Philippines: KALAHI CIDSS National Community-Driven Development Program
(Financed by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction)

EMPOWERMENT DEFINED: VOICE, CHOICE, AND PARTICIPATION
A Case Study in Facilitating CDD with Philippine Indigenous Peoples

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<td>ACT</td>
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<td>Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan</td>
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<td>Environmental and Social Management Plan</td>
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<td>FPIC</td>
<td>Free Prior Informed Consent</td>
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<td>Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework</td>
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<td>KC-NCDDP</td>
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<td>LGU</td>
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I. Facilitating CDD in the Context of Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines

1. What program strategies are in place that facilitate community driven development (CDD) in the context of indigenous peoples? Do project implementers make adjustments in the way they engage communities to ensure that subprojects are in line with indigenous knowledge systems and practices (IKSP)? How do they ensure that indigenous voices are heard in decision making? Do indigenous peoples feel they have a say in determining the solutions to their problems? The answers to these questions will be explored in an effort to understand how CDD can be used to empower indigenous peoples, who have historically suffered oppression and discrimination, to articulate, then advocate for their development priorities.

Indigenous people are widely recognized as vulnerable to development projects and are often socially and economically disadvantaged. Many live in isolated communities with few government services available. In the Philippines, there are between 15 and 18 million indigenous peoples scattered throughout the country, comprising approximately 18 percent of the national population. The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), the sole government agency responsible for advancing indigenous peoples concerns, states that 61% of the indigenous peoples are in Mindanao while 33% are in Luzon, and about 6% are in the Visayan group of islands. The Summer Institute of Linguistics has documented 171 different languages spoken in the country, most of them by indigenous groups; 168 are still spoken and 3 languages are extinct. All of the country’s indigenous peoples have a history of tradition-based cultures and were politically autonomous before the Philippines was colonized in the 16th century (Corntassel 2003). Each group has its own unique economic, political, and social organization and level of integration with the mainstream society. Indigenous peoples have suffered from historical injustice due to colonization that resulted in the loss of their traditional lands and natural resources within their territories.¹

¹ Austria-Young, Jane DC. “Basic Manual for Implementing Indigenous Peoples Safeguards in Development Projects.”
2. As a result of this painful history, many indigenous communities were forced off their ancestral lands and relocated in areas that are physically isolated. By avoiding the inroads of colonization, they were free to develop their own languages, cultural heritage, and decision-making practices, which are all quite different from those of the mainstream society. Because of the remoteness of many indigenous communities, the availability of basic services such as health, education, and social infrastructure is limited. The communities’ isolation, both physical and political, has often resulted in their lack of involvement in decision making processes in development programs. Indigenous peoples face numerous challenges, including lack of recognition of their ancestral domains, social exclusion, and prejudice.

3. When the Philippine legislature enacted the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997 (IPRA), it took a giant step to correct the historical injustice suffered by indigenous peoples. A result of continuous advocacy by the indigenous peoples and civil society groups, the law is considered groundbreaking in its recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples to own their ancestral domains.2

4. The IPRA, which adopts the term Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs), promotes the right of indigenous communities to maintain their own language, culture, values and worldview. Their dignity and status as equal citizens of the Republic can only be assured through the recognition and protection of their rights as distinct peoples. One of the most important sections of IPRA requires that for any program, government or private, implemented within an ancestral domain, affected communities must be consulted through a process of free & prior informed consent (FPIC). This provision is defined by NCIP Administrative Order No. 3, Series of 2012, or the Revised Guidelines on Free and Prior Informed Consent and Related Processes. The FPIC process provides a venue for indigenous communities to be informed about proposed projects that will affect their communities or their ancestral domains and the right to either provide or withhold their consent for the projects.

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2 Austria-Young, “Implementing a Culture Sensitive Community Empowerment Activity Cycle (CEAC) with Indigenous Communities: A Field Guide”
5. There are numerous government agencies and non-governmental organizations that initiate development programs in rural communities. But the project implementers often consider the beneficiaries of development aid as mere receivers of the programs they have to offer, providing them with little or no involvement in the identification of projects based on the true situation or needs of their communities. Community driven development is a strategy where development projects are identified by the target communities, a process that empowers and makes development more inclusive (Mansuri and Rao 2004). CDD operates on the principles of transparency, participation, local empowerment, responsiveness to community needs, greater accountability to communities on the part of project implementers, and enhanced local capacity. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), for its part, has taken concrete steps to contextualize CDD principles and approaches so they fit within a culture-sensitive framework based on indigenous peoples’ cultural identity and unique situation.

A. Addressing Social Inclusion and Reaching the Marginalized Groups

6. For more than a decade, the Department of Social Welfare and Development has utilized the CDD approach through its Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS) program. The CDD model has proven to be an effective poverty alleviation strategy. In 2014, the KALAHI-CIDSS program expanded its coverage from 364 to 847 municipalities, 85% of which have barangays with populations of indigenous people. The expanded program is called the KALAHI-CIDSS-National Community Driven Development Program (KC-NCDDP). One of the major strategies of the program is the conscious effort to address inequalities and the exclusion of marginalized groups, including indigenous people, by focusing on the active participation of vulnerable sectors.

7. DSWD has consciously worked to build the capacity of its program staff to engage indigenous communities. Fieldworkers must be committed to reach out to the often remote villages where indigenous people live to ensure that the program will benefit the most neglected
sectors of society. Under KC-NCDDP, the indigenous people identify both the most pressing problems faced by their communities and what they see as the most relevant solutions to the problems. Generally, indigenous peoples have not been part of decision making when it came to identifying and running development programs that affect them. But DSWD is committed to implement programs based on the models of development that meet the needs and fulfill the aspirations of indigenous communities.

