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DepEd O R D E R
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**ADOPTING THE NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (IP)
EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK**

To: Undersecretaries
Assistant Secretaries
Bureau Directors
Directors of Services, Centers and Heads of Units
Regional Directors
Schools Division/City Superintendents
Heads, Public and Private Elementary and Secondary Schools
All Others Concerned

1. In line with the country's commitment to achieve its Education for All (EFA) targets and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and in pursuit of the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA), the Department of Education (DepEd) is adopting the enclosed **National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy Framework**. It was prepared in consultation with the representatives from Indigenous Peoples (IP) communities, civil society, and other government agencies.

2. This Policy Framework is intended to be an instrument for promoting shared accountability, continuous dialogue, engagement, and partnership among government, IP communities, civil society, and other education stakeholders. Recognizing education as a necessary means to realize other human rights and fundamental freedoms, the DepEd urges the strengthening of its policy on IP education and develop and implement an IP Education Program. This Program subscribes to the *rights-based approach* which gives primary importance to the principles of *participation, inclusion, and empowerment*.

3. Many IP communities continue to lack access to decent basic social services; they have limited opportunities to engage in the mainstream economy, and suffer social, economic, and political exclusion marginalization. A major factor contributing to their disadvantaged position is the lack of access to culture-responsive basic education. Thus, the right of indigenous peoples to education is provided in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997, and the numerous international human rights instruments, especially in the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).

4. Immediate dissemination of and compliance with this Order is directed.

BR. ARMIN A. LUISTRO FSC
Secretary *tlw*



Encl.:

As stated

Reference:

N o n e

To be indicated in the Perpetual Index
under the following subjects:

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION
POLICY
PROGRAMS

SMA/Madel, DO Adopting the National Indigenous Peoples Education
August 1, 2011

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

1. Indigenous peoples (IPs) remain to be among the most vulnerable and marginalized members of the citizenry. Many IP communities continue to lack access to decent basic social services, have limited opportunities to engage the mainstream economy, and suffer social, economic, and political exclusion.
2. Among the current disadvantages that IPs face, access to culture-responsive basic education stands out as one of the most critical to address, especially if the right to basic education is viewed as an “enabling right.” Basic education is an essential means for IPs to claim their other rights, exercise self-determination, and expand the choices available to them.
3. The problem of the IPs’ lack of access to education services is compounded by the fact that in areas where there are schools accessible to them, many of these have limited or no capacity to provide culturally appropriate education. Recommendations of various IP consultations have reiterated time and again the desire of IP communities for an education that is responsive to their context, respects their identities, and promotes the value of their traditional knowledge, skills, and other aspects of their cultural heritage. This is the kind of education that removes barriers to their meaningful participation in the different levels and spheres of society and empowers them to exercise their rights and duties as Filipino citizens.
4. Effectively responding to the basic learning needs of IPs is a key measure in achieving the country’s Education for All (EFA) commitments and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In line with the thrust of the Department of Education (DepED) to pursue institutional and systemic reforms to improve the efficiency and quality of the delivery of basic education for all, IP education has been included as a reform item in the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA).
5. There are existing models and best practices on IP education based on successful projects and interventions by DepED, non-government organizations (NGOs), IP organizations (IPOs), and other community-based initiatives. The DepED recognizes the need to consolidate these experiences and lessons to formulate a systematic and coherent IP Education Program, which subscribes to a rights-based approach and gives primary importance to the principles of participation, inclusion, and empowerment. Within a broader perspective, the DepED considers this as a step towards a Philippine educational system that is truly inclusive and respectful of the diversity of learners.
6. It is within this context that this policy framework was formulated by DepED in consultation with representatives from IP communities, civil society, and other government agencies. This policy document is envisioned to be an instrument for promoting shared accountability, continuous dialogue, engagement, and partnership among government, IP communities, civil society, and other education stakeholders.



