

WHAT'S INSIDE?

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| MOU forges ARMM-IPDEV..... | p1 |
| Advocacy for IPs concrete steps..... | p1 |
| Ketindeg!..... | p2 |
| IPDEV strategizes for 3 yrs..... | p4 |
| DFs gear for field..... | p5 |
| IPDEV witness Moro IP..... | p6 |
| IP Women Kefeduan..... | p7 |
| New actor gets nod..... | p9 |

MOU forges ARMM-IPDEV cooperation

The newest project for Indigenous Peoples in the ARMM has forged a strong partnership with the government of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao through a Memorandum of Understanding signed.. **more on page 1**



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MOU forges ARMM-IPDEV cooperation

The newest project for Indigenous Peoples in the ARMM has forged a strong partnership with the government of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao through a Memorandum of Understanding signed on April 15, 2012.

“This is a very significant step,” says Fr Eliseo R. Mercado Jr, OMI, Director of the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG). IAG is one of the members of the consortium implementing IPDEV, or the Recognition of the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao for the Empowerment and Sustainable Development, a project funded by the European Union (EU).

The ARMM, through the OIC Governor Mujiv Hataman, signifies their joint participation on addressing IP issues by, among others, strengthening an enabling law in the ARMM as embodied in the IPRA Law, the Philippine Constitution and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

The ARMM has passed in 2008 the Muslim Mindanao Act 241, and act to Recognize, Respect, Protect, and Promote the rights, governance and justice systems, and customary laws of the Indigenous Peoples/ Tribal peoples of the ARMM. A Deputy Governor for Indigenous Peoples has also been installed.

The IPDEV project will generate information that will serve as baseline reference; enable IPs in the ARMM to have capacity through rights-based knowledge and skills; let IPs move from a status of inequality to equal protection before the law; and sharpen management skills of IPs through the implementation of their own projects/sub-projects that will be identified in the Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP).

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Advocacy for IPs in the ARMM takes concrete steps

GREETINGS OF PEACE!

It is with joy that I announce to all our friends and partners the opening of a new window in the advocacy work of the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG). In the past years, the concentration of IAG’s advocacy work has been with the peace process and good governance in the ARMM.

Beginning 2012, IAG has expanded the advocacy work to the Indigenous Peoples in the ARMM. The main work would constitute the profiling of the IPs in the ARMM, the delineation of their ancestral domain and programs of empowerment where the IPs can fully participate in existing government mechanisms as envisioned both by the Local Government Code

(LGC) or RA 7160 of 1991 and the Indigenous Peoples Rights Acts (IPRA) or RA 8471 of 1997.

The IPs have a long way to go when it comes to their full participation and expression of their self determination within their ancestral domain since the application of the IPRA is NOT immediately applicable to the ARMM owing to its 'autonomy' under the Organic Act or RA 9054. For this reason, the sole instrument at hand is the LGC and the 1987 Constitution that recognizes the rights of the IPs.

Part of the advocacy envisioned in the ARMM is for the local legislature or the Regional Assembly to enact its own IPRA and establish a sort of Regional Commission for the Indigenous Peoples (RCIP) enjoying the same powers and privileges as the NCIP in the national level.

But the crux of the work is to make the IP leaders fully participate in all local councils in their communities. It is not simply to have the IP voice heard, but to make them truly stakeholders both in local governance as well as in development of their communities.

In this new venture, IAG has partnered with Development Consultants, particularly in the IP communities where it has extensive contacts. On the national and international level, IAG's new venture is made possible through the funding coming from our national and international partners – the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the European Union.

The program was officially launched in February 2012 with the participation of the IP leaders in Upi. Mayor Ramon Piang was also at hand to celebrate the launch of the new venture.



Fr Eliseo 'Jun' Mercado, OMI
Executive Director
Institute for Autonomy and
Governance

March 2012



Kêtindêg!

Welcome to the newest project launched by the Institute of Autonomy and Governance (IAG) named "Recognition of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) for their Empowerment and Sustainable Development".