8. DSWD has made culture sensitivity one of the core requirements for facilitating community empowerment processes with indigenous communities. As a result of this focus, indigenous people actively participate in the program, including decision making at both the local and municipal levels. The CDD approach provides indigenous peoples the opportunity to make their voices heard and gives them the power to choose the direction they want to take in defining their own path to development. Ultimately, the confidence they gain in being able to choose and then implement their own development projects, and deal with various government officials, makes them more able to influence future government programs in their favor.

Figure 4: The future holds challenges for the next generation of indigenous peoples
III. Revisiting the Journey to Empowerment: Defining Voice, Choice and Participation as Experienced by Indigenous Peoples

9. KC-NCDDP strives to be responsive to the unique needs of the indigenous communities by making sure they are able to: (i) provide input during local planning activities where development priorities are identified; (ii) participate and take the lead in the design, development, and implementation of community subprojects; and (iii) provide feedback on subproject implementation and its benefits and risks to their economic, social, political, and cultural systems. Over the past three years, the program made significant progress in empowering indigenous communities by developing their capacities to influence community decisions on matters pertaining to allocation and use of resources. Indigenous communities identify, design, and implement projects based on community-identified priority needs.

10. Given the unique situation of indigenous peoples and the special attention they require, both national and regional project staff schedule trainings to build the capacity of area coordinating teams (ACTs) to engage indigenous communities in a manner that takes into consideration their political institutions and is sensitive to their cultural values. These capacity building activities emphasize the complexity and diversity of indigenous societies and stress the importance of understanding indigenous economic and political systems, decision-making processes, and communities’ level of integration with mainstream populations. A comprehensive understanding of the situation facing indigenous communities has helped project implementers ensure their active participation in the program and assure them an equal opportunity to enjoy the benefits of culture-relevant projects.

A. Facilitating a Culture Sensitive Community Empowerment Activity Cycle (CEAC)

11. The CEAC process is designed to allow marginalized communities to identify and analyze the development challenges facing them. Recognizing that indigenous communities have not sufficiently benefitted from past development programs, KC-NCDDP guarantees that indigenous peoples have an equal opportunity to enjoy project benefits.
12. Many indigenous communities, especially those who comprise a minority population in their barangay or municipality, do not regularly participate in public forums where decisions are made. Reasons for disengagement may include feelings of inadequacy or intimidation in the presence of the often better educated and more assertive non-IPs. As a consequence, many indigenous communities are unable to influence decisions concerning the allocation of public resources. Their voices are unheard and their problems remain invisible. To address these difficulties, KC-NCDDP has taken steps to integrate indigenous peoples’ perspectives in all phases of the project cycle. These initiatives include:

(i) Defined strategies for capacity building of project staff, community volunteers, and other critical stakeholders to enable the formulation of a sound IP framework for implementing KC-NCDDP with indigenous communities. The capacity building equips the ACTs with the tools needed to guarantee that indigenous peoples' economic, social, and cultural practices are not negatively affected during subproject design and implementation.

(ii) Integrated facilitation approaches that ensure indigenous peoples are consulted and participate meaningfully at all levels of subproject planning and implementation.

(iii) The formulation of an IP facilitation guide, which provides guidance to ACTs for the implementation of CEAC processes in a culture sensitive manner. The field guide includes useful facilitation techniques that can be used during all stages of the CEAC. It explains how to facilitate program components in a way that strengthens indigenous culture and institutions, ensures meaningful participation, and allows equal representation of indigenous communities in decision making processes.

(iv) Institutionalized partnerships and coordination mechanisms with the NCIP at the national, regional, and field office levels to systematize the mandated exercise of free and prior informed consent. The validation process ensures that subprojects are based on the identified needs of the indigenous communities.

(v) Collection of new data from the field to validate population, ethnicity, and geographic coverage of indigenous communities in project areas. The data is instrumental in providing a better understand of the situation of the indigenous peoples in program areas. Quantitative data on the participation of indigenous people is collected by means of forms and attendance sheets that indicate the number of IP participants in barangay assemblies, trainings, and other activities. Expanded data collection has resulted in better tracking of program impacts for indigenous peoples.

13. The foregoing initiatives comprise adjustments made to the program by project implementers in a conscious effort to integrate culturally sensitive approaches into the five CEAC stages: (i) social preparation and community consultation; (ii) community planning, proposal preparation, and approval; (iii) community-managed implementation and formation of community-based organization; (iv) community monitoring; (v) transition to cycle 2. These cultural sensitive approaches are demonstrated in the two cases described below, where indigenous communities were actively involved throughout the KC-NCDDP cycle.

B. Learning from Successful Initiatives

14. Two best practice cases for effective engagement and meaningful participation of indigenous communities in KC-NCDDP are presented. The case of the Mandaya in Barangay Tandawan, New Bataan, Compostela Valley is an excellent example of how KC-NCDDP helps
to strengthen indigenous political institutions as a means of enhancing effective governance. In the project context, the extent to which indigenous decision making is interfaced with the workings of national and local government entities determines how much say indigenous communities have in local governance. Critical in the equation are the role of tribal leaders and elders, community representation in major decision making, and the integration of culturally appropriate conflict resolution measures.

15. The Mandaya of Tandawan comprise the majority population in their barangay and the tribal leaders maintain control over their ancestral territory. The Manobo of Sitio Mam-on, Barangay Tubo-tubo in Cagwait, Surigao del Sur, on the other hand, are the minority in their barangay and municipality. Because of their minority status, they have been unable to influence major decisions made in the barangay. They have had little success bringing development projects to their community. But this changed with their involvement in KC-NCDDP, where they gained the confidence to speak up in barangay and municipal forums and have a say in the allocation of development funds.

