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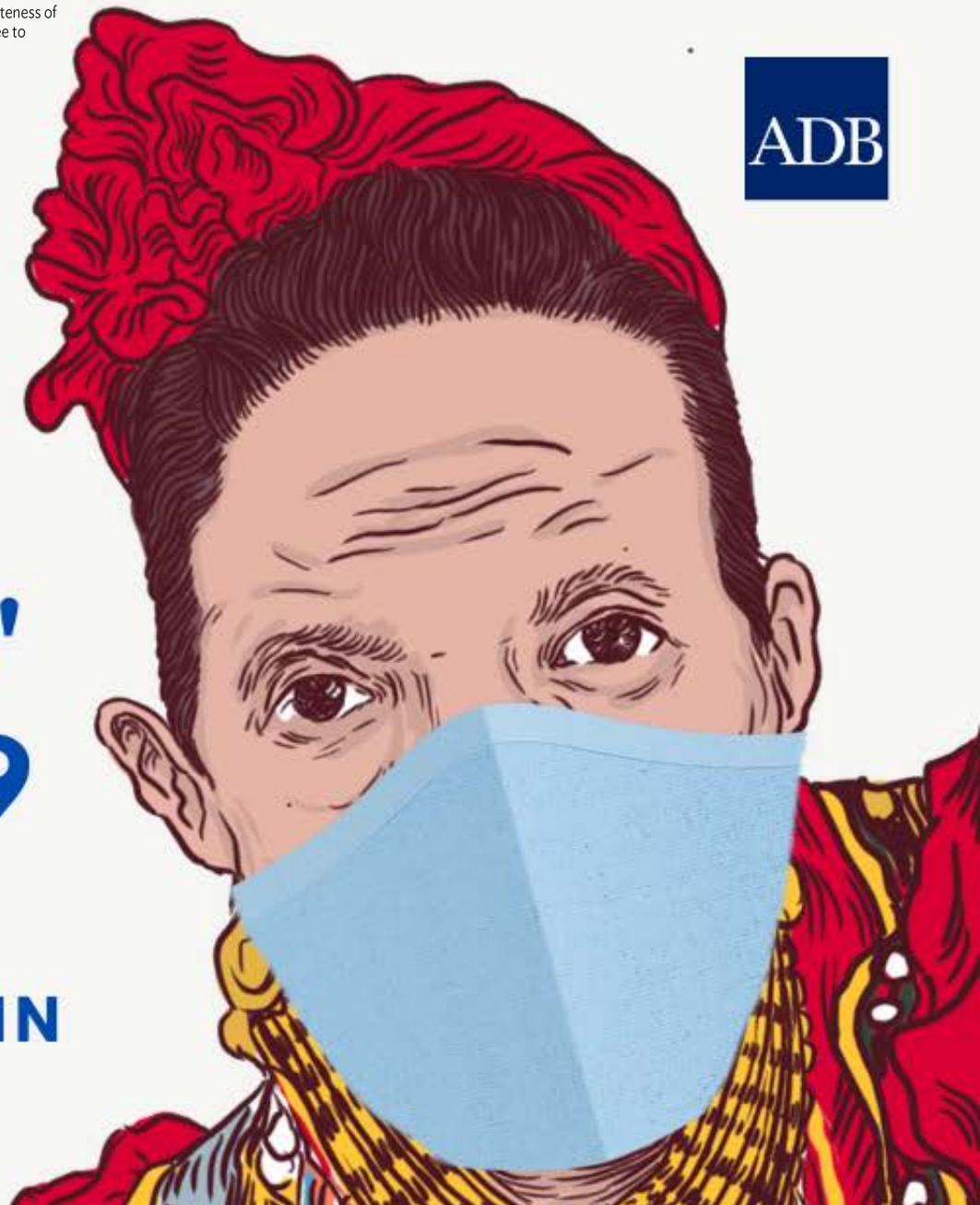


*Webinar 2*

# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' HEALTH AND COVID-19 PANDEMIC

## EMERGING AND ONGOING ISSUES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

A Webinar Series





# The Current Health Situation of Indigenous Peoples in Asia

**Jaime Z. Galvez Tan, MD, MPH**  
Chairman, Health Futures Foundation



*“The COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately affecting indigenous peoples, exacerbating underlying structural inequalities and pervasive discrimination.”*

- UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights,  
29 June 2020

- Limited access to **health care** or medical support
- Limited **health services and information** that are culturally and linguistically accessible
- Lack of access to **safe water** (subsequently, sanitation) due to land dispossession, excessive extraction, pollution, weak water governance structure, and climate change
- Lack of **social protection** (e.g., bureaucratic procedures leading to exclusion; rights of those working in the informal sector)



## Other Underlying Structural Inequalities and Pervasive Discrimination (Lao PDR, Kazakhstan, Philippines)

- Indigenous Peoples dominated by leaders coming from the lowlands practicing the dominant religion; using the dominant language
- Geographical boundaries are politically decided by convenience vs boundaries determined by ethnolinguistic language and culture
- National health insurance programs discriminate by requiring Indigenous Peoples to show marriage/birth certificates prior to becoming beneficiaries
- Indigenous Peoples totally relegated from any political decision making and governance (national and local level)



## Common Positive Traits of Indigenous Peoples

- Deep attachment to the land and natural environment
- Close family and community ties (kinship)
- Presence of traditional community mechanisms for care and support
- Council of elders (traditionally males) as decision-making body; elders as guardians of indigenous knowledge.
- Reclusiveness especially among those in the hinterlands
- A worldview about achieving or restoring balance -- Problems as reflections of imbalances in the world in various realms: community, environmental, spiritual.



