

PRIME Program

Six Monthly Progress Report

July - December 2011

Philippines' Response to
Indigenous Peoples' and
Muslim Education (PRIME)
Program

15 January 2012

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Acronyms and Abbreviations¹

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao
BESMEF	Basic Education Sector Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
BESRA	Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda
BEST	Basic Education Sector Transformation
CEIP	Community Education Improvement Plan
CO	Central Office
COA	Commission on Audit
CO-EC	Central Office – Evaluation Committee
CO-PIP	Central Office Program Implementation Plan
CSEIP	Community-School Education Improvement Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DEDP	Division Education Development Plan
DepED	Department of Education
DO	Division Office
EDGE	Enhancing Disadvantaged Groups' Education
EDPITAF	Educational Development Projects Implementation Task Force
EFA	Education for All
EoPOs	Expected End-of-Program Outcomes
GAA	General Appropriations Act
GAD	Gender and Development
GMIS	Grants Management Information System
GoA	Government of Australia
GoP	Government of the Republic of the Philippines
GPIDA	Gender, Poverty Inclusion and Disability Awareness
GRM	GRM International
IAC	Information, Advocacy and Communications Plan
IPRA	Indigenous Peoples Rights Act
IPs	Indigenous Peoples
IPsEO	Indigenous Peoples Education Office
IP/M	Indigenous Peoples/Muslim
KRT	Key Reform Thrust
LOA	Letter of Award
LGU	Local Government Unit
MC	Managing Contractor
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
ME	Muslim Education
MEFP	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Plan
MEPA	Monitoring, Evaluation and Plan Adjustment
MIPE	Muslim and Indigenous Peoples' Education
MOVs	Means of Verification
MSA	Memorandum of Subsidiary Agreement
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NCBTS	National Competency-Based Training Standards
NEDA	National Economic Development Authority
NGO	Non-government Organization
OSA	Out-of-school Adult
OSC	Out-of-school Children

¹ Applies to the Narrative and to Annexes that do not have a separate list of Acronyms

OSY	Out-of-school Youth
OPS	Office of Planning Service
PDD	Project Design Document
PDED	Program Development and Evaluation Division
PMIS	Program Management Information System
PO	Peoples' Organization
PPD	Programming and Planning Division
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PRIME	Philippines' Response to Indigenous Peoples' and Muslim Education
REDP	Regional Education Development Plan
RAD	Rapid Assessment on Disability
RFT	Request for Tender
RO	Regional Office
RO-EC	Regional Office – Evaluation Committee
RPIPs	Regional Program Implementation Plans
SBM	School-based Management
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMPR	Six Monthly Progress Report
TNA	Training Needs Analysis

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose, Scope and Coverage of the SMPR

The 1st Six-Monthly Progress Report (SMPR) of the Philippines' Response to Indigenous Peoples' and Muslim Education (PRIME) Program covers the period 1 July to 31 December 2011. The SMPR aims to review progress of program implementation, in terms of: i) accomplishing physical outputs planned for the period; ii) progress towards achieving end-of-program outcomes (EoPOs); iii) status of PRIME support to the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA); and iv) status of Financial Performance.

1.2 Features of the PRIME SMPR

The SMPR has the following features:

- a. **Employs the learning-process approach and strategy.** The SMPR is a program milestone that is the accountability and responsibility of the Managing Contractor, but PRIME uses it as an avenue and opportunity to enhance the skills of the Department of Education (DepEd) in 'intermediate and above-the-line' progress monitoring (with an emphasis on the achievement of outputs and outcomes). It enables DepED to appreciate the link of progress monitoring done during the regular quarterly Monitoring, Evaluation and Plan Adjustments (MEPA) that focused on activities and highlights with the achievement of the planned end-of-program outcomes. Thus, the SMPR integrates participatory processes and a learning-by-doing approach.
- b. **Used as a platform for the application of guiding principles and approaches in PRIME Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) such as:** i) alignment to DepED M&E and capacity-building; ii) managing for results; iii) sustainability; iv) balancing learning and accountability; v) simplicity and practicality; vi) appropriate approach to Indigenous Peoples' (IP) and Muslim Communities; vii) integration of gender, poverty, inclusiveness and disability awareness (GPIDA) considerations.
- c. **Involves three major steps:**

Step 1: Pre-work. Includes meetings and consultations where the PRIME presents the 'learning process approach/strategy' and agree with DepED on the processes involved, content of the SMPR, specific roles of the DepED in this milestone. The tools and instruments used in data gathering are also discussed and DepED is provided guidance in the facilitation of data gathering/validation workshops.

Step 2: Actual Work that Engages DepED. The workshop aims to ensure quality data is obtained to inform the SMPR as well as: i) engage DepED's Central Office (CO) and Regional Offices (ROs) in the data gathering and validation; and ii) model actual progress monitoring in a program. The activity provides an opportunity for validation of the outputs and outcomes identified early on in the program. DepED's CO, particularly the key staff of the Office of Planning Service (OPS), is responsible for the facilitation of the workshop sessions.

Step 3: Post-Work. Immediately following the data gathering workshop, DepED and PRIME jointly undertake consolidation, processing and analysis of the results of the data gathering. This post-work will also allow for the drafting of the report which PRIME/GRM refines.
- d. **Use of SMPR Guide and Tools.** PRIME has developed a comprehensive SMPR Guide and Tools to provide information on the key elements, key questions, information/data requirements and tools/instruments. This guide also provided the format of the SMPR to be used throughout the duration of the program.

e. ***The SMPR Review focused on the following key areas:***

- ***Quantitative Information***, specifically on the status of:
 - Progress in accomplishing planned outputs for the period;
 - Progress towards achieving End-of-Program Outcomes (EoPOs);
 - Status of Financial Performance;
 - Progress in Supporting BESRA; and
 - Progress of Program Strategies, Operational Plans and Manuals
- ***Qualitative Information, such as:***
 - Significant Observations and Issues
 - Facilitating and Hindering Factors and Lessons Learned
 - Major Recommendations and Possible Adjustments to Implementation Approaches
 - Plans for the Next Six-Month Period

2 Activity Description

2.1 Program Background

The PRIME Program was designed to improve equitable access to and quality of basic education for girls and boys in disadvantaged Muslim and Indigenous Peoples' (IPs) communities – citing that many of these communities continue to be underserved with respect to the provision of basic education services. The PRIME Program is intended to build upon and scale up throughout the country the support activities for Muslim and IP education that were developed as part of the Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao (BEAM) project that concluded in 2009. The PRIME Program is viewed by the Department of Education (DepED) as a significant contributor to the implementation of the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA) – the package of policy reform to assist DepED in meeting its international commitments of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). In particular, the PRIME Program is intended to focus on MDG Goal 2 – Universal access to quality primary education.

Initial discussions between the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and DepED began in the latter part of 2008 to design the PRIME Program under the title “Enhancing Disadvantaged Groups’ Education” (EDGE). The discussions resulted in the preparation of the DepED’s proposal, the “Philippines’ Response to Indigenous Peoples’ and Muslim Education” (PRIME) in September 2009. The AusAID’s Request for Tender (RFT) was issued on 18 September 2010.

The PRIME Program was designed to cover seven Regions as reflected in the original contract between AusAID and the Managing Contractor (MC), GRM International. However, during the mobilisation, DepED requested for AusAID to include two additional Regions – which had been part of the original design submitted by DepED to the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA). AusAID approved the request of DepED, thus, the two additional Regions were included in early April 2011.

2.2 Goal, Objectives and Component Descriptions

Through the consultative process with DepED, there have been adjustments to the phrasing of the program goal and objective that were originally provided in the Request for Tender (RFT) and contract. The revised goal statement did not change the ‘intent’, but rather provided additional clarification. The revised statements provide direction in implementation planning process, guide program activities and inform revisions to the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Plan (MEFP).

The revised goal statement of the PRIME Program is: ***To improve the quality of, and equity in, basic learning outcomes in disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities.***

The original objective statement in the RFT included two statements (essentially two objectives). To provide better guidance for planning and implementation and for effective monitoring and evaluation, these two statements were separated as two distinct objectives. This approach also more clearly articulates the demand and supply side dynamics underpinning educational quality and access. The two objectives are stated as follows:

1. *Enable DepED to provide better access to an appropriate, policy driven, sustainable and quality education for girls and boys in Muslim and IPs communities.*
2. *Stimulate demand for education services from IP and Muslim communities.*

In the previous documents, the term ‘component’ primarily reflected the “demand-supply” equation as follows:

- i) **Component 1: Supporting the Demand Side:** Attract IPs and Muslim children to school and keep them in school;
- ii) **Component 2: Supporting the Supply Side:** Enable DepED to address access and quality issues in basic education in disadvantaged IPs and Muslim communities; and
- iii) **Component 3: GoP Management and Monitoring Capacity Building Support** was directed to supporting DepED at all levels to enable it to efficiently and effectively manage the Program and other initiatives that seek to improve the delivery of basic education services to disadvantaged IPs and Muslim groups.

