residential areas. An inventory of rice fields in 2004 by the MAO showed that of the total area of agricultural lands used as rice fields, only 712 hectares are rain-fed rice paddies for 1,203 households or an average of less than one hectare each. The rest of the rice paddies are irrigated.

Nonetheless, most Kiangan residents claim to be dependent on agriculture as their primary source of livelihood. The town's agricultural products include rice, vegetables, root crops, fruits, poultry and livestock. Rice is the staple food and is generally planted once a year, but lowland rice varieties are now planted twice a year in some barangays. The MAO reported that 1,270 hectares of rice lands are cultivated during the main cropping season with a production volume of 4,572 metric tons, or an average yield of 3.6 metric tons per hectare. Only 60 per cent of rice lands are cultivated for a second crop, producing an average of 3.15 metric tons per hectare.

Most farmers make use of gravity irrigation, but these are found mainly within private lands. To serve wider areas, government agencies have built 78 "community irrigation systems" spread out among the barangays. Gravity irrigation is the common practice of drawing water from a higher source, such as upstream or a spring or another rice paddy on a higher elevation. The water flows through man-made canals or ditches to the rice paddies on lower elevations.

Kiangan is the main source of vegetables in the province. Baguio beans are the primary crop. Secondary crops include Chinese cabbage, *pechay*, *sayote*, sweet peas, winged beans, eggplant and other local vegetables. The produce is sold to middlemen who resell these mainly in Nueva Vizcaya and Isabela provinces, or sell these for retail in other towns of Ifugao. Kiangan experienced a vegetable production boom in the mid-1980s to the late 1990s. Other agricultural products include fruits – particularly oranges, bananas and rattan fruit – and coffee.

Some families maintain small fishponds for home consumption. Others raise ducks, chicken and pigs as backyard livelihood for food and to augment family income.

The town does not have any major industries, and business is mainly in the retail trade. However, there is a good potential for developing economic activities such as food processing, blacksmithing, back-strap and loom weaving, rattan and bamboo craft, and broom making into small and medium scale industries. Out of 243 businesses registered in 2004, a total of 135 establishments carried the name of women proprietors.

In recent years, the town has explored the possibility of developing local attractions for eco-tourism. Local officials and residents are promoting some natural, man-made and cultural resources. Natural attractions include scenic rice terraces, waterfalls, mountain lakes, forest glades, and hiking trails. The people of Kiangan are also hoping that their customs and traditional community life would interest visitors. Some households are providing home-stay lodging to augment government tourist facilities.

A Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) survey in 2002 showed that 76% of the families reported an average monthly income of PHP7,343.00, which is below the pegged threshold level of at least P7,853 for an average family of six.

Another survey in April 2004 showed that the town has a total population of 15,311 in 2,780 households. Population growth is very low, with the population projected to grow to only 16,026 and the number of households to 3003 by 2014. (See Table 1)

**Table 1: Kiangán population according to age group**

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Less 1 to 14	2800	2736	5536	34.69%
15 to 64	4562	4446	9068	60.69%
65 and above	307	400	707	4.62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7729</b>	<b>7582</b>	<b>15311</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

In 2004, out of the total population in the working age group (15-64 years), 5,521 people claimed to be employed. The types of occupation reported were as follows: farming - 61.96%; government employment – 11.65%; overseas contract worker - 4.40%; driving – 4.31%; business – 4.26%; NGO employment - 3.10%; carpentry – 1.32%; carving - 0.62%; others – 8.26%. The municipal government reported a total of 73 salaried personnel and officials, comprised of 30 males and 43 females. Unfortunately, the survey did not provide additional sex-disaggregated data on the labor force. The Municipal Social Welfare Office takes care of elderly citizens (60 years old and over), with a total of 414 females and 274 males registered in 2004.

Except for a few migrant families who originated from other provinces, almost all residents claim Ifugao ancestry. Majority identify themselves as original members of the community, with *tuwali* as their main dialect. Others consider themselves as *Ayangan Ifugaos*, but claim affinity with Kiangán as their hometown.

Classified as a fifth class Municipality, Kiangán’s total revenues from 1999 to 2003 showed that PhP99.8 million or 98.5% came from national assistance, and only PhP3.1 million came from local revenues. The municipality experienced a deficit in 2001, but during the five-year period, it had a total surplus of PhP7.3 million.

Due to the early influence of missionaries, Kiangán has maintained a high literacy rate, which stood at 94.76% during the MBN survey in 2004. Male pupils outnumbered females in the elementary level during that school year, with a total enrolment of 1,321 boys and 1,198 girls. At the high school level, the situation was reversed – with 712 female students and only 597 males enrolled. An earlier MBN survey in 2000 showed more boys entering college, with 605 males and 570 females enrolled in the tertiary level.

In general, the health status of the municipality is improving through the years, with no reported cases of maternal deaths from 1999 to 2003. Pre-school children showed a malnutrition rate of 8.2 % in 2004. Government health facilities include a health center in the Poblacion and eight barangay health sub-stations, with a total of 76 personnel. Almost all households have toilets, but water supply is inadequate, especially in built-up areas of the town. Poor distribution facilities have also rendered the water in Kiangán unsafe for drinking.

Except for Barangay Dalligan, most areas in the municipality are connected to the Ifugao Electric Cooperative. However, only half of the population or 54.96% had electricity as of August 2004. A micro-hydro power plant in Barangay Bokiawan also provides alternative power source to some 20 households.

With the establishment of cell sites in Ifugao, mobile phones have become the preferred means of communication, and no longer the post office or telegraph services. Residents are also linked to the outside world through cable television and the Internet service from the municipal government.

A 10-kilometer segment of the national road linking Ifugao to Nueva Vizcaya traverses the eastern boundary of Kiangán. Two bus lines provide daily services to Kiangán from Manila and





Baguio City, while jeepneys ply the Nueva Vizcaya route. Most of the barangays are accessible by vehicular transportation.

Kiangan is generally peaceful and there have been no recent incidents involving armed groups. But the Philippine National Police contingent in town does not discount possible threats from insurgents, considering the proximity of Kiangan to the municipalities of Asipulo, Tinoc and Hungduan, which are still threatened by insurgents. The Kiangan Police Station has one Chief of Police and 22 policemen, or a ratio of one policeman to every 665 residents. Police records have shown a “very satisfactory” rating in terms of their efficiency in solving crimes.

## The Tuwali Concept of Ancestral Domain

The Tuwali Ancestral Domain in Kiangan is one of two areas in Ifugao that have obtained a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). It covers 20, 419 hectares, which is also the remaining area of the municipality, and was awarded to the community on May 5, 1996. The other approved claim in Ifugao is the Kalanguya ancestral domain in the municipality of Tinoc.

To date, however, the Tuwali community has not yet formally applied for the conversion of its CADC into a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT), as provided under the IPRA. The local leaders do not see the immediate need for securing a CADT, as they are more concerned about pending political boundary conflicts with adjoining towns. Many members of the community are also more interested in individual land titles than a CADT.

Like other Ifugaos, the Tuwali people of Kiangan have very concrete concepts of their ancestral domain.

In the past, the people lived in small villages or communities called *bob-le* (or *bab-le*), which had definite natural boundaries. The village territory included the mountain ranges, forests, hunting grounds, pastures, villages, ricefields, swidden farms, burial grounds, rivers and streams, and all other areas over which the community held sway since time immemorial. The members of the community had equal access to all the areas of the territory open for common use, such as hunting grounds (*pun-anupan*), forests (*pangaiwan*), grazing lands, grasslands (*magullon*), swidden areas (*uma*), burial grounds (*pun-lubukan*), and rivers and streams. No one could claim these areas for private ownership, but their use was exclusive to members of the tribe. Encroachment by people from other villages often led to tribal conflicts.

Among the early communities in the area were Lingay, Ba-e (also known as Ba-ay), Ambabag, Pindongan, Nagacadan, Julongan, Tuplac, and Duit. The villages were independent from each other. But as time passed, people from these villages who had common ancestors and spoke the common *Tuwali* dialect became collectively identified as *i-Kiyyangan* (from Kiangan). Eventually the villages merged into the Kiangan homeland or ancestral domain.

Within the village, certain parcels of land were recognized as privately owned by individuals or families/clans. These were generally inherited from ancestors, handed down from generation to generation; hence, they are referred to as ancestral lands. These included rice fields (*payo*), residential areas (*kubu*, *lotangan*), private forests (*muyung*), tree lots (*pinugo*), private swidden lands (*habal*), pastures, burial grounds, and sometimes even “cane land” (*mabila-u*) where “*runo*” sticks grow. Individual private rights and responsibilities for the ownership, use, maintenance, and protection of ancestral lands are always clearly defined.

Ancestral lands are valued more in terms of their cultural significance, rather than their market value in cash. Thus, inherited ricefields, forests, and other ancestral lands are considered more valuable and prestigious compared to lands which may have greater economic worth, but



which have been merely purchased or acquired by a different mode other than inheritance. According to tradition, rice fields (*payo*) are prized as the most valuable ancestral lands, followed by private forests (*muyung*), residential areas, and lots for granaries. Swidden lands are valued for providing supplemental source of food, and other lands for whatever economic or cultural value they may have. Burial grounds are valued in terms of cultural and family sentiment.

Customs, traditions and rituals govern the inheritance, acquisition and transfer of ownership of ancestral lands. The utilization, management and protection of these lands, including the resolution of conflicts relating to such lands, also hew closely to tradition.

## Rights of Tuwali Women to Land and Resources

In general, the *Tuwali* women of Kiangan have the same rights as men with regard to personal and family relations, as well as property rights. More particularly, the *Tuwali* women's rights to land and resources include the following:

1. ***Right to inherit land and other properties.*** Among the *Tuwali* of Kiangan, the right to inherit and own lands and other properties is not determined by sex, marital status, education, or any other physical, economic or social circumstance or qualification, but rather, according to the order of birth. The first born (*panguluwan*), whether female or male, has the right to choose to "inherit" the ancestral lands and other properties (such as granaries, jars, other heirlooms) of either of his/her parents, usually upon his/her marriage or upon reaching adulthood. The second born gets the inherited lands and property of the other parent. Other children share in whatever lands or properties their parents may have acquired during their union.
2. ***Right to acquire and own other land and property.*** Women can acquire and own other lands through any traditional mode of land ownership and transfer, such as purchase, barter, occupation, and cultivation regardless of her marital status. For instance, land and any other property purchased by an unmarried woman remains her own property even after she marries. Land and other property purchased or acquired by a married woman, which she paid from her own funds (such as when she sells a parcel of her inherited property or any property acquired from her side of the family), will remain her own and does not become conjugal property.
3. ***Right to use and manage lands and property.*** Women, whether married or not, are entitled to use and manage their inherited and acquired land and property. The produce from the land and other gains derived from other inherited property may redound to the benefit of the family, but women landowners have the final decision on the use and management of their own land and properties.
4. ***Right to defend and protect lands and property.*** In case of conflicts affecting their inherited lands or other property, women have the right to defend and protect their lands and property. A husband may help his wife protect her land, but the wife must be the one to speak up and assert her right to the property.
5. ***Right of access to lands and resources within the domain.*** Women have the same rights as men in terms of access to other lands and resources within the ancestral domain that are open for common use among all members of the community. For example, women can cultivate a *camote* (sweet potato) patch in the common swidden areas. They may collect herbs, vines and other products from common forests for her family's use. They can draw water from springs generally used by the community, or catch fish or gather shells in the streams and rivers.



# Role of Tuwali Women in Resource Management

Tuwali women perform many traditional roles along with the men in the use and management of lands and resources within their ancestral territory. Interviews with community leaders reveal specific functions for both men and women in the community.

## ***Forests and Forest Resources***

Women normally do not have any specific work in relation to the development and maintenance of the forests and tree lots. Work in the forest such as planting, clearing, gathering of firewood, felling of trees for lumber, harvesting fruits by climbing trees, or hunting wild game from distant forests are traditionally the exclusive domain of men. But women also go to the forests to gather herbs and other medicinal plants, or ferns and other wild but edible plants for family use or for sale, harvest coffee, or bring food provisions for those working there.

While their men folk (husbands or sons) may do most of the work in the forests, women nevertheless exercise proprietary interest and control over forests and tree lots which they inherited and own in accordance with custom and tradition. They make the final decisions on matters affecting their inherited forests and/or tree lots. They also have the obligation to defend their rights to these forests in case of conflict or litigation.

## ***Rice Fields***

Men and women have specific roles in traditional rice farming. The cultivation of the native variety of rice called *ipuggo*, also known as *tino-on* (literally meaning “yearly” or “annual” because it is only planted once a year), takes from five to six months. The rice cultivation cycle includes the performance of rituals and work activities, as shown in Table 2.

In the rice cycle, the men do the heavier work of building or repairing dikes, plowing, and preparing the rice paddies for cultivation. Thereafter, the women take over – from sowing of rice seedlings, transplanting, weeding, taking care of the crop, to harvesting of the crop. At harvest time, the men help sharpen the harvesting knives called *gamulang*, prepare bamboo strips (*botok*) for binding rice sheaves, cook lunch for the workers, and help carry or transport the crop from the fields to the granaries for storing.

Since they spend more time in the rice fields, women also maintain the *guhing* or water spillways to make sure the paddies have adequate water supply. This is important, as rice cultivation in terraced rice paddies is a form of wet-agriculture.

## ***Dry or Swidden Lands***

Dry lands and the slopes of hills and mountains are converted into swidden farms (*uma* or *habal*) for the cultivation of vegetables and root crops. The men’s task is mainly the clearing of new areas or the controlled burning of thin sections of the forest for swidden farming.

After the men folk have cleared enough areas, the women plant a variety of crops such as legumes, cassava, corn, and root crops. Plants with deep roots are usually planted along the edges of steep slopes to prevent soil erosion. Most of the time, a *kamote* or sweet potato patch is continuously maintained as a source of food for the community, and also for livestock.

## ***Water Resources***

The main sources of water in Kiangan are natural springs (*ob-ob*), creeks, rivers, and three small lakes. The municipal government has developed several natural springs to provide potable water to residents. Water for irrigation systems comes from creeks and rivers. Members of the community have equal right of access to natural springs found in open or communal areas, creeks and rivers. No individual member can have exclusive use or control of common water sources.



**Table 2: Traditional Rice Cultivation Cycle**

WORK ACTIVITY/DESCRIPTION	DONE BY	DURATION
<i>Munbanong</i> - repair of dikes and rice paddies	Men	Several days or weeks depending on extent of repairs needed or area/length of dikes and paddies
<i>Ahigaud hi panopnakan</i> - preparation of seedbed	Men	A few days
<i>Ahihopnak</i> - sowing of select rice seeds in the seedbed	Women	One to two days
<i>Ahigaud hi payo</i> - preparation of rice paddies with the use of spades, or by plowing	Men	Several days to two weeks or more, depending on extent of fields and number of workers
<i>Ahipohod hi payo</i> - final preparation of rice paddies for cultivation	Men and women	Few days to a week
<i>Ahitunod</i> - transplanting of rice seedlings in the paddies	Women	Several days to a week
<i>Ahikagoko</i> weeding of fields to keep them clean at all times	Women	Almost daily, from the second month after planting up to near harvest time
<i>Ahilida</i> - cleaning of terrace walls and dikes, slopes and surrounding areas to prevent field mice or rodents and other destructive pests from nesting and destroying the crop	Women	Several days at a time during the whole season until harvest time
<i>Ahi-ani</i> - harvest time	Women	One to two or more days depending on extent of fields to be harvested and number of reapers

*Reference: Interviews with Manuel Dulawan, Monica Pagaddut, Cecilia Malingan, and Balbina Bolhayon*

However, springs or water sources emanating from or found on private lands belong to the landowner. He or she has priority to the use of the resource and must give consent before others can utilize it. Ifugao customary law provides clear rules on the use of water resources, especially in relation to water needed for cultivation of rice lands and farms. This law applies to all members of the community.

## From Past to Present: Some Best Practices

Some customs and traditions on the agricultural use of ancestral lands that are still practiced until now are the following:

1. **Seed Selection** - Certain members of the community, usually women, have learned from experience or have been taught by the elders how to select, gather, and store seedlings for future planting.

At harvest time, the women who know how to select the rice grains for seedling go to the fields ahead of the crowd of harvesters to select rice stalks with robust and heavy grains. To distinguish these from the rest of the harvest, the selected stalks are usually cut much longer and are sheaved together in bigger bundles. These are called *binong-o*.

The selection and preservation of seeds for propagation or planting purposes also apply to other crops such as corn, legumes, garlic and other staples.

2. **Pingkol** - This refers to the unique farming method using mud mounds (*pingkol*), a common practice in Kiangan. After the crop is harvested, the rice stalks are uprooted and formed into big balls or bundles in the field or paddy. These are covered with mud, water lilies, algae and other plants that thrive in the fields. Seeds or seedlings of various vegetables (onions, garlic, cabbage, *pechay*, etc) are planted in the fields, which are then flooded with water. In the process, the mounds gradually decay and fertilize the growing vegetables.

The fields can also be filled with shells, mudfish, and *yuyu* (a variety of the *jojo*, also known as the Japanese small eel), to supplement the diet of the Tuwali people. By the time the new planting season comes around, the mounds would have sufficiently decayed and spread around to fertilize the fields.

The making of the mud mounds (*mun-pokol*) is women's work. Women also take care of planting and cleaning the mounds and, later on, gathering the produce from the mound. When it is time to prepare the paddies for a new cropping season, the men help the women break up and spread whatever is left of the decayed mounds.

3. **Ubbu** - This is a form of cooperative or community work. To make sure that one has enough workers to help in the rice fields or vegetable patch, women and men would agree to work in the fields or farms of one another without wages. This practice ensures that work in the fields and other land resources can be accomplished even without cash paid for labor. This practice has been extended to other areas of mutual assistance. One of the latest innovations is in the formation of small informal groups who loan cash to each other on rotation basis.
4. **Baddang** - Sometime after the marriage of a couple, the parents and other relatives of one spouse whose "inherited" rice fields are ready to be harvested would invite the relatives of the other spouse to harvest the rice for the couple. On the day of the harvest, the invited family would bring along other relatives and friends to help (*baddang*) them harvest the crop. But they would also have to produce the pigs, sometimes even a carabao, to be butchered for the harvest feast. They harvest the crops for free, and try to finish as wide an area as possible. Rice wine flows throughout the day. While the occasion is more of a prestige celebration, its value is that all those who attended the event can stand as witnesses to the fact that the rice fields had been handed to the spouse concerned, and the metes and bounds of the land have been identified at the same time. This practice establishes title to the land beyond any doubt.

Loosely translated, the *baddang* concept is more popularly applied to all forms of voluntary assistance, particularly during deaths in the family, calamity or disaster, and in community self-help activities.

5. **Muyung** - a system of sustainable forest ownership, use and manage unique to the central Ifugaos, especially in the Kiangan area. An individual, a family or clan usually owns the *muyung* (private forests or tree farms). It is usually given to an heir in addition to inherited rice fields. The owners of a private forest or tree farm generally allow other family members and relatives, and sometimes even non-relatives, to take products from the forest for their needs. The forest is well kept and fires are almost unheard of because the owner often visits and cleans the property. Most of these private forests are second growth and heterogeneous in character, meaning there are various kinds of trees and plants found in the area. There are trees that hold water, trees that can feed birds, trees that can be used as lumber, trees and plants for food, and those for other household needs. Trespassing is strictly prohibited and severely penalized according to customary law.





6. ***Alak / Palok*** – The rice paddies are irrigated with water sourced from streams and creeks and even natural springs. Landowners whose fields have their own water sources, or are located near streams, constructed and maintain their own private irrigation canals. On the other hand, landowners whose rice fields are far from water sources get their supply from communal irrigation canals, which they themselves built and maintain as a group. These irrigation canals are called *alak* or *palok*. Many of the pre-war canals are still in use today.

The men are responsible for constructing and repairing the irrigation canals. All landowners who benefit from the irrigation canals contribute food for the workers. The women usually help maintain the waterways by cleaning the portion of the canal that flows through their lands, or the source of their water supply. Women also help prepare the food for the canal builders and repairmen.

7. **Customary Resolution of Land and Property Conflicts.** Land disputes, especially those referring to boundaries of ricefields, are traditionally resolved through the digging up of the *paghok*, wooden pegs or stone boulders imbedded deep into the ground to mark boundaries. In cases where there are no such markers, disputes can also be solved through the *bultung* or wrestling. The opposing parties to a land dispute or their representatives wrestle on the contested boundary line, which is then established on the spot where the losing party falls.

## Adapting to Change and Modernization

Interviews and group discussions with Kiangán residents reveal their common view that the community has undergone many changes through time. The older respondents (65 years and over) used the Second World War to reckon time, often expressing greater nostalgia for olden ways in the olden days. Respondents in the middle age group (40 years to 64) still believe in many customs and traditions, and are interested in passing on their knowledge to the younger generation. At the same time, they realize the need to move on in the modern world. The younger group of respondents (below 40 years) generally claim respect for and showed some curiosity in learning the old customs and traditions, but they also pointed out the need for people to meet the challenges of changing times and external influences. Several respondents stressed the necessity of promoting and preserving the good aspects of *Tuwali* customs and traditions before these are entirely lost and forgotten.

Many respondents cited the following factors that hastened the opening of the community to the outside world after the Second World War: 1) the establishment of provincial and local offices of national agencies; 2) improvement of transportation and communication between Kiangán and the outside world; 3) greater access to information and education; 4) increased trade and commerce with other communities; and 5) greater mobility of people.

### ***New agricultural technologies***

The biggest impact of external influences and new technologies can be seen in the changes in the traditional agricultural practices and work cycle of the community.

For instance, before the war and immediately thereafter, the only rice variety known in the community was the *ippugo* or *tino-on*, a native rice variety that was notable for its aroma and taste. However, it took many long months to grow and hence, can only be planted once a year. Fertilizers and pesticides were not needed to ensure a bountiful harvest of *ippugo*. But the ricefields had to be kept immaculately clean to prevent field rodents from proliferating and destroying the crops. Cleaning the paddies often required long hours of back-breaking work which the women had to do.

In the early 1960s, the government's farm extension workers introduced new varieties of rice into the community to increase rice productivity. Members of the community who had gone to other



provinces, particularly Nueva Vizcaya, Isabela and Quirino, also saw the agricultural boom in these areas and wanted to follow their example. Local farmers eagerly embraced the new farming methodology, with its shorter rice-growing cycle that allowed them to plant twice a year. This meant that they could double or even triple their income. However, the production of fast-growing and high yielding rice varieties required the use of farm implements and other inputs such as pesticides and fertilizers. To make matters worse, the lowland varieties could barely thrive in higher elevations, according to municipal government sources.

The farmers in Kiangon soon realized that even though they could produce more with a shorter working time in the fields, they also had to spend for modern farm machinery, and buy fertilizers and pesticides that were needed to ensure a successful harvest. Some also complained about the foul odor of the chemicals used, their effects on the skin, and other health concerns. Many women who continued to work in the fields complained of skin irritation.

The women observed that the use of modern farm machinery and low-land techniques of rice cultivation, which required male laborers, lessened or even made the work of women in the rice fields unnecessary. This allowed many of them to look for alternate livelihood, such as selling of cooked food and other commodities.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, the then Ministry of Agriculture began promoting the “golden kuhol” as a food and protein supplement. A variety of edible snail, the “golden kuhol” were placed and soon proliferated in various fields and ponds in Kiangon. Before long, the farmers discovered that the “golden kuhol” thrived on palay stalks, causing widespread destruction to crops. Pesticides were useless in stamping out the spread of “golden kuhol” in the rice fields. Women and children had to spend hours picking the snails and putting them in sacks for extermination. But the snails were simply too numerous and spread out too widely, that the manual task became a futile exercise.

Some farmers were understandably furious that the agricultural agencies simply introduced the snail without any sufficient study on its habits and effects. Members of the municipal council asserted that the consent of the community should be sought before any project is implemented, to prevent another “golden kuhol” fiasco in the future. The organism has turned out to be the farmers’ curse, but until now, no formal investigation or survey on the extent of damage it has caused to crops has been done. Worse, the project failed in its original intent, as the local residents never developed a taste for the “golden kuhol.”

### ***Vegetable Farming***

In the late 1970s, the Presidential Assistance for National Minorities encouraged farmers to plant vegetables as an additional livelihood program. *Kalanguya* farmers from Tinoc municipality, and even from adjacent towns in the province of Benguet, swept into town to look for lands to buy or lease for vegetable growing.

As vegetable farming peaked in the 1980s and 1990s, and emboldened by the initial success of the pioneer gardeners, more landowners converted their rice fields into gardens. Green beans and cabbage were the main vegetables raised for sale to middlemen, who brought and sold these to other agents of Manila buyers in the lowlands. Several middlemen-buyers attained almost instant wealth in the new trade. However, one negative result is that the mass production of green beans displaced women cultivators of other local vegetables, as areas where traditional vegetables used to be grown were used for raising green beans instead.

### ***Return to Traditional Agriculture***

Many farmers eventually went back to traditional rice cultivation in the late 1990s when unstable prices and stiff competition from other provinces affected them. The decline of vegetable farming due to natural disasters, cutthroat competition, and unreliable market prices has resulted in



the revitalization of traditional farming, especially of local upland varieties of rice and vegetables.

The Save the Ifugao Terraces Movement (SITMO), an NGO based in Kiangán, initiated a project to promote the conservation of the rice terraces through traditional farming methods and cultivation of indigenous varieties. It is also promoting the revival of cultural practices and rituals related to indigenous agriculture, and studying ways to



The town of Kiangán in Ifugao province

sustain commitment to the preservation of the rice terraces. One proposal is to tap Ifugaos abroad for financial support so that other members of their family in Kiangán can continue to cultivate their ancestral rice terraces. SITMO has undertaken studies and, through various programs, has stirred up local concern for the endangered rice terraces. It also hopes to be able to inject a gender equality strategy in its programs.

Nevertheless, there are those who express the need for a balanced perspective in looking at Tuwali customs and traditions. One community elder who pioneered in various business enterprises and experimented with modern farming methods said a return to the traditions of the past must not be just some romantic notion or a nostalgic whim. He urged younger leaders to look at various options for supplementing traditional systems and practices. These would include the increased production of fruits, coffee and vegetables, as well as the development of small-scale industries utilizing available local materials and manpower such as broom making and loom-weaving.

### ***Impact of education and mass media***

While education, better means of communication, and the mass media have all contributed to community development, these have also resulted in some negative effects. Some people in Kiangán are apprehensive that less young people want to work in the fields, and instead, they want office jobs or overseas work. As more members of the community acquire formal education and qualify as professionals, many have chosen to move to the cities in search of employment. A woman employee preferred to remain in her government position, which assures her a steady income, than to cultivate her inherited riceland, so she allows others to do the task for her.

In an attempt to re-inculcate traditional values and indigenous knowledge, certain sectors of the community have initiated local versions of the “schools for living tradition.” Concerned community leaders, local officials, local schools and the National Commission on Culture and the Arts jointly support these initiatives. So far, most of their efforts have focused on the cultural aspects (dances, *hudhud* chants, rituals, weaving) of Ifugao heritage.

### ***Effects of migration***

In an interview for this study, former Ifugao Governor Teodoro Baguilat Jr. said he conducted an informal survey and came up with an estimated 150,000 migrants of Ifugao descent who are living



in other provinces and abroad. The voluntary relocation of many Ifugao families to lowland provinces, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, in search of better economic opportunities have led to the neglect or abandonment of their ancestral lands. Many claim that even as they realize the need to preserve their ancestral domain and the environment, the produce of the land can no longer sustain the demands of modern day existence.

Several elders and local officials concerned with this situation are studying a SITMO proposal that would encourage some members of the family to remain in the traditional villages to cultivate and maintain their ancestral lands. In return, their family members should commit themselves to provide financial assistance for those who are left behind to carry on the family traditions.