A. Policy Background

7. The right of indigenous peoples to education is primarily enshrined in the Philippine Constitution, the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), and numerous international human rights instruments, especially the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
8. The Philippine Constitution (1987) stipulates that the State shall “protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all” (Art. XIV, Sec.1). The State is further mandated to encourage indigenous learning systems (Art. XIV, Sec. 2.4) and to “recognize, respect, and protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions, and institutions” (Art. XIV, Sec. 17).
9. The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 (Republic Act No.8371), which emanated from the constitutional provision on the recognition and protection of the rights of indigenous cultural communities/IPs (Art. II, Sec. 2), mandates the State to “provide equal access to various cultural opportunities to the ICCs/IPs through the educational system, public or cultural entities, scholarships, grants and other incentives without prejudice to their right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions by providing education in their own language, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning” and that “(i)ndigenous children/youth shall have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State” (Sec. 30, Chap. VI).
10. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), among other international human rights laws, contains specific provisions on IPs’ right to education. Article 14 of the Declaration stipulates that IPs “have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning” (14.1); “indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination” (14.2); and that the State “shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language” (14.3).
11. In response to the distinct educational needs of IP communities, the DepED has earlier issued DepED Order No. 42, s.2004 (“Permit to Operate Primary Schools for Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Communities”) and DepED Order No. 101, s.2010 (“The Alternative Learning System (ALS) Curriculum for Indigenous Peoples (IPs) Education”). The DepED intends to build on these existing policies and further strengthen the policy environment that would enable all its offices and units, especially those in the frontline of service-delivery, to effectively address realities on the ground.
12. Adding to the urgency of fulfilling the mandated duties and obligations contained in national and international laws is the Philippines’ commitment to the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which include the attainment of universal access to primary education by 2015, and the Education for All (EFA) 2015



Goals, which include ensuring that by 2015 all indigenous children have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality. The country has adopted the Philippine EFA 2015 National Action Plan as its roadmap to achieve these time-bound goals and corresponding targets.

13. The DepED, through this policy framework, seeks to move towards the full realization of these laws, national policies, and development commitments.

B. Process of Formulating the Policy Framework

14. A consultative and participatory process was employed in the drafting of this National IP Education Policy Framework. Representatives from IP communities, together with civil society partners, were invited to participate in the two regional consultations held in Luzon and Mindanao to ensure that IP communities can claim ownership of this framework. The two regional consultations were followed by a national validation workshop, where participants affirmed the principles of the draft framework and gave their recommendations on the formulation and implementation of an IP Education Program. The DepED shall be guided by these recommendations in the crafting of future policy guidelines and other related instruments that will ensue from this policy framework.

C. Policy Statements

15. Consistent with DepED's mandate to provide inclusive basic education for all, it shall be the policy of the Department to maintain an education system that will recognize, protect, and promote the rights and welfare of ICCs/IPs, as well as equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to face various social realities and challenges. IP education interventions are to be developed and implemented in consultation and cooperation with IPs concerned in order to address and incorporate their special needs, histories, identities, languages, knowledge, and other aspects of their culture, as well as their social, economic, and cultural priorities and aspirations. Towards this end, the DepED shall:
 - a) **Ensure the provision of universal and equitable access of all IPs to quality and relevant basic education services towards functional literacy for all.** The DepED together with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), local government units (LGUs), and other government agencies, and in partnership with civil society and private sector organizations, shall provide culture-responsive basic education services through both the formal school system and alternative learning system. The use of basic education service contracting and other public-private partnership (PPP) schemes shall be maximized in responding to the learning needs of IPs. Both supply- and demand-side interventions shall be expanded and diversified as needed. As part of maintaining the Basic Education Information System (BEIS), all DepED offices and units are directed to gather – in an appropriate and timely manner – relevant data needed from schools, learning centers, and education programs/projects for the effective planning and implementation of its IP Education Program.