In discussions with DepED, the ‘demand-supply’ equation appeared to reflect more of an implementation principle or approach rather than a useful way of organizing the program work outputs. The use of the word ‘component’ for the program has been adjusted from the RFT and the Inception Plan and was included in the Annual Plan to better reflect the implementation approach DepED wishes to use. The re-organized components are:

Component 1: *Indigenous People’s Education*

Component 2: *Muslim Education*

Component 3: *Capability-Building and Institutional Strengthening*

Component 4: *Program Management and Administration*

2.3 ***Expected End-of-Program Outcomes (EoPOs)***

The Annual Plan presented eleven EoPOs for the supply-side and nine for the demand side (See **ANNEX A**. The revisions on the MEFP, which was annexed to the first Annual Plan, provided direction for the review and validation of the EoPOs. The revision process also provided an opportunity to assess the EoPOs against four (4) criteria: i) Alignment to the goal and objectives; ii) Significance and relevance; iii) Measurable; and iv) Achievable.

As part of the SMPR preparation, DepED organized another review and validation of the EoPOs. While maintaining the “demand-supply” equation as its basis for restating the EoPOs, the revision resulted in: i) reducing the number of EoPOs to one each for the supply and demand sides; ii) adding an enabling EoPO that cuts across both the demand and supply sides; and iii) adding process indicators for the EoPOs. The revised EoPOs and corresponding process indicator are as follows:

Demand-Side Outcome: *Increased demand for educational services in disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities.*

Process Indicator: Tested models of structures, system, and mechanisms for increased multi-stakeholder demand for improved access among IP and Muslim groups to culturally appropriate basic education.

Supply-side Outcome: DepED continuously providing better education services and access to responsive, policy-driven and quality inclusive education in disadvantaged IP/Muslim communities.

Process Indicator 1: System and mechanisms in place to enable review, analysis, formulation and implementation of policies to support inclusive IP and Muslim education.

Process Indicator 2: System for planning, budgeting and program implementation that is responsive to the demands of disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities.

Process Indicator 3: System in place for gathering feedback on the delivery of basic education services for disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities.

Enabling Outcome: Positive changes in the attitudes and perceptions among internal and external stakeholders towards, a) IP and Muslim identity and cultures; and b) IP and Muslim education.

2.4 Validated “Menu of Outputs”

The Project Design Document (PDD) provided a ‘menu of outputs’ which were intended to guide the direction of the program without being prescriptive or dictating what the outputs of the program ought to be. There were several reasons for this approach: i) the absence of sufficient data/information to inform the identification of outputs; ii) recognition that the program was to serve as support to current and future DepED initiatives so flexibility was needed in deciding which outputs were important; and, iii) commitment to the program in serving the ‘demand-side’ of the education equation wherein it would be difficult to pre-determine outputs without additional information as to the actual needs that will emerge.

Through consultations within each of the nine (9) Regions, with the Programming and Planning Division (PPD), the Program Development and Evaluation Division (PDED) of the Office of Planning Service (OPS) and through the planning sessions during the three quarterly Monitoring, Evaluation and Plan Adjustment (MEPA) workshops in June, September and December 2011, a ‘menu of outputs’ was identified and validated (See **ANNEX B**). While additional information from the Baseline Survey may reveal the need for additional outputs or revisions to existing outputs, the intent is for the PRIME Regions and Divisions to select from the ‘menu’ the specific outputs based on identified needs and to focus the implementation of the program in accomplishing outputs that are relevant to the requirements of the specific location.

The result is the preparation of the Central Office Program Implementation Plan (COPIP) and nine (9) Regional Program Implementation Plans (RPIPs) developed by the DepED-CO and the nine (9) Regional Offices. The approach to planning the COPIP and RPIPs recognizes the principles of decentralization of educational management - aligned with the direction provided for in the Republic Act 9155 – Governance of Basic Education (2001).

3 Review of Program Implementation

3.1 Implementation Progress to Date

3.1.1 Status of Accomplishing Physical Outputs

As of 31 December 2011, against a time elapsed period of 23% of the total program duration of 39 months, the program has accomplished three (3) major outputs and have implemented various activities leading to the achievement of fourteen (14) out of twenty (20) outputs that were included in the validated ‘menu of outputs’. The three (3) outputs that have been accomplished are:

- a. **Output 1.1** – IP Policy and Strategies Adopted at the CO and RO level in nine (9) PRIME Regions. Full implementation of the Region-specific action plans is yet to commence.

- b. **Output 4.1** - Planning System Operationalized – (1) CO-PIP and nine (9) Regional Implementation Plans (RPIPs) were prepared – although quality remains an issue.
- c. **Output 4.3** – Financial Systems for GoA and GoP Funds installed.

Component outputs reported as 'ongoing' are those that are being accomplished through activities that are at various stages of implementation. These are:

Component 1: Indigenous Peoples' Education

- a. **Output 1.2** - School Improvement Plans (SIP) Enhanced and Community Education Improvement Plans (CEIP) Developed
- b. **Output 1.3** - Curriculum, Instructional Guides and Learning Materials Indigenized and Adopted
- c. **Output 1.4** - Education and Training Programs for IP/Non-IP Teachers Developed/Enhanced
- d. **Output 1.7** - Access Programs in Selected IP Communities Designed and Implemented
- e. **Output 1.8** - Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Program/Mechanisms on IP Education Developed and Established

Component 2: Muslim Education

- a. **Output 2.1** - Existing policy on Muslim Education (ME) Reviewed and Curriculum Enhanced
- b. **Output 2.2** - Community-School Education Improvement Plans (CSEIP) Developed and Enhanced

Component 3: Capability Building and Institutional Strengthening

- a. **Output 3.1** - Training Needs Analysis (TNA) Developed and Conducted
- b. **Output 3.2** - Training Program for the 3 Program Components Developed and Implemented

Component 4. Program Administration and Management

- a. **Output 4.2** - Coordination & Communication Systems Installed & Operationalized
- b. **Output 4.4** - Monitoring and Evaluation System Developed & Operationalized
- c. **Output 4.5** - M&E Reports and Operational M&E System Installed and Operationalized
- d. **Output 4.6** – Program Management and Administration

Details of the status of the planned outputs are presented in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: STATUS OF PLANNED OUTPUTS AS OF END DECEMBER 2011

Physical Outputs targeted for the Period July – December 2011		Progress (Accomplished/On-Going)	Status
Output Code	Name of Output		
Component 1: Indigenous Peoples' Education			
1.1	IPP Policy and Strategies Adopted	Accomplished. The CO and of the nine (9) Regions adopted DepED Order #62, s. 2011 Adopting the National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy Framework in nine (9) Regions	CO and RO-specific Action Plans for implementation still prepared.
	IPP Policy and Strategies Implemented	Implementation is Ongoing. CO and Regions will prepare action plans.	

Physical Outputs targeted for the Period July – December 2011		Progress (Accomplished /On-Going)	Status
Output Code	Name of Output		
1.2	School Improvement Plans (CEIP/SIP) Developed/ Enhanced	Ongoing DepED ROs and DOs continue to conduct series of consultations with internal and external stakeholders to formulate guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines for the SIP and CEIP is not yet crafted
1.3	Curriculum, Instructional Guides and Learning Materials Indigenized and Adopted	Ongoing with consultations started in some Regions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forum on knowledge sharing related to Curriculum, Instructional Guides already conducted but consultations are still continuing in the two clusters
1.4	Education and Training Programs for IP/Non-IP Teachers Enhanced	Ongoing Development of tools for assessing needs and actual situation commenced.	
1.7	Design and Implementation of Access Programs in Selected IP Communities	Ongoing with the design of needs assessment tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community selection process still in progress in some Divisions Determination of requirements in communities ongoing
1.8	Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Program on IP Education Established	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapping of stakeholders had to be completed and initiated in some instances

Component 2: Muslim Education

2.1	Existing Policy on Muslim Education Reviewed and Existing Curriculum Enhanced	Ongoing. Initial need assessment and planning next steps done.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities for this were rescheduled due to natural disaster in Mindanao
2.2	Community-School Education Improvement Plans (CSEIP) Developed	Ongoing. Consultations commenced in some Regions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines for the CSEIP not yet

Component 3: Capability-Building and Institutional Strengthening

3.1	TNA developed and conducted	On-going. TNA tools are now being developed	
3.2	Training program for three (3) program components developed and implemented	On-going. Some activities to support the accomplishment of physical outputs in C.1, C.2 and C.4 commenced	

Component 4: Program Management and Administration

4.1	Planning System & Operationalization	Accomplished. One (1) COPIP and Nine (9) RPIPS developed, reviewed and adjusted	
4.2	Coordination and Communication Systems & Operations	Ongoing. Governance & Implementation arrangements, institutional set-ups and Information, Advocacy & Communication activities are implemented.	
4.3	Financial Management System	Accomplished. Applicable GoA and GoP Financial Management Systems Installed and Adopted.	
4.4	M&E System Implementation	Partially accomplished the revision of the MEFP but needing further revalidation with DepED due to matters arising from the final review.	

