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- Provides need-based tertiary and advanced programs in Agriculture, Education and allied fields;
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Credibility and Integrity
Social Responsibility and Interfaith Dialogue
Collaboration and Shared Competence

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Project Title:

Legal Literacy Session for Subanen Youth: Empowering Subanen Leaders through Policy Advocacy and LGU Engagement Workshop

Implementing Unit:

J.H. Cerilles State College – School of Law
Clinical Legal Education Program (CLEP)

Target Community:

Subanen Community, Municipality of Lakewood, Zamboanga del Sur

Assessment Basis:

A Qualitative Study: Assessing the Legal Needs and Access to Justice of the Indigenous Peoples in Zamboanga del Sur Focusing the Subanen Community (June 2026)

I. INTRODUCTION

This Community Assessment Report presents the identified legal literacy, access-to-justice, and community engagement needs of the Subanen community in Lakewood, Zamboanga del Sur, which serve as the basis for the proposed extension project of the JHCSC School of Law–Clinical Legal Education Program. The assessment is primarily based on the findings and recommendations of the completed qualitative study entitled *A Qualitative Study: Assessing the Legal Needs and Access to Justice of the Indigenous Peoples in Zamboanga del Sur Focusing the Subanen Community*. The study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach and gathered data from selected Subanen community members through semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis.

The research specifically examined legal needs, awareness of rights, experiences in seeking justice, barriers to legal services, customary dispute resolution, and access to legal representation or assistance. Its scope was limited to selected Subanen participants in Lakewood and therefore does not claim to represent all Subanen communities in Zamboanga del Sur.

II. ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

1. Legal Literacy and Awareness

The research indicates that members of the Subanen community possess a basic awareness of certain legal rights, including awareness of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997. However, awareness does not always translate into a practical understanding of how these rights may be exercised, protected, or pursued through available legal remedies and government institutions.

Identified need:

A culturally responsive legal literacy program that translates basic legal concepts into practical and understandable information.

Extension response:

Legal Literacy Session for approximately 50 Subanen youth covering rights, remedies, documentation, government services, and appropriate legal referrals.



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2. Land, Documentation, and Civil Rights Concerns

Recurring concerns identified in the study included land disputes, informal inheritance practices, sale of ancestral lands, and inadequate documentation. These concerns demonstrate the importance of improving practical awareness of documentation, legal processes, and available institutional assistance.

Identified need:

Practical orientation on land-related concerns, documentation, basic civil rights, and where appropriate assistance may be obtained.

Extension response:

Case-based discussions and practical scenarios involving land, documentation, family/community concerns, and access to government services.

3. Barriers to Accessing Formal Legal Services

The study identified geographic isolation, transportation costs, financial constraints, limited legal literacy, procedural complexity, and limited availability of lawyers as significant barriers. Participants reported that obtaining legal services may require travel to Pagadian City or assistance through NCIP.

Identified need:

Greater awareness of available legal and government institutions and clearer pathways for obtaining assistance.

Extension response:

A "Where Can We Seek Help?" component identifying the appropriate roles of NCIP, LGU, IPMR, barangay officials, PAO, legal aid providers, and other relevant institutions.

4. Customary Justice and Formal Justice

The research found that the Timuay and community elders play a central role in customary dispute resolution. Participants generally regarded customary justice as accessible, culturally familiar, and focused on restoring community harmony. Serious offenses, however, are referred to formal authorities and courts.

Identified need:

Improved understanding of the relationship between customary and formal justice systems, including appropriate referral mechanisms.

Extension response:

Interactive discussions emphasizing respect for customary systems while clarifying situations requiring assistance or intervention from formal institutions.

5. Role of Community Leaders

The research highlighted the important role of Timuays and other community representatives in guiding community members and resolving disputes. It also identified an opportunity to strengthen their capacity to engage with formal legal institutions when addressing more complex concerns.