Case Study 1: Interfacing of Traditional Governance and the KC-NCDDP Community Empowerment Processes

16. Barangay Tandawan is home to the Mandaya people, who share an 80,000-hectare Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) with nearby Mansaka communities. Tandawan was originally inhabited exclusively by the indigenous Mandaya. But large scale mining and logging activities in the 1960s brought an influx of migrant Cebuano workers, a number of whom married into the local population and others also chose to settle in Tandawan. The present barangay population is 30% Cebuano and 70% Mandaya. The Mandaya recognize the presence of non-IPs in their territory but require them to follow customary practices for protecting and managing their ancestral lands and resources.

17. The main economic activity of the Mandaya is farming, the major crops being corn, coconut, rice, banana, coffee, cacao, abaca, and bamboo. Agriculture is the only means of
livelihood in Tandawan, and though the Mandaya are experienced farmers, the barangay lacked the infrastructure that would allow its residents to improve their incomes. There was no convenient place to dry their corn or equipment to mill it, and no farm to market road; corn had to be carried on one’s back to Camanlangan, the barangay center, for milling and sale.

18. The Mandaya in Tandawan have in many ways assimilated into the mainstream society, especially with regard to local governance. But they still retain their traditional political structures, which they have successfully integrated with the national governance system. The mangkatadong—respected elders who implement the Mandaya justice system and enforce its laws, bagani—the bravest men in the kin group, pandita/bailan—influential shamans, and bagong-utaw—youth representatives, all have roles in the present Mandaya political structure. The system retains many customary political practices, but exists alongside and in harmony with the local government, where a number of traditional leaders have assumed leadership roles. The integration of the two systems has been an effective strategy for maintaining social order and managing the ancestral domain. Customary rules and practices are maintained by enforcing policies set out by the council of elders, the mangkatadong.

19. The concepts of justice, decision making, and leadership are aspects of culture not immediately visible to the outsider, but are critical components of the ever-evolving identity of the Mandaya. The case presented here is an example of how KC-NCDDP has helped strengthen the traditional political institutions of this indigenous community.

**Change in the Context of the Mandaya Political Structure**

*I think the KALAHI program has been genuinely beneficial for our community. People eagerly participated in the identification, design, and implementation of our subprojects. I could see how happy they were as they learned how to manage all phases of the projects, and develop a sense of ownership of the process. The experience could even be called life changing, not just because of the government assistance we finally received, but because of the community’s attitude—how participative people have become. They are more than happy to volunteer for community projects because they can see real results from their efforts. We have seen a huge improvement in our community.* —Tandawan community volunteer

20. Prior to KC-NCDDP, Tandawan had benefitted from very few government programs. Community members lacked the confidence to approach government agencies and press for the social infrastructure that would improve their lives. But the situation changed with the introduction of KC-NCDDP in the barangay. The process of change began when an area coordinating team visited the barangay to explain KC-NCDDP to the mangkatadong. The ACT established a good relationship with the tribal leaders; they realized the importance of consultation, as they knew the project could not succeed without the full support of the elders and tribal leaders. Though the members of the ACT were not Mandaya, most were from New
Bataan and familiar with Mandaya culture. They knew that a good relationship with the tribal leaders would be important to gain the trust of the community. The *mangkatadong* taught the ACT members about their traditional political structure, which proved to be helpful in choosing representatives and community volunteers based on traditional decision making practices. They also worked hand in hand with ACT to translate project information into the local language.

21. The ACT explained that KC-NCDDP requires an 80% participation rate for communities to be included in the program. Determined to finally get a share of the development pie, 91% of barangay residents, many of whom traveled long distances by foot, attended the barangay assembly, where they were vocal in expressing their need for development assistance. As a result of their efforts, the community successfully acquired three subprojects: a community activity center in Cycle 1, corn milling facilities in Cycle 2, and a multi-purpose building with storage facility in Cycle 3. The ACT ensured that the *mangkatadong* were included at all stages of the program. During the selection of the community volunteers, the *mangkatadong* were involved in the decision making so they would be up to date concerning the roles of all those involved in the project.

22. The role of the community empowerment facilitator (CEF) is to guide the community volunteers throughout all stages of the CEAC, helping them to (i) write a project proposal, (ii) access basic information related to the proposed subproject, (iii) mobilize community members for assemblies, (iv) guide discussions in a way that they will lead to a unified decision, (v) handle procurement of materials, (vi) manage the actual construction of the subproject, (vii) manage project finances, (viii) monitor the operation of the subproject, and (ix) ensure the subproject is properly maintained after turnover. These processes not only ensure that subprojects are successful, but will benefit the community by building the skills and confidence of the community volunteers.

23. At Municipal Inter-Barangay Forums (MIBF), it is common for barangay representatives to present a video depicting the situation in their village, emphasizing the reasons their proposed subproject should be prioritized. During subproject prioritization at the MIBF for Cycle 2, the Mandaya from Tandawan chose a corn mill as their proposed subproject. Instead of showing a video, the community volunteers felt it would be more effective if they did a role-play depicting the difficulty of carrying their corn back and forth to the main barangay for milling. Since the role-play was based on their real life experience depicting real hardship, the
presenters put their hearts into their performance, exuding much emotion. The audience was touched, and the corn mill proposal was prioritized.