Ongoing Implementation

Physical Outputs targeted for the Period July – December 2011		Progress (Accomplished /On-Going)	Status
Output Code	Name of Output		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ M&E Framework and Plan undergoing revalidation ▪ Capacity Assessment for DepED key personnel done for the ROs and DOs; CO assessment to follow ▪ Initial capability-building and training activities implemented ▪ Reactivation of M&E Teams at the CO, RO and DO commenced ▪ Assessment of Information Systems Needs for the establishment of the Grants Mgt Information System done 	

Details of the status of cross-cutting activities based on actions recommended in the Annual Plan are presented in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2: UPDATES ON THE PROGRESS STATUS OF ACTIVITIES BASED ON INCEPTION AND ANNUAL PLAN (AS OF END DECEMBER 2011)

Indicative Activities Planned	Progress as of 31 December 2011	Updates on the Actions Recommended in Annual Plan
Conclusion of Mobilization Activities	<p>DepED: Accomplished at the National, Regional and Priority Division Levels</p> <p><i>Central Office:</i> A focal person and an administrative staff from OPS-PPD have been assigned to coordinate the PRIME Program. The focal person led orientation of the Regional implementation teams in the nine (9) target Regions.</p> <p><i>Regional Offices (9):</i> All Regions have formulated a core team consisting of IP and Muslim education focal person(s) and the Regional planning officer. The team is provided technical assistance from the Field-Based Program Officer assigned in each of the Regions.</p> <p><i>Division Offices (Priority Divisions):</i> All 10 priority Divisions have established implementation teams with orientation and guidance from Regional Offices.</p> <p>Managing Contractor: Completed with the adjustments as per Contract Amendment – in response to Inception Plan recommendations</p> <p>Engagements of needed Consultants was completed (One Field-Based Program Officer resigned from the GRM Team); Offices at the central and Regional are operational with required equipment, communications and supplies.</p>	<p>Done necessary orientations and training for newly appointed DepED personnel at CO and RO</p> <p>Done mobilization activities within the additional priority Divisions identified at the end of September by ROs</p> <p>Done with the orientation of target communities/schools for PRIME grants by Divisions with support from the ROs. Likewise, in addition to the planned activities indicated in the Annual Plan, these were undertaken</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Orientation of Internal and External Stakeholders on the PRIME Program ▪ Mapping of IP Education Efforts ▪ Selection of Disadvantaged IP Communities/Target Schools
Community Engagement Adviser	<p>Hiring is accomplished but work still ongoing</p> <p>To reduce the risk of the 'supply' side of DepED dominating the agenda for determining the support required by target locations, a community engagement adviser has been contracted to provide guidance and technical assistance to DepED in appropriately engaging disadvantaged and</p>	<p>Adviser provided technical advice and support to DepED during initial 'entry' into target communities</p>

Indicative Activities Planned	Progress as of 31 December 2011	Updates on the Actions Recommended in Annual Plan
	marginalized groups	
Design and conduct of the Baseline Survey	Accomplished. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference developed for two (2) stages. Stage 1: <i>Targeting of Priority Schools Divisions in Nine (9) Target Regions</i> and Stage 2: <i>Baseline Survey of IP and Muslim Communities in Target Areas</i>. • Stage 1 was completed in mid-September and presented for validation during the Monitoring, Evaluation and Plan Adjustment (MEPA) workshop on 28-29 September. • Contract awarded for Stage 2 following an RFP process due to the projected costs. • Design of the survey will commence in early October 2011 	Completed actual field survey for the Baseline by the end of December. The Service Provider will present the results and the Summary Results to DepED in 3 rd week of January and the Topline Report in February. The Baseline Survey Report will be submitted to DepED in March. PRIME considers the option to technical assistance for the analysis of the results and findings of the Top-line Report.
Rapid Appraisals to Identify Priority Divisions within the selected Regions	Accomplished. <p>Ten (10) priority Divisions (one each in all the Regions, except Region 9 with 2) were identified based on available data. These priority Divisions participated in Regional planning workshops to prepare the Regional Program Implementation Plans</p>	In addition to the ten (10) existing priority Divisions selected through rapid appraisal technique, additional fourteen (14) DOs were selected as priority Divisions in October. Inception activities commenced shortly. Activities done in the additional DOs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selection of target IP/Muslim communities/ schools ▪ Formation of the Prime Implementing Teams at the RO/DO level ▪ Orientation of Internal and External Stakeholders on the PRIME Program ▪ Mapping of IP Education Efforts ▪ Selection of Disadvantaged IP Communities/ Target Schools
Identification of Priority Division based on selected IP & Muslim population		
Orientation and training of Regions and Priority Divisions on the PRIME Program	Accomplished. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation sessions were conducted in all 9 Regions and subsequently with the 10 priority Divisions • Formal program launching activities have been held in two Regions/Divisions (Regions X, IV-B) • Training activities have been started in some Divisions with target communities/schools 	<p>Orientation of additional priority Divisions conducted by the DOs with support from the ROS in November & December</p> <p>Formal program launches took place in selected Regions and Divisions with the issuance of the first grant release</p>
Preparation (or review/revision) of Grant Guidelines for Schools/Community, Divisions, Regions and Central Office	Accomplished. <p>The Grant Guidelines have been developed and validated with DepED at various levels. Care has been taken to align with the SBM Grant procedures of DepED. Grant Guidelines have been disseminated to the field offices in Sept.</p>	Review and revision of the grant guidelines is on-going with a revised version to be prepared to guide the April 2012 Grant Proposals
Proposal Preparation, Review, Awarding and	Accomplished. <p>With the issuance of the grant guidelines in mid-September</p>	Done with the proposal preparation, review and approval for 9 Regions but

Indicative Activities Planned	Progress as of 31 December 2011	Updates on the Actions Recommended in Annual Plan
Monitoring of the “Fast-Tracked” Grants for 2011/2012	seven (7) were awarded to the Regional, nine (9) to Division and twenty (20) at the school-community levels. Preparation of grant proposals are ongoing in PRIME target ROs, DOs and schools that have not yet availed of grant.	only 7 of these received the first tranche of grant release. 2 proposals from the two Regions are still for review and approval. Done also with the proposal preparation, review and approval in 10 Divisions but only 9 received the first tranche of grant release. Ongoing efforts to encourage target communities/ schools to avail and access grants
Conduct of Priority Research/Analytical Studies on the Madrasah Curriculum and Learning Materials	Under Discussion DepED has provided direction on the requirements for studies/research on the Madrasah Curriculum With identification by several Regions as well as from the Office for Madrasah Education of the need for review, OPS will forward the request to senior management	Continue discussions with OPS/senior management to determine the scope and element of a comprehensive review of the Madrasah curriculum—draft TORs for will be prepared for review
Conduct of Priority Research/Analytical Studies on existing IP Curriculum models and Learning Materials	Postponed to Future Date This activity was included in both central office and Regional implementation plans, but was not scheduled to begin until 2012 Some preparation work is being undertaken in Mindanao with the gathering of existing IP learning materials developed by all stakeholders in IP education	Assessment on the need and research topics to guide the preparation of the proposal and TORs for these analytical studies ongoing To be guided by the IPSEO
Preparation of the first Annual Plan (October 2011)	Accomplished. With the preparation and review of the central office and the 9 Regional Implementation Plans—a consolidated annual plan has been prepared.	Submitted to AusAID on 15 October 2011
Conduct of the M&E Assessment of Current Practice—during the 2nd Quarterly Monitoring, Evaluation and Plan Adjustment Workshop	Partially Accomplished. The assessment of current level of M&E practice has been conducted for the Regional Offices and 24 10 priority Divisions, however the assessment still needs to be validated for the CO level	Conduct assessment at and central office levels—analyze results to prepare recommendations and a capability building plan
Conduct of the 2011 2nd, 3rd and 4th Quarterly Monitoring, Evaluation and Plan Adjustment Workshops	Accomplished. MEPA Workshops for Quarter 2 and 3 were conducted—significant adjustments to the design and activities of the Qtr 3 MEPA were undertaken to improve processes and analysis	Conducted Quarter 4 MEPA mid-December 2011 Revised and redesigned the processes and technology of the MEPA to inform the SMIPR and to use it as a mechanism to strengthen the performance of OPS functions
Establishment of and Support to the Governance and Advisory Structures (Program Advisory Committee—PAC and the PRIME	Accomplished but with major adjustments from original plan PMC The 1st Planning and Monitoring Committee (PMC) meeting was held on 14 September 2011. Based on an assessment of	