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Identified need:

Leadership development focused on communication with government institutions, issue articulation, advocacy, and referral.

Extension response:

Empowering Subanen Leaders: Policy Advocacy and LGU Engagement Workshop.

6. Youth Participation and Cultural Continuity

The research documented the strong cultural identity of the Subanen community while noting concerns involving modernization, discrimination, and declining participation of younger generations in traditional practices. The study specifically emphasized the importance of engaging both elders and youth in efforts to address cultural and structural gaps.

Identified need:

Meaningful youth participation in legal literacy, community affairs, and future leadership while respecting Subanen cultural identity and traditional leadership structures.

Extension response:

A youth-focused legal literacy activity integrating rights awareness, civic participation, practical scenarios, and culturally appropriate learning approaches.

7. Governance and Institutional Engagement

The research found that Subanen community members are generally consulted on matters affecting the tribe through meetings led by the Timuay, tribal councils, and Indigenous Peoples representatives. This indicates the existence of community participation mechanisms that can be further connected with formal government engagement.

Identified need:

Strengthening existing consultation mechanisms through informed and structured engagement with LGU and other government institutions.

Extension response:

Policy advocacy, stakeholder mapping, issue identification, and LGU engagement activities.

III. SUMMARY OF ASSESSED NEEDS

Identified Need	Evidence from Research	Proposed Extension Response
Legal literacy	Gaps in practical understanding of rights and remedies	Legal Literacy Session
IP rights awareness	Awareness of IPRA exists but practical application varies	IP rights orientation
Land/document tation concerns	Recurring land and documentation issues	Case-based legal discussions



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Access to legal services	Distance, cost, lack of lawyers, procedural complexity	Legal referral orientation
Customary/formal justice interface	Strong reliance on Timuay and elders	Customary-formal justice discussion
Youth engagement	Declining youth participation noted	Youth legal literacy and civic participation
Leadership capacity	Need to strengthen leaders' engagement with formal institutions	Policy Advocacy and LGU Workshop
Government engagement	Consultation occurs through Timuay, tribal councils, and IP representatives	LGU/stakeholder engagement
Institutional collaboration	Need for stronger government/legal institutional support	JHCSC-LGU-ADMO-NCIP collaboration

The overall assessment is consistent with the study's conclusion that improving legal literacy, institutional accessibility, collaboration between customary and formal legal frameworks, and the empowerment of community leaders and youth are important components of improving access to justice.

IV. PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE EXTENSION PROJECT

Based on the assessment, the project shall prioritize the following:

1. Basic and practical legal literacy;
2. Indigenous Peoples' rights and IPRA awareness;
3. Land, ancestral-domain, and documentation concerns;
4. Access to legal and government services;
5. Legal referral and appropriate institutional assistance;
6. Relationship between customary and formal justice;
7. Youth civic participation and leadership;
8. Community leadership and policy advocacy; and
9. Constructive engagement with LGU, NCIP, ADMO, and other institutions.

V. ASSESSMENT-TO-INTERVENTION MATRIX

Assessment Finding	Intervention	Expected Output
Limited practical legal knowledge	Youth Legal Literacy Session	Increased legal knowledge
Difficulty understanding procedures	Practical legal scenarios	Improved ability to identify appropriate action
Limited awareness of available institutions	Legal referral orientation	Improved knowledge of where to seek assistance
Recurring land/documentation concerns	Rights and documentation discussions	Increased awareness of proper processes
Strong customary justice system	Customary/formal justice dialogue	Better understanding of

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		appropriate referrals
Need to strengthen leaders' institutional engagement	Policy Advocacy Workshop	Community advocacy/action plans
Existing consultation mechanisms	LGU engagement	Strengthened community-government communication
Need for sustained collaboration	Stakeholder engagement	Strengthened institutional linkages

VI. CONCLUSION

The completed research provides a clear evidence base for a community-based legal literacy and empowerment intervention in Lakewood, Zamboanga del Sur. The findings demonstrate that the Subanen community possesses strong cultural identity, traditional leadership, and established customary justice practices, while also experiencing gaps in practical legal knowledge, access to formal legal assistance, documentation, and institutional accessibility.

