

## Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines

The Philippines is a mountainous archipelago of approximately 30 million ha. It comprises 7,100 islands grouped into three regions: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Indigenous peoples make up approximately 10-15 per cent of the population.

Despite colonialism, the indigenous peoples retained ways of life that reflect age-old environmental adaptations, emphasizing sustainability, coexistence, community consensus and collective effort. These are expressed as worldviews and as indigenous economic, socio-cultural and political practices. Central to indigenous ways of life is the persistence of traditionally-owned lands and resources and, on this basis, of subsistence oriented hunting, gathering, agriculture and handicrafts as prevalent modes of livelihood. Surplus was sometimes produced but exchange of goods outside the community consisted mainly of forest products sought after by inter-marine traders. In general, what was produced was consumed by the producers themselves. Private ownership, in its common understanding, especially of land, did not exist. Individual ownership of land was confined to irrigated rice terraces constructed elaborately by some of the indigenous peoples in the Cordillera. All other ancestral lands and all their resources are traditionally considered community property, and the traditional leaders act as custodians.

The dominant money economy and oppressive practices against indigenous peoples have greatly affected them. The most glaring manifestation of this has been the constant expropriation of ancestral lands by the government for commercial logging, plantations and mining concessions. Dislocation brought about by these intrusions has altered or destroyed the traditional economic and social practices of many of the indigenous groups. These practices have been called "development aggression" because they lead to the loss of ancestral lands, dislocation of communities, destruction of traditional ways of life, economic impoverishment and political marginalization.

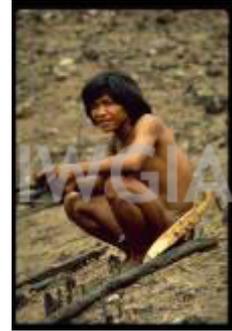
Although indigenous peoples are willing to try new market-oriented modes of livelihood for their immediate benefit, they see that much of the changes are imposed from above without their consent and participation, and are eroding their traditional ways of life and destroying their resources. Indigenous resistance to such impositions is often met with persecution and outright force, sometimes with token concessions.

Sources: Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Minority Rights Group

### The various indigenous groups

#### Cordillera (Northern Luzon)

The Cordillera peoples, also collectively known as *Igorot*, refer to the assemblage of indigenous groups living in the highlands, foothills and river valleys of the Cordillera mountain ranges of Northern Luzon. *Tingguian*, *Isneg* and *Northern Kalinga* are found in the watershed areas of the Abulag, Tineg, and Chico rivers. These groups are largely swidden cultivators who depend on farming rice, root crops, and vegetables. Along the slopes of Mount Data and nearby areas are the *Bontoc*, *Sagada*, *Ifugao*, and *Southern Kalinga*. They are mainly wet-rice cultivators who grow their crops both on irrigated terraces and swidden fields. The Ibaloi and



People: Buhid  
Photo: Christian Erni



People: Agta  
Photo: Christian Erni



People: Matigsalug  
Photo: Christian Erni

Kankanaey inhabit the southern region of the Cordillera and their subsistence economy is based on wet and dry agriculture. In more recent years, these groups have been integrated into the outside market economy with the growth of commercial gardening of temperate vegetables.

The following groups are found in the mountains, foothills and lowlands of Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino: *Itawes (Itawit)*, *Malaweg*, *Yogad*, *Gaddang/Gad'ang*, *Kalinga-Isabela*, *Isinay*, and *Bugkalot (Ilongot)*. All of them, with the exception of *Ilongot*, *Ivatan* and *Ga'dang*, are in an advanced state of assimilation into the national mainstream with substantial erosion of indigenous identity except language.