Indicative Activities Planned	Progress as of 31 December 2011	Updates on the Actions Recommended in Annual Plan
Program Planning and Monitoring Committee - PMC)	<p>the functions of the PMC, it was decided by PMC members that all of the functions were already functions of line units within OPS—thus there was a decision to dissolve the PMC and to use the technology of the MEPA to provide a process to strengthen the performance of OPS functions</p> <p>PAC</p> <p>The Program Advisory Committee was proposed as a mechanism for DepED, AusAID and key stakeholders to discuss policy issues—the PAC has not yet met</p>	
Advocacy	<p>Accomplished.</p> <p><u>National Launching of PRIME</u></p> <p>National launch of PRIME on 6 July attended by major stakeholders included ceremonies, events and signing of a Pledge of Commitment</p> <p><u>Establishment of PRIME website</u></p> <p>PRIME web-site is launched in mid-September under the DepED web-site (prime.DepED.gov.ph)</p> <p><u>Regional Launches</u></p> <p>Significant launches in Regions X (Bukidnon) and Region Region IV-B (Occidental Mindoro) served to gather Regional and Division stakeholders to support and commit to support PRIME</p>	<p>Supported other Regional launches during the first grant release (October 2011)</p> <p>Implemented Advocacy and Communications Plan across all PRIME locations</p>
Grant Management Information System (GMIS)	<p>Initiated.</p> <p>In response to a request from DepED to strengthen the grants management and monitoring system, initial assessment and design work has been undertaken to establish and implement a Grant Management Information System for PRIME grants that will also serve SBM Grants for the DepED—it is intended that the GMIS will be a module of the ongoing development of the EBEIS</p>	
Selection of Communities	<p>Partially accomplished.</p> <p>Six (6) Regions (4 in Luzon and 2 in Mindanao) have guided the priority Divisions to conduct the community selection process to identify target areas for PRIME support</p> <p>The process of selection of communities has involved consultation with internal and external stakeholders (including NCIP for priority IP communities and those with Ancestral Domain Titles), identification of a selection committees, data gathering and validation and assessment/priority setting of target locations</p>	<p>Provided support to ROs to continue the quality assurance of the community selection process and support completion of community selection in all priority Divisions</p>
Updated Manuals and Plans	<p>Accomplished.</p> <p>A number of manuals and plans prepared as part of the Inception Plan have been revised and updated with the Annual Plan. These include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milestone Schedule (Annex B) 	<p>Revised versions of the MEF and Plan, Risk Management Matrix are annexed with the SMPR. Other manuals and plans reviewed as part of the SMPR process</p>

Indicative Activities Planned	Progress as of 31 December 2011	Updates on the Actions Recommended in Annual Plan
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- IAC Plan (Annex C)
- Risk Management (Annex D)
- Financial Management (Annex H)
- Operations Manual (Annex I)
- Safety & Security (Annex J)

For the next SMPR period (January-June 2012), the program will modify its reporting of accomplishment vs. planned outputs after adjustments on CO-PIP and the R-PIPs are completed. The program needs to improve its reporting of accomplished outputs due to the following reasons:

- Need to validate standards and indicators of completion of outputs;
- Need to confirm means of verification (MOVs) ; and
- Need to indicate specific target delivery dates of outputs identified.

3.2 Contributions in Support to BESRA

In support of Education for All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and BESRA policies and programs, PRIME facilitated the issuance of relevant policies and guidelines to support Key Result Thrust (KRT) Nos. 3 and 5.

TABLE 3: OUTPUTS ACCOMPLISHED IN SUPPORT TO BESRA (AS OF END DECEMBER 2011)

Key Result Thrust	Outputs
KRT3: <i>DepED central, Regional and Divisional levels focus on aligning peoples' collective aspirations for education with actual teaching practice in schools and learning outcomes attained by Filipinos.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuance of DepED Order No. 62, s. 2011 dated 8 August 2011: "Adopting the National Indigenous Peoples (IPs) Education Policy Framework"
KRT5: <i>National Government creates a financial, institutional, technological and accountability necessary for basic education reform thrusts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuance of DepED Memo No. 103, s. 2011 dated 26 December 2011 entitled "Creation of Indigenous Peoples Education Office (IPsEO)" • Issuance to ROs and DOs of Unnumbered DepED Memo dated 21 October 2011 Activating and Utilizing the National, Regional and Division M&E Teams in pursuance to DepED Order 44 • Expanded the coverage of School-based Management (SBM) grants to include community, Civil Society Organization (CSO) - Non-government Organization (NGO) and private sectors in PRIME selected areas • Support to the development of the (Regional Education Development Plans (REDPs) through the process of preparing the RPIPs • Enhancement of the Division Education Development Plans (DEDPs) through the advocacy activities conducted at the Division level in Priority Divisions

3.3 Progress towards Achieving End-of-Program Outcomes (EoPOs)

As of the end of December 2011 or nine (9) months' time elapsed in implementing the program, the basis for tracking progress towards end-of-program outcomes will be established this next reporting period after plans adjustments, standard setting and confirmation of output indicators. Activities to achieve planned outputs are either ongoing or at initial and preparatory stages. Likewise, with the major revision on the original EoPOs, the "menu outputs" needs to be further validated. The list will

be the basis for revising CO-PIP and the RPIPs and enhancing the standards and means of verification (MOVs) set earlier for the outputs.

3.4 Status of Financial Performance

This reporting period saw a scaling-up of activity and expenditure. The total reimbursable expenditure was \$1,479,707 for the six months from July – December 2011, bringing the total reimbursable expenditure for the program to \$1,918,684 (March – December 2011). Expenditure across all PRIME Payment Streams (including Fixed Fees) for the July – December 2011 has been relatively on target with estimates – within 10% variance to budget.

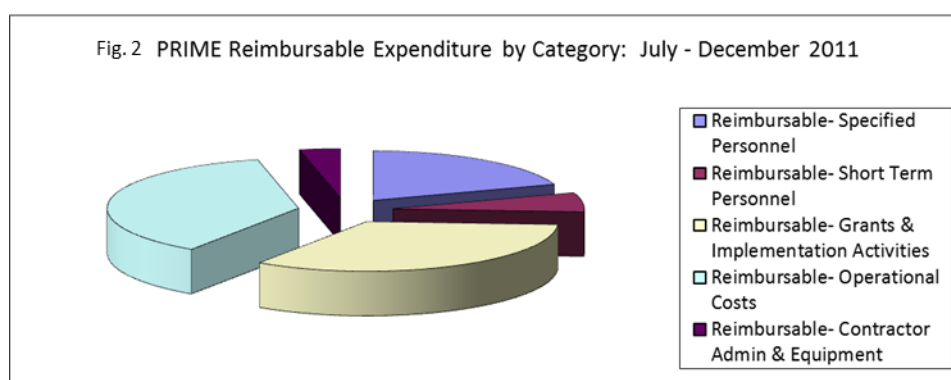
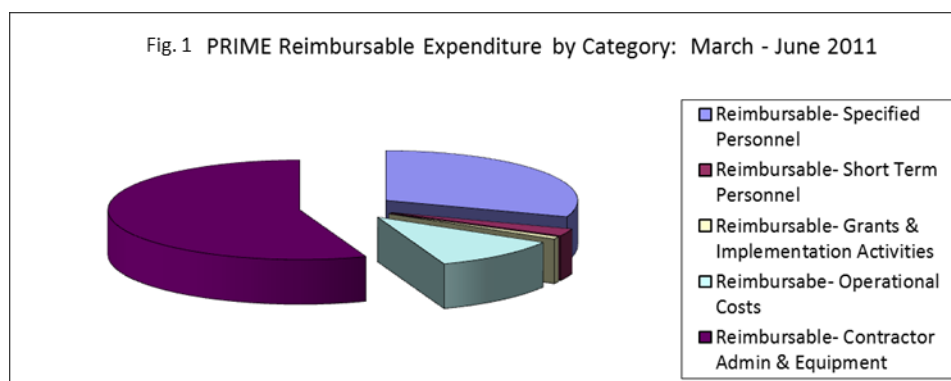
Table 1 in **Annex C** shows the variances against budget for each Reimbursable Payment Stream. The table shows that the majority of the variance relates to lower than expected spending in *Reimbursable Operating Expenses*, attributed to subcontractor payments for the Baseline Survey. Subcontractor payments are payable following the completion of deliverables which have been rescheduled to early 2012.

The budget variances for the other Reimbursable categories are minor.

All budget figures provided in this report are based on revised estimates submitted to and approved by AusAID outside the formal reporting process. These budget figures do not appear in previous reports.

3.4.1 Summary of Expenditure by Category

As PRIME transitioned from the Mobilization/Inception Phase and into the Implementation Phase, there have been significant changes in spending patterns between the reimbursable expenditure categories. The two graphs below highlight the changes in expenditure patterns as at 30 June 2011 and 31 December 2011, followed by a summary of the major changes.