Accordingly, the proposed extension project will not replace existing customary mechanisms. Rather, it will complement them by providing accessible legal education, strengthening awareness of formal legal and government services, empowering youth and community leaders, and facilitating constructive engagement with relevant institutions.

The assessment therefore supports the implementation of the two-part intervention: (1) Legal Literacy Session for Subanen Youth and (2) Policy Advocacy and LGU Engagement Workshop for Subanen Community Leaders.



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ANNEX A

COMMUNITY LEGAL LITERACY AND ACCESS-TO-JUSTICE ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

(For Extension Project Implementation and Evaluation)

Purpose

This questionnaire is intended to assess participants' self-reported legal knowledge, access-to-justice awareness, and learning needs before and after the extension activities. It is an extension evaluation instrument and is not intended to reproduce or alter the methodology or findings of the completed research study.

Instructions: Please check the response that best represents your answer.

Part I. Participant Information

- Participant Category:
 - ☐ Subanen Youth
 - ☐ Community Leader
 - ☐ Timuay/Traditional Leader
 - ☐ IP Representative/IPMR
 - ☐ Other: _____
- Age: _____
- Sex Assigned at Birth:
 - ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say
- Community/Barangay: _____

Part II. Legal Literacy Self-Assessment

Scale:

- 5 – Very Knowledgeable
- 4 – Knowledgeable
- 3 – Moderately Knowledgeable
- 2 – Slightly Knowledgeable
- 1 – Not Knowledgeable

Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1. I understand the basic rights of Indigenous Peoples.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I have basic knowledge of IPRA.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I understand the importance of legal documentation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I know where to seek help when a legal problem arises.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I understand the role of NCIP in protecting IP rights.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I understand the role of the LGU in providing relevant services.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I know when a matter may be referred to formal authorities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I understand the difference between customary and formal justice mechanisms.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I am familiar with basic procedures for seeking legal assistance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I feel confident communicating a legal concern to an appropriate institution.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



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Part III. Priority Legal Information Needs

Which topics would you like to learn more about?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Indigenous Peoples' rights/IPRA
- ☐ Ancestral domains and land concerns
- ☐ Land documentation
- ☐ Inheritance and family concerns
- ☐ Customary justice
- ☐ Formal legal procedures
- ☐ Government services
- ☐ NCIP services
- ☐ LGU services
- ☐ Legal aid/free legal assistance
- ☐ Barangay dispute resolution
- ☐ Human rights
- ☐ Youth rights and responsibilities
- ☐ Community leadership and advocacy
- ☐ Others, please specify: _____

Part IV. Access to Justice

1. If you have a legal concern, whom would you normally approach first?

- ☐ Timuay/Traditional Leader
- ☐ Family/Elder
- ☐ Barangay Official
- ☐ IPMR
- ☐ NCIP
- ☐ LGU
- ☐ Lawyer/Legal Aid Provider
- ☐ Police
- ☐ Court
- ☐ Others, please specify: _____

2. What factors may make it difficult to obtain legal assistance?

- ☐ Distance
- ☐ Transportation cost
- ☐ Legal fees
- ☐ Lack of information
- ☐ Lack of available lawyers
- ☐ Difficulty understanding procedures
- ☐ Documentation requirements
- ☐ Language/communication concerns
- ☐ Others, please specify: _____

3. What type of assistance would be most useful to your community?

- ☐ Legal literacy sessions
- ☐ Legal consultation/referral
- ☐ Documentation assistance
- ☐ Government-service orientation
- ☐ Leadership training



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- ☐ Policy advocacy training
- ☐ LGU/community dialogue
- ☐ Others, please specify: _____