### North, Central and Southern Luzon

The main indigenous groups in these predominantly Tagalog and Bikol territories belong to the *Negrito* groups whose economies have depended on swidden agriculture, hunting and gathering, fishing, wage labour and trade. The *Negrito*, of which up to 25 major groups have been identified, are mostly distinguished by their Australoid physical features. They live in dispersed groups throughout the major islands, usually in the less-accessible forested areas. Pre-historians suggest that one migration stream (with groups now called *Alta*, *Arta*, *Agta*) settled the northern part of Luzon and moved down the eastern part, along the Sierra Madre and Pacific coast down to the Bondoc and Bicol mountains. Another branch (with groups now called *Aete*, *Ayta*, *Atta*, *Ita*, *Ati*, *Dumagat*, *Sinauna*) settled in western and southern Luzon, with larger populations now found in the Zambales-Bataan mountains and Southern Tagalog foothills, while others settled on Palawan (Batak), Panay, Negros and northern Mindanao (Mamanwa).

### Visayas

"Mangyan" is the collective term for indigenous groups in Mindoro, which are usually clustered into the *Northern Mangyan (Tadyawan, Alangan and Iraya)* and the *Southern Mangyan (Buhid, Taobuid and Hanunuo)*. A small group called *Bangon* is considered a branch of the *Taobuid*. Another small group, *Ratagnon* on Mindoro's southernmost tip, is closely related to the *Cuyonin* of Palawan. Generally, the *Mangyans* of Mindoro practise swidden agriculture combined with hunting, fishing, gathering and trade.

Several groups in Palawan may be considered as indigenous: the *Agutaynen*, *Tagbanwa (Kalamianen)*, *Palaw'an*, *Molbog*, *Batak* and *Tau't batu*. The *Cuyonin* no longer consider themselves an indigenous group, having long been assimilated into the mainstream culture. In some reports, the *Agutaynen*, *Tagbanwa* and *Kagayanen* are deemed already fully assimilated, although clearly some indigenous ways of life remain.

### Mindanao

The spread of Islam in Mindanao-Sulu created a differentiation among its native peoples between those who became Muslim (also called *Moro*) and those who did not (now called *Lumad*). There are nine major Islamized ethnic groups in the Mindanao-Sulu area (the *Maranaw*, *Maguindanao*, *Tausug*, *Yakan*, *Sama/Samal*, *Sangil*, *Iranun*, *Kalibugan* and *Kalagan*). The *Lumad*, or non-Moro indigenous peoples of Mindanao, are a complex patchwork of indigenous groups. The *Lumad* stress that they are different from the Moros and they do not recognize the Moros as being indigenous.

Depending on how groups are identified, the number of *Lumad* groups ranges from 15 to 21. To simplify, *Lumad* groups may be clustered into (a)



People: Buhid  
Photo: Christian Erni



People: Agta  
Photo: Christian Erni



People: Buhid  
Photo: Christian Erni

the *Manobo* cluster, (b) the *Bagobo-B'laan-T'boli-Tiruray* cluster, (d) the *Mandaya-Mansaka* cluster, (e) the *Subanen*, and (f) the *Mamanwa*. There is much inter-penetration among the groups, especially between the *Manobo*, *Bagobo* and *Mandaya*. For the most part, the indigenous peoples in Mindanao basically subsist through swidden and wet rice cultivation, hunting, fishing, gathering and the trade in locally manufactured items.

Sources: Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Asia Development Bank

#### Further information

Information about the different indigenous groups is available from the following websites:

National Commission for Culture and the Arts:

[www.ncca.gov.ph/about\\_cultarts/abtcultarts.php](http://www.ncca.gov.ph/about_cultarts/abtcultarts.php)

People Groups:

[www.peoplegroups.org/MapSearch.aspx?country=Philippines](http://www.peoplegroups.org/MapSearch.aspx?country=Philippines)

The Peoples of the World Foundation:

[www.peoplesoftheworld.org/the%20philippines.jsp](http://www.peoplesoftheworld.org/the%20philippines.jsp)

[http://litera1no4.tripod.com/phlplpl\\_frame.html](http://litera1no4.tripod.com/phlplpl_frame.html)

