Peoples Development Institute

"…building self-reliant communities through peoples' initiatives…"

The PDI Peasant and IP Education Program: A Development Perspective

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I. Introduction

The Peoples Development Institute was established in 1989 with the mission of *"building self-reliant communities through people's initiatives."*

It is committed to the pursuit of genuine asset reform and rural development of peasants and indigenous peoples. The strength of PDI lies in its participatory approach not only toward development of programming but also in transforming these development initiatives at the ground level into policy for advocacy at the regional and national levels. Its strength also lies in its negotiating strategy that obliges to government to provide land and other resources as well as resolve issues in favor of peasants and indigenous people.

The **Peoples development Institute** (PDI) helps build and strengthen local organizations that will serve as effective partners in addressing related social, economic and political concerns. PDI adheres to the Asset Reform Framework which argues that rural development and self-reliant communities can be established through the positive combination of changes in land tenure and social and economic support services minus the influence of vested interests that impede progress. In this regard, PDI's main role is to encourage and support peasants, women and indigenous peoples (IP) who aspire to claim and protect their land rights and who aim to pursue their autonomous goals in their respective communities.

PDI believes that to correct the skewed distribution of land and resources, land must be redistributed, and this must

be accompanied by institutional capacity building and the provision of economic support services. The direct participation of the peasants and indigenous people in all the phases of development must be ensured. In other words, development work should integrate claim-making with the government for asset redistribution with the peasants and indigenous people at the forefront, accompanied by support service delivery and social infrastructure building. One without the other will not spell sustainable rural development in the countryside because asset reform is equal to land transfer, plus economic support services and strengthened social infrastructure.

Securing for peasants, women and indigenous people the ownership of their farmland and ancestral domain give them a stake in the social order, renders them more likely to defend the social system, and contributes to social and political stability. It opens the door to lasting peace based on justice in the countryside and make national development possible on a sustainable basis.

II. The Philippine Context

PDI's Education Program is being implemented in the context of a property and education problem that has afflicted poor nations around the world. These problems are recognized globally and have formed part of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Statistics from the Department of Education (DepEd) indicate that only 16 percent of the student populations are able to complete a college education. This means that from Grade 1 on, dropouts can be

expected. Basic Education Statistics from the DepEd reports of 1,462,616 dropouts in 2008-2009 in elementary and secondary levels represented only the youth, and by no means the other marginalized groups. Of the P158.2 billion total budget allocated to education in 2009, only P343.5 million is allocated to ALS. With meager resources ALS graduate only reached 290,000 that year.

In 2004, when the government started its non-formal education program the total target learners for Alternative Learning System (ALS) was 16,282,343, or 20 percent of the total Philippine population then.

The challenges to engaging in non-formal education in the Philippines are inextricably linked to the entire educational system. What afflicts the educational establishment cannot but be reflected in the non-formal segment of educational efforts.

According to the Asian Development Bank, Asia is the most populous region where three fourths of the world's illiterates live and where millions of children who finish primary school can barely read and write. The ADV said that one of every four Southeast Asian children is not enrolled in primary school, millions of children drop out of school every year because of poverty, and 50 percent of all children are not enrolled in secondary school while some governments spend more for their soldiers than their children. (ADB, *Education: Framework, Policies, Strategies,* 2002)

While the regional statistics are already glaring, they are much more so in the Philippines. The state of education of the country is intertwined with the state of its econo-

my and a post-Marcos asset reform program in land that has not yet delivered its promise of alleviating poverty. In fact, the distribution of the remaining private agricultural lands under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) is facing a hard wall of landlord opposition and declining capacity of the government to implement the reform program.

The infamous case of Hacienda Luisita, which partly owned by the new president's family is now awaiting settlement in the Supreme Court that could be detrimental to the farm workers. Furthermore, the lands that are already in the hands of the agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) are at greater risk than before due to lack of government support in science and technology, of direct investments for agriculture and other support services.

Worse, the country's economic crisis is enormous – ballooning deficit, unemployment, grinding poverty and rising cost of living. The fiscal and financial crisis is so intense that food management is no longer simply a challenge but a demand to the administration. Philippine poverty is caused by historically skewed land tenure-patterns, government policies that are extremely socially costly such as debt-repayment, militarization, and ecological and demographic crises. Rapid population growth has resulted in increasing population density, putting severe pressure on resources. Climate change is also now causing irreversible damage to land and water resources and loss of production in agriculture. It will affect ther agro-ecological stability of crops and increase pest and disease infestations. Climate change will have a disproportionate impact on poor people in rural

areas where livelihoods depend on agriculture. Depletion of soil fertility and degradation of forest resources, water resources, pastures and fisheries aggravated poverty in the countryside.

According to the Medium-Term Philippine Plan (2004-2010), the quality of basic education has been deteriorating continuously. Basic education bore the effects of continuing rapid population growth, estimated at 2.3 percent annually. The government budget for education is lower than the recommended international standards:

Table I: Government Budget for Education

YEAR	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BUDGET (in billions)	TOTAL BUDGET (in billions)	BUDGET PATTERN (%)
2007	128.6	1126	11.47% *
2008	138.2	1066	11.42% *
2009	158.21	1170	13.52% *
2010	161.4	1300	12.41% *

Source: Department of Budget and Management

**Computed by Peoples Development Institute*

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommends an education spending level of 6 percent of GNP. However, the Php 158 billion education budget in 2009 is only 1.8 percent of the GNP.

From 2007 to 2010, the government spending on education fluctuated but was still way below the 2001-2004 budget pattern which was pegged at 15 to 16 percent of the total budget expenditure.

Table 2: Government Budget Pattern, 2001-2004

YEAR	BUDGET PATTERN FOR EDUCATION
2001	16.56%
2002	16.90%
2003	15.63%
2004	15.47%

Source: National Statistical Coordination Board

This indicates a lack of concern or even a readiness to sacrifice education in favor of other expenditures.

