

PRIME Program

# Six Monthly Progress Report

*January - June 2012*

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

*15 July 2012*



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## Table of Contents

	Description of Content	Page
	<b>Acronyms and Abbreviations</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Purpose, Scope and Coverage of the SMPR	
1.2	Features of the PRIME SMPR	
<b>2</b>	<b>Activity Description</b>	<b>1</b>
2.1	Program Background	
2.2	Goals, Objectives and Component Descriptions	
2.3	Expected End-of-Program Outcomes	
2.4	Validated “Menu of Outputs”	
<b>3</b>	<b>Review of Program Implementation</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1	Implementation Progress to Date	
3.1.1	Status of Accomplishing Physical Outputs	
3.1.2	Contributions in Support to BESRA	
3.2	Status of Financial Performance	
3.2.1	Summary of Expenditure by Category	
3.2.2	Financial Year Budget and Expenditure	
<b>4</b>	<b>Status of Program Strategies, Operational Plans and Manuals</b>	<b>12</b>
4.1	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Plan	
4.2	Sustainability Strategy	
4.3	Risk Management Plan/Matrix	
4.4	Gender, Poverty Inclusion and Disability Awareness Strategy	
4.5	Grants Management	
4.6	Information, Advocacy and Communications Plan	
4.7	Financial Management Manual	
4.8	Operations Manual	
<b>5</b>	<b>Significant Observations and Key Issues</b>	<b>18</b>
5.1	End-of-Program Outcome 1: Demand-side	
5.2	End-of-Program Outcome 2: Supply-side	
5.3	End-of-Program Outcome 3: Enabling	
5.4	Program Management and Implementation	
<b>6</b>	<b>Major Recommendations and Proposed Adjustments to Implementation Approach</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Plans for the Next Period (July - December 2012)</b>	<b>21</b>
	<b>Tables</b>	
1	Outputs Accomplished in Support to BESRA (As of End of June 2012)	
2	Risk Assessment, Necessary Adjustments and Rationale	
	<b>Figures</b>	
1	PRIME Reimbursable Expenditure by Category: January – June 2012	
2	PRIME Reimbursable Expenditure by Category: July – December 2011	
	<b>Annexes</b>	
<b>A</b>	List of Original End of Program Outcomes	
<b>B</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Plan	
<b>C</b>	Progress to Date	
<b>D</b>	Reimbursable Expenditures	
<b>E</b>	Sustainability Strategy	
<b>F</b>	Risk Management Plan/Matrix	
<b>G</b>	Status of Mainstreaming of Gender, Poverty and Disability into Key Areas of the PRIME Program	
<b>H</b>	Status of Grants Management	

	Description of Content	Page
I	Grants Audit Report	
J	Status of Operationalizing the Information, Advocacy and Communications Plan	
K	Safety and Security Plan	
L	Financial Management Manual	
M	Operations Manual	
N	Most Significant Change Stories	
O	Plans for the Next Period	

## Acronyms and Abbreviations<sup>1</sup>

<b>ACCESS</b>	A Community and Child Centered Education System
<b>ACR</b>	Activity Completion Reports
<b>ARMM</b>	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
<b>AusAID</b>	Australian Agency for International Development
<b>BEAM</b>	Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao
<b>BEE</b>	Bureau of Elementary Education
<b>BESRA</b>	Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda
<b>CapB</b>	Capability Building
<b>CAR</b>	Cordillera Administrative Region
<b>CEIP</b>	Community Education Improvement Plan
<b>CO</b>	Central Office
<b>CO-PIP</b>	Central Office Program Implementation Plan
<b>DALSC</b>	Division Alternative Learning System Coordinator
<b>DEDP</b>	Division Education Development Plan
<b>DepED</b>	Department of Education
<b>DLP</b>	Distance Learning Program
<b>DO</b>	Division Office
<b>DMEG</b>	Division Monitoring & Evaluation Group
<b>DPIP</b>	Division Program Implementation Plan
<b>DPO</b>	Disabled Peoples Organization
<b>EC</b>	Evaluation Committee
<b>EDPITAF</b>	Educational Development Projects Implementing Task Force
<b>EFA</b>	Education for All
<b>EoPOs</b>	Expected End-of-Program Outcomes
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GAD</b>	Gender and Development
<b>GoA</b>	Government of Australia
<b>GoP</b>	Government of the Philippines
<b>GPIDA</b>	Gender, Poverty Inclusion and Disability Awareness
<b>IAC</b>	Information, Advocacy and Communications Plan
<b>IE</b>	Inclusive Education
<b>IKSP</b>	Indigenous Knowledge, Systems and Practices
<b>IPRA</b>	Indigenous Peoples Rights Act
<b>IP</b>	Indigenous Peoples
<b>IPsEO</b>	Indigenous Peoples Education Office
<b>LEC</b>	Locally Engaged Consultant
<b>LES</b>	Locally Engaged Staff
<b>LGU</b>	Local Government Unit
<b>MC</b>	Managing Contractor
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>ME</b>	Muslim Education
<b>MEF</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
<b>MEFP</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Plan
<b>MEPA</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation and Plan Adjustment
<b>MSC</b>	Most Significant Change
<b>MTB-MLE</b>	Mother Tongue-Based Multi-Lingual Education
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation

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

<b>NCIP</b>	National Commission on Indigenous Peoples
<b>NCMF</b>	National Commission on Muslim Filipinos
<b>NGO</b>	Non-government Organization
<b>OME</b>	Office of Madrasah Education
<b>OPS</b>	Office of Planning Service
<b>PD</b>	Program Director
<b>PDD</b>	Project Design Document
<b>PIP</b>	Program Implementation Plans
<b>PPP</b>	Public-Private Partnership
<b>PRIME</b>	Philippines' Response to Indigenous Peoples' and Muslim Education
<b>REDP</b>	Region Education Development Plan
<b>RFP</b>	Request for Proposal
<b>RFT</b>	Request for Tender
<b>RO</b>	Regional Office
<b>RMEG</b>	Region Monitoring & Evaluation Group
<b>RMEPA</b>	Regional Monitoring, Evaluation and Plan Adjustment
<b>RMP</b>	Risk Management Plan/Matrix
<b>RPIPs</b>	Regional Program Implementation Plans
<b>SBM</b>	School-based Management
<b>SEDIP</b>	Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project
<b>SFBPO</b>	Senior Field-Based Program Officer
<b>SIP</b>	School Improvement Plan
<b>SMPR</b>	Six-Monthly Progress Report
<b>SPED</b>	Special Education Division
<b>SWS</b>	Social Weather Station
<b>TEEP</b>	Third Elementary Education Project
<b>TIPS</b>	Tools, Individual Reflections and Participatory Processes



## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose, Scope and Coverage of the SMPR

The Six-Monthly Progress Report (SMPR) is one of the major monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms of the Program designed to ensure timely delivery of outputs, integration of strategies and address implementation challenges and risks. The SMPR accounts for the accomplishments and initial benefits derived from activities and outputs delivered every six months.

The 2nd SMPR of the Philippines' Response to Indigenous Peoples' and Muslim Education (PRIME) Program covers the implementation period from 1 January to 30 June 2012. This SMPR provides an overview of the program's major milestones and initial benefits achieved during the period. Specifically, this SMPR covers (i) the status of program strategies, (ii) implementation efficiency of the Department of Education (DepED) PRIME Program implementers in terms of physical accomplishment and funds utilization, (iii) documentation of progress towards achieving End-of-Program Outcomes (EoPOs), and (iv) the status of PRIME Program support to the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA). This report also documents, analyses and identifies solutions to the major issues affecting Program implementation.

This SMPR summarizes the program's implementation at the school and community, division, region and national levels. The SMPR documents the accomplishments, implementation challenges and issues experienced by the national office, the nine regions and 24 divisions covered by the PRIME Program. The regions and divisions are:

- i. Region I, Divisions of Ilocos Sur and La Union
- ii. Region II, Divisions of Isabela and Nueva Viscera
- iii. Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Divisions of Apayao, Ifugao, Kalinga, and Mountain Province
- iv. Region IVB, Divisions of Mindoro Occidental and Palawan
- v. Region IX, Divisions of Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga Sibugay
- vi. CARAGA Region, Divisions of Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur
- vii. Region X, Divisions of Bukidnon and Lanao del Norte
- viii. Region XI, Divisions of Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental and Davao del Sur, and,
- ix. Region XII, Divisions of Sarangani, South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat.