The rather long title is easily remembered as IPDEV, with a logo depicting a person looking on to the land with hope. The image embodies four things which the project envisions to accomplish within three years, namely: a) Cultural mapping through baseline setting and formulation of ADSDPP (or Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan); b) Capacity building through collection of jurisprudence using customary law and training on

judicial processes; c) Advocacy for socio-legal and administrative reform; and d) Implementation of the ADSDPP and integration into the local development plans.

This project did not come out of the blue. After the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) was passed in 1997, nearly half a million IPs comprising 20% of the ARMM constituency remains at a disadvantage before the law. The project document states that "... the problem stems from the absence of an enabling law that is supposed to be enacted by the Regional Legislative Assembly in the ARMM. The Teduray have self-delineated 480,000 hectares of their homeland but are unable to obtain a certificate of ancestral domain title (CADT) because IPRA does not apply to the ARMM." It is hoped that with empirical data produced by the project, legislators and planners will come up with research-based decisions and give their constituents due recognition and protection, putting them at par with the rest of the IPs in the country.

A lean team composed of three specialists on Information Management, Capacity Building and Advocacy will work with experts from Development Consultants, IP Leaders and Councils, Local Government Units and other stakeholders in the field to make the mission a reality.

Three IP groups in Maguindanao are identified, and these are the Teduray, Lambangian and Dulangan Manobo; while the fourth, which is the Higaonon, is found in Lanao del Sur. Consultations will continue

and utmost care is undertaken to ensure the acceptance and outcome of the project. It will be an atmosphere of participatory rapid assessments, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, documentary reviews and analyses, and workshops to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and strengths in 76 barangays. A sounding board composed of representatives from various sectors will provide precious feedback and insights on how the project should be able to influence policy makers.

Why Kêtindêg?

In the Teduray language, *kêtindêg* roughly means standing up for something, making one be seen and be felt among the many. The word is not far from the Visayan or Tagalog variations of *tindog* or *tindig* respectively. Though it was difficult for the IPDEV staff to find one word that represents the four IP groups, we finally thought it is a fitting title for a regular publication that attempts to capture the experiences gathered in this journey of recognizing the rights of the Indigenous Peoples. The IPs would be very happy if you, too, journey with us. Read *through* the stories.

Fiyo têtêsang!

Aveen Acuña-Gulo
Project Manager, IPDEV
March 2012





IPDEV Team strategizes for 3-year mission

A kickoff inception workshop was conducted in February in Makati, Philippines to formally start the partnership between Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG), Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), and Development Consultants (DEVCON).

The three-year project, co-funded by the EU/BMZ and officially named 'Recognition of the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) for their Empowerment and Sustainable Development' or simply IPDEV, is hoped to help address four specific problems besetting Indigenous Peoples in the ARMM, namely:

1. Absence of enabling laws in ARMM recognizing IP rights and social justice as embodied in the IPRA Law, the 1987 Constitution and existing international law for IPs;
2. Absence of empirical information and reliable cultural data that strengthen IP self governance and planning as well as enhancing IP advocacy in the ARMM;
3. Extreme poverty and age-old discrimination as a result of politico-administrative structures

inclined to the dominant people and culture in the region;

4. Poor delivery of social services such as health, education, community infrastructures, potable water, access to communication, access to electricity, shelter, and similar support services due to the IPs as a people; and
5. Great gaps on programs and projects related to cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender equality, children and older peoples' rights, rights of persons with disabilities and people belonging to minorities, environmental issues and disaster risk reduction, respect of the rule of law and governance accountability in the areas populated by IP groups in the ARMM.

The project, which took at least eight months to formulate, is funded by the European Union. The inception workshop was participated by KAS Director Peter Koppinger, IAG Director Fr Eliseo R. Mercado Jr, DEVCON President and CEO Rafael Nabre.

Also in attendance were Representatives from the EU Delegation in Manila: Johann Farnhammer, Head of Development Section; and Ms Emily Mercado, Project Manager; Robert Leon, Information Officer; and Divina Somera, Finance Officer.

Representatives from DEVCON were Ms Jo Genna Martin Jover, board member; and Ms Erlinda Taclob, Finance Officer.

Experts on Project Management from KAS Europe offices also came to facilitate, namely: Sabine Harriehausen from KAS Berlin and Anna Link from KAS Brussels. With them was Martine-Maurice Bohme, Head of Southeast Asia Unit, KAS Berlin.