The American Chamber of Commerce estimates that Philippine government spending for education is only $170 per student. The amount is only one-third compared of what the government of Thailand is spending per student and is the lowest among Asian countries (Bello, 2005). The government spends more for debt servicing than for education. From 2001 to 2006, the annual budget for education grew by only 20 percent. But actual debt service for interest payments in the same period increased by 44 percent, while principal payment grew by 82 percent.

The DepEd is itself in crisis. Its annual budget allocation is barely adequate to pay for the bureaucracy with very little slack for direct expending for education and related services. There is a perennial inadequacy of classrooms, textbooks and other school necessities. With a population that is growing at a faster rate than the economy, the gaps are nothing short of being constant. Based on the MTDP there is several billion pesos worth of backlogs in hiring new teachers, building classrooms and providing textbooks, desks and seats. For

2010, DepEd has a budget of Php161.4 billion, only a little above the 2009 funding of Php158.2 billion. About P1.5 billion was allocated for personnel, maintenance and operating expenses, or more than 80 percent. Very little money is left for the hiring of additional teachers and building more classrooms, much less (Php301,597,000) for the DepEd's Alternative Learning System (ALS), the new name for the Non Formal Education Program.

There is no longer any debate that poverty and education are interrelated and both are causes and effects that reinforce each other. Most of the poor are either uneducated or have gone through low levels of formal education. With little human assets to leverage, poor families always tend to give away their material assets in order to subsist.
As indicated earlier, there are several existing policies around Non-Formal Education, namely:

- **The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**
  The Philippines is among those countries who signified commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Goal 2 of the MDG aims to achieve universal primary education. The target by 2015 is that all children can complete a full course of primary schooling. For the Philippine government, the Education for All Plan (EFA Plan) for 2015 prescribes urgent tasks that guides the Department of Education in fulfilling the spirit of Republic Act (RA) 9155 and Executive Order (EO) 356 and ultimately the vision of the Philippine Constitution. It embodies the various programs, projects and activities necessary to achieve the goal of quality ALS for all marginalized Filipino learners.

Republic Act 9155: The Governance Act of Basic Education. It defines the governance of basic education. Among its provision is the recognition of ALS as a complement to formal education and major component of basic education with a clearly defined role within the overall education goals.

- **RA 7165** states that it is the policy of the state to give the highest priority to the adoption of measures for the total eradication of illiteracy.

- **Administrative Order No. 116** mandates all government agencies and local government units to support the Non-Formal Education Accreditation and Equivalency System.

- **EO 356 (2004)** aims to address the learning needs of marginalized learners outside the school system. The Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS) was given stewardship to guide the country's ALS.

- **Education for All (EFA) Plan (2015)** is a program of reforms that aims to (1) develop and strengthen the Department of Education's BALS and mandate it to serve as the government agency to guide the development of the country's ALS; (2) make available public funds for ALS programs of government organizations (GOs) and non-government organizations (NGOs) subject to the guidelines of BALS; (3) build and develop a constituency for ALS development; (4) conduct research and studies to rest cost0-effective options for delivering quality ALS; (5) undertake an

inventory of available resources in localities for literacy interventions outside schools; (6) ensure a vigorous and credible system for reliably assessing, measuring, validating and communication competencies acquired through NFE and informal education.

- **The Local Government Code of 1991**

  The Local Government Unit's Local School Boards in some cases have managed to allocate small portions of the LSB budget. In the case of Iligan City in southern Lanao del Norte province, there is a Special Education Fund (SEF) allocated by the city government for NFE. It is accessed by the DepEd-BALS and spent on parateachers' allowances in the areas.

  Aside from the LSB, the barangay or village governments are also encouraged to set financial support to the NFE through their Education Committee. However minimal, some barangays managed to set aside some funds to somehow augment the literacy action needs.

All these legislation and policies show that the Philippines is not wanting in legislation on behalf of the disadvantaged groups. It is important that we acknowledge this. However, laws alone will not change the lives of the targets of the NFE legislation. Clearly, other building blocks have to be provided, strengthened, and coordinated to enable the educationally deprived full participation in enjoying the fruits of democracy.

Between 2001 to 2010, the Philippines has eight heads of the DepEd. The fact that leadership of this agency is by ap-

pointment politicizes the department, whether or not this is the intent. It means what is obvious: reforms, innovation, and sustaining a reform or innovation are practically impossible.

There is nothing in the existing policies that hinders or inhibit private sectors, e.g. PDI, to effectively work on the education sector. The main problem boils down to how to implement these policies since the required resources are of utmost concern.

Non-Formal Education is way below in the priority of governance. What little allocation is given the public school system leaves precious little for those outside the system.

Non-Formal Education has to have a strong, visible and effective advocates. This dire picture is the opportunity for the private sector to fill the enormous gap of neglect outside the formal school system. The scant attention non-formal education receives form the poorly funded education department means that those who want to support non-formal education must find other sources of support.

III. The PDI's Education Program (PEP)

PDI's Education Program (PEP) was launched in 1995 in support of the overall program on rural empowerment through asset development. It is being implemented in the same areas where it implement other major programs. It is not designed to supplant government's obligation to provide education, rather, it directly complements the larger education system and directly supports the need of the other programs.

PDI is engaged in asset reform and economic support for peasants and indigenous people. Oriented towards poverty

alleviation and political and economic empowerment of the disadvantaged rural sectors and indigenous peoples, education support serves as a thread in developing capabilities and enabling sustainability. Given the states of literacy and education of the rural sectors and indigenous peoples, there is a general recognition that education is a must not only for children but also for adults who, due to poverty and access problems, have not been afforded opportunities to education themselves.