## 2 Activity Description

### 2.1 Program Background

The PRIME Program is a collaborative effort of the Government of the Philippines (GOP) and the Government of Australia (GOA) to respond to the specific challenges of disadvantaged Indigenous Peoples' (IP) and Muslim communities in the Philippines citing that many of these communities continue to be underserved with respect to the provision of basic education services. The program is intended to build upon and scale up throughout the country support activities for IP and Muslim education that were developed as part of the Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao (BEAM) project that concluded in 2009. The PRIME Program is also viewed by the DepED as a significant contributor to the implementation of the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA) - the package of policy reforms to assist DepED in meeting its international commitments to the Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). In particular, the PRIME Program is intended to focus specifically on MDG Goal 2 - Universal Access to Quality Primary Education.

The stated goal of the PRIME Program is to improve equitable access to and quality of basic education for boys and girls in disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities. The program was designed to offer flexible responses to the unique linguistic, cultural and religious identities of Muslim and Indigenous Peoples' (IP) communities and support DepED to identify, design and implement a range of basic education programs and services that will respond to the education demands of IP and Muslim communities. This support

includes mobilizing and strengthening communities and schools to attract and retain IP and Muslim children either in school or through the provision of other learning environments.

The PRIME Program is expected to strengthen the capacity of target DepED divisions, regions and selected national office units to establish the necessary enabling environment (particularly in planning, monitoring and evaluation) that will help enhance and sustain the delivery of basic education support services.

DepED is the implementing agency of the PRIME Program with the Office of the Planning Service (OPS) as the lead coordination unit.

## **2.2 Goal, Objectives and Component Descriptions**

Through the consultative process employed with DepED, there have been adjustments to the phrasing of the program goal and objectives that were originally provided in the Request for Tender (RFT) and contract with the Managing Contractor. The revised goal and objective statements did not change the 'intent' of the program, but rather provided additional clarification. The revised statements have provided direction in the implementation planning process, guided program activities and have informed 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.

As per the Program Design Document (PDD), the original objective statement is: To allow GOP/DepED to provide better access to an appropriate, policy driven, sustainable and quality education for boys and girls in IP and Muslim communities, stimulating a community demand for education services.

For a more holistic and sustainable approach to the management of the program, the original objective statement has been further re-cast into three distinct objectives. This approach helps the program to capture better the demand and supply dynamics the program aims to address as well as highlight a fundamental requisite objective to enable program implementation to be more effective and efficient. These three Program objectives are deemed necessary and adequate by DepED in achieving the program goal of improving the quality of, and equity in basic learning outcomes in disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities.

The revised PRIME objectives are as follows:

- Objective 1. Increased demand for educational services in disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities. This represents the demand-side which targets boys and girls in disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities.
- Objective 2. Enabled DepED to continuously provide accessible, culturally and linguistically appropriate, policy driven, sustainable and quality education to boys and girls in the IP and Muslim communities. This a sustainability mechanism (supply-side) focusing on strengthening the basic education services delivery of DepED to disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities; Sustainability means continuation of benefits long after PRIME support is terminated.
- Objective 3. Positive changes in the attitudes and perceptions among internal and external stakeholders towards (i) IP and Muslim identity and culture, and (ii) IP and Muslim education.

This an enabling mechanism necessary to deepen understanding and appreciation by the internal and external stakeholders to the practices, beliefs and to the awareness of issues affecting boys and girls in the disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities. Program management acknowledges the importance of improving perspectives as regards the IP and Muslim education to stimulate the demand-side as well as ensure readiness of the supply-side.

### 2.3 Expected EoPOs

EoPOs represent the desired situation the PRIME Program aims to achieve at the end of program implementation. The program, in the 2011 Annual Plan, presented 20 ‘indicators’ (eleven demand-side and nine supply-side) representing the initial EoPOs (See Annex A). DepED, in its effort to ensure a more coherent and logical presentation of the PRIME Program scope, organized a series of validation workshops on the initial EoPOs. These consultations resulted in a significant reformulation of the 20 proposed EoPOs. The EoPOs were reduced to eight, logically supporting each of the three PRIME objective statements noted above. The revised EoPOs are as follows:

On the Demand-side EoPOs:

- Increase in the number of IP and Muslim girls and boys who are (i) in school, (ii) stay in school, and (iii) completed schooling; and,
- Increase in the engagement of IP and Muslim communities in education planning and involvement in the delivery of basic education services to IP and Muslim girls and boys.

