



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5780



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
RECOGNIZING AND INSTITUTIONALIZING INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES' EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS WITHIN THE PHILIPPINE
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS, ESTABLISHING THE GUIDELINES FOR
THE ACCREDITATION, MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION OF IP
SCHOOLS, APPROPRIATING THE NECESSARY GOVERNMENT
FUNDS, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, INCENTIVES AND SUPPORT
THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The indigenous peoples (IPs) of the Philippines, who represent a significant segment of the nation's diverse population, have historically faced systemic obstacles in accessing quality education. Despite ongoing efforts to reduce these disparities, IP communities still confront challenges such as geographical remoteness, discrimination, and limited access to resources. Recognizing that every Filipino, including IPs, has a fundamental right to quality education, it is crucial to establish systems that address their unique cultural and educational needs.

Based on the 2020 census by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), IPs number approximately 9.84 million, making up 9.1 percent of the country's total household population of 108.67 million. In 2021, the Department of Education's Indigenous Peoples Education Office (IPsEO) catered to 2.529 million IP learners across 42,176 public schools nationwide. However,

many IP communities remain in geographically isolated locations and continue to suffer from disadvantages caused by discrimination and restricted access to social services.

In 2023, reports indicated that the NCIP was unable to fulfill all scholarship assistance requests from IP students. Additionally, there is a lack of data on the employment outcomes of those who received support, highlighting gaps in the educational support system.

This bill aims to institutionalize the various existing Indigenous Peoples Education Systems within the National Educational System, fostering a Philippine educational framework that values inclusivity and respects the diversity of learners across the country. It ensures that all groups identified as IPs are given meaningful opportunities to participate fully in society, adapt to evolving needs, and exercise their rights and responsibilities as Filipino citizens. Moreover, the bill authorizes the State to provide reasonable oversight and regulation over all IP educational institutions.

Ultimately, this legislation seeks to fulfill the constitutional mandate to develop national plans and policies that protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities, preserving and promoting their rich heritage, traditions, and institutions for the benefit of current and future generations.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



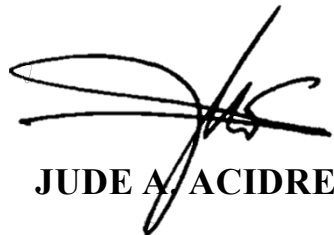
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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Indigenous Peoples Education Systems Act” (IPED Systems Act).

SEC. 2. *Declaration of State Policies.* – In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, and pursuant to International Covenants, in force, and which the Philippines has entered into, accepted and/or ratified:

- (a) The State shall give priority to education science and technology, arts, culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress and promote total human liberation and development; Pursuant thereto the State shall promote the right of every individual to relevant quality education regardless of sex, age, creed, socio-economic status, physical and mental conditions, racial or ethnic origin, political or other affiliation. The State shall therefore promote and maintain access to quality education as well as the enjoyment of the benefits of education by all its citizens.
- (b) The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all; Accordingly, the State in conjunction with the Indigenous peoples shall take effective measures in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.
- (c) The State shall establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society; Consequently, the State shall encourage, recognize and support Indigenous Peoples 'Education/Indigenous Peoples 'Learning Systems, non-formal, informal, as well as self-learning, independent and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to community needs;
- (d) The State shall recognize, respect, and protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions, and institutions. It shall consider these rights in the formulation of national plans and policies. In view thereof,

1. The State shall respect and recognize the right of Indigenous peoples to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning;
2. The State shall take into account regional and sectoral needs and conditions and shall encourage local planning in the development of educational policies and programs;
3. The State shall respect and recognize the right of Indigenous Peoples to revitalize, use develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places, and persons;
4. The State shall ensure that education programs and services for indigenous peoples shall be developed and implemented in cooperation with them and shall address their special needs, incorporate their histories, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices, spirituality and value systems and will further their social economic and cultural aspirations.
5. The State shall promote the right of the ICCs/IPs to develop themselves within the context of their cultures, customs, traditions, interests and beliefs and recognizes education as an instrument for their maximum participation in national development and in ensuring their involvement in achieving national unity.

- (e) The State recognizes the complimentary roles of public and private institutions in the educational system and shall exercise reasonable supervision and regulation of all educational institutions; and
- (f) The State shall establish and maintain a system of scholarship grants, student loan programs, subsidies and other incentives which shall be available to deserving students, especially the indigenous peoples and the under privileged, in both public and private schools.

SEC. 3. *Objectives.* – The objectives of the IPED Systems Act of 2024 are:

- (a) To recognize and institutionalize the various existing IP Education Systems as part of the National Educational System, thereby realizing a Philippine Educational System that is truly inclusive and respective of the diversity of learners;
- (b) To set up, sustain and support IP Schools where the curriculum is based on culture, history and situation of indigenous peoples, where formation of learners is geared at the acquisition of competencies needed to adapt and participate within the larger society, where methods of teaching adhere to IP ways of knowledge management including, but not limited to thematic instead of subject based teaching framework; holistic and integrated instead of segregated teaching style, and finally where communities directly manages and provides direction to all school activities, with the elders having a primary role and responsibility for transferring knowledge, and where learning occurs in the context of the everyday living and environment;
- (c) To provide Indigenous peoples with access to basic education that is rooted in the IP's history and culture, is community driven, deeply values creation, strengthens formation towards self-reliance and assertion of

- human rights, competence in defending and developing the ancestral domains, and equips the indigenous person with the capacity/competence to actively participate in mainstream society, be a productive and versatile citizen in the general pursuit of improving the quality of human life; and
- (d) Through a system of education planning, to institutionalize a kind of education for IPs that removes all barriers to their meaningful participation in all spheres of society and enables indigenous peoples to respond effectively to changing needs and conditions in society, exercise their rights and duties as Filipino citizens.

