

## People Empowerment an approach toward indigenous early childhood curriculum

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### Abstrak

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This paper is aimed at presenting an implemented community engagement of the University of San Carlos School of Education with the communities of Agusan del Sur, Philipines, in close partnership with the Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation IDC, (JPIC-IDC) Incorporated of Agusan del Sur as a response to a felt need in the early childhood education program of the province. In 2004, JPIC pooled together concerted resources from provincial and local government units, non-government organization and academe to create and develop a cul ture based curriculum guide for early childhood education that is appropriate and responsive to the needs of indigenous groups in Agusan del Sur, Southern Philippines. To address these needs, an ethnographic commu-nity engagement framework was utilized and initiated by JPIC IDC team and the University Of San Carlos School Of Education. The community engagement framework facilitated the partnership of Agusan del Sur government leaders, a non government organization in Germany, community cultural masters, Day Care Teachers and the University of San Carlos School of Education to create a developmentally appropriate and culture-based cur-riculum for Day Care with a supporting handbook for mother teachers in early childhood education. As a result of this framework, children drop out decreased from 80% to 10% while parent community involvement in creased from 30% to 90% in 2009 (JPIC-IDC, 2007). Ongoing teacher trainings and community orientations on the culture-based curriculum have been extended to 42 additional communities in 2012-2018 from 35 com-munities in 2007 upon request from the provincial governor. Two editions of a culture-based handbook have been published and a third edition is currently prepared for District 2 communities with guided participation by Day Care teachers as co-authors. This community engagement framework, initiated by the Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation of Agusan del Sur Philipines involving all stakeholders from the provincial leaders to the recipients of early childhood education, serves as a model to community extension service programs (CES) of schools and universities as well as to curriculum practitioners and administrators. Three principles involved in this particular community engagement concretely demonstrate that program sustainability is a product of partnership, sensitivity to culture and context and relevance to community need