24. The procurement of the construction materials and supplies needed for the Tandawan subprojects was a challenge. The community volunteers were unfamiliar with the procurement procedures and lacked the confidence to handle the process on their own. With KC-NCDDP, community members are part and parcel of the project cycle—from start to finish—forming various committees, each with its specific task. The Mandaya were used to following directives from local and national government agencies. So they were surprised when they were encouraged to take the lead in directing all aspects of their subprojects, from project identification to monitoring and evaluation. Involved during all stages of the CEAC, they internalized the need to sustain their hard earned subprojects. The Tandawan Corn Farmers' Association, formed to ensure the KC-NCDDP subprojects have a lasting impact, created committees to manage the subprojects the community had worked so hard to acquire.

25. A significant contribution of KC-NCDDP has been the enhancement of the capacity of village leaders, many of whom became community volunteers. The leaders say that the knowledge they gained during the CEAC stages has provided them the skills to be able to plan, implement and manage development projects. The trainings and seminars were an opportunity to learn, critically analyze community issues, and develop effective ways to resolve them. They now apply this knowledge not only in the management of KC-NCDDP subprojects, but also for overseeing other community based programs. A number of the volunteers who did not previously hold leadership positions emerged as new community leaders, and some were elected as barangay officials. The training they underwent and experience they gained during KC-NCDDP prepared them to handle their new roles as elected officials. The assumption of key leadership positions is an indicator of people's empowerment, where community members actively participate in community concerns and take on the responsibilities that come with leadership.

26. Another impact the program has had is that it inspired the leaders to educate themselves. Most of the leaders and elders had not attended school, so could not read or write. Because of his new position as the chairperson of the Barangay Sub-project Management Committee (BSPMC), one of the tribal elders learned to write his name so he could sign checks. The changes to the community brought by KC-NCDDP were manifested not only in the
community subprojects, but also at the individual level. The experience and confidence the leaders gained during the program has resulted in their taking the initiative and approaching other government agencies to push for development projects beyond KC-NCDDP.

27. In summary, KC-NCDDP helped strengthen indigenous political structures by respecting the Mandaya concept of self-governance. The program did not introduce external models that define what community based organizations should look like; instead, the project facilitators worked with traditional leaders, who eventually became community volunteers. This was critical as the leaders who became volunteers are from influential clans and are the recognized authority in the barangay. They know the customary laws and how to apply them. They have the power to make decisions in the community and to enforce them. KC-NCDDP helped to strengthen indigenous governance by involving the Mandaya, especially the traditional leaders, in decision making and over-all program implementation. This level of participation was instrumental in allowing the community to achieve their development goals and maintain a strong sense of ownership of the project.

28. Community members expressed their appreciation for the CDD process. They said that this was the first time they were truly involved in all aspects of a project. Their role in identifying their felt needs resulted in the selection of subprojects that truly addressed those needs. They said they wished other government agencies would use the same participative processes for identifying and implementing projects.

Case Study 2: Participating in CEAC Activities Enables the Voiceless to Speak out and Change the Course of Development

Figure 10: Tribal leaders during the Municipal Inter-Barangay Forum-Participatory Resource Allocation

29. The indigenous Manobo of Barangay Tubo-tubo, Cagwait Surigao del Sur are a minority in their barangay, totaling 15% of the total population. Most live in Sitio Mam-on, the most
remote village in the barangay, which takes an hour to reach by motorbike from the population center. The community has received very few government projects because of its isolation. One of the main problems facing the residents of Mam-on is poor roads. Bad roads means there is limited transportation, the main mode being the motorcycle, or “skylab,” that can navigate the road which is muddy and slippery, especially during the rainy season. The primary source of livelihood in the community is farming; the major products are corn, rice, coconut and abaca. Due to the poor condition of the road, transporting agricultural produce to the market is a major obstacle.

30. In 2016, KC-NCDDP provided ₱8 million for community development projects in Cagwait. During the first barangay assembly the CEF assigned to the area, who happened to be a Mamanwa indigenous person, noticed very few people from Sitio Mam-on in attendance. An indigenous person herself, she was very aware of the situation of indigenous peoples in Mindanao, and in line with the KC-NCDDP IP framework, she suggested conducting a separate consultation exclusively for the Manobo community. She coordinated closely with the Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative (IPMR) and the LGU, and with her perseverance, succeeded in getting their permission to hold the consultation in spite of the peace and order situation in Sitio Mam-on. In cooperation with NCIP, the tribal leaders, and the IPMR, the team conducted a separate consultation process and explained the objectives and principles of KC-NCDDP and the importance of community participation in the program.

31. At first it was a challenge to overcome the lack of trust in outsiders, but over time the CEF built rapport with the tribal leaders and eventually, the rest of the community. The local government officials and the Manobo did not have a good relationship, as the residents of Mam-on felt their needs had never been given priority by the barangay. They were hesitant to participate in KC-NCDDP because of their past experience. They had taken part in programs sponsored by the municipality but had never really seen any benefits for their community. This doubt in the sincerity of the government to address the problems of Sitio Mam-on was a constant struggle for the CEF, who had to exert extra effort to deal with the issue of mistrust and the belief that Manobo would never be the recipients of development projects.

32. During the second barangay assembly the CEF explained the importance of community participation and the critical role community volunteers play in KC-NCDDP. During the meeting the community identified which projects they felt were the most needed: (i) road improvement; (ii) tribal hall; (iii) health station; and (iv) junior and senior high school. The assembly provided an opportunity for the Manobo to analyze and prioritize their most urgent needs through a process of collective decision making. Since only one subproject at a time may be funded, the community decided to prioritize the tribal hall. They had a tribal hall in the past but because of a shortage of school buildings in the village, they donated the building to use as a classroom.

