

EMPOWERING INDIGENOUS MINDS

by:

Rodrigo S. Panlaque Jr.

School Principal I, Pag-asa Elementary School

Indigenous Peoples represent a rich cultural heritage that is both unique and integral to the nation's identity. Recognizing the importance of preserving this heritage, the Department of Education (DepEd) has implemented various policies with regards to Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) in schools.

Pag-asa Elementary School (ES) as one of the schools implementing Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) in SDO Bataan has developed and implemented culturally responsive curriculum. This curriculum not only adhere to national educational standards but also incorporates local indigenous knowledge, language known as "Magbukun", and traditions. This ensures that the education provided is not only relevant but also respectful of the unique cultural contexts of "Aeta Magbukun."

Recognizing the linguistic diversity within Indigenous communities, DepEd has embraced the importance of multilingual education. Schools have introduced programs that teach students in their native languages and mother tongue, gradually transitioning to the national language and English. This approach not only facilitates a smoother learning process but also preserves and promotes indigenous languages.

Implementing Indigenous Peoples Education involves active engagement with the local communities. Pag-asa Elementary School collaborates closely with Indigenous Peoples, involving community leaders, elders, and parents in the educational process. This ensures that the education provided aligns with the community's needs and values, fostering a sense of ownership and pride in the learning experience.

The integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs) is a foundation of successful IPed. The school has embraced the idea that traditional knowledge is a valuable resource. Lessons often involve the application of IKSP, connecting classroom learning with the rich cultural practices and wisdom passed down through generations.

Beyond academic achievement, the school recognizes the importance of holistic development for Indigenous Peoples. The school implements programs that focus on the physical, emotional, and social well-being of learners. This includes initiatives related to health, nutrition, and mental well-being, contributing to a more comprehensive and culturally sensitive educational experience.

Pag-asa ES celebrates and preserves Indigenous Peoples' cultural heritage through various means. This includes organizing Indigenous People's Month, traditional arts and crafts programs, and storytelling sessions led by community elders. Such initiatives not only instill a sense of pride in students but also create an awareness and appreciation for the rich culture of the Indigenous People.

Ensuring that teachers are equipped with the skills and understanding needed to implement Indigenous Peoples Education is a vital component of IPed. The school invests in specialized training programs for teachers and non-teaching staff. This training focuses on cultural sensitivity, language proficiency, and an appreciation for the unique challenges faced by Indigenous learners.

By incorporating cultural sensitivity, community engagement, and a holistic approach to education, Pag-asa Elementary School is not just providing academic knowledge but also nurturing a sense of identity, pride, and belonging among "Aeta Magbukun." These best practices serve as a model for fostering inclusive and culturally respectful education system that empowers indigenous minds and contribute to the preservation of the nation's diverse cultural heritage.

References:

DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2015 titled “Adopting the Indigenous Peoples Education Curriculum Framework.”

DepEd Order No. 61, s. 2021 titled “Observance of the National Indigenous Peoples Day, International Day of World’s Indigenous Peoples, and National Indigenous Peoples Month 2021.”