The new team for Project IPDEV who were in the management training workshop were Aveen Acuña-Gulo, Project Manager; Miriam Fischer, Project Co-Manager; Myrna Cestina, Admin & Finance Officer; Reyna Sarsalijo, Financial Administrator; Irene M. Dillo, Community Development Specialist; Joel Dizon, Information Management Specialist; and Froilyn T. Mendoza, Advocacy Specialist.

Roles of each partner and staff members were discussed, along with coordination lines. Basic visibility issues were also discussed, with main focus on highlighting IP issues to policy makers; together with the role of donors and main operating partners.

IPDEV has its project offices in the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG) inside the Notre Dame University Campus in Cotabato and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) along Tordesillas St, Makati.



Development Facilitators gear up for field work

Ten (10) development facilitators (DFs) from Development Consultants (DEVCON) underwent 2-day training recently by IPDEV Specialists as part of the inception phase of the newest capacity building project for Indigenous Peoples in the ARMM.

“They are our direct contacts to the community,” said IPDEV Project Manager Aveen Acuña-Gulo, “They need all the support we can give for them to be able to effectively dispense their roles.”

The training ensured a common understanding of the project goals, objectives and activities among the participants; initiated an open and trusted cooperation among themselves and with IPDEV staff; and were made familiar with all the details of the scheduled activities and project budget.

The DFs were introduced to the main operational partners and its respective roles in the project. They were also given refresher courses on the IPRA and other legal instruments that address IP issues and how it needs to operate in the context of the ARMM.

“It made them understand for example that before a CADT is issued, a number of steps have to be undertaken,” explains Information Specialist Joel Dizon. “These steps include demographic surveys, focused group discussions, community mapping, among others.”

The 76 target barangays were then clustered according to geographical location and proximity; type of transportation and access; and preference of DF in terms of familiarity. Finance policies were also laid out, along with visibility guidelines highlighting IP issues, participation of major stakeholders as well as donors.

A thorough understanding of the context and the project is seen to make the DFs generate accurate, culture-sensitive data and information which are crucial in helping decision-makers come up with research-based and responsive policies.

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IPDEV Witnesses Historic Reaffirmation of Kinship Among Moro and IPs in Mindanao

By: Froilyn Mendoza, Advocacy Specialist

IPDEV, a newly launched project on IP empowerment in ARMM was one of the hundreds who witnessed the reaffirmation of kinship between Moro and Indigenous Peoples of Mindanao last March 7-8, 2012.

“It is a rare opportunity to see a ceremony which was last done almost 5 centuries ago,” says Aven Acuña-Gulo, Project Manager of IPDEV, the official name of which is Recognition of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao. Funded by the EU and jointly



implemented by the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG), Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and Development Consultants (DEVCON), IPDEV seeks to design and implement an ancestral domain sustainable development and protection plan or ADSDPP in the ARMM in consultation with the direct beneficiaries and various stakeholders.

Around 500 men and women leaders from 15 tribes of Moro and Indigenous Peoples came to the Talaandig Ancestral Grounds of Sitio Sungko, Lantapan, Bukidnon, to reaffirm their shared ancestry. They committed to the five (5) pillars of kinship namely: *buligâ* or cooperation; *sayudâ* or mutual sharing of information; *uyagâ* or mutual protection and preservation of life; *kilalahâ* or mutual recognition and respect; and *pagbatunbatunâ* or mutual obligation to help the needy.

The activity was organized mainly by the Mindanao Peoples Caucus (MPC) and Consortium of Bangsa Moro Civil Society (CBCS). Witnesses include the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP); the Congressional Committee on Cultural Communities; Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP); Moro Islamic Liberation

Front (MILF); Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF); International Monitoring Team (IMT); Mindanao Human Rights Action Center (MinHRAC); Provincial Government of Bukidnon; Philippine Army; other government institutions, NGOs and support groups.

The 15 participating tribes were composed of six (6) Islamized IP groups, namely Tausug, Maguindanaon, Yakan, Maranao, Iranun, Yakan, Kagan; and seven (7) non-Islamized IP groups, namely Talaandig, Higaonon, Dunganon Manobo, Ata Manobo, Manuangan, Matigsalog, Erumanen Manobo, Teduray, and Dulangan Manobo.

