Implementation of Indigenous Peoples (IPEd) Program in Agusan del Sur: A Case Study

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Abstract: *The study aimed to know the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program and the support received by the IPEd implementing schools coming from the different stakeholders. The researcher employed a qualitative research design using an exploratory case study. Interview guides were used during the interview of fifteen key informants, and the data were analyzed using the thematic analysis of Braun & Clarke. The results showed nine themes from the different clusters such as governance and management, curriculum and instruction, teacher's development, facilities and management of resources, the role of the culture bearers, parents' support, culture bearer's support, support from the local government units, and support from the other government agencies. It was found that the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples (IPEd) Program is still in the process, and the different stakeholders have a significant role in the program implementation.*

Keywords: implementation, Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program, stakeholders
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1. Introduction

One of the person's fundamental human rights is to achieve quality education. That is why different countries in the world have an educational system that would answer the need of their citizen. However, not all are given 'quality education' culturally rooted in the person's worldview. The best example of this is the minorities and the Indigenous Peoples worldwide. According to World Bank (2022), 476 million estimated Indigenous Peoples comprise 6% of the worldwide population, while 19% live in poor conditions. One of the reasons why they are still in a marginalized and disadvantaged situation is the lack of quality education. According to Cosentino (2016), education for Indigenous Peoples should be "well-resourced, culturally sensitive, aligned with their learning needs, languages, priorities and aspirations, and delivered through culturally appropriate teaching strategies, and in culturally appropriate settings." Since the Indigenous Peoples were introduced to mainstream education, it created a problem in their existence, assimilating them into the broader population and destroying their cultural identity (Cosentino, 2016). Therefore, there is a need to protect the identity of the Indigenous Peoples through education with the help of various conventions and declarations.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), n.d.-a), Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2008), Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention of 1989 (International Labour Organization, n.d.), Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, n.d.) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (OHCHR, n.d.-b) are examples of

conventions and declarations that respect the right to education among the Indigenous Peoples. Thus, a possibility of improvement in the lives of the Indigenous Peoples will be realized if there is only political will exists in each country.

In the Philippines, there are approximately 11.3 million Indigenous Peoples, or 11-12% of the total population (Minority Rights Group, 2020), and the Indigenous Peoples are geographically bounded, wherein 33% come from Northern Luzon, 61% in Mindanao, while the rest is in Visayas area (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). The Philippines need to look for the development of the Indigenous Peoples since it was stated in the Philippine Constitution that every citizen has the right to education (Republic of Philippines, 1987). It was also cascaded in the IPRA Law or "The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997," the different rights of the IPs in every aspect of life (Republic of the Philippines, 1997). Because of this law, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) was created, wherein the primary task is to implement various policies, plans, and programs for the protection and promotion of the rights of every IP Community.

The passage of Republic Act No. 10533, also known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, is the beginning of the most awaited changes in the Philippines' educational system. The primary education curriculum is expected to be learner-centered, inclusive, relevant, responsive, culture-sensitive, flexible, etc., which would address the learners' needs (Republic of the Philippines, 2013). The Department of Education also crafted the DepEd Order No. 62, s. 2011 or Adopting the National Indigenous Peoples (IP) Education Policy Framework created through consultation with the different stakeholders, especially the representatives from various IP Communities, to ensure that the framework belongs to them (Department of Education, 2011). Since there is a recommendation to formulate and implement an IP Education Program in the Philippines, the Department of Education issued DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2015 or Adopting the Indigenous Peoples Education Curriculum Framework (Department of Education, 2015). With this, the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program was implemented, focusing on the rights-based approach inclined with participation, inclusion, and empowerment principles.

The Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program will be realized if there is an inclusion among the various stakeholders. The best description is an African saying, "It takes a whole village to raise a child" (Mohamed, 1996; Rhaiti, 2016). DepEd officials and administrators, along with the teachers, cannot make it, primarily because this program focuses on the cultural identity of the Indigenous Peoples. There is a need to collaborate with the culture bearers and community to realize the program and produce a curriculum framework that will mirror the Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs) of the said community. Parents also need to understand the importance of the program to support the child academically. The local government officials and other government agencies are deemed necessary to assist the IPEd implementing schools in the different projects for the welfare of the IP learners.

