



*Press Release*  
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## **CHED expands financial assistance to IPs in Nueva Vizcaya**

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) continues to expand access to quality higher education by providing additional financial assistance to students belonging to indigenous peoples (IPs) in the province of Nueva Vizcaya.

CHED Chairman J. Prospero E. De Vera III visited Nueva Vizcaya recently in his continuing “Listening Tour” entitled “Pannakisarita” (dialogue) with the students, faculty and staff of higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Cagayan Valley and took the opportunity to award additional Tulong Dunong benefits to 150 members of IPs identified by village elders and communities in the region.

The Tulong Dunong program grants a P15,000 per year stipend to qualified students who are currently enrolled in universities and colleges and whose family income is below P300,000 per year.

The Tulong Dunong stipend is given in addition to Free Higher Education (FHE) in state universities and colleges (SUCs). Students use this stipend for other school needs such as books, transportation and other class requirements.

"Education is a powerful tool for individual empowerment that enables IP students to improve their employability, help their families and communities, and become productive citizens as we modernize our country. This is why we are going the extra mile by helping these students complete their education," De Vera said.

Embraced by the mountain ranges of the Cordillera, Caraballo, and Sierra Madre, Nueva Vizcaya is home to 18 groups of IPs which include the major tribes of Ifugaos, Gaddangs, Isinai, Dumagats, Kalanguyas, and Bugkalots.

A total of 58,322 students in Region 2 are currently enjoying FHE through public universities like Cagayan State University, Isabela State University, Batanes State University, and Nueva Vizcaya State University. In Nueva Vizcaya alone, there are 9,643 students who get free education. In addition to FHE, there are 1,669 Tertiary Education (TES) grantees and 1,135 Tulong Dunong grantees from the province.

The additional Tulong Dunong beneficiaries awarded by De Vera are financially needy students enrolled in public and private universities but are not included in the

Listahanan 2.0 of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and therefore do not qualify for the TES. Some of these grantees come from the following IP groups: Bugkalot, Ga'dang, Ibaloi, Ifugao, Ikalahan/Kalanguya, Iwak, Kankaney.

By continuing to identify and give Tulong Dunong to financially needy IP students, “CHED will ensure that access and equity to quality higher education will be felt even in the smallest municipalities and cities in the country. This is our mission under the Duterte administration,” De Vera said.

De Vera also took the opportunity in the Pannakisarita to meet the educational stakeholders in the region to hear problems on the ground, and to explain government programs such as the Universal Access to Quality Higher Education Law (UAQTE) or Republic Act 10931, the promotion of faculty members under NBC 461, and other initiatives to improve Philippine higher education.



**J. PROSPERO E. DE VERA III, DPA**

*Chairman*

Commission on Higher Education