The activity provided opportunity for the tribal groups to retell the stories of Apo Agbibilin, Mamalo and Tabunaway. Apo Agbibilin survived the great flood by staying on dry land that is only as high as the lemon grass (*tanglad*, from which Mt Kitanglad is named after). He is believed to have children who went to the big lake (Maranao) and the flooded plains (Maguindanao). Mamalo is said to be the ancestor of non Islamized Indigenous Peoples while Tabunaway the ancestor of the Islamized IPs or the Moro people.

Among the tribal leaders who shared their stories were Datu Makapukaw Kulintang Saway of the Talaandig; Timuay Jovito Martin of the Teduray; Datu Lumunog of the Higaonon; Mr. Tawantawan Karuntong and Dr. Akmad Alonto Jr of the Maranao; and Ransid Sisay of the Iranun. The other tribes that also shared story of Mamalo and Tabunaway were representatives from the Erumanen and Manobo in Carmen North Cotabato; and Tausug of Jolo Sulu.

The participants were reminded that 492 years ago in nearby Sitio Tikalaan, the last peace pact was marked with the planting of a durian tree. This time a monument in the shape of a jar was built as a landmark. The Kinship Reaffirmation Ceremony showed that the different nations within Mindanao had their ways of resolving conflicts and addressing their issues long before the coming of colonizers. The participants hoped that this be kept in mind in the ongoing peace talks.



The invitation for the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG)–IPDEV to witness this historic event was in support to the belief that it is a vehicle to recognize the right to self determination of the IP and Moro people in achieving sustainable peace and development in Southern Philippines.



IP Women empowerment: Role of *Kefeduwan Libun* Emphasized

The newest project for indigenous peoples in the ARMM participated in the recently conducted national planning workshop on Women Empowering Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE) by the Philippine Commission on Women in Intramuros, Manila. This is in line with the continuing advocacy

for putting issues of Indigenous Peoples into mainstream governance.

“There is a need to give recognition to the significant but often invisible, role of the *kefeduwan libun*, or IP women arbiters,” says Froilyn Mendoza, Advocacy Specialist of IPDEV. “The *kefeduwan libun* have helped resolve cases of murder, theft, infidelity, land grabbing, domestic abuse, rape, among others. These women arbiters also perform roles of traditional birth attendants, ritual officiators, community workers/organizers, wives and mothers (having seven children on the average).”

“While performing these roles,” Mendoza continued, “the *kefeduwan libun* most often exhaust personal and family resources in order to settle conflicts in the traditional, peaceful way. Many of these women inherited the capacity and knowledge as arbiters from their parents and elders who have carried out the same responsibilities before them.”

Mendoza shared that decided cases of indigenous women playing these roles will be documented in a cultural mapping activity of the project. Relevant laws in the ARMM i.e. MMA 241 (Protecting and Promoting IP Rights) and MMA 280 (ARMM GAD Code), as well as RA 9710 (Magna Carta for Women) and RA 9262 (Anti-VAWC Act) will also be part of how to enrich the culture of peace in their communities together with the tribal justice system.

The Philippine Commission on Women in partnership with the National Commission on Culture and the

Arts conducted the strategic planning workshop for the WEDGE Plan 2012-2016, which is part of the government’s Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP). The WEDGE Plan is part of the fulfillment of President Benigno S. Aquino III’s social contract with Filipino women in promoting equal gender opportunity in all spheres of public policy and programs.

Linking IAG work with peace, governance, environment protection, and IP women.

“IPDEV participation in a national planning workshop is very timely,” says IPDEV Co-Manager Miriam Fischer. “The project has an advocacy component that will train IPs on lobbying for the passage of an IPRA in the ARMM.”

It should be noted that despite the presence of Muslim Mindanao Act 241 that Protect and Promote the Rights of IPs in the ARMM, an enabling law still needs to be passed. IPDEV will be working in 76 barangays in Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur where four tribes are present, namely: Teduray, Higaonon, Dulangan and Lambangian Manobo.