In PDI's own accounting, the asset reform program (under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program and the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act) will not deliver on its own economic and political development and will not be sustainable if not paired with education support. In Central Luzon, for example, most of the agrarian reform beneficiaries are now aging. They do not only need to acquire new knowledge and skill to negotiate with government and with markets to leverage their newly acquired (land) assets, they also need to ensure that their families will have continuity in securing access to and control of their lands.

In Zambales and Pampanga, the Aetas who have just secured their ancestral domain need also to secure their economic and political participation in governance to maintain access to and control over their ancestral lands.

In Coron (Palawan), the Tagbanuas indigenous communities have acquired ancestral domain control over the 22,000-hectare (Coron Island and its surrounding waters but their economic, political and educational capacities are week. They not only have to face the problem of securing

control over their ancestral land, they also have to compete with other economic sectors in a territory that is fast developing into a tourist destination. The economic transformations of Coron, Busuanga and other islands they inhabit will exert grave pressure not only on their way of life but also on their means of economic existence.

PDI's mission is to build self-reliant communities by strengthening peasant IP communities committed to the pursuit of asset reform and rural development. This vast human capital in the rural areas, although abused and underutilized, is one of the major determinants of economic growth. Human capital is embodied in individual skills and knowledge and can be created through educational opportunities. Because of this, the PEP has evolved into a comprehensive program for human capital development that addresses not only the education and literacy dimensions of poverty but also the knowledge and skills requirements of community institution building.

The education support is approached through a multi-pronged delivery system that has three sub-programs or components, namely:

A. The Barefoot Managers Course (BMC).

The BMC is an intensive, cutting-edge training aimed at educating and developing empowered peasant and indigenous men and women leaders as Barefoot Managers who can engage and move the government to provide public services and who are able to monitor the implementation of government projects at the ground level to deter-corrup-

tion. It is an interrelated series of workshops and activities seeking to align the personal and shared vision and aspirations of the peasants and IPs in relation to good governance in their respective communities. This shall enable them to develop links with government agencies at the local, regional and national levels. As of 2010, there have been 4,767 graduates of BMC.

The BMC is designed to enhance the capacity of the IP men and women who have the potential to become IP leaders or barefoot managers.

PDI seeks to mold, develop and improve the quality of peasants and IP leadership. The trainings and practical learning are conducted for the peasants/IP men and women to help them embody the correct principles and values of a leader. At the end of the BMC, there will be a wide and deep resource pool of empowered peasants/IP leaders adept at local governance and able to manage their agrarian lands or ancestral domain. The leader graduates are patriotic, people-oriented, just, creative, hardworking, service-oriented and selfless. These are necessary traits to be able to carry out the task of sustainable community building.

Special gender and development training are conducted for peasants and IP women leaders to help them become barefoot managers who are actively involved in local governance. This shall be linked with organizing and education other members of their communities by re-echoing the BMC.

The BMC will enable the IPs to develop linkages with the LGU, other government agencies at the local and

national levels, as well as conduct advocacy work at the national and international levels in support of their ancestral domain concerns and issues.

Barefoot Managers Course Curriculum

Module I: The Barefoot Manager and the Organization (Duration – 3 days)

- Meaning of Barefoot Manager and the concept of development. The Philippine situation shall be discussed and the barefoot manager is defined.

- Setting of Vision, Mission, Goals and Strategies of their communities and organizations.

- Organizational Life Cycle. Describe organizational processes and identify and describe the stages of organizational process and identify and describe the stages of organizational development, their possible hazards and remedies.

- Organizational capacity assessments (OCA) will be conducted for all partners and beneficiary organizations to deepen their knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of their organizations in managing the set of activities and delivering services to their members. The assessment will also surface critical organizational need, including systems for participation and structures for strengthening accountability to their members.

- Habits of Highly Effective Barefoot Managers. The main concern is accountability and analysis of a leader's behavior.

- The Barefoot Manager and community work. This will focus on the conduct of work and management of people to harness their full potential. It includes discussions on the theories and principle of organizing work, including a code of conduct in the organizing process.

Module II: Project Development, Implementation and Evaluation (Duration: 3 days)

- Project Development Cycle. This will focus on the project development cycle (PDC). Specifically, the PDC will tackle proposal writing and area development plans. SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis, including participatory monitoring , management and evaluation will be taught together with some useful and practical tools for problem identification and planning, monitoring and assessment. Each leader shall develop an Area Development Plan.

- Leadership Values for Good governance and local governance at the community level.

- Resource mobilization and financial management

Module III: Paralegal for Barefoot Managers (Duration 2 days)

- Paralegal for Barefoot Managers

    - Building capacities of leaders on the law and the legal system, their basic rights and obligations as

well as the knowledge and skills to enforce and defend such rights and perform such obligations.

- Basic Principles of Paralegalism. Strengthening paralegal techniques

- Role playing and lessons learned in paralegal practice.

Module IV: Gender and Development (Duration 1 Day)

- Gender and Development

  - Basic Concepts and P)rinciples on Gender and Human Rights. Women Situation in the Philippines.

  - Gender Definition and Concepts

  - Gender Mainstreaming.

  - The UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

  - The Right to Food of women and children.

Module V: The Barefoot Managers in Action (Duration 3 Days)

- Learn the values of the role of vision, mission and strategies in the success of the organization.

- Learn the organizational processes and identify and describe the states of organizational development, the possible hazards and remedies.

- Acquire knowledge of how to improve or maintain the skills and commitment of IP/peasant members and officers, or stopping their regression.

- Learn how to develop project proposals for rural development.

- Relate IP peasant development to situational leadership and acquire the knowledge of the seven effective Habits of a Barefoot Manager.

- Learn how to mobilize resources and financial management, and be accountable.

- Learn negotiation techniques and strategies in relations with government agencies and other institutions.