Since the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program started in 2013, the researcher would like to know the implementation of the program in the Department of Education – Division of Agusan del Sur for the School Year 2016-2017, specifically in the Districts of Esperanza. Through qualitative research design, the perspective of the different stakeholders can be drawn in the study. It will also provide feedback on the implementation process and how the various stakeholders affect the program's success.
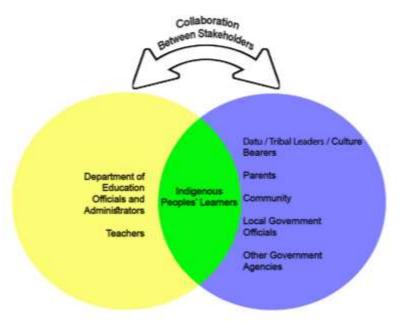
The Model

Figure 1: Collaboration between stakeholders in the IPEd Program

Fig.1 presents how the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program will be implemented. Using a Venn Diagram, the relationship between the different stakeholders is logically presented. The first circle, composed of the Department of Education officials, administrators, and teachers, are the internal stakeholders since they are employed and belong to one institution. These people are also the implementers of the said program. The second circle is the external stakeholders composed of the datu/tribal leaders/culture bearers, parents, community, local government officials, and other government agencies that have an essential role in the implementation. Through collaboration, IPEd Program will become successful, which will affect the Indigenous Peoples' learners academically since they are the program's direct beneficiaries. The color green (represented by the Indigenous Peoples) is the result of the combined colors of two primary colors, which are yellow (internal stakeholders) and blue (external stakeholders). Green symbolizes growth and new life. In this perspective, the Indigenous Peoples are the hope of their community.

Statement of the Problem
This study focuses on implementing the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program in Agusan del Sur, specifically in the Municipality of Esperanza. The researcher sought to answer the following problems:
1) How is the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program implemented in the Division of Agusan del Sur?
2) What are the support received by the IPEd implementing schools from the different stakeholders?

2. Methodology

Research Design. The study employed a qualitative research design using an exploratory case study. Based on the definition given by Sturman (1997), as cited by Starman (2013), a "case study is a general term for the exploration of an individual, group or phenomenon." In addition, a "case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and

uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a 'real life" (Simons, 2009). The exploratory case study is appropriate since the research interest is new to the researcher and a few studies have been published related to it (George, 2022). The researcher focuses on the new program, specifically the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program implemented by the Department of Education in 2013.

Research Locale. The study was conducted in the Department of Education – Division of Agusan del Sur, specifically in the Municipality of Esperanza. The IPEd Program was implemented in the schools where most learners belonged to the Indigenous Peoples, just like the Higaonon and the Manobo.

Research Respondents. The respondents are chosen based on their knowledge of the topic the researcher wants to know (Calderon &Gonzales, 2012). The researcher ensured that there would be a representative informant in every district of Esperanza. However, the researcher also assures that they are directly involved in the IPEd Program, willing to be interviewed, and available during the conduct of the study. The researcher selected one administrator, three teachers, three parents, three datu/tribal leader/culture bearers, four local government officials, and one from the Department of Social and Welfare Development representative. A total of fifteen key informants are involved in this study.

Research Instrument. The researcher crafted interview guides for the key informants. The key informants are divided into two. The first one is the internal stakeholders, and the second one is the external stakeholders. Internal stakeholder pertains to the administrator and teachers in the IPEd implementing schools who work in the same institution. In contrast, the external stakeholders are the parents, datu/tribal leader/culture bearers, local government officials, and DSWD representative who were not employed in the institution but were vested in its success and failure. The first question was asked to the internal stakeholders, while the second was for the external ones.

Data Gathering Procedure. The researcher used interviews to gather the necessary data (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The researcher asked permission from the different key informants before conducting an interview, especially from the datu/tribal leaders/culture bearers of the Municipality of Esperanza. The researcher wrote a letter to the tribal council. After a week, the secretary-general gave a letter of consent to the researcher signed by the Supreme Datu of Indigenous Peoples on Tribal Affairs. A letter also was given to the local government officials asking permission for the interview.

