



IP CHAMPIONS
ADVANCING
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES



**INSTITUTE FOR
AUTONOMY AND
GOVERNANCE**



Co-funded by
the European Union

ADVANCING INDIGENOUS RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Building the Foundation for Advocacy and Empowerment



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Introduction

As the Indigenous Peoples Champions for the Philippines project concludes, it stands as a significant collaboration between the European Union (EU), International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), and the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG). At its core, the project sought to empower Indigenous communities by cultivating Indigenous Peoples (IP) Champions—individuals capable of articulating and asserting their rights. Simultaneously, it aimed to establish Institutional IP Champions within national and sub-national institutions, ensuring the effective fulfillment of mandates related to IP rights.

Choosing the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) as pilot regions showcased strategic foresight. BARMM, navigating the establishment of political autonomy after years of conflict, and CAR, with a history of advocacy towards autonomy dating back to 1987, represented critical landscapes for building the foundation of this advocacy work.

The project unfolded through seven key outputs, ranging from preparatory consultations to the delivery of Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Constitutions Assessment Tool (IPCAT) workshops, mentoring, advocacy support, forums for experience-sharing, and dialogues with government entities. These outputs collectively aimed to overcome knowledge, capacity, and network constraints, fostering constructive engagement between duty-bearers and right-holders.





Against the backdrop of an estimated 14-17 million Indigenous individuals across 110 ethno-linguistic groups, the Philippines is a mosaic of cultural diversity. Despite legislative safeguards such as the 1987 Philippine Constitution and the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997, Indigenous communities face ongoing challenges. The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), established by IPRA, has faced criticisms, leaving Indigenous peoples vulnerable to human rights violations.

In BARMM, presently establishing political autonomy, the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) grants authority over IP rights, but jurisdictional clarity remains a significant challenge. Indigenous communities lack avenues for filing land claims, highlighting the imperative to address these issues for effective rights protection. CAR, with a history of advocating for autonomy, faces similar challenges but carries the potential for improved protection of Indigenous rights.

The COVID-19 pandemic added further complexities, causing displacement and threats to Indigenous communities in BARMM and CAR. The project emphasized knowledge-building, constructive engagement, and cross-cultural learning, setting the stage for targeted interventions that underscore the critical role of knowledge, advocacy, and Indigenous participation in shaping a more inclusive future for Indigenous communities in the Philippines.

In this final publication, we express our gratitude to the IP Champions and distill the key learnings from the 3-year project. International IDEA and IAG hope this document helps spur continued progress in advancing IP rights protection in the Philippines and globally.

AT A GLANCE

The Project in Numbers



Answered the call for application
40 IP Champions

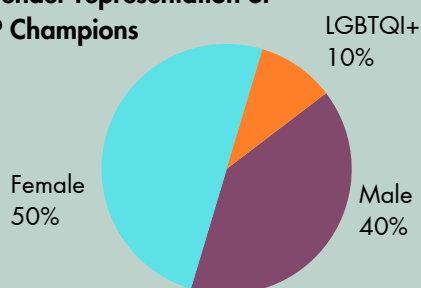


Ethnic communities represented
16



Institutional Champions trained
24

Gender representation of IP Champions

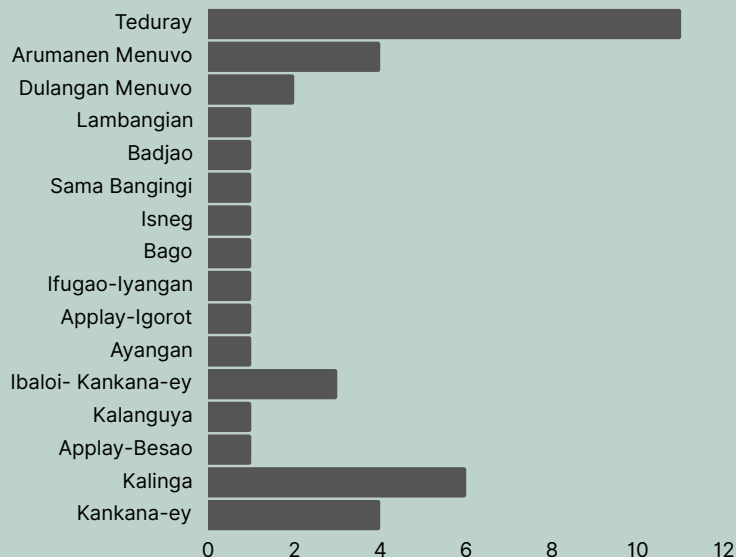


Completed the project
32 IP Champions



Key activities conducted
18

Ethnicity of IP Champions

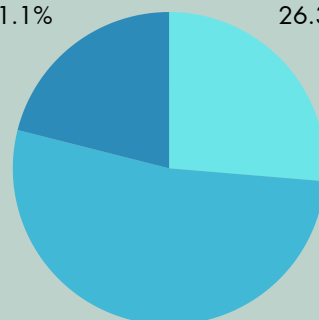


Impact of COVID-19 on the conduct of activities

- Online activities involve engaging in various tasks or interactions over the internet, often utilizing digital platforms and communication tools.
- Hybrid activities combine elements of both online and in-person experiences, allowing participants to interact both virtually and physically.
- In-person activities require participants to be physically present at a specific location, fostering direct face-to-face interactions and engagement.