CHAPTER II

DEFINITION OF TERMS

SEC. 4. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of the Act, the following terms shall mean:

- (a) *Ancestral Domain* - refer to all areas generally belonging to the Indigenous Cultural Communities/ Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs) comprising lands, inland waters, coastal areas, and natural resources therein, held under a claim of ownership, occupied or possessed by ICCs/IPs, by themselves or through their ancestors, communally or individually since time immemorial, continuously to the present except when interrupted by war, force majeure, or displacement by force, deceit, stealth, or as a consequence of government projects or any other voluntary dealings entered into by the government and private individuals/corporations, and which are necessary to ensure their economic, social and cultural welfare. It shall include ancestral lands, forests, pasture, residential, agricultural and other lands, individually

owned whether alienable and disposable or otherwise, hunting grounds, burial grounds, worship areas, bodies of water, mineral and other natural resources, and lands which may no longer be exclusively occupied by ICCs/IPs but from which they traditionally had access to for their subsistence and traditional activities, particularly the home ranges of ICCs/IPs who are still nomadic and/or shifting cultivators.

(b) *Ancestral Lands* – refer to lands occupied, possessed and utilized by individuals, families and clans who are members of the ICCs/IPs since time immemorial, by themselves or through their predecessors-in-interest, under claims of individual or traditional group ownership, continuously, to the present except when interrupted by war, force majeure, or displacement by force, deceit, stealth, or as a consequence of government projects and other voluntary dealings entered into by government and private individuals/corporations including but not limited to, residential lots, rice terraces or paddies, private forests, swidden farms and tree lots.

(c) *Community Intellectual Rights* – refer to the rights of ICCs/IPs to own, control, develop, protect (a) the past, present and future manifestations of cultures such as but not limited to, archeological and historical sites, artifacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies, visual and performing arts and literature as well as religious and spiritual properties; (b) science and technology including but not limited to human and other genetic resources, seeds, medicine, health practices, resource management systems, agricultural technologies, knowledge of properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, designs, scientific discoveries, and (c) language, script, histories, oral traditions and teaching and learning systems.

- (d) *Culture* – refers to the way of life, mores, traditions, customs of a community including its symbolic (sacred grounds, cultural sites, ceremonies, ceremonial objects), societal (traditions, institutions, justice systems, peace building processes, educational systems and language) and technological (IKSPs, Genetic resources, literature, design, technologies, sciences) dimensions and customary laws which are explicit or implicit rules of conduct of members of society that are generally recognized and accepted for which negative or positive sanctions exists;
- (e) *Culture bearers* - IP elders, leaders and culture experts who are willing to facilitate the learning of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs).
- (f) *Culture Sensitive* – refers to the quality of being compatible and appropriate to the culture, beliefs, customs and traditions, indigenous systems and practices of the ICCs/IPs.
- (g) *Customary Laws* - refer to a body of written or unwritten rules, usages, customs, and practices traditionally and continually recognized, accepted, and observed by respective ICCs/Ips;
- (h) *Customs and Practices* – refer to norms of conduct and patterns of relationships or usages of a community over time accepted and recognized as binding on all members.
- (i) *Free and Prior Informed Consent* - as used in this Act, refers to the consensus of all members of the ICCs/IPs to be determined in accordance with their respective customary laws and practices, free from any external manipulation, interference and coercion, and obtained after fully disclosing the intent and scope of the activity, in a language and process understandable to the community.
- (j) *Heritage* - refers to the sense of being a descendant and ancestor

- (k) *History* - refers to life stories woven into the tribe's story, woven into the bigger story of a national and the world.
- (l) *Indigenous Cultural Communities / Indigenous Peoples (ICCS/IPs)* – refer to a group of people or homogenous societies identified by self-ascription and ascription by others, who have continuously lived as organized community on communally bounded and defined territory, and who have under claims of ownership since time immemorial, occupied, possessed and utilized such territories sharing common bonds of language, customs, traditions and other distinctive cultural traits, and who have, through resistance to political, social and cultural inroads of colonization, non-indigenous religions and cultures, became historically differentiated from the majority of Filipinos. ICCs/IPs shall likewise include peoples who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, at the time of conquest or colonization, or at the time of inroads of non-indigenous religions and cultures, or the establishment of the present state boundaries, who retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, but who may have been displaced from their traditional domains or who may have resettled outside their ancestral domains.
- (m) *Indigenous Peoples Education Curriculum (IPED Curriculum)* – the appropriate basic education pedagogy, content and assessment which integrates IKSPs in all learning areas and processes and provides adequate and culturally appropriate learning resources and environment.
- (n) *Indigenous Knowledge, Systems and Practices (IKSPs)* – refers to systems, institutions, mechanisms, and technologies comprising a unique body of knowledge evolved through time that embody patterns

of relationships between and among peoples and between peoples, the lands and resource environment, including such spheres of relationships which may include social, political, cultural, economic and religious spheres and which are the direct outcome of the indigenous peoples' responses to certain needs consisting of adaptive mechanisms which have allowed indigenous peoples to survive and thrive within their given socio-cultural and biophysical conditions. It can also refer to the system of knowledge generation, storage, transmission, and evaluation being kept alive by indigenous peoples in different parts of the world.

(o) *IKSPs Holders* - they are the recognized elders in the community that are acknowledged repositories of their peoples' history, practices, beliefs, and knowledge systems having faithfully and truthfully practiced these as taught them by their own elders.

(p) *Indigenous Peoples' Education System (IPED)*- are systems of knowledge generation, storage, transmission and evaluation, which is rooted in the indigenous peoples' history and culture, heritage and spirituality, and which since time immemorial have been passed down from generation to generation, within the integral context of the indigenous peoples' community life, their ancestral domains and their distinctive identity as a tribe, to enable the indigenous person to realize the fullness of his/her dignity and to have adequate competencies to confront and respond to various situations in life including interaction and relationship with societies, other than themselves, and ultimately to have the wisdom to discern what is life-giving and to live accordingly.