Part V. Leadership and LGU Engagement

(For Community Leaders/Workshop Participants)

Rate each statement:

5 – Very High | 4 – High | 3 – Moderate | 2 – Low | 1 – Very Low

Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1. I understand the basic rights of Indigenous Peoples.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1. I can clearly identify community legal concerns.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I can communicate community concerns to government offices.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I understand the appropriate government institution for specific concerns.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I can participate in policy discussions affecting the community.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I can help develop an advocacy or community action plan.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I am confident engaging with LGU representatives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part VI. Open-Ended Questions

1. What legal issue or concern do you think should receive the most attention in your community?
2. What legal information do you think Subanen youth should know?
3. What support do community leaders need when dealing with government institutions?
4. What can the LGU, NCIP, and other institutions do to improve access to legal assistance?
5. What specific community action or advocacy initiative would you like to see developed?



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ANNEX B

PRE- AND POST-ACTIVITY KNOWLEDGE CHECK

1. Which law primarily recognizes and protects the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines?
A. Local Government Code
B. Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act
C. Civil Code
D. Family Code
2. Which institution is primarily concerned with the protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights?
A. NCIP
B. DepEd
C. DOH
D. TESDA
3. Who plays a central role in customary dispute resolution in the studied Subanen community?
A. Mayor
B. Judge
C. Timuay
D. Prosecutor
4. Which of the following may be a barrier to accessing formal legal assistance?
A. Transportation costs
B. Distance
C. Legal expenses
D. All of the above
5. Serious criminal offenses should be appropriately referred to:
A. Formal authorities
B. Only family members
C. Only community elders
D. No institution
6. Why is legal documentation important?
A. It may help establish and protect legal rights
B. It is never necessary
C. It replaces all customary practices
D. It is only required for government employees
7. Which is an appropriate purpose of community-LGU engagement?
A. To suppress customary leadership
B. To communicate community concerns and identify appropriate support
C. To avoid government institutions
D. To replace tribal councils
8. Legal literacy primarily means:
A. Memorizing all Philippine laws
B. Understanding relevant rights, responsibilities, procedures, and available remedies
C. Becoming a lawyer
D. Avoiding formal institutions
9. Which approach is most consistent with the extension project?
A. Replacing customary justice
B. Integrating culturally responsive legal education with appropriate formal referral
C. Ignoring traditional leaders
D. Limiting participation to government officials



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10. Community leaders can contribute to access to justice by:
 - A. Identifying concerns and facilitating appropriate referrals and institutional engagement
 - B. Deciding every legal case themselves
 - C. Preventing community members from seeking assistance
 - D. Avoiding government institutions



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ANNEX C

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FORM

Please rate the activity using the following scale:

5 – Excellent | 4 – Very Good | 3 – Good | 2 – Fair | 1 – Poor

Evaluation Area	5	4	3	2	1
Relevance of topics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Clarity of presentations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Usefulness of activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Practicality of examples	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cultural appropriateness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunity for participation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Knowledge gained	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Facilitator effectiveness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall usefulness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What was the most useful part of the activity?

What topic should be discussed further?

What recommendation do you have for future activities?



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ANNEX D

DOCUMENTATION AND MONITORING CHECKLIST

(For attachment to the terminal extension report)

- ☐ Approved project proposal
- ☐ Attendance sheets
- ☐ Participant profile
- ☐ Pre-activity knowledge assessment
- ☐ Post-activity knowledge assessment
- ☐ Participant evaluation forms
- ☐ Workshop outputs/community action plans
- ☐ Stakeholder/agency participation records
- ☐ Photographs of activities
- ☐ Copies of training materials
- ☐ Certificates, if applicable
- ☐ Minutes/documentation of LGU or stakeholder engagement
- ☐ Consolidated assessment results
- ☐ Accomplishment/terminal report
- ☐ Recommendations for continuing engagement