



**IP CHAMPIONS**  
ADVANCING  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES  
RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES



**INSTITUTE FOR  
AUTONOMY AND  
GOVERNANCE**

Funded by the  
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# Indigenous Peoples Champions in the Philippines

## THE DILEMMA OF IP DISCRIMINATION

With approximately 17 million Indigenous Peoples (IPs) living in the Philippines, the highest IP population are located in central Luzon and Mindanao. Despite Indigenous Peoples' extensive societal and cultural contributions, their communities remain among the most vulnerable and discriminated against.

In the Cordillera and Bangsamoro, throughout their lives, IPs face multiple layers of social discrimination, economic marginalization, and political disempowerment that must be addressed at the institutional and legislative levels. This was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, as Indigenous Peoples suffered exponentially due to displacement and hostilities instigated by armed groups who want to occupy their lands.

Despite the existence of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) and the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), which protect and promote the rights for IPs, there continues to be gaps and overlaps in the mandates of government agencies.

## A CALL FOR INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

In order to respond to multiple types of discrimination that the indigenous communities are exposed to, the 'Indigenous Peoples Champions for the Philippines' project will use a capacity development and local systems approach. Local champions empowered with knowledge and tools to resolve these challenges are more sustainable than institutions solely leading the advocacy initiatives.

National government plans being prepared to pursue, transition and operationalize autonomy in Cordillera and Bangsamoro, and there is an opportunity to advocate for Indigenous Peoples' inclusion in the planning processes. The project serves as a light of hope for a more inclusive and prosperous future for the IP community.

This project is led by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) and the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG) with funding support from the European Union.

## UPHOLDING IP CHAMPIONS

The project aims to support IP groups in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and the Cordillera on two levels: Advocacy and Institution engagement.



Photo source: Institute for Autonomy and Governance

Over the long term, the project envisions that all will become champion leaders who can work with institutions for the protection of indigenous rights. It will help shape the foundation for meaningful and sustainable inclusion of the Indigenous Peoples agenda, especially in the governance and development processes within BARMM and Cordillera.

### 40 ADVOCACY CHAMPIONS

Forty advocacy champions from the indigenous groups in BARMM and the Cordillera will be trained and equipped with understanding the legal and institutional framework for indigenous rights in the Philippines. This will allow them to collaborate and build partnerships with local key agencies and actors in pursuit of better policy for and protection of indigenous rights.

### 60 INSTITUTIONAL CHAMPIONS

Sixty institutional champions will be trained and equipped to: 1) facilitate meaningful participation of IP champions, and 2) fulfill their specific role and mandate to work collaboratively with indigenous peoples to respond to rights violations and promote better protection of indigenous rights.

# THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS IN CONSTITUTIONS ASSESSMENT TOOL (IPCAT)

The IPCAT methodology serves as a guideline for Indigenous Peoples, by using a rights-based approach to constitution-building. IPCAT uses a list of 39 questions based on eight principles to support the role of Indigenous Peoples in autonomous governance.

With this tool, a series of workshops was organized for the IP Champions, focused on how to use the IPCAT methodology. The IPCAT will help the IP Champions effectively identify gaps and overlaps in the legal and institutional frameworks, and to better understand prevailing socio-economic circumstances that contribute to lesser participation of IPs and advocates in the formulation and implementation of development plans. It also reviews if national laws and policies are in line with internationally recognized rights and standards.

The outcomes of the workshops are an investment in future IP Champions' activities. First, the sessions' documentation can be used by the Champions to lead their own IP communities in inclusive implementation of transition plans. Next, the real-practice stories and positive lessons gathered from the Indigenous Peoples, helped provide capacity-building and knowledge inputs on how to establish the need for meaningful consultation and multi-stakeholder policy negotiations for the fulfillment of Indigenous Peoples' inclusion in governmental planning processes.