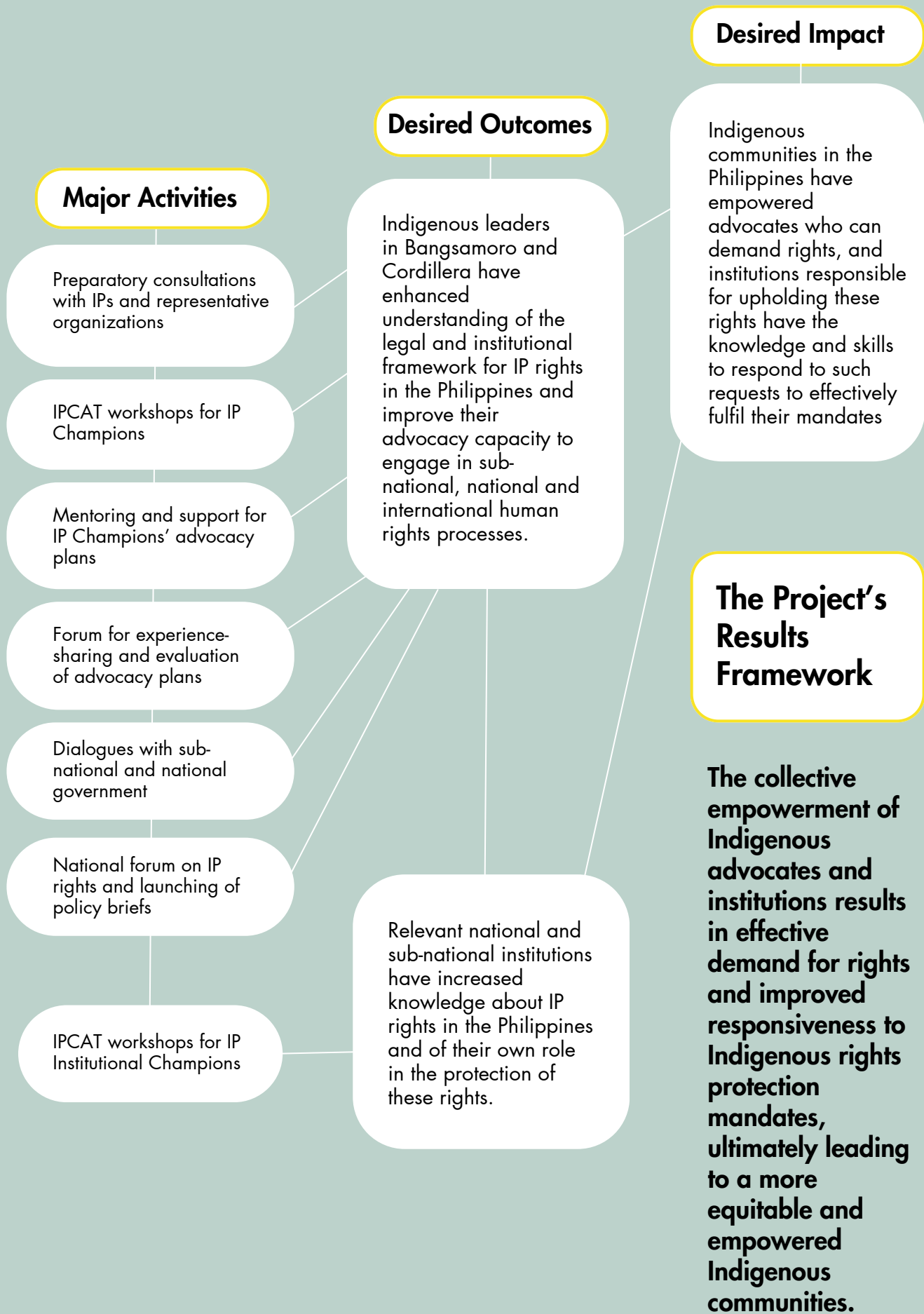
Online activities
21.1%

Hybrid activities
26.3%



In-person activities
52.6%





Understanding Indigenous Rights Protection in the Philippines

What are IPs in the Philippines?

- IPs in the Philippines refer to distinct cultural communities who have retained social, economic, cultural, and political structures distinct from the dominant society. They are characterized by their ancestral domains, customary laws, and traditional practices.

What legal frameworks protect the rights of IPs in the Philippines?

- The Philippines has several legal frameworks aimed at protecting the rights of IPs, including the 1987 Constitution, which recognizes and promotes the rights of IPs. Additionally, the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 provides specific provisions for the recognition and protection of IP rights.



Gaps in the legislative and institutional framework leave Indigenous peoples vulnerable to rights violations and institutional confusion. The Project sought to bridge these gaps by building knowledge around constructive advocacy, fostering Indigenous participation in autonomy processes, and facilitating the exchange of lessons learned between the Bangsamoro and Cordillera regions.

Estimated IP
population in the
Philippines

**14-17
million**

Which government agency has the primary mandate to protect IP rights in the Philippines?

- The primary government agency responsible for protecting Indigenous rights in the Philippines is the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). Established under the IPRA, the NCIP is tasked with promoting and protecting the rights of IPs and ensuring their welfare and development.

What are the key challenges faced by IPs in the Philippines?

- IPs in the Philippines face numerous challenges, including social discrimination, economic marginalization, and political disempowerment. They often experience land grabbing, displacement, and lack of access to basic services such as healthcare and education.

How do ongoing political transformations, such as the establishment of the BARMM, impact IPs?

- Ongoing political transformations, like the establishment of BARMM, present both opportunities and risks for IPs. While autonomy may provide avenues for self-governance and recognition of IP rights, there are concerns about jurisdictional clarity and the implementation of laws affecting IPs within the region.

How do international entities support the protection of IP rights in the Philippines?

- International entities, such as the International IDEA and European Union (EU), provide support for initiatives aimed at protecting IP rights in the Philippines. This support may include funding for projects, technical assistance, and advocacy efforts to raise awareness about IP issues globally.

How can individuals and organizations support the protection of IP rights in the Philippines?

- Individuals and organizations can support the protection of IP rights in the Philippines by educating themselves and others about IP issues, supporting grassroots initiatives and advocacy efforts, and advocating for policy changes that promote the recognition and protection of IP rights.

What are some promising developments in the protection of IP rights in the Philippines?

- Promising developments in the protection of IP rights in the Philippines include increased awareness and recognition of IP issues, the establishment of autonomous regions like BARMM, and ongoing efforts to strengthen legal frameworks and policies to better protect IP rights.



What are the prospects for the protection of IP rights in the Philippines?

- The prospects for the protection of IP rights in the Philippines are hopeful, with growing recognition of the importance of Indigenous knowledge and practices, increased collaboration between government and IP communities, and ongoing efforts to address the root causes of discrimination and marginalization faced by IPs.

What role do IP Champions play in advocating for the rights of IPs in the Philippines?

- IP Champions play a crucial role in advocating for the rights of IPs in the Philippines by raising awareness, lobbying policymakers, and mobilizing communities. They act as representatives and leaders within their communities, driving initiatives for social change and empowerment.





The Project's

Highlighting the intricate dynamics of Indigenous rights in the Philippines, the project's approach focused on the balanced interaction between "demand and supply", fostering a cohesive synergy to achieve enduring results.

Demand Side: Empowering Indigenous Leaders

IF Indigenous leaders in Bangsamoro and the Cordillera enhance their understanding of the legal and institutional framework for Indigenous rights in the Philippines; and IF these Indigenous leaders acquire skills to effectively demand protection of the rights of Indigenous peoples at sub-national and national levels, a transformative shift begins.

The demand side envisions Indigenous leaders equipped with the knowledge and skills to navigate the complex landscape of legal frameworks. By empowering them to effectively demand the protection of Indigenous rights, a powerful ripple effect emanates from within these communities.

Supply Side: Enhancing Institutional Capacity

IF sub-national and national institutions responsible for monitoring, protecting, and promoting Indigenous peoples' rights increase knowledge and skills to respond to such requests, the supply side complements the demand.

Institutions, when fortified with the capacity to understand and address the needs voiced by Indigenous leaders, become pivotal allies in the quest for Indigenous rights. The supply side acts as a responsive support system that can translate demands into tangible actions and policies.

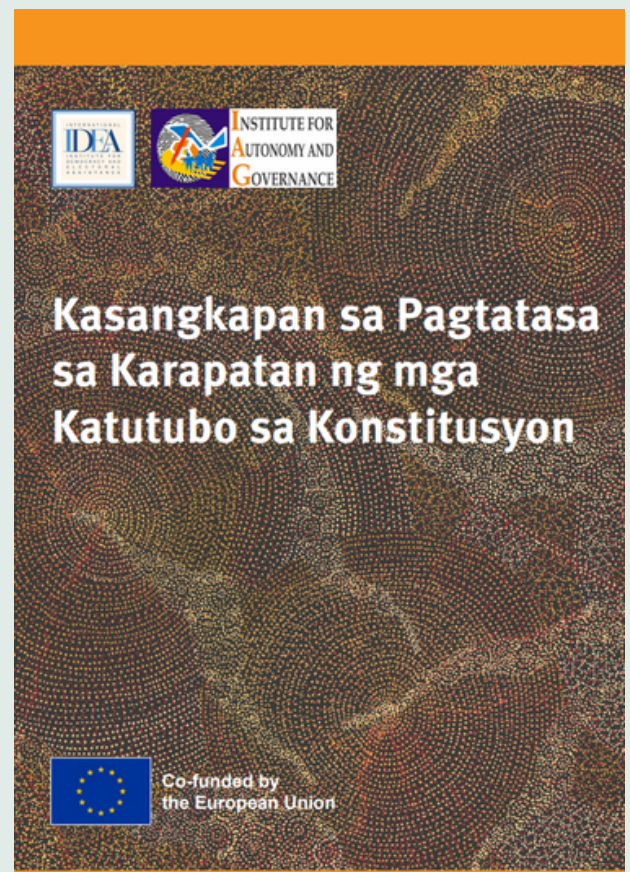
Philosophy



The IPCAT Tool

The Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Constitutions Assessment Tool (IPCAT) is a comprehensive resource designed to analyze constitutions or constitutional amendments from the perspective of Indigenous peoples' rights.