(q) *Indigenous Peoples' Schools (IP Schools)* - are learning institutions or educational institutions that believe, adhere, practice and nurture Indigenous Peoples Education Systems.

- (r) *Indigenous Political Structures* - refer to organizational and cultural leadership systems, institutions, relationships, patterns and processes for decision making and participation identified by the ICCs/IPs such as but not limited to Council of Elders, Council of Timuays, Bodong Holders, or any other tribunal or body of similar nature.
- (s) *Indigenous Socio-Cultural Institutions* - these include the intellectual, spiritual and social dimensions in the culture that are interlinked and practiced as one integral system. The intellectual dimension pertains to the promotion of important values for the common good and the transmission of accumulated knowledge to the younger generation; the spiritual dimension relates to the practice of rituals, beliefs, and other cultural activities which are expressions of recognition and respect for their ancestors and the environment; the social dimension refers to traditional practices, values and principles that are important to the IP community for their collective survival (e.g. Principle of collective work, cooperation, and mutual assistance among community members—that enables them to be more resilient as they collectively address their issues and define their coping mechanisms.
- (t) *Natural Resources* – refer to life support systems such as, but not limited to the sea, coral reefs, soil, lakes, rivers, streams, and forests as well as useful products found therein such as minerals, wildlife, trees and other plants, including the aesthetic attributes of scenic sites that are not man-made.
- (u) *Non-Government Organizations* (NGOs) - refers to a private, non-profit voluntary organization that has been organized primarily for the delivery of various services to the ICCs/IPs and has an established track record for effectiveness and acceptability in the community where it serves.

- (v) *Peoples' Organizations* (POs) - refers to a private non-profit voluntary organization of members of an ICC/IP community which is accepted as representative of such ICCs/IPs.
- (w) *Private Schools* – are educational institutions maintained and administered by private individuals or groups.
- (x) *Public Schools* – are educational institutions established and administered by the government.
- (y) *Schools* – are duly established institutions of learning or educational institutions.
- (z) *Spirituality* – refers to expressions of faith, life, values and beliefs
- (aa) *Sustainable Traditional Resource Rights* – refer to the rights of ICCs/IPs to sustainably use, manage, protect and conserve (a) land, air, water and minerals, (b) plants, animals and other organisms, (c) collecting, fishing and hunting grounds, (d) sacred sites, and (e) other areas of economic, ceremonial, and aesthetic value in accordance with their indigenous knowledge, beliefs, systems and practices (IKSPs).

CHAPTER III

IP EDUCATION SYSTEMS CONCEPTUAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

SEC. 5. Basic Policy. – Consistent with the constitutional mandate for the State to provide quality education for all, it shall be the policy of all State agencies concerned with education:

1. To recognize, maintain, and protect Indigenous Peoples Education Systems;

2. To support its further development and implementation in consultation with and in cooperation with Indigenous Peoples concerned in order to address and incorporate their special needs, histories, identities, languages, knowledge, integrity of their culture, as well as social, economic, political, and cultural aspirations and priorities; which will promote the rights and welfare of ICCs/IPs; and which will equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to face various realities and challenges.

SEC. 6. *Declaration of Objectives.* – Indigenous Peoples Education Systems aims to:

- (a) Serve the interest and well-being of indigenous communities: Through a system of education planning and evaluation and in the peculiar ecology of their own societies, to assist each individual in attaining their potentials as human being, enhance the range and quality of individual and group participation in the basic functions of society and acquire the necessary competencies for the individual and collective development, respond effectively to changing needs and conditions;
- (b) Maintain the life of indigenous cultures: To nurture and instill among indigenous learners the competencies and learning processes both from their system and the mainstream to enable them to assert their rights and self-determination;
- (c) Foster respect for indigenous identity: The formation of indigenous peoples who are rooted in their ancestral domains, their culture, indigenous knowledge systems and practices,

spirituality with a clear sense of identity and who are committed to meeting the challenges and issues that face the community/tribe, can assert self-determination and are conscious of being inheritors of a heritage and their elders for the coming generations; and

- (d) Promote and protect indigenous ways of knowing, learning and thinking: Including but not limited to integrative and associative thinking; creation, ancestral domains, dreams and ancestors as teachers; learning by doing and experiencing, harnessing inner senses, practicing multiple forms of storing and expressing knowledge; integrating indigenous peoples psychology, recognizing orality or the oral dynamics of storing and passing on knowledge and wisdom and giving space for the intuitive knowledge such as weaving for math and crafts for the sciences.

SEC. 7. *Integral Components of IPED Systems.* – The following are the integral components of IP Education Systems:

- (a) Philosophy, Foundational Principles, Values and Characteristics: Indigenous culture, history, heritage, and spirituality are the foundation of which an integrated sense of self and identity is built. Mainstream competencies, learning processes and worldview are learned to enable the indigenous peoples to engage in contemporary times.
- (b) Teaching and Learning Processes:
 - 1) IP Learners: In the IP Education Systems IP learners are formed in the ways of the ancestors and in competencies which will enable them to interact with contemporary mainstream society;

- 2) IP Education Teachers: The elders in the community form the core of IPED Teachers. The IPED Teacher is one who is capable of appreciating and discerning the IP perspective, has a deep understanding of the ancestral domains, the learners under her/his care, the learners' families, and their community.
- 3) IPED Instructional set up: The use of the indigenous peoples own language as the medium of instruction and imparting knowledge and information is a condition sine qua non in the IP Education process. The school calendar and activities follow the pattern of community life. Knowledge products and tools are generally derived from the environment and are based on IP learning systems. School structures follow indigenous architecture, orientation, and preferences.