Discussions in the workshop included the right to life, culture, security and social protection with emphasis on how men and women are affected differently by conflict and extreme weather patterns. It also tackled environment issues i.e. mining, logging, chemical-based farming practices, plantations that have worsened the impact of climate change and threatened the IP communities’ right to self-

determination. It was noted how these types of investments have resulted to the IP communities' access and control over their ancestral lands, traditional sources of food, and means to provide for the welfare of their families.

Poverty and food insecurity were often cited as reasons behind the conflicts that the women arbiters helped resolve. The planning workshop ended with the call for "Real issues to be addressed to attain peace in Mindanao. As we lobby for support to the women arbiters, we call for people-oriented development so as not to worsen the reasons for conflict."

Participants noted that policy reforms will only be successful with full respect for and equal treatment between men and women under an "open" governance.



New Actor on IP Development introduced; Gets nod from IP Leaders

By: Irene M. Dillo
Community Development Specialist

Amidst a sound of gongs and the singing of the Teduray anthem, a project on Empowering Indigenous Peoples in the ARMM or IPDEV kicked off with an orientation in the SB Conference Hall of Upi on February 28, 2012. The 3-year intervention of IPDEV was introduced to members of the different

IP representatives in the barangay local government units.

IPDEV aims to contribute to the development of IP communities in ARMM through four (4) components of the project namely cultural mapping, capacity building, advocacy and the formulation and implementation of the ADSDPP. ADSDPP is the Ancestral Domain and Sustainable Development and Protection Plan, which is mandated to be drafted under the IPRA Law of 1997.

Attended by 96 members and stakeholders from Upi and South Upi, the said meeting stressed that the implementation will cover the major tribal groupings of Teduray, Higaonon, Dulangan and Lambangian Manobos living in 76 identified barangays in the ARMM. IPDEV delegation was headed by Dr. Peter Koppinger, Director of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) who expressed his full support.

The discussion of the project was done in the Teduray dialect facilitated by the IPDEV Advocacy Specialist Froilyn Mendoza. Open forum was done as well to clarify any queries of the participants.

Project Manager Aveen Acuña-Gulo assured the participants that as direct beneficiaries of the project, they will constantly be informed of the status of the project; and that the orientation was just the start. While the IPDEV project document states that the barangays where cultural mapping and community development will be conducted are in Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur, the final results

will benefit all five provinces in the ARMM where IPs are located through the drafting and implementation of the Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan or ADS DPP.

IPDEV was also designed to have feedback mechanisms to ensure smooth implementation. Two of which are the Stakeholders' Forum and the Sounding board that will meet on a regular basis to update each other and resolve issues as they arise.

Timuay (Regional Tribal Chieftain) Jovito Martin extended his warm appreciation of the project and appealed for the utmost cooperation of the participants in the IPDEV implementation.

"It will be a great shame if we will not even lift a finger to do our share in empowering ourselves and developing our ancestral domain," he said as a challenge to the participants. "Our friends from '*jakatra*' (locally accepted Teduray term for people from far places) invested much for us through IPDEV."

Honorable Ramon Piang, the municipal Mayor of Upi also called the attention of everyone to stop selling their lands. "How can we clamor against intrusion into the ancestral domain when we still continue to sell it to outsiders?" he said. He added that through IPDEV, the IPs will have the opportunity to chart their plans on their ancestral domain.

"We hope IPDEV will help bridge our concerns and complement our efforts," says Deonato

Mokudef, Secretary of the Organization of Teduray, Lambangian and Dulangan-Manobo Conference (OTLAC). Mokudef pointed out in an earlier preparatory meeting with IP leaders that there are already funding partners providing assistance to the IPs. "We just want to be assured of the process and that there will be no duplication of assistance."

Currently the European Commission is also assisting a project in partnership with the French Committee on Hunger entitled "Strengthening Traditional Systems of Justice and Governance of Lumad Indigenous Peoples in South Central Mindanao".

The orientation ended with high hopes of cooperation between IPDEV and the IPs. Project orientation in the 76 covered barangays will then be conducted leading to the project launching with other stakeholders by May 2012.

IPDEV is a joint undertaking of the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG), Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), and Development Consultants (DEVCON). Funded by European Union (EU), it is programmed to be implemented starting February 1, 2012 and end on January 31, 2015.



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