Every year, more migrant workers, particularly women, leave Kiangan in search of employment abroad. Many have expressed preference for overseas domestic work as a better “opportunity” rather than remain in the town and engage in traditional agriculture-based work. Male overseas workers are usually seamen or skilled laborers. There have been some success stories, and many have been able to send financial support to their families. In most cases however, migrant workers and their families have had to obtain loans, secured by mortgages on their lands and other properties, to finance travel costs and placement fees. Many have not been able to repay their loans on time, so they keep on borrowing just to pay the interest on the loans. Eventually, some workers who could not keep up with payments lost their mortgaged land and properties. Undoubtedly, this would have an effect on the protection of Kiangan’s ancestral domain. However, there is not enough information on the situation of migrant workers, and no study has been conducted to evaluate the socio-economic impact of this growing trend.

### ***Effects of government projects***

In many cases, the implementation of government projects, though these may be well intentioned, has become a source of dissatisfaction and distrust in government officials. One example cited is the tendency of government agencies to organize farmers groups without adequate social preparation, in order to access loans or grants for project implementation. Often, these groups would cease to exist after their members obtain the loans, conveniently forgetting to repay them. Another common example is the implementation of infrastructure projects, whether or not these were needed. All that mattered was that a contractor would implement the project and get paid for it.

In the case of irrigation canals, many residents observed that the community-built ones still function to this day because the farmers volunteered to maintain their waterways. In contrast, irrigation projects constructed as projects of politicians often get destroyed easily and are not maintained by the community. Such projects require continuous funding from politicians, and thus become milking cows for contractors. This practice runs counter to the values of self-reliance and community cooperation.

## **Gender Equality Among the Tawali**

Studies conducted by the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) and some women NGOs claim that indigenous women suffer from loss of control over and access to ancestral lands, negative impact of environmental degradation, extreme poverty, inadequate facilities and poor delivery of basic services, multiple burden and lack of access to resources and benefits, armed conflicts, militarization and other forms of violence. In Kiangan however, it would seem that the stereotypes on land ownership and management of natural resources are not applicable to the Tawali women.

During interviews and discussion groups, most respondents said there is no discrimination against Tawali women based on sex. They strongly asserted that *Tawali* customs and traditions



hold women in high regard. Respect for womanhood can be seen in traditions pertaining to betrothal and marriage, the observance of certain norms of behavior and language in the presence of women, the condemnation of male violence against the female, and equality of rights to personal and family relations and to property.

All the respondents, including those in the local government units, unanimously agreed that *Tuwali* customs and traditions recognize and respect the



The author (right) with two *Tuwali* women respondents

rights of women, and that women and men are equal although they may have different roles and responsibilities. Although *Tuwali* tradition assigns distinct roles for men and for women, the difference is not seen as discrimination, but rather, as complementary. For instance, men do the heavier manual work of preparing the rice paddy for cultivation because they are expected to be stronger physically, while the women transplant the seedlings since this task is not as physically strenuous. But there is nothing to prevent men and women from doing both tasks if they want to, or if necessity so demands.

As wife and mother, women are primarily responsible for child rearing and domestic work in the home (food preparation, cleaning and other household chores, care of domesticated animals). They are convinced that motherhood is a very special role and responsibility and women have the physical, emotional, mental and social nature to be mothers. The *Tuwali*, like most traditional Ifugaos, consider children as blessings. They admire women who have many children and can raise them to adulthood to have children of their own. This is why in traditional *Tuwali* society, one of the few grounds for divorce is childlessness.

At times, some women feel burdened with the demands of motherhood and work or career. Instead of complaining however, they would try to cope as best as they can. They say it helps that the Ifugao family is clannish and closely knit, such that they can always find a support system to prop them up. None of the women considered their multiple roles as a form of discrimination, as they also expect their husbands to provide a strong hand in the rearing and disciplining of children, and to share in domestic work. In certain instances, men do most of the chores, such as when their wives are about to give birth or have just given birth, are sick or recovering from illness, at work in the rice fields or swidden farms, or away from home. Thus, it would not be unusual to see men staying at home to take care of their very young children while their wives are at work in the rice fields or swidden farms specially during certain work seasons which require work to be done mainly by women, or in the office, or at a conference or seminar.

Many residents believe that the indigenous women of Kiangnan assume strong leadership roles in the family and in the community. When asked whether they knew of women who have held leadership roles or demonstrated strong adherence to customs and traditions, interviewees invariably pointed out their own mothers, grandmothers, or aunts and certain women leaders in the community. The municipal mayor is vocal in his opinion that the Kiangnan *Tuwali* family is very matriarchal, citing his own strong-



willed female ancestors as examples. He said that his father did not make decisions without first consulting his grandmother, and that his mother had a say in everything that concerned her children.

There were no complaints about women suffering from loss of control and access to ancestral lands. This was attributed to the fact that property rights and relations are clearly defined and protected by customary law, and that women are not discriminated against in relation to property rights and access to resources. Squabbles over property do not touch on gender, but usually arise from conflicting land claims or boundary disputes.

In terms of education, one of the women observed that there were cases in the past when parents would ask one of the older daughters to stay at home and take care of younger siblings while both parents were at work in the fields. Today however, boys and girls are encouraged to go to school. She said her own parents fully supported her wish to go to college, even if it meant mortgaging some of the family's lands.

Women are active in community organizations, including church-based and NGO-initiated associations. Several occupy key positions in these organizations. The municipal social welfare and development office also helped organize women's groups in the barangays, which became the nucleus of the municipal women's organization. Other women's groups in Kiangán include neighborhood groups, loan assistance groups, local councils of the Girl Scouts, mothers' clubs, and the cut-flower growers association. So far, no women's group has been organized to focus solely on indigenous rights.

Tuwali women are also involved in conflict resolution and hold vital decision-making positions in their families and at the village level. Female officials head five of the 10 municipal offices: Treasury Office, Budget Office, Accounting Office, Health Office, and Social Welfare and Development. Yet, in local politics, the trend in Kiangán closely hews to national patterns. Only one female was elected in May 2004 as a member of the municipal legislative council. The other female member of the council is the youth representative. At the barangay (village) level, the smallest political unit, there are only two females out of 15 barangay heads.

Except for eight cases of domestic incidents, there were no reports of other violence against women, such as those resulting from armed conflict or militarization. This confirms the reports brought to the attention of the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples in 2002, which did not include Ifugao in the list of Cordillera provinces where there were allegations of violations of human rights.

In the Focused Group Discussion, most women maintained that they are on equal footing with men, and that they have not experienced any discrimination as women within the community. In general, they were content with their lives – their families were not sick, they had food to eat, they had their own homes, they have relatives and friends, and a peaceful community. However, they admit that they sometimes wish they could have more cash income, better employment and livelihood opportunities, and more time for sports, relaxation and fun.

When they learned that Ifugao Province, where Kiangán is found, remains the fourth poorest province in the country, the women respondents pointed out that Ifugaos may be generally considered poor but at least there are no beggars in the streets and everyone has a home to sleep in at night. They acknowledged that most families in Kiangán consider themselves economically poor due to several factors.

For one thing, most families are subsistence farmers whose rice production is not even enough for the family the whole year. In fact, many families buy commercially sold rice in neighborhood stores. Vegetable farming may have improved the economic condition of some middlemen, but the farmers themselves complain of very low income, if any, due to the high cost of inputs and unstable market prices.



Also, there are very few employment opportunities in the community. The main employers are government agencies and a few private enterprises. Chances for government employment would depend on vacancies to be filled up, or more rarely, for new positions to be created. Except for the consumers' cooperative store, local business enterprises generally do not hire employees, relying instead on family members. Over the past few years, more women have gone abroad to work as domestic help. Some of these overseas contract workers are college graduates who could not find employment in the community, or wanted higher paying jobs outside the country. Many new recruits become hopeful when they observe the apparent improvement in the economic situation of many families with overseas workers such as new houses, and the ability to send children to school. However, they do recognize that other socio-psychological problems have cropped up and affected several of these families.

Several livelihood programs have been initiated at one time or another, but very few individuals and families have sustained their projects. Some of these projects include rice-wine making, poultry raising, backyard piggery, gardening, weaving, and food vending. Loans were made available through the local cooperatives and other credit facilities in the province, but many people were unable to repay their loans. Often, these were diverted to other needs of the family such as health care and payment of school fees.

Most families do not have savings. In times of need, they borrow from moneylenders or from the local cooperative, and from money lending enterprises in other towns. Government employees borrow from the government's lending institutions.

The municipal government and some national agencies provide basic health and social services, but in most cases, these are limited to minimum provisions or token services. For instance, the municipal health center is staffed by the minimum number of medical and dental personnel, with only a supply of medicines for common ailments. Other drugs have to be purchased from private drugstores in town or from other places. But often, patients can hardly afford to purchase needed medicines even if these are available. For women, services include family planning and maternal health care. Such limited services affect the productivity of Kiangan's residents, such that many are unable to rise from their economic level.

As women are busy trying to cope with the demands of family and work, they have very little time for their own pursuits and recreation. But even if they have time, there are few facilities and opportunities for sports and relaxation in the community. One woman disclosed that in order not to spend money to hire someone to weed the family's rice field, she tends to the farm after office hours and during weekends. This means her only day off, for fun, is during the town fiesta.

Despite its avowed gender sensitivity, the municipal government has not given priority to women's issues in its programs and projects. In its 2005 Annual Development Investment Plan, the municipality allotted a mere P20,000.00 for women's health and safe motherhood, and P30,000.00 for women's development projects. Official documents also overlooked many concerns on gender equality and development. Other than a few statistics in the socio-economic profile of the municipality on population, there is not much sex-disaggregated data or information in the reports and plans of the municipality. Its Gender and Development plan is basically a social welfare program, not a comprehensive strategy to improve women's lives.

## **Indigenous Women's Rights and the Law**

In the Philippine Constitution of 1987, the government came up with a State policy to recognize the rights of indigenous cultural communities. The new charter also enshrined the role of Filipino women in nation building.



With this Constitutional mandate, the Philippine Congress passed the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997 (IPRA) as the primary law for the promotion and protection of indigenous rights and welfare. The IPRA recognizes the rights of indigenous peoples to their lands and domains, to self-governance, respect for cultural integrity, to social justice and other human rights, and to basic services. This includes the right to use, manage, protect and conserve land and other traditional resources. The law also upholds other rights of indigenous cultural communities and indigenous peoples (ICCs/IPs) that have economic, ceremonial and aesthetic value in accordance with their indigenous knowledge, beliefs, systems and practices.

Indigenous women's rights are especially protected under IPRA. Specific provisions that spell out the State's policy on this subject are as follows:

- *“The State shall guarantee that members of ICCs/IPs regardless of sex shall equally enjoy the full measure of human rights and freedoms without distinction or discrimination.”*
- *“The State shall ensure that the fundamental human rights and freedoms as enshrined in the Constitution and relevant international instruments are guaranteed also to indigenous women. Towards this end, no provision in this Act shall be interpreted so as to result in the diminution of rights and privileges already recognized and accorded to women under existing laws of general application.”*
- *“ICC/IP women shall enjoy equal rights and opportunities with men, as regards the social, economic, political and cultural spheres of life. The participation of indigenous women in the decision-making process in all levels, as well as in the development of society, shall be given due respect and recognition.”*

Basic principles in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other international instruments were incorporated in the IPRA law.

Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets forth all the rights and freedoms which all human beings are entitled to “without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or status.”

The Philippines signed CEDAW, considered the international law on women's rights, on July 15, 1980 and subsequently ratified it on August 5, 1981. All the women's rights guaranteed and protected by CEDAW are applicable to all indigenous women. Article 14 of the Convention focuses on the elimination of discrimination against rural women, including indigenous women, so that they may participate and benefit from rural development equally with men. Specific rights for women from rural and/or indigenous communities include equal rights to participate in development planning, gain access to health care facilities, benefit from social security programs, obtain formal and non-formal education and training, organize self-help groups and co-operatives, and join community activities. They are also ensured equal rights to adequate living conditions including housing, sanitation, electricity, water supply, transportation, and communications.

Although the Philippines has not yet ratified ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, many of the principles and policies of the Convention found their way into the IPRA law. For instance, Article 3 of the Convention guarantees the enjoyment by indigenous and tribal peoples of “the full measures of human rights and fundamental freedoms without hindrance or discrimination” and the application of the provisions of the Convention “without discrimination to male and female members of these peoples.”

Several countries, international organizations and IP rights advocates consider the passage of IPRA as landmark legislation, the first of its kind in Asia. Its enactment generated goodwill towards the Philippines from the international community. Thus, several countries and international organizations such as the UNDP, ILO, and UNICEF have initiated and continue to support programs for indigenous peoples in the Philippines. Some countries and international organizations are closely



watching the full implementation of the IPRA, in the hope that it can serve as a model for other developing nations with indigenous populations.

## **Awareness of IPRA and Environmental Laws**

While the IPRA law is vigorously discussed at the national and international levels, there is much to be done to bring it to the community level.

In Kiangán, most respondents to written questionnaires said they had minimal awareness about a law that recognized their rights to ancestral lands and their customs and traditions. Several replied that they had heard about IPRA but were not familiar with its provisions. There were some who were not even sure about the existence of a law for indigenous cultural communities, but knew there was an office for “cultural minorities.” Only very few responded that they had read the law, or had at least attended one or two IPRA-related activities.

Community leaders and key informants said they had heard about a law for indigenous cultural communities, but most of them could not recall its title. On the whole, they welcomed the official recognition of their customs and traditions, as well as the opportunity to obtain titles to their lands. But some were quick to add that with or without a law, they know where their lands are and would continue to practice their customs, traditions and rituals. These include practices in relation to agriculture, property, family relations, marriage, and burial rites. However, they agreed that the law is worth implementing if it can give them additional protection and benefits.

Most municipal officials professed that they are aware of IPRA and have read it, along with the Local Government Code. The mayor and vice mayor are convinced that IPRA is a good law and expressed interest in its local implementation. They also believe that pertinent provisions of the Local Government Code and the IPRA, in relation to the use of customary law in conflict resolution, can be applied in Kiangán. Hence, they see the need to document customary law in order to implement these legal provisions.

Newer members of the municipal legislative council admitted that although they are aware of the enactment of IPRA, they have yet to thoroughly read and understand the law. Most of them opined that as local officials and legislators, they would need not just an orientation on the law; they should have a deeper understanding of IPRA and other related laws. One councilor said it would be good to localize pertinent provisions of the IPRA, but conceded that local legislators may lack the capability to formulate appropriate municipal ordinances. Another suggested that barangay officials and other municipal officials and employees should also have a proper understanding of the IPRA so that it can be properly implemented at the barangay level. Another councilor added that even schoolteachers in Kiangán should have a working knowledge of the IPRA so that they can help disseminate information on the law.

With regard to environment laws, several residents mentioned the Forestry Code in relation to their experiences with DENR forestry programs. Some are amused to point out that technically, the town proper of Kiangán is classified as forest zone. They cited cases of illegal logging that DENR had filed against local residents who fell trees allegedly from their own private forests. Others recalled that several years ago, the DENR organized some local residents to implement an integrated social forestry project covering their families’ tree lots or *muyung*. Also, one part of the town is still covered by a military reservation although no one remembers having seen any military facility in the area, which is now occupied by the public market and many private residences.

Generally, members of the community agree to the purpose of environmental laws to protect and conserve natural resources, as this also supports the Ifugao concept of protecting and preserving the ancestral domain or territory. For instance, they fully support tree-planting programs, which they consider as second nature to them. Ifugaos are also vigilant against forest fires; the intentional burning of forests is severely punished, according to Ifugao custom.



Several residents have heard of the Mining Law and the opposition to mining, but they do not consider it relevant to their lives, for the simple reason that there are no mining resources and claims within Kiangán. However, they do know of a few old residents who used to work in the mines in Benguet Province, and others who had left town some years ago for gold panning in the Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino provinces.

## Making IPRA Work for Tuwali women

It is heartening to note that the *Tuwali*-speaking residents of Kiangán are fully aware of their customs and rights to their ancestral domain. Pride in their ancestry and culture is demonstrated by efforts to keep these alive and practicing these up to the present, their desire to make sure that younger generations get to know their heritage, and their willingness to share their best practices with the outside world.

However, there is a need to support the Tuwali community's efforts to promote their indigenous heritage through pro-people legislation such as IPRA. One of the more significant results of this study is that the law has not trickled down to the communities that need it most, making it marginally effective.

The IPRA law would have been critical in addressing issues such as the productivity of ancestral lands, the cornerstone of indigenous culture in Kiangán. The cold statistics of the 2004 MBN Survey shows that only one fourth of Kiangán's land area is considered prime agricultural land, and out of this, approximately 1, 270 hectares consist of rice paddies. In the past, the produce from such lands was adequate to sustain the tribe, but as the population increased, the economic value of the land also declined.

Yet, in the hierarchy of land and property value, the ricefields or *payo* are considered the



Tuwali women play a major role in maintaining Ifugao's famous rice terraces á

most valuable, mainly from the cultural point of view. Rice fields are treasured as these represent the family line of inheritance from generation to generation. In proving ownership of ricefields, it is often useful to know the *ton-ton* or the narration of one's ancestry. Moreover, a whole series of rituals cover the culture of rice, thus giving spiritual value to the rice fields. Land is not just a commodity. No wonder that even in these modern times, disputes involving rice fields, no matter how small in size, can end up in the civil courts, or worse, in

bloodshed. If possible, contending parties have to resolve the dispute amicably according to custom, for one's honor must stand on one's land.

Traditional practices of the *Tuwali* people in relation to land and resource use and development continue to be practiced today. For instance, the *muyung* and other forests are maintained not just as sources of lumber and other forest products, but also as water sheds for domestic use



and for the ricefields. The *muyung* has been the subject of several studies, and the DENR has recognized it as one of the best indigenous forest management systems in the country. Another commendable practice is the cultivation of the native rice variety only once a year, which is dictated not just by the nature of the rice variety, but also allows the multiple use of the land and the restoration of its fertility. Swidden farming as practiced in Kiangán is sustainable and need not be destructive, because the burning is controlled and the terrain is managed in such a way that erosions are prevented or minimized. Since their agricultural land is usually not enough, swidden farming provides supplemental crops for the subsistence of the community. The Tuwali women's *pingkol* mode of vegetable growing may be replicated in other indigenous communities with similar wet agriculture technology. The *ubbu* as a system of cooperative labor arrangement may also be done in other communities.

Even as the *Tuwali* of Kiangán cling to their traditional identity and heritage, the reality is that somehow, change has become inevitable and communities like the *Tuwali* of Kiangán have joined the national mainstream in many ways. One sees a dichotomy of living: on one hand, adhering to traditional *Tuwali* Ifugao customs and practices, while on the other, also adapting to an integrated Filipino society. For example, couples who get married in church or in civil rites must also perform the customary requirements of betrothal (*imbangngo*) rituals. Another example is that members of the community who transfer land and property in accordance with Ifugao customary law now also comply with legal requirements of civil law such as written contracts, notarization and registration of instruments.

The most visible example of inter-phasing is in the area of socio-political and economic structures and relationships. Government has been generally seen as an external authority imposed upon the people, particularly so because the early Ifugaos did not have any formal structures of government represented by an authority. They only had systems of personal and property relationships, and conflict-resolution and justice systems. Probably because of the military expeditions during the latter part of the Spanish colonial rule, followed by the American pacification expeditions and civil governance, the brief occupation by Japanese soldiers during the second world war, and the development of politics in Ifugao after the war, Government has come to mean several things: organized force; political power; provider of basic services and infrastructure; creator of rights; and dispenser of benefits and privileges. In the past, people relied on themselves and did things for themselves; now, Government is expected to provide everything. The *Tuwali* people of Kiangán have learned the principles and processes of democratic government. They have become very familiar with elections and the vote. But in exercising the right of suffrage, they are still attached to clannish loyalties and have been accustomed to the patronage of politicians.

At the same time, it cannot be ignored that the inroads of modernization and external influences pose threats as well as challenges to the *Tuwali* of Kiangán. These influences include education and mass communication, the phenomenon of migration, and globalization. The situation of the *Tuwali* Kiangán may be reflective of what is transpiring in other indigenous cultural communities in the country. A full case study on the psycho-social and economic impact of the migration of indigenous women workers from Kiangán on their families and the community could provide a fuller picture of how new labor trends have affected indigenous peoples.

In general, *Tuwali* customary law and traditions afford women and men equal rights to ownership of lands, as well as access to the use and management of other lands and resources within the Kiangán ancestral domain. Although they may have distinct work roles, these are not perceived as discriminatory or unfair. Generally, they also have equal rights in participating in traditional family and community activities. The differences in the role of women and men are seen as naturally complementary. There are no *Tuwali* cultural practices that repress or violate the human rights of women.



Mainly because their traditional work roles are focused on the home and the land, the Tuwali women have become the repository of indigenous knowledge systems and best practices of the community. It would be good to study the role of indigenous women in the sustainable development, management and protection of ancestral lands and natural resources in other localities in order to document the contribution of indigenous women to the growth and development of their communities and to nation building.

In assessing and evaluating the situation of indigenous cultural communities like the *Tuwali* of Kiangang, the primary standards used are their own values system. Hence, it would be safe to conclude that *Tuwali* customs and traditions do not discriminate against women. But then, it is also necessary to use international human rights standards in looking at the situation of *Tuwali* indigenous women in the more comprehensive context of the national legal system, and as members of Philippine society. Who is primarily obliged to comply with or implement the provisions of these human rights instruments?

The prevailing conditions of dire poverty crippling the most marginalized sectors and provinces such as Ifugao affects women and children the most because of their vulnerability. In the case of indigenous cultural communities, it would be erroneous to presume that they are poor because they are culturally different from mainstream society. It would not be correct to blame their value systems, language and dialects, customs and traditions, and different world-view for their poverty. Rather, they become impoverished due to lack of recognition of their right to their own lands and territories, cultures and forms of governance.

For instance, prior to IPRA, ancestral lands and forests were generally considered part of the forest zone or inalienable public lands. Hence, the Ifugaos whose ancestors built the rice terraces long before the Philippine Government came into existence could not obtain loans to finance livelihood projects and business enterprises, simply because they did not have land titles to offer as security for the loans. At that time, they could not obtain those titles because their lands were considered part of the public domain. Thus, the Government's non-recognition of the right of the Ifugao indigenous peoples to their ancestral lands deprived them of the right of ownership and access to lands and resources, which they could have productively used for their empowerment and well-being.

The passage of the IPRA is a big step forward in the recognition, promotion and protection of the rights of all indigenous peoples and cultural communities in the Philippines. Thus, it is necessary to fully implement the law and other pro-IP legislation, policies and programs.

Nearly 10 years have passed since IPRA was enacted, but until now, it appears that the first step towards its effective implementation would have to be intensive information seminars on the law and similar legislation. For the Tuwali people of Kiangang, in-depth discussion of laws regarding natural resources and the Local Government Code is needed so that municipal officials could properly implement these inter-related laws, policies and programs. The NCIP should intensify popularization of the IPRA at the community level to enable more indigenous peoples to understand and appreciate the law, and use it to promote their rights and interests.

The municipal government and devolved national agencies need to institute long-range programs to reduce and, hopefully, eliminate poverty. At the same time, they need to ensure that social welfare mentality is not permanently instituted because this does not empower their constituents to improve their lot in life. Government agencies would have to overhaul their strategies and programs for women empowerment to include access to credit, resources, training, information and technology, participation in planning and decision-making and governance, and control of their own opportunities and resources.

The Philippine government has tried to comply with its obligations under the CEDAW and other international instruments through measures such as the passage of anti-violence against



women laws, institutionalization of gender and development plans and programs, and development of tools and strategies for gender mainstreaming. However, there is still a need to localize these measures and bring them to the communities where rural women and indigenous women live. Agencies such as the NCIP and NCRFW should ensure that Gender and Development Plans of local government units and agencies include the issues and concerns of indigenous women.

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Case Study 5

## Working Children: Reducing Child Labor among the Mandaya and Manobo

By Raoul M. Cola



In the gold mining area of Mt. Diwalwal in the southern Philippines, children from indigenous communities haul ore-bearing soil and rocks to the bull mill, a distance of up to three kilometers. The scene is repeated in two mining enterprises within the ancestral domain of the Manobo and Mandaya in Boston municipality, Davao Oriental province.

On average, the children haul five sacks a day, each about one-fourth full. At P20 per sack, they usually earn about P100 a day, with half of the money spent on food and other expenses. The pay is higher in the Mt. Diwalwal area at P100 per sack, so an average day brings in P500. However, the prices in the area are also higher, and since the children are far from their villages, they pay for both food and lodging. When expenses are deducted from their gross income of P10,000 a month, the remaining amount is a measly P1,000.

Children also haul hardwood poles that are used to support the mining tunnel. The eight-foot pole is carried over a distance of 2.5 kilometers, so one child can only haul two per day. The child laborer gets P100 per pole, but after expenses are deducted, only P50 is left and around half of the hard-earned income is turned over to the parents.

Another source of income in the ancestral domain is the collection of birds' nests, which fetch a lucrative price of P400 per gram in the market. Swifts build their nests in rocky cliffs from November to August. In the past, indigenous communities avoided these cliffs, which are regarded as spirit abodes. Besides, the crevices were crawling with snakes, predators that feed on the swift's eggs and hatchlings. But when outsiders began to harvest the swifts' nests in 1985, the indigenous people soon learned to follow their lead. Later, they discovered that children had an advantage in climbing the cliffs and reaching for the nests because of their smaller size, so they were recruited into the trade.

Collection of birds' nest is usually done at night, and takes from two to three hours. The darkness makes the work even more dangerous. One collection session yields an average of 1.5 grams, or an income of P600. The range of income is from P200 to P1,000 per session, with collection done once a week to avoid depletion of the resource. Gatherers face the risk of falling down the cliff or getting bitten by a snake. Two children had fallen in the past but luckily they survived, according to residents.

Many of the children working in the mine sites and rocky cliffs belong to the Mandaya and Manobo communities, two of the largest indigenous people groups in Mindanao. Both groups live in scattered settlements in the uplands, although there are compact villages that serve as a centre. They share many common traits and have influenced each other even before colonization. Such are their similarities that it is difficult to ascertain the ethnic provenance of many of their shared cultural elements.

### The Mandaya

The Mandaya is the ethno-linguistic group associated with southeastern Mindanao. The term Mandaya means "first people upstream" and indeed, their settlements are spread all over the

upland area of Davao Oriental, Davao del Norte, Compostela Valley and in the southern fringes of Surigao del Sur and Agusan del Sur.

Historians believe that the provenance of the Mandaya can be traced back to the Malays who came to the Philippines between 300 to 200 BC through Palawan and Mindoro. They intermarried with the Manobo in eastern Mindanao and formed a distinct group known as the Mandaya. Through intermarriage, Chinese became part of their racial stock in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

During the Spanish colonial period from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Mandaya villages within the reach of the administration were Christianized. They were also encouraged to settle in the more compact towns in the lowlands, but their vulnerability to Muslim raids forced them back to the uplands, where they resumed their former lifestyle. During the American period from 1900 to 1945, the Mandaya were recruited for work in plantations established in lowland areas of Davao. These workers acquired elements of lowland culture that they brought back to their upland settlements.

Although most of the Mandaya profess to be Christians, they still retain much of their indigenous beliefs. They believe in a set of deities and spirits whose predisposition affects human affairs. The good deities include Mansilatant and Dady, who are father and son. Among the evil ones are the husband-and-wife, Pudaugson and Malimbong. Spirits live in natural objects and interact with the people through omens and rituals.

The Mandaya are mainly agriculturists, but their food sources vary with their ecological niche. Those who live close to the forest are engaged in foraging and hunting, while those who are in swampy and river areas go fishing for daily subsistence. They plant rice and tubers along with bananas and vegetables in their swidden plots. Rituals mark the start of the various phases of farming and offerings are made to the deities. The most elaborate is the harvest ritual, with the yield shared among community members to court the favour of the deities for the next harvest. Farming is usually a communal activity.