Before an interview, the researcher informed the informants about the study details and assured them that their answers would be kept confidential for them to express their ideas honestly. The researcher needs to establish rapport with the informants to interact during and after the interview positively. Since it is a semi-structured interview, the researcher and the informants had a chance to explain further vague information to understand it thoroughly. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim to avoid bias and to have a permanent record of what was being said and not by the key informants. After all the data was collected, the researcher analyzed it based on the purpose of the study.

Data Analysis. The collected data from the interviews were analyzed following the six phases of thematic analysis by Braun & Clarke (2006).

Ethical Considerations. To maintain the confidentiality of key informants, the researcher used pseudonyms.

3. Results and Discussion

Implementation of the Program

Governance and Management

The IPEd Program was realized through its DepEd Order No. 62, s. 2011 or Adopting the National Indigenous Peoples (IP) Education Policy Framework (Department of Education, 2011). It is the basis for the collaboration of various stakeholders for the IP learners to receive an education suited to their needs. In an interview with Rolando, the Department of Education systematically organizes the program's implementation. Based on the interview, in 2012, the IPsEO established a central office to create the Indigenous Peoples Education Office and formulate the DepEd 5-year IPEd Strategic Priorities. Then, some of the activities were approved of the IPEd line item for the DepEd budget, designation of regional and divisional IPEd Focal Persons, and training. It focuses on the right-based approach and principles of inclusion, participation, and empowerment.

So in 2012, it is more on setting up the ground level or the foundation of IPEd offices and personnel. In 2013, it was the time when they baseline the situational analysis and understanding of the context of the IP learners, advocacy, and capacity building of the IPEd Focal Persons, particularly on the right-based approach. Retooling teachers and school heads from the selected schools with IP learners and initial interaction with the IP communities were also done in 2013.

In 2014, it focused on capacity building for the IPEd Focal Persons through conferences and quarterly, midyear, and year-end meetings. The role of the IPEd Focal Person is crucial in the implementation process as they are the ones who will collaborate with the other stakeholders as stipulated in DepEd Order No. 33, s. 2017 (Department of Education, 2017). IPEd framework formulation at the division level, advocacy and partnership building in communities, immersion, and consultation from another province that is more advance in IPEd implementation are some of the activities. It was in 2015, wherein the implementation of curriculum contextualization was the focus, along with advocacy and partnership with the IP Communities. Again, capacity building for the IPEd Focal Person on contextualizing the curriculum. This year also was the adoption of DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2015 or Adopting the indigenous peoples' education curriculum framework (Department of Education, 2015).

The regional rollout of curriculum contextualization, preparation of indigenized lesson plans, training for teachers, capacity building for IPEd Focal Person to enhance the framework, and capacity building of IP Community Representatives for the curriculum contextualization were some of the activities in 2016. It means that from 2015 to 2016, it is now trying to get into the content of the lessons. While in 2017, it is more on partnership with the IP Communities regarding implementing community contextualization. It means that 2017 onwards is more on integrating IP lenses in the school setting.

In Caraga region, there are five IP Communities, the Banwaon, Manobo, Higaonon, Mamanwa, and Mandaya or Kamayo. In Agusan del Sur, there are four tribes, the Manobo, Banwaon, Higaonon, and the smallest group, the Talaandig. In the case of Talaandig, there are only three communities, which is why they are left behind in orthography development. It becomes a problem for the division office how to cope with the orthography so that they can come up with

learning resources for Talaandig learners. In the case of Agusan del Sur, they are assigned only in Banwaon to develop an indigenized lesson plan. At the same time, the rest of the Division within Caraga had different groups assigned. Just like in Bayugan City for Manobo, Agusan del Norte for Manobo and Higaonon, Surigao del Sur for Manobo, Mamanwa, and Mandaya. So the Division of Agusan del Sur will wait for the indigenized lesson plan for Bayugan City, Agusan del Norte, and Surigao del Sur which is the Manobo lesson plan. For the Higaonon, they will wait for the developed lesson plan of Agusan del Norte. Once they are already through, validation will occur if the lesson plan of Higaonon produced by Agusan del Norte is applicable for Higaonon learners in Agusan del Sur.

