

“FOR ALL, EDUCATION”

by:

Jelly F. Peñaflor

Teacher I, Kinaragan Integrated School School

First responders can be defined as a group of professionals who immediately respond to a scene of an accident or emergency. They are usually classified as firefighters who respond to fire emergencies, paramedics who respond to health accidents, police officers who respond to crime incidents, and doctors who respond to life-and-death emergency situations. But in the field of education, teachers are to be considered the first responders who teach children about life and knowledge. In a blog published on the website of Camella (2023), teachers are considered vital to the future development of a country. Their devotion to education and their unwavering enthusiasm are crucial in empowering children and laying the groundwork for future national and personal growth. In the Philippines, the teaching profession is essential to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the UN. SDG 4. It is their objective to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education that promotes chances for lifelong learning for everyone. They are essential in expanding educational opportunities, raising standards of learning, and promoting a culture of continuous growth. There are different types of teachers, including public and private school teachers in preschool, elementary, high school, and senior high school. There are also public and private college and university teachers known more as professors. And another type of teacher are the Indigenous teachers and non-Indigenous teachers who teach indigenous tribes and are ready to cross rivers or hike up mountains just to reach the indigenous community’s classroom. Due to the scarcity of learning resources and transportation challenges among communities of indigenous groups, dedicated indigenous teachers are always one call away to provide education and self-growth for indigenous children in the Philippines.

Due to the lack of societal awareness and the imposing standard of living in society, people tend to belittle and judge indigenous people as their lifestyle differs from that of most people living in the urban part of the province. The indigenous Aeta people are a part of the indigenous people in the Philippines; they are dispersed over the island of Luzon and are mostly vagrants. Due to their lack of basic education, Aeta people often receive discrimination because they are illiterate and considered ignorant. In an interview conducted by World Vision, Cecilia was featured in the blog, as she was a former chieftain of the Aeta community and was able to finish her degree in college. Teacher Cecilia shared that her commitment and desire to teach the Aeta kids in her neighborhood are the fuel that drove her to pursue her college degree with determination. According to Teacher Cecilia, her family used to frequently relocate when she was little in order to sell their goods. They would relocate to a new location after a month. Hence, going to school was difficult for her and other Aeta kids at the time because of this kind of lifestyle. She described her learning journey as a rollercoaster ride, as it has driven her down various unexpected paths. Cecilia had to stop studying several times due to financial instability, and she must first provide food for her family. But this kind of barrier didn't stop her from achieving a dream, not just for herself but also for her Aeta community. In 2019, Cecilia graduated from college and is now called Teacher Cecilia. Out of the 78 households in our town, she was one of the two teachers in her community who were able to share and provide learning to the Aeta children.

On the other hand, non-indigenous teachers who are appointed to remote places of indigenous tribes often encounter various sets of problems and challenges, including lack of access to appropriate roads, drinkable water, and power supplies. Also, the absence of transportation, internet, and cellphone signals causes a delay in their ability to stay in contact with friends and family and to get real-time updates and provide necessary data to units, agencies, or people in power. Despite the school supplies and resources needed for instruction in both urban and rural schools given by the Department of Education, scarcity of resources tends to arise as non-indigenous teachers most of the time

lack the tools needed to conduct good lessons. As a result, they begin to improvise and come up with original ways to instruct their students. It sounds difficult and challenging, but despite these factors, non-indigenous teachers are able to gain the ability to significantly teach indigenous children's lives and become a channel of change and opportunity for the indigenous children's self-growth. Furthermore, after the COVID-19 pandemic caused a paradigm shift in the education system of the Philippines, where traditional face-to-face classes were shifted to remote learning, it created obstacles and challenges for both instructors and students. Since the majority of indigenous students don't have enough technological resources for online instruction, teachers are being directed into alternative delivery methods and cutting-edge tactics to help students finish their education.

Hence, teachers tasked with implementing education for indigenous peoples are utilizing cutting-edge learning techniques like self-reflection, tender care, parental participation, and contemporary technology. According to the professionals, maintaining creative teaching practices would foster and provide high-quality education, especially for indigenous people who are not proficiently knowledgeable in terms of technological equipment and technologies. Appointed school heads in IPed implemented schools to offer capacity building so that teachers may create creative teaching methods and enhance instruction. Development initiatives should be put into place to support the adoption of cutting-edge teaching techniques in schools that implement IPE for Indigenous peoples. In conclusion, indigenous children are most of the time born with major obstacles and challenges in their pursuit of an education. That's why Indigenous teachers and non-Indigenous teachers are expected to combat these hindrances and break educational barriers. And as well as conquering their own battles and challenges. They might not be trained first responders in times of fire, emergency, and crime, but they are always ready to respond for a high-quality education for indigenous children. They will do and give everything for all, education.

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