The Mandaya collect wild tubers, fruits and honey from the forest. The type of food items collected depends on the season. They hunt using spears and traps. A wide range of fishing methods is used. The various tasks required to undertake food production activities are done individually or at the household level. Greater market access has intensified trading activities. Abaca has been raised as a cash crop since the American period, while coconuts were added after the Second World War. Nonetheless, barter is still done, particularly in the more isolated settlements.

Many of the Mandaya have intermarried with settlers from other provinces, and some of their offspring no longer consider themselves as members of the group. The Mandaya seem to have managed well outside their cultural milieu, as indicated by their relatively minimal conflict with other ethnic groups. Many have become integrated with dominant lowland communities, and some have taken high government positions. The varying degrees of Mandaya acculturation have resulted from increasing contact with the market, mass media and government service providers, as well as the encroachment of settlers, miners, loggers, plantation operators and land speculators into their traditional homeland. Generally, the most acculturated Mandaya settlements are the ones closest to the main road arteries.

## **The Manobo**

The Manobo is a Hispanized term for a group of people widely scattered in northeastern and central Mindanao. Their original name is believed to be “Manuvu” (people) or “Mansuba” (people of the river). When Islam reached Mindanao in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, some of them converted to the religion and are now known as Maguindanao.

The Manobo people believe that humans share the earth with spirits, some of them good while others are evil. The favours of the spirits must be courted and their anger appeased to ensure that harm would not be inflicted on people. The benevolence of the spirits is obtained through rituals performed by a priestess known as *baylan*, a tradition shared with the Mandaya. The most



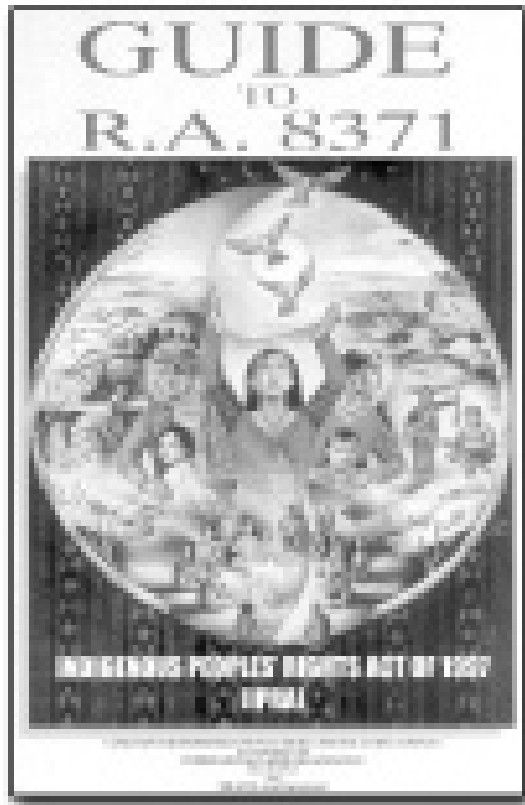


elaborate rituals are done as part of the rice farming cycle, indicating the central role of the crop on the lives of the Manobo. A number of practices are also done to evade the attention of the evil spirits.

During the Spanish period, the Manobo resisted colonization and engaged the invading troops in constant warfare, such that efforts to settle them into towns never succeeded. It was only during the American period that Manobo villages were established in the lowlands and some of their children went to school. The American government also largely succeeded in stopping inter-tribal raids.

Most of the Manobo people in the upland areas still retain their distinct beliefs and practices. They maintain swidden plots planted to rice, root crops and vegetables. Later, corn became part of their farming tradition when most of their swidden plots had to give way to logging and plantations. Foraging, fishing, hunting, honey collection and hunting supplements the yield from the farms. Commercial crops such as coconuts and abaca are also planted. The produce is sold in the lowlands and the proceeds are used to purchase salt, sugar, coffee and other manufactured goods.

The Manobo who settled in the lowlands have adopted a number of practices of the migrants. However, three historical events hastened the acculturation of both upland and lowland Manobos: the Second World War, the post-war government homestead program, and logging operations. Many lowland settlers evacuated to the uplands during the war, intensifying their interaction with the Manobo. The homestead program and the logging operation also brought in migrants who settled in the traditional home range of the Manobo. The Manobo people are now experiencing varying degrees of acculturation, with those closer to the lowlands becoming more acculturated than those in the uplands.



## Preventing Child Labor

From October 2003 to September 2004, a project entitled “Testing Indigenous Community-Driven Education Approaches Against Child Labor” was implemented in four barangays in the municipality of Boston, in the province of Davao Oriental. The International Program on Child Labor (IPEC) provided funding of \$24,700 for the one-year project. It was implemented by Lungga Mangmang Agong Center Inc. (LMAC), a non-government organization composed of Mandaya professionals who are based in the capital town of Mati.

The objective of the project is to “gradually eliminate and prevent child labor among the indigenous peoples” in the area. In particular, it aimed to remove child laborers from mining sites and related hazardous work, and help them switch to traditional livelihood with their families, mainly abaca and fibre production. There are three key interventions:

- Information dissemination on child labor
- Promotion of indigenous basic education with livelihood
- Establishment of local institutional framework for the elimination of child labor

The Boston Municipal Tribal Council Association (BOSMANTRICA) served as the main partner of LMAC in implementing the project. Members of the association and the project staff initially went through an orientation process in order to gain a clear understanding of its objectives and context. In addition, BOSMANTRICA members were trained on development facilitation, since they were the project's main link to the communities. Meanwhile, the 10-member project team received skills training on how to do the organizing, facilitation and planning activities in a community-driven and participatory manner.

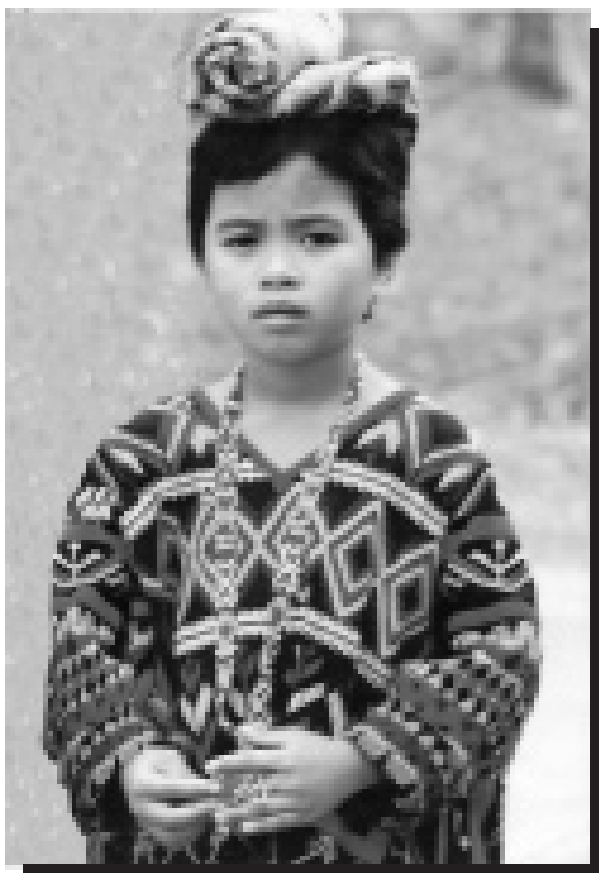
As part of the community immersion phase, Mati-based staff members stayed for a month in one project site in order to get to know the people and their problems better. They conducted focused group discussions, home visits and community assemblies. Their outputs included community profiles and case studies on child laborers, which were used to sharpen the project's direction. Linkages with barangay and municipal officials, indigenous leaders, school teachers and administrators, NGOs and local churches were also made during their stay.

The design of activities to be implemented was decided during a tribal leaders' assembly, considered the turning point for the project. This became the venue where the project's acceptability was finalized and its implementation and beneficiaries were identified. Leaders representing both traditional (elders) and formal (municipal and barangay officials) authority attended the assembly.

The assembly selected 88 households with 96 child laborers as project beneficiaries for livelihood and non-formal education. Abaca production was chosen as the main component of livelihood intervention because of existing cultivation technology. It is also one of the traditional crops of the indigenous people in the area. This would be supplemented by training on the making of handicraft and accessories.

Collaboration with resource institutions and household level interventions became necessary to implement various tasks. Among the institutions tapped and their expertise were the following: Fiber Industry Development Authority (FIDA) for abaca cultivation, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) for information materials, Department of Education (DepEd) on non-formal education, and Silangang Dapit sa Habagatang Sidlakang Mindanao, Inc. (Sildap-Sidlakan) on handicraft training.

Abaca is known to grow wild in Davao Oriental. The Spanish colonizers encouraged its cultivation for export, but the industry declined when mining and timber plantations entered the province and the price of abaca plunged in the international market. The intervention on abaca production involves a grant of P3,000 as start-up capital of the households of child laborers. The funds were spent on clearing, land preparation and weeding. Four abaca nurseries with 52,000 suckers were established. Some households also received training and raw materials such as



An indigenous child in Mindanao



bamboo and wicker to make handicrafts and accessories. Their products included baskets, kitchen ware, fish traps and simple trinkets like anklets, bracelets and necklaces.

Non-formal education activities targeted both the child laborers and their parents. It covers not only writing, reading and arithmetic but also traditional knowledge and the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA). Modules were made and para-teachers from the community were trained and paid by the project. Classes were conducted every Saturday, one half day each for the child laborers and their parents, for three months.

Regular evaluation was done on the beneficiaries to ensure that the start-up capital was used properly. The funds came in three instalments – P1500, P1000, and P500 – with the release of the second and last payments based on farm evaluation results. The total release period ranged from four to twelve months. The project staff also evaluated their own performance through quarterly meetings, a mid-year evaluation and a final evaluation session. Results served to fine-tune project activities.

## The Project Site

The project was implemented in the barangays of Cawayanan, Caatihan, Nabunga and San Jose. They are located in the uplands, with an earth road connecting the barangays to each other and to the Boston town centre. San Jose is the closest, about five kilometres from the town centre, followed by Cawayanan which is seven kilometres away. Farther off are Caatihan at 17 kilometres away and Nabunga which is 21 kilometres from the town centre. Landslide and erosion often blocks the road during the rainy season, particularly the portion in San Jose that leads to Caatihan.

The area in Boston where a substantial number of indigenous people remain is secured through a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) issued in 2000. It covers around 17,112 hectares including the projects site and parts of three other barangays. BOSMANTRICA, an umbrella organization of tribal councils in the municipality, manages the ancestral domain for the indigenous communities. It is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission and duly recognized by the municipal government and National Commission of Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) as the representative of the indigenous people of Boston. Its mission is to protect, promote and preserve their ancestral domain and the indigenous heritage.

The municipality of Boston is part of the traditional range of indigenous peoples. It has eight barangays but the Mandaya and Manobo are largely confined to those chosen as the project site (*See Table 1*). During the 2000 census, the four barangays registered a total of 4,047 residents, or about 40 percent of the total municipal population. The Mandaya constitute 14 percent of the municipal population

while the Manobo has seven percent. All the barangays have a sprinkling of Visayan settlers, and intermarriage is common.

In the entire province of Davao Oriental, the National

Statistics Office registered 66,634 Mandaya or about 15 percent of the provincial population. The Manobo population is much less at 5,195 or just one percent of the residents in the province, according to the NSO records in 2003.

The cultures of the Mandaya and Manobo in the area share many similar patterns. Among these are subsistence production, swidden-based farming systems, supplemental use of the forest,

<b>PROJECT BARANGAYS</b>	<b>ETHNIC COMPOSITION</b>
Cawayanan	Dominantly Mandaya
Caatihan	Dominantly Manobo
Nabunga	Dominantly Mandaya
San Jose	Mix of Mandaya and Manobo



animistic beliefs, and rank-based social organization. The Mandaya and Manobo in the project site may have even more similarities, to the degree that their culture seems closer to each other than to the mainstream culture of their own ethnic group. This is seen in their administrative system, typology of spirits, rituals associated with the agricultural cycle, and cropping patterns.

Each of the four barangays has a recognized elder who functions as their leader. Their ascendancy is based on the clan's material possessions and recognized influence. For instance, the clan of the elder of Cawayan, Dodong Colas, has the largest farm land in the barangay. His grandparents are the acknowledged pioneers in the area, having opened the first farmland in the barangay. This is a variant from the council that usually manages the Manobo and Mandaya groups.

The population in the four barangays profess Christianity as their religion. But in varying degrees, belief in the environmental spirits persists and rituals to gain their favors are still done. The spirits are identified as *diwata* which is a Manobo nomenclature. Both groups make the same offerings such as eggs, tobacco, *tuba* (coconut wine) and rice in the rituals. The *baylan* may perform the ritual, as the intermediary between the world of the supernatural and the mortals. However, different communities seem to reconcile the traditional and introduced belief systems in various ways.

In Caatihan, both religions operate side by side as indicated by a separate house of worship dedicated to each one. The split-level belief system is the Manobo people's way of accommodating the pressure to be "civilized" without forsaking the belief of their ancestors that defines their identity. The proselytizers packaged Christianity as an element of civilization and dismissed the traditional belief system as primitive.

In Cawayan, the adaptation of the Mandaya to similar pressure is through syncretism, in which they employ traditional practices in Christianity. They still make offerings and community rituals during the harvest season but these are done in honor of Saint Isidore, the Catholic patron saint of the farmers, instead of nature spirits.

Upland rice remains the central crop in the four barangays, in spite of the expansion of their income sources. Apart from farming and hunting, many households earn from wage labor within and outside their barangays. The blending of the two groups can be seen in abaca cultivation. Although the crop is associated with the Mandaya, it has become part of the farming system of the Manobo as well.

The great similarity in the culture of the Mandaya and Manobo in the project site can be attributed to four processes. First, the long-term interaction between the two groups has apparently allowed mutual adoption and adaptation of cultural elements from each group. Second, they have been exposed to the same outside influences such as timber operation, migrants from the Visayas, and Christian missionaries. Third, the educational system still reflects the past government policy of assimilation. Lastly, there is the increasing onslaught of the mass media, such as television that has reached the project site. The educational system and mass media may be insidious in changing the culture of the indigenous peoples, but the timber industry and Christian missionaries are more intrusive.

Commercial logging was introduced in the 1960s, followed by timber plantations from 1969 to 1993 and the Industrial Forest Management Agreement from 1994 to 1997. Through timber production, the government imposed control over ancestral domain and brought in migrants that took over the denuded land. After destroying their forests, the government ran after indigenous communities that practiced swidden cultivation, depriving them of their basic mode of production.

The first missionaries, an American Catholic priest and a nun, arrived in Caatihan in 1971. A succession of missionaries of various denominations followed, resulting in the religious division of the Manobo and Mandaya. Apart from Catholics, the project site has Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptist, Pentecostal and Mormon churches. One of the casualties of their conversion is the women, who were disempowered by the male-controlled Western religions. In the indigenous system, religion is



the domain of women, as exemplified in the *baylan* who is normally a woman. The disempowerment of women diminishes their status and role, not only in the community, but also in the household. The resulting imbalance in the gender power distribution puts undue burden on the men to support the community and the household.

## **Child Labor in Boston**

The four barangays had 114 child laborers before the project was implemented (*See Table 2*). All of them are boys, with ages ranging from 10 to 17 years old. The work in both enterprises is physically demanding, making male children more suitable to the task. Collection of swifts' nests generally requires younger children, as their smaller size facilitates entry into the crevices where the nests are found. Mining requires a certain level of physical strength that older children have; the youngest child employed in the industry is 13 years old.

<b>Table 2: Child Laborers in Boston (2003)</b>			
<b>BARANGAY</b>	<b>MINING</b>	<b>SWIFTS' NEST Collection</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Cawayanan	15	6	21
Caatihan	20	10	30
Nabunga	20	10	30
San Jose	30	3	33
Total	85	29	114

Child laborers are generally from big households with an average of eight members. In contrast, the average household in the four barangays has only five members. Hence, it is clear that the pressure for the child to work is greater among big households, given equal circumstances.

The pressure seems to be heaviest among middle children. This makes the order of birth a factor in determining the child's vulnerability to recruitment into the labor market. On one hand, the first-born children do not compete with siblings for the resources of the household. The last born children, on the other hand, are usually too young to work. This situation is particularly acute when birth interval is short. Due to rapid succession of children, the expansion of the household's requirement outpaces its rate of production. The temporary decommissioning of the mother for birth-giving and child rearing subtracts a substantial portion from the household's productive input. Given their cultural values, the middle child may feel that supporting the younger children is part of his responsibility, and so he takes on the burden of meeting the production shortfall.

The asset base of the household is the main determinant of the degree of the shortfall. In the project site, the most productive and dependable asset base is land. It follows that the larger the land holding of the household, the less vulnerable its children to child labor. Another major factor is the parents' education, with the more learned ones managing their resources better and ensuring that their children get educated too.

### ***Indigenous Perspectives on Child Labor***

The employment of children has been practiced in the project site for about 10 years, probably even longer for mining as the gold operation in Mt. Diwalwal dates back to 1985. Apparently, the concept of child labor had no negative connotation or was not part of their individual and community psyche until the project came along. To explain this phenomenon, the perspectives of the indigenous people regarding work and related concepts are explored to determine their cultural vulnerability to the practice.

The concept of child labor is based on the assumption that children comprise a vulnerable group and require special protection that is normally not accorded to adults. However, while there is a universal notion that childhood begins at birth, there is no agreement on when it ends. This means



that although the concept of a child may be universal, the conditions that qualifies a person to adulthood is relative. It is a social invention and each society defines it in its own way to serve the society's own purpose. This may be its own survival or some higher end, like attaining a demographic balance to ensure economic stability. The change of categorization from child to adult carries with it a change in role and entitlement to the society's resources.

Age is the common tool used to determine the end of childhood, particularly in law. In a number of Philippine laws, one is considered a child until the age of 18. Under ILO Convention 138 or the Minimum Age Convention of 1973, the working age is placed at 15 to 18, with employment allowed for children aged 13 to 15 only for "light work" that are not hazardous to their health.

In the four barangays, a person is considered adult at about the same age, between 15 to 18. The differences may indicate that this is not a collective belief, and 18 years as the start of adulthood may be a foreign concept that has no cultural basis among indigenous peoples. For instance, to the Mandaya and Manobo in the project site, age is not the only indicator of adulthood. There are also social considerations such as the ability to look after oneself and one's family, which is a key benchmark of adulthood in the project site. (See Table 3)

<b>Table 3: Concept of Minimum Age in the Project Site (April 2006)</b>				
<b>ITEM</b>	<b>KAWAYAN</b>	<b>SAN JOSE</b>	<b>CAATIHAN</b>	<b>NABUNGA</b>
Age when adulthood starts	18 years	15 years	18 years	18 years
Social considerations	Ability to take care of oneself & family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to feed one's family</li> <li>• Ability to discern right and wrong</li> </ul>	Ability to feed one's family	Ability to earn a living
Purpose of reproduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replenish population</li> <li>• Preserve the family name</li> <li>• Help in livelihood</li> <li>• Expand land holdings</li> <li>• Satisfy the need for affection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiply one's kind</li> <li>• Help in livelihood</li> <li>• Ensure line of inheritance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve family name</li> <li>• Ensure line of inheritance</li> <li>• Secure parents in old age</li> <li>• Perpetuate the group's culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiply one's kind</li> <li>• Preserve family name</li> <li>• Secure parents in old age</li> <li>• Satisfy the need for affection</li> <li>• Ensure group's progress</li> </ul>

Because a child is brought up with potential economic contributions in mind, equipping the child for work is a primary parental responsibility. Having seen the success of many Mandaya and Manobo in various professional fields, most families consider formal education as the best vehicle for a child to do well in the future. Hence, sending a child to school is always mentioned as the first priority of parents. Their other responsibilities include inculcating a sense of right and wrong, transmitting spiritual beliefs, and ensuring discipline. In Kawayan, marrying the child off is also the task of parents. In San Jose and Caatihan, the parents consider advising their children in making decisions a lifetime responsibility. The child is never considered completely independent from the parents. As the person goes through the various stages of life, the role of the parents simply changes but it is not diminished.

The child's responsibility to their parents is not only to respect and obey the parents but also to care for them. An older child not only cares for the parents, but also for the younger siblings. At a certain age, a child is expected to assist parents in their work. When they start earning, they take it as a responsibility to support their parents.

The child learns responsibilities early in life. There is a long breastfeeding period, from birth to four years, which builds the child's attachment to the mother. Between the ages of four and six, the child learns to play and gradually socialize into the work setting. Playing mimics the activities comprising actual work, which the child learns to do by age six. Girls take on household chores like drawing water and cleaning the house, while the boys help out in clearing and planting the fields.

At first, children do the work with their parents and relatives, but they gradually graduate to doing it all alone. The complication and intensity of work increase with age. From drawing water, the girls will eventually take on the laundry. From weeding, the boys will eventually do the harvesting. Gender differentiation of task assignment begins at this stage. Physically heavy work, usually done outside the house, are generally for boys. The girls often perform lighter work within the home.

As they grow older, the boys pick up other skills from adults such as hunting, trapping, fishing and collection of forest products. The girls may learn basketry and food processing. In mid-teens, the child learns enough to take on the work of the parents, such as managing the farm and the household. Throughout their lives however, children are bound to the responsibility of looking after their parents.

Before marriage, a prospective bride's family thoroughly assesses the man's capability for work first. He works for the bride's family from one to two years, where his readiness for marriage and a family is ascertained. Still, having a family of procreation does not cut the ties that bind him to his family of orientation. It merely ensures that the same sense of responsibility is transmitted to the next generation and the behavioural patterns of the group are continued.

### ***Concept of Work***

Work to the indigenous people in the project site has eight qualifications: (1) physical exertion; (2) mental effort; (3) positive psychological disposition; (4) skills; (5) sense of obligation; (6) direction and organization; (7) productivity; and (8) rest. Their concept of work encompasses all aspects of a person: physical, mental and psychological. It is also seen not as an isolated activity but a series that builds up to attain a certain return. The emphasis on skills shows that their acquisition is a necessary prelude to work.

A positive psychological disposition is considered necessary because work is seen as interactive. Smooth interpersonal relations in the work setting require such an attitude. The breakdown of relations can undermine work and its productivity. In this sense, work is seen not just as an economic but also a social activity. This view is further reinforced by the inclusion of the sense of obligation as qualification of work. Residents in Caatihan said a worker is obliged to relate well to others, turn in good work and follow the team leader's instruction. Obedience is valued in the work setting just as it is in the family.

Rest is seen not as the opposite but as an element of work. This view emphasizes the need to maintain balance by combining various intensities of exertion. The severity of work depends on the degree of physical exertion or sweating. Work is considered light if it requires more mental rather than physical exertion. However, they do recognize that work requiring more mental exertion needs more sophisticated skills acquired through education, and it is also deemed more materially rewarding. For this reason, higher education to get into a professional career is a widely shared aspiration among the Mandaya and Manobo families. No difference is noted in the concept of work between the two ethnic groups and between genders.



The purpose of work is to serve individual, household and community interests. In all barangays, meeting one's needs is cited as the primary purpose of work. These include not only material goods but skills and individual advancement as well. Work is also regarded as a contributor to family resources – for the children's education and other investment to secure their future, and to help the parents. The reward from the work of one is shared by many, including relatives and even the community. (See Table 4)

**Table 4: Perception of Work among Mandaya and Manobo in Boston (April 2006)**

Item	Kawayan	San Jose	Caatihan	Nabunga
Purpose of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earn a living</li> <li>• Fulfil ambition</li> <li>• Learn skills</li> <li>• Provide child's education</li> <li>• Expand experience</li> <li>• Help relatives</li> <li>• Help community members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earn a living</li> <li>• Meet household obligations</li> <li>• Expand experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet daily needs</li> <li>• Assure the future</li> <li>• Provide future of children</li> <li>• Secure old age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet daily needs</li> <li>• Assure the future</li> <li>• Provide for the future of children</li> </ul>
Skills Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents and relatives</li> <li>• Other farmers</li> <li>• Government extension workers</li> <li>• Radio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Government extension workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Government extension workers</li> <li>• Television</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Radio</li> <li>• Television</li> </ul>
Definition of hazardous work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Causes illness</li> <li>• Danger in work setting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Causes illness</li> <li>• Risk of accident</li> <li>• Dangerous working conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poses threats to life</li> <li>• Requires over-exertion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of accident</li> <li>• Breach a law</li> </ul>
Definition of dirty work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves dishonesty</li> <li>• Breaks moral rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves dishonesty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breaks moral rules</li> <li>• Causes illness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves dishonesty</li> </ul>

The parents take it as their principal responsibility to teach the children the skills needed for work. This means that skills acquisition mainly happens in the family setting, involving face-to-face interaction using experiential methods. Informants for this study emphasized that the skills they get from parents are part of the knowledge of their ancestors acquired through generations of living in the upland environment.

Children also learn from their relatives, and when they become full-time laborers, from other community members in the same line of work. Government extension workers introduced wet rice farming technology in Cawayan in 1969, but the indigenous people did not adopt it due to expensive commercial inputs and rigorous work involved, which was inappropriate to their farming practices. The extension workers were more successful in San Jose and Caatihan, where they taught selected



farming methods rather than introduce the whole technology package. Other minor sources of skills are the radio, which came in the 1970s, and the television, which arrived in the 1990s.

The Manobo and Mandaya consider work to be hazardous if it exposes the person to illness, accidents or criminality due to the work setting or work requirement. The human body, although built for work, has its limits and over-exertion may harm it. Their concept of dirty work has more to do with morality rather than physical condition. Work that involves dishonesty, such as stealing, and debasement of one's integrity, such as prostitution, are considered dirty. Work that exposes one to diseases is considered more hazardous than dirty.

## **No more child laborers**

The immediate result of the project indicates that the project attained its objective of gradually eliminating and preventing child labor among indigenous peoples. Indicators for project success were as follows: number of families without working children, enrollment of indigenous peoples' children, number of enterprises with working children, and change in perception of child labor.

The project cleaned the four barangays of child laborers. After one year, no Mandaya or Manobo child was left working in mining or swift's nests collection. Up to 73 percent of the children who worked as laborers went into farming, mainly due to the availability of land and the relatively high price of abaca and coconut. The price of abaca more than doubled between 2002 and 2006 while the price of copra increased nine-fold, making farming more lucrative than other jobs. The residents reported that the amount earned from farming, in an average of one hectare, even exceeds the wages from mining in a year. Although farming income is estimated to be 20 percent lower than the income from swift's nest collection, it is considered more stable due to the high level of certainty. The work in the farm is also much safer than in the swift's nests site. Besides, the yield from swift's nests is diminishing due to unregulated collection.

Only 27 percent of the child laborers went back to school, with the continuing pressure to be part of the productive rather than consumptive sphere of the household economy as the paramount reason. Breaking such pressure requires changing the whole socialization process of these groups of indigenous people. All the former child laborers said that their parents never asked them to work and the decision to help their families is entirely theirs. The pressure on them only eases when the household attains a surplus or breakeven of the amount produced and consumed. One indicator is the fact that households who sent their children back to school are those who are better-off – with bigger land, less number of children and more highly educated parents.

While the household surplus enables a family to forego the potential contribution of the child, it does not break the pressure on the child but merely postpones it, with the expectation that better education can bring higher monetary and non-monetary returns. The higher the level of education that a child attains, the brighter the economic prospect of the household and their status in the community.

Another critical factor considered by households in deciding the fate of child laborers is the quality and access to education in the community. Although there are schools in the project site, only full elementary education is offered in San Jose, Caatihan and Nabunga and full primary education in Cawayan. If they wish to enter high school, the children in Cawayan have to go to another barangay about two kilometers away. High school education is best available in the town center of Boston but children from San Jose, Caatihan and Nabunga would have to spend for expensive lodging away from home. With roads often impassable during the rainy season, commuting long distances is not a practical option.