On the Supply-side EoPOs:

- Relevant IP and Muslim curriculum, instructional guides and learning materials are being used in the teaching and learning process;
- Policies and strategies on IP and Muslim education continuously implemented by schools, communities and divisions;
- IP and Muslim education concerns and issues are reflected in the education plans of DepED (School Improvement Plan (SIP), Division Education Development Plan (DEDP), Region Education Development Plan (REDP), National Plan) with specific strategies and/or programs for addressing their needs; and,
- Increase in education investments for disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities and learners.

On the Enabling EoPOs:

- Increased net satisfaction rating of IP and Muslim boys and girls about their identity and culture; and,
- Improved attitude and perception of DepED officials on the beliefs, practices and learning needs of IP and Muslim children.

These eight EoPOs allow for the design and implementation of strategic interventions and serve as ‘a point of convergence’ of the different program initiatives at the community, school, division, region and national level. The same EoPOs will be used as basis for evaluating the success and sustainability of the PRIME Program.

### 2.4 Validated “Menu of Outputs”

The enhancements undertaken by DepED to improve and adjust the PRIME Program goal, objectives and EoPOs included a revisiting of the proposed “Menu of Outputs” originally offered in the PDD and later adjusted in the preparation of the initial MEFP. These proposed outputs were realigned based on their direct contribution to the achievement of the revised PRIME objectives and the achievement of the reformulated EoPOs. The two main criteria used in the realignment were (i) are these outputs necessary in the realization of the objectives and EoPOs? and (ii) are they adequate or complete? The reorganized “menu of outputs” is provided as follows:

1. On Demand-side EoPOs. The PRIME Program is currently supporting the outputs listed below:

- Output 1.1. School and communities started projects for boys and girls belonging to disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities on access to basic education services.

- Output 1.2. 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. Specifically, these include:
    - Enhanced SIPs reflecting situation, issues and strategies for the disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities;
    - Developed community education improvement plans (CEIPs);
    - Support program for IP and Muslim education leaders, managers, practitioners and other stakeholders developed;
    - Access programs in selected IP and Muslim communities designed and implemented; and,
    - Public-private partnership (PPP) program on IP education established.
2. On Supply-side EoPOs. The program could support the outputs listed below:
- Output 2.1. System and mechanisms in place to review, formulate and implement policies to support inclusive IP and Muslim education. Specifically, these include:
    - IP education policy framework and strategies adopted and implemented;
    - Existing policy on Muslim education reviewed and enhanced;
    - Curriculum, instructional guides and learning materials indigenized and adopted;
    - Education and training programs for IP and non-IP teachers enhanced and implemented;
    - Education and training programs for Muslim and non-Muslim teachers enhanced and implemented; and,
    - Regional IP education centers and Regional Muslim education centers established.
  - Output 2.2. System for planning, budgeting and program implementation in place that is responsive to the demands of IP and Muslim education.
    - Monitoring, evaluation and plan adjustment (MEPA) process in place and operational at National, Region and Division level;
    - Capability building program on planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation developed and implemented.
  - Output 2.3. System in place for gathering feedback on the delivery of basic education services to disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities. These include outputs on:
    - Program coordination and management systems effectively established and implemented; and,
    - Documented and replicated desirable practices.
3. Enabling EoPOs. The Program could support outputs on:
- Output 3.1. Advocacy programs and distribution of advocacy materials on IP and Muslim education; and,
  - Output 3.2. Implemented community engagement and immersion programs for DepED staff.

The 'menu of outputs' was used as a reference by the Central, Regional and Division Offices in the preparation of their respective program implementation plans (PIP) resulting in the preparation of the Central Office Program Implementation Plan (CO-PIP), nine Regional Program Implementation Plans (R-PIPs), and twenty four Division Program Implementation Plans (D-PIPs).

These same PIPs are being utilized for tracking outputs accomplished and associated funds utilization.

### 3 Review of Program Implementation

#### 3.1 Implementation Progress to Date

The overall actual implementation progress to date is 29% representing the accomplishments of the central office, nine regions and 24 divisions included in the PRIME Program. The relatively low physical accomplishment can be attributed to three major factors: (i) over ambitious planning by DepED Regions and Divisions, (ii) the limited capacity of DepED units to implement activities outlined in their plans, and (iii) the recent release of funds to schools and divisions (April/May 2012). These limitations are being addressed through the recently concluded national office and regional MEPA workshops. The implementation progress and utilization of funds are expected to significantly increase in the next six month period from July to December 2012.