Through a series of questions, explanations, and global examples, IPCAT guides users in systematically assessing the robustness of Indigenous rights provisions and comparing them with practices from various countries. Intended for a diverse audience, including advocates, drafters, civil society members, lawyers, and judges, IPCAT facilitates evidence-based analysis and prioritization of issues for advocacy or constitutional amendments. With 34 questions across eight sections covering key aspects of Indigenous rights and informed by international standards, IPCAT ensures thorough examination and understanding of constitutional frameworks. Additionally, IPCAT provides chapters outlining its purpose, structure, and key concepts, along with references and annexes containing relevant international instruments for further exploration and analysis.



The Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Constitutions Assessment Tool (IPCAT) can be accessed by scanning the QR code.

English version



Filipino version



REGIONAL ADVOCACY PLANS



The creation of the two regional advocacy plans began with the IP Champions bringing their personal advocacies to the table. Two regional workshops were conducted—one for BARMM IP Champions and one for Cordillera IP Champions—where they explored how these individual pursuits could work together, engaging in plenary discussions. In these discussions, they revisited advocacy planning concepts, strategically mapped commonalities, and identified shared needs. This collaborative effort resulted in the formulation of the two regional plans—the BARMM Regional Advocacy Plan and the CAR Regional Advocacy Plan. Both plans rest on robust legal foundations, drawing strength from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the 1987 Philippine Constitution, the IPRA at the national level, and the BOL, as well as insights from various experiences globally. The legal framework provides a solid basis for advocacy, fostering inclusive and sustainable development for Indigenous peoples.

Key Advocacy Areas

01 Indigenous Political Structure (IPS)

- Pursue recognition and institutionalization of IPS in regional governance.
 - Develop an IPS Agenda aligned with NMIP Coordinating Council's priorities.
 - Propagate the IPS Agenda through government consultations and presentations.
-

02 Political Identity of Non-Moro Indigenous Peoples

- Correct misinterpretations and promote awareness of NMIPs' political identity.
- Establish a Technical Working Group for intervention programs.
- Conduct campaigns through caravans, social media, and literary activities.

03 Cultural Integrity

- Create a Research Team for a comprehensive cultural database.
- Develop a research plan to protect, preserve, and support NMIPs' cultural integrity.



Five Indigenous communities in mainland BARMM, specifically the Teduray and Lambangian Dulangan Manobo in Maguindanao provinces, the Higaonon in Lanao del Sur, and the Blaan and Arumanen Ne Menuvu within the Special Geographic Area in North Cotabato, are represented by the IP Champions in their advocacies, as reflected in the issues covered by the BARMM Regional Advocacy Plan.

The plan outlines three focal advocacy areas. Firstly, the Indigenous Political Structure (IPS) takes precedence. This is a critical advocacy point for the IP Champions in BARMM because, despite legal provisions, the regional government neither supports nor recognizes the legitimacy of the IPS of the NMIPs in the region. To address this, the IP Champions are committed to pursuing the recognition and institutionalization of the IPS in regional governance. The group aims to establish an IPS Agenda in support of the NMIP Coordinating Council (NMIPCC). This agenda will be presented to the security sector, the Bangsamoro Transition Authority Parliament, and other government entities. It is imperative for the IP Champions to seek invitations to high-level meetings and government consultations to promote the agenda and

reach the Chief Minister of the Government of the Day.

Secondly, the focus is on the Political Identity of the NMIPs. The lack of awareness and non-recognition of the political identity of the NMIPs has led to misinterpretations of their political ideologies, hindering their inclusion in mainstream politics and governance. The IP Champions aim to rectify these misinterpretations by establishing a Technical Working Group to draft intervention programs and spearhead campaigns through caravans, social media exposure, and literary activities in collaboration with educational institutions. An effective campaign will involve print and tri-media activities.

Lastly, the plan emphasizes Cultural Integrity, encompassing Indigenous Peoples Education (IPED), Indigenous Knowledge, Skills, and Practices (IKSP), Heritage, and Preservation. The objective is to protect, preserve, and support the cultural integrity of the NMIPs in the region. To mobilize this advocacy, the IP Champions plan to create a Research Team that will compile a database of their respective cultural systems, knowledge, and practices, accompanied by a corresponding research plan.

Key Advocacy Areas

01 Policy Reform, Research, and Documentation

- Advocate for clarity and strengthening of policy implementation on land issues, women's concerns, and other IP matters.
- Conduct quarterly sectoral consultations and bi-annual progress reports.

02 Information and Capability Building Interventions

- Enhance awareness, knowledge, and competencies of Indigenous People's Mandatory Representatives (IPMRs), youth programs, and Indigenous Knowledge System and Practices (IKSP) through training and workshops.
- Develop annual modules for capacity training and conduct a yearly Cultural Appreciation workshop.

03 Harmonizing Indigenous Peoples' Practices

- Advocate for reconciliation of differing practices among Indigenous Peoples' groups through networking and partnerships.
- Establish one Indigenous Peoples' Organization (IPO) with an IPS annually.



The CAR Advocacy Plan, on the other hand, focuses on three pertinent issues. The first revolves around the unclear and weak policy implementation on land issues, including the delineation of ancestral domain and environmental concerns. To effect positive change, the IP Champions seek Policy Reform, Research, and Documentation, aiming to clarify and strengthen policy implementation on ancestral land issues through sectoral consultations, resolution proposals, and bi-annual progress reports.

The second issue concerns the lack of awareness, knowledge, and competency of the Indigenous Peoples' Mandatory Representatives (IPMRs) regarding their functions. Additionally, there is a lack of awareness about youth development programs and projects and Indigenous Knowledge, Systems, and Practice (IKSP). To address this, the IP Champions plan to conduct Information and Capability Building Interventions, enhancing awareness, knowledge, and competencies of the IPMRs, youth programs, and IKSPs.

The goal is to develop a set of modules annually for capacity-building trainings and workshops, with a yearly Cultural Appreciation workshop as a significant feature of the plan.

Finally, recognizing the need to reconcile differing practices among Indigenous Peoples' groups, particularly in conflict resolution, the process for the implementation of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and cultural standards, the IP Champions advocate for harmonization. This involves networking and partnerships to create a uniform reference on conflict resolution or justice systems, clear guidelines for FPIC implementation, and agreed-upon cultural standards. Success in this area will be measured by yearly profiling or mapping per province, concluding either a Memorandum of Understanding or a Memorandum of Agreement with a development partner at least every quarter of the year, and the establishment of one Indigenous Peoples' Organization (IPO) with an Indigenous Political Structure (IPS) each year.

SPOTLIGHT

Project URNONGG

IP Champion Bit Wanas

shares insights into Project URNONGG, a transformative initiative in Benguet centered on preserving cultural heritage and empowering Indigenous Youth. In this testimonial, Bit celebrates unity, knowledge, and pride through Project URNONGG.



URNONGG stands as a beacon for preserving cultural heritage and empowering Indigenous Youth in Benguet.



Celebrating cultural identity and unity is essential for the thriving and bright future of the Indigenous Peoples in Benguet.