33. After they had decided on which subproject to prioritize, the next challenge was to decide on the best way to present their proposal during the Municipal Inter-Barangay Forum-Participatory Resource Allocation (MIBF-PRA). This is a crucial activity in the KC-NCDDP process as it determines which subprojects in a municipality will be prioritized for funding. Without a means of transportation, the residents of Mam-on had to walk the long distance to the barangay center to participate in the MIBF. The Manobo representatives were anxious, as they were outnumbered during the assembly. They knew the barangay center had its own subproject proposal as well; they were afraid that as what had happened so many times in the past, government projects would go to other communities, never to Sitio Mam-on.
To boost the morale of the Manobo leaders, the CEF urged their datu to convince local officials from other barangays to give Mam-on its own fund allocation. The datu spoke with conviction as he talked with the officials, sharing the situation of the Manobo and how they had been neglected over the years. Hearing his plea, the barangay officials decided that the time had come to allocate funds specifically for the Manobo. They were convinced that Sitio Mam-on deserved its fair share of the available development resources. It was a momentous day for the tribal leaders because for the first time, they felt that their voices were heard.

KC-NCDDP does not follow conventional project strategies where communities are mere receivers of development aid with very little input as to what projects are needed and how they should be implemented. With KC-NCDDP, community volunteers are mobilized and play crucial roles during all stages of the CEAC, all the way to project completion. The CEF encouraged the community to work for gender balance in the selection of community volunteers. As most of the men were heavily involved with farming and had limited time to dedicate to project activities, women were encouraged to participate in the program.

Before KC-NCDDP, women were not accustomed to taking on
public roles. They were timid and afraid to approach local officials in town with their concerns. But as a result of their exposure to decision making and project management during the implementation of KC-NCDDP, they gained experience participating in the public sphere. On the technical side, they learned about procurement, operations, and book keeping. Their involvement in community trainings bolstered their confidence, and when they were given the opportunity to take leadership roles, they gained a feeling of empowerment and relevance in their community as indigenous women.

37. Instead of creating a separate organization to oversee the implementation of the subproject the CEF built on the existing organization, the Cagwait Manobo Indigenous Cultural Community (CaMICC), which was formed to oversee and manage the community’s ancestral domain. CaMICC is in charge of the operation and maintenance of the subproject as the community is committed to maintaining the tribal hall even after the end of funding support from KC-NCDDP. CaMICC decided to divide tasks for the upkeep of the building among its members and community volunteers from the four Manobo clans in Mam-on. The leaders realized that it would be more effective to assign tasks to the clans instead of individuals.

38. The community volunteers were happy with the outcome of the project. They felt that all the sacrifices they had made for the community were worth it. They were confident that they had learned everything they needed to know to make the project a success, from the initial planning stages through project completion. The tribal leaders also appreciated the CEAC process, which allowed them to articulate their needs to the broader community and for the first time, they felt that the government listened. For the community, the tribal hall represents not just a physical structure but a place they can gather to discuss important community issues. The community is
pleased with the design of the building, which they conceived as a structure that would affirm their cultural identity as Manobo.

**What were the elements that made this case successful?**

39. **Developing culture sensitive staff.** Prior to the deployment of the CEF, the regional staff ensured that the ACT was ready to work with indigenous communities. To prepare them for their assignment, members of the ACT underwent trainings focusing on the specific roles they would play in the communities. Culture sensitivity training was a crucial activity that ensured the ACT would have the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitude to be effective development facilitators. In the months succeeding the training, follow-up coaching sessions were conducted that reinforced the learnings acquired during training. In partnership with NCIP, a training on indigenous knowledge systems and practices was given with the aim of fostering respect for the customary laws and other traditional practices of the IP communities the ACTs would be assigned to work with. The education they received through the capacity building activities was crucial for the project implementers, especially if they were non-IPs. It broadened their perspective, enabling them to understand and respect values and cultures other than their own.

40. **Establishing a close relationship with the community.** The CEF admitted that it was difficult for her to earn the trust of the community in the beginning. The mistrust stemmed from the belief by some in the community that they would be used as subjects of research; many were convinced that, because of past experience, they would never benefit from any government development program, no matter what kind. As there were security issues in the area, the CEF made a conscious effort to establish working relationships with the IPMR, local officials, and the tribal leaders, with whom she always coordinated closely. But despite the security risk, the CEF immersed herself in the area by going house-to-house to explain the KC-NCDDP program. Eager to learn about their culture and traditions, she established open lines of communication with the tribal leaders and elders. She was very respectful of their cultural norms and as a result, gained the trust of the Manobo community.

41. Her perseverance and hard work paid off and after some time, the community welcomed the CEF and KC-NCDDP. People realized the importance of participating in the program and said they were willing to learn whatever they needed to be able to implement and manage their project. One of the tribal leaders said: “Tabangi lang gyud mi Ma'am unsa among angay buhaton kay amo lang paningkamutan sa abot sa among makaya.” (Please help us, Ma'am; tell us what we need to do and we'll try our best to do it.)

42. **Respect for tribal leaders and elders.** From the beginning, the CEF knew that to successfully implement KC-NCDDP in an IP area she needed to coordinate with the tribal leaders and elders. She realized that the lack of proper coordination with the genuine community leaders would be a sign of disrespect. As a result of her efforts to build their trust, the tribal leaders became her partners, helping to explain the program and to mobilize the community for project activities. Traditional leaders play a significant role in the life of indigenous communities, so bringing them in as partners is an effective strategy to help guarantee the success of the program.

43. **Developing the capacity of community volunteers.** The ACT and CEF played a major role in in developing the capacity of community volunteers at different stages of the CEAC. Seminars and trainings were provided the community volunteers to give them the skills needed to effectively implement the project. The regional specialists ensured the ACTs were properly
guided and supported with appropriate technical assistance. They also visited the communities and maintained regular communication with the ACTs to keep them informed of safeguards and other program requirements.