Even the IP framework, Agusan del Sur, will wait for Agusan del Norte and Bayugan City for its completion. Since the division had four communities, there would be four IP frameworks. However, the IP framework is not finished. Rolando explained: "Every year there is updating, shall we say work in progress because we need to make some innovations, insertions in the IP framework, especially that the framework will focus on K to 12. So it means it is a spiral. The framework spirals from Kindergarten, Grade I, Grade II, Grade III, and Grade IV; therefore, there will be yearly updates. Maybe once it reaches Grade 12, that's the time framework development will end."

In addition, Rolando added that when it comes to advocacy, the Division of Agusan del Sur was ready. But, there is a need for the teachers, the IP community, and the IP elders to fully understand the implementation because it was just in 2017 that the elders were engaged. In the case of Esperanza District, the implementation was still in the process. It is not yet in the classroom.

The Division of Agusan del Sur still wanted to know the typology of the school to decide if IPEd Program would be implemented in that school. Rolando explained: "Because as of this time, we try to know the typology of the school whether the school is really, whether the community is still speaking the language. They accept that they are IPs but no longer speak the language. So, therefore, IPEd Program will not be implemented since they are already mainstream. They take that by blood; they are IPs but cannot speak the language, so that it would be difficult for them. If the IPEd Program is implemented in the school, the language may be foreign to them. Even the schools in Esperanza will be filtered later on. Once it is done, the learning materials will be placed in that school."

Rolando appreciated the Department of Education central office because of the guidelines in implementing the IPEd Program at the division level from which they cannot deviate. Doing so would give a clear picture of their status in the implementation process. Rolando said: "They want to see how it was implemented, so which division, which region is fast. Which division is a little bit lagging behind. What divisions are or regions that find the difficulty of the implementation."

Curriculum and Instruction
According to Rolando, the curriculum framework for Agusan del Sur, especially the IPEd framework for Manobo, Higaonon, and Ban-waon, was still progressing. However, from 2015 to 2016, curriculum contextualization started, especially the preparation of the indigenized lesson plans. In 2018, they developed a teacher's guide, a primer on how to read the language and spell, learning resources like big and small books, and listening stories to Ban-waon, Manobo, and Higaonon communities. But, they are still waiting for the central office for its publication.

There are insufficient materials used during the implementation. Usually, it is from the mainstream, just like the MTB-MLE textbooks. With this, the community that is a pure speakers of the language, the Manobo and Higaonon, may find it difficult to understand. However, it is no problem for those eighty percent assimilated communities because they can understand MTB-MLE learning materials. These are some of the feedback coming from the teachers that are trained. Mark, Maria, and Josephine, assigned in the IPEd implementing schools, have the same sentiments regarding the learning materials. They revealed: "It was already given especially in K to 12….but if it is indigenized book, none." Maria disclosed: "About IPEd? None, none." Josephine added: In IPEd, ma'am, none since it is still in the process…"

Because of this problem, the teachers, especially the languuage speakers, are instructed to start localizing the mainstream materials for instruction. Rolando said: "For example, Kindergarten, you can translate that. But if you are Banwaon, Higaonon, or something like that, and you are teaching Grade I, you can start talking about the Higaonon tradition. Examples are the Higaonon and Kindergarten stories; you can use that."

Related to this suggestion, Maria and Josephine started localizing and indigenizing their instruction, especially for those who speak the language. Maria shared: "We have Math, EPP, Science, that is what we use now, but we localize and indigenize so that the pupils can relate since the books came from the mainstream. But we localize and indigenize it for the children to understand since they can easily learn if you translate it into their language. They are active since they will only stare at you when you talk fluently in English. But if you translate it into their language, they can easily understand, are active, and participate." However, not all teachers can localize and indigenize the lesson since they have difficulty doing it. They are still using the mainstream way of instruction.

Another approach Rolando suggests is inviting elders to talk with the children inside the classroom as resource persons. Rolando opined: "Then you ask a question with the students. But your resource person, because you do not know if you are a Bisaya teacher, can ask the IP elders familiar with their IKSPs to talk to the pupils. And the students understand because that is the language of the community." In connection with this suggestion, some teachers, especially those IP teachers, plan to invite the IP elders into their classrooms. Maria shared: "I am planning to ask the chieftain to go to school and teach something to the learners, especially their language. They will bring anything they wanted to share to the learners so they can imitate it." Josephine also opined: "As of this time, ma'am, the chieftain did not teach in our school, but I plan to invite him since it was still prevalent in their area to trap wild pigs. Hopefully, when I return this January, I can ask the expert to make a trap for wild pigs." It is possible through collaboration between the teacher and IP leaders of the community to help one another in the education of the IP learners that are suited to their needs (Sarmiento & Tudy, 2020).