- Acquire knowledge of the Local Government Code, its role and relation to civil society and the basic rights of citizens.

- Understand the socio-economic and political condition of the Philippines.

- Learn how to formulate a Community Development Plan.

- Acquire paralegal skills and improve capability in defending IP/peasant rights.

- Acquire clear understanding of the concept and principles of human rights and knowledge of women's rights and child welfare.

What is most important, however, is that the BMC shall strengthen the people's organizations involved in the program to carry on their advocacy for sustainable agriculture to achieve food security.

The BMC will build a wide and deep resource pool of empowered men and women leaders who are adept at local governance and able to manage effectively their own lands. The PO Leaders are now Barefoot Managers who have the capacity to manage their farms and are actively participating in local governance.

B. College Scholarship Program

This provides collegiate and technical education support to poor but deserving youths in PDI project areas. This started in 1995 and is being done in cooperation with the Angping Development Foundation for Education (ADFE). There are a total of 170 college graduates as of April 2010.

1. PDI Education Program

The vision of Peoples Development Institute (PDI) is to build and strengthen communities of peasants and Indigenous Peoples (IP) and People's Organization who are committed to genuine agrarian reform and rural development. PDI recognizes that this vast human capital in the rural areas can be a major force in economic growth. PDI believes that education opens opportunities and gives hope to rural poor families and their communities as the educated youth bring new ideas and skills to the countryside.

Recognizing the importance of education, PDI Education Program (PEP) in 1995 was also instituted in support of PDI's overall program of rural empowerment through agrarian development. The program is now on its 15th year.

2. Vision-Mission-Objectives

a. Vision – To empower the peasant and indigenous youth to develop correct values and orientation towards total human development with emphasis on love of country and commitment to community service.

b. Mission – To educate the peasant and indigenous youth so as to nurture future leaders endowed with dignity and principled values crucial to the development of a sustainable community.

c. Objectives

c.1. To equip the youth with proper values and principles through education.

c.2. To develop the youth to become future leaders of the community.

c.3. To use formal and noin-formal education as tools to organize the peasants and indigenous people towards rural empowerment.

c.4. To establish peasant and indigenous youth organizations with a genuine development orientation.

c.5. To institute a model education program for the rural youth.

3. Tertiary Education

a. Factors considered in Selecting a Scholar

The main factors to be considered in connection with a student's application for a scholarship grant are:

a.1. Scholars Record

a.2. Economic Status

a.3. Health

a.4. Aptitude for community and development work

a.5. Moral Character

a.6. Qualities of leadership

a.7. Oral and written facility of communication.

b. How can a Student Apply for a PDI Scholarship?

b.1. A student can apply for a scholarship by accomplishing the application form

which can be obtained from the PDI National Office or from any of its area offices.

b.2. The applicant must obtain the endorsement/ recommendation of a PDI-accredited People's Organization (Farmers, Women or Indigenous People).

b.3. Deadline for submission of application requirements is fixed each year by the PDI Executive Director.

c. How the Scholars are Selected

The selection of Scholars is based on the following:

c.1. Competitive essay writing on any of the following topics: self-introduction, rationale for selection of preferred college course and its contribution, if any, to the applicant's community and a future scenario of the applicant's life.

c.2. Oral interviews conducted by PDI representatives in the area and a final interview by the PDI Executive Director.

d. How the Scholars are notified

Successful candidates are informed in writing of their admission into the program.

e. Requirements for Maintaining the Scholarship

In order to maintain the Scholarship, a grantee must:

e.1. Enroll in a state college or university.

e.2. Take the regular load stipulated in the course prospectus.

e.3. Maintain a weighted average grade prescribed by PDI.

e.4. Remain single throughout the Scholarship term. Pregnancy or marriage will mean expulsion from the program.

e.5. Attend discussions and meetings of scholars.

e.6. Participate in PDI-sponsored community activities.

f. How Scholars are Monitored

f.1. Accepted students are required to undergo an orientation seminar on the requirfements of the PDI Education Program (PEP).

f.2. A Memorandum of Agreement outlining the PDEP requirements is signed in a

simple ceremony by PDI, the scholar and the parents of the scholar.

f.3. A PDI staff is tasked to monitor the Scholar's Academic Standing. The PDI staff also serves as Counselor/Adviser to the Scholars.

f.4. Monthly meetings are conducted for the scholars. These serve as a forum for bonding, discussion and regular consultation. Scholars also attend a General assembly each semester.

f.5. Home visit are conducted periodically by the PDI staff as part of monitoring activities.

C. Edukasyong Pantao para sa Ikauunlad ng mga Katutubo (EPIK). The Non-Formal Education Program of PDI

EPIK is the non-formal and indigenous education program being implemented by PDI. The EPIK responds to the same compelling problems of marginalization of IP communities where education is a lost opportunity. The right to education has taken a new light with the acquisition of ancestral domain rights that require adequate knowledge and skills in protecting and developing vast tracks of the uplands. NFE has become more relevant at the current stage where IP communities need to develop, protect and strengthen ownership of their ancestral domains.

Indigenous people want to rejuvenate the basic elements of their learning systems, while they learn new ideas and skills to survive in their rapidly changing environment. Indigenous people also want to learn modern sciences, but in the context of their own culture and in their own terms and according to their own pace.

Indigenous peoples want an education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. They demand their right to speak their own language, along or with the practice of their indigenous education, since language cannot be divorced from the struggle for self-determination and ancestral domain.

NFE does not merely satisfy literacy objectives. It is a process of reckoning with day-to-day reality and empowering the IPs to deal with their deprivations by developing their entrepreneurial skills for community building. It involves the acquisition of knowledge even outside the school.