#### Self-organizing among the Indigenous Peoples

Before the 1960s, most indigenous groups were unorganized in the common understanding of the term sense even though they were tightly-knit as communities. By the 1960s, efforts by government and Church agencies resulted in formal indigenous peoples' organizations, mostly as conduits for dole-out benefits. With the worsening influx of destructive projects in the 1960-1980 period, many indigenous communities in Mindanao, Cordillera and elsewhere increasingly engaged in active self-organization and mass action. Thus, over the past two decades, many indigenous organizations throughout the country have been conducting campaigns for the defense of indigenous land, life and resources. Through these campaigns, indigenous communities held sustained protests, dialogues and lobbying work to pursue their demands. These campaigns have strengthened the capacity of indigenous peoples to defend their rights, and have generated public support for the indigenous peoples' cause from local to national and international levels.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, some indigenous joined armed separatist movements such as the Moro National Liberation Front and Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and into National Democratic Front-affiliated organizations such as the Moro Resistance and Liberation Organization and Cordillera Peoples Democratic Front. Others grew into broad legal movements for the defense of ancestral lands, recognition of indigenous peoples' rights, and against militarization. They now encompass local associations, regional alliances and other non-government groups among indigenous peoples, including advocacy institutions for human rights, socio-economic projects and education resources.



People: Buhid  
Photo: Christian Erni



People: Higaonon  
Photo: Christian Erni



People: Kankana'y  
Photo: Christian Erni

Click [here](#) to see a list of national, regional and local indigenous organizations.

## List of national, regional and local indigenous organizations

It has to be noted that the following list of organisations working with indigenous issues is not exhaustive.

### National indigenous peoples' formations

In 1983, leaders from the major indigenous groups gathered to form the Consultative Assembly of Minority Peoples of the Philippines (CAMPP). In 1987, several regional indigenous organizations who were consistently active in CAMPP decided to transform this regular gathering into the Kalipunan ng mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas (KAMP, Federation of Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines). KAMP remains one of the broadest national alliances of indigenous groups in the country, encompassing 15 regional indigenous peoples formations.

In December 1994, PLANT (Pambansang Lupon ng mga Nakatatanda sa Tribu; National Council of Tribal Elders), a new national IP federation was created during the First Congress of PANLIPI's Council of Elders. Naturally, most of its members were (and still are) partners of PANLIPI (many at the same time under the Catholic Church's Tribal Filipino Apostolate). PLANT does not appear to be very active these days.

Another national formation is the Koalisyon ng Katutubong Samahan sa Pilipinas formation, KKASAPI (National Coalition of Indigenous organizations in the Philippines) which was established in October 1997. KKASAPI was instrumental in lobbying for the passage of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) and lobbying the Supreme Court to uphold the constitutionality of IPRA. Its programme is on empowerment and strengthening of its local indigenous organizations, advocacy for IPRA and scholarship for indigenous youth.

The Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Watch was established in January 2006 and is a cooperation between Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA), Kalipunan ng mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas (KAMP, Federation of Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines), Cordillera Peoples Legal Center (DINTEC) and Kusog sa Katawhang Lumad sa Mindanao (KALUMARAN).

National Confederation of Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines (NCIPP) was active in the late 1990s, but appears inactive at present. A few national indigenous organizations have been reported as working closely with the Philippine government, namely, the Association of Tribal Councils of the Philippines (ATCP) and Tribal Communities Association of the Philippines (TRICAP).

### Northern and Central Luzon indigenous organizations

**Cordillera:** Cordillera Peoples Alliances (CPA) is a broad formation including 130 community based indigenous organizations clustered into provincial chapters and sectoral groupings. **Cagayan Valley:** Cagayan Agta Association (CAA) in Cagayan; Didipio Earth Savers Movement Association (DESAMA) in Nueva Vizcaya. **Central Luzon:** Central Luzon Aytas Association (CLAA); Pederasyon ng mga Aytang Samahan sa Sambales (PASS) in Sambales.