However, it would be advantageous if hired teachers in the field belonged to the ethnicity of the learners since they are the speaker of the language and they already know the culture and tradition of their learners. Mark suggested that Higaonon teachers should be placed in the schools where the Higaonon learners reside so they can understand each other. Mark disclosed: "In IP education, I suggest that if they assign teachers in the identified IP communities, they should identify those teachers who speak the language of the IP community. If the teacher is Manobo, she must be in the Manobo community. We request that the Higaonon teacher should teach in the Higaonon community since they can understand each other."

In Mark's perspective, the teacher is the primary instructional material inside the classroom. Mark added: "When it comes to teacher's materials, the teacher is the primary material since the teacher is one of the IMs. The teacher is an IMs themselves. When the pupils see that the teacher is beautiful and handsome and can speak the language, pupils will surely be amazed. Mark stressed the importance of a teacher who can speak the mother tongue of the IP learners in attaining their academic performance. Mark elaborated: "Just like one of our IP teachers, when he arrived, pupils were rude, but when he speaks in their language, pupils become silent. They are all amazed. During his class observation, 100% of his pupils got the exam, in a quiz, they all learned since he used their language."

The point of Mark is that to realize the IPEd Program, teachers should know the mother-tongue of the learners, especially in Kinder and Grade III, for them to have a good interaction during the teaching-learning process. Mark pointed out: "That is what I hope that Higaonon teacher will be assigned to our school. Pupils used their language from K to III. That is what they used." However, from the administrators' point of view, it is challenging to hire IP teachers since only a few go to school and proceed to college. Rolando's sentiments: "Not all, not all, not all are IPs because not all also are, you know that there are few IPs who go to school."

Mark, Maria, and Josephine expressed their thoughts that they slightly speak their learners' language inside the classroom. Since they are not IPs or not immersed in the community, they can only understand but not totally can talk about the language. The language barrier is one of the challenging aspects of the teaching and learning process between non-IP teachers and IP learners. Learners had difficulty understanding what was taught by the teacher in the class (Sarmiento & Tudy, 2020). They disclosed: "I can talk Higaonon a little but not totally the whole language since I am not exposed to them." Maria shared: "In Higaonon, I'm not fluent but try to speak straight, but I know, I understand. I know, I can talk a little. The use of language in the classroom is an essential tool for transmitting the culture, values, and world views of the IP learners; hence, the medium of instruction is in the mother tongue (Stavenhagen, 2015). According to Rolando, the teachers assigned are immersed during the implementation and not before, except for those IP teachers who are still in the community and those volunteer teachers.

Even the monitoring and evaluation in IPEd implementing schools are still mainstream. According to Rolando, they need assistance from the central office, especially the supervisors who ask how they can assess and monitor. Quizzes, projects, oral recitation, and attendance are just part of the mainstream assessment stipulated in DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015 (Department of Education, 2015). However, the IP Community has a different way of assessing the child's performance. Rolando shared: "But for them, for the IP curriculum, if it is time for planting, the child is absent in school, they are in their farms because that is their classroom, according to them. Therefore, the teacher should have to go there and observe how the pupils plant upland rice because that is their culture."

For the Learning Resources Management and Development System (LRMDS), the Division of Agusan del Sur was not allowed to put the IPEd materials in the portal since it was generic. Rolando explained: "IPEd learning materials should be division level. So the LR in our division is now trying to develop a website for division use only. So they can access the materials within the division, not the other division, since it was contextualized and other divisions cannot understand this. So we have to deposit learning materials for ICCs or IP Communities that, shall we say, uploaded within the division." In addition, Rolando added: "So in 2018, we have to talk with the LR manager, which are those line items for LR. And then for others, IPEd implementation of the content of the curriculum is more on indigenizing the lesson plan. So

the indigenized lesson plan, once the Quality Assurance Team assures its quality, will be uploaded in the division portal but cannot be put in the national portal."