Alternative education allows children and adults access to learning outside the government sector. Its primary objective is to empower the indigenous people by giving them the opportunity to analyze their environment, to engage in critical analysis, deep reflection and local vision building of their own families and learning processes through the use of innovative learning methodologies. NFE facilitates people's participation in social transformation by providing them with the necessary

values, attitudes, skills and ab ilities to face the outside challenges.

The Non-Formal Education Program of PDI started in Culion, Palawan in 1997 for the Tagbanua children and in 1998 in ambales to support its overall program to help the Aeta indigenous communities displaced by the 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo in their new found agrarian lands. It is aimed at attaining specific learning objectives for the indigenous people, out of school youths and adult illiterates. By 2004, The NFE Program of PDI had expanded in other areas of Central Luzon, Palawan and Northern Mindanao. EPIK is being conducted in partnership with the Department of Education and the local governments of Coron, Palawan, the LGUs in Zambales and Iligan, in Northern Mindanao. In the latter stage of NFE modules (Levels V) coordination with the Department of Agriculture or Department of Trade and Industry is required depending on the skills need for enterprise development by the learners.

EPIK addresses the necessary learning competencies of formal school; curricula. It entails the acquisition of knowledge even outside the school. It is aimed at attaining specific learning objectives for the Aetas, Tagbanuas and Higaonons, for out-of-school youth and illiterate adults to Central Luzon, Palawan and northern Mindanao. EPIK includes a functional literacy program for the non-literate and semi-literate and integrates basic literacy with livelihood skills training, provision of funds for income generating projects and the IP core

curriculum. It is carried out in coordination with local governments units and the district offices of the DepEd. There are currently 30 NFE program sections running in these areas. As of 2012, 5,934 learners have studied under the NFE program.

PDI is emphatic that the assistance must put premium on addressing the learning needs. This enabling clause is crucial to secure a planned integration of the IPs into the mainstream without compromising their integrity, culture and social practices. Given this thrust PDI seeks to re-orient and sharpen NFE to become a [program that is truly situation-based and action-oriented. The curriculum and material development for the NFE Program involves the design and production of at least 29 modules for 150 session hours for each competency level. Each module consists of a teacher's manual and session guide.

EPIK will offer basic learning competencies that are parallel to the formal school curriculum but anchored on a strong cultural foundation. The teaching modules will be learner-centered. They will be taught in the language of the tribe and lessons will integrate IP culture and IP governance in the teaching of literacy, basic arithmetic and history of their ancestral domain. It shall use the Dialogical teaching method of Paulo Freire. The courses offered are as follows:

Level 0 – Discusses the basic knowledge and ideas regarding colors, shapes and lines through the use of materials commonly found around them. It deals

with the two types of letters in the alphabet – vowels and consonants – by using the things around them, generative words deeply associated and relevant to their current issues, concerns and situations (e.g. baha, bagyo – floods and typhoons). It also introduces the numbers 0-9 and basic mathematical operations (simple addition, simple subtraction, simple multiplication, simple division). Lessons are taught using relevant local games, critical analysis of IP poems, songs or local situations.

Level I – Offered to those with no literacy skills and lessons are comparable to those in Grades I and II. It introduces important legal documents that they usually encounter (community tax certificate, bio-data, medical prescriptions, birth certificate, death certificate, land titles, other legal documents). The objective is to help them identify the different parts of the documents and to teach them the appropriate manner to fill out the forms through lectures, discussions and workshops. It also discusses the core curriculum designed for IPs. The first part deals with cleanliness and its essence to the IPs. The lesson focuses on the common behavior and attitudes about their daily experiences regarding health and cleanliness. The lesson will serve as a first step to teach them pronunciation, reading, writing and constructing simple sentences and paragraphs through picture analysis, role playing/drama, discussion and workshop. The lesson is further subdivided into: (1) different types of illness and diseases of IPs and herbal medicines; (2) cleanliness of the bodies; (3) cleanliness of the

environment. In addition, the IP culture and tradition are discussed with the objective of (a) identifying and illustrating the different kinds of IP clothes and body accessories/decorations, (b) imbibing their songs, dances and poems, and (c) understanding their various seasonal activities. They are provided guidance and direction in learning how to write and to resolve problems using the knowledge that they have acquired about their culture and tradition. It provides the IPs with the knowledge of how to construct short, simple sentences, paragraphs, letters and stories using lessons related to their core values, cultures and social system. Through this, the IPs become familiar with their values, culture and tradition while learning writing skills.

The DepEd Level I materials – Modules 1-10 on good manners and right conduct – are then taught to the IP learners. They also discuss stewardship of the environment, proper nutrition, self-reliance and respect. Level 0-1 is 300 session hours from July to February.

Level II – Offered to semi-literates, reinforces basic reading, writing and mathematics skills. It is similar to Grades III and IV. It discusses the way of living of the indigenous peoples and modern farming, fishing and hunting practices. The knowledge acquired here will help them improve their way of living.

Level II also discusses the DepEd Level II Modules 11-28, which covers the rights of the individual,

especially the children and women, and the associated obligations of an individual to himself, to society and to the environment. It also discusses the concept of nationalism. Level II is 300 session hours from July to February.

Level III V – Flexible competency exercises, designed for functional literates. It entails 300 session hours from July to February.

Level III – Equivalency to grades V and VI. It discusses the IP local governance system, specifically the leadership and decision-making systems and processes that occur within the IP community and the relevance and interrelationship of different social and political structures and institutions. It also discusses the IPs ancestral domain. This is their repository of knowledge, culture and views honed and developed over time by their ancestors. Entitlements to their ancestral domain are of paramount importance. A lecture on the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, or IPRA, will also be given, Specially, IPs will identify (1) the scope of their ancestral domain, (2) the rights of IPs to their ancestral domain, (3) the obligations and duties of IPs to their ancestral domain.

The above discussion will help the IPs improve their reading, writing and listening skills and they will be equipped with the tools needed to help them solve the problems they encounter in their daily lives.