Considering that high school education is unattainable, completing elementary education is not so attractive to households in the project site. After all, it is reckoned that the income-earning potential of the child only starts to increase when high school education is acquired. The advantage of higher literacy is also defeated if the quality of education is low, as experienced by the pupils in San Jose where there are

only three school days instead of five, learning materials are lacking, and teachers are often absent.

Although the children in the project site are no longer engaged in mining and swift's nest collection, these two enterprises continue to employ children mostly from migrant households in other barangays. The demographic and economic conditions of Boston and Davao Oriental ensure that a steady stream of children work in these enterprises. Around 40 per cent of the population in both Boston and Davao Oriental are 14 years old and below, and the province is considered one of the poorest in the country.

In addition, global factors such as high metal prices and the economic boom in China are making Boston and Davao Oriental a hotspot for child labor. Mining operations have expanded while China is intensifying the demand for swift's nests.

The project has undoubtedly engendered recognition and awareness of child labor, as seen among barangay and municipal officials as well as households. There is a widely shared understanding among local leaders and households that the intention of providing farm inputs as part of project activities is to wean the children from hazardous labor.

Non-formal education may have served as a vehicle to change the perception on child labor, but it also increased the capacity of beneficiary households to manage their farms' finances. Literacy in numbers has enabled them to compute the inputs and output and negotiate prices of their products with buyers. Improvement in their ability to read and write is also reported, but there is no indication that it upgraded their record keeping. In Nabunga, the informants reported that the non-formal education activities also made them more confident and improved their skills in dealing with people, particularly outsiders.

With the children out of mining and swift's nest's collection, the income sources of the households in the four barangays was reduced, making them more vulnerable to the fluctuations of the price of farm commodities. At present, the prices are good enough for the households to maintain their income level, but a decline in the prices of their products may again prompt the children to work.

The children's use of time and their activities drastically changed, whether they are in school or in the farm. In school, their time is devoted to more structured learning and socializing with other children. In the farm, the activities are more diverse than in mining and swift's nest collection. In both settings, activities do not demand over-exertion and there is much less exposure to hazards.

The project had less success in mobilizing local institutions against child labor. Of the four barangays, only Cawayan came up with an ordinance prohibiting child labor. The municipality of Boston did not pass any such legislation, and BOSMANTRICA has no continuing program that addresses the problem of child labor.

## **Implications on Child Labor Policies**

The experience of the initiative to eliminate child labor among indigenous peoples has implications on international and national laws and programs, which may be taken into consideration in the formulation of future policies.

There are a number of international agreements aimed at protecting children from economic exploitation and hazardous work, such as the following:

- 1930 - Forced Labor Convention
- 1959 - Declaration on the Rights of the Child
- 1973 - Convention 138: Minimum Age Convention
- 1989 - Convention on the Rights of the Child
- 1999 - Convention 182: Worst Form of Child Labor

Among these agreements, ILO Convention 182 can be considered the most compelling for its intention to reduce child labor. It identifies the four forms of child labor that must be eliminated, as follows:





- a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

IPEC, which funded the Boston project, is an offshoot of ILO Convention 182. Launched in 1992, it aims “to work towards the progressive elimination of child labor by strengthening national capacities to address child labor problems and by creating a worldwide movement to combat it.” The program advocates prevention and withdrawal of child labor, which is believed to perpetuate the vicious cycle of poverty by preventing children from acquiring skills and education. For this reason, one of the areas it is actively working on is the improvement of the educational system in countries where child labor is prevalent.

The intention of international agreements to respect the rights of children and spare them from economic exploitation is mirrored in Philippine policy, as expressed in four laws:

- Presidential Decree No. 442 as Amended: Labor Code of the Philippines
- Republic Act 7610: Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act
- Republic Act 8371: Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act (IPRA)
- Department Order No. 04 of DOLE: Hazardous Work and Activities for Persons Below 18 Years of Age

The Labor Code of the Philippines prohibits the employment of children below 15 years of age unless the child is under the sole responsibility of the parents or guardian, and the employment does not in any way interfere with school work. The law permits persons below 18 years of age to work under certain conditions, as long as it is not hazardous.

Republic Act 7610 clearly enunciates the state’s obligation to protect children from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation, discrimination and other conditions prejudicial to their development. It is the state’s responsibility to shield children from circumstances that affect their survival and development. This law provides the children of indigenous people with protection that is consistent with their customs and traditions. This includes a culture-specific alternative system of education that is relevant to their needs. The DepEd is charged with developing and instituting such an educational system, as well as supporting NGOs that provide non-formal education programs to indigenous peoples.

The Implementing Rules and Regulations of the IPRA law specifies that the use of child labor is punishable by fine and imprisonment. Meanwhile, DOLE’s Department Order No. 04 defines locations and work that are hazardous. Such locations include the underground, confined spaces and heights of at least two meters. Hazardous work includes those that involve manual handling or transport of heavy loads such as logging, construction and quarrying.

## **Reinforcing the Gains**

The condition in the four barangays shows that before the project was implemented, the government did not fulfil its obligations to these communities under international agreements or national laws. The project was the first effort to meet these obligations. It is also the first step in filling the gap between the requirements of international agreements and a country’s laws, and the capability of the international community and the government to fulfil them. To reinforce its gains and magnify its impact,



mandated institutions have to take the next steps in continuing the effort and ensuring that the elimination of child labor will be relentless.

The project in Boston has taught valuable lessons that other institutions could take heed in planning their next steps in addressing the issue of child labor, as follows:

- The vulnerability of the indigenous peoples group to child labor may be rooted in their culture, which must be understood better in order to design a suitable intervention.
- Among indigenous peoples, children work as part of their social processes. Hence, child labor can never be removed without changing the way of life of indigenous communities. Mechanisms are needed to maintain certain standards and keep children out of the worst forms of child labor.
- Site interventions must be tied up with interventions at the national, regional and international levels to attain maximum results. Factors operating at higher levels can undermine the gains of site intervention and make its accomplishments unsustainable.
- Strengthening the capacity of local institutions against child labor is indispensable in any initiative. The IPEC recognizes that the progressive elimination of child labor requires strong institutions. The project's experience validates the need for this strategy.
- Local institutions have resources that can be mobilized against child labor such as their mandate, organization, personnel, equipment and funds. The project can tap into these resources through collaboration in order to expand its capacity and reach and ensure sustainability. Partnership arrangements must be part of the design of any project.
- It is necessary to enlist local institutions in the effort to stop child labor to attain uniformity of approach. The project's participatory and community-driven approach can confuse the beneficiaries who are receiving assistance from other agencies that still use the conventional top-to-bottom models of intervention.
- The capability of the implementer to carry out a project espousing a certain approach cannot be assumed. Part of the preparation is to train its staff, particularly in preparing the required outputs. The project's experience shows that its staff lacked courses in the following fields: product processing, development and trading; visual and written communication; research; and report writing.
- Participatory processes must be used in the design and implementation as it is in this project. But the project staff must be inculcated with skills to carry these out. Some of the extension workers of the project did not gain the community's trust because of weak application of participatory processes in their selection and operations.
- Project implementers need to consider the sense of time of the beneficiaries and the circumstances in the setting. Since it is a rural area, work and other daily activities are done at a different pace compared to offices in urban areas. The implementer must also be given greater leeway to adapt the project to the site in order to better handle uncertainties and unforeseen events, and also to harness opportunities that crop up.
- Grants to project beneficiaries must be considered a stop-gap measure and not a standard practice to avoid dependency and to emphasize self-reliance. The households and communities must be turned into problem-solving entities to sustain project results.
- Increased market access through improvement of infrastructure and inflow of capital can enhance production more than direct grants. Mining operators and swifts' nest buyers control such access at the moment, rather than the local people. Although it is one factor that encourages child labor, greater market access can also work for the good of the community if it is used as an instrument to increase household income.



# Eliminating Child Labor

In many indigenous communities, survival techniques and group knowledge are transmitted from older to younger generations in the work setting. In these communities, the household is the basic economic unit. Each member contributes to production based on assigned roles and tasks. The transmission process ensures that the group is always well-adapted to its ecological niche and preserves its social organization and culture.

The work setting in these indigenous communities does not merely produce goods and services that meet their material requirements, but also functions as a social unit. Children are part of these units not just to contribute to the production process but also to learn how to become a member of the group. It is partly in this setting that children develop their ethnic identity and the sense that their group is distinct from all others.

This cultural practice makes the children of indigenous peoples vulnerable when the operation of profit-oriented commercial enterprises penetrates their communities. Capitalizing on the practice, they recruit children as part of the workforce to cut costs and raise revenues. The children's participation is not for their survival but for the financial viability of the enterprise. The work setting is no longer a social unit but a device to enrich a particular person or group. The result is the disruption of inter-generational transmission of culture and the degradation of the dignity of the indigenous communities.

The accomplishment of the project in reducing child labor in Boston can be sustained by immediate actions in the supply and demand side of the market chain. On the supply side, the susceptibility of the households to child labor must be reduced. On the demand side, the users of child laborers must be targeted and engaged in a bigger effort. Some immediate actions recommended to attain both are as follows:

- Prepare the Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan for the CADT so that its resources can be characterized, managed and transformed into revenue generating assets. The CADT area has minerals and swift nests sites, but their exploitation is controlled by outsiders. The outflow of benefits deprives the indigenous peoples of the chance to improve their income and reduce their vulnerability to child labor. It has also depleted their resources due to unsustainable use.
- Strengthen BOSMANTRICA by devising and instituting management systems and procedures. The organization is prone to conflict because of the absence of these systems. Their officers need training on management and sustainable financing to avoid organizational problems.
- Assess and strengthen the capacity of the Municipal Health Office to address population management and maternal and child care. Support must be obtained internally or externally to correct its deficiencies in helping to reduce the vulnerability of indigenous peoples to child labor recruitment.
- Improve the capacity of the barangay and municipal governments to manage child labor, particularly the demand side of the market, through more stringent regulations. Mechanisms such as the business permit system and health standards must be activated. Regular inspection must be done and fines must be imposed, which can then be used to support complementary programs such as population management, maternal and child care, non-formal education and livelihood support.
- The continuation of non-formal education activities is essential not only in improving literacy but also livelihood. Organizations that can carry out this effort efficiently must be sought and support must be mustered from local and outside sources.
- Engage the enterprises through dialogue and self-regulation. Individual mining enterprises and their associations must be oriented on the international agreements and national laws on



child labor. They must be helped in recognizing the problem and providing solutions on their own.

- Work at the higher nodes of the demand chain. For instance, local groups can link up with international NGOs targeting the middle and end users of gold and swifts' nests. This may be difficult because a large portion of the gold and swifts' nests produced in Davao Oriental are traded through informal channels. However, the option of using a certification system on gold and the swifts' nests may still be explored.

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## Case Study 6

# Alternative Health Care for Indigenous Filipinos

By Dennis B. Batangan



In the northern province of Benguet, the Ibaloi people of Atok still practice Gamal, when someone asking for help feeds the volunteers. He would then return the favor by rendering services for another community member through a practice called Aduyon. In the central province of Capiz, the concept of Damayan, which literally means helping one another, is still very much alive along with Yayungan, the act of carrying a sick individual on a hammock. In the southern Philippines, the people of Las Nieves in Agusan Norte have a tradition called Magtinabangay, which refers to the intuitive offer of help among members. These indigenous traditions have remained alive and served as a social blanket among indigenous Filipinos in time of need despite the prevailing mode of monetary exchange for services rendered in modern society.

From the perspective of the International Labour Organization (ILO), social security is a human right and an important tool for poverty reduction. In the 2001 document *Social Security: A New Consensus*, ILO stated: “Social protection can, through national solidarity and fair burden sharing, contribute to human dignity, equity and social justice. It is also important for political inclusion, empowerment and the development of democracy.” The 1989 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention further stipulates that “social security schemes shall be extended progressively to cover the peoples concerned, and applied without discrimination against them.” The convention urges governments to “ensure that adequate health services are made available to the peoples concerned, or shall provide them with resources to allow them to design and deliver such services under their own responsibility and control, such that they may enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.”

Social protection benefits range from basic health services, food, shelter and education in the poorest countries to more elaborate income security schemes in industrialized countries. In the Philippines, the mandate for social protection emanates from the 1987 Constitution, which “directs the state to promote and protect the physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual and social well-being of the people.” This mandate is articulated in the social services offered by various government agencies.

However, various sectors comprising Philippine society benefit in different ways from these social programs. The exclusion of disadvantaged groups, such as indigenous peoples, from legal and political mechanisms of the state deprives them of intended benefits due to them as citizens of the Republic. Hence, their traditional systems and coping mechanisms remain their first layer of protection from economic and social distress.

The term “indigenous peoples” refers to the more than 12 million descendants of the original inhabitants of the Philippines who have managed to retain their customs, traditions and life ways despite centuries of colonization. Before the Spanish and American colonizers came, the original inhabitants of the archipelago had exhibited the attributes of independent states, namely: people, territory, government (through their indigenous socio-political institutions), and sovereignty. They resisted colonization and refused to be subdued.



Under American rule, indigenous Filipinos were called “non-Christian tribes.” When the country gained independence, they became known as cultural minorities, or tribal Filipinos. In the last decade, the term “indigenous peoples” gained wider usage. However, many prefer to identify them through their ethno-linguistic groupings.

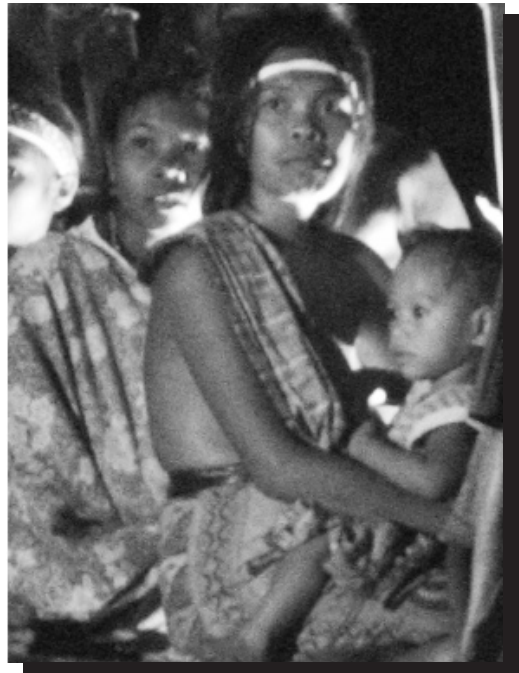
Socioeconomic, geopolitical and cultural factors have driven these communities to impoverished sections of the countryside where access to basic health care and other services is poor. These places have been described as hard to reach, unattractive to health providers, deprived, depressed, underserved and critical in terms of high health risks and precarious security situation.

A considerable number of indigenous Filipinos are still nomadic or semi-nomadic. Even groups with established settlements leave their permanent dwellings during certain times of the year to look for food and livelihood. Families in many indigenous communities are known to leave their houses after a serious illness or death in the family.

Health care practices form part of the belief systems of indigenous communities in the Philippines. Through centuries of existence, indigenous health care has been their primary response to illness and many have retained these practices because they cost far less than modern medicine. Their practices are usually lumped under the category of traditional medicine, a comprehensive term that includes Chinese, Indian Ayurveda and Arabic Unani medicine. The World Health Organization’s definition of traditional medicine includes medication therapies - involving the use of herbal medicine, animal parts and/or minerals – as well as non-medication therapies such as acupuncture, massage, and spiritual healing. The Philippine Institute for Traditional and Alternative Health Care has a more encompassing definition, as follows: “Traditional Medicine also known as indigenous knowledge and practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs incorporating plants, animal and/or mineral-based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises, applied singularly or in combination to maintain well-being, as well as treat, diagnose or prevent illness.”

According to a report from Plan Philippines International, some indigenous health practices have adverse effects and have limited efficacy for some diseases. In these situations, modern medicine would be more appropriate in addressing their health problems. From the point of view of the western oriented health system, the most common illnesses and disorders among indigenous peoples are cholera, dysentery, parasitism, diarrhea hepatitis, malaria, goiter, tuberculosis, polio, measles, pneumonia, and skin diseases. Malnutrition is a common problem, not only for preschoolers but also for nursing mothers. These imply inadequate health and sanitation services and facilities.

The Department of Health has acknowledged that addressing the health concerns of indigenous people poses many challenges. Indigenous people in far-flung settlements have a hard time reaching health services due to difficult terrain, steep fares, and lack of transportation especially during the rainy season. Insufficient knowledge regarding health services, irregular presence of service providers, and lack of medical supplies often discourage indigenous people from using the government’s health services.



Jofelle Tesorio

Indigenous peoples, like this Batak family in Palawan, often get marginal health care

## Building Blocks for Better Health

The Philippine Constitution and various social protection laws contain many provisions that are supposed to benefit indigenous peoples, but government services for them remain inadequate, inconsistent and, at times, non-existent. These laws and programs include the following:

### *Indigenous Peoples Rights Act*

The IPRA of 1997 (Republic Act No. 8371) declares: “The State shall guarantee that members of the ICCs/IPs regardless of sex, shall enjoy the full measure of human rights and freedoms without distinction or discrimination; The State shall take measures, with the participation of the ICCs/IPs concerned, to protect their rights and guarantee respect for their cultural integrity, and to ensure that members of the ICCs/IPs benefit on an equal footing from the rights and opportunities which national laws and regulations grant to other members of the population; The State recognizes its obligations to respond to the strong expression of the ICCs/IPs for cultural integrity by assuring maximum ICC/IP participation in the direction of education, health, as well as other services of ICCs/IPs, in order to render such services more responsive to the needs and desires of these communities.”



Clinics are often located far from indigenous communities.”

The Office of Education, Culture and Health (OECH) of the NCIP is mandated to implement the health provisions of IPRA. It has forged a Memorandum of Agreement with Philhealth to expand the Social Health Insurance coverage of IPs. The OECH is also in charge of direct provision of health services to IPs/ICCs in coordination with other agencies. One of its tasks is to identify members of indigenous communities “with potential training in the health profession and encourage and assist them to enroll in schools of medicine, nursing, physical therapy and other allied courses pertaining to the health profession.”

### *Philippine Institute for Traditional and Alternative Health Care*

Created under Republic Act 8423, the Philippine Institute for Traditional and Alternative Health Care (PITAHC) is the lead government agency on the development of traditional medicine. Republic Act 8423 is better known as the “Traditional Medicine and Alternative Medicine Act of 1997” and states that: “It is hereby declared the policy of the state to improve the quality and delivery of health care services to the Filipino people through the development of traditional and alternative health care services and its integration into the national health care delivery system.” In its website, PITAHC declares its vision as “Traditional and alternative health care in the hands of the people,” a concept parallel to Primary Health Care principles. Almost 10 years after the law was enacted however, traditional medicine practices and its coverage have not been integrated in the formal health system.

## ***Philhealth***

Under Republic Act 7875, the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation or Philhealth is mandated to provide all Filipinos universal coverage by the year 2010. Indigenous Filipinos are included in the National Health Insurance Program under the Indigency Program. However, there have been problems in the enrollment of IPs due to lack of birth certificates and problems in determining their place of residence. The NCIP is addressing this problem through an assisted process of documentation, but health coverage for IPs has not significantly increased. Out of five million Filipinos covered under the sponsored program of Philhealth, it is estimated that only 20,000 come from indigenous communities.

The Philhealth–NCIP pilot project in Jamindan, Capiz covered an estimated 600 IP beneficiaries in 2004. There is no consolidated national data, but anecdotal reports put the Local Government Units (LGU) coverage at an estimated 100 to 200 enrollees per community only. The small number is attributed to the fact that enrollment of IP groups is dependent on local government resources and the generosity of politicians. Under the decentralized health system, local governments are mandated to deliver health services to their constituents. However, these are usually biomedical in nature, inconsistent with the traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples.

## ***Department of Health***

The Department of Health has developed a special program called GIDA, or Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas, which is ideal for indigenous communities as many of them live in remote villages. The department has issued Administrative Order No. 185 Series of 2004 that spells out the implementing guidelines for GIDA, and proposed the new program to the NCIP. Both offices have not elaborated on the program for sometime, but it remains a potential venue for developing a more suitable health service delivery system for indigenous peoples.

In 2004, the Department of Health laid down a plan to improve the health and nutrition of indigenous peoples, with the following national objectives:

### **Health Status**

1. Reduce morbidity and mortality among indigenous people.
2. Improve the nutritional status of indigenous people.

### **Risk Reduction**

1. Increase the practice of personal hygiene and use of safe water and sanitary toilet facilities by 30 percent.
2. Increase knowledge, attitude and practice of basic health habits among indigenous people by 30 percent.
3. Increase access to and use of health services among indigenous people by 30 percent.

### **Services and Protection**

1. Undertake demographic and health surveys on indigenous people, using Minimum Basic Needs survey instrument and other community profiling tools.
2. Increase research initiatives on indigenous medicinal plants and healing practices, and appropriate and sustainable health system for indigenous people.
3. Formulate health standards, policies and plans appropriate for indigenous people.
4. Increase the number of cultural communities provided by LGUs and national government agencies with appropriation for health and other minimum basic needs by 30 percent.
5. Increase the number of cultural communities assisted by NGOs in setting up and sustaining people's organizations for health and development by 30 percent.



6. Increase the number of local health personnel providing services appropriate for indigenous people.
7. Provide 4,200 indigenous peoples' communities with technical, institutional and financial assistance to enable them to set up and sustain people's organizations for health and social development.
8. Increase health services for control of communicable diseases, malnutrition and environmental sanitation by 30 percent.
9. Develop a package of health services for indigenous people.

## **Indigenous Health Practices**

As a first step in designing a program that would enhance social protection for indigenous Filipinos, particularly in the field of health, local knowledge and practices in three communities were examined. The study sites represent the country's main geographical groupings of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. They were selected on the basis of their experiences regarding indigenous health programs and their interest in obtaining Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles.

### ***The Ibaloi of Atok, Benguet***

The community site selected in Atok is barangay Naguey, its oldest barrio. Its name comes from the native grass called "Nagnagkey" that abounds in the surrounding terraces. Many old houses still stand on the rocks that cradle the rice terraces, forming old but beautiful stairways. The houses are built close to each other and are found on both sides of the river. The Amburayan River and its tributaries make it possible for farmers to have two harvests per year from the irrigated rice terraces, which are suited to the temperate climate of Naguey.

Most of the rice terraces are believed to be more than five centuries old. When put together, it is estimated that they would cover more than a hundred hectares of land. They symbolize the people's ingenuity and strong communal spirit, as demonstrated through a self-help practice called "Aduyon". Depending on the number of workers needed to do certain tasks, the host butchers some animals and prepares other food such as root crops and rice. Most of the time, rice wine called "Tapoy" is served for the enjoyment of everyone.

The people of Naguey are industrious and speak an "Ivador" dialect with a distinct intonation from the Ivadoi, or Ibaloi language spoken in other parts of the northern Philippine region. The barangay has an estimated land area of 2,000 hectares. It has two public elementary schools, two health centers, and two day care centers.

**Knowledge and Practices on Social Protection.** The spirit of volunteerism appears to be strong in the community of Atok. It may even be considered the heart of their social protection mechanism. People willingly help one another in times of need such as child birth, tending the field, harvest, house repair, and taking care of the sick. Money is not a priority, in the sense that no one is expected to give money in exchange for services from community members. Typically, the one who asks for help feeds the volunteers (a practice known as Gamal) or returns the favor by rendering services when another community member needs help (known as Aduyon). Villagers are known to carry an individual who is sick all the way to the hospital. Sometimes, money is solicited, especially from more affluent families, for hospital expenses.

Practices derived from Gamal and Aduyon include "back-up" and "bulod." Back-up system refers to the practice of community members organizing themselves to work for someone who needs assistance, for instance a rice field owner, for a reasonable amount. The money goes to a revolving fund of the group, which members can access for loans or emergencies. Meanwhile, bulod is a borrowing system that involves goods such as rice.



As a result of these practices, people who have no money are able to live well, work is quickly accomplished, and the community becomes united. While there are a few who prefer to be paid with money, this is often due to some pressing need of the family.

However, some residents have observed a sharp decline in volunteer work. They say that lately, more and more people prefer to be paid in cash. This is inevitable, given the economic downtrend and changes in lifestyles. The availability of jobs in other towns, and the introduction of government contracts that offer paid labor have also contributed to decreasing volunteerism.

Despite the onset of modernization in the community, they still recognize the importance of keeping traditions alive. They cite the advantages to having voluntary and free labor exchange, such as savings in time and money, which have helped the practice to remain strong in Naguey.

#### **Defining Social Protection.**

Since the Ibaloi of Naguey are accustomed to such practices, it is

not surprising to find out that their definition of social protection is based on volunteerism and free labor exchange. Cooperation and service are heavily emphasized because they foster unity among community members. At the same time, such traditions lighten their load of work substantially.

**Types of Social Benefits Needed.** Farming is the main livelihood in the village, so their main concern is to obtain support on agricultural matters. In particular, they seek to generate resources that would ease their difficulties in harvesting and rice shortage. Livelihood training, education, income-generating activities and employment opportunities are needed to address their major problem, which is food scarcity. Insufficient harvest is forcing them to look for other sources of labor, and many have chosen to find work outside the community.

Increased access to health services is the top priority for many residents. Lack of medicine and access to hospitals are major problems, with most people forced to go to the urban center of Baguio City for proper medical care. Hence, they require assistance in the procurement of low cost medicine, access to emergency loans for hospitalization, and the promotion of herbal medicines. To withstand the rough mountain terrain, one of their aspirations is to acquire “improved hammocks” they can use to efficiently transport patients from the villages to the health facilities.

The people of Naguey noted that implementation of such schemes must be done in accordance with the spirit of volunteerism. The first step in achieving this is to inform members about any project through community meetings. Coordinating with local officials, monitoring, and follow-up are also important in ensuring the success of the scheme. These measures would help



On the trail to sitio Tapaan



prevent dependency among the people and avoid sentiments of abandonment when an assisting organization moves out.

**Increasing Access to Services.** Various government agencies can help introduce social protection schemes for the community. To address food scarcity for instance, the Department of Agriculture could help them improve rice productivity. The Department of Social Welfare and Development and local government can be tapped for assistance in Philhealth enrollment and membership. Non-Government Organizations are also seen as potential partners in increasing access to social services. Previous experiences with organizations such as Women's Health and Plan International (Philippines) have taught them the importance of collaboration. These agencies can help in other projects such as provision of scholarships and income generating trainings, and construction of roads.

In general, villagers reported no problems in accessing services because local government officials are approachable, road conditions have improved, and transportation services from their community to the town are available. Nevertheless, they suggested that consultations, community meetings, and following proper channels would help residents increase their access to services. Any government agency or NGO needs to consult local officials, village elders, and community members in order to increase project awareness and ensure their participation in any project.

While they appreciate any support from government and non-government agencies however, the people of Naguey still acknowledge the benefits and importance of traditional practices. They still believe their living conditions in the past were better because one could afford to live comfortably with very little money.

**Implementation of a Proposed Social Protection Scheme.** Good leadership skills and consultation with the villagers and officials through a community assembly are their basic requirements for ensuring success in any social protection scheme. A good leader must be able to manage and oversee the project. The project leader also needs to take into consideration any questions raised, objections, and expressions of approval or participation to the proposed scheme.

For any proposed project to flourish, it would be necessary to integrate traditional practices such as Gamal and Aduyon in its implementation. Although they are open to outside assistance and innovations, the people of Naguey also wish to uphold traditional practices that are beneficial to their community.

A monitoring system should also be in place. Elected community members would take charge of checking and following up project activities. Citing their previous experience with other NGOs, residents said some income generating projects were discontinued because of the absence of a monitoring group. Clearly, a monitoring and evaluating system must be in place and functioning well for any new social protection scheme to work.

### ***The Bukidnon of Jamindan, Capiz***

The town of Jamindan is located in Panay island, in the central Philippines. It is the biggest municipality in the province of Capiz, comprising about one-sixth of its land area. Five of its 30 barangays are found within a military reservation.