Teacher's Development

The Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program started in the Philippines in 2013. Hence, there is a need for teachers in the IPEd implementing schools to be trained and capacitated on what to do to implement the said program successfully. Rolando shared: "They have been retooled before going to school where they are assigned. They are trained on what to do in school and the situation of the IP Communities when they come in. What are some of the traditions that must be observed when they will be assigned in that particular IP Community where the school will be constructed? What are the things that they have to do on how to deal with the IP elders, and what are the things that they will use in case there are no materials?" With the help of the training, teachers will be given a chance to understand the culture of their learners.

The retooling of teachers and school heads in selected schools with IP learners was done in 2013. In 2014, another retooling of teachers and school heads in selected schools with one hundred percent IP learners. Other regional-led teachers' and school heads' training was done in 2015. This time, the national-level training for contextualization was done and continued in 2016, along with the preparation of indigenized lesson plans. Mark, Maria, and Josephine shared that they attended training related to IPEd Program. However, they also felt the need to participate in more training, especially since it was new and they were not experts. The Division of Agusan del Sur has already developed the teacher's guide, a primer on how to read the language, and small and big books, but there is still a need for training on how to deliver it. In any government program, the teacher needs effective teaching training to carry out what is expected of them as a facilitator of learning (Wa-Mbaleka, 2013).

With this effort to make the program successful on the part of teachers, they still need more training to understand the program. Rolando said: "So they cannot understand in the first place, they cannot understand IPEd with the mainstream because not all teachers are trained. In 2016, not all teachers were trained in every school for those identified schools with IP learners. They are already 83 out of 356 elementary schools. There is no high school yet. So you can imagine 83 out of 356. How many percentages is that? Maybe twenty? Twenty percent? It is not enough if we try to see the twenty percent."

Rolando expected more training to come for the IPEd teachers. However, some teachers who are already trained transferred to the non-IP schools. Rolando said: "So the school was left behind. Untrained teachers are the ones who replaced them. So the instruction is mainstream and not the IP lens. Because trained teachers, after the training, after two or a year, they request for transfer. Because of the terrain, the community, especially the assigned teacher, is not an IP teacher." These are some of the challenges during implementation. However, in 2016, one hundred eighteen items were allotted for priority sites, which means those sitios which DepEd does not serve.

IPEd implementing schools are located in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas. Because of this, the assigned teachers have difficulty reaching the said schools and must pay more for transportation. Fare transportation ranges from 1,000 to 2,500 one way. So it means teachers will pay 2,000 to 5,000 when they return. They must also walk one hour or almost half a day to reach the school's location. Teachers' commitment in this scenario may be tested since arriving at schools will take a while with an expensive fare for the transportation alone. So the

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teachers are asking for help from the Department of Education. Rolando shared: "So the DepEd advised them to have three weeks straight teaching then one week break so that they can look for some provision when they return or another two months. Two months are straight teaching, then two weeks break. That is localized by district according to the need." This scenario is not true for all IPEd implementing schools since not all schools are far away. It was estimated that ten percent or fifteen percent have this arrangement with the district supervisor. A researcher named Wa-Mbaleka (2013) also experienced difficulty reaching the school of Katutubo in Mindoro Occidental since some schools are accessible only by boat or need to walk for almost one whole day before reaching the public transportation.

Facilities and Management of resources
It was in 2016 when there was an establishment and construction of new public schools for the IP Communities. Thirty-one new public schools will be opened, with 118 building classrooms.

According to Rolando, the program, work and financial plan are based on the central office. The division office cannot make its activities since the program has a thematic focus every year, unlike the other programs and projects with no thematic focus. So it is just like no direction, but in IPEd, there is direction. Every year there is a tracking of activities.

The division has no Ancestral-Domain Based School Improvement Plan since they need to align with the three-year plan in the SIP and ask for guidance from the central office on how to run and facilitate. The school and IP elders need to understand how it will be implemented and how it will be crafted based on the NEAP, the budget, and the MOOE of the school. The money will be downloaded to the school after an AD-Based SIP. A certain amount will be given in school once the AD-Based SIP is done. There would be a SIP revisit and possible crafting of AD-Based SIP, which will be implemented for those identified schools. The IPEd implementing schools had a budget from the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) as stipulated in DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2016 (Department of Education, 2016).

