Based on the data of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), the estimated population of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) is between 12-15 million. It roughly constitutes 10-15 percent of the total population of the Philippines. Less than 50% of the IP population finished elementary education. Only 19% graduated from secondary schools and 2% from college. 82% of the total IP population in the Philippines reached elementary level and only 70% are literate. “Indigenous peoples are among the poorest and most marginalized sectors of Philippine society. They experience neglect and discrimination in the provision of basic social services by the Government.” (Cariño, 2012) One of these basic social services is the provision of quality and relevant education which should be both inclusive and culture-sensitive based on Republic Act 10533 of 2013 or the K to 12 Program.

In its quest to addressing marginalization and to achieving the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All Goals (EFA), the Philippines gears towards inclusion. “There is now a stronger focus on those learners who are still out of school or are hard to reach. More attention is also being paid to the many children and young people who attend school but who are excluded from learning, who may not complete the full cycle of primary education or who do not receive an education of good quality” (UNESCO, 2009). These include marginalized learners like people with disability, gifted learners, linguistic minorities, adult lacking basic literacy skills, learners under difficult circumstances, Muslim learners and indigenous peoples (Philippine EFA Assessment 2015).
The government, through its Philippine Development Plan (PDP), is slowly instituting inclusive education by implementing programs like Special Education (SPEd), Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB MLE), Alternative Learning System (ALS), Alternative Delivery Modalities (ADMs), Madrasah Education and Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd).

The Department of Education’s commitment to realizing inclusive education in the country became more evident when it adopted the National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy Framework through DepEd Order No. 62, s. 2011 (D.O. 62, s. 2011). This framework adopts the indigenous peoples’ learning system and uses culturally appropriate learning resources and environments which is anchored on the United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Article 14 statement that Indigenous Peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning and that indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education without discrimination in their own culture and provided in their own language.

D.O. 62, s. 2011 also develops the educators’ appreciation of IPs’ cultural heritage and implores them to utilize and integrate IP culture in learning contents and processes. IP schools, community elders and DepEd personnel are tasked to create and design local implementation plans after a series of consultations and meetings from 2012 to 2014. Select educators and IP elders are then tasked to design lessons based on the known Indigenous Knowledge System and Practices (IKSPs) listed.

The Schools Division of Bataan on its part, with the assistance and guidance of the IP Elders, continuously designs and validates indigenized lesson plans and materials intended for the Ayta Magbukun Tribe, which is the primary IP group in the province. Steps are also being taken to document the indigenous basic grammar, spelling rules and
directed word list of the tribe for the sole purpose of passing their language and culture to the IP learners of the province.

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