The DepEd Level III Materials. Modules 29-34, are also discussed with IP learners. They tackle enhanc-

ing individual capacities to pose positive effects on fellow IPs.

Level IV – For adequately functional literates, comparable to 1st and 2nd years of secondary school.

Level V – Autonomous learning level equivalent to 3rd and 4th year of secondary school. It provides peasants and IP learners with knowledge of local governance systems through knowledge sharing, exposure trips and workshops. It also discusses simple bookkeeping for small-scale livelihood projects and teaches them how to enhance their livelihood skills. Based on the availability of local resources in the areas and the indigenous knowledge and skills that they have acquired, the IP learners identify livelihood options that they can develop to establish small-scale livelihood enterprise to improve their living status. Skills development is taught based on the chosen livelihood to the IP learners by specialists in the field. They are linked with TESDA or DTI to further develop their chosen product.

After graduating from Level V, the IP learner can now take the Accreditation and Equivalency test (A and E). the adults upon passing the A and E test can proceed to college while the young IPs who want to enter formal high school can take the A and E test after Level III.

The NFE Program of PDI is implemented in cooperation with DepEd and the LGU through a Memo-

randum of Agreement and had engaged parateachers. The MOA spells out the terms and conditions of the program. The MOA also defines the roles and responsibilities of all parties. In general, PDI as the lead agency assumes responsibility over the project's execution in collaboration with the NFE Coordinator assigned by the DepEd. The NFE Coordinator assumes the responsibilities, including field coordination, supervision and delivery of required technical know-how.

Local villagers are hired and trained as parateachers. Their proximity and their knowledge of the local language and IP culture are critical elements in the success of the NFE. PDI covers the honoraria of the parateachers, the monitoring and evaluation of the classes, training workshops for parateachers and the supplies and materials needed by the IP learners.

The parateachers along with the NFE coordinator and the project management team (PMT) conduct summer workshops every April or May, to enhance, improve and calibrate the NFE curriculum based on the changing needs of the IP communities. The parateachers have formed an organization in the interest of advancing and mainstreaming the non-formal and indigenous education for the indigenous communities. The group is known as the EPIK Para-Teachers Organization.

As their counterpart, the beneficiary IP community builds the venue for the NFE classes, and

the program provides a small amount for a school structure in the village. DepEd provides a Coordinator responsible for supervising and monitoring the parateachers. It conducts tests to determine whether the students' achievements in the NFE classes are equivalent to formal school competency levels and grants certificates of accomplishment. The DepEd also takes care of training the parateachers. Material Curriculum development shall be the responsibility of both the PDI and DepEd.

The PDI Area Coordinator and the NFE Coordinator meet frequently to discuss implementation issues and formulate remedial measures. They also refine and calibrate the existing NFE curricula to be responsive to the actual situation in the area and the expressed needs of the NFE students. The effects of these exercises are more potent in the Level III Curriculum, which includes livelihood matters. Level III takes into account the local poverty situation, identification and analysis of the causes of poverty and establishing the need to address poverty and pursue local development. As a consequence, the resolution of the problem recognizes the importance of community organizing and building in addition to other skills learned in the NFE Program.

NFE Successes

The following table shows the NFE coverage of PDI from 2004 to 2012.

Table 3. PDI NFE Learners 2004-2012

Year	Total
2004	368
2005	413
2006	537
2007	539
2008	630
2009	669
2010	646
2011	993
2012	1.139
Total	5,934

Table 4. NFE Learners by Gender 2004-2012

Year	Male	Female	Total
2004		368	
2005		413	
2006		537	
2007	166	373	539
2008	248	382	630
2009	278	391	669
2010	244	402	646
2011	367	626	993
2012	431	708	1,139
Total		**5,934**	

IV. Significance, Effects and Impacts of the EPIK/NFE Program

Based on the major findings of an independent evaluation mission which previously assessed the program and projects of the institution, the PDI Education Program specifically the EPIK Program has been observed to be relevant in the following specific needs:

1. **Appropriateness to priority needs.** Education generally comes third to food and livelihood in the priorities of poor households. However, education spending is often sacrificed due to generally inadequate income and more so when health needs emerge.

    - *Education as a social need that has implications on economic and political relations.* Agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) and IPs are emerging as economic and political players in local economies. Their newly acquired assets may be used as leverage in exercising their economic and political clout but they need to be equipped with knowledge and skills to be able to negotiate with government and market forces more effectively.

    - *Education as a right especially for children.* The Philippine government is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). By its accession to this international protocol, it is obligated to provide a favorable environment for child education and development. The PEP is an instrument of advocacy as well as direct support for disadvantaged children.

    - *Education is a continuing right of adults who did not have the opportunity to educate themselves when they were young.* The agrarian reform and ancestral domain strug-

gles have gone through a long process. In the interim, the participants of these struggles have not benefited from education opportunities. However, these are age groups whose parents did not have the capacity to send them to school. Most ARBs are in the primary or elementary grades while most IP adults have never been to formal school.

- *Education as a key element in the development of human resources.* As observed and proven elsewhere, a significant attribute in the status of developed countries is the status of its human resources, primarily the level of education afforded to their citizens. The PEP is designed to ensure that human resource de3velpment of rural areas and ancestral domains reach an adequate level to ensure that, at the minimum,. The rural sectors and indigenous peoples are able to exercise their rights in an informed manner.

2. Significant to Gender Needs.

- Among IP households, the males have better access to education than the females. In the case of the Aetas of Zambales and the Tagbanuas of Palawan, parents tend to give priority to the male children than the female child, arguing that the girl child would soon get married and would no longer serve as an asset to the family. This tradition has created distortions

in the knowledge and skills standing of males and females. The EPIK program appropriately responds to this disparity.