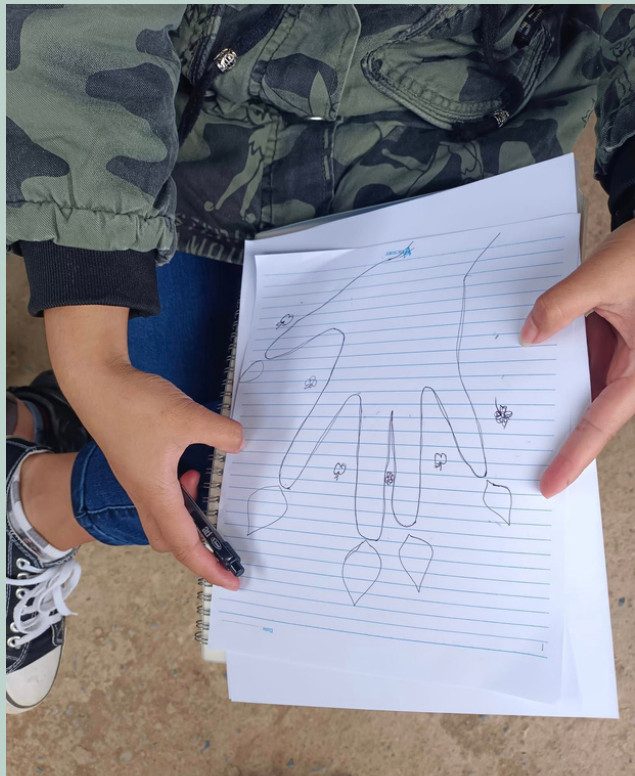
Investing in Indigenous youth is crucial for fostering a resilient collective future.

My heart beats for a cause deeply intertwined with our roots - the preservation of our rich cultural heritage and the empowerment of our Indigenous Youth. It is a journey that finds its expression through the remarkable initiative known as Project URNONGG.

In Benguet, our cultural heritage is not just a part of us; it is the very foundation upon which we stand. It encapsulates ancestral wisdom, traditions, and values that define our identity. Yet, in the face of a rapidly changing world, our cultural legacy stands at the precipice of obscurity. The call to safeguard this legacy becomes resounding, especially for our Indigenous Youth who bear the responsibility of carrying our torch into the future.

Project URNONGG, meaning 'unity' in our native tongue, is not just an initiative; it is a mission to sow the seeds of unity, knowledge, and pride. Through Indigenous People Youth Formation, I am resolute in my belief that investing in our youth is an investment in our collective future. Our traditions hold timeless lessons that guide us through modern challenges, instilling a deep sense of belonging and resilience.

The essence of Project URNONGG lies in the message of unity it propagates. Our shared heritage becomes the thread that binds us together, transcending temporal and generational boundaries. This initiative marks a collective rediscovery, celebrating our identity as members of the IP community in Benguet. It is not merely an advocacy; it is a call to action, an invitation for every member to contribute to our shared narrative.





Imagine a future where every Indigenous youth in Benguet stands tall, empowered by their heritage, and equipped with the tools to navigate the modern world while staying true to their roots. Project URNONGG is the vessel through which this vision can materialize. It is a beacon of hope, a source of inspiration that reminds us that our legacy is not bound by the past but is an evolving narrative that we co-create.



My advocacy for IP Youth Formation is fueled by a profound sense of responsibility to safeguard our heritage and empower our youth. Through Project URNONGG, we send ripples of positive change that will shape the course of generations to come. As we unite, celebrate, and nurture our flame of cultural identity, we ensure that the Indigenous Peoples of Benguet and the Cordilleras continue to thrive and shine brightly in the tapestry of humanity.



Let us stand shoulder to shoulder, celebrating the diverse threads that make up our cultural fabric. Together, we become active participants in shaping the destiny of our tribe. This is not just a journey; it is our shared narrative, and Project URNONGG invites you to be a part of it.



Project URNONGG photos contributed by Bit Wanas



TESTIMONIAL

Championing Women Leadership

IP Champion
Amylyn Moendeg-Dolores,
Teduray Leader

I've been thinking about the real impact of programs like the Indigenous Peoples' Champions. This effort aims to help Indigenous Peoples and is built on core principles—good governance, transparency, accountability, respect for customary law, empowering Indigenous voices, and recognizing women leaders—that we, IP Champions, share in our journey.

These principles matter as we strive for cultural preservation, economic resilience, and fair progress. We need a strong, honest government that respects transparency, in line with our Indigenous heritage. Accountability should be the foundation of our efforts, fostering trust and collaboration among everyone involved.

Preserving customary law, tied to centuries of knowledge, honors the resilience of Indigenous Peoples. It's a way to balance modernity and tradition in our cultural identity.

Empowering Indigenous women isn't just an idea; it's a must. Their leadership, based on nurturing and strength, is a source of power for our communities. We must commit to giving them the recognition they deserve as leaders.

As a Teduray Woman Leader, I promise to stick to these principles and contribute to positive change. Together, let's make progress that truly empowers Indigenous Peoples.

TESTIMONIAL

Championing Food Sovereignty Through the “Sulagad” Indigenous System



My journey in the IP Champions project, facilitated by IAG in collaboration with International IDEA, has involved various meaningful activities. These include immersions in the IPCAT tool, learning advocacy and lobbying techniques, crafting comprehensive individual and regional Advocacy Plans, and participating in enriching mentoring sessions. I've also had the privilege of joining a significant regional dialogue involving BARMM agencies and other relevant stakeholders.

The IP Champion initiative has deeply influenced my perspective, providing me with an expanded outlook and boosting my confidence in facing the harsh realities confronting Indigenous Peoples. One of the central challenges is championing the hopes and aspirations of our Indigenous communities within their ancestral domains. This program has ignited a relentless inspiration in me to persist in my advocacy efforts, standing shoulder to shoulder with fellow Indigenous Peoples to cultivate a more resilient community. This involves reinforcing the *Sulagad* system, an ancient Indigenous approach to farming and safeguarding the ecosystem.

Currently, I am wholeheartedly engaged in collaborative efforts with the community to implement the *Sulagad* system as a primary response to economic crises and the pressing concerns of climate change. These endeavors are fortified by the invaluable support of a dedicated collective encompassing the barangay and municipal local government units, national, and international organizations.

Through the IP Champion program, we are translating the aspirations of our community into palpable realities, turning dreams into achievements.



**IP Champion
Allan Olubalang**



IP CHAMPIONS' 10-POINT NATIONAL AGENDA

The IP Champions' 10-Point Policy Roadmap was crafted by Indigenous leaders and advocates from the Non-Moro Indigenous Peoples of Teduray, Lambangian, Menubu Dulangan and Arumanen Ne Menuvu communities in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, and the Ayangan, Kalanguya, Kankanaey, Ibaloi, Bago, Isnag, Applai and Kalinga communities in the Cordillera Administrative Region to amplify the political participation and empowerment of Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines. This strategic framework outlines key recommendations spanning representation, recognition, and rights, with a resolute focus on inclusivity, self-determination, and promoting Indigenous knowledge and perspective. The roadmap envisions a future where Indigenous voices are integral to governance and policy, creating a harmonious blend of heritage and progress.

While the initial draft of this roadmap was first presented to government stakeholders on August 9, 2023, in commemoration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, the final version was unveiled during the culminating forum of the 3-year IP Champions project in Manila on October 24-25, 2023.

IP Champions gather alongside multi-stakeholder participants during the culminating forum in Manila on October 24, 2023.



01. **Respect and recognition of Indigenous Political Structures (IPS) to enhance political representation and participation**

Recognition and empowerment: Strengthen and enact policy mandating Local Government Units (LGUs) to respect, recognize and empower Indigenous Political Structures (IPS) within their jurisdictions. This policy directive shall encompass self-governance rights, Indigenous leadership recognition, and meaningful engagement in decision-making processes and developmental planning anchored in the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) and other international legal frameworks recognizing Indigenous peoples' rights.