Jamindan is the home of the tumandok (native dwellers) called Bukidnon. They reside along the headwaters of Mambusao and Malinamon Rivers, and are scattered in seven barangays. Two of these barangays, Ganzon and Agbun-od, are inhabited entirely by indigenous communities. Lowland migrants now comprise the majority in the rest of the original Bukidnon barangays.

The most acculturated of the Bukidnon barangays is Jaena Norte, about 12 kilometers from Jamindan town proper. It has a population of 3,273 and a land area of about 2,600 hectares. Animistic beliefs and practices are no longer entrenched among the Bukidnon who live side by side with lowlanders. When they get sick, they can avail of medical facilities in the poblacion, especially if they have a lingering illness and they have resources to buy medicine. However, impoverished



Bukidnon are content to seek the services of the traditional healer or to use herbal medicines that are effective for minor ailments.

Most of the Bukidnon are farmers. They practice swidden agriculture on the mountain slopes and harvest their crops once a year. Those who have farms near the river manage to harvest twice a year because they make improvised irrigation canals for their paddies. Some work as laborers while others are engaged in trading, selling the farmers' produce in the military camp.

Sitio Agbalongon, the study site, is an hour away from the barangay proper of Jaena Norte, and about 45 minutes from the military camp on foot. Going there requires patience and stamina, as it can only be accessed through a narrow and slippery path. Houses are scattered on the plateau, and most villagers practice slash and burn agriculture.

**Knowledge and Practices on Social Protection.** Damayan, which literally means helping one another, plays an important part in the lives of people in Jamindan. In this community, lending a hand is done in many occasions, and in many different ways. During emergencies for instance, someone will climb the coconut tree to blow the carabao horn. This is the traditional warning signal that has been passed on from generation to generation. Bayanihan, which involves helping someone build a house, is also very much alive. Yayungan, the act of carrying a sick individual on a hammock, is still observed. Consultation with the babaylan, a traditional healer, and administration of herbal medicines are performed when one is sick. All these practices respond to the various needs of the people – physical, economic, and health - and are done without payment.

Concern for each other is a major guiding principle that allows the people of Jamindan to help one another without expecting anything in return. In spite of changes in living and economic conditions such as access to public education and availability of employment outside the community, they are still willing to render services to those in need. One factor that has allowed the survival of traditional practices could be the fact that most community members are related to each other. Thus, it is not difficult to seek assistance in times of need. As a result, family members and relatives become even closer to one another.

**Defining Social Protection.** Often, this is associated with access to medicine, health facilities and benefits. They recognize the importance of membership in Philhealth and availability of health information as major components of social protection. The presence of traditional healers, development of technology in obtaining herbal plants, and production of herbal medicines are also considered part of social protection. Sufficient food is another important aspect, as adequate nutrition helps prevent illness. Community assistance is seen as integral in any social protection scheme, as people can easily seek help if their neighbors are willing to assist them.



Research team in Jaena Norte

Fusion of traditional and modern technology is recommended. However, the reintegration of traditional beliefs in new programs is not encouraged because, as one resident put it, “it will be messy and complicated.” The popular use of both traditional and modern health services reflects the current practice of utilizing whatever health resource is available in the community. There is however a recognition that the traditional and modern health beliefs and practices also have inherent conflicts and differences. These conflicting approaches in diagnosis and treatment of illnesses often times put the health service providers and the patients in a dilemma as to how best to manage a certain case.

**Types of Social Benefits Needed.** Health is the greatest concern of the community. Thus, renewal of Philhealth membership is their choice of social protection because of its comprehensive coverage package. Although many have not used it before, they are aware that they would need it during emergency situations. However, there appears to be a mixed reaction with regard to implementation. Some say this is the sole responsibility of Philhealth, while others are pushing for an election within the indigenous community so that their officers could help implement the program. For unexplained reasons, they suggest that the social protection scheme should not be under Barangay supervision.

Access to medicine and health facilities is a priority. Availability of medicines that are orally taken (not injected) is preferred because indigenous peoples are afraid of needles. They are hoping for a Barangay Health Center to be built in their community. A facility for processing herbal plants and a more advanced communication system are also desired.

To address the problem of poverty, they believe that cooperatives and lending institutions would immensely help the community.

**Increasing Access to Services.** Government agencies are recognized as potential partners in providing various services to the Bukidnon people, thus increasing access to social protection. However, local officials have not prioritized projects for upland communities. In the past, other organizations such as the World Bank and NCIP have given them support but changes in leadership have resulted in termination of assistance.

The role of the Department of Health is pivotal in increasing access to services, for it is seen to have the capacity to initiate and implement programs that are very much needed by the community. Similarly, Philhealth is targeted because of its comprehensive insurance coverage. Having a health center is perceived as an institution that could address their concern because most of their problems are related to health and nutrition.

Problems such as bad roads, lack of transportation, and non-renewal of Philhealth membership have hindered access to services outside the Bukidnon community. To reverse this situation, they suggested the creation of a local office that would attend to their needs. They have also submitted a resolution to their local congressman requesting for road projects.

Because most of the Bukidnon in Jamindan are illiterate, great emphasis is placed on inter-personal behavior if one wishes to introduce a program to the community. This means that community immersion is needed before introducing the program. Project implementers need to stay in the community, become familiar with the people and their ways, and gain their trust and sympathy. Meetings are necessary to inform them of the objectives of the program and assess their needs. Careful planning, effective communication system, and an efficient monitoring system are required to improve access to social services.

**Implementation of Proposed Social Protection Scheme.** Information dissemination through meetings is the first step in implementing a social protection scheme. Proper consultation and an efficient monitoring system are two important factors that would ensure its success. Proper coordination with the NCIP is also necessary because it can assist implementers in informing the community members about the project.

Once the project is full operational, monthly monitoring is recommended. The Bukidnon people have expressed concern that most local officials in Jamindan are migrants, so they prefer to do the program monitoring themselves through elected leaders, who will give reports during meetings. They are aware that their participation in the program is crucial since it is for their benefit.

Roads leading to the Sitio should also be improved in order to increase access to the village. Lack of social services is often attributed to poor road conditions in the area.

### ***The Higaonon of Las Nieves, Agusan del Norte***

Las Nieves is a fourth-class municipality in the province of Agusan del Norte, in the southern island of Mindanao. It is composed of 20 barangays, including tribal barangay Lawan-lawan, the study site. Its land area is 58,269 hectares and has a population of 21,530. Indigenous peoples such as the Higaonon and the Manobo live alongside migrants from other provinces including the Cebuanos and the Boholanon.

**Knowledge and Practices on Social Protection.** The people of Las Nieves have a tradition called Magtinabangay, which refers to the intuitive offer of help among members. It is a practice handed down by their forefathers and calls for “liability and conscientiousness to help the tribe and family members,” according to one informant. This principle guides the community as they help one another in times of need. Ritual intervention through the assistance of the babaylan (traditional healer) is done to help the sick. Neighbors also help out during marriage and farming. These forms of social protection proved useful in Las Nieves during armed conflicts between government troops and the rebel New People’s Army.

Any work done in the community is based on collective effort. They help one another on different occasions, but most especially when someone gets sick. They help one another willingly, as this is deeply rooted in their tradition. Thus, the concept of “debt of gratitude” has no place in their community. If someone needs money, for instance, they will come up with donations. If the needy person cannot give it back, they will not hold it against that person. This is a testament to their commitment to help one another, a practice also known as hugos-hugos.

These practices have been very beneficial as problems are prevented or solved, and burdens are eased. Work in the farm becomes lighter, the sick are cared for, and houses are built for those who need them. People with insufficient financial resources are still able to live well because of assistance from other members of the community.

Health and nutrition problems encourage residents of Las Nieves to seek help from other community members. In seeking help from tribal chieftains, called datu, a ritual offering known as buhat-buhat is done in order to solve problems. Teachings of elders or ancestors about conscientiousness to help, or giving help as a responsibility, have paved the way for the continued observance of these traditional practices. This is not limited to monetary assistance, but also includes guidance, counseling, and giving advice.

**Defining Social Protection.** Las Nieves residents focus this concept on assisting the sick, improving road conditions, building health facilities, and feeding the malnourished. At the same time, they should promote and uphold existing values and beliefs. Cooperation among community members must be encouraged. Thus, the participation of the datu is essential in every undertaking. Respect for indigenous practices is highly valued, particularly in healing the sick.

Social protection schemes should provide assistance in health, education, road development, and livelihood such as farming and fishing. Transportation and medical insurance are their top concerns. Medicines, health facilities, and health workers are also necessary. However, traditional practices such as the use of herbal medicine and consultation with traditional healers must not be excluded. Instead, these are considered initial interventions when someone gets ill. Health workers and modern medicine are regarded only as an alternative to traditional healing.





**Types of Social Benefits Needed.** Pahina or working together voluntarily, especially during farming, and formal cooperatives is still practiced in the community. However, they need assistance in improving farm outputs, road construction, access to education, the use of herbal plants, and orientation on health intervention especially in fighting malaria. Training and education, and provision of farm and health implements, should be made available.

If these schemes are implemented, the residents, particularly their Barangay officials, intend to manage the projects themselves. Community organizing should take place to ensure active involvement of members, particularly in sharing the task of managing health facilities and maintaining farm implements. The advantages and disadvantages of the scheme have to be presented to facilitate decision-making in the community.

Seeking help from relatives, community members, and the datu is probably the most popular social protection scheme in Las Nieves. Assistance from a government institution, such as the NCIP, comes in a close second. The most important social protection scheme is one that provides income while promoting their traditional beliefs and practices at the same time. Programs that highlight customary assistance are clearly favored.

**Increasing Access to Services.** The NCIP, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Health, and Local Government Units are the agencies perceived to be the most capable in extending assistance and increase access to social services to the community. These agencies could help the community in monitoring social protection schemes or programs. They can orient the people regarding the services of their agencies during community meetings.

However, poor road conditions prevent people or programs from reaching their area. Barangay Health Workers are not able to visit their community regularly, and medicine is not available to them. Similarly, going to hospitals or clinics is also difficult for the people of Las Nieves because they have to travel great distances. Without roads, the task of increasing access to social services is almost impossible to accomplish.

Thus, there is an urgent need for construction of roads and access to transportation. Improved roads would result in regular visits from health workers, availability of medicines, and easier access to hospitals. Construction of a Barangay Health Center is also suggested, for this will eliminate the need to travel great distances just to get to a health facility. Coordination with local officials and the NCIP for project monitoring and evaluation is also necessary.



Many far-flung communities do not have access to health services



Drawing up resolutions and forging partnerships with different agencies is seen as the most effective way of dealing with these problems. It also calls for the active participation of the datu to ensure that coordination with individuals and government authorities is maintained.

**Implementation of Proposed Social Protection Schemes.** A community assembly attended by local leaders, community members, and relevant agencies is the starting point for an orientation on the proposed program. A case study on the culture and problems of the Higaonon tribe should also be discussed to promote better understanding on the proposed program. A group of individuals who are knowledgeable about the community's living conditions should be invited to help in threshing out issues.

A written agreement on the terms of implementation, assignment of roles, training of local trainers, meeting and coordination with local leaders and the agency involved, and information dissemination are some of the necessary steps in implementing the scheme.

Training and seminars must be responsive to the culture of the Higaonon. This way, the scheme can be easily integrated in their way of life. Active involvement among community members in monitoring the project, with the assistance of local authorities, is necessary to ensure a smooth flow.

## **An Alternative Health Program for Indigenous Filipinos**

Based on these three case studies, a social protection model has been developed, focusing initially on health insurance, to increase the access of indigenous communities to social services. The proposal is entitled "Indigenous Peoples Rights and Access to Appropriate and Alternative Health" Program. It assumes the NCIP as lead agency, under the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). The main areas of the proposal are as follows:

### 1) Policy Framework

The basis for the proposed program is the broader context of traditional medicine, the Philippine health care system, and a Filipino health belief model.

Since its adoption of the Ancestral Domain Sustainability Policy and Program, NCIP-DAR has included health services as a key result area in building social infrastructure and support for indigenous communities. As the projects with a health service component are currently in various stages of development and implementation, it becomes imperative for NCIP and DAR to review and consolidate its policies and programs regarding health support services.

The findings in the case studies strongly suggest the need for consultations with indigenous communities in developing this framework, as this will be the basis for policy and operational guidelines for the program implementers and partner organizations.

### 2) Initiation Phase

It is proposed that DAR, as the mother agency of NCIP, take the lead in this program as it has already initiated a health service program for agrarian reform beneficiaries.

For a start, DAR can issue a Department Order designating its Bureau of Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Development and the Office of Education, Culture and Health of the NCIP as the program's implementing units. A Technical Working Group may be created that would discuss policy questions and proposals resulting from this program, with the aim of influencing the policy development process of relevant government agencies. Through an inter-agency memorandum, DAR can officially inform the health agencies concerned (DOH, PITAHC and Philhealth) about the program and request them to send an official representative to the Technical Working Group.



To signify their support for the program, these agencies can sign a Memorandum of Understanding either on the anniversary of IPRA or Philhealth. This would serve to consolidate the efforts of the agencies involved in developing the health program. Relevant Circulars, Administrative Orders, Department Orders and other issuances from the different agencies can be attached as annexes to the memorandum.

With possible technical assistance from ILO, the Technical Working Group can prepare a joint memorandum circular within six months and an implementation plan within one year for the participating agencies. Bilateral agencies, international donors and NGO advocates can be invited to support program components or pilot areas, following the Sector Wide Approach currently proposed by donor agencies.

At the local government level, officials can be assisted to declare their policy intentions on the development of the health program. These would serve as strong guideposts for allocating resources, and also the basis for further agreements on the possible piloting of the program.

The participation of more people in the community can be a strategic move to institutionalize the health program in the proposed pilot sites. Existing beliefs and practices on social protection should be tapped in the conceptualization and implementation of the program. Consultation meetings and orientation sessions on proposed programs have been strongly suggested from the case studies; these could be a venue for discussing any barriers to their participation as well.

### 3) Implementation Phase

The proposed activities are described in phases, but they do not have to be exclusive of one another. A summary of the steps in implementing the health program is presented below.

#### Preparatory Phase

1. Situational analysis of national and local contexts
2. Training needs assessment of identified stakeholders
3. Preparation and approval of a Two-Year and Annual Operational Plans
4. Capacity building activities
5. Preparation and approval of a Monitoring and evaluation Plan

#### Pilot Phase

1. Issuance of guidelines on the implementation of selected program components
  2. Resource allocation and generation
  3. Allocation of government funds
  4. Designation of tasks and resource contributions from specific agencies, institutions, organizations and program partners
- Assessment of program impact on the National Health System
1. Promotion of the proposed program as part of the health sector, poverty reduction, agrarian reform, and cultural reforms for national development
  2. Assessing the contribution of the Alternative Health Program for Indigenous Filipinos to the National Objectives for Health and the development of a Filipino Health System model.
  3. Development of a benefit, monitoring and evaluation tool for the Alternative Health Program for Indigenous Filipinos.



## Core Elements of the Program

The proposed health program should have the following basic components:

1. A Filipino version, as well as translations in selected dialects, of the policy documents and guidelines should be made available to ensure that the intended beneficiaries will understand the concepts clearly.
2. An Operational Research Framework shall be crafted to address methodological or contentious issues in the development of the program.
3. A community-based social health insurance (CBSHI) system shall be established, on the assumption that IPs shall get broad coverage for IPs under the Indigency Program of Philhealth. The health service provider is assumed to be the rural health unit.
  - Specific Guidelines for the National Health Insurance Coverage of IPs
    - a. Sponsorship for the health insurance coverage of IPs should be assured for at least three years. In terms of population size, at least thirty percent should be covered in the pilot sites on the first year, increasing incrementally in the succeeding years.
    - b. An inter-agency coordinating committee composed of the Barangay Council, Office of the Mayor, Rural Health Unit, Municipal Social Work and Development Office, Philhealth local office, the Department of Health Regional Office, NCIP and PITAHC should be created.
    - c. A local health insurance office should be set up in the pilot sites to coordinate the implementation process.
    - d. A Local Health Accounts committee shall manage program funds and policies. This can be a sub-committee of the inter-agency coordinating committee. It should negotiate the sponsorship cost for the second three-year phase during the first year of the program.
    - e. Community mobilization should be based on current organizational practices and indigenous beliefs on health.
  - Community-based health insurance scheme

A parallel local health insurance scheme can be developed to complement national health insurance coverage. This will have two basic components, namely: a) community health financing; and, b) health care delivery mechanism. This would be a local risk sharing and resource pooling scheme, and will serve as a mechanism to finance the health care needs of the participants that reflects the values of solidarity and social responsibility. This strategy is expounded in the Social Health Insurance Manual, SHINE -GTZ Project by Elmer S. Soriano. The social protection schemes identified in the three case studies can be the starting point for the development of social health insurance schemes in the pilot communities.

Social health insurance systems include the development and maintenance of a health care delivery mechanism, such as primary care and referral systems, in an organized manner. Respondents in the three case studies cited the barangay health center and the government hospital referral network as their preferred health service providers and facilities.



#### 4. Policies and Programs consistent with Indigenous Knowledge and Practices

- Indigenous Knowledge and Practices as Program Basis

Program policies shall be developed to integrate indigenous health knowledge and practices in the delivery of services. This shall serve to guide the implementers at the national and local levels as well as partners and other concerned agencies. The definitions and framework from PITAHC will be the basis for the indigenous health practices and services that will be included in the program. This would have to include the processing and utilization of herbal medicine, as most respondents had identified this as a key component of the health services they expect to receive.

- Alternative and Traditional Health Care Services as Part of Program Benefits

Program benefits should be consistent with the health needs of indigenous Filipinos. This means that the services of traditional healers would need to be recognized. An innovative scheme of accreditation and remuneration for health services based on traditional medicine can be developed for this purpose. Some models that can be considered are as follows:

- a.) The modified capitation model. A traditional medicine practitioner who agrees to be an accredited service provider in the community will be given a fixed amount per family that is included in the social health insurance scheme, regardless of number of consultations.
- b.) Current cost model. The value of the services of the traditional medicine practitioner are based \* on the current cost of labor in the area, recorded, and contributed to a community fund.
- c.) Global benefits model. The capitation fund from Philhealth can be allocated to all health service providers in the area, including traditional medicine practitioners, using an internal formula.

#### 5. Basic health facilities

The GIDA approach of the DOH can serve as the basis for developing basic health facilities for indigenous peoples. In areas where there are functional health care facilities, the local government and community organizations shall review and upgrade the mechanism for health care delivery so that these will qualify for Philhealth accreditation. This would ensure that the Philhealth capitation fund will be provided to the health facilities.

#### 6. Primary health care

Social health insurance schemes usually respond to urgent and curative medical needs. Primary health care promotes the preventive aspects of health, such as: mass health education, organizing and training of volunteer health workers, indigenous or alternative health practices, sanitation, and nutrition. These activities promote good health and prevent illness, considerably reducing the cost to health services. A health belief model that recognizes indigenous knowledge and practices in health should be the foundation of this primary health care program.

#### 7. Inter-agency Networking

The burden of health care will continue to be shared by other agencies mandated to provide such services to the citizens. With the assistance of NCIP, indigenous communities and their partner organizations at the community level shall find ways to access resources from other government and non-government institutions to support their health requirements.

Health facilities and resources at the local government level should be maximized for the use of indigenous communities in the locality. People's organizations and cooperatives may participate in local health campaigns and programs, including those from the Department of Health. Negotiations and dialogues shall be done at the national and local level to enhance active support from concerned agencies in setting up and maintaining the health program for indigenous Filipinos nationwide. Collaborative mechanisms have to be institutionalized for the sustainability and continuity of the community based health support system.

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## Case Study 7

# Re-defining Indigenous Education

By Erwin M. Vargas

Quality education is relevant education.  
- UNESCO



For many decades, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has advocated the teaching of the principles of development and modernization in ways that respect the learners' socio-cultural contexts. UNESCO's Delors Commission supported this argument through its report "Learning: The Treasure Within" that views education throughout life on the basis of four pillars: 1) **learning to know** acknowledges that learners build their own knowledge daily, combining indigenous and 'external' elements; 2) **learning to do** focuses on the practical application of what is learned, 3) **learning to live together** addresses the critical skills for a life free from discrimination, where all have equal opportunity to develop themselves, their families and their communities, and 4) **learning to be** emphasizes the skills needed for individuals to develop their full potential.

This principle is in line with Article 26 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, which states that: "Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace."

Education for All (EFA), enunciated in the 1990 Jomtien Document of UNESCO, has been the guiding framework of the Philippine government in providing education to all sectors through formal and non-formal strategies. EFA aims "to meet the basic learning needs of all our people by expanding learning opportunities for children, youth and adults, making primary education universal and working for a fully literate society."

The 1987 Philippine Constitution guarantees the right of every Filipino to quality education. The rights of indigenous cultural communities (ICCs) are recognized within the framework of national development, as stipulated in the following provision:

*"The State shall encourage non-formal, informal and indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to community needs." (Section 2.4, Article XIV).*

Four years after the Constitution was adopted, the Congressional Commission on Education or EDCOM reported critical issues on education confronting the country's indigenous peoples, in the light of this provision. These are:

1. Access to public schools is difficult since most ICCs are in far-flung areas;
2. The curriculum and instructional materials are not relevant to the experiences of IPs;
3. Most teachers are from the lowlands, their attendance is irregular, they have no special

training for the education of tribal groups, and some are prejudiced against indigenous culture; and

4. The management of public schools is not flexible enough to accommodate the economic activities of indigenous communities, resulting in high drop-out rates.

To address the education concerns of indigenous communities, EDCOM made the following recommendations: 1) government support should be given to DepED-accredited IP schools in areas that are far from public schools; 2) promote non-traditional approaches in the teaching-learning process, develop indigenous materials, and train teachers in using them; 3) attract qualified resident teachers in rural areas and appoint para-teachers in areas where there are none; and 4) create a flexible school calendar based on the life cycle of IPs, and introduce health and nutrition programs to improve participation.

The EDCOM report noted that the weakness of the public school system vis-à-vis the education of ICCs/IPs allowed other sectors to fill the gap. These included NGOs and religious groups, which implemented formal and non-formal education programs geared toward empowering ICCs/IPs. Through comprehensive literacy education, these groups enabled indigenous communities to understand and address the issues confronting them, such as displacement due to armed conflicts and environmental degradation. The curriculum they implemented incorporates indigenous culture, modes of existence and needs.

Inspired by worldwide recognition of their right to self-determination and self-identity as advocated by ILO Convention No. 169, the Philippine Congress passed the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act or IPRA in 1987. The law mandates the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) to fulfill the constitutional right of indigenous Filipinos to quality education.

Under IPRA, education for ICCs/IPs is advanced within the context of their ancestral domains, the reality of their situation, and indigenous knowledge system and practices. Section 7 of Rule V of IPRA's Implementing Rules and Regulations mandates the NCIP to collaborate with institutions concerned with children and youth on the following:

1. Produce education literature about indigenous culture to facilitate efforts at integrating the subject matter into the IP curriculum;
2. Establish appropriate mechanisms in accordance with customary laws that shall involve children and youth in community leadership and decision-making;
3. Encourage and support the integration of indigenous knowledge systems and practices in both formal and non-formal educational systems;
4. Provide technical training and strengthen regional state colleges, universities and schools in fulfilling their role towards quality education that is relevant to the needs, interests and aspirations of indigenous children and youth; and
5. Use indigenous languages as the medium of instruction in early childhood and primary educational levels where applicable.

Section 6 of Rule VI gives indigenous Filipinos the right "to establish and control their educational and learning institutions." Under this provision, the NCIP is mandated to establish a program that supports the following:



A journalist interviews an Aeta girl

1. Establish, maintain and support a complete, adequate and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of indigenous peoples, particularly their children and young people;
2. Develop and implement school curricula for all levels using their language, learning systems, histories and culture without compromising quality of education and building the indigenous children's capacity to compete for higher education;
3. Encourage indigenous learning as well as self-learning, independent, out-of school study programs, school of heritage and living traditions that nurture cultural integrity and diversity that responds to the needs of IP communities;
4. Provide adult indigenous peoples with skills needed for civic efficiency and productivity; and
5. Establish processes and implement affirmative action in the employment of indigenous teachers in schools within their communities and assist them in their professional advancement.

Aside from IPRA, another law that is relevant to the education of indigenous Filipinos is the Early Childhood Care and Development Act, which mandates the holistic development of young children from birth to age six through a full range of health, nutrition, education and social services programs. It promotes the inclusion of children with special needs and advocates respect for cultural diversity. Apart from center-based programs provided through day care centers, the law legitimizes home-based programs with trained parents and other members of the communities as service providers.

Republic Act 9155 (An Act Instituting a Framework of Governance for Basic Education) promotes school-based management as a governance strategy, in collaboration with local communities. It sets the policy and direction of basic education in the Philippines, as follows:

*“The State shall encourage local initiatives for improving the quality of basic education. The State shall ensure that the values, needs, and aspirations of a school community are reflected in the program of education for the children, out-of-school youth, and adult learners. Schools and learning centers shall be empowered to make decisions on what is best for the learners they serve.”*

In line with this law, then-Secretary Edilberto de Jesus issued DepEd Memorandum 42 entitled “Permit to Operate Primary Schools for Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Communities” in 2004, which encouraged IP schools to formally register in the Philippine educational system.” Among the requirements were:

- **Curriculum.** It should be flexible without undermining the balance between the attainment of core learning competencies that every Filipino learner should master in the community and the indigenous culture.
- **Teachers.** As much as possible, qualified teachers should teach the core subjects of the curriculum. However, in handling the concerns of the community, e.g. culture, traditions, songs, practices, local para-teachers or those who know the culture may be employed. They need not hold a degree in education, but should be experienced or trained parents.
- **School Calendar.** While cultural or tribal idiosyncrasies are to be observed, the required calendar days of the school year should be followed as much as possible.

In the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan for IPs for 2004-2008, the assumption is that “given the onslaught of globalization and the immediacy of change facilitated by revolutions in the information arena, the indigenous peoples desire the preservation and protection of their culture, traditions and institutions as a way of coping with change. By remaining rooted to their tradition and culture, the IPs feel enabled to dynamically cope with the fast-changing world.” Thus, the plan

recommends strengthening the capability of indigenous peoples to preserve and protect their culture, traditions, and institutions by codifying their customary laws and supporting their efforts to protect their ancestral domains. It also aims to enhance the capability of the larger society to accept and understand indigenous peoples' culture, tradition and institutions through the revision of educational modules in public schools accordingly, and media education.

The MTDP for IPs goes beyond the usual strategy of addressing the education needs of IPs/ICCs through scholarship programs. It advocates curriculum development integrating IKSP, promotion of non-formal education services, establishment of IP community primary and secondary schools, and support for establishment of IP student services. It is apparent, however, that promoting these programs would need a careful analysis of the evolving policy, legal and community contexts of education for IPs/ICCs to ensure that these would be genuinely relevant to their lives and situation, and in line with the goal of national development.

Indeed, the passage of IPRA has enlivened long-standing debates on how education for indigenous Filipinos could truly become relevant and appropriate for them. It also strengthened the resolve of IP advocates to continue with their efforts on “indigenizing” IP/ICC education.

One of the ways of doing this is to harmonize indigenous knowledge systems and practices (IKSP) with contemporary methods of education. According to the IPRA law, IKSP refers to “systems, institutions, mechanisms, and technologies comprising a unique body of knowledge evolved through time that embody patterns of relationships between and among peoples and between peoples, their lands and resource environment.” It covers a wide range of subjects such as agriculture, livestock rearing, food preparation, education, institutions, health care, and natural resource management.

In many countries, including the Philippines, formal education continues to be Euro-centric in outlook and academic in orientation. It reflects Western industrial and scientific cultures, rather than the cultures of learners and as well as teachers. Globalization has further fuelled this trend, with skills acquisition throughout life seen as the key to economic growth.