## IPCAT'S EIGHT PRINCIPLES

1. Recognition and citizenship
2. Right to equality and anti-discrimination
3. Foundations for indigenous peoples' rights
4. Autonomy: Agreement-making and self-government
5. Consultation, political participation and representation
6. Land, territories and natural resources rights
7. Right to culture, and social and economic development
8. Protecting and promoting indigenous peoples' rights

## THE JOURNEY TO EMPOWERMENT

The expected impact of the project is to enhance Indigenous Peoples' rights in the Philippines by contributing to a situation where indigenous communities have empowered advocates who can demand rights, and where institutions responsible for upholding these rights have the knowledge and skills to respond to such requests to effectively fulfil their mandates.

The project will be implemented for three years (from 2021-2023), focusing on two outcomes:



Photo source: Institute for Autonomy and Governance

### OUTCOME 1

Indigenous leaders in Bangsamoro and Cordillera have enhanced understanding of the legal and institutional framework for indigenous peoples' rights in the Philippines and improve their advocacy capacity to engage in sub- national, national and international human rights processes.



Photo source: Institute for Autonomy and Governance

### OUTCOME 2

Relevant national and sub- national institutions have increased knowledge about indigenous peoples' rights in the Philippines and of their own role in the protection of these rights.

## KEY OUTPUTS

### PREPARATORY CONSULTATIONS

In the first months of the project, in order to build relationships and trust with relevant stakeholders and ensure that activities are in line with current needs and constraints, IAG will lead in the consultation of Indigenous Peoples and their representative organizations in Bangsamoro and Cordillera, as well as with government institutions.

### IPCAT WORKSHOPS

International IDEA will facilitate the workshops for the IP Champions in Year 1, then will have follow-on workshops in Year 2 with the same participants to inform advocacy planning and ensure updates in the rights situation and legal/institutional framework are monitored.

### ADVOCACY PLANS

The IP Champions will draft advocacy plans based on regional and national advocacies that emanate from the mutual agreement among IP Champions. Said advocacy plans will be anchored on their baseline understandings of the current legal and institutional framework for better protecting the rights of indigenous peoples in the Philippines. They will receive mentoring and support from IAG and International IDEA.

### FOUR POLICY BRIEFS

Policy Briefs will be developed and published throughout the project period, focused on different issues relevant to the IP Champions' advocacy plans and actions.

### EXPERIENCE-SHARING FORUM

This forum will allow for the review and evaluation of advocacy plans for the IP Champions.

### TWO REGIONAL DIALOGUES AND ONE DIALOGUE WITH NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

These round table discussions will harness support from the government to the advocacy plans formulated by IP champions and explore inter-agency mechanisms for IPs.

### TWO-DAY NATIONAL FORUM

This forum will collate lessons learned from the implementation of the Action and highlight the state of Indigenous Peoples' rights in the Philippines based on the BARMM and Cordillera experience. A publication will be produced featuring the IP issues and advocacy plans.



Photo source: Institute for Autonomy and Governance

Overall, the project and its activities will help build a strong and sustainable commitment and ownership among the IP Champions, and truly ensure a future where the indigenous rights are protected and promoted.

The IP Champions Project is an EU-funded program implemented by International IDEA and The Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG).

For more information about the project, contact Nyla Prieto at [N.prieto@idea.int](mailto:N.prieto@idea.int) or Jo Genna Jover at [jjjover@iag.org.ph](mailto:jjjover@iag.org.ph).

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#### About International IDEA

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance is an intergovernmental organization with the mission to advance democracy worldwide, as a universal human aspiration and enabler of sustainable development. We do this by supporting the building, strengthening and safeguarding of democratic political institutions and processes at all levels. Our vision is a world in which democratic processes, actors and institutions are inclusive, accountable and can deliver sustainable development to all.

#### About IAG

The Institute for Autonomy and Governance is an independent institution devoted to research, training and technical assistance to evolve genuine autonomy and good governance and support peace and development in the southern Philippines. IAG sees the promotion of autonomy as strategic, and it provides platforms for the country's minority Muslims and Indigenous Peoples in the Bangsamoro and Cordillera regions to create self-governance structures for meaningful self-determination, sustainable growth and lasting peace.