44. **Facilitating inclusive development.** Indigenous peoples have their own economic organization, decision making, and customary beliefs systems that must be considered when planning and implementing development projects. For example, when formulating a barangay development plan the Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP) must be incorporated. The ADSDPP is the planning framework used by indigenous communities to define the policies for the development of their ancestral domain that are in line with their development goals. Keeping indigenous communities’ development plans and aspirations at the forefront of the conversation when discussing development programs was a practice used by the CEFs in Caraga and in particular, with the Manobo communities in Cagwait.

45. **Establishing an IP Focal in the region.** Aside from holding trainings for ACTs to provide them the skills and background necessary to develop an IP lens, the Caraga regional office also created an IP focal position. The job of the IP focal is to ensure that KC-NCDDP is implemented in a way that is sensitive to the culture and overall situation of indigenous peoples in Region XIII. The IP focal is an indigenous Manobo who can speak the language and has kinship relations in many of the project areas. These are important factors that address some of the obstacles to effectively engaging IP communities in Caraga. Having an IP focal enhances the working relationship with NCIP and the communities in the project areas. The IP focal serves as a resource on indigenous knowledge systems and practices to the ACTs, who are mostly non-IPs.

**IV. Successful Strategies and Best Practices for Facilitating CDD in IP Areas: The KC-NCDDP Model for Integrating Culture Sensitive Facilitation based on the Experience of Regions XI and XIII**

As an outsider to their cultures, my experience working with indigenous peoples has played an important role in expanding my perspective as a development worker. It is important to recognize that people are part of the development process, regardless of their background. One of my greatest insights working with indigenous communities has been learning how to respect other cultures and belief systems. Respect involves delving deep, in an effort to gain an understanding of who they really are and an appreciation of their indigenous knowledge systems and practice. If you are truly interested in them, the people will sense your sincerity and you will gain their trust. Trust is an essential element for successful engagement with indigenous peoples. I believe that we were able to gain the trust of the indigenous communities and that contributed to our success. I think the culture sensitivity training we provided ACTs assigned to work with indigenous communities was another major factor. — Regional Community Development Specialist, Region XI

**A. Best Practice in Obtaining FPIC in the Context of KC-NCDDP**

46. The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997 is the primary instrument that gives legal recognition to the rights of indigenous peoples to develop and protect their ancestral lands and natural resources. The law promotes cultural integrity and upholds the right of indigenous peoples to determine the kind of development they choose to pursue. As a means of protecting this right, the law provides that indigenous communities must provide their free and prior
informed consent (FPIC) for any development program that affects them or their ancestral territories. Recognizing this important provision, DSWD and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples forged a partnership by crafting a memorandum of agreement defining the institutional arrangements for the facilitation of FPIC for subprojects in IP areas. For programs, projects, and activities solicited or initiated by the concerned IPs themselves where the activity is strictly for the delivery of basic services to be undertaken within or affecting the ancestral domain, under which category KC-NCDDP falls, FPIC involves a validation process that ensures that (i) projects and activities solicited are initiated by the concerned indigenous communities themselves, and (ii) the activity is strictly for the delivery of basic services to be undertaken within or affecting the ancestral territory.

47. With the sheer number of KC-NCDDP subprojects that require validation and the lack of human resource on the part of NCIP, there have been delays in the issuance of certificates of precondition, the document that is the result of the validation process. This has led to frustration on the part of KC-NCDDP field staff. But in spite of the challenges, NCIP has maintained a good working relationship with DSWD, as they can see that indigenous communities truly benefit from the KALAHI program.

48. Though there have been challenges, there are also cases where the validation process has proceeded smoothly. The experience of Region XI can provide insights into a successful DSWD-NCIP partnership and lessons for best practices for subproject validation and issuance of certificates of precondition, including the following:

(i) **Functional Regional Technical Working Group (RTWG).** A joint NCIP–DSWD regional technical working group met quarterly to discuss issues involving the validation process. DSWD recognized NCIP’s limitation in terms of human and financial resources, so during the RTWG meetings they developed mechanisms to address the concerns. Communication was the key to finding solutions to implementation issues. Also crucial to the success of the collaboration was the role of the IP focal, who served as the link between the agencies, did important groundwork, and provided essential coordination services.

(ii) **Fast tracking Validation without Sacrificing the Quality of Consultations: One Certificate of Precondition for a Whole Municipality.** In order to address the human and financial resource constraints faced by NCIP, the NCIP regional office recommended conducting municipality-wide validations. Validation is the prerequisite for the issuance of a Certificate of Precondition, which is the legal recognition that free and prior consent for the project has been granted by the community. The municipality-wide validation would be in lieu of validating each subproject separately, which requires visiting each individual subproject. It was an effective and feasible strategy that maximized the available resources and minimized delays. Local NCIP staff were confident to do the municipality-wide validations since they knew the local situation and had good relationship with the tribal leaders. They also said it was clear that the projects were community initiated and that they would benefit the whole community, not serve the interests of a few powerful people.

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3 Certification Precondition (CP) refers to the certificate issued by the NCIP, signed by the Chairperson, attesting to the grant of FPIC by the concerned ICCs/IPs after appropriate compliance with the requirements provided for in NCIP Administrative Order No. 3 Series of 2012, The Revised Guidelines on Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) and Related Processes of 2012.
Steps involved in the municipality-wide validation

(a) Once all the subprojects proposed for funding in the municipality have been identified, the ACT prepares a request letter for NCIP to conduct the validation. After NCIP receives the request they will finalize the plans for the validation in coordination with DSWD and the community leaders. NCIP is responsible for informing the tribal leaders and setting the schedule for the field-based investigation.