Guidelines for collaboration: Develop comprehensive guidelines for collaborative roles, responsibilities, and mechanisms between LGUs, IPS and Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representatives (IPMRs). These guidelines will foster effective communication, informed consent, and conflict resolution, ensuring a harmonious partnership that respects and advances Indigenous Peoples welfare and interests in local governance and development.



02. **Ancestral Domain Protection and Management**

Facilitation of the delineation and issuance of CADT to ICCs/IPs: Create a streamlined and effective procedure for the delineation and issuance of Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT), and pending delineation awards incorporating the knowledge of Indigenous communities, government entities, and pertinent stakeholders. Expedite boundary conflict resolutions, simplify processes and allocate appropriate funding support to ensure the attainability of Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP) in ancestral domains.

03. **Ensuring Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)**

Robust enforcement of FPIC procedures: Formulate all-encompassing and uniform directives for the implementation of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) across diverse sectors and scenarios including policy formulation and development. Creation of guidelines that facilitate Indigenous research and educational development and recognize the role of Indigenous Peoples Structures in the issuance of consent. The directives should clearly delineate the necessary stages, timeframes, and assigned roles to acquire and uphold FPIC by all stakeholders.

04. Integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP)

IKSP in all levels of education: Mandate the integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices in curriculum development across various subjects in basic and higher education ensuring cultural integrity and gender sensitivity learning materials reflecting Indigenous worldviews and values as reflected in tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

IKSP in development programs: Develop and implement policies that mandate the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices in the planning, design, and execution of services, projects and programs across relevant agencies and development institutions ensuring the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives.

06. Addressing Human Rights Violations and Abuse

Upholding human rights: Continuing education and information campaign on human rights and human rights mechanisms and strengthening community-based dialogues and conversations towards effective interventions and enforcement of accountability on human rights abuses.

Addressing human rights abuses and historical injustices thru transitional justice and reconciliation: Utilize tools for transitional justice and reconciliation to address issues and adopt alternative dispute resolution and the Indigenous tribal justice system.

05. Empowering Indigenous Peoples Engagement and Recognition of Indigenous Perspectives in Climate Action

Inclusion of IP role and perspectives in climate action: Adopt and incorporate Indigenous perspectives and active Indigenous people's participation in government and non-government initiatives for climate action, disaster response, food security, resilience, and well-being.



07. Fast-Tracking the Enactment of Non-Moro Indigenous Peoples Code in BARMM

Recognition of Non-Moro Indigenous Peoples in the BARMM IP Code: Fastrack the enactment of the Non-Moro Indigenous Peoples Code as one of the priority legislative agenda of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority.

08. Establishing Cordillera Regional Autonomy

Cordillera Autonomous Region Organic

Act: Accelerate the enactment of an Organic Act for the Cordillera Autonomous Region that has benefitted from an extensive consultation with Indigenous Peoples and multi-cultural stakeholders in the region, for the exercise of the right to self-determination and autonomy.

09. Empowering Indigenous Peoples' Youth and Women

Strengthening Indigenous Youth and Women's political engagement and empowerment:

Ensure the representation, participation and capacitation of Indigenous women and youth in regional and national bodies with the enactment of legislative measures and provision of relevant support. Address the multiple forms of gender-based discrimination and violence.

10. Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Sustainable Livelihood

Sustainable food security and livelihood:

Ensure the respect of Indigenous peoples' rights to healthy and culturally relevant food and livelihood ecosystems that promote diversity, harmony and balance with nature and spiritual beliefs.



IP Champions mark their advocacy efforts with a cultural presentation in Manila on October 24, 2023, during the culminating forum, which includes the launch of the 10-Point Policy Agenda.

LESSONS LEARNED



Over the three-year span of the Project, there has been a deliberate focus on championing community-driven advocacies tailored to meet the distinctive needs of diverse Indigenous communities. This emphasis was particularly significant in the BARMM and CAR, identified by the IAG and International IDEA as strategic regions where positive changes in policy and programming could profoundly impact not only the Indigenous communities within these areas but also contribute to the broader improvement of IP rights protection in the Philippines. As we reach the culmination of the Project, this section unravels key lessons, presenting significant insights into the multifaceted challenges and strategic approaches that characterize the pursuit of IP rights in the country.

1. Resilience in Overcoming Persistent Hurdles

The Project's enduring commitment to navigating challenges highlights the crucial lesson that, even with established constitutional and legal frameworks, IPs in the Philippines continue to confront ongoing obstacles in securing their rights. This persistent reality underscores the importance of cultivating resilience and adaptability in crafting strategies and interventions. The lesson extends beyond addressing immediate issues, emphasizing the long-term formation of values, skills, and attitudes, particularly among emerging IP Champions. Recognizing the dynamic nature of advocacy, this lesson underscores the need for continuous learning and adaptation, ensuring that the next generation of IP advocates is well-prepared and equipped to navigate the evolving landscape of Indigenous rights in the Philippines.

2. Empowering Through Synergized Individual Advocacies

The Project's methodology involves equipping IP Champions with the IPCAT tool at a personal level, initially through training and subsequently through group workshops and mentoring. This strategic approach has demonstrated its significance by not only fostering a sense of ownership and customizing initiatives to meet the specific needs of individual communities but also by creating a foundation for mutual support and resource pooling. This, in turn, enhances the complementation and interconnectedness of each advocacy, ensuring a more cohesive and impactful collective effort.

3. Promoting Evidence-Based Advocacy Planning

The pivotal role of the IPCAT tool at the Project's inception emphasized to the IP Champions the significance of in-depth study and knowledge-building for the enhancement of their advocacies. By delving into the foundational framework of IP rights in the Philippines and drawing insights not only from local experiences but also from various regions across the world, the emphasis on a global perspective becomes apparent. This cross-cultural immersion significantly enriches the reservoir of knowledge and strategies accessible to IP advocates, fostering a more informed and effective approach to their initiatives.

4. Creative Approaches to Skill Development

The lesson learned from the Project's innovative capacity-building strategy involves equipping IP leaders with a diverse skill set and knowledge specifically tailored for community-level advocacies and projects. This inventive approach signifies the importance of going beyond conventional methods and embracing creativity in designing programs that address the unique needs of IP communities. The collaboration with IP champions, as well as partnerships with national, local, and regional entities, along with international organizations like International IDEA, demonstrates the effectiveness of a comprehensive and collaborative model. This lesson underscores the value of integrating varied perspectives, expertise, and resources to create a well-rounded and impactful capacity-building initiative for the benefit of IP leaders and their communities.

5. Adapting to Hybrid Learning Environments Amidst the Pandemic

The unforeseen challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic prompted the adoption of a hybrid training format for the IPCAT tool. Participants uniformly expressed concerns about the limitations of this approach, citing that it hindered the learning experience, with a consensus emerging that face-to-face learning is more effective. This experience has unveiled a critical lesson about the importance of learning adaptability in unforeseen circumstances. While hybrid models may offer flexibility, the value of in-person interactions and traditional learning methods is irreplaceable. This underscores the need for projects to proactively explore innovative solutions that balance flexibility with the proven efficacy of face-to-face learning, ensuring optimal knowledge transfer and participant engagement.



6. Embracing Change as a Continuous Journey

The project's culmination signifies not an endpoint but rather a fresh commencement in the ongoing commitment to uphold IP rights in the Philippines. Acknowledging that change is an ongoing process encourages a dynamic approach to navigating evolving challenges and opportunities. A crucial insight gained is the recognition by IP Champions that this project is just one of numerous opportunities in their lifetime, constrained by finite resources. Importantly, the advocacy and potential for change reside within individual IP Champions, extending beyond the temporary bounds of the project.