The apparent contradictions between formal education and indigenous knowledge in the Philippines means that many students face conflicting demands. For those who come from indigenous communities, the purpose, content, and processes of schooling run contrary to those of their home culture and knowledge systems. It is no surprise then, that “cultural gaps” have been blamed for the underachievement of some students. For education to be relevant to indigenous communities, it has to be designed in such a way that knowledge is utilized to meet their needs, realities and aspirations as a people. The following sections portray how this is done in five different communities across the country.



Playing their own musical instruments is part of indigenous education

Lotelle Tesoro



# I. Education for Sustainable Development at the Kalahan Academy

The Ikalahan-Kalanguya people inhabit the southeastern portion of the Cordillera and western end of the Caraballo Mountain Range in Northern Luzon. Their traditional grounds, covering a total of 58,457.058 hectares, is the subject of their application for a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT). The area extends to three provinces in 26 barangays found in four towns: San Nicolas, Pangasinan, Sta. Fe and Aritao of Nueva Vizcaya and Caranglan of Nueva Ecija. Several indigenous groups and other ethnic communities are found within the ancestral domain, but majority of the population are Ikalahan-Kalanguyas, comprising 78 per cent of the total during the 2002 census.

The ancestral domain is divided into three parts. This case study shall focus on one part, the area covered by the Kalahan Agro-Forestry Development Project that was established through a Memorandum of Agreement between the Kalahan Educational Foundation (KEF) and the Bureau of Forest Development on May 13, 1974. It provided for the development of 14,730 hectares of Ikalahan ancestral lands, classified as public forest lands, located in the western section of Sta. Fe in Nueva Vizcaya and northeastern part of San Nicolas in Pangasinan.

The land is hilly and rugged, with Mount Imugan at the center and Mount Bantay Lakay in the southern portion. A ridge connecting the two mountains also serves as the basic watershed. Streams and rivers join the Agno River in the West while those in the eastern portion join the Cagayan River. Forest lands comprise 70 per cent of the area including some grasslands and brush land. The rest is devoted to agricultural use and built-up areas for residential and commercial purposes, roads and highways, parks and open spaces.

Barangay Imugan, where the Kalahan Academy is located, has an elevation ranging from 760 to 1538 meters above sea level. Its landmass is made up of undulating to very steep slopes, which makes the land vulnerable to soil erosion and less suitable for irrigation and farm machinery. This condition has resulted in a generally low agricultural activity.

Farming, mainly swidden (slash and burn) farming, is an important economic activity. Crops such as rice, corn, *camote* (sweet potatoes), cassava, ginger, gabi and vegetables like beans, tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, cucumber, bell pepper, beets, pechay, mustard, chayote, radish, sweet peas and spices are planted along mountain slopes and in patches of lowland. The Ikalahan also raise livestock such as cattle, swine and goat. Forest resources such as tiger grass, cogon and rattan are valuable raw materials for handicrafts such as baskets and mats, and for making the famous Sta. Fe brooms. The Ikalahan people are also noted furniture makers, utilizing oak and indigenous timber from the forest as well as bamboo. However, greater awareness and strict regulations on the use of valuable forest resources have affected this trade.

Indigenous beliefs and practices are still observed despite the conversion of most families to Christianity. The *keleng*, a traditional celebration among the Ikalahan, is still widely practiced. It is a semi-religious feast and ceremony for healing an illness, remembering an ancestor, restoring fellowship, or for a simple house blessing.

In 1954, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) responded to the request of the tribal elders and began to evangelize the Ikalahan. They have exerted a significant influence in the community, and 90 per cent of the indigenous people profess faith to the religion while retaining some of their animistic practices. Some elders said they are trying to “purify” their practices by eliminating the rituals that are not productive and those that pose a risk to their well-being. Many of the celebrations now feature Christian chants and songs. While dances still accompany the butchering of animals, none of the spirits or ancestors are addressed during the ceremonies and rice wine has been eliminated from the festivity.





The tribe's elders remain as important decision-makers in managing community affairs despite the adoption of the conventional political system. There are occasional tensions when the people ignore the barangay officials and choose the elders in calling for a *tontongan*, an indigenous practice of consensus-building. The community, together with the elders and the parties involved, engage in open discussions. Later, the elders decide if a consensus has been achieved and verbalize it to the community. *Tontongans* are called not only to settle disputes but also to discuss and give advice on engagements and marriages, as well as farm practices.

### ***The Kalahan Educational Foundation (KEF)***

In 1967, land tenure problems and the educational concerns of their youth brought the Ikalahan elders from the villages of Imugan, Malico, Bacneng and Baracbac together. Lowland settlers were encroaching on their lands and Ikalahan children had to travel far to Solano and Pangasinan for their high school education. The elders saw the need to work more closely and adjust to new demands. They also realized that they had to establish formal mechanisms as a way of expanding their personal and intimate approach in addressing community problems. This adjustment would allow them to negotiate with established institutions while retaining leadership in the hands of their elders. Thus, the **Kalahan Educational Foundation** was born in 1973 with the council of elders from the four villages serving as the governing Board of Trustees. The foundation was later registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

The first action of the board was the establishment of the Kalahan Academy, the first high school in the area for indigenous people. They linked up with networks to seek support for the education program. A church group from California donated the funds to purchase the land for the school, which gained recognition in 1974 .

The next move was securing their ancestral domain. In the same year, the KEF signed the agreement that secured their land for the Kalahan Agro-Forestry Development Project.

These victories strengthened the community's resolve to cooperate with each other in addressing their complex problems. Over the years, new projects have been added. The Kalahan Health Center was established to provide health care, while the Kalahan Mutual Aid Program provided a credit facility that allowed the people to start their own income-generating projects.

Gathering wild fruits from the forests and processing them into jellies, jams and preserves has become a viable alternative for a good number of Ikalahan families. For many years now, Ikalahan workers have cooked and packed fruits and flowers such as *dagwey*, guava, santol, ginger and even hibiscus in the Kalahan Food Processing Center daily. The products are sold under the label *Mountain Fresh* in big supermarkets as far as Manila.

Other projects of the foundation are organic vegetable farming, mushroom raising, and the propagation of orchids gathered from the forest in backyard plots in order to regulate abusive collection from the wild.

A recent addition to the diverse livelihood activities of KEF is a water purifying and bottling station that taps spring water from the vast water reserves in the ancestral domain to produce "one of the best-sourced bottled water in the country named Mountain Fresh Spring Water," as its brochure proclaims.

Eco-tourism is one program that runs parallel with attempts to revive the people's environmental consciousness while providing an alternative income source for the community. The Foundation has embarked on campaigns to protect and enhance particular sites in the reserve such as the popular Imugan Falls and the Imugan River, which won an award as the Cleanest and Greenest Inland Body of Water in the country in 1998. They prepared information materials on the unique environmental features of the place for the benefit of travelers.



Since most of the elders are also members of the Board of Trustees, some problems are brought to the attention of the Foundation rather than to the council of elders or the *barangay* (village) officials. To clear the confusion, community leaders have defined their responsibilities and delineated roles of each governing structure. The KEF board has also made it a policy to invite the *barangay* officials to their board meetings.

### ***The Kalahan Academy***

Elementary education has been accessible to the Ikalahans since 1944, when a public school was opened in the area. However, high school students had to trek through treacherous paths in the mountains to schools in faraway Solano or Pangasinan. They also had to endure severe discrimination and cultural stress while trying to obtain a secondary education.

With the help of UCCP Pastor Delbert Rice, who has lived with the people of Imugan since 1965, the Ikalahan elders established the Kalahan Academy to provide high school education for the indigenous people within the vicinity.

In 1972, the school started operations with a very small class of three students in the basement of the UCCP mission house. As more students joined, the mission house was converted into a classroom. Some classes were conducted in the UCCP chapel, and some under the trees.

Two years later, the government officially recognized the Kalahan Academy. By then, it had three teachers and 104 students, most of them from IP families. Majority came from the province of Nueva Vizcaya while 25 per cent came from provinces as far as Mindoro, which sent Mangyan students. Later, the school was built in its present site, with residents contributing materials for the construction of school facilities and other agencies providing further assistance.

Until school year 2000, the Kalahan Academy had an average annual enrolment of 250 students. With continuous expansion, the current average is about 350 students. In 2005, there were 17 faculty members and 364 students coming from nearby municipalities and provinces.

With most students coming from very poor IP families, KEF subsidizes the bulk of school expenses through donations from government and non-government institutions. In the last three years, students have benefited from the government's Education Service Contracting Scheme, which gives scholarship grants of P4,000 per student per year. As their counterpart, students pay a minimal fee of P1,500 annually. About half of the students who come from remote areas stay in very modest dormitories, also subsidized by KEF, paying only a monthly share of P75 for electric consumption. Those who can afford the P100 to P150 monthly fee stay with families around the school campus.

The school has a high participation rate of 90 per cent from its target sites, but completion rate only registered 65.47 per cent during the 2000-2005 period. This is a phenomenon all over the country among poor communities, especially among indigenous communities where students often drop out due to economic reasons.

### ***School Management***

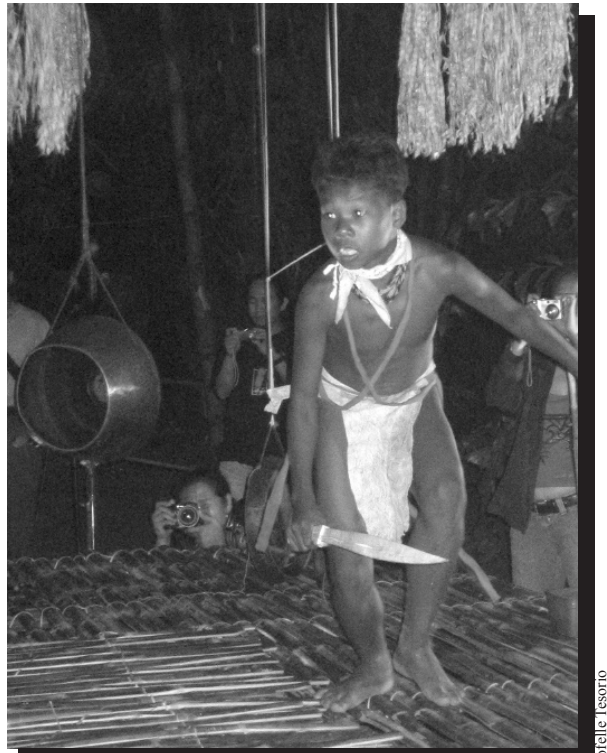
The Kalahan Educational Foundation, as the policy-making and governing body of the Kalahan Academy, manages the school directly. It played a major role in crafting the school's mission and objectives, as well as in determining curriculum content. It is also responsible in meeting the logistical requirements of the academy: construction of buildings, procurement of facilities, purchase of supplies, and paying salaries. To meet these demands, the Foundation has to continuously tap sources of funds through its networks or generate funds through its various livelihood projects.

Periodically, the Board of Trustees assesses the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the school to make it more responsive and relevant to the changing situation. Its current vision states: "The Kalahan Academy, a Christian School for indigenous students, envisions a dynamic community where justice and peace reside through democratic processes and economic self-sufficiency, and where indigenous practices, religious teachings and environmental stewardship are emphasized."



While the school has adopted the DepEd-prescribed curricula to meet the minimum requirements for secondary education, special topics and courses relevant to the life of the Ikalahans and the indigenous people in general have been added. This framework of education enables its graduates to learn the basic competencies expected of mainstream Filipinos while sharpening their understanding of their roots and equipping them with skills to manage their own affairs. Below are some features that have evolved in the effort to make education at Kalahan Academy appropriate to the needs of its students:

1. To ensure that students acquire life skills, each one is required to enroll in any of the following courses:
  - farm and mountain skills e.g. Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Arts and Crafts
  - home skills e.g. Culinary Arts, Tailoring, Family Health Care, Food Processing
  - shop skills e.g. Auto Mechanics, Welding, Handicrafts, Carpentry
  - office skills e.g. Business, Basic Computer, Typing, etc.
2. Cultural activities every year during the Foundation Day Celebration introduces students to their rich heritage as constituent barangays demonstrate their unique practices, music, songs and dances. Intramurals are also held every year in which members of the Cordillera Schools Group compete in sports activities.
3. Assigning the standard Values Education Class in Third Year as a Course in Ecology orients students to the principles of ecology, develops their awareness on environmental issues, and culminates in sustainable farming practices, conservation and protection of the ancestral domain.
4. Social Studies I helps freshmen study the details of their physical environment and trace the history of their people, including the practices of their ancestors in managing their land. The *ba-liw* (chants), *dayomti* (song), dances and rituals of the Ikalahan are committed to memory. Artifacts of their culture like baskets, musical instruments and other tools are studied, helping students appreciate and own their rich heritage. Social Studies III (Economics) assists students to study in detail the resources, products and services found within the Kalahan Reserve. The subject will end up with the students preparing feasibility studies on income generating activities that may be done in their respective communities.
5. The Sciences give particular focus on mountain ecosystems. The surrounding forest, river systems, farms and community gardens serve as living laboratories where students can test hypotheses. An Organic Agriculture module that helps students to plan and



Indigenous dances help children reaffirm their identity

Jofelle Tesorero



put up a backyard garden to raise vegetables for family consumption is a complementary topic. Techniques for preparing organic fertilizers and pesticides are also taught.

6. Training for governance and development of leadership skills that respect traditional practices starts early with the adoption of the *Tontongan system* in decision-making, in settling disputes and dispensing justice by the student government. This is a unique feature in the school system. First, the students are made responsible and second, unlike the conventional practice of meting sanctions and punishment to offenders when there are cases brought to the student government, emphasis is on self-discipline and consensus-building. When disputes or violations are too difficult for students to handle, the case is elevated to the Council of Elders at the community level. This demonstrates to all that the community assumes equal responsibility in the education of their youth.
7. Only teachers who are members of indigenous communities and therefore, understand the inherent characteristics of their culture and are committed to contribute in uplifting the conditions of IPs through education are assigned in the academy. According to the principal, their weekly meetings and church activities target the development of teaching skills and values supportive of indigenous education. Meanwhile, courses that require practical skills are handled by community elders, leaders and experts in their respective fields who are the most qualified to mentor students and guide them in acquiring life skills.

### ***Impact of Education at Kalahan Academy***

In his study entitled *Towards a Culturally Appropriate Integrated Educational System for Children of Indigenous Peoples*, anthropologist Pons Bennagen cited many gains of the school, which continues to create a positive impact on the life of the Ikalahans.

More than a thousand students have graduated from the Kalahan Academy since 1972. It is the school's pride that many of its graduates have returned to their roots and are taking active part in their people's development. Current officials of the KEF and KA and majority of the faculty are Ikalahans who trained at the Academy. The municipal mayor of Sta. Fe, where Imugan is located, and majority of its councilors and barangay captains are graduates of the school. Most of the officials in other mountain barangays within Nueva Vizcaya are also Kalahan academy graduates of KA within the LGU administration. Many barangays in Nueva Ecija and Quirino provinces have KA alumni working as community leaders. We find them as well among the Mangyans, Ifugaos, and Ibalois in other provinces.

The Ikalahan community and its elders have a distinct place in the educational program. They decide on the direction, form and content of their education through their involvement in strategic planning activities and in facilitating curriculum changes. This has increased their sense of ownership of the school and also helped build their capacity in managing the education program. Their broad participation is a big boost to their perspective of self-determination and sustainable development.

Education at the Academy helped in the revival of sustainable practices in agriculture and judicious selection of economic activities that protect their natural environment. There are school activities that send students to monitor farming practices and give out awards for environment-friendly methods. These efforts are responsible for the gradual restoration of the richness of ecosystems in the Kalahan Reserve.

Management of the school under the Kalahan Educational Foundation is a good model of a comprehensive development effort. Education of the youth is only one of the many components in the development scheme of the tribe, which includes all other aspects in the life. The foundation assumes an integrating function in the varied and complex activities of the tribe, an approach that affirms the interconnectedness and holistic nature of life. In this sense, education becomes an



important transmission mechanism of this reality. The attempt at Kalahan Academy to draw school lessons from various components of their life brings back the examination of indigenous knowledge and practices. Since culture is dynamic and therefore subject to change, the process helps in refining traditional practices to make them responsive to new conditions.

Education at Kalahan Academy also helps students to deal with mainstream society. They are trained to use computers and other gadgets that facilitate dissemination of information. Their training also includes proficiency in English, the language of Information Technology. In the social sphere, the students are exposed to confidence-building activities such as the decision-making process of *tontongan*, free articulation of ideas, friendly sports competitions, and cultural activities involving other ethnic groups. They also develop functional skills that would help them face problems in their daily life.

The strong linkages and support network of the academy may be attributed to their adherence to the vision, objectives, and clear processes set by the Ikalahan community through its foundation. The school continuously inspires generations of Ikalahans and motivates external donors as it charts directions for indigenous education efforts.

### ***Moving Forward***

Despite its gains, there is much room for improvement in the school. Ikalahan elders, barangay officials, students, parents and KEF board members cited the following concerns:

1. The perennial problem of financial sustainability weighs down on all efforts for sustainable development. Income from livelihood activities are not enough to support their efforts, and support from external sources is precarious and should not be depended upon on a long term basis. The community must prioritize ways and means for resource generation towards self-reliance.
2. Reorientation and development of new skills are needed to restore the Ikalahans' degraded resources, and the school is a good venue for research on this aspect. Efforts of the Agro-forestry section of Natural Resources Development must be supported, such as the regulations on swidden farming. Traditional economic activities that are extractive in nature must be rethought, and alternative activities must be put in place.
3. Efforts for indigenization of education program have not been adequate. Examination of the curriculum content in various subject areas reveal that it is not yet Ikalahan life-specific. Documented IKSPs of the Ikalahan must be integrated in the curriculum. Ikalahan teachers and volunteers must be trained to prepare learning materials using their IKSPs and experiences drawn from community life.
4. Learning resource centers that support general education must be established in strategic areas in the community to provide individual IPs with the opportunity to learn on their own time, in a way that befits their circumstances. This would also boost lifelong learning, which education advocates are actively promoting in the light of changes in society.

Inspired by their history and traditions that are closely linked to their natural environment, the indigenous education system in the Kalahan Academy has attempted to transmit new lessons that address their need to adjust to new situations. After 34 years replete with difficulties but punctuated by victories, the school will continue to draw insights on indigenous education that might unravel the key for containing the environmental damage in the local and global arena.

## **II. Dibabawon: Education in the Highlands**

The SILDAP Learning Centers for the Dibabawon communities in Kimataan and Okapan are found in the mountainous portions of Gupitan, the largest and most populated barangay in the





Municipality of Kapalong, Davao del Norte province. Travelers have to take motorcycles locally known as *habal-habal* and an uphill trek along slippery logging roads to reach the villages from Tagum City, the nearest urban center. Both communities are made up of clusters of houses built on both sides of the road. Most of the dwellings are traditional houses known as *bawoy*, which are small in shape and made of wood as well as other light materials.

The Dibabawon, regarded as the people who live “*sa ibabaw*” (in the highlands), are one of the major “*lumad*” or indigenous tribes in Mindanao. Originally, they were a nomadic people moving in and around the wide forest zones in Kapalong and adjacent areas. Like other tribes in the Philippines, they once lived peacefully and subsisted on nature’s bounty. They survived by living communally, sharing among themselves the diverse resources of their forest abode. Slash-and-burn agriculture or *kaingin* was practiced with caution, following their customs and rules.

The elders or *manigaons* and leaders govern the communities. The members have strong respect for their elders and comply with their critical decisions. The elders are traditionally the source of knowledge and skills for children and young people. They teach survival skills following oral tradition, and impose sanctions for violators of customary laws. From time to time, their *bagani* or warriors have to defend their territories from other tribes and migrants.

In the 1960s, the Dibabawons began to settle in different communities, including Kimataan and Okapan. By the 1980s, the influx of Dibabawons from various areas resulted in the conversion of these communities into villages that became part of a *barangay*, the smallest political unit in the country. This new situation introduced profound changes in their traditions as well as their social, economic, and political conditions as the center of the *barangay* is about 14 to 17 kilometers away from their communities. They have accessed social services through the *barangay* and some leaders have become the conduit of the communities to the *barangay*.

At the same time, the wide tracts of forest in Kapalong lured several wealthy families and corporations that began to engage in logging and other extractive activities. They built roads, such as those leading to Kimataan and Ocapan that were constructed in the 1980s by Aguinaldo Development Corporation. These activities radically altered the natural terrain and caused the diminution of the Dibabawon’s natural resource base. As a consequence, their traditional mode of subsistence living also changed. To cope with the entry of corporate interests, some Dibabawons became dependent on logging for their livelihood. Many villagers resent what they describe as the “divide and control” strategy of powerful families and corporations that weakened the social fabric of the Dibabawon communities. The influence of commercialism and the consequent materialism introduced by logging has also resulted in economic and political subservience among the Dibabawon people. They regret the fact that some have become leader-coordinators of powerful interests whose activities have negatively affected the community.

Amid the rapid changes, the Dibabawon along with their elders and leaders are resisting the threats to their ancestral domain. Their effort to defend the lands of their ancestors has led to conflicts with logging concessionaires and created tensions with the military. Some Dibabawons said the military outposts in the area remind them of their troubled past as a tribe and their vision for lasting peace in their communities.

Every Dibabawon family now has to eke out a living from their remaining natural resources. Most of them survive by maintaining a *kaingin* where they raise various crops depending on the season such as upland rice, corn, root crops, and some vegetables. There are also large tracts of land planted with bananas, part of a contract growing scheme that indicates a thriving banana industry in town. Upland rice is used for daily subsistence, but their harvest is not sufficient to meet the demand of an increasing population. Other crops that they used to barter among themselves and with other tribes in the past are now being sold in market centers. Income drawn from these crops is used to buy lowland rice and other commodities that are not available in their communities. As their livelihood base continues to get eroded, the cycle of poverty in Dibabawon villages remains a problem.



The introduction of market forces, which give primacy to monetary exchange, has demanded new kinds of literacies that the Dibabawons have to learn in order to avoid getting cheated. New skills in appropriate technologies, such as contour farming to increase production, have also become necessary. At the same time, they expressed the need for more training that would enable them to combine higher productivity with environmental protection.

Recently, the Dibabawon communities filed a CADT application with the NCIP in the hope of acquiring tenure security for their ancestral domain. This would help them protect the remaining forest resources and sustain their lives as IPs over the long-term.

### ***History and Objectives***

The schools for the Dibabawons in Kimataan and Okapan were established with the help of SILDAP-Sidlakan, an NGO founded in 1982 in Surigao City. The group is advocating the right of *lumads* toward self-determination through its various programs, which include literacy and education. The schools are the product of SILDAP's efforts to address the plight of Dibabawons whose rights are allegedly being violated by armed groups and logging companies.

*"Noon, wala kaming magawa kundi magpalipat-lipat ng tirahan para maiwasan ang gulo sa aming lugar. Kung tapos na ang gulo babalik na naman kami dito. Iniiwanan namin ang aming mga pananim at wala kaming makain. Ang SILDAP kasama namin at sila'y matiyagang nagtuturo sa amin, kasama ang aming mga anak sa gitna ng mga kaguluhan,"* (Before, we had no choice but to move to other places to avoid conflicts in our communities. When the conflicts subsided, we returned. We would leave our crops behind, so we usually had nothing to eat. SILDAP was always with us, patiently teaching us and our children amid these conflicts), said an elder in the community.

The communities were once considered "*no man's land*" because of frequent encounters between the military/paramilitary forces and rebel groups. Some members of the Dibabawon and Ata-Manobo communities were suspected as "sympathizers" or "members" of the revolutionary movement, and their villages became "targets" of anti-insurgency campaigns. The conflicts have been minimized with the presence of a military outpost in the area.

Angelina Ortiz, a SILDAP staff, recounted that the situation in the area was very tense when she was still actively working on-site in the 1980s. Back then, much of the trail was still covered with thick vegetation and she would hear the distinct whir of chainsaws felling trees while she was hiking to the Dibabawon villages. As the pioneer facilitator for SILDAP's literacy/education program, Ortiz had also hiked along the trail a number of times with several individuals whose institutions are supporting the indigenous community.

Early on, SILDAP provided non-formal adult education along with early child care services to address the perennial malnutrition problem among indigenous children. Formal schooling was then inaccessible, and children had to study in Gupitan and other places that were too far from their residence. These formal schools did not consider the nomadic lifestyle of the Dibabawon. *"Ang aming mga anak ay kailangang umabsent sa eskwelahan kung minsan depende sa panahon para makatulong sa amin. Minsan kung malakas ang ulan hindi sila makatawid sa mga ilog."* (Our children had to be absent from school depending on the season to help us in our livelihood. During heavy rains, they could not cross the rivers), said one parent. Furthermore, the usual requirements of schools such as birth certificates, marriage contracts and baptismal records have hindered them from availing of formal education.

In 1985, the Dibabawon people learned the value of formal education from SILDAP when they insisted on setting up a makeshift school in Kimataan. The school was built by the people themselves using locally available materials and small cash donations for nails from individuals and government officials. Various NFE classes were introduced for both young and old, such as functional literacy and livelihood classes. Reading and writing were integrated with basic measures in computing,



such as counting the number of kilos of harvested corn on the weighing scale. After one year, Grade 1 classes were offered in Kimataan, as well as Ocapan.

In 1988, the two schools were accredited by DepEd even though they were only able to offer classes up to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Those who wanted to continue their elementary education would still need to leave their communities. However, SILDAP noticed that the other schools negated the lessons children learned in their early years of schooling, so classes in Ocapan were expanded up to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to provide the Dibabawon access to complete elementary education.

### ***Enthusiastic Learners***

The schools for the Dibabawon aim to provide access to basic education that is relevant to them. The learners in both schools hail not only from Kimataan and Ocapan but also from other areas in Barangay Gupitan with a Dibabawon population, some of them coming from villages up to four kilometers away. Both are multi-grade schools offering combination classes. For school year 2005-2006, Kimataan had Grades 1-2 and 3-4 combination classes while Ocapan offered Grades 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6 classes.

According to the teachers, although Dibabawon children dominate the school population, they also have non-Dibabawon classmates whose families have become integrated into the community. In Kimataan school for instance, five learners are Ata-Manobo children who do not experience any difficulties as they speak almost the same language as the Dibabawons. Meanwhile, the Bisaya migrants have learned Dibabawon from their neighbors, who have also learned the Bisayan language by dealing with traders.

Compared to those in non-IP communities, these schools have over-age learners. The usual entry age for Grade 1 is six years old, but some students are older when they enroll, which is a normal occurrence among IP communities nationwide. According to SILDAP, the Grade 1 class had learners whose ages ranged from seven to 22 years old when the school in Ocapan was opened. Meanwhile, teachers in Kimataan said all children in the 6-12 age level in the catchment areas are likely to be enrolled in the school, as parents and leaders know the families with school-age children and encourage them to avail of the access to primary education.

While there are many enthusiastic learners, however, there are also some who refuse to send their children to school for fear that their children's values would change and weaken their rootedness in the tribe's culture and traditions, and eventually live a life away from them.

### ***Teaching-Learning Environment***

Each school has a five-hectare land area. The school sites are classified as "ancestral land," meaning the communities transferred ownership of the land to the schools through a deed of donation, a requirement of DepEd.

Classes are conducted in classrooms maintained through the effort of parents and the communities. Occasionally, they need to replace parts of the school houses that are damaged by typhoons. In Ocapan, they find this work too taxing, especially since the best sources of wood in the forests are getting harder to find. They are hopeful that DepEd could support the construction of a concrete school building to replace their wooden classrooms to make them more durable.