- Among the greater rural population where there is inequality among men and women, the latter can use education as means to assert their rightful place in society. Studies show that human trafficking and sex slavery afflicts mostly rural women in search of livelihood and income. This problem is deeply rooted in the educational disadvantaged position of women and their inability to secure economic and political participation in their places of origin.

3. Significant to IP Needs.

- The marginalization of IPs is not only an economic issue. It is also a socio-cultural issue that traces its roots to discrimination and lack of access to larger social opportunities. In Coron, Palawan, for example, the public education system has been in existence since the American colonial period. The first public school was established in the nearby island of Busuanga in 1902. However, it was only in the early 1990's when the Tagbanuas of Coron Island were able to produce two college graduates. In the coming years, the next batch of college graduates would be those supported by PDI.

4. **Timeliness.**

    - The EPIK/NFE Program comes as a critical stage when ARB and IP organizations need to improve their capabilities in negotiating for their political and economic participation in their communities and the larger society. Their acquired knowledge and skills help ensure that they can protect their rights.

    - Support was provided at a time when the Pinatubo victims were reeling from the disaster. While the effects of the government's relief program to assist the Mountain Pinatubo victims was not widespread (not to mention the negative effects on some women and children who were pulled into the sex trade) PDI's PEP invested on NFE and scholarships to ensure long term benefits for the affected households and communities. Partly, the support also provides a psycho-social cushion to the victims who would otherwise, have fallen into desperation.

5. **Relevance to the Public Education System.**

    - While the PEP has very limited resources, it directly addresses inadequacies in the public education system in PDI's areas of operation. It has been able to prevent beneficiaries from falling off the arena of opportunities for survival and development.

- The NFE of PEP directly complements the ALS of DepEd and provides a platform for NGO-government cooperation. It also addresses the financial inadequacy of the DepEd in implementing the ALS program and mainly supports the salary and monthly expenses of the ALS coordinators. It is EPIK which absorbs the cost of salaries for the parateachers.

- The education disadvantages of the rural poor and indigenous communities have been a long running problem that the public education system is unable to adequately address. While PEP may not be financially significant on a national scale, it is highly significant to target groups. The lessons learned in the exercise will contribute to the improvement of the education system and the needs of the disadvantaged sectors.

6. The direct effects of the EPIK/NFE Program of PDI.

Based on the evaluation conducted on the EPIK/NFE Program, the positive effects of the NFE can be attributed to the functional and culturally-sensitive substance of the teaching modules, the accessibility of the learning centers and the skills, and familiarity of the parateachers. Most of the parateachers are non-IP professionals who have entered into marriage with IPs. Most of the

parateachers reside on-site and form part of the community. Others are themselves products of the NFE. Some others are leaders of people's organizations (PO) who combine organizational skills and capabilities in their teaching. The parateachers do not receive enough compensation relative to the services they provide and to the risks they encounter as they move in far flung areas. Nevertheless, they are inspired by the non-financial benefits and the employment opportunity in areas where wages are low and employment opportunities are generally absent. There is no better measure of the effects of the NFE than the class performance that allows each learner to move from one level to another. Data gathered from interviews and discussions with the learners indicate the following key improvements:

- Ability to read and write thus influencing a radical change in the behavior of the learner towards other people in the community.

- Acquisition of basic knowledge that allows adults to exercise their rights such as independently choosing candidates during elections.

- Ability to determine weights, measures and prices thus improving the learners' abilities to negotiate their exchange rights when dealing with market players and traders.

- Ability to communicate better. This is attributed to the fundamental ability to read and write, and correspondingly, the ability to absorb and process information.

- Among IP women who are relatively disadvantaged compared the men in terms of literacy, the NFE has given them the chance to recover lost opportunities during their childhood. Armed with reading, writing and numeracy skills, they are now able to negotiate fairer terms in household management of finances.

7. Impact of the EPIK/NFE Program of PDI:

- Impact on Household. The NFE has improved gender relations within the family and household management of finances. This is most evident among IP women learners who are able to immediately utilize their new knowledge and skills in co-managing their family affairs.

- Impact on personal values and behavior. The NFE has responded to the rights of children and adults to be educated. It also creates an environment of opportunity for continuing education especially for adults who never had the chance acquire formal education when they were young.

- Impact on empowerment and governance. The NFE program implementation itself

is an exercise of empowerment and has contributed to the improvement of local governance. In the case of Coron, Palawan, program implementation has induced the DepEd and the LGU to participate and produce equities. The inadequacies of the government have also induced government players to look at NGOs as positive partners in development.

- Impact on Gender. In the case of the NFE, the educational disadvantage of women, especially among IPs, has been addressed. NFE women graduates have proven that knowledge power is an instrument in asserting their rights and equalizing power distribution in the household and community.

- Impact on indigenous peoples. The NFE has produced literate IPs who can help mitigate distortions in social, political and economic relations. Literacy and numeracy skills have empowered IPs to demand fairer relations in markets (e.g. negotiations with traders) or in the governance functions of line agencies and local governments. The NFE has also improved IP capacity in claiming and/or managing their ancestral domains.

- Impact on education policy. The NFE tends to be on the lower end of government priorities. PDI's active involvement in LS/NFE

creates pressure on government to fulfill its obligations in the education of its citizens.

- Impact on child and youth development. The NFE creates an environment for asserting child rights to education. It also enables children to secure their survival and to provide adequate resources for continuing education.

V. Major Issues and Challenges

The following are the major issues and challenges in the implementation of NFE as experienced by PDI:

• Although good policies already exist, their implementation is always faced with challenges on scarcity (if not a lack) of funds. The Grand Alliance that was launched by the Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC), which involves the barangay or village governments, is confronted with the same problem inasmuch as most of the needy people are in the remote rural areas where most barangay governments have the least resources to exploit.