7. Enhanced Political Literacy for Effective Advocacy

Another important lesson from the project lies in its role in advancing the understanding of political transformations, especially within the evolving governance systems of the BARMM and the prospective autonomy in the CAR. The insights gained provide valuable knowledge for navigating the intricate landscape of opportunities and risks in these political contexts. Empowered by the IPCAT tool, IP Champions have demonstrated improved political literacy, equipping them to comprehend the profound impact of legislations and enabling them to adeptly navigate evolving political developments. This lesson underscores the significance of cultivating political awareness among IP advocates, enabling them to contribute more effectively to informed and well-adapted advocacy projects in the realm of Indigenous rights.

8. Nurturing Collaborative Sustainability

The Project's strategic approach, emphasizing both the empowerment of IP Champions and the enhancement of public institutions' capacity to respond, has facilitated meaningful exchanges, establishing the foundation for sustained collaborations. This dual-sided engagement has not only nurtured ongoing partnerships but has also created an atmosphere conducive to shared initiatives between IP Champions and pertinent public institutions, ensuring sustainable impacts that extend beyond the Project's timeline.

9. Facilitating Virtual Collaboration and Learning

Recognizing the evolving landscape of project collaboration, the initiative has successfully promoted social networking and experience-sharing among participants through dynamic engagement on social media platforms. This strategic use of digital communication channels has proven to be crucial in achieving positive results. The lesson learned emphasizes the significant utility of establishing virtual information and communication platforms for project participants. Such platforms serve as interactive spaces where participants can engage in discussions, share valuable experiences, and efficiently communicate learning materials and relevant information. Platforms like International IDEA's e-learning platform Talent LMS present promising options for creating structured and effective virtual environments, highlighting the potential for enhanced collaboration and knowledge exchange among project participants. This lesson underscores the strategic importance of leveraging digital tools to facilitate seamless communication and enrich the collaborative experience within projects.

10. Harnessing Global Networks for IP Rights

The Project's success in energizing IP Champions through the IPCAT tool and facilitating networking among them reveals a substantial potential in fostering connections between Indigenous peoples on national, regional, and global scales. The newfound enthusiasm among IP Champions, stemming from a deeper understanding of global IP rights, emphasizes the transformative impact of cross-cultural knowledge exchange. This underscores the crucial lesson that building networks is not only beneficial for individual advocates but also holds the key to amplifying the collective voice of Indigenous communities. The experience serves as a valuable model for future projects, highlighting the significance of incorporating global perspectives and fostering collaborative networks as integral components for empowering Indigenous advocates and promoting the broader cause of IP rights.



Policy Briefs

Part of the support provided to the IP Champions is the development of four policy briefs addressing various pertinent issues and actionable options aligned with their advocacy plans. These briefs were crafted through research on contemporary frameworks and trends influencing Indigenous rights in the Philippines, coupled with insights from ongoing advocacy initiatives led by the IP Champions and their support networks. Designed to inform constructive dialogues, these briefs serve as invaluable resources for engaging both national and sub-national institutions effectively.

Scan the QR code to download policy briefs.



Human rights lawyer Raymond Marvic (Ice) Baguilat scrutinizes the 11 Building Blocks formulated by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) for Resilient, Responsive, and Relevant Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs)/ Indigenous Peoples. He contends that given the Building Blocks' aim to advance the rights of ICCs/IPs, the evaluation should employ a Rights-Based Approach, applying internationally recognized Indigenous Peoples rights standards as normative benchmarks. The PANEL principles—emphasizing participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment, and legality—are at the core of Baguilat's analysis.

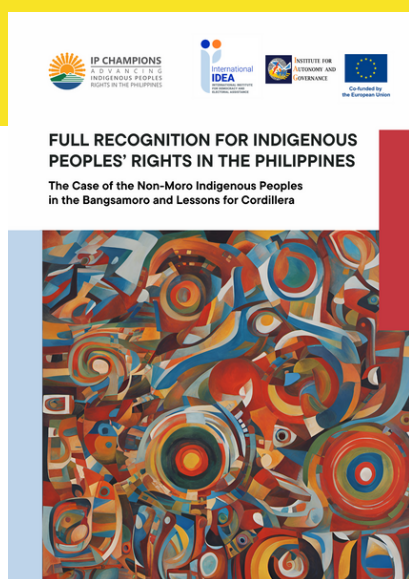
He writes: "The NCIP is mandated under the IPRA to protect and promote the interest and well-being of the ICCs/IPs with due regard to their beliefs, customs, traditions, and institutions. It released the 11 Building Blocks of Resilient, Responsive, and Relevant ICCs/IPs to fulfill its mandate in Ancestral Domains. The 11 programmatic steps are imagined to result in the idealized ICCs/IPs that are fully empowered. The Building Blocks has since then become the predominant normative policy of the NCIP.

Sober evaluation of the 11 Building Blocks using a rights-based approach and the PANEL principles, however, reveals the inadequacy of the plan and its failure to recognize the complexity of the problems facing ICCs/IPs. There is an apparent gap in the formulation of the policy as it is seemingly assumed to be suitable for all ICCs/IPs. There is also no recognition of the intersectionality of the problems plaguing the community as the policy failed to consider other vulnerable groups within the communities. This omission tends to further the multiple discrimination faced by these sectors. Measures that ensure the proper implementation of the law are also lacking. There are no redress mechanisms provided under the law that would ensure that violations would be effectively dealt with. Access to justice has been sidestepped in the policy as there is no mention of support mechanisms and legal support in the Building Blocks. Furthermore, while empowerment is idealized, there is scant explanation as to how this will be attained. Pedestrian activities to provide information, education, and communications (IEC) on ICCs/IPs rights fail to address the existing power imbalance between communities and dominant society. Also, despite the mention of specific duty bearers, there has been no platform provided to allow ICCs/IPs to interact and demand action from these duty bearers. There are also no measurable and objectively verifiable indicators to show the effectiveness of the policy in promoting and protecting the rights of ICCs/IPs. Lastly, the legal basis of the policy is still ill-defined. It has not been embodied in any comprehensive Master Plan, Administrative Order, or Memorandum Circular that would explain the full rationale of the policy and its implementation details.

The NCIP's 11 Building Blocks of Resilient, Responsive, and Relevant Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples

1. Confirmation of Indigenous Political Structure
2. Registration & Accreditation of Indigenous Peoples Organization
3. Delineation Process for the Issuance of Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title / Certificate of Land Title
4. Establishment of Ancestral Domain Management Offices
5. Formulation of Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plans
6. Systematization of IP Wealth Management Through the Formulation of Community Resource Management and Development Plans
7. Institutionalization of the Process for Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) and Exercise of Priority Rights
8. Effective Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative (IPMR) in the Local Legislative Bodies
9. Formulation of Efficient Memorandum of Agreement/ Understanding/ Cooperation
10. Conduct of Socio-Economic Activities with IP Cooperatives
11. Establishment of Ancestral Domain Defense System.

All efforts that recognize, promote, and protect the rights of ICCs/IPs should be lauded and encouraged. The NCIP should thus be commended for proposing the 11 Building Blocks. Nevertheless, even good intentions are not enough to make policies work. Thus, the author hopes that through the careful evaluation of the policy, the NCIP would recognize the previously indiscernible limitations and trepidations. Furthermore, respectful proposals are also provided to determine ways forward. It calls for all stakeholders to assist the NCIP in developing a robust Master Plan that fully provides the requisite human rights principles. This is because amid difficulty and challenges is an even greater opportunity to better the lives of ICCs/IPs throughout the country.”



Romeo Saliga, the former representative for Non-Moro Indigenous Peoples (NMIP) in both the second Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) and the inaugural Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), revisits the persistent challenges hindering the full recognition of NMIP rights in the Bangsamoro region.