## Community IP Practices Relevant to COVID-19

### *Kalinga/Ifugao/Bontocs of the Cordilleras, Philippines*

- “Ubaya” or “tengao” or closing off the community - done annually after cropping, and carried over to times of epidemics or other disasters.
- “Binnadang” or “ub-ubbo” - a collective and unwritten initiative to extend one’s labor and strength for the good of the community.
- Rituals to divine omens and invoke the supreme being to ward off disease and protect the community.



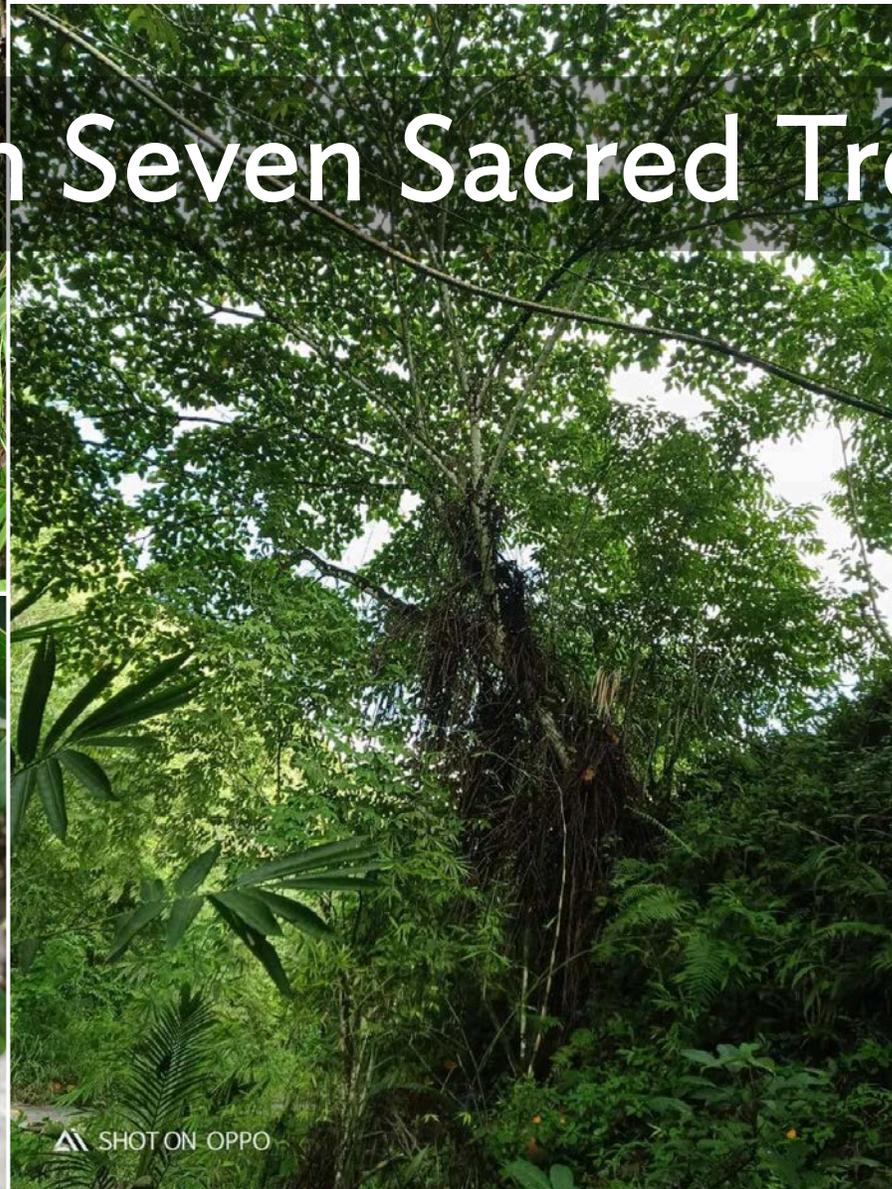
## Community IP Practices Relevant to COVID-19

### *Blaans of South Central Mindanao, Philippines*

- “Guflunos”: self-quarantine for healing; a sick person isolates him/herself from the community, eating only fruits and vegetables until he gets well
- “Fales”: a washing ritual done after an illness; clothes or anything old from the past are placed in the river to be carried away by the current; hands and feet are washed in the river (a body bath is optional) as the final act of cleansing
- “Sfuk”: an act of ceremonial cleansing using aromatic leaves dipped in water, often performed when visitors enter the community



# Blaan Seven Sacred Trees





# Blaan Centenarians

SHOT ON OPPO





Blaan Nurse & Midwives Scholars



Blaan Birthing Center