##### 3.1.1. Status of Accomplishing Physical Outputs

###### *At School and Community level*

PRIME is now approaching its midpoint of operations in supporting IP and Muslim education programs in the targeted nine regions and 24 divisions. PRIME is now reaching as many as 295 schools and 22 IP and Muslim communities. The following are some examples of the school and community projects being implemented:

- Indigenization of reading and supplementary materials, including their development and reproduction;
- Acquisition of IP and Muslim costumes, artifacts, indigenous musical instruments and accessories;
- Collection of IP songs and stories;
- Formulation of Community Education Improvement Plans (CEIP);
- Livelihood and income generating projects such as vegetable farming and vermiculture, complemented by feeding programs to address malnourished children;
- Construction of learning centres, water systems, and dormitories;
- Capacity building for teachers on indigenization of curriculum and preparation of indigenous learning materials; and
- Purchase of school equipment and school supplies, including audio-visual and laboratory equipment.

The PRIME Program, through the school grants, is catering to an estimated total of 55,625 pupils/students, of which 44.79% and 55.2% are males and females respectively and covering 352 households. There are at least 17 IP ethnic groups currently being served by the grants in Luzon and 22 IPs and Muslim groups in Mindanao, including: Bago, Kankanaey, Ibaloi, Agta, Bugkalot, Ifugao Tuwali, Ibaloi, Iwak, Kalanguya, Ayangan, Kalinga, Pala'uan, Tagbanua, Jama Mapu, Tausug and Mangyan, Subanen, Kolibugan, Sama, Tausug, Higaonon, Matigsalug, Talaandig, Manobo, Umajamnon, Manobos, Tiduray, Blaan, Mamanwa and Tu'banwa, Sangil, Ata-Manobo, Dibabawon, Mangungan, Mandaya, Kalagan, Maguindanaoan and Maranaos. These ethnic groups are serving as the main source of information regarding the documentation of their Indigenous Knowledge, Systems and Practices (IKSPs) that will inform the Mother Tongue Based Multi-Lingual Education (MTB-MLE) Program that DepED strongly advocates. The documented IKSPs will influence the indigenization of the curriculum and will contribute to the appropriate preparation, production and distribution of relevant learning materials.

The 22 ongoing community grants are implemented by entities such as private schools, distinguished IP organizations and selected local government units (LGUs).

**Division level**

At the start of the 2012, an additional 14 divisions to the original 10 Divisions (identified as the initial priority Divisions) were added to the PRIME Program. Examples of initiatives implemented at the Division level includes:

- Enhancement of SIPs. The improvements include highlighting the unique requirements of children who are not in school, children belonging to disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities and children with disabilities. The schools' strategies on access, increasing enrollment and reducing drop outs, were enhanced;
- Technical assistance to schools and communities in the preparation of project proposals for PRIME Grants. Assistance includes training of schools stakeholders on how to prepare project proposals for PRIME grants, and included strengthening the technical review and appraisal or proposals.

**Regional Level**

The PRIME Program was able to provide support to a number of initiatives at the regional level , examples of which include the following:

*IP Education*

- Benchmarked existing and relevant practices, programs, relevant policies, practices learning materials pertaining to IP education and Activity on Education Mapping.
- Orientation on Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) Education Framework, PRIME and Republic Act 9155 (Governance of Basic Education).
- Consultative meeting on Regional Thrusts on IP Education.
- Developed guide for integrating IP education in the SIP and CEIP.
- Orientation on Guide for Preparation of Culture Responsive SIPs including reproduction of the guide.
- Technical assistance to Divisions in the Preparation of Project Proposals for PRIME grants and SIPs.
- Technical Assistance to division on field data immersions and conduct of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).
- Workshop on CEIP Model Design with inputs from community and other stakeholders.
- Seminar-workshop on Crafting a Regional Advocacy Plan Popularizing National IP Education Policy Framework.
- Research project on the Indigenous Knowledge, Skills and Practices of 4 tribes in the SOCCSKSARGEN area.
- Crafted Advocacy Guidelines for the Promotion of the IP Education.
- Conference to Review and validate the inventory of IP Education Initiatives and learning curriculum, guides and resource materials use.