(c) IPED Curriculum and Evaluation process:

- 1) IPED Curriculum is thematic and modular, is based on indigenous knowledge systems and practices, it mirrors the IP life—including present realities, culture, history, heritage, and spirituality. It is developed with the community taking a pro-active and central role. It enables the learner to acquire indigenous competencies, learning processes and worldview simultaneous with acquiring mainstream competencies, learning processes and worldview with the end goal of enabling the learner to have the wisdom to discern what is life-giving and to live accordingly.
- 2) Evaluation process: The IP community will have a central role in testing and evaluation processes. These processes will adhere to the IP's system of evaluation without dismissing the usefulness and benefits from recent tools and methods as appropriate in different situations.

- (d) **School Management:** IP communities are the primary owners and vital partners in the management of IP schools. Transparency and accountability to the community is the foremost attribute of the school management system.

CHAPTER IV

IP EDUCATION COMMUNITY

SEC. 8. *Definition and Coverage.* – The IP Education Community refers to those persons, groups of persons as such, or associated in institutions involved in organized teaching and learning processes. The IP Education Community include the IP Community, the elders in the community, Guardians, the IP learners, IPED teachers, and school personnel including school administrators, teaching staff, non-teaching personnel, the IP School Accreditation Body and the IPED Council.

SEC. 9. *Basic Policy.* – IP education is a collective responsibility of the community where an IP education program is being implemented.

- (a) Community ownership of an IP education program ensures that it is the kind of education that is truly culture based and culture-responsive/culturally sensitive. Community management of IP schools is a concrete exercise of the right of IPs to self-determination.
- (b) Learning is a community process. Decisions on what and how to learn rests on the community members in that way learning is directly related to the people's aspirations.
- (c) IP community life is defined by relationships. Indigenous education strengthens the processes that build these relationships. It strengthens and enhances the relationship of the older generations (elders' parents/

ascendants) and the younger generation. The IP School serves as a venue to strengthen unity among community members.

SEC. 10. *The Indigenous Peoples 'Community.* – The Indigenous Peoples' Community comprises all communities located within the territorial bounds of an Ancestral Domain. It may also refer to established IP communities in civil reservations, resettlement areas or other places where Indigenous peoples have voluntarily migrated to. The IP Community shall have the following rights and responsibilities:

- (a) All aspects in the management of an IP Education Program, including curriculum, privilege the voices of the community where an IPED program is being implemented;
- (b) The right to negotiate with others in all matters pertaining to IP education rests with the community through their own decision-making processes and consensus building mechanisms, to ensure that the expected outcomes of the IP Education will truly respond to their collective aspirations; and
- (c) The IP community shall accept the responsibility for educating the whole community not just the learners. This means readiness to utilize and develop resources available to help meet education needs including human and material resources, organizations, and institutions at all levels.

SEC. 11. *The Elders/ IKSPS Holders in the Community.* – The elders/ IKSPs Holders in the community are the bearers of cultural heritage, they are key in ensuring the continuity of the IP way of life. They form the core of IPED teachers. Elders in the community include Leadership structures that keep the indigenous community intact and functional and are recognized and respected as such by the

community. The Elders/IKSPS Holders have the following powers and roles in relation to IP Education System:

- (a) Elders and IKSPs Holders as active knowledge managers in the teaching and learning process: - IKSP Holders and Elders are considered by IP communities as living libraries. They are the acknowledged repositories of their people's history, practices, beliefs, and knowledge systems having faithfully and truthfully practiced these as taught them by their own elders. In the education process, the IKSP holders, elders, leaders, and culture bearers shall not only provide and validate information but also facilitate learning.
- (b) They shall be actively involved in whole cycle of IPED curriculum development, from conceptualization and implementation, to monitoring, evaluation and revision.

SEC. 12. *The Guardians.* – Guardians may be the IP learner's parents, judicially appointed guardian, surviving grandparent, the oldest sibling who has at least reached the age of majority, unless unfit or disqualified, or their actual custodian, who has at least reached the age of majority, unless unfit or disqualified. . Guardians shall have the following rights and responsibilities in relation to the IPED System/Program:

- (a) To participate in the planning and implementation of the total school program, both by themselves and as a member of the IP community;
and
- (b) To request any official record directly relating to the children/minors who are under their parental responsibility.

SEC. 13. *The IP Learners or Students.* – They are individuals who accepts, participates in indigenous ways of knowing, learning and thinking which includes, but not limited to integrative and associative thinking; creation, ancestral domains and ancestors as teachers; learning by doing and experiencing; harnessing inner senses (awe and wonder, wisdom, sacred heritage); practicing multiple forms of storing and expressing knowledge (body movement, music, chant, crafts, integrating indigenous peoples psychology, recognizing orality or oral dynamics of storing and passing on knowledge and wisdom; recognizing and giving space for the intuitive knowledge like weaving for math and crafts for sciences. Indigenous Learners shall have the following rights and duties:

- (a) Participate in learning activities and receive basic education which enable them him to acquire indigenous competencies, learning process and worldview at the same time acquiring mainstream competencies, learning processes and worldview and thus enable them him to actively participate in mainstream society and be a productive and versatile citizen in the general pursuit of improving the quality of human life;
- (b) The right to free expression of opinions, suggestions, and to effective channels of communication with appropriate academic and administrative bodies of the school or institution;
- (c) The right to guidance and counseling, access their own school records, to be issued official certificates, diplomas, grade, transfer credentials and other similar documents within thirty (30) days from request;
- (d) The right to be free from involuntary contributions except those imposed by their own community;
- (e) The duty to exert their utmost effort to develop their potentials for service, exercise their rights responsibly in the knowledge that they

shall be answerable for any infringement or violation of the public welfare and the rights of others;

- (f) Participate actively in the promotion of the general welfare, particularly in the social, economic, and cultural development of the community, their ancestral domains, in the attainment of a just, compassionate and orderly society; and
- (g) Promote and maintain peace and tranquility of the school/community by observing rules of discipline and by exerting efforts to attain harmonious relationships with fellow learners, the teachers and other school personnel.