### Southern Luzon and Mindoro-Palawan indigenous organizations

**Southern Luzon:** Bigkis at Lakas ng Katutubo sa Timog Katagalugan (BALATIK), covering Southern Tagalog and Mindoro; Makabayang Samahan ng Dumagat-Rizal (MASKADA-Rizal) in Rizal province. **Mindoro:** Kapulungan ng mga Mangyan para sa Lupaing Ninuno (KPLN); Samahan ng Nagkakaisang

Mangyan Alangan (SANAMA); Sadik Habana Buhid. *Palawan*: Nagkakaisang Mga Tribu ng Palawan (NATRIPAL).

### Visayas indigenous organizations

NOFETRICOM - Negros Occidental Federation of Tribal Communities; TUMANDUK (Tumanduk nga Nagapangapin sa Duta kag Kabuhi Inc.) in Panay.

### Mindanao-wide, regional Lumad alliances

*Mindanao-wide*: Alyansa sa mga Lumad sa Mindanao (Mindanao Lumad Alliance); PANAGTAGBO (Council of Lumad tribal leaders); Kusog sa Katawhang Lumad sa Mindanao (KALUMARAN, Alliance of Indigenous Peoples in Mindanao); Lumad Mindanaw Peoples Federation. *Regional alliances*: Confederation of Lumad Organizations in Southern Mindanao (PASAKA); Kalumbay Northern Mindanao; Kahogpongong sa Lumadnong Organisasyon (KASALO) in Caraga region; Alyansa sa mga Lumad sa Habagatang Mindanao (ALUHAMAD); Kahogpongong Lumad sa Halayong Habagatang Mindanao (KALUHHAMIN) in Soccsksargen; Kahugpungan sa Mag-uumang Lumad (KAMLU) - South Cotabato, Sarangani. Silingang Dapit sa Sidlakang Amihang Mindanao (SIDLAP-SIDLAKAN); Apo Sandawa Lumadnong Panaghiusa - Cotabato. Timuway Justice and Governance (TJG).

### Lumad group-specific and area-specific organizations

*Manobo*: Agtulawon Mintapod Higaonon Cumadon (AGMIHICU); Bukidnon: Kibalagon, Kisanday, Narikdukan Manobo-Talaandig Tribal Association; San Luis Bukidnon Native Farmers; Southern Bukidnon Lumadnong Kahugpungan Alang sa Kalambuan; Natulinan (Matigsalog Tribe of Bukidnon), Nasavaka'n Tarigunay't Bukidnon do't Kalindaan (NATABUK) in Manobo-Pulangi; Tunay to Matisalog to Malabog (TUMAMA); Salugpungan Ta' Tanu Igkanugon - Talaingod; Trento Manobo Ancestral Domain Development Organization (TREMADDO); Southern Bukidnon Tribal Council (SBTC); Alliance of Banwaon Peoples' Organizations (TAGDUMAHAN). *Bagobo*: T'boli Ancestral Domain Foundation; Tribal Community of Esperanza Association (Sultan Kudarat); Organization of Teduray Lambangian Conference; United Bagobo Association. *Subanon*: Salabukan Nok G'taw Subanen (SGS); Pig Salabukan Nog Bansang Subanen (PBS); Balai Danggawan nok Subanen (BADASU); Gukom sog Pito Kubogulan (Zamboanga del Norte); Siocon Subanon Association Inc. (SSAI); Siocon Federation of Subanon Tribal Councils (SFSTC); Tumaned Pusaka Subannen dig Midsayap (TUPUSUMI); Western Zamboanga Peninsular Subanon Association (WEZPESAI); Zamboanga Peninsula Women Association Inc.; Subanen Professional Association. *Mamanwa*: Mamanwa Tribal Community. Matigsalog: Federation of Matigsalog-Manobo Tribal Councils (FEMMATRICS).