Fortunately, SILDAP makes it a point to stress that learning is not limited to the classroom. The entire community is considered a learning area, a rich source of knowledge for learners. Their education comprises the entire context of their community -- their socio-cultural, economic-livelihood, and politico-civic situation as indigenous people. Experience-based learning that strengthens their understanding and appreciation of their own culture, traditions and environment is integrated with basic elementary competencies prescribed by DepEd. As such, the schools promote the use of instructional materials that their learners can easily relate with because they are part of their culture,

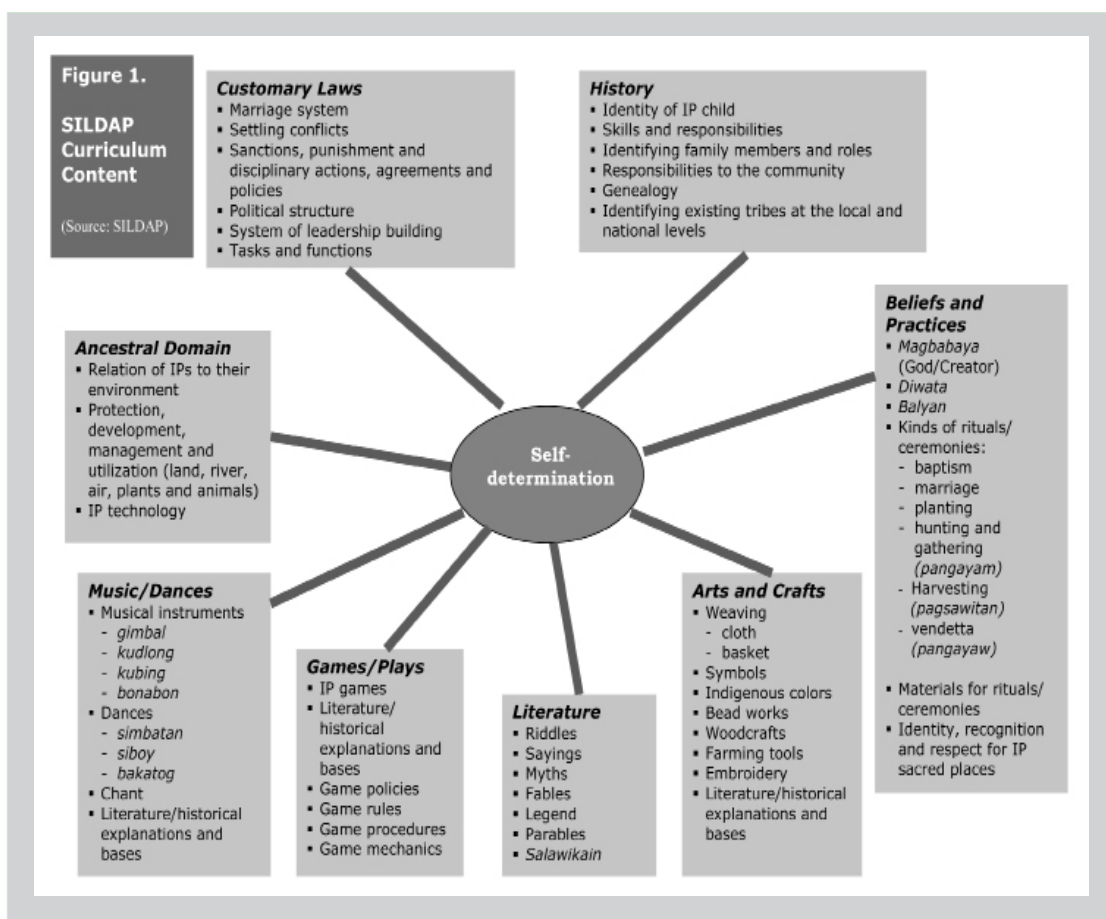


traditions and environment. Traditional musical instruments such as *kudlong*, *gimbal*, and *palidok* are displayed in the classrooms and in the mini-museum. The latter resembles a traditional Dibabawon where some of the learning materials are kept for the learners' use.

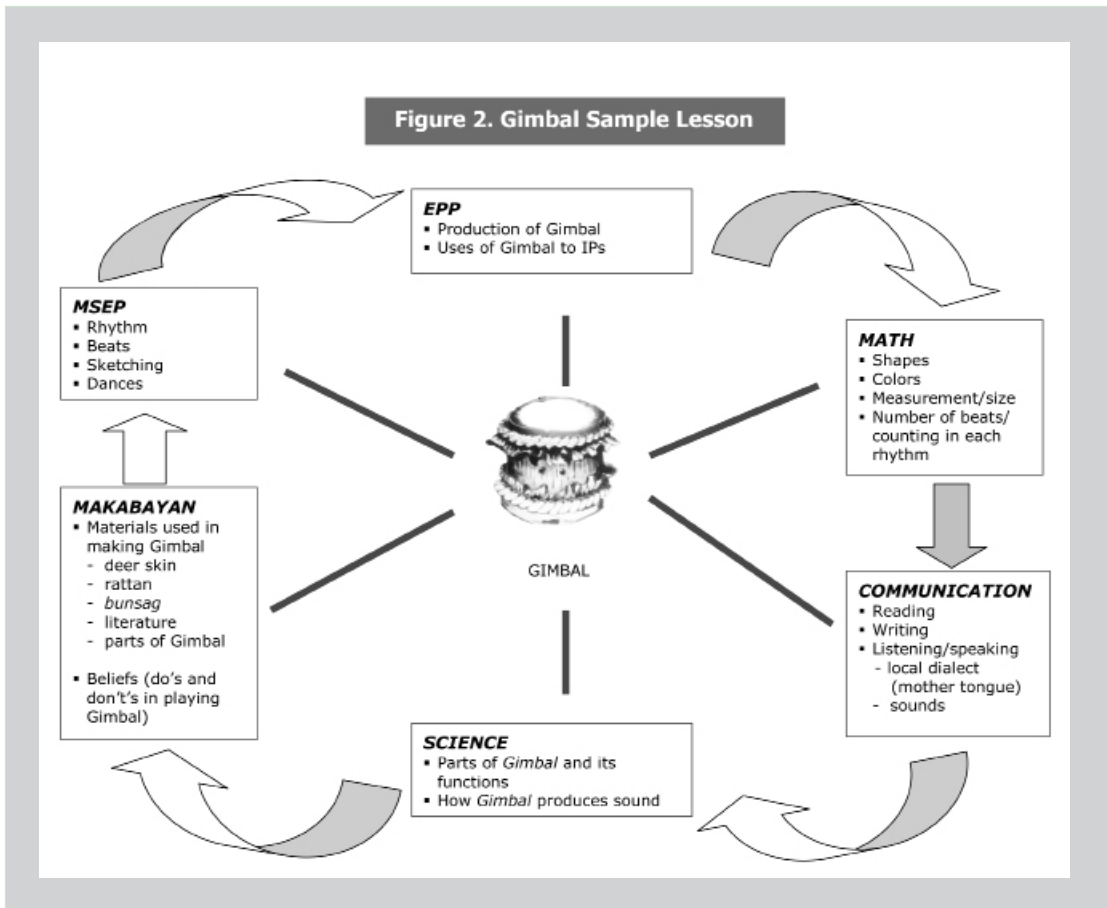
A mini-library is integrated in each classroom, utilizing materials relevant to learners. Farming and other livelihood ventures in the community are promoted as learning activities. The learners and teachers are encouraged to go out of the school to observe the environment, participate in the rituals, and join other community events. Community elders and leaders share their skills as resource persons and participate in the learning process in the schools, where they transmit to the young people the indigenous knowledge and practices of Dibabawons.

Relevant education is promoted by connecting learning to their lives and their realities as *lumad*. Through these schools, SILDAP advocates education for the Dibabawon people that will enable them to defend their ancestral domain, nurture indigenous lifestyles, enhance social awareness, and promote their IKSPs and right to self-determination.

The school curriculum is both holistic and integrative, as seen in **Figure 1**. The framework



of education promotes a culture-sensitive curriculum that aims for the holistic development of Dibabawon learners within the context of their right to self-determination. Within this framework, special emphasis is given to teaching knowledge, attitudes, values and skills in relation to their ancestral domain, customary laws, history, beliefs and practices, arts and crafts, literatures, games/plays, and music/dances. The communities select the topics they deem useful to their situation while SILDAP facilitates the process of selecting the curriculum content. and help the Dibabawon communities make



informed decisions. By connecting these subjects with the competencies in the traditional learning areas prescribed by DepEd, the holistic approach and integrative nature of the curriculum is achieved.

For instance, lessons in Math are connected with lessons in Communication Skills. **Figure 2** shows how the *gimbal*, an indigenous drum, is utilized as an integrating theme under the topic music/dances in the curriculum content. Discussion of concepts makes use of the Dibabawon language to enable learners to relate and understand them more effectively. Abstract concepts are related to everyday life in the communities; for instance, mathematics is connected to basic computing skills which they use in dealing with traders. This approach allows the discussion of lessons based on the integrating theme, a departure from the traditional approach of discussing the learning areas separately.

To make learning more relevant, thematic learning is promoted with monthly themes that respond to the seasonal life cycle of Dibabawon communities. Following DepEd's school calendar, the Dibabawon schools begin their classes in June and end in March. However, they also have monthly themes that focus on indigenous concerns, as shown in **Figure 3**. For instance, in the Month of June, the school curriculum focuses on the theme "environment." There are three topics under this theme: a) the relation of ancestral domain with the IPs e.g. source of livelihood; b) issues and concerns affecting IPs e.g. mining, logging, plantations, commercial tourism; and c) IP responsibilities in protecting their ancestral domain.

The monthly themes allow each of the learners to learn relevant lessons that they can use as responsible members of their communities to defend their ancestral domain. These also serve as the





**Figure 3. Monthly Learning Themes**



January: Month of Gatherings



February: Cultural/Industrial



March: Family Month



June: Environment Month



December: IP Rights

**Indigenous Education Monthly Theme**



July: Planting Season



November: IP Struggle Month



August: Indigenous Communication Month



October: IP Month



September: Customary Laws

Sources: SILDAP Tagum City

bases of the lesson plans. The facilitators match the lessons for each monthly theme with the grade level of learners - from simply familiarizing the learners with the issues to identifying the factors and elements surrounding these issues. The lessons become more complex depending on the capacities of learners. Lesson planning is done at the SILDAP Tagum City office every six months, with the participation of SILDAP facilitators as well as teaching assistants from the communities, under the supervision of the Indigenous Education Program Coordinator.

### ***Teachers and Teaching Methodologies***

**Teachers and Teaching Methodologies.** Although SILDAP encourages the participation of volunteers from the Dibabawon communities to serve as school facilitators, DepEd's stiff policy for private schools compels SILDAP to employ education graduates who have passed the board exams



for teachers. So far, only IP teachers who are not Dibabawon schools are serving in Kimataan and Ocapan, as the local communities have not yet produced education graduates.

The facilitators are required to go beyond actual teaching functions, as the curriculum demands their full immersion with the communities and developing a close relationship with the families of learners. Under the manual of operations of SILDAP, the teachers are known as Indigenous Education Facilitators and are mandated to perform the following responsibilities:

1. Facilitates and monitors tribal community literacy activities of children and parents;
2. Assists the Indigenous Education Program Coordinator;
3. Ensures follow-up of community activities after training and provide feedback about other activities of the institution;
4. Gives community updates and submits periodic reports and plans related to daily classes and community activities;
5. Establishes, organizes and consolidates community parents association towards dynamic participation and cooperation;
6. Follows-up on tasks and performance of the supported students;
7. Initiates community activities to strengthen parents' support for school development;
8. Assists in solving all community-related problems that may arise;
9. Documents community situation and IP literature (histories, legends, poems, stories, riddles, arts and crafts, etc.) related to culture and life of the tribe;
10. Involves oneself in periodic curriculum development, staff assessment, program evaluation and planning.

The high level of commitment required of facilitators is the key to their effective performance of various roles such as community organizers, researchers, agriculturists, counselors, resource persons, and negotiators. They usually conduct home visits to inform parents about the performance of their children in school, build rapport, gather information that can be used in the school, learn the local language and follow up on the commitments of the parents to the school. Their capacities are enhanced through trainings conducted by SILDAP.

As teachers, they employ teaching methodologies that are understandable and familiar to the learners. They promote hands-on learning; thus, students are able to learn by experiencing the lessons first hand following the monthly themes, not only by reading about them in books that are scarce in these communities. Teachers and learners get involved in community activities such as farming and rituals, the most popular of which are the *hinang* or thanksgiving in October and *pangayam* or hunting in January.

Since learning is considered a collective endeavor, the parents of learners and other members of the communities are encouraged to actively participate in the process of education, not only to provide material support, but also as resource persons of schools and as learners themselves. They come to the schools and teach their knowledge on the culture and practices of Dibabawons such as indigenous music and dances, instruments, chants, stories, and farming technologies. They contribute in the production of visual aids and other instructional materials that can be found in the communities. In this way, the parents also re-learn the customs and traditions of their communities.

Role playing, workshops and reports, analysis exercises, actual demonstrations, nature trips, actual observation exercises, actual demonstrations, recitations, action research, homework and projects, debates are among the methodologies that facilitators employ in school. They apply participative methods to suit the general mood of learners to make learning more effective.

Lessons also conform with the current issues faced by the communities. Thus, lessons on science or history may be discussed in terms of the rampant logging problem. The science part may discuss the effects of logging on the soil, flora and fauna in the forests while the history component may discuss human rights issues in relation to logging. The learners are encouraged to dig deeper on these issues through research.



The teachers in Kimataan recalled that at one point, logging was intensively discussed in the school, which made learners conscious about the problem. The school led a protest rally to denounce logging, making some parents angry as it is a major source of livelihood for some families. A ritual was held so that the community could discuss and resolve the issue collectively. In the end, the community went back to the original objective of the school, which is to protect their ancestral domain for the next generation of Dibabawon. Despite the continuing advocacy of the schools against logging however, it is believed that some individuals are still engaged in logging due to poverty and lack of livelihood opportunities.

As a way of combating poverty, SILDAP tries to introduce alternative sources of livelihood for some families. For instance, every household is encouraged to develop a backyard garden as source of vegetables to achieve food security. Families that express interest in such projects are provided with garden tools and seeds. SILDAP also promoted crop production ventures on the school farm to develop cooperative learning among parents and children. These avenues enable the facilitators to teach literacy more effectively, since it is integrated with a concrete economic endeavor.

To address absenteeism, a feeding program is held every week through the help of parents and the communities. They bring vegetables and other food that they cook and serve to learners in all grades. This is also a venue for learners to learn cooking the Dibabawon way.

Absenteeism among learners, especially those from far-off communities, worsens during the rainy months from December to February when rivers and streams become flooded and dangerous for young children to cross. In January, children also join their parents in hunting expeditions. Hence, this is the time of year when facilitators and parents would help one another to make sure that the children's activities outside the school would still be a learning experience for them. The facilitators conduct more intensive home visits and coordinate with parents to make sure that home study is indeed taking place. Parents are also required to report to the facilitators the performance of their children. During these months, more frequent feeding is conducted for learners who report to the schools. Remedial classes are held as the need arises to adhere to the 203-day school calendar required by DepEd. If some parents refuse to cooperate, the facilitators request the community leaders to deal with them.

The schools follow SILDAP's alternative system of motivational rewards. For instance, exemplary performance of learners is recognized by giving them school supplies and other materials that are useful to them, rather than the traditional medals and ribbons. Peer tutoring is promoted wherein students help one another learn various lessons, a significant departure from the traditional system that promotes competition among learners rather than cooperation.

The grading system is patterned after the grading format prescribed by DepEd for private schools. Performance of learners is evaluated through oral and written tests that assess the knowledge, skills or competencies, and values or attitudes they were able to learn and actually practiced in the schools, at home and in their communities. Quizzes and periodical tests are also administered. To improve the performance of learners, remedial classes are held after classes and on Saturdays. Wearing of indigenous dress or *puka* is required during important occasions in the school and community, and during graduation rites instead of the usual toga or formal attire.

### ***School Planning and Management***

Every six months, a school development plan is formulated collectively as a guide for school management at the academic and administrative level. It originates from the communities, incorporating the suggestions of learners, parents and key leaders. SILDAP staff make a critique of the plan with the facilitators, teaching assistants, education staff and invited individuals from the communities. SILDAP also assigns a Coordinator to monitor the performance of school facilitators.



The administrative part of the plan consists of school activities to improve physical structures such as repair work, school farm activities, monitoring of facilitators, and home visits. It is usually the primary responsibility of parents through “*Maas Mag-aanad Katibuan*” or the local Parents, Teachers and Community Association. It mobilizes the support of a local association of elders and leaders called “*Datu Alyansa*” which, in turn, gets assistance for the schools from local government units or its network of elders at the regional level.

The academic part describes the lesson plans of teachers and is primarily implemented by the school facilitators, in cooperation with parents and key leaders. A team leader is assigned among the school facilitators to lead the monthly meetings where they report their accomplishments as well as the difficulties encountered, develop strategies to address problems, produce lesson plans, visual aids, and other instructional materials.

Evaluation of the plan is done at the end of the six-month period, when they assess the output of the specific target areas and identify those that still need improvement. The results of this evaluation serve as the basis of the next plan.

The parents and communities support the school facilitators by ensuring their safety and providing a cottage near the schools where they teach. Local produce such as native chicken, vegetables and other crops are brought to the teachers for their daily subsistence. “*Tagbo*” or volunteerism is done to address the needs of the schools.

SILDAP also helps the communities support the schools in many ways. First, it oversees the facilitators of the schools and looks for ways to compensate them with the help of donors and income generating projects. Second, SILDAP facilitates the annual registration of these schools with DepEd, a costly exercise that requires heaps of documents and shouldering the travel expenses of DepEd monitors visiting the schools. Third, it assists in comprehensive learning activities inside and outside the formal setting of the schools, taking into consideration the objectives of improving the economic, social and political status of the communities. Fourth, SILDAP provides education assistance to learners who wish to pursue high school and college in public schools. These scholars are required to render voluntary service to their communities during school breaks and to involve themselves actively in the IP youth federation. Lastly, the Dibabawon schools are part of the advocacy agenda of SILDAP on indigenous education at the local and national levels, raising the chances of these schools to obtain support from different institutions for their further development and sustainability.

### ***Positive Impact***

Discussions and interviews with teachers and concerned parents showed that they believe the curriculum of the schools is relevant, responsive and culturally-appropriate. They agreed that the schools have imparted to the learners the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills they can use in everyday life: read, write, compute, self-confidence, improve agricultural production, promote sustainable development, and relate with non-Dibabawons. They believe that the schools have had a significant impact on parents and leaders in the communities, especially in gaining a stronger appreciation of their own culture and traditions that they have begun disseminating to the children and youth through the schools. Learners from both schools echoed the opinions of their parents.

Community leaders and SILDAP personnel provided additional information regarding the significant impact of the curriculum on the learners’ performance when they get to secondary school or college. They announced with pride that learners from these schools would always excel in terms of the diagnostic test for high school, with a consistent passing rate of 7 out of 10 learners. In high school, they can easily compete with graduates from other schools and are able to understand the lessons with ease. SILDAP is also proud of the exceptional dedication and performance of Dibabawon learners who have availed of its educational assistance program.



Ruel Otao, the first Dibabawon who was able to graduate from college with SILDAP's assistance, shared some of his experiences in the world outside his community. An excellent student in elementary and high school, Otao became a leadership awardee in college for being an active student leader in the University of Southern Philippines) in Kapalong.

According to Otao, he thought he would have a difficult adjustment period since he was not familiar with the rhythm of life in the lowlands. During his early days as a freshman in college, he did not find it easy to belong since he was the only Dibabawon in the school. He had no confidence to talk in classes for fear of making a mistake. However, he decided to make friends with Bisayan students and IPs coming from other tribes to learn about other cultures while strengthening his roots as a Dibabawon. He avoided negative influences and studied well, motivated by his dream to get a college degree and help his family and community. He also won a seat in the student government, serving in various positions that allowed him to promote the cultures and traditions of the Dibabawon in school and advocate their critical issues and concerns. He willingly participated in cultural presentations to enhance the consciousness of the students about the richness of indigenous cultures.

He graduated from college in 2003 with a degree in agriculture and currently serves as SILDAP coordinator for its Ancestral Domain Development Program, which includes Kimataan and Ocapan. His vision is to excel in his work by learning new knowledge and skills. He dreams of a better life for his family and his community, and does not think being a Dibabawon is a hindrance to attaining his ambition.

### ***Sustaining the School***

The issue of sustainability is among the most critical concerns of the two schools. Recently, the different stakeholders of the schools arrived at a consensus decision to transform them into public schools for Dibabawons under the supervision of DepEd, with the support of the local government of Kapalong and SILDAP. This strategy is patterned after the experience of the SILDAP learning center for the Mangguangans in New Corella, which was converted into a public school in 2003.

A memorandum of agreement has been drafted to formalize the partnership of these schools, but the DepEd had yet to make a decision and it had not yet been signed at the time this case study was written. However, the municipal government of Kapalong has expressed support for the schools, especially in hiring the five teachers as casual employees until such time that DepEd is able to absorb them. In 2005, the municipality passed a resolution authorizing Mayor Dominador P. Cruda, Sr. to sign the agreement regarding the turnover of the schools. The resolution states that the municipality shall consider these schools as "pilot schools for the Dibabawons" which, according to the mayor, is very much in line with the policy of his administration to prioritize the education for indigenous youth since a substantial number of the population is composed of IPs. He said the municipality has won an award for promoting literacy programs in all its *barangays*. Members of the Sangguniang Bayan (Municipal Council) also welcomed the town's support for IP education.

The draft agreement specifies that the DepEd "shall take responsibility for the administration and general supervision of these schools." The five teachers of the schools have been assured that they will be retained as long as they satisfy the minimum hiring requirements of DepEd. The continued professional development of the teachers still includes SILDAP, but there are apprehensions on whether they can continue what has been started in the schools if these are transferred to DepEd supervision.

Some individuals have interpreted the delay in the formalization of the partnership as an indicator that DepEd is not yet ready to adjust its guidelines in order to recognize these schools for the Dibabawon. Some of them think that the new criteria for hiring teachers will prevent DepEd from





recognizing the present corps of teachers due to lack of certain qualifications. But they still hope that DepEd would permit the turnover so their vision of sustaining these schools will become a reality.

### **III. *Paaralang Bayan Ng Mga Aeta Sa Zambales:* An Emerging Folk School**



PANLIP

Access to education has to be improved for the next generation of Aeta children

The eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the early 1990s marked the start of a critical phase in the lives of the Aeta community in Zambales province. After living for so long in the mountain they consider sacred, the Aetas found themselves engulfed in a mass forced migration that none of them wanted. Their survival was gravely threatened by hunger, disease, and the absence of a reliable source of livelihood.

Most of the Aetas migrated in groups, by tribe and clan, bringing with them what little could be salvaged from their former homes. In most cases, all they had were the names of their ancestral communities. Hastily prepared resettlement sites in Zambales, most of them located in the municipality of Botolan, served as host to a threatened people and to a threatened way of life. Although most resettlement sites now bear the names of the Aetas' ancestral lands, they still have to cope with the demands of a bigger society dominated by lowlanders.

The education needs of the relocated Aetas may be classified into two: those that can be addressed by

conventional modes through public schools, and those that require a different system due to the special needs of the indigenous community.

Most Aeta children go to public schools near their relocation areas, the main option for acquiring formal education. Integration into the public school system had been more difficult for the first batches of Aetas who enrolled, with many complaining about the 'unfriendliness' of the schools to Aeta learners. But as the years passed, the schools have seen a higher Aeta enrollment, meeting the needs of the younger generation.

However, the other education needs of the Aeta are more urgent as these have immediate implications on their daily life. For the resettled Aetas, survival meant looking for alternative livelihood and having to deal with non-Aetas for their basic needs. The land which had sufficiently provided for their sustenance in the past now lies distant and covered with lahar. After several years, depending



on the season, some have been returning to their ancestral lands to forage, to plant and to harvest whatever they can, but this is not enough. Others managed to find land to till near the resettlement sites. Most had to engage in livelihood activities previously unfamiliar to them such as vending, day labor, crafts production, and employment. Other needs such as health and other social services had to be accessed from various agencies. Furthermore, securing a place in their new setting where their uniqueness and rights are recognized meant participating in larger social processes that were new to the Aeta communities.

In view of these realities, the Paaralang Bayan ng mga Aeta sa Zambales (PBAZ) was conceptualized to address the education needs of the resettled Aetas outside the domain of the formal education system. In May 2002, PBAZ was established through the efforts of five Aeta leaders from the LAKAS resettlement who had taken the Leadership and Empowerment Course conducted by the Education for Life Foundation (ELF), a non-government organization. The school also obtained support from the Villar Resettlement Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Samahan ng Katutubo sa Masikap, ELF, Indigenous People's Apostolate, and the municipal government of Botolan in Zambales.

PBAZ's vision, mission and goals are as follows (translated from the original in Filipino):

**Vision:** For all Aetas in Zambales to unite in order to improve their quality of life with

respect for culture and traditions towards a progressive and peaceful community.

**Mission:** To organize and train Aetas to be good community leaders and to be able to establish strong livelihood projects.

**Goal:** In five years time, to establish a non-formal folk school for the Aetas in Zambales that shall train the leaders of every Aeta community and enable them to serve the needs of their constituency.

To achieve its objectives, PBAZ offers three main programs:

1. **General Leadership and Empowerment Course.** This is a four-week program first introduced by ELF and adapted by PBAZ, which covers a variety of issues related to IP rights and leadership topics ranging from conflict resolution to popular education. Leaders from the different Aeta communities in Zambales are trained in batches, with graduates from previous trainings serving as facilitators.
2. **Alternative Learning System.** Through this program, learners are expected to gain the same skills obtained through the formal education system (elementary and high school). ALS instruction is delivered through a set of learning modules developed by the DepEd-Bureau of Alternative Learning Systems (BALS) to promote five learning strands – communication skills, problem solving and critical thinking, sustainable use of resources, development of self and sense of community, and expanding one's world view. Out of more than 500 modules, 101 were chosen as applicable for the Aetas. With the help of the DepEd mobile teacher and instructional managers based in the PBAZ communities, four other modules with indigenous content were developed: *Karapatan ng mga Katutubo* (Indigenous Peoples' Rights); *Mga Kaugalian ng Katutubong Aeta, Kagamitan, Musika at Instrumento* (Customs and Traditions of Indigenous Aetas, Implements, Music and Instruments); *Katutubong Kaalaman Hinggil sa Kalusugan* (Indigenous Medicine and Health Knowledge and Practices); and *Katutubong Pagsasaka* (Indigenous Agriculture).
3. **Distance Learning Program.** This is a home-based program consisting of several modules including the following: *Pamumuno at Pagnenegosyo* (Leadership and entrepreneurship); *Paglilinigang: Lokal na Pamamahala sa Barangay* (Enriching: Local Barangay Governance); *Salubungan: Adbokasi sa Lokal na Pamahalaan* (Meeting Halfway: Local Government Advocacy).



All Aetas are free to enroll in any PBAZ program. The General Leadership Course is delivered primarily through seminars, lectures, and discussion. The ALS and Distance Learning Program are done through self-instructional learning modules with periodic guidance from facilitators. Thus, it follows that learners in both programs must be able to read and write, as they are designed to be individually paced.

For the Distance Learning Program, the learners decide whether to progress to the next module or to re-learn the current module, depending on their available time. Sometimes, it takes a learner one week to finish a module, sometimes longer. A self-assessment guide is incorporated into each module. Local leader graduates and trained facilitators take charge of the program.

Meanwhile, learners have to be assessed before they can enroll in ALS. Instructional managers based in the Aeta communities, with supervision and coordination with local DepEd-BALS personnel, implement the program. Some learners go through all the modules, while others choose only from among the available ones. When the learners are ready, they take the Accreditation and Equivalency Test and if they pass it, they are given a certificate equivalent to a high school diploma. It takes some learners less than a year before they are ready to get the test, while others take years.

Although PBAZ is actively operating only in the resettlement areas of Botolan, it is governed by a board elected from the leadership of Aeta communities across the province of Zambales. The governing board solicits funds from various agencies and NGOs. The PBAZ facilitators render service for a token honorarium, while DepEd mobile teachers and other A and E facilitators are paid by the DepEd Division of Zambales.