Role of the Culture Bearers
The culture bearers in each group were the most important people for successfully implementing the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program. For them to be ready in their role, capacity building for IP Community Representatives was engaged with the Department of Education on Curriculum Contextualization. In 2017 and 2018, it is more on contextualization and development of learning resource materials for the IP learners.

There is still a need for advocacy related to the program, and it was just in 2017 wherein the IP elders were involved in the implementation. Rolando discoursed: "They give their IKSPs or Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices to DepEd but not all. It is a gradual disclosure of the IKSPs because DepEd must build confidence before they can trust DepEd. There are some reasons why IP elders will not disclose. Some communities are conservative this time, especially if you will not explain the purpose of the study. That is why DepEd had a hard time on how to convince them. But because of the training related to orthography last 2017, in which it produced an alphabet, the primer, the teacher's guide, and the big book, they appreciate it. They see that the stories written in the big book are the story of the community. It is not coming from the outside. Because of that, the datus already understand that DepEd is sincere in getting the IKSPs for documentation for the next generation. They understand and are happy with the training, and they expect more training to come because there are more things to be written in the Higaonon tribe." The wisdom of the IP elders is significant in preserving their IKSPs,

boosting their cultural pride and identity as an IP, and providing a better future view of the IP youth (Stavenhagen, 2015).

Rolando added that the culture bearers have a significant role in validating the developed indigenized lesson plan, especially since Agusan del Sur is not assigned to Manobo and Higaonon but Banwaon. During their validation, it was found that Esperanza Higaonon has different words but the same meaning as the other Higaonon in Agusan del Norte and Gingoog. The exact meaning but the words and pronunciation are different, resulting in a division problem on how to solve the issue. They devise a strategy to make a language congress to address the issue. However, one datu suggested that they may have the learning materials, but there are some variations from Agusan del Sur based on their understanding. How they spell and write some of the words in Higaonon Agusan del Norte is attributed to the influences of Gingoog, Misamis Oriental, and Bukidnon.

Culture bearers are the partners of the teachers when it comes to the education of the IP learners since they are the speaker of the language. Teachers can request the culture bearers to teach related to craftsmanship because, in the community, they have specialists. They have specialists in agriculture, fishing, forestry, rituals, history, etc. Rolando said: "As much as possible, they are required to help the school. But based on their request that if they help in terms of curriculum, they will also be given some monetary or reciprocity allowance." Because of this request, the IP elders were given an honorarium in every training. Possibly, when they are in school, they will be given some reciprocity allowance once the IP MOOE is downloaded within the school.

However, the central office did not say about it, but that is one of the strategies. If this happens, many culture bearers may come to the school because there is something in return. Rolando added: "So those are the things that if they are given honorarium, they will also provide their full knowledge because DepEd is not the one who is benefitting but the next generation." A possibility that the culture bearers asking for reciprocity allowance is that they must leave their homes to attend the training for many days, leaving their families without provisions. They also need to work to feed their families, and attending training and other activities related to IPEd would be difficult for them to earn or go to the farm. Hence, reciprocity allowance may help them provide for their families when they are away.

The division plans to have Consultative Advisory Bodies (CABs) as school partners in implementing the IPEd Program as stipulated in DepEd Order No. 34, s. 2017 (Department of Education, 2017). It will also ensure the program's sustainability, good relationship with the culture bearers, good direction, and clear and transparent implementation. These CABs will be cascaded to the regional, division, municipal, and school. It is just like the School Planning Team for the mainstream. Rolando explained further: "It is School Consultative Advisory Bodies which is composed of IP elders representative in the sitios or barangay and they will be a partner with DepEd. The school head and the School Planning Team of the school. So SPT and SCAB will be aligned and partner in school implementation for IPEd. So in school activities concerning IPs, it must be consulted with the IP elders. It should be a collaborative effort between the two bodies. Because if talking about IP day and IP month, those are the works of the School CAB. So curriculum, for example, in the lesson plan indigenization, they will be consulted. They will become a consultant, not teachers, who will make the lesson plan in their way. There should be an IP elder with them." It only shows how vital the IP elders are in realizing the IPEd Program since their presence in any activities is needed.