(b) NCIP will mobilize all of the barangays involved in the municipality and ensure that the tribal representatives are present during the validation. Those present should include the tribal chieftains, councils of elders, IPMRs from the barangay and municipal levels, and chairpersons of indigenous peoples’ organizations and federations, if there are any in the municipality. Indigenous women should also be well represented to guarantee that all perspectives are considered.

(c) During the municipal consultation NCIP presents the key features of IPRA with a special focus on the provisions dealing with FPIC. The presentation highlights the right of indigenous peoples to determine their own course of development and that no one or no organization may unduly influence the community in their decision concerning the subproject they choose to propose for funding. When a community gives its consent for a subproject to proceed, it is essential that the project be consistent with their vision for their community and aligned with their development goals.

(d) After the principles of FPIC have been explained, the ACT presents an overview of CDD and enumerates the proposed community subprojects in the municipality. The NCIP then asks the ACT to leave the room while they ascertain whether the decision to propose the subprojects was indeed reached by community consensus and asks how each community came to its decision.

(e) The validation process entails focus group discussions and interviews with tribal elders, village leaders and other community representatives. It is an important occasion where indigenous communities have the opportunity to freely discuss their development priorities and make decisions without outside influence. NCIP ensures there is sufficient time for communities to confer in their own language and that the whole FPIC process is conducted in a culturally appropriate manner.

(iii) Project Staff Recognize the Principles of FPIC and CDD are Interlinked. For many outsiders, FPIC is regarded as a tedious process that delays progress. But DSWD Region XI recognized that FPIC is a tool that ensures indigenous peoples’ priorities are taken into account in KC-NCDDP. FPIC and CDD include mechanisms that ensure communities are well informed about all aspects of projects that will affect them, and give them control over the kinds of initiatives they deem appropriate for the development of their ancestral territories. FPIC is not only an administrative process for obtaining communities’ consent to a
proposed project, but is also a recognition and symbol of respect for indigenous communities’ cultural identity and their right to self-determined development.

49. The table below lists the number of CPs issued nationwide. Regions XI and XIII, have the largest numbers of validated subprojects and also some of highest rates of issuance of CPs and Certificates of Non-Overlap (CNO).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>No. of Validated SPs</th>
<th>No. of CPs Issued</th>
<th>No. of CNO Issued</th>
<th>Total CP and CNO</th>
<th>% of Validated SPs with CP/CNO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>61</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>56%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>937</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1295</td>
<td>1486</td>
<td>2781</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SP = subproject; CP = Certification Precondition; CNO = Certificate of Non-Overlap.
Source: KC-NCDDP

(iv) NCIP as a Resource for Culture Sensitive Engagement with Indigenous Communities. NCIP provides guidance to DSWD on indigenous knowledge systems and practices and how these must define culture sensitive engagement strategies. The agency also serves as a resource on topics such as the recognition of indigenous peoples’ rights based on IPRA and provides pointers, such as do’s and don’ts when working with indigenous communities. Sharing of information is important in the partnership, and NCIP provides valuable support by providing inputs on culture sensitive engagement of indigenous peoples.

(v) The role of the Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative (IPMR) is crucial in channeling the concerns of indigenous communities to the local government. The IPMR serves as the voice of the community and a vital link to the local government unit and other organizations.

4 Expected to be completed in ADB supported areas by 30 July 2018.
B. Developing Culture Sensitive Staff for Facilitating Development Programs with Indigenous Communities

50. The two cases presented here demonstrate the high level of commitment of DSWD to effectively engage indigenous peoples in development programs. An indigenous peoples framework, formulated as part of the KC-NCDDP process, includes clear program directives to ensure indigenous peoples’ perspectives are integrated throughout the project cycle. The framework serves as a guide for all KC-NCDDP personnel, from field-based staff up to the national program office, for effective engagement with indigenous communities. DSWD has effectively systematized capacity building activities, internal monitoring systems, and safeguards mechanisms for integrating indigenous perspectives in KC-NCDDP.

51. The investment DSWD made to develop culturally competent staff capable of facilitating the program in a culture sensitive manner has certainly paid off. Project staff have proven they are prepared to work effectively with indigenous communities; they understand the complexities of indigenous societies and treat the indigenous people as their equals. By immersing themselves in project areas, often in spite of security risks, they have shown their commitment to bringing government services to the indigenous communities. Because of their sincerity and dedication, communities grow comfortable with project staff, opening up to share their aspirations and vision of development based on their unique needs and interests. This is particularly evident in the case of the Manobo community of Mam-on, where the ACT and CEF exerted extra effort to involve the community in decision making and encouraged them to determine their own development priorities as opposed to those of the mainstream society.

52. This investment in capacity building to develop culture sensitive staff has allowed the successful integration of IP perspectives in KC-NCDDP. Project staff have the technical competence to (i) safeguard the rights of indigenous peoples in development, (ii) employ effective and culturally appropriate facilitation techniques at all stages of the CEAC, and (iii) partner with NCIP to facilitate the FPIC validation activities.