Most PBAZ programs are largely home-based. Periodic pre-planned sessions are usually held in multi-purpose halls in the communities, but plans are underway for the construction of PBAZ facilities. Efforts are also ongoing to more effectively serve Aeta communities in the neighboring towns of San Marcelino, Subic, Cabangan, and some areas in Olongapo.

Most of the support for PBAZ are voluntarily given. ELF and DepEd-BALS are the primary providers of technical curriculum and program support. The local government unit (LGU) of Botolan, which is considered a co-founder of PBAZ, provides assistance for the reproduction of teaching materials but has not yet provided a regular allocation for the school. The relationship between the LGU and PBAZ is rather vague, with no clear-cut rules of engagement. The LGU and provincial office NCIP provide a wide range of assistance on a per request basis, such as provision of transportation and resource persons.

After four years of existence, the school is facing the following concerns:

### ***Official Recognition of PBAZ***

Although it is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission as a non-profit people's organization, PBAZ is not officially recognized by DepEd as an institution catering to the education needs of the Aetas of Zambales. Its facilitators and para-teachers are also not officially recognized as IP educators. With official recognition, the following benefits and discretions could be provided to PBAZ:

- as an institution managed by and catering exclusively to the Aetas, PBAZ would be granted the discretion to modify and introduce topics to the ALS curriculum based on the actual needs of the Aeta learners and toward the promotion, preservation and appreciation of their culture;
- as an extension for delivering Alternative Learning Systems instruction, PBAZ could be given state subsidy for instructional materials and honorarium for para-teachers and facilitators.

At present, there is no system for the accreditation of institutions delivering alternative learning systems. PBAZ cannot apply for accreditation as a regular school as the requirements,



which include physical facilities and teacher qualifications, are way beyond its capacities. Furthermore, PBAZ was not intended to operate as a formal school.

### ***Customized A and E testing for IP examinees***

In 2006, more than 80 learners from the Aeta resettlement communities were deemed ready to undertake the ALS Accreditation and Equivalency examinations. Out of 25 who registered and took the exam, six passed. Considering national passing averages, this is already a good accomplishment.

However, PBAZ leaders believe that the examination procedures place the Aeta examinees at a disadvantage. Those who are exposed to the formal education system are more familiar with the examination procedures, and very few Aeta examinees had formal school experience. Also, most Aeta learners consider some of the ALS competencies less relevant to their learning needs, which are not provided in the usual ALS instructions. This is the reason why ALS instructions provided by PBAZ are enriched with four modules with indigenous content, but these are not considered in the exams. To offset the disadvantage of Aeta examinees, their leaders are pushing for the adjustment of the A and E passing standards for IP examinees. The A and E exam may also be customized for IP learners to include “indigenous” items.

### ***Official representation to the Sangguniang Bayan and Local Board***

The present administration of the Municipality of Botolan has been very supportive of the Aetas, putting up a center for Aeta culture and providing financial and material aid for PBAZ operations. The mayor has a liaison officer for Aeta concerns, but there is no official Aeta representation to either the Sangguniang Bayan (municipal council) or the Local School Board.

There are two ways for the Aeta community to gain official representation: election or appointment. In recent elections, some Aeta leaders joined the race for the municipal council but unfortunately, they were not able to garner enough votes. Their other option is to lobby for sectoral representation in line with the Local Government Code of 1991. In an interview, the municipal administrator of Botolan agreed that there is such a space for the Aetas, but although some dialogues were initiated, no vigorous efforts were exerted to follow-up the discussion.

### ***Political support instead of legislated agreements.***

Given the Aetas’ experience in previous elections, there is no guarantee that the level of LGU support for PBAZ will be sustained in case of changes in the local political leadership. The Aeta leadership therefore prefers LGU support based on legislation so that interventions can be programmed, allowing for smoother planning. The municipal administrator of Botolan is open to the idea.

### ***Policy guidelines on the role of NCIP***

The provincial office of the NCIP claims that there are no guidelines on the nature and extent of support, monitoring and supervision regarding organizations such as PBAZ. Hence, they cannot provide long-term support to PBAZ and requests can only be granted if these are within their capacity and general mandate. There is a need for concrete agreements between NCIP and relevant government agencies such as DepEd in order to have a reference where they can draw guidance from.

### ***Sustainability***

Having a relatively disadvantaged sector for its clientele, charging tuition and other fees is out of the question, making PBAZ dependent on financial and material support from various sources. As a fledgling operation, PBAZ also has to gain more technical knowledge in running a school. The management of PBAZ will have to develop expertise in this respect, since this is crucial in aiming for



official recognition. Essentially, PBAZ is a school for adult learners who, without the benefit of formal basic education during their youth, have to gain the basic knowledge for interacting with the larger non-indigenous society in order to gain access to services that they need and earn a decent living.

### ***Asserting indigenous identity***

For those who had been severed from their ancestral land for too long and in constant struggle for survival, the Aeta are in danger of losing their indigenous identity. As an emerging folk school for indigenous people that is context specific, PBAZ facilitates meaningful interactions between the Aetas and the non-Aetas, and provides a venue for the transmission and preservation of their indigenous knowledge and practices. The development and progress of PBAZ may serve as a reference for providing educational services for other indigenous peoples in similar contexts.

## **IV. Indigenization of Formal Education in Besao, Mountain Province**

In the Philippine context, the DepEd is the single biggest agency responsible for ensuring that the country's future labor force acquires the necessary knowledge and skills. Through its network of public schools, DepEd carries out this mandate and implements related policies, including some provisions of IPRA. Therefore, in areas where there are apparent contradictions between the contents of the western-oriented educational system and indigenous knowledge systems, it is in the schools that such contradictions are expected to be resolved.

The most common strategy employed by the DepEd to address these contradictions is often called *indigenization* or *localization* of the curriculum, which makes full use of the existing structure. It is premised on the principle that the knowledge transmission process is better facilitated if there exists a common orientation and established definition of terms and concepts between the teachers and the learners.

In the Cordillera Administrative Region, several programs geared towards the utilization of indigenized learning materials in the classroom have been initiated. Their proponents range from educational institutions to NGOs advocating indigenous peoples' rights. Several schools in the region were chosen as pilot sites for indigenization programs mainly because it is the only area in the country that has remained intact as an ancestral domain, thus, giving its people the continued benefits of the "material bases" of their cultural integrity. In effect, this removes basic concerns about land ownership. The Cordillera Region is composed of the central mountain ranges located in the northern part of the main island of Luzon in the Philippines. It has a total land area of approximately 1.75 million hectares covering the provinces of Abra, Mountain Province, Kalinga, Apayao, Ifugao, Benguet, and the city of Baguio. The present population of the region is approximately 1.3 million.

Among these indigenization initiatives is a project implemented in the year 2000 by the Education Research Program of the University of the Philippines-Center for Integrative and Development Studies. In one of the follow-up studies to this project, there was an attempt to measure the impact of indigenized learning materials on the learners' achievement and cultural identity. Two important factors that directly affected the indigenization efforts of some schools were identified – teacher training and the ethnic affiliation of the teachers. Four contexts where indigenization in the region takes place were also identified:

- **Context 1** – The teacher was given training and teacher and students belong to the same ethnic grouping
- **Context 2** – The teacher was given training and teacher and students do not belong to the same ethnic grouping





- **Context 3** – The teacher was not given training and teacher and students belong to the same ethnic grouping
- **Context 4** – The teacher was not given training and teacher and students do not belong to the same ethnic grouping

It is hypothesized that indigenization of the formal education curriculum is more easily undertaken and obtains the best results in the first context. Besao Elementary School and Besao Central School are examples of the first context.

Besao Central School is a district level institution located in the town proper. Besao Elementary School is located some five kilometers away, in Barangay Besao East. Both are complete elementary schools affiliated with the schools division of Mountain Province. They are relatively small, with only one section per grade level and school population of less than 300 each. All students and teachers belong to the Besao indigenous community.

Teachers from both schools have received training on the development and utilization of indigenized teaching-learning materials. Periodic monitoring reveal that teachers are actually implementing indigenized lesson plans and instructional materials.

One outstanding effort of Besao Central School is the production of reading materials from a compilation of local myths, legends, traditions and beliefs. Funded through the School Innovation and Improvement Facility component of the Third Elementary Education Project, these learning materials are widely used within the school district.

In Besao, as in most schools in the Cordillera, the idea of consciously indigenizing the formal education curriculum had been met with mixed sentiments at first. For some, the term “indigenous” suggests ‘old’ and ‘traditional’ at best, and ‘backward’ and passé at worst. Therefore, many thought it had no place in the formal education system where learning is equated with acquiring modern knowledge and technologies. ‘Preservation of the culture’ alone hardly seemed a sufficient justification for indigenizing the curriculum. From the point of view of DepEd personnel, the more acceptable reason is that ‘it catalyzes the teaching-learning process.’ Through trainings and advocacy, both goals have been adopted in Besao and most schools in the cordilleras.

As part of the formal education system, the schools in Besao adhere to the curriculum set by DepEd. Lessons are taught and budgeted according to the Philippine Elementary Learning Competencies. Indigenization is done through the methodical incorporation of indigenous knowledge and concepts to the existing curriculum. Indigenous traditions and concepts are readily acceptable for use in subjects related to the appreciation of the culture and the arts such as Physical Education, Health and Music (PEHM) and Social Studies. However, only those elements of indigenous culture classified as ‘useful’ are accepted, with indigenous concepts becoming contentious for subjects such as Math, Science and Communication Arts. As a general rule, the teachers use indigenous concepts in these subjects only when it is deemed helpful to the teaching-learning process. In science, for example, indigenous practices based on their belief systems are discussed in the lessons only to be disproved. Indigenous practices however, when properly understood and analyzed, serve as good examples of application of theories.

The mode of indigenization carried out in Besao necessitates a systematic classification of indigenous knowledge according to the subject area where they are most likely to be used. Social systems and customary laws may be classified under Social Studies, agricultural practices under Science or Technology Education. These are then tested for usefulness, with the Philippine Elementary Learning Competencies (PELC) used as reference for determining the entry points of these indigenous knowledge into the curriculum.

This mode of indigenizing the curriculum is sustainable in the sense that there is no shortage of resource materials, as these are drawn from community experience. For resource persons, it is not uncommon to have community elders consulted in matters concerning education and indigenous



knowledge. Indigenizing the curriculum also works in Besao primarily because both the teachers and students belong to the same ethnic group. A clear appreciation of the culture makes for easier integration of indigenous knowledge into the lessons. Teachers need not go through the tedious process of classifying, validating and determining entry points in the curriculum. Choosing which particular topic to include in their syllabus is almost instinctive.

Recent developments in public administration and within DepEd support such innovations. The move to decentralize the management of education allows for more discretion at the local levels in defining the contents of the curriculum, with school administrators now given the opportunity to produce their own instructional materials. However, there are some apprehensions that a centralized system for student assessment such as the National Achievement Test may prove to be disadvantageous to students that go through an indigenized curriculum.

Previously related studies and projects in Besao demonstrated that given the proper training, motivation and support from administrators, teachers are capable of developing teaching-learning materials in the form of modules, lesson plans, visual and other teaching aids. They are able to replace conventional yet foreign concepts with traditional and local concepts, without compromising on the desired learning competencies prescribed by DepEd.

Related studies also suggest that the teaching-learning process is enhanced by the use of indigenized materials. Such interventions however, were not sufficiently evaluated in terms of their contribution to enhancing the students' perception of cultural identity and consequently, to promoting their indigenous culture.

## **V. A School for the Mangguangans, a Vanishing Tribe**

The Mangguangans, or people of the forests (*guangan*), are among the indigenous peoples occupying the vast lands in New Corella, a third-class town in Davao del Norte province. Once a thickly forested area, logging concessions started operating in the town in the 1950s, profoundly affecting the lives of the Mangguangan. Rivers and creeks that they revered were desecrated.

Mayor Ricarido Federiso of New Corella has embarked on a campaign to restore the natural beauty of the town through reforestation projects that include components on livelihood, eco-tourism, continuing education, and good governance. Five barangays of the town have been delineated as logging areas. These include Mambing, the barangay where the primary school for the Mangguangans in Sitio Antequera can be found.

Sitio Antequera is about 28 kilometers from the town center by motorcycle, along bumpy roads snaking upwards to the highlands. Secondary growth trees can be seen along the road, remnants of commercial logging operations. The Sitio is home to 89 families, belonging mostly to Mangguangan and Dibabawon indigenous communities. Most families rely on farming as their main source of livelihood. Corn is planted as their staple food while others plant vegetables, maintain coconut groves, and raise livestock as additional sources of income.

The area was once a logging concession of Alcantara and Sons, Inc. In the early 1990s, it became part of DENR's timberland project, which was engaged in the massive planting of commercial trees, mainly gmelina. Most of the people were hired to maintain the trees and haul the timber to the town center. However, some workers stopped supporting the project after realizing its negative effects: the enormous roots of gmelina trees had invaded their farmlands and consequently, planting of crops was no longer viable. The area is now planted with falcatta, another species of fast growing trees. Each worker who hauls the timber is paid just one peso per board foot, but even though they consider the pay very unjust, lack of economic options leaves them no choice but to accept the measly amount.



A community leader's family recalled times past when trees grew thickly and there were plenty of animals and birds. Water was abundant and so was rice. The people never went hungry and helped one another willingly. They could rest under the trees peacefully.

In recent decades however, the situation has changed drastically. The trees, animals, and birds are gone. Water is scarce, especially during summer when the streams and springs run dry. They can no longer plant rice due to soil erosion. Instead, they plant corn and sell it in the market so they can buy rice and other basic goods. They earn extra income from the DENR project and selling of cash crops like banana. Their mobility is limited to avoid getting caught in the middle of a military operation. The family recalled that many villagers died or went missing when Martial Law was declared in the country. Still, they are hopeful that *Magbabaya* (God) will eventually show them the way out of their difficult situation. The community has applied for a CADT in the hope of saving their remaining natural resources.

### ***History of the School***

Illiteracy is prevalent among parents and children in the sitio because of lack of access to schools and education programs. In the 1970s, a primary school was established in the village, but it stopped operating due to armed conflicts. Many families were forced to leave the area for fear of getting caught in the crossfire, which considerably reduced the number of enrollees. A few children were sent to the nearest public school about eight kilometers away, but it was too risky as the children had to cross Mawab River, which is usually inundated during the rainy season. Most of them dropped out because many parents preferred to have their children stay at home rather than study. Their lack of education made them more vulnerable to external influences. Some of them got involved in logging while others left the community to work as housemaids, laborers, and other low-paying jobs.

In 1994, SILDAP started a pre-school in Sitio Antequera and took in 34 children aged 6-8 years. A community-based facilitator was assigned in the area. The following school year, classes for Grade 1 started, attracting children from nearby villages. Initially, the lone facilitator handled 85 enrollees. Classes were expanded to Grade IV in later years, offering multi-grade classes handled by one facilitator each. Some students went on to complete their education at the Mambing Elementary School, about eight kilometers from the sitio. In 2001, the first set of 18 pupils from the school in Sitio Antequera completed their elementary education, followed by 14 graduates in 2002.

School lessons conform with the basic competencies prescribed by DepEd, with indigenous content touching on the culture, traditions and condition of the Mangguangan people. The curriculum followed SILDAP's pedagogy in other *lumad* areas of Mindanao. Learners were taught to adopt and deepen their awareness on the knowledge systems and practices of the community. Group learning was encouraged, not only in the confines of the classroom, but also in their daily lives in the community.

The community supported SILDAP and the school through volunteer work. Parents agreed to the mandatory participation in any school activity, paying "fines" in the form of crops and vegetables if they failed to fulfill their responsibilities.

In school year 2003-2004, school management was transferred to DepEd. The school still offers primary education, and is now called Mangguangan Primary School. Its learners come from three villages, the farthest about three kilometers from the school site. The school sits on a one-hectare lot donated by a parent. A feeding center, a *lumad* house and the school farm planted with herbs, fruit trees, root crops and vegetables share space in the site.

With the transfer, SILDAP also turned over the facilities and instructional materials to DepEd. New structures such as toilets and a small cottage for teachers are under construction. According to Clodencia C. Bernaldez, the school district supervisor, DepEd allotted a budget of



PhP1.2 M to pay the salary of a teacher, repair the school building, obtain a land title for the school site, and purchase equipment such as desks, chairs, blackboard, chalk and other facilities. The LGU at the barangay and municipal levels complemented DepEd's support by helping in the construction and repair of some classrooms. Parents provided free labor and materials.

Many changes have been noted since DepEd assumed responsibility for the supervision of the school. Among the concerns raised by the parents are the following:

1. There are no IPs in the present team of teachers; they are all Bisayans. The agreement signed with DepEd stipulated that the government would absorb the SILDAP teacher, but this did not materialize. Instead, the teacher was transferred to a school in her locality. "*Ang teacher na ito sana ang susi upang maipagpatuloy ang nasimulan na katutubong edukasyon sa eskwelahan ngunit nawala siya*" (This teacher should have been the key to the continuation of the indigenous education started in the school, but she is gone now), one parent said. The present crop of teachers admitted that they have no experience on indigenous education, but expressed willingness to learn how it is done through SILDAP training.
2. The teachers have no substantive integration with people in the community. Since they are not from the area, they go home every Friday afternoon to spend the weekend with their families. They do not fully immerse during weekdays since they have to make their daily lesson plans after class, a requirement of DepEd. For this reason, they have little chance to experience the local situation and culture, which could have been the key to contextualizing their lessons. Rapport with families is not that strong, and some parents complain that there are no more home visitations.
3. The curriculum of the school does not promote indigenous content. There are no more lessons that give insights on indigenous cultures, traditions and situations. Subjects are discussed the way typical public schools discuss them; they are given separately at different times and are not connected to the rhythm of community life. Lessons on the environment are not seen in the context of real situations in the area. Methods are not experiential nor based on the realities of learners, causing learning difficulties among students. Most of the materials used in class come from DepEd, and the parents no longer serve as resource persons for lessons on indigenous cultures and practices such as dances, chants, cooking, instruments, and many others. Indigenous songs were replaced with western tunes such as *Jack and Jill* and *Rain Rain Go Away*, which are totally foreign to the Mangguangan students.
4. Parents go to school only if the teachers ask for their voluntary service or if there are meetings and projects that require contributions. The parents complain that they are no longer proactive participants in school planning processes, and are afraid that "dependency" would set in because the teachers assume all responsibilities in school operations. Compounding the problem is that the plan is written in English, which most of the parents cannot understand, and it does not mention indigenous education.

The parents, the entire community, and SILDAP had actually anticipated these changes when they were collectively assessing the situation of the school in 2003. However, they still pushed for the transfer to ensure the sustainability of the school, for the sake of their children and future generations. Hence, most of them consider the pressing issues faced by the school as transitional matters. Even though they are disappointed, the parents are optimistic that these issues will be resolved through an open mind and cooperation. They are giving their full support and commitment to help the teachers address their concerns about the school. Some of the recommendations for resolving the issues are:

1. The parents will facilitate the integration of teachers in the community in order to build rapport and give them insights on IKSPs that may be included in the lessons;



2. The teachers need to allow more substantive participation of parents in the school processes, not just as provider of free labor and material support, but also as resource persons on IKSPs; and,
3. Regular meetings between the teachers and parents should be held so that community concerns are resolved at once, with the knowledge and participation of everyone.

The parents' priority is still to support the school. Meanwhile, they are also petitioning for the return of Rosalima Sanchez, the pioneer teacher from SILDAP, so that the curriculum of the school can be made relevant to their lives again.

The Mangguangan people are regarded as a vanishing tribe in Mindanao. It will be a great achievement of DepEd if it contributes to the effort of reviving the cultures and traditions of the community through the public school system, for the sake of present and future generations. A team composed of representatives from concerned institutions may be formed to monitor the progress of this pilot implementation of indigenous education within DepEd.

## **A Framework for Indigenous Education**

The UN declaration on the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development or DESD (2005-2015) recognizes that “a key aspect of diversity is respect for indigenous and other forms of traditional knowledge, the use of indigenous languages in education, and the integration of indigenous worldviews and perspectives on sustainability into education programmes at all levels.” The IKSPs of indigenous Filipinos therefore, are important factors to consider in crafting strategies for sustainable development in their communities.

Under the IPRA law, this principle may be implemented in the Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP) of indigenous communities. NCIP Administrative Order No. 1, Series of 2004 encourages indigenous peoples to exercise their constitutional right to self-governance and self-determination by preparing their ADSDPP in accordance with their customary practices, laws and traditions. The plan is important as it facilitates the conduct of the Free Prior Informed Consent provision of IPRA. It can also serve as the basis of convergence efforts for assisting agencies in the sustainable development and protection of ancestral domains.

As a tool for people's empowerment, the ADSDPP is expected to be a learning process for indigenous communities so they may be able to understand their situation and collectively plan solutions to their problems. Hence, it presents the perfect framework for developing a relevant education system for indigenous Filipinos for the following reasons:

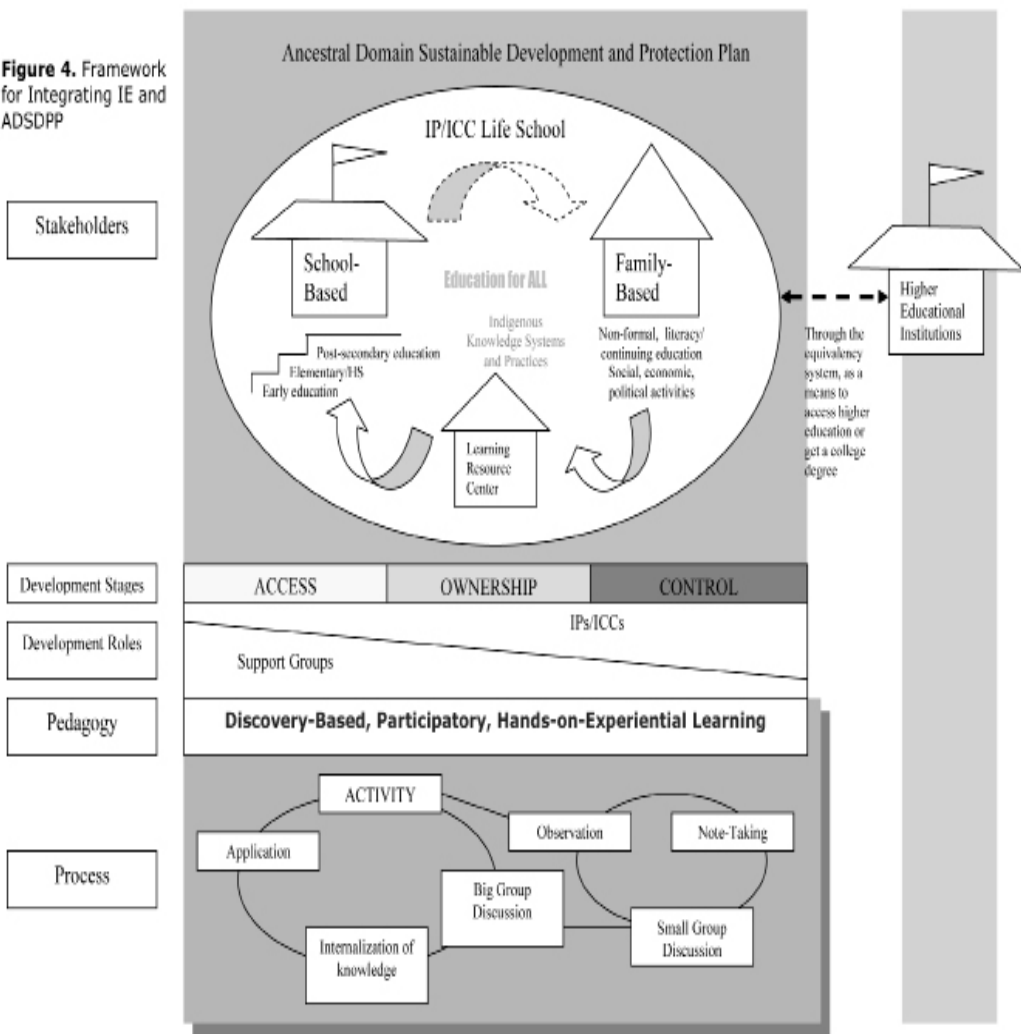
- It provides the correct principles that can be adopted in promoting a holistic and integrative indigenous education at the community level, within the IPs' ancestral domains, based on indigenous rights and IKSP, with emphasis on environmental protection, socio-cultural preservation, and gender-sensitivity;
- It establishes a process for mobilizing inter-sectoral and institutional partnerships, with the ICCs at the frontline;
- It defines the means for participatory identification of development issues within ancestral domains and how to address the situation;
- It provides a basis for them to effectively assert their right to self-determination since it defines the environmental, social, political, economic situation, limitations and potentials of their ancestral domain; and
- It defines the structure for project implementation, monitoring and sustainability.

The basic elements of ADSDPP such as the ancestral domain profile, community profile, indigenous knowledge system and practices, development needs and plans can be the bases for developing the unique contents of indigenous education modules. These contents may help the





**Figure 4.** Framework for Integrating IE and ADSDPP



ICCs develop lessons that can provide learners with the necessary knowledge, attitudes, values and skills that will enable them to become critical, responsive, proactive and productive members of their community. The plans identify the kinds of technologies appropriate to the situation of learners in different levels, which can help them contribute in the improvement of the quality of life of their families while protecting the environment at the same time.

The integration of ADSDPP with indigenous education is shown in **Figure 4**. The framework promotes the principle of Education for All by providing access to learning opportunities within ICCs. The concept of the IP/ICC Life School is based on formal/non-formal education systems. The formal stream provides access to basic education while the family-based mode is a non-formal, literacy-oriented, continuing education program providing knowledge and skills based on the major activities of IP families such as fishing and farming. All streams use IKSPs and modern knowledge and skills that can be adapted to the ICC's situation and can be used to address the complex range of issues related to sustainable development and livelihood of families.

The IP/ICC Life School promotes the establishment of Learning Resource Centers which can serve as a clearing house for all IKSPs and technologies promoted in the community. These are connected to the two learning streams, providing all learners with access to materials and resource persons. The school is also connected to higher education institutions through the equivalency system, so that IP learners may be able to continue their education outside their communities. It promotes participatory, discovery-based, and hands-on learning. Students learn how to observe keenly, take note of their experiences, engage in group discussions, and internalize knowledge so they can apply these to improve their lives. This process helps them to make informed decisions, eliminate risks, and adjust their lives so that they can attain development in harmony with nature.

The framework promotes three stages in order to attain development: access, ownership and control of lessons learned so that indigenous communities can make decisions on the social, economic and political aspects of their life within their ancestral domains. They become effective environmental stewards while meeting their own needs at the same time. The community is also encouraged to access resources from potential support groups as they gain better capacity in building partnerships in the larger society.

As the organization in charge of protecting the interests of indigenous Filipinos, the NCIP is best qualified to lead efforts for the financial sustainability of their schools. Although policies are in place to address the education problems of indigenous people, there are no guidelines nor resources to implement policies. It is best to delineate the NCIP's role at different levels in order to make indigenous education work. By doing so, NCIP staff will be oriented towards promoting IE objectives, giving them the authority to mobilize resources available within their localities in the face of limited resources allocated for IE advocacy within NCIP. In 2005, for instance, NCIP only managed to try out indigenized curriculum in four pilot areas, allotting about PhP269,000 for the project. Building linkages and fund sourcing at different levels would increase the chances of NCIP to assist communities, especially those that have implemented indigenous education strategies which can serve as models for other ICCs in the country.

On their part, interested communities may also strike partnerships with institutions that have potentials to draw alternative sources of funds for indigenous education. The Special Education Fund managed by LGUs is one potential source of such funds. Academic institutions in areas with a substantial IP population may also be tapped for support, especially in providing teacher training and scholarships for deserving indigenous children and youth.

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