- At the operational level, the usual challenge is the suitability and adaptability of the modules' languages to the local cultures. Each ethnic grouping has unique cultural features, and therefore different approaches to common literacy needs.

  The most common problem of any private-public partnership would have is the conflict of

interest between the three institutions. Conflict of interest happens for many reasons. One common reason is that the LGU for example might have different projects or priorities for its municipality, very different from what is being proposed (NFE). Another reason of conflict of interest is when the parties involved have different definitions, views and opinions on the project proposed (NFE).

- At the institutional level, PDI's capacity to cover as many areas as possible is hindered by its limited source of funds for operation. Note that one of the main challenges from the very start is the fact that the Local Government Unit and the DepEd does not have enough funds to implement projects at the barangay level. As a result, PDI provided institutional capacity building and the needed support services while the LGU provided technical expertise. Some local government units may have enough funds for the project but the predicament comes when they misallocate the budget. Some LGUs may prioritize projects that do not address the immediate needs of the people.

VI. The New Life Forms for Moving Forward

- **Improving Access to Required Resources – A Need for a Stronger Network of Support.** PDI needs to expand its network of support at various levels in order to reach

as many needy rural communities as possible. PDI will continue working with its existing partnerships with government and the private sector while exploring all other avenues to expand the network support to combat illiteracy in rural areas.

- **Continuing Research and Studies for Customized Approaches Suited to Different Cultures of Different Peoples.**

  In the context of the ALS of DepEd, there is only one standardized set of modules for all the different levels. In the context of PDI's agenda in empowering the rural poor, there is a need to enhance suitability and adaptability of instructional modules.

- **Advocacy within Government.**

  The education sector is itself somewhat marginalized within the Philippine government, far from occupying the central stage which it should, given that the future of the country rests in the hands of the young. Global warming and climate change have become global issues only because there have been advocates who positioned the issue as requiring critical and urgent responses. Education in the Philippines needs such advocates who are behind the cause not just as a periodic election issue.

- **Advocacy by Private Sector, NGOs.**

  Former US Vice President Al Gore, who ran and lost the presidency to George Bush, stepped outside the government establishment and became the primary voice for climate change. Through his efforts, not only the US government took notice, but also the governments in Europe and Asia. Advocacy for education and specifically non-formal education needs a voice or voices. PDI is one of those voices, but it's voice has been not through direct campaigns for consciousness raising but rather through direct action, in seeding and maintaining programs for indigenous peoples (Aetas, Tagbanuas) in Zambales and Palawan since 1998.

- **Consolidation of Lessons of Experience.**

  PDI's experience over the 12 years with the introduction and maintenance of NFE in its targeted sites (Zambales, Palawan, others) are a rich minefield of knowledge. Organizing both the body of knowledge on approaches, techniques, and teaching interventions that work and don't work will be a project in itself aside from conducting the NFE for which organizations like PDI have to search high and low for prospective instructors. For this collaborative efforts between PDI and the government will be required.

- **Action Research Projects.**

  Apart from gathering wisdom from successes, public and private sectors can join in undertaking Action (Educational) Research Projects to discover and isolate the factors that lead to successful non-formal education. To this end, PDI's contribution might be in the tightening of one of the key and common descriptors in ALS language – the r3ference to "life skills."

- **Showcasing and Building on Success.**

  PDI's work has been concentrated on doing the work, with not an ounce of sweat for publicity. This aversion to marketing has probably cost PDI and other similarly service-oriented NGOs in the sense that their successes have been far from the public. And yet, there are successes to be celebrated and succe3ss stories that can be emulated. Collaboration between PDI and other organizations whose expertise lie in multiplying the mileage for NFE discoveries, learning, and successes can lead to a number of possible consequences: greater awareness of the possible impact of NFE on groups of people who eventually return that positive impact through their own contributions back to society; the attraction of resources to reinforce, bolster, and spread NFE so that more of the

millions of Filipinos who have fallen off the education ladder can rejoin the mainstream.

VII. Recommendations on Good Public-Private Partnership:

For LGUs

1. More Active Role by Local School Board (LSB) in the implementation of the NFE program

    a. Assistance in the identification, planning and designing

    b. Monitoring of the NFE implementation

    c. Regular dialogue on improving the NFE conduct in terms of applicabitily and acceptability

2. Automatic allotment of the Special Education Fund by the LSB for the implementation of the ALS-NFE program

3. LGUs should establish community learning centers (CLCs)

4. Promote LGU information sharing through the CLCs. Further promote LGU presence through the CLCs.

    a. LGU programs and projects discussed in the CLCs

b. Civic acti9ons are conducted in the CLCs

c. Gender and development promotion are conducted in the CLCs

d. CLC as local livelihood resource center

For NGOs:

1. The NGO applying to be the service provider for the ALS-NFE should demonstrate proven track record of at least five years in the [preferred field of mass-based alternative education. (This should be a clear-cut policy of the DepEd in accrediting service providers (e.g. clarity on the set of criteria for selection).

2. In the light of the Local Government Code (LGC), NGOs identified by DepEd should work with and be duly accredited by the Local Government Units (LGUs).

For DepEd:

1. Should open the windows for civil society participation in Alternative Education.

2. Link up with the LGU and Local Government Agencies (LGAs).

3. Popularize the definition of literacy and translate curriculum/modules in common dialects.

4. Establish local literacy councils in coordination with LGUs.

5. Learn from good practices on NFE programs and replicate them through government-NGO collaboration.

6. Encourage the development and replication of innovative, creative and indigenous literacy programs.\

7. Map out current and emerging education needs that are not addressed.

8. Unity guidelines for service contracting in ALS-NFE and standardize program procedures.

    a. Service Providers may be a private organization, private/state universities, college or government organization.

    b. Selection of Service Providers must base on a set of criteria and qualifications.

    c. Awards should cover specific contract periods.

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