A summary of significant changes in expenditure patterns as follows:

- **Reimbursable Grants and Implementation Costs** increased from 1% in March – June 2011 to 33% in the current reporting period. The first substantial grant payments were approved and released in October 2011. It is anticipated that Reimbursable Grants and Implementation Costs will constitute approximately 50% of reimbursable expenditure in early 2012 as PRIME progresses into the Implementation Phase of the program.
- **Reimbursable Operational Costs** have increased from 11% in the early months of the program to 37% during the July – December 2011 period. This is largely due to the subcontracting costs associated with the Baseline Survey that is scheduled to be completed in early 2012. Once the Baseline Survey is completed, it is anticipated that the Operational Costs will reduce to approximately 20% of reimbursable expenditure.
- **Reimbursable Contractor Administration and Equipment Costs** have decreased from 56% of reimbursable expenditure in the early months of the program to only 3% throughout the July – December 2011 period. This is due to the majority of procurement for the establishment of program offices was completed by June 2011.

3.4.2 Financial Year Budget and Expenditure

Table 2 in **Annex C** illustrates PRIME's financial position over the entire 2011-2012 financial year.

Current forecast estimates show PRIME expenditure to be \$132,000 under budget at 30 June 2012. PRIME will be closely monitoring the following issues that are likely to affect the programs financial position over the next reporting period:

- **Reimbursable Grants and Implementation Costs** - PRIME has forecasted to spend \$1.4 million in grants for the January – June 2012 period. The majority of these payments are scheduled for the next tranche period of April 2012. PRIME's ability to meet this budget expectation is largely dependent on the timely grant approval process within DepED. Some delays and significant issues regarding grant proposal approvals were experienced in the current reporting period (refer Annex C) and PRIME will be monitoring this closely in the coming months to ensure expenditure is as close as possible to the forecast.
- **Reimbursable Operational Costs** – Subcontractor payments for the Baseline Survey are scheduled to be completed in early 2012. As mentioned above, the under expenditure in this category is mostly a timing delay with major subcontractor payments. Table 2 shows that PRIME expects only minor variance to the budget overall for the 2011-2012 financial year.

PRIME will continue to keep AusAID informed of any major financial issues as they arise.

4 Status of Program Strategies, Operational Plans and Manuals

As part of the preparation for the implementation of the PRIME Program, a number of key strategies, operational plans and management manuals were developed during the program inception and their review and updating is part of the annual planning process. These key strategies, plans and manuals were developed to guide the design and implementation of program activities to ensure alignment with important development principles and AusAID policies. It also aims to ensure that program implementation is efficiently and effectively managed. As part of the process in preparing the SMPR, key strategies, plans and manuals have been reviewed and updated as required. The status of the review and updating is provided below.

4.1 **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Plan (MEPF)**

The M&E Framework attached to the PDD was revised following a process of progressive engagement and validation with key stakeholders within DepED. The updated MEFP, was submitted as an annex to the Annual Plan in October 2011. Following comments and suggestions from AusAID, the MEFP is currently undergoing revision and refinement. The additional time allowed for further engagement and inputs from the team and DepED is expected to result to updated and simplified MEFP. The revision takes into consideration enhancements through:

- a. Greater focus on the centrality of key evaluation questions (KEQs) and the means by which they will be answered;
- b. Sharper focus on the target audiences and their information needs;
- c. Clearer presentation of PRIME's program logic
- d. Revision of the end-of-program outcomes based on these four (4) criteria: i) Alignment to the goal and objectives; ii) Significance and relevance; iii) Measurable; and iv) Achievable.
- e. Revalidation of the indicators aligned to the Basic Education Sector Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (BESMEF) if these are achievable within the program duration.
- f. Stronger emphasis on the need for culturally sensitive approaches to working with IP and Muslim communities;
- g. Incorporation of Gender, Poverty Inclusiveness and Disability Awareness (GPIDA);
- h. Updating key learning and knowledge sharing events; and,
- i. Outlining the activities, scheduling and responsibilities for operationalising the M&E system in a results framework.

In terms of operationalisation of the M&E Plan itself, the highlights of M&E activities during the period include:

- a. Revision, Enhancement of the PRIME M&E Framework per PDD through progressive consultations with and engagement of DepED key staff of the OPS-PDED. This involved:
 - Alignment of PRIME M&EF Indicators with the Basic Education Sector Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (BESMEF)
 - Revision and Revalidation of end-of-program outcomes;
- b. Installation of interim Progress Monitoring Mechanisms while the M&E System was being designed and developed;
- c. Conduct of the quarterly Monitoring, Evaluation and Plan Adjustment (MEPA) for the 3rd and 4th Quarters of 2011;
- d. 1st SMPR Preparation and the conduct of the data gathering/validation workshop to inform this Milestone; SMPR Guide and Tools were developed for this purpose;
- e. Assessment of the M&E capacity at the Region and Division levels;
- f. Reactivation and mobilisation of DepED CO, RO and DO M&E Teams
- g. Conduct of initial capability-building and training activities to support M&E work; and,
- h. Provision of oversight for the conduct of the Baseline Study in IP and Muslim communities

4.2 Sustainability Strategy

The Sustainability Strategy of the PRIME Program was developed and submitted as part of the first annual planning activity in October 2011. Sustainability is identified as one of the core implementation principles for the PRIME Program; the strategy continues to guide the design and implementation of program activities. Increasingly, DepED are giving consideration to issues of sustainability, in part due to the focus of the PRIME Program on sustainability.

Based on a review of the Sustainability Strategy undertaken in preparation for submission of the SMPR, no adjustments have been made to the strategy as submitted as part of the Annual Plan. However, with the revised MEF and Plan it is expected that following approval of the MEF and Plan, there may need to be adjustments to the content of the Sustainability Strategy.

4.3 Risk Management Plan/Matrix

A risk management plan/matrix was prepared as part of the original design for the PRIME Program and was updated as part of the inception and annual planning processes. The process of the Six-Month Progress Report (SMPR) provided the opportunity to identify and assess existing and emerging issues and challenges to the implementation of the program. As a result of the SMPR process the following significant adjustments have been made to the Risk Management Plan/Matrix:

TABLE 4: RISK ASSESSMENT , NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS AND RATIONALE

#	Risk	Adjustment	Rationale
3	Political intervention in program activities at the local level	Increased from Medium to High Risk	Based on experience there is an increased probability of local elected officials interested in using the program to advance their own agendas
5	Negative perception in communities of linkage between GoA interests in resources and support from AusAID	Decreased from Medium to Low	Limited probability of future concerns and lower impact as strategy adopted for addressing the issue. May remove from future Risk Management Plans
9	Lack of coordination and cooperation between stakeholders and within stakeholder agencies	Increased from Medium to High	Based on experience with the Baseline Survey and with local communities, higher probability and impact is assessed
12	Limited capacity of the DepED Regional/Division Offices to participate as lead agency in Program management and implementation	Increased from Medium to High	Based on experience with the preparation of quality RPIPs and M&E efforts, higher probability and impact is assessed
14	Monitoring process inadequate, process fails to identify emerging concerns/lessons	Decreased from Medium to Low	DepED's engagement is high and likely to be sustained and institutionalized with the M&E efforts
17	Financial systems inadequate/Mechanism for distributing finance and monitoring not adequate	Increased from Medium to High	Based on experience with handling and releasing of grants to schools and communities, higher probability and impact assessed
18	(new) - Limited capacity of DepED to implement key policy reforms	Assessed as High	Limited capacity of DepED to advance the implementation of DepED Orders re: IP Education
22	(#21 previously) - PRIME plans beyond the absorptive capacity of DepED	Decrease from High to Medium	DepED is increasingly integrating planning and M&E efforts for PRIME as part of its 'business'.
29	(new) - Duration of PRIME Program	Assessed as High	DepED and stakeholders are uncertain of commitments to continue specific initiatives after the completion of PRIME and without exception comment on the shortness of the program

A revised Risk Management Plan/Matrix is provided as **ANNEX D**.

4.4 Gender, Poverty Inclusion and Disability Awareness Strategy

The PRIME Program has developed a gender, poverty inclusion and disability awareness strategy to ensure that the learning needs of all boys and girls in the target areas are addressed. To achieve this, the program adopts an inclusive strategy so that access to and benefits from education are also provided to those who often face barriers to equitable participation including learners with disabilities, out-of-school-children (OSC), out-of-school youth (OSY) and out-of-school-adult (OSA) in the target communities.

During the period, progress has been achieved in mainstreaming gender, poverty and disability into two (2) levels of PRIME Program implementation: i) program-wide; and ii) key inclusion activities.

Program-wide activities include: i) the Baseline survey; ii) Grants Management; iii) information, advocacy and communication; and iv) defining M&E Gender-equity indicators. Key inclusion activities on the other hand include: i) assessing disability inclusion; ii) Inclusive Education demonstration project; iii) gender focused research and analysis; and iv) identification of potential areas for research in GPIDA strategy.

An update on the Status of the GPIDA Strategy Implementation is in **ANNEX E**.