SEC. 14. *IPED Teachers/ Practitioners.* – IPED Teachers and Practitioners are non-elders in the community, who may be IPs themselves or non-IPs who facilitate the transmission of knowledge through indigenous learning processes. It shall be duty and responsibility of IPED Teachers/Practitioners to:

- (a) Zealously endeavor to understand and appreciate the IP perspective and aspirations, values and beliefs, worldview, ancestral domains, culture, the learners under their care, the learners' families and communities. To help teachers imbibe, understand and appreciate IKSPS, it shall be mandatory for teachers in IP Schools to participate in community immersions at least once every school year. Such immersion programs shall be developed, implemented and evaluated in coordination with the elders and leaders of the community;
- (b) Nurture the capacity of IP learners to learn from their own experiences (including aspirations), from creation and from the community/ancestral domains;

- (c) Participate meaningfully in community life, in a manner that is appropriate, sensitive to and respectful to community processes;
- (d) Perform their duties to the school by discharging their responsibilities in accordance with the philosophy, goals and objectives of the IP School;
- (e) Participate as an agent of constructive social, economic, moral, intellectual, cultural and political change in the school and in the community within the context of the community's own values and priorities for development; and
- (f) Render reports and prepare scholastic ratings as appropriate.

SEC. 15. *Other IP School Personnel.* – Other School Personnel are all other non-academic staff needed for the effectively running an IP School. All IP School Personnel shall:

- (a) Zealously endeavor to understand and appreciate the IP perspective, values and beliefs, ancestral domains, culture, the learners under their care the learners' families and communities; and
- (b) Perform their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the philosophy, goals and objectives of the IP School/ the community where it is established.

SEC. 16. *The School Administrator.* – Together with the community concerned, the school administrator shall ensure the efficient and effective administration and management of the IP School. The School Administrator shall assume and maintain professional behavior at work, in dealing with learners, elders, teachers, academic and non-academic staff, parents and guardians of the learners.

SEC. 17. *IP School Regional Accreditation Body.* – The IP School Accreditation Body shall be composed of at least three (3) IP elders where the school shall be located, a regional DepEd representative, a representative from DepEd National Office, and a member of the IPED Committee. Accreditation bodies shall enforce a permitting system for IP Schools in the Region, and upon its judicious determination and assessment of the requirements submitted by the applicant shall issue to the applicant school the authorization to operate.

SEC. 18. *The IPED Council.* – The IPED Council, which shall be established within the Department of Education, will be the primary body that will oversee, control, manage and supervise all IP Schools. The IPED Council shall:

- (a) Formulate a Recognition System for IP Schools;
- (b) Formulate appropriate policies, rules and regulations governing teaching and learning processes, curriculum, evaluation and management of IP Schools; and
- (c) Deliberate, adopt and implement the National IP ED Program of the Department of Education.

CHAPTER V

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ' EDUCATION CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

SEC. 19. *Definition.* – The IPED Curriculum is the appropriate basic education pedagogy, content and assessment which integrates the indigenous peoples' IKSPs in all learning areas and processes and provides adequate and culturally appropriate learning resources and environment.

SEC. 20. *Aims of IPED Curriculum.* – The IP Education Curriculum promotes and deepens the valuing of the ancestral domains as wellspring of life and knowledge and enables learners to perform their sacred calling as nurturers of creation. The Indigenous Education Curriculum likewise:

- (a) Strengthens the capability of learners to face the threats against the ancestral domains;
- (b) Recognizes as pillar, the wisdom of the elders and leaders of the concerned indigenous community;
- (c) Distills the indigenous culture through continuing research, reflections, and decision-making together with the elders and the community; and
- (d) Recognizes all community members as facilitators of learning and all events as leading to learning moments.

SEC. 21. *Features of the IPED Curriculum.* – The IPED Curriculum shall have the following features:

- (a) It is rooted in the ancestral domain and its indigenous cultural institutions. The IPED curriculum must view the ancestral domain as its central focus so that this legacy and the IP culture as a whole will continue to survive and be sustained;
- (b) It embodies the sacredness of transmitting IKSPs — which underscores spirituality that is imbedded in all aspects of IP life;
- (c) It revitalizes, regenerates, strengthens, and enriches IKSPs, indigenous learning systems and indigenous language. Indigenous language (and in some cases, the system of writing) shall be used as the language of learning first before the regional lingua franca.

Consequently, instructional materials shall be written in the indigenous language and the content shall be on the community's culture, history, beliefs, and practices;

- (d) It affirms and strengthens IP identity. The content, strategies and methodology shall focus on the community values cherished and practiced for generations;
- (e) it focuses on cultural competencies and other types and forms of knowledge, concepts, and skills attuned with the needed life-long learning values and competencies for the development and protection of ancestral domains, their culture and the advancement of IP rights and welfare. The curriculum shall enable the IP learner to actively engage in shaping the community's future without losing track of their identity and cultural heritage;
- (f) It allows the whole community to discern new concepts that will contribute to the community's integrity while building new relations with the broader society. Curriculum review and revision that incorporates new knowledge, approaches and methodology shall be the concern of everyone in the community;
- (g) It uses instructional materials and resources that are culture-based and culture-sensitive, this is ensured through the participation of the whole community in curriculum development; and
- (h) It utilizes the whole ancestral domains as a learning space. Classes shall not be limited to physical structures as rooms but in the IPs' natural environment.

SEC. 22. Curriculum development, review, revision, and validation. – The dynamic process of curriculum development, review, revision, and validation shall be based on systematic and sustained consultations with IP communities,

provided that customary processes and practices of giving Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) shall strictly be observed when other institutions/personalities outside the IP community are involved. Provided further, that the process shall be well conceptualized and planned, taking into consideration the community's flow of life and cultural values and practices.

SEC. 23. *Role of IP Communities in Curriculum Development.* – IP communities shall be actively engaged in all aspects of management, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the IPED curriculum to ensure that it appropriately integrates the special needs, histories, identities, language, indigenous knowledge, systems and practices, and other aspects of the Ips' culture, as well as their social, economic and cultural priorities and aspirations.

