

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 3805**



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Introduced by **HON. RENE L. RELAMPAGOS**  
First District, Bohol

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

A considerable percentage of the population of Bohol Province comprises various indigenous peoples (IPs). Specifically, the towns of Duero, Guindulman, Pilar and Sierra Bullones are homes to cultural minorities such as the Eskayas.

Also known as the “Visayan-Eskaya”, the cultural community is only found in Bohol. They have a unique cultural heritage, use a distinct language and literature, and have traditional practices that date way back to pre-Spanish times.

Unfortunately, many of these minorities are unable to gain access to sufficient training and education and are therefore unable to competitively seek means of employment and/or other forms of livelihood. Moreover, as much as we try to preserve the culture and language of the Eskayas, we see them fading away with the onset of technological advancement and new trends.

The legal mandate of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines (NCIP) is the protection and promotion of the interest and well-being of the Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) and Indigenous Peoples (IPs) with due regard to their beliefs, customs, culture and institutions.

On the other hand, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) is the government agency tasked to manage and supervise technical education and skills development in the country.

The bill seeks to pull together the resources and respective expertise of NCIP and the TESDA as well as the concerned local government units in the province of Bohol and ultimately come up with an avenue for education for the IPs of the province, specifically a training center where they can hone their technical knowledge and skills which shall be their implements and tools for obtaining livelihood and ultimately an improved life.

Education is essential to preserve the unique identities of IPs, as well as for the full development of their potential as individuals and as communities. This is why the United Nations has chosen ‘Indigenous Peoples’ Right to Education’ as the theme for the 2016 International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples. The UN Declaration recognizes the right of indigenous peoples to be educated in their own languages and cultures and calls on states to guarantee this right.

Yet there are many barriers to fulfillment, including a low prioritization of education for indigenous peoples in allocating public resources, language barriers and discriminatory and racist attitudes in education systems that are often reflected in textbooks and materials.

All of this combines to limit indigenous peoples' opportunities, develop and meet their full potential as human beings and as citizens. In the world today, the Philippines remains one of the countries where indigenous cultural communities and indigenous peoples can be found. Let it be our commitment, then, to help them improve their way of life and at the same time preserve their language and culture.

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

  
**RENE LOPEZ RELAMPAGOS**

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**“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TRAINING AND LEARNING CENTER IN THE PROVINCE OF BOHOL, PRESERVING THE CULTURE AND LANGUAGE OF THE “ESKAYA” AND PROVIDING THEM LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES, THROUGH EDUCATION, SEMINARS AND LITERACY PROGRAMS FOR LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”**

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

**SECTION 1.** There shall be established, through the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) jointly with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), an indigenous training and learning center in Bohol where the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) live.

**SECTION 2.** Definition of Terms. – For the purpose of this Act, the following terms shall mean as herein defined:

- a. “Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples” (ICCs/IPs) refer to a group of people or homogenous societies identified by self-ascription and ascription by others, who have continuously lived as organized community on communally bounded and defined territory, and who have, under claims of ownership since time immemorial, occupied, possessed and utilized such territories, sharing common bonds of language, customs, traditions and other distinctive cultural traits, or who have, through resistance to political, social and cultural inroads of colonization, non-indigenous religions and cultures, became historically differentiated from the majority of Filipinos. ICCs/IPs shall likewise include peoples who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, at the time of conquest or colonization, or at the time of inroads of non-indigenous religions and cultures, or the establishment of present state boundaries, who retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, but who may have been displaced from their traditional domains or who may have resettled outside their ancestral domains;

- b. "National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)" refers to the office created under Republic Act Number 8371, which shall be under the Office of the President, and which shall be the primary government agency responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies, plans and programs to recognize, protect and promote the rights of ICCs/IPs;
- c. "Eskaya" refers to an indigenous tribe found in the hinterlands of Bohol province. The settlement of this tribe is at Biabas, Guindulman, established in the early 20th century by one Mariano Datahan. Datahan died in the year 1949. Likewise known as the "Visayan-Eskaya", the community is only found in the island province of Bohol. They have a unique cultural heritage, use a distinct language and literature, and have traditional practices that dates way back to pre-Spanish times.

**SECTION 3.** Toward this end, the NCIP in coordination with TESDA shall formulate learning programs and livelihood seminars that shall be relevant to the needs of the concerned ICCs/IPs who themselves shall determine the types of skills training applicable and relevant to their circumstances. The concerned agencies shall hire instructors or teachers from within the tribe to teach the native language of the *Eskayans* to the young generation in order to preserve their language and culture.

**SECTION 4.** For this purpose, the NCIP shall coordinate with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for the construction of a building where the skills training and learning sessions shall be conducted. There shall also be enough equipment or materials for livelihood trainings.

**SECTION 5.** The NCIP shall ensure that the Eskaya's unique identity will be further strengthened and preserved by displaying and showcasing their skills, artistry, crafts and archaeological objects (eg. clothing, writings, literary works, among others) through exhibition at the Bohol National Museum or a replica showing their way of living. It shall also ensure that the Eskayas are fully recognized by the provincial government and are well represented during special events and other relevant celebrations in the province.

**SECTION 6.** Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the NCIP, in coordination with the TESDA, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to govern the effective implementation of this Act.

**SECTION 7.** Any provision of law, order, issuance, rule or regulation inconsistent with this Act is hereby repealed, revoked, or modified accordingly.

**SECTION 8.** Appropriations - The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the appropriation for TESDA and NCIP under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its maintenance shall be provided for by the national government.

Approved,