4.5 Grants Management

A major element of the PRIME Program is the provision of grants to various levels within DepED to support activities that will increase access to and improve the quality of basic education for disadvantaged Indigenous Peoples' and Muslim communities, particularly girls and boys. Of the available grant funds approximately 70% are allocated to the school/community level (with 35% of these funds targeted to provide funding to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs). The maximum grant funding available for individual schools/communities is 500,000 pesos each. Of the remaining 30% of the available grant funds, approximately 10% has been assigned for proposals from the Central Office, 10% to the Regional Offices and 10% to Division Offices to support program initiatives that are aligned with their respective mandates. Training on grant fund management was provided to Regional and Division offices.

As of December 31, 2011, the program made a total amount of grant payments amounting to AuD 0.482M or Php21.2M (Table 1) but only AuD 0.307M or Php 13.5M was released to the Regions, Divisions and Schools; which is only 5.08% of the total grant allocation. The remainder of the grant payments at AuD 0.175M is still for deposits awaiting the completion of the required documents from the proponents eg. Conformance to the issued Letter of Award (LOA).

The status of the grant releases as of 31 December 2011 is provided in **ANNEX F**. In addition to the detailed grant release information, the narrative also provides a summary of issues and concerns relating to the processing of grant proposals.

Due to the short time frame for implementation of the PRIME Program, an initial issuance of grants to priority Divisions and schools was provided in October 2011 in order to provide funds as early on in the program as possible. As well, the short time frame for the program required that a maximum number of grant releases over the duration of the program be limited to five (5) - in April and October of each year with the final grant release in October 2013 (to allow for appropriate acquittal of funds by June 2014). This scheme allows grants to be released over a period of only two school years of the three year program.

A PRIME Program Grant Guidelines handbook was prepared to guide the release of the October 2011 grants. Based on experiences with the administration of the October 2011 release as well as changes in the processing of grant proposals, particularly at the Central Office, the Grant Guidelines will be revised in time to guide and inform the April 2012 grant proposals and grant management.

4.6 Information, Advocacy and Communications Plan(IAC)

The Information, Advocacy and Communications Plan (IAC) of the PRIME Program, which has been initially presented as part of the Program's Inception Plan, aims to establish behavioral change towards better respect for and appreciation of cultural diversity in the basic education sector. To this end, the majority of the activities outlined in the IAC have been implemented as scheduled although some had been cancelled for reasons of safety and security. A summary of advocacy activities conducted from July to December 2011 is can be found on **ANNEX G**.

Given that there has been no significant deviation from the outlined activities since its revision for the first Annual Plan, amending the activities listed on the IAC Plan is not deemed necessary. It is the intention of the program that the activities in the current IAC Plan will be incorporated as part of DepED CO's IAC Plan upon the latter's completion.

4.7 Financial Management Manual

As part of the inception planning, a Financial Management Manual was prepared to guide and help ensure that good fiscal management practices are in place. Some adjustments were introduced as part of the review process during the preparation of the first Annual Plan. The Financial Management Manual continues to guide financial transactions of the program.

Based on a review of the Financial Management Manual as part of the preparation for the SMPR, no further revisions since the October 2011 version are deemed necessary. The Financial Management Manual will be reviewed again in preparation for the 2nd SMPR submission in July 2012.

4.8 Operations Manual

As with the Financial Management Manual, part of the inception planning required the preparation of an Operations Manual to guide effective management of the program. Adjustments were introduced as part of the review process during the preparation of the first Annual Plan with an updated Operations Manual provided as an Annex to the Annual Plan. The Operations Manual continues to provide guidance to program staff in managing the program effectively and efficiently.

Based on a review of the Operations Manual as part of the preparation for the SMPR, no further revisions are deemed necessary at this time. The Operations Manual will be reviewed again in preparation for the 2nd SMPR submission in July 2012.

5 Significant Observations and Key Issues

This section presents the significant observations and identifies key issues for each Component. These directly or indirectly affected the achievement of planned outputs and program implementation as a whole, of the PRIME Program. The significant observations and key issues noted in the first Annual Plan have been reviewed and where relevant have been included. These are:

Component 1: Indigenous People's Education

- a. **Insufficient priority continues to be given to IP Education:** Although two important DepED Orders (D.O. #62, s. 2011 adopting an IP Education Policy Framework and D.O. #103, s. 2011 creating the Office for IP Education) have been signed since the start of the PRIME Program,

there has been little attention given to the implementation of these two DepED Orders. No personnel or resources have been provided nor are there guidelines as to how each of these DepED Orders will be implemented.

- b. ***Increasing expectations from internal and external stakeholders on DepED to address the basic education needs of IP communities:*** The implementation approach of the PRIME Program is to encourage and require the active participation and engagement of IP communities in determining the need for basic education. This engagement has resulted in initiating a 'demand' for educational services that were not in evidence previously. Managing the expectations of long underserved disadvantaged communities is emerging as an issue for DepED at the field level.
- c. ***Varied understanding and approach to culturally-appropriate SIPs and application of the CEIP:*** At the present time, DepED has been unable to provide clear guidance on the standards or processes to be used in preparing culturally-appropriate SIPs or on the standards and applications for CEIPs. This has resulted in a wide range of experiences being introduced at the school/community level – some of which demonstrate better effectiveness than others.
- d. ***No system to profile, assess and engage external stakeholder and service providers for potential collaboration to strengthen education service delivery to target groups:*** There is limited attention by DepED given to 'tapping' non-DepED providers and other stakeholders to support the delivery of basic education to disadvantaged communities. In some instances, DepED managers are distrustful of non-DepED participants. Aside from the government's stated policy to increase the level of Public-Private Partnership (PPP), within DepED this has mainly resulted in the provision of funds to support school building program rather than supporting non-DepED providers of basic education. The absence of a system within DepED to profile, assess and engage stakeholders to support the delivery of education contributes to the lack of action on this front at the field level.
- e. ***Uncertainty within different Regions on how to pursue indigenization of curriculum materials:*** Different understanding of the concept of 'indigenization' among and between DepED officials at various levels contributes to confusion as to how to approach this activity. In addition, based on the admission of DepED officials there is a lack of expertise/skills to undertake 'indigenization' – although in some areas (BEAM-supported locations) there was capability-building but was not sustained by DepED.
- f. ***Lack of baseline data on IP access to basic education to guide planning and decision-making:*** Acknowledged as a significant data gap during the design of the PRIME Program, the continued absence of baseline data made DepED planning and decision-making on where to focus efforts and what to do difficult. The short-time frame for the PRIME Program has meant that the Baseline Survey is being conducted in parallel with initial planning and implementation activities.

Component 2: Muslim Education

- a. ***Specific outputs (and their targets) for the Muslim Education (ME) Component lack a strong evidence-base:*** The 'menu of outputs' provided in the design of the PRIME Program were developed prior to the establishment of a line item in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) of DepED for Madrasah Education. As a result, many of the outputs in the 'menu of outputs' are being addressed through the regular budget of DepED and there is no evidence provided by DepED that additional support for many of the outputs is still required from the PRIME Program.

- b. ***Differing understanding within DepED re policies on Madrasah Education:*** Various levels within DepED and even between different offices within Central Office are unclear about the policies and implementation of Madrasah Education resulting in reluctance to appropriate guide and target specific outputs for PRIME in support of Madrasah Education. While a review of Muslim Education initiatives of the DepED has requested PRIME support, this review has yet to be conducted.
- c. ***Need for additional baseline data on ME to guide planning and decision-making:*** As with the limited data available to guide planning and decision-making with IP education, the same situation also exists with Muslim Education. The Baseline Survey is being conducted in parallel with planning and implementation activities.
- d. ***Limited participation of the Office for Madrasah Education in PRIME Planning and Monitoring activities:*** Although DepED OPS has consistently approached and invited representatives of the Office of Madrasah Education to attend PRIME planning and monitoring activities, it was only during the preparation activities for the SMPR that representatives attended. This limited participation has resulted in a lack of input and guidance from Central Office on key planning considerations for PRIME support to the Muslim Education initiatives of the central office.

Component 3: Capability and Institutional Strengthening

- a. ***Absence of DepED direction in setting targets for identified outputs:*** At the Central Office level, there are a number of different units responsible for capability building activities of DepED managers and staff. Given the different units responsible, the confirmation of outputs and specific targets with these units has been challenging.
- b. ***Targeting of participants for initial capability-building and training activities is unclear:*** Experience in the initial implementation of PRIME witnessed inappropriate targeting of participants for training activities by both central office and field levels with some participants attending who were not properly selected.