SEC. 24. *Role of Other Institutions.* – The implementation of an IPED curriculum may benefit from the support of other institutions and civil society organizations. These organizations may participate in any aspect of the curriculum development process; Provided, that their participation is with the Free and Prior Informed Consent of the IP community concerned; Provided further, that the support to be provided must be based on community aspirations, in accordance with the community processes and framework, and is non-prescriptive; and Provided finally, that partnerships and linkages shall undergo a consultative participatory process the mechanisms of which shall be anchored on IP values and practices.

SEC. 25. *Assessment and Evaluation.* – Assessment shall measure IKSPs competencies and appropriate forms of knowledge, concepts, and skills. The assessment process including methods and tools shall be culture-based, anchored on IP community values, and appropriate to the competencies being measured.

Knowledge application is key in measuring learning that has taken place. This is consistent with the IP view that learning happens anywhere, anytime and is designed to protect and nurture their culture. Accordingly, the assessment shall be viewed as part of the IP's living culture. Curriculum implementers shall apply the community's assessment methods and systems of measuring competencies and values learned using its accepted set of standards or levels. The design of the assessment tools shall address the needs and concerns of the community and must be done with the active participation of the IP Community.

SEC. 26. *School Calendar.* – Cultural and traditional practices of the indigenous community shall be taken into consideration in determining the school calendar.; Provided, that the number of school days in a school year must be similar to the national standard number of school days.

CHAPTER VI

ESTABLISHMENT AND ACCREDITATION, RECOGNITION OF AND SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES SCHOOLS (IP SCHOOLS)

SEC. 27. *IP Schools.* – These may be private or public schools. Private IP Schools are educational institutions established and administered by private individuals or groups, while Public IP Schools are established and administered by the government.

SEC. 28. *Establishment of IP Schools.* – IP Schools may be established by either private institutions or government through any of its agencies or instrumentalities: Provided, that the establishment of the school in an ancestral domain or IP community shall be with the free and prior informed consent of the IP community concerned.

SEC. 29. *Ownership of IP Schools.* – Other than those established by religious groups and mission boards, all IP Schools shall be owned solely by citizens of the Philippines, or Corporations or Associations at least sixty per centum of the capital of which is owned by such citizens.

SEC. 30. *Accreditation and Permit to Operate.* – Accreditation bodies for IP schools shall be created in all the ethnographic regions established under the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, including: Cordillera Administrative Region and Region 1, Region 2, The Rest of Luzon, Island Groups, Eastern and Southern Mindanao, Central Mindanao and Northern and Western Mindanao. Accreditation bodies for IP Schools shall be composed of at least three (3) IP elders where the school shall be located, a regional DepEd representative, a representative from DepEd National Office, and a member of the IPED Committee. Accreditation bodies shall enforce a permitting system for IP schools, and upon its judicious determination and assessment of the requirements submitted by the applicant shall issue to the applicant school the authorization to operate.

SEC. 31. *Requirements for Accreditation.* – All applications for accreditation of IP Schools shall be submitted to the appropriate accreditation body for the ethnographic region where the school is established (if already operating) or where it is to be established. The Applicant shall submit the following:

- (a) The written free and prior informed consent of the community where the school is to be/is established, coursed through their existing, recognized Indigenous Political Structure/Leadership, including the

minutes of the consultations conducted pertinent to the FPIC process;

- (b) A written undertaking that the IP School will operationalize the IPED System with all its integrated components, (Philosophy, Teaching and Learning Processes, Curriculum, Assessment and Management);
- (c) A copy of the IPED Program that the school is intending to implement, or implementing, if the school is already existing; and
- (d) The internal organization of the school and its manual of operations, which shall include, among others, the manner of settling any disputes which may occur involving its personnel and staff and/or the IP Community concerned.

SEC. 32. *Recognition of IP Schools.* – IP Schools are encouraged to register with the Department of Education for mainstreaming in the educational system. Such registration shall be effected by recognition. A System for Recognition will be instituted in the Department of Education. The conditions for the grant of recognition, cancellation and withdrawal, and other related matters shall be set by the IPED Council which shall be created in the Department of Education within one year after the enactment of the IPED Systems Act.

SEC. 33. *Effect of Recognition.* – The issuance of a certificate of recognition to an IP School shall have the following effects:

- (a) It transforms the permit/accreditation issued by the Regional Accreditation Body to a permanent authorization to operate;
- (b) It entitles the school to give the students who have completed their course a certificate or diploma; and

- (c) It shall entitle the students who have graduated from such recognized schools to all the benefits and privileges enjoyed by graduates in similar courses of studies in all schools recognized by the government.

SEC. 34. *Control and Administration.* – The control and administration of IP schools shall be vested primarily with the indigenous peoples subject to such lawful and reasonable supervision and regulation of the Department of Education.

SEC. 35. *Supervision and Regulation by the DepEd.* – IP Schools shall be under the Supervision and Regulation by the Department of Education, through an IPED Council which shall be established therein within a year after the enactment of this law.

SEC. 36. *Composition of the IPED Council.* – There shall be created within the Department of Education an IP Education Council (IPED Council), which will be the primary body that will oversee, control, manage and supervise all IP schools. The IPED Council shall be composed of the following:

- (a) The DepEd Secretary or an alter-ego from the Office the Secretary duly designated by the Department Secretary;
- (b) One (1) IP representative from each of the seven (7) ethnographic regions, chosen by the concerned IPs in a culturally appropriate process, who shall serve a term of three (3) years, unless otherwise removed by the body that choose such individual or any other circumstance preventing the performance of said individual's duties;
- (c) One (1) Indigenous Person representing an IPED School or Institution for each of the Islands of Luzon, Visayas (including

Panay, Negros, Palawan, Romblon and Mindoro Oriental and Mindoro Occidental), and Mindanao, who shall be chosen in an appropriate process from IPED Schools/ Practitioners in the Island, and who shall likewise serve a term of three (3) years, unless otherwise removed by the body that chose such individual, or any other circumstance preventing the performance of such individual's duties;

(d) The Director of the Office of Education Culture and Health of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP); and

(e) Three (3) representatives of the Civil Society Groups engaged in IP Education.