Support from the Stakeholders

Parents Support. It is cliché to say that the first teacher of a child is their parents. Their support in their children's education is vital, primarily that the IPEd Program was implemented in their school. As a parent, they are expected to help the learners in school and make some follow up. Since IPEd Program focuses more on the learners' culture, educating them related to the culture of the community is a big help for the school. Lara, Concepcion, and Rodrigo shared that they speak the Minanubo and Higaonon languages daily in their home. They taught their children to talk about the language for them to know. However, because of assimilation, some children are fluent in Binisaya rather than in Minanubo and Higaonon, except for those pure language speakers.

In addition, parents also teach their children when it comes to their traditions and rituals. They let their children observe when they perform it. According to Rodrigo, it is essential to teach the children the culture and practices of the tribe and never forget that they are Higaonon wherever they go. They also attended meetings, school cleaning, and whatever activities in school. Concepcion shared: "In any activities in the school, we are active. Why? We ask for this school for how many years, so, naturally, we would support it because we are the ones who are asking for this. Through cleaning, whatever school activities, we support." The support given by the parents in IPEd implementing schools may be attributed to the fact that they see education as a way that their children will have a better future (Matengu, Korkeamäki, & Cleghorn, 2019).

Culture Bearers Support. Rolando stated that the IPEd implementation in Esperanza District was still in the process, primarily since they are assigned to the Banwaon group and not to Manobo and Higaonon. That is why, during the interview with the culture bearers, Mila (representative only), Apolinario, and Gregorio said they did not experience teaching in school. However, according to Mila, the teachers informed them about it, and they are still waiting for when it will happen. The three culture bearers are willing to help with the education of their tribe. They taught the tribe about the group's culture but not in school. If this is realized, it will bring a positive outcome for the learners, especially in preserving their culture (David, 2013).

Support From the Local Government Units. The local government support is deemed necessary as they help with the additional needs of the IPEd implementing schools. Esmeralda said that they gave school supplies to the selected barangays. Assistance for the newly constructed school building since some barangays chose to transfer to another location. They gave thirty percent of the budget as their counterpart in KALAHI projects or Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan. In the past, they gave solar for the barangay, and now electrification with the help of ASELCO. Agricultural assistance through corn production activity for the 4Ps or Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program beneficiaries. They organized and taught them about food sufficiency. It is a good move from the local official to prepare the people not to become dependent on government aid since this is temporary. When there is food on the table, learners can go to school. The good thing for these 4Ps is the requirements for the learners to attend school. Absenteeism and drop-outs will lessen, and the participation rate among learners will increase. This kind of program is the same in Mexico, wherein the government gives indigenous peoples incentives. Still, they also need to be responsible regarding their attendance at school and other conditionalities (Rocha & Latapi, 2016). Road construction was also done to reach the barangays, and significantly it will improve the quality of life of the IPs to have better access to different services (Wa-Mbaleka, 2013).

In the past, Mila gave incentives to the teachers in the said IPEd implementing schools; however, it was cut off for some reasons. Adolfo, Antonio, and Pedro contribute to the school's success through volunteerism in school activities. IP Communities are expected to help in basic construction activities in school to finish the job (Wa-Mbaleka, 2013). They also gave counterparts in any project done in schools.

Support From Other Government Agencies. Other government agencies like the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and the Department of the Interior and Local Government help implement projects in IP Communities that need additional support through KALAHI-ICCL. The project's focus is on classrooms only, and specific barangays that need other classrooms were identified since the enrollment was increasing.

4. Conclusion

The right to education among the indigenous peoples is reflected in the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program. However, during its implementation, there are a lot of challenges that the different stakeholders experiences. On the side of the internal stakeholders, the District of Esperanza is still in the process of its implementation since they are assigned to the Banwaon group. Additional training for teachers is also deemed necessary, especially since there are teachers assigned that are non-IPs. Learning materials and assessments are still mainstream. Teachers were encouraged to start indigenizing the lesson plan and may ask for help from IP teachers or community elders. IP funds are still in the process. Collaboration with the IP elders needs time and trust before disclosing their Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs). There is a plan to have Consultative Advisory Bodies (CABs) to help the Department of Education implement the IPEd Program.

Parents are supportive when it comes to school activities. They taught their children the tradition and rituals of the community. The culture bearers are willing to help if their services are needed in schools. The local government officials and other government agencies helped realize the IPEd Program through its various initiated projects.

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