C. Developing Facilitation Approaches to Ensure Meaningful Participation and Indigenous Representation

When implementing a development program it is important that no one is left behind. Everyone has a role to play in CDD. As project implementers, we are happy with the response of the communities, especially in IP areas. They participate in all the activities and we have seen positive change in individuals and in the communities in general. —Community Empowerment Facilitator, Region XI

53. Another successful strategy employed to ensure meaningful participation and representation was the use of facilitation methods based on the specific context of the communities involved. An effective way to determine the most appropriate method for engaging indigenous communities is to assess their demographic status in the barangay or municipality—whether they comprise the majority of the population, or if they are in the minority. In Tandawan, where the Mandaya constitute the majority of the population and the project staff implementing the program are mostly from New Bataan and quite familiar with Mandaya culture, separate consultations were not needed. KC-NCDDP project implementers worked within the existing indigenous political structure by integrating customary decision making processes in all stages of the CEAC. This helped strengthen Mandaya political institutions and reinforce local leadership.
54. In Sitio Mam-on, where the Manobo community comprise the minority population in the barangay, the community consultations were held separately. This was to ensure people were comfortable and would not feel intimidated by large numbers of non-indigenous residents, possibly discouraging their participation in the meeting and leaving their voices unheard. Holding separate consultations exclusively for the Manobo community proved was the right thing to do, as people were able to discuss their sentiments and feelings of neglect without fear. Throughout the process, the CEF’s encouragement bolstered the confidence of indigenous representatives, inspiring them to influence local officials by speaking up at barangay assemblies, raising awareness of the challenges faced by indigenous communities.

D. Being Able to Influence How Resources are Allocated is a Significant Step Toward Inclusive Development

55. Empowering community volunteers and leaders of indigenous communities who comprise minority populations to be able to express themselves during assemblies takes considerable effort and commitment on the part of the CEF. The CEF assigned to Sitio Mam-on devoted her time to building the capacity of the leaders and volunteers to effectively impress on local officials the true situation faced by indigenous people in their municipality. Making the local government accountable without being confrontational was a challenge during the assembly meetings. It was indeed empowering when the barangay officials decided to allocate funds specifically for Manobo community. Their efforts to voice their concerns and participate in decision-making paid off when their subproject was prioritized for funding.

E. Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM) in KC-NCDDP: Cultural Appropriateness in Handling Project Related Issues

56. Grievance redress mechanisms exist to ensure that program related concerns are addressed and ultimately resolved. KC-NCDDP has institutionalized a system where grievances can be submitted through text messaging, letters, or verbally to the ACT or the regional office and each grievance or concern is taken seriously. Since indigenous peoples have their own conflict resolution mechanisms based on customary practices, the ACTs made sure that they were integrated in the project’s GRM.

57. The Mandaya in Tandawan practice their traditional system of justice, called pagabarawan (dialogue), to resolve conflicts. The mangkatadong (village elders) facilitate the conflict resolution process. If problems arise among Mandaya in the community, the mangkatadong representatives from the 11 clans in Tandawan who constitute the council of elders will intervene. They conduct rituals prior to adjudicating the case, asking for guidance from the recognized highest being in order to resolve the conflict without ill feelings. For problems arising from KC-NCDDP, the details of the conflict resolution process are not documented, but as long as the problem is resolved through customary practices the community facilitator will record it as “resolved using IP customary law.” Customary law is the most effective means of conflict resolution for the Mandaya of Tandawan.

58. However, if the grievance is between IPs and non-IPs, national laws and policies on jurisprudence will be adopted by the local government. The appropriate mechanism for resolving conflict is decided on by the people in the community.
V. Challenges Facing CDD Projects in IP Areas

59. Significant headway was made in ensuring that indigenous peoples participate meaningfully in KC-NCDPP, but project staff also encountered difficulties. The challenges faced by regional staff implementing KC-NCDDP in indigenous communities may be grouped into three main concerns:

(i) **Delays in the FPIC process.** A major challenge has been the delay in obtaining FPIC for subprojects in IP areas. A MoA between DSWD and NCIP for the implementation of KC-NCDDP exists and there was a great deal of collaboration between the two agencies. But in spite of the fact that DSWD made funds available for validation activities, NCIP was not prepared to respond to the large number of subprojects needing validation. It was the lack of human and financial resources on the part of NCIP that most often caused delays in field validation and the issuance of certificates of precondition. These impediments occasionally contributed to setbacks in the implementation subprojects.

(ii) **Lack of financial support for community volunteers.** Trainings held outside of the community often posed a problem for community volunteers, especially if they required extended time away from home. Volunteers are usually willing to sacrifice time away from their families and the loss of livelihood for a few days in exchange for additional knowledge and skills. But the lack of financial support has been a constant issue among community volunteers, especially for indigenous peoples. Volunteers are sometimes forced to use their own money for transportation expenses if their organization or the barangay does not have the resources to support them.

(iii) **Peace and order situation.** Many indigenous people live in isolated communities and due to the presence of armed groups the security of field staff cannot always be guaranteed. The remoteness of many barangays and the unstable security situation has hampered some efforts to implement KC-NCDDP.
Staff cannot travel to communities if they don’t feel safe. Deploying front line workers in very demanding and high risk situations and asking them to deal with potential danger are issues that program managers in some areas of Mindanao are confronted with, especially Caraga Region.

VI. Conclusion

60. KC-NCDDP successfully integrated indigenous peoples’ perspectives by establishing strategies to address participation and social inclusion issues at the national, regional, and local levels. The commitment of the agency to these goals is manifested in its capacity building initiatives to enable program staff to understand and respect indigenous knowledge systems and practices, values, and customary laws. The project staff understand the importance of culture sensitive approaches for engaging indigenous communities and the need to firmly incorporate them in the CEAC. These elements have contributed to the success of DSWD’s efforts to ensure the meaningful participation of indigenous communities in KC-NCDDP.

61. The integration of IP perspectives has resulted in increased access of indigenous communities to public resources. It has enabled them to address feelings of neglect, of being left out of the development process. By participating in decision making, indigenous communities have been successful in swaying resource allocation outcomes in their favor and designing projects that respond to their needs. The capacity they have gained to voice their concerns as a result of the project is an achievement that puts them a step higher on the ladder toward true empowerment.