- b) **Adopt appropriate basic education pedagogy, content, and assessment through the integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs) in all learning areas and processes.** The DepED shall give due recognition to and promote the sustainability of indigenous learning systems. The DepED shall also prioritize the further development and implementation of the following in schools, learning centers, and other learning services with enrolled IP learners: a) mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE); b) culture-responsive education for sustainable development and c) alternative modes of instructional delivery and assessment schemes to address the peculiar needs of IP learners.
- c) **Provide adequate and culturally-appropriate learning resources and environment to IP learners.** Aside from ensuring the proper selection and development of textbooks and other supplementary learning materials provided to IP learners, the DepED shall put in place a policy that would promote the establishment and maintenance of culture-responsive educational infrastructures, learning environment and spaces. Documentation and research activities by IPs on their own history, knowledge, practices, and other aspects of cultural heritage shall be encouraged and supported by DepED as a means of enriching the learning resources available to IP communities and the educational system at large. The DepED shall uphold and advocate the protection of the intellectual property rights of IPs in pursuing this policy.
- d) **Strengthen the hiring, deployment, and continuous development of teachers and learning facilitators in the implementation of its IP Education Program.** The DepED shall review, harmonize, and align its teacher education and development policies – consistent with the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS), MTB-MLE Policy, “Localization Law” (Republic Act No. 8190), and other relevant laws and issuances – to support affirmative action responding to the learning needs of IP learners. A support program for the training and provision of incentives for teachers assigned in IP communities, especially in isolated and hard-to-reach areas, shall be pursued as needed. The DepED shall encourage and mobilize support for members of IP communities, who may wish to enter the teaching profession, to help them complete the necessary academic preparation and satisfy professional licensure requirements. The active participation of community members, especially elders and community knowledge specialists, in the learning process shall be encouraged and supported.
- e) **Establish and strengthen appropriate multi-level units within DepED responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring IP education interventions.** The DepED shall strengthen the capacity of its teaching and non-teaching staff across levels to effectively and efficiently manage its IP Education Program. It shall likewise ensure that adequate financial support – sourced from various sources, such as the agency’s regular annual budget, the LGUs’ Special Education Fund (SEF), and education projects – are readily available to implementing units/entities to ensure smooth implementation and sustainability of education services.

- f) **Expand and strengthen institutional and civil society linkages to ensure proper coordination, knowledge-sharing, and sustainability of the IP Education Program.** The DepED in collaboration with NCIP, IPOs, civil society organizations (CSOs), and other public and private institutions, shall maximize – but not be limited to – existing inter-agency/multi-stakeholder basic education-related structures at all levels as the mechanism to coordinate, formulate policies, undertake social mobilization and advocacy, mobilize resources, and monitor and evaluate IP education interventions and initiatives. The DepED shall organize consultations and dialogues as needed to periodically review the implementation of this policy framework and other policy directives and interventions that will ensue from it.
- g) **Implement stronger affirmative action to eradicate all forms of discrimination against IPs in the entire Philippine educational system.** Within the framework of maintaining inclusive and effective learning environments, the DepED shall nurture, among all learners and DepED teaching and non-teaching personnel, respect for human rights and cultural diversity. In line with this policy, all concerned DepED offices and units shall also ensure that textbooks, supplementary learning materials, and other learning resources are free from discriminatory content and erroneous accounts, descriptions, and visual depictions, which misrepresent the history and culture of IPs or do not adequately acknowledge them. To promote greater awareness and appreciation of the IPs' cultural heritage and history – an integral, yet often neglected, part of the Philippine nation's cultural heritage and history – these shall be given due recognition and appropriately integrated into the learning content of schools and learning programs. The DepED shall actively promote compliance with this policy among private schools and other private institutions of learning.
16. Following the intentions of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, as well as the principles enshrined in the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 (Republic Act No. 9155), all DepED offices and units are enjoined to effectively communicate this policy framework to all concerned stakeholders in their respective areas of concern.