SEC. 37. *Functions of the IPED Council.* – The IPED Council shall be convened by the DepEd at least once every quarter. The IPED Council shall:

1. Formulate the Permitting and Recognition System for IP Schools;
2. Formulate appropriate policies, rules and regulations governing teaching and learning processes, curriculum, evaluation and management of IP Schools; and
3. Deliberate, adopt and implement the National IP ED Program of the Department of Education.

SEC. 38. *Inter-agency Multi Sectoral Collaboration in the implementation of IPED Systems/ IP Schools.* – The DepEd and the IPED Council in collaboration with the NCIP, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Indigenous Peoples' Organizations (IPOs) shall maximize—but shall not be limited to – existing inter-agency/multi stakeholder basic education related structures at all levels as mechanism to coordinate, formulate policies, undertake social mobilization and

advocacy, mobilize resources, and monitor and evaluate IP education interventions and initiatives.

The DepEd, in consultation with the IPED Council, shall organize consultations and dialogues as needed to periodically review the implementation of the IPED Program, other policy directives and interventions that will ensue from it.

CHAPTER VII

APPROPRIATION OF GOVERNMENT FUNDS, FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, INCENTIVES AND SUPPORT FOR IP EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND IP SCHOOLS

SEC. 39. *Government Financial Assistant to IP Schools.* – Pursuant to the declared policy of the State that the national government shall contribute to the financial support of education programs in accordance with the goal of education as declared in the Constitution, IP schools, whether private or public, shall receive from the national government, financial assistance, and other forms of incentives for the school, its teachers, and learners.

- (a) Public IP Schools shall continue to be funded primarily from national funds: Provided, that local government units shall be encouraged to assume operation of local public schools on the basis of national fund participation and adequate revenue sources which may be assigned by the national government for the purpose.
- (b) Private IP schools may be provided with aid by the national government in recognition of their complementary role in the

education system. Such aid shall be in form of grants, scholarships, or loans from government financial institutions.

SEC. 40. *Income from other Sources.* – Any private IP School duly recognized by the government, may receive any grant and legacy, donation, gift, bequest or devise from any individual, institution, corporation, foundation, trust or philanthropic organization, or research institution or organization as may be authorized by law. Furthermore, private IP schools are authorized to engage in any auxiliary enterprise to generate income primarily to finance their educational operations and/or reduce the need to increase student fees.

SEC. 41. *Financial Support.* – The DepEd shall ensure that adequate financial support – sourced from various sources, such as but not limited to the agency’s regular annual budget, the LGU’s Special Education Fund (SEF) and Education projects—are readily available to IP Schools and other IPED implementing entities to ensure smooth implementation and sustainability of IPED services.

SEC. 42. *Financial Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private IPED Schools.* – In recognition of the complementary roles of public and private educational institutions in the education system and the invaluable contribution that private schools have made and will make to education, the State shall provide the mechanisms to improve the quality of private education by maximizing the use of existing resources of private education. Recognizing in the process the government’s responsibility to provide basic elementary and secondary education as having priority over its function to provide for higher education, financial assistance shall be extended to students and teachers in Private IP Schools, consisting of the following:

- (a) Tuition fee supplements for students;
- (b) Textbook assistance and financial assistance program;
- (c) Scholarships;
- (d) Education Loan Fund; and
- (e) Teachers Assistance Fund.

SEC. 43. *Tuition Fee Supplements for Students.* – All eligible students in private IP schools shall be entitled to tuition fee supplements from the government consisting of an absolute amount not lower than seventy percent (70%) of the average prevailing tuition fee rates of private schools in the region for each equivalent grade level.

SEC. 44. *Textbook and Financial Assistance.* – The Department of Education shall allocate at least ten percent (10%) of its funds every year for textbooks and learning materials for IPED.

SEC. 45. *Scholarships.* – The Department of Education, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Labor and Employment through TESDA and all other government agencies or government owned and controlled corporations, shall allocate funds for Scholarship grants for indigenous peoples in an amount equivalent to not less than twenty percent (20%) of any of its funds available for such purpose. Provided that, in the case of NCIP, the full amount shall be appropriated.

SEC. 46. *Education Loans Teacher's Assistance Grant.* – It shall be made available to IPED Teachers and Learning Facilitators in accordance with such rules as may be established by the IPED Council Revenues and Assets.

SEC. 47. *Revenues and Assets.* – All revenues and assets of IP schools established as non-profit educational institutions used actually, directly, and exclusively for educational purposes shall be exempt from taxes and duties. Upon the dissolution or cessation of the corporate existence of such institutions, their assets shall be disposed of in the manner provided by law.

SEC. 48. *Tax Exemptions for Proprietary IP Schools.* – Proprietary IP schools, including those cooperatively owned, may likewise be entitled to such exemptions subject to the limitations provided by law including restrictions on dividends and provisions for reinvestment.

SEC. 49. *Tax Exemptions on Grants, Endowments, Donations, Contributions.* – Subject to conditions prescribed by law, all grants, endowments, donations, or contributions used actually, directly, and exclusively for education purposes shall be exempt from tax.