Component 4: Program Management and Implementation

- a. ***Varied and diverse interpretation by CO and the nine (9) ROs on physical outputs:*** In part the differing interpretation of the outputs stems from the lack of agreed-upon standards and MOVs for each output. Complicating the agreement of standards and MOVs is the understanding that outputs need to be contextualized to the actual situation at the field-level e.g. indigenization of curriculum, criteria used for transfer of IP teachers, and decisions over hiring of teachers.
- b. ***Variable quality of Central and Regional Offices plans to support IP and Muslim Education:*** Upon the startup of PRIME, it was observed that no Regional Offices had formal officially approved plans to support IP and Muslim Education. While the Central Office has the plans associated with BESRA, there were no specific plans for IP and Muslim Education. During the first stage of PRIME, support was provided to the Regional Offices and Central Office to prepare implementation plans specific to IP and Muslim education (in the absence of Regional Education Development Plans and a National Education Plan. While a positive start to the planning process, the CO-PIP and the R-PIPs still require additional effort to improve and refine.

- c. **Unclear delineation of tasks/roles at the DepED CO level involving OPS and the Educational Development Projects Implementation Task Force (EDPITAF):** The Memorandum of Subsidiary Agreement (MSA) between DepED and AusAID identified generic roles and functions for OPS and EDPITAF. Attempts to clarify the various roles of the three relevant OPS Divisions (PPD, PDED and RSD) clearly established the lead for implementation coordination as PPD and the role of RSD in the Baseline Survey and responsibility for data collection and analysis. Some tasks/roles with respect to review of PRIME Grant proposals and monitoring and evaluation were not clear. In addition, the role of EDPITAF was not clearly agreed between OPS and EDPITAF – resulting in some confusion on responsibility for certain activities. Another factor that also contributed to the lack of clarity was the need for administrative and logistical support to the program – which neither OPS nor EDPITAF felt they were able to provide – in part due to the limitations on hiring Contract of Service and the limited ability to recruit for the high number of vacant positions.
- d. **PRIME Program is perceived by DepED implementers to be very short:** Only with the MEPA conducted in December 2011 and with the review of accomplishments in preparation for the SMPR have DepED participants begun to realize that the target timelines for some identified outputs may be unrealistic. While there has been discussions between AusAID and DepED about the need to continue some of the initiatives introduced by PRIME in the BEST Program, the mechanisms for this adoption and integration with Basic Education Sector Transformation (BEST) remains unclear.
- e. **Varying levels of effectiveness of Regional Offices to establish and support effective teams to support the PRIME Program:** Each Regional Office, based on their unique circumstances, has implemented different mechanisms to support the PRIME Program implementation. Some of these mechanisms still reflect a ‘project’ approach, while others have embedded the PRIME Program as part of the Region’s regular functions. The wide variation in capacity of the Regional Office PRIME support mechanisms is evident in the quality of planning, implementation management, monitoring and reporting on PRIME supported activities.
- f. **Central Office participation, aside of OPS, in supporting PRIME has been slow to take place:** In part due to factors that compete with the available time of central office focal persons and in part due to limited advocacy with other DepED units at Central Office, there has been limited active participation aside from attendance at specific activities. This has resulted in a limited involvement in the planning and monitoring of PRIME and included limited guidance from Central Office in the identification and preparation of grant proposals for the Central Office level.
- g. **Rigid adherence to existing government accounting and financial practices in some Regions and Divisions:** Although a training activity was conducted on Grant Fund Management for Regional and Divisional personnel who would be involved with management of the grants, some Regions and Divisions have been reluctant to apply the required financial processes to release grants to schools and communities. This has resulted in a lower than anticipated release of funds (20 releases of a possible 120 releases) to schools and communities.

h. ***Emphasis by DepED on the supply-side of the education ‘demand-supply’ equation:***

Understandably given previous practices and behaviors, DepED at all levels has focused its initial efforts on providing basic education services rather than examining and understanding the ‘demand-side’. This has resulted in some response activities being less responsive to actual needs. In part this approach has resulted in DepED focusing its attention on what DepED can provide and also limited engagement of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and people’s organizations (Pos) – those recognized for responding effectively to ‘demand’ for basic education services at the community level. In some instances DepED has expressed the need for assistance to engage other non-DepED partners as they have admitted the need for more knowledge and skills in this area.. In other instances, DepED is wary of non-DepED participation and would like to eliminate the non-DepED allocation of grants at the school-community level. One of the results of DepED not actively engaging non-DepED stakeholders has been a lower than expected submission of proposals for PRIME Grants from CSOs, NGOs and POs.

i. ***Limited analysis of needs and requirements at the school/community level by Division Offices:***

In many instances the Division Office has approved the awarding of the maximum grant allowable (500,000 pesos over the course of the program) to each and every proponent at the school and community level without understanding that the grant allocations are intended to be variable based on actual needs of the schools and communities. If this practice continues the minimum number of schools and communities will be served with the PRIME Grant Funds.

j. ***2011 Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GoP) counterpart release delayed:***

The GoP counterpart was released in mid-December 2011 and as the funds were part of a continuing 2010 GAA appropriation, the funds lapsed at the end of 2011. The result was that not all of the funds provided to Regions and Divisions could be properly utilized in the available time. This situation caused significant concerns and created financial challenges for Regional and Division Offices in supporting PRIME.

k. ***Payments of local travel and other costs for non-DepED participants:*** This issue was identified during the preparation of the Annual Plan as there is a restriction by the Commission on Audit (COA) that does not allow non-government personnel to be reimbursed for local travel costs. This COA rule effectively excludes non-DepED participants from engaging in planning, implementation and monitoring program activities. As the approach of the PRIME Program is to engage non-DepED stakeholders, including community representatives of IP and Muslim disadvantaged areas, the COA rule could seriously affect future participation. AusAID has agreed to allow funds from the Government of Australia (GoA) to be used in specific instances where the circumstances warrant the payment of expenses to non-DepED participants, however, there is an issue of sustainability that DepED needs to address once GoA funds are no longer available.

l. ***Need for capability-building for ROs and DOs in program & project management to be effective in Grants Management.*** With the initial release of grant funds in the Region, Division and Schools, the demand for efficient grant management entails not just ‘fund management’ capability but skills in project management (planning/development, managing/implementing and monitoring and evaluation). The ongoing training needs assessment for program stakeholders should cover those who are directly involved in grants management.

- m. ***Need for most of the program's stakeholders to fully understand the concepts and principles of inclusive education.*** A particular challenge is understanding disability as a rights based issue, where the individual experience of exclusion and disadvantage is created by factors that create physical, social, and attitudinal barriers in the environment where they live. The lack of understanding and experience of program and DepED staff in working with disability has had implications on program activities such as monitoring and evaluation, grants mechanisms, and information and advocacy. Additional working sessions and orientations were conducted in order ensure that the baseline survey will capture pertinent information on gender and disability.
- n. ***External Stakeholder Engagement Issues:*** Some specific stakeholder engagement issues emerged through the preparation of the SMPR, including the following:
 - i. Limited engagement and support from external stakeholders due to lack of awareness about the PRIME Program.
 - ii. External stakeholders' interference in the selection of schools and communities eligible for PRIME Grants due to local political agendas.
 - iii. Some stakeholders attempted to make their involvement in the planning of DepED Programs conditional on certain benefits or agreements in their favour.
 - iv. Misunderstanding of DepED programs led some stakeholders to request support beyond the scope of basic education or inappropriate support.

These significant observations and key issues are further explained in ANNEX I:

6 Facilitating and Hindering Factors and Lessons Learned

An analysis of the factors that facilitated and hindered program implementation was done during the progress monitoring of the six-month progress to generate lessons learned in program implementation. The analysis of these hindering and facilitating factors, helped program stakeholders draw lessons learned in the course of achieving outputs during the period under review. These facilitating and hindering factors as well as lessons learned are expected to be used for future reference, guide and considerations in the implementation of the program.

6.1 ***Factors that Facilitated Achievement of Planned Outputs:***

- a. Existing information and application of experiences gleaned from previous foreign-assisted projects helped facilitate DepED key stakeholders' performance and discharge of their functions and tasks to achieve outputs.
- b. Actions and pressure from interest groups both within and outside DepED such as civil society, NGOs and POs triggered the issuance of the Policy on IP Education Framework.
- c. The issuance of the IP Policy Framework spurred the achievement of planned targets during the period for this served as a springboard by which the Regions rallied their advocacy programs to raise awareness among DepED and external stakeholders.
- d. Meaningful and purposive field-immersion and interactions enabled DepED and partners to understand the worldview, needs and aspirations of the IP communities.
- e. Multi-level support and cooperation from the Local Government Units (LGUs), CSOs, NGOs, POs and other stakeholders are motivating factors that facilitated the conduct of planned activities leading to the achievement of planned outputs.
- f. The fast downloading of GoA funds and simplified paper requirements hastened program management and administration.