NMIPs have consistently advocated for their rights, anchored in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, the UNDRIP, and IPRA. The enactment of the BOL in 2018, a result of the GPH-MILF peace process establishing BARMM, presents opportunities for NMIPs to assert their rights to ancestral domain, self-governance, cultural preservation, social justice, and human rights. However, despite these legal strides, significant progress on the ground remains elusive for NMIPs. They grapple with issues such as blurred identity, struggles for representation on local bodies, insufficient recognition of their Indigenous governance systems, and the deficient implementation of social services. These challenges are exacerbated by human rights violations, including violence leading to deaths and displacements. As the early stages of Bangsamoro autonomy unfold, NMIPs perceive it as a critical juncture to vigorously advocate for the complete recognition and fulfillment of their rights to safeguard their cultural heritage and advance social justice in the region.

Among Saliga’s recommendations in the policy brief are:

1. The Bangsamoro Transition Authority should expedite the enactment of the Indigenous Peoples’ Code, ensuring clear rights for NMIPs without diminishing existing legal recognitions. This code will aid ministries like MIPA in effectively implementing policies for NMIPs’ rights and identity clarification, leading to improved service delivery.
2. Collaboration between NCIP and MIPA is vital for promptly delineating NMIPs’ ancestral domains to prevent land dispossession, enhance economic self-sufficiency, and bolster access to basic services like health and education. Establishing a working

mechanism between NCIP and MIPA will streamline program delivery and ensure the involvement of NMIPs in decision-making processes.

3. Mobilize the Bangsamoro Human Rights Commission and other stakeholders to address human rights violations and protect vulnerable groups, including women, youth, and people with disabilities. Designate peace zones for displaced individuals and hold both state and non-state actors accountable for any violations, fostering a safe environment for all residents.
4. Foster collaborative initiatives among civil society, NGOs, and international donors to facilitate people-to-people dialogues, fostering trust and peaceful coexistence among the diverse Bangsamoro population. This approach aims to mitigate conflicts and promote harmony among communities.
5. Officially recognize Indigenous Political Structures as primary leadership bodies, providing support for tribal leaders to fulfill their roles without external interference. Rather than creating new structures, MIPA should acknowledge existing ones to enhance unity among leaders and ensure proper representation of IPs in decision-making bodies.
6. Grant fiscal autonomy to Indigenous Political Structures under the IP Code to finance their development priorities, ensuring clear delineation of functions between MIPA and the structures to avoid conflicts. Explore the concept of *Fusaka Inged*, an ancestral domain-based autonomous governance, as a means of fully integrating NMIPs' rights within the BARMM.



Saturnina Rodil, an author, playwright, and retired associate professor, explores the complexities of implementing IPRA and highlights mediation and conflict transformation's pivotal role.

Indigenous communities, deeply connected to their ancestral lands, grapple with legal disparities while preserving cultural identities amidst economic progress. Rodil advocates integrating conflict transformation into IPRA for inclusive dispute management over Indigenous territories.

According to Rodil, conflict transformation and mediation are essential for navigating disputes and fostering dialogues, addressing multi-dimensional conflicts faced by Indigenous communities. Dialogic platforms provide equitable spaces where all voices are valued, especially significant as IPs/ICCs express positions amid powerful entities. Community mediations recognizing how IPs/ICCs resolve conflicts are vital amidst common struggles and coordination challenges. Legal arbitration offers a structured, binding approach for resolving disputes over ancestral domains while respecting cultural significance.

The IPRA aimed to safeguard IPs/ICC's rights and cultural identities, yet its practical implementation has been challenging. Overlapping laws have created conflicts, hindering Indigenous communities' survival and economic development. Environmental, cultural, and human rights issues persist, revealing a gap between legislated rights and actionable respect.

Among Rodil's recommendations are calls for legal and policy reform, aiming to tailor solutions to the diverse challenges faced by IPs. She advocates for legal harmonization through reviews and mediation to address conflicting statutes. Rodil emphasizes the need to strengthen the NCIP and Local Government Units to enhance operational transparency and facilitate constructive dialogues.

Additionally, she suggests implementing programs to empower IPs in safeguarding their rights, creating platforms for IPs to actively participate in policymaking, and ensuring equitable resource allocation for the validation of ancestral domain titles. Rodil also emphasizes the importance of instituting culturally sensitive mechanisms for resolving disputes, fostering partnerships for sustainable development initiatives, establishing mechanisms to protect IPs from exploitation and violence, and adopting inclusive frameworks prioritizing IPs' rights over ancestral domains in land use and environmental management.



The fourth policy brief, authored by Amanda Cats-Baril, former Programme Manager of MyConstitution Programme at International IDEA and Constitution-Building Advisor for the Asia-Pacific region, aims to complement International IDEA's IPCAT for the promotion and protection of Indigenous rights. It aims to

inspire global IP Champions to take actions, both large and small, to enhance the experience of Indigenous communities within constitutional and legal frameworks. The brief provides concrete examples of objectives and actions to address identified gaps and capitalize on opportunities for improving the protection of IP rights, working alongside the IPCAT. It emphasizes that while there may be no perfect constitution, ongoing efforts are necessary to ensure alignment with its vision and human rights standards. Rather than focusing solely on changing legal texts, the presented case studies offer creative initiatives to transform perceptions of the law, treatment of IPs, and design of government services, aiming to empower Indigenous communities themselves. While not universally applicable, the policy brief also features case studies that serve as seeds for actionable ideas to improve the lived realities of Indigenous communities and the overall health of constitutional orders.

The advocacy support was very important as we learned how to articulate our needs better. It gave us a burning desire to execute our advocacy skills.

I had experiences as a representative for my community, but I was not so confident. I wondered if I deserved leading the group. I really wanted to learn to be able to deliver, and the project has really boosted my confidence.

What I learned was to be assertive in a non-adversarial manner. I really learned that that I need to connect with decision-makers and build relationships.

What I appreciate most about this project is the IP Champion title! The title empowers me and gives me a platform in my community.

I learned a lot of lessons by talking to my peer Champions and developed close friendships. It was good that we met in this project. We all work for IP rights, so we have a lot in common.

We will keep in contact after the project. We have the same rights, and we are fighting for the same things.

INSIGHTS AND PERSPECTIVES

IP Champions Reflect on a 3-year Advocacy Journey

Scalable Strategies for Replicable Interventions in Areas with Similar Contexts in BARMM or CAR

These insights capture essential lessons from diverse activities, highlighting a commitment to effective initiatives. Ongoing efforts tackle recognition challenges, ancestral domain protection, resource allocation, and combating stereotypes, contributing to positive change.

1. Empowering Indigenous Communities

- Implementing transformative programs that empower Indigenous leaders became a cornerstone for the IP Champions, underlining the need for clear objectives and goals in community activities. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and self-determination among IPs, emphasizing the preservation of their culture and overall well-being as essential rights. Encouraging a proactive stance and strategic planning in advocacy initiatives proved crucial, recognizing the dynamic challenges faced by IPs.

2. Advocacy and Collaboration

- The emphasis on advocating for the recognition and preservation of IP rights over individual interests resonated strongly with the IP Champions. Employing creative approaches to challenge stereotypes and promote social interdependence within Indigenous communities became a hallmark of effective advocacy. Additionally, fostering partnerships with IPs, ensuring cultural appropriateness, and dedicating attention to mental health emerged as critical components of successful collaboration.



3. Land Security and Sustainable Development

- The focus on securing land for Indigenous communities, even in the absence of formal titles, became a pivotal insight. Collaborating with stakeholders and prioritizing grassroots-led initiatives allowed tailored projects to address the specific needs of each community. The key takeaway emphasized the importance of bridging the gap between tradition and modernity, promoting sustainable development through ongoing adaptation and learning.