*Muslim Education*

- Gathering of all stakeholders to present Implementation Plans and Project Proposals of schools relative to Muslim education to ensure assistance in the planned activities
- Orientation and Final Revision of R-PIP XI-Muslim Education (ME) Proposal
- Visit to DepED Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), Cotabato City
- Mobilization and preparatory work leading to permission to use of Distance Learning Program (DLP) modules
- FGD with ME Coordinators and Writers for Regional Musabaqah
- Crafted Advocacy Guidelines for the Promotion of IP Education,
- Mindanao Cluster Workshop on the Review of the CEIP Technology
- Conference to Review and Validate the Inventory of IP Education Initiatives and learning curriculum, guides and resource materials used



*Capability Building and Institutional Strengthening*

- Training of Mobile Teachers, Division Alternative Learning System Coordinator (DALSC), Facilitators for IP Education
- Learning Visit of Isabel School Heads, Agta Leaders and Nueva Vizcaya Division PRIME Implementation Team to Tugdaan Mangyan Center for Learning and Development, Oriental Mindoro
- Teachers as Ethnographers: Indigenous Knowledge in Curriculum and Instructional Material Development in Indigenous Peoples Basic Education
- Capacity Building for School Teachers and Administrators on Indigenous Peoples Education: Training on Education for Equitable Societies
- Workshop on TIPS (Tools, Individual Reflections, and Participatory Processes): Developing an IP Lens cum tool development and field testing
- Funds management training
- Training on Basic Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) for RXI Region and Division M&E Teams, Developed Regional & Division M&E Plan for School-based Management (SBM) and PRIME

*Program Administration and Management*

- The major accomplishment under Program Administration is the implementation of the Regional MEPA workshop. The MEPA is an event for regions and divisions to discuss and resolve Program implementation, issues and concerns at the schools, division and region levels
- Fund management training for region and division staff.

**Central Office**

The accomplishments of the National Office include the following:

*IP Education*

- Commencement of the Indigenous Peoples' Education Office (IPsEO) operation. The operations of IPsEO are supported by a PRIME Grant. IPsEO has drafted its Strategic Priorities for the period 2012-2015 to guide the Office in the task of pursuing the full implementation of DepED Order (DO) 62 Adopting the National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy Framework. The Strategic Priorities were based on an external and internal environment analysis derived from past consultations and a review of secondary data. The Strategic Priorities are directed by the policy statements of the DO 62 and build on the directives of the Secretary of Education with respect to supporting IP Education. The priorities include, among others; i) initiatives on the IP curriculum framework; ii) mechanisms to support IP Education across levels (i.e., national, regional, division offices and school level); iii) recognition of private IP schools; iv) teacher education, development, hiring, and deployment; v) capacity building for teaching and non-teaching personnel; vi) IP Education advocacy plan and collaboration with public and private stakeholders; vii) policy research; and, viii) the establishment of a knowledge management system for planning, design and implementation of interventions to strengthen IP Education.

As DepED has yet to include the cost of operations and programs of IPsEO in its regular agency budget, a PRIME Grant was awarded to the Office to support the establishment of its physical office and staffing. Grant funds also support IPsEO's basic operations, initiatives, and activities for 2012. IPsEO has prepared a PHP 100 million line item budget proposal for 2013, which was included in the total agency budget proposal submitted by DepED to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). The proposed IP Education line item in the 2013 budget shall cover the operations and programs of IPsEO, as well as budget support for the regions.

IPsEO has identified the following core programs – which are essentially subprograms that comprise DepED's IP Education Program – to meet the strategic objectives, namely:

- 1) Support to IP Learning Systems Program

- 2) Capacity-building Program
- 3) Advocacy and Partnership-building Program
- 4) Knowledge Management Program

The aforementioned 2013 proposed budget for IP Education is aligned with these four core programs.

#### *Muslim Education*

- The priority activity in this component has been the preparation of the Terms of Reference for the Review of the Muslim Education Initiatives of the DepED. It is expected that the Requests for Proposals for the conduct of this review will be issued by mid-July with the review to begin by mid- August 2012.

#### *Capability Building and Institutional Strengthening*

- Training on Impact Evaluation for selected DepED National Office staff. This training program was implemented in collaboration with the Project Development Evaluation Division (PDED) of the OPS and the World Bank (WB).
- Training on Managing the Regional MEPA Technology. The training was attended by Division M&E Group (DMEG), Region M&E Group (RMEG) and staff from the OPS. The training program was directed at improving the competencies of DepED staff in managing the MEPA