6.2 *Factors that Hindered Achievement of Planned Outputs:*

- a. The program experienced difficulty in engaging indigenous communities with the program and eliciting more meaningful participation from them because of mistrust due to their negative experiences with government initiatives in the past.
- b. Lack of DepED appreciation of the needs, aspirations and views and a basic understanding of the unique cultural make up of the target groups led to the identification of activities that were not responsive to the actual needs of IP/M communities, unrealistic timelines for activities and plans during the period.
- c. Inadequate Training Needs Assessment and the National Competency-Based Training Standards (NCBTS) guidelines that are not customized for IP education hindered the development of capability building program.
- d. Lack of understanding of the terms of engagement with PRIME as a facility and unclear guidelines on the delineation of roles, functions and timelines were cited as factors that need to be addressed.
- e. The delayed downloading of government counterpart funds and the lack of specific guidelines for its utilization hindered the implementation of target activities.
- f. Overlapping activities and multi-tasking of key DepED personnel assigned to PRIME and other programs and projects caused delays in the conduct of activities that are critical for the outputs. For instance, during the period, some activities to implement the GPIDA strategy , some activities that did not eventuate were:
 - Convening of a DepED group to work with the International Disability Inclusion Advisor and the Gender Advisor in providing inputs to inclusion;
 - Orientation session on inclusive education with the Regional staff in the nine (9) PRIME Regions; and
 - Consultation-meeting with the baseline contractor.

6.3 *Lessons Learned in Implementing Planned Activities and the Achievement of Planned Outputs*

- a. ***The program processes and activities can be used to maximize DepED learning.*** For instance the 1st SMPR was a test case for introducing an arena of learning for DepED on 'intermediate and above-the-line' progress monitoring. This piloting of the "learning process approach' on this SMPR was acknowledged to have provided DepED key players an opportunity to:
 - Understand and appreciate intermediate and above-the line progress monitoring;
 - Establish the connection between the activities done at the field level to the program outputs leading to the achievement of the EoPOs at program level;
 - Value participatory manner of data gathering and validation for it leads to clarifying information;
 - Observe a process of data gathering and validation which they can adopt to their respective offices;
 - Organize, consolidate and process data and information gathered from the exercise;
 - Appreciate the value of organized and processed data to enable a sound analysis and judgment of the situation; and
 - Learn the application of the evidence-based principle with the analyzed data for informed decision-making.

- b. ***The current practice of conducting regular monitoring of progress and status of achievement of planned outputs against the program plans e.g. CO-PIP and RPIPs provides an opportunity to continuously make improvements on the planning process and plan content.*** There were weaknesses noted in the plans that were monitored. Namely: i) no target delivery dates for some physical outputs; ii) unrealistic timelines; and iii) no specific output statement for some activities. Regular progress monitoring exercises provide opportunity for correction and to recommend improvements, both on the process and the plans.
- c. ***Advocacy at the different level of DepED as well as with its external stakeholders plays a critical role in establishing partnership between PRIME and other stakeholders.*** A sustained advocacy efforts using tri-media is also essential to draw multi-stakeholders' and public support for the program.
- d. ***Quality plans requires deeper analysis and need-based planning of target outputs.*** The quality of plans produced indicates the uncertainty in targeting definite outputs for IP and Muslim education. The unrealistic targets and activity timelines may also indicate the lack of appreciation of the realities at the field including the actual needs of target groups. In the case of PRIME, CO and Regions should have considered that the initial stages of program implementation are focused on mobilization, setting up of program support structures and a social-preparatory phase. Unless, a particular output is used as an entry-point activity, 'hard' deliverables and outputs should consider institutional as well as stakeholders' readiness and absorptive capacity.
- e. ***Regular dialogue with external partners help:*** i) clarify expectations from the program and vice-versa; ii) promote collaboration for smooth program implementation; iii) more aggressive advocacy at the onset results in partners buying-in and cooperating with the implementation of education development programs for IPs and Muslims.
- f. ***Clear delineation of roles and functions is an essential element in forging collaboration among stakeholders and contributes to the achievement of quality output.***
- g. ***ROs and DOs implementation will be more effective if they are not given more than what they can accommodate and manage.***
- h. ***Transparency and accountability enables stakeholders to better respond to program needs.***
- i. ***Personal commitment strengthens teamwork among individuals.***
- j. ***Roles and accountabilities are strengthened when they are continuously reinforced, clarified and discussed.***

7 Major Recommendations and Proposed Adjustments to Implementation Approach

Based on the analysis of the results of the **quantitative information** (physical accomplishments) and **qualitative informative** (issues, facilitating and hindering factors & lessons learned; implementation strategies) regarding the progress of program implementation from July to December 2011, the program recommends and identifies the following proposed adjustments to the implementation approach:

- a. **Identify critical next steps that need to be responded to by the IP Office, including the immediate establishment of improved coordination and linkages to Management to enable prompt action on program issues and challenges.** The program should initiate the: i) strengthening of the mandate of the IP Office; ii) convening of the advisory committee composed of Top Management to review the challenges identified in this report and to assess appropriate responses (either by way of policy advise or direction) to resolve and to respond to these challenges.

Based on emerging discussions: the program should be able to recommend to Top Management concrete actions that will guide DepED to create an enabling environment such as, but not limited to: i) developing and implementing policies that support IP and Muslim education; ii) crafting plans based on IP communities' actual needs, aspirations and views ; iii) multi-stakeholder participation in charting education development plans; iv) allocating resources for not just internal stakeholders' KSA development but also of the external stakeholders who are involved in the development processes.

- b. **Conduct Regional and Division level analysis of the "fit" of a particular target output** to the situation and context of the site, demand/needs of the target groups; and readiness of the Region or Division to achieve the output prior to their adjustment of their respective RPIPs. The adjustment of the CO-PIP should be based on the RO's adjusted plans.
- c. **Plan and implement activities meant to provide for increase multi-stakeholder participation in knowledge-sharing, solidarity activities, planning, coordination to allow for DepED's interaction with partners.** Effective delivery of education services to a target group involves multi-stakeholders. The program should be able to take advantage of the potential of multi-stakeholder cooperation and the wide range of possibilities for collaboration with external partners (e.g. civil society – NGOs, LGUs, private sectors, other government agencies) who have proven comparative advantage in terms of addressing community needs. PRIME can serve as an entry-point for the convergence of various entities and groups to face the challenges of education service delivery to IP and Muslim communities.
- d. **Implement activities aimed at preparing and enabling DepED to internalize and appreciate IP and Muslim education in a more meaningful way.** The program should consider the need for DepED to go through a longer social preparatory phase involving: i) "conscientization" involving more field and community immersion to allow for a better appreciation of the situation before plans are crafted; ii) familiarization with relevant law and issuances e.g IPRA, R.A, Decentralization of Local Government Units, etc. to enable these program stakeholders to adopt ways to address, tackle and resolve emerging concerns appropriately in creative, results and solution-oriented way.
- e. **Institutionalize field-level MEPAs for informed decision-making.** PRIME currently conducts regular quarterly MEPA sessions purposely to provide a venue for monitoring progress and updating of implementation plans. The activity is conducted with the Central Office and the nine (9) Regions but subsequent MEPA gatherings will be Regionalized to institutionalize the technology at the Regional level. An important consideration is to start embedding a process that would allow for *action-reflection-action* on the part of the program key players at all DepED levels (Central, Regional and Division. As interactions between stakeholders increase, adjustments to the approach/strategies can be made as issues emerge. Since PRIME is conducting MEPAs more at the program-level with an intention to bring the technology down to the Regional level. DepED should eventually consider programming similar gatherings at the Divisions and possibly at the school level to enable field-level

information to inform management decision making on how PRIME will respond to demands and concerns quickly and effectively.

Moreover, given the scheduling of the quarterly MEPAs, Regions should be given more flexibility to act and respond accordingly - providing appropriate, facilitative and timely solutions when and if necessary, within their mandated functions. ROs and DOs are now beginning to see the need to adopt ways to address, tackle and resolve emerging concerns internally as an institution and those of the target groups in more creative, results and solution-oriented way.

- f. ***Support and allocate resources for the capability-building of ROs and DOs with regard to Grants Management.*** With the initial release of grant funds in the Regions, Divisions and Schools, the demand for efficient grant management entails not just 'fund management' capability but skills in project management (planning/development, managing/implementing and monitoring and evaluation). The ongoing training needs assessment targets those who are directly involved in grants management.
- g. ***DepED Central Office should ensure that field-level operations are supported with adequate and timely release of GoP counterpart funds.***

8 Plans for the Next Period (January – June 2012)

8.1 Activities to support target Outputs

CO and ROs will review and enhance CO-PIP and RPIPs to: i) validate target delivery dates for outputs; ii) identify target outputs for the next period (January to June 2012); and iii) set standards and MOVs. Meanwhile, ongoing activities to support the achievement of outputs under the four (4) components will be continued at the national, Regional and Divisional levels. Critical follow-through activities to achieve these outputs are presented in **ANNEX H, Table 1**.

8.2 Specific activities/actions to support some cross-cutting areas of program implementation

Table 2 in ANNEX H presents planned activities and actions to support the following cross-cutting areas of program implementation for the period January to June 2012,:

- Grants Management;
- Mainstreaming of the Gender, Poverty and Disability into Key Areas of PRIME Program;
- Planning the Next Critical Steps for the Baseline; and
- Implementation of the Information, Communication and Advocacy Plan;