4. Policy Implementation and Advocacy Guides

- The implementation of policies rooted in international standards, with a focus on genuine consent, emerged as a guiding principle. The IP Champions highlighted the need for comprehensive recognition of ancestral domains, emphasizing voluntary agreements, clear definitions, and collective empowerment.

5. Conflict Resolution and Empowerment

- Utilizing Indigenous wisdom and dialogue spaces for peaceful conflict resolution took center stage in empowering Indigenous communities. Strengthening local institutions and addressing environmental sustainability and human rights protection became vital. The IP Champions underscored the importance of addressing representation gaps, particularly for women, penalizing encroachment on ancestral domains, and ensuring access to justice for IPs.

6. Upholding IP Rights in NCIP's Policy Building Blocks

- Evaluating NCIP's 11 policy building blocks through a rights-based approach, particularly in the context of challenges faced during the pandemic, became a strategic focus. Prioritizing participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment, and adherence to international human rights principles in policy frameworks was highlighted. The IP Champions stressed the ongoing need to refine empowerment strategies, ensuring active participation, accurate understanding of communities, and fostering private sector respect for IP rights and wisdom.



Insights Gained from Activity Implementation

These reflections distill vital insights from varied activities and showcase commitment to effective initiatives. Recognition challenges, ancestral domain protection, resource allocation, and combating stereotypes highlight ongoing efforts for positive change.

1. Fostering Empowerment within Indigenous Communities

- Transformational Journey: Shifting the perspective on projects from mere activities to transformative journeys became a fundamental insight. Recognizing the value of equipping participants with tools for setting and achieving objectives, the IP Champions emphasized the need for projects to instigate lasting transformation within IPs.
- United Community: The emphasis on encouraging unity and collective action among IPs underscored the non-negotiable nature of IP rights. Projects should prioritize fostering a sense of community.
- Cultural Preservation: Projects should actively focus on preserving cultural values, integrating elements that encourage selflessness, shared responsibility, and spirituality within IPs. This approach ensures that cultural preservation is at the forefront of community-focused initiatives.

2. Partnership and Collaboration

- Strategic Approach: Adopting proactive and strategic planning approaches emerged as a crucial insight, emphasizing the necessity of clear objectives and plans in advocacy initiatives. The IP Champions highlighted the importance of strategic thinking in fostering effective collaboration and achieving collective goals.
- Culturally Appropriate Partnerships: Collaborative efforts should prioritize respect for heritage and overall well-being, emphasizing the need for culturally appropriate initiatives, especially in mental health. This insight stresses the significance of ensuring that partnerships align with and contribute to the cultural identity and values of IPs.

3. Conflict Resolution and Advocacy

- Innovative Conflict Resolution: Exploring creative conflict resolution methods rooted in Indigenous wisdom and dialogue spaces became a focal point. The IP Champions emphasized the need for innovation in conflict resolution techniques to ensure effectiveness and cultural relevance.
- Inclusivity: Ensuring equitable platforms for dialogue, irrespective of power structures, emerged as a vital insight. Encouraging the participation of inhibited Indigenous voices in discussions became a guiding principle, promoting inclusivity and diversity in conflict resolution processes.

4. Rights-Based Approach and Policy Advocacy

- Refined Empowerment Strategies: Refining empowerment strategies, addressing gaps, and protecting Indigenous rights within policy frameworks were deemed essential for comprehensive recognition and protection. The IP Champions stressed the ongoing need for strategic refinement to ensure that policies actively contribute to empowering IPs.
- Guiding Principles: Recognizing the importance of grounding projects and policies in international human rights principles, the IP Champions emphasized genuine consent and adherence to rights-based frameworks such as the PANEL Principles. This commitment ensures that advocacy efforts align with globally recognized standards for human rights and Indigenous rights protection.

5. Recognition Challenges

- Identity Crises: The absence of clear definitions and practical implementation in the BARMM poses challenges to the full recognition of Non-Moro IPs' rights, leading to identity crises within these communities. The IP Champions identified the critical need for precise definitions and effective implementation mechanisms to address this issue.
- Hurdles in Policy Building: Challenges such as red-tagging, violence, and insufficient participation in policy-making processes highlight gaps in policy implementation. The IP Champions emphasized the necessity of overcoming these challenges to ensure a robust policy framework that actively protects and promotes Indigenous rights.

6. Ancestral Domain Protection and Empowerment

- Protection Gaps: Ongoing challenges in protecting ancestral domains and addressing issues related to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) indicate the need for stronger legal mechanisms. The IP Champions underscored the imperative of enhancing legal frameworks to ensure the comprehensive protection of ancestral domains and the rights of IPs.
- Representation and Access to Justice: Persistent representation gaps, particularly for women, and challenges in ensuring access to justice for IPs require focused attention in project implementation. The IP Champions recognized the need for targeted interventions to address these gaps and promote inclusive representation.

7. Community Engagement and Resource Allocation

- Sustainable Funding: While community-led funding models are in place, challenges arise in resource allocation, necessitating careful evaluation and decision-making in project proposals. The IP Champions stressed the importance of sustainable funding models that align with community needs, promoting effective resource allocation for long-term project success.
- Balancing Traditional Wisdom and Modernity: Bridging the gap between tradition and modernity emerged as an ongoing challenge, requiring continuous adaptation and learning. The IP Champions emphasized the need for initiatives that strike a balance between preserving cultural heritage and embracing sustainable development.

8. Advocacy and Perception Challenges

- Combatting Stereotypes: Addressing stereotypes, both in public perception and official systems, remains a core challenge, emphasizing the need for creative campaigns and awareness initiatives. The IP Champions highlighted the importance of innovative advocacy approaches to challenge and reshape existing stereotypes.
- Collaborative Efforts: Collaborative efforts with governmental agencies, international communities, and civil society organizations were identified as vital but requiring persistent advocacy and proactive engagement strategies. The IP Champions underscored the ongoing need for sustained collaboration to effect positive change in perceptions and policies.



Key Insights from Emerging Political Developments Affecting Project Context

These reflections highlight the crucial need for a nuanced and comprehensive approach to Indigenous rights advocacy and deepen our understanding of the complexities involved in safeguarding Indigenous rights.

1. Transformational Advocacy

- Empowering Community Leaders: Empowering Indigenous leaders and involving children through education and heritage workshops not only fosters aspirations but also preserves ancient knowledge. This approach bridges the gap between tradition and modernity, ensuring the transfer of wisdom to future generations.
- Community-Led Funding: The adoption of community-led funding models allows for tailored grassroots projects, ensuring that initiatives align with community needs and values. This bottom-up approach empowers communities to shape projects according to their unique requirements.

2. Community Engagement and Partnership

- Culturally Appropriate Partnerships: Culturally appropriate partnerships with Indigenous communities are vital for successful community engagement. Collaborative efforts must prioritize respect for heritage and overall well-being, particularly in areas like mental health, demonstrating a commitment to upholding Indigenous rights and amplifying Indigenous voices.

3. Conflict Resolution and Mediation

- Emphasizing Indigenous Rights: Placing IP rights, particularly regarding ancestral domains, at the forefront and shaping interventions based on their customs and wisdom ensures that initiatives are respectful and conducive to preserving their heritage, thereby promoting long-term sustainability.

4. Policy Advocacy and Implementation

- Comprehensive Recognition: Achieving comprehensive recognition of IP rights requires clear definitions, voluntary agreements, collaborative efforts, and overcoming structural limitations within IP communities. This comprehensive approach ensures the protection and promotion of Indigenous rights.



IP CHAMPIONS
ADVANCING
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

