

## “OUT FOR DELIVERY: QUALITY EDUCATION FOR INDIGENOUS CHILDREN”

by:

**Jelly F. Peñaflor**

*Teacher I, Kinaragan Integrated School School*

A human being that wakes up every day has needs and wants. As Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs illustrates, physiological needs such as food, shelter, water, clothing, sleep, and breathing are placed in the first-bottom row of the Hierarchy pyramid, which is considered to be fulfilled first in order to survive and thrive in the remaining aspects until one reaches self-actualization. In today’s modern time, we are surrounded by the advancement of technology, wherein every need, every system, every procedure, and mostly everything is dependent on technology. If you are hungry, you can grab food via a food delivery app. If you are in need of shelter, you can browse on social media platforms to see and locate available shelter spaces. If you are out of drinking water, you can dial a number and call for home water service delivery. If you want a new set of clothes, you can add them to your cart through various online shopping apps. All these are possible and accessible just by using a single smartphone. Technology has indeed made the lives of individuals easier, for even a person’s basic needs can be met through advanced technological innovation. Although it is convenient for most people to obtain what they need since they just need to add it to their cart, place an order, and wait for the delivery of their package; life for other people is not as effortlessly convenient as it may seem, especially if there is a scarcity of basic needs to children belonging to the indigenous group.

In an article published on the website of the United Nations Office for Project Services, or UNOPS, the author, Jennilyn Santos, stated that the Philippines is known to be home to more than 17 million indigenous people who belong to the 110 ethnolinguistic

groups. The majority of indigenous communities live in isolated areas where they have mostly preserved their traditional way of life and culture. Similar to other indigenous tribes worldwide, the indigenous people of the Philippines are still counted among the world's poorest and most impoverished group of individuals. Due to the occurrence of historical persecution, indigenous populations are excluded from social services, economic opportunity, and political representation. Even acquiring a birth certificate is a challenge due to severe unemployment and pervasive illiteracy. In an interview conducted by the UNOPS, Bae Dalayagan Gloria Penaso, a Manobo Tribe leader, shared the reason behind their tribe not having a birth certificate. She stated that they were born on mountains, and the first thing their mother did was take care of them after giving birth. Hence, they could not travel to the cities in order to obtain birth certificates because of the distance of their home community from the urban city. That's the reason why a lot of indigenous tribes in today's world don't have birth certificates. The absence of a birth certificate makes children more vulnerable to poverty and discrimination. They will become ineligible for social assistance programs offered by the government. Also, they will not be able to acquire the basic right to education that is considered the key to breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty, not just in the Philippines but also in their community.

Education is considered a significant aspect of a child's development that they must obtain, as it provides learning, knowledge, and makes them literate individuals. Being literate beats all odds in society, as a literate person has the capacity to use language to communicate with individuals or social groups that have a distinct cultural and social identity from the general public. The basic need for education for indigenous people is most of the time out of reach for indigenous children due to numerous factors, such as scarcity of classroom facilities, the community's location, a limited number of teaching personnel, cultural differences, and a lack of basic needs. As a result, it tends to compromise the learning and social growth of indigenous children. Whereas, instead of attending school to learn, most of them are helping their parents with their means of

livelihood in their community to obtain their everyday needs. Due to the increasing number of indigenous tribes' lack of education, the Department of Education implemented the National Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program 2011 under the title “Embracing the Education Policy Framework for National Indigenous Peoples (IP) and Republic Act (RA) No. 10533, the 2013 Enhanced Basic Education Act”. Whereas, as of October 2021, 2.529 million IP students are being served in 42,176 public schools throughout the Philippines during the first ten years of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program. The objective of the policy is to apply a rights-based learning method and approach that specifies how education should be implemented, keeping in mind the social and cultural background of Indigenous students. According to Senior Technical Assistant and IPsEO Head Maria Lourie Victor, the program aims to respect the indigenous tribe’s identities and culture. It gives importance to and promotes their knowledge systems, competencies, and the values that are close to them and their heritage. Also, DepEd plans to give support regarding long-term community development through education programs that can promote responsive and pandemic-relevant indigenous community expertise, like indigenous farming and health systems, through rural farm schools, senior high school offerings, and other similar initiatives. In conclusion, education is counted as one of the basic needs of human beings, including indigenous people, as it helps beat poverty and societal issues. Thus, the DepEd’s IPEd Program is a crucial point for Indigenous people, as it ensures that they will also have fair access to quality education, guarantee their welfare and rights, and contribute to community development. All children, including those in the indigenous tribes, have dreams of their own, and education is the most established path towards success. That’s why it is necessary to break them out of the cycle of educational deprivation and let them reach their full potential, as today, quality education for indigenous children is out for delivery.

## *References:*

Shah, D. (2022, September 12). How Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can be applied in teaching. [Www.classcardapp.com](http://www.classcardapp.com).

<https://www.classcardapp.com/blog/how-maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-can-be-applied-in-teaching>

The Department of Education. (n.d.). DepEd marks 1st decade of Indigenous Peoples Education Program (IPEd) with 2.5M learners served | Department of Education. The Department of Education. <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2021/10/08/deped-marks-1st-decade-of-indigenous-peoples-education-program-iped-with-2-5m-learners-served/>

Unops. (2022). Towards inclusion for indigenous peoples in the Philippines. UNOPS. <https://www.unops.org/news-and-stories/stories/towards-inclusion-for-indigenous-peoples-in-the-philippines>