SEC. 50. *Provision of universal and quality basic education and equitable access of all Indigenous Persons.* – Pursuant to the Constitutional mandate to provide quality education for all its citizens, the State, through the Department of Education, shall ensure the provision of universal and equitable access of all Indigenous Persons to quality and relevant basic education services towards functional literacy for all. Towards this end, the Department of Education, in collaboration with other government agencies concerned with education and culture, primarily, but not limited to, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), National Commission on Culture and Arts (NCCA), Local Government Units, and/or together with Civil Society, shall provide technical, fiscal, and financial support to IP Schools/ IP Education. Provided that, whenever education service contracting or public-private partnerships modes for resource

mobilization are contemplated, the Indigenous Peoples owning and controlling concerned IP schools shall determine the criteria for the selection of the contractors and the terms and conditions of any/ all agreements entered into with them.

SEC. 51. *Establishment of Basic Information System.* – As part of its Basic Education Information System (BEIS), the DepEd offices and units shall be directed to gather—in an appropriate and timely manner, and in coordination with the concerned indigenous peoples' community—relevant data needed from schools, learning centers, and education programs and projects that shall guide the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of a National IP Education Program.

SEC. 52. *Promotion of IP Learning Systems in non-IP Schools.* – The Department of Education shall give due recognition to and promote the sustainability of indigenous learning systems, consequently, in all non-IP Schools where the school population includes a sizeable number of indigenous peoples, the DepEd shall cause (encourage) the adoption of culture sensitive education pedagogy, content, and assessment through the integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices in all learning area and processes. Moreover, the DepEd shall prioritize the further development and implementation of the following in schools, learning centers, and other learning services with enrolled IP learners:

- (a) Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE);
- (b) Culture responsive education for sustainable development; and
- (c) Alternative modes of instructional delivery and assessment schemes to address the peculiar needs of IP learners.

SECTION 53. *Culturally-appropriate learning resources and environment.* –

The DepEd shall put in place a policy that would promote the establishment and maintenance of culture-responsive educational infrastructures, learning environment and spaces. As a means of enriching resources available to IPs and the education system at large, the DepEd shall provide grants and financial assistance, subject to appropriate procedures for selection and awarding, to the documentation and research activities of IPs on their own history, knowledge, practices, and other aspects of cultural heritage. The DepEd shall uphold and advocate the protection of the community intellectual rights/ intellectual property right of IPs pursuing such research and documentation.

SEC. 54. *Development of teacher and learning facilitators in the implementation of the IP Education Systems Program.* –

The DepEd shall encourage and support the participation of community members, particularly the elders and other indigenous knowledge transmitters or intermediaries, as primary knowledge facilitators in the operations of the IP Education Systems.

SEC. 55. *Support for Indigenous Persons desiring to enter the teaching profession.* –

The DepEd shall encourage and mobilize support for members of IP communities who may wish to enter the teaching profession, to help them complete the necessary academic preparation and satisfy professional licensure requirements.

SEC. 56. *Professional Licensure Requirement.* – The DepEd in collaboration with IPED Practitioners and Professionals, particularly the IPED Council, shall set the Professional Licensure Requirement for IPED Teachers. For this purpose,

a Licensure Examination/ Testing Standards/Package shall be developed for IPED teachers and practitioners.

SEC. 57. *Teacher Education and Development Policies.* – The DepEd shall review, harmonize, and align its (Non-IP) teacher education and development policies—consistent with the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS), MTB-MLE Policy, Localization Law or Republic Act No. 8190, and other relevant laws and issuances—to support affirmative action responding to the learning needs of IP learners.

SECTION 58. *Affirmative Action to eradicate all forms of discrimination against IPs in the entire Philippine Education System.* – Within the framework of maintaining inclusive and effective learning environments, the DepEd shall nurture, among all learners and DepEd teaching and non-teaching personnel, respect for human rights and cultural diversity. Accordingly, all concerned DepEd offices and units shall ensure that textbooks, supplementary learning materials, and other learning resources are free from discriminatory content and erroneous accounts, description, and visual depictions which misinterpret the history and culture of IPs and/or do not adequately acknowledge them. To promote greater awareness and appreciation of the IPs cultural heritage and history – an integral yet often neglected part of the Philippines national history and heritage—these shall be given due recognition and appropriately integrated in the learning content of schools and learning programs. The DepEd shall actively promote compliance with this policy among private schools and other private institutions of learning.

SEC. 59. *Appropriation.* – To implement the provisions of this Act, the amount of Seven Hundred Million Pesos (PHP 700,000,000) per year for ten (10) years

is hereby appropriated to the Department of Education for the Indigenous Peoples Education Systems Program, to be included in the General Appropriations Act.

A supplementary appropriation in the amount of twenty million pesos (20,000,000.) from the gross receipts of travel tax of the preceding year shall be provided to the Indigenous Peoples Education Program of the DepEd as a reserve fund for every year of operation immediately upon approval of this Act. This shall be used to augment funding for auxiliary aids and services.

CHAPTER VIII

FINAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 60. *Implementing Rules and Regulation.* – The Department of Education, an Ad Hoc IP ED Council shall, in collaboration with the NCIP, NCCA, and DILG, promulgate and issue the necessary implementing rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this act within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act. The Ad Hoc IP ED Council shall be composed of the following:

1. Three (3) representatives each from the seven (7) ethnographic regions, to be chosen by representatives from the ethnographic region convened for the purpose;
2. One (1) representative of IP Schools from each of the major Islands, Luzon, Mindanao and Visayas (Panay, Negros, Palawan, Mindoro, and Romblon), to be chosen by representatives of IP Schools in the island convened for the purpose; and
3. Five (5) CSO representatives who are engaged in IP Education Programs, as may be invited by the Department of Education, provided

that these CSOs have been actively involved in the crafting of the National Framework for IP ED.

SEC. 61. *Saving Clause.* – This Act will not in any manner adversely affect the rights and benefits of the ICCs/IPs under Conventions, Recommendations, International Treaties, Protocols, National Laws, Awards, Customs and Agreements.

SEC. 62. *Separability Clause.* – In case any provision of this Act or any portion thereof is declared unconstitutional by a competent court, other provisions shall not be affected thereby.

SEC. 63. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rules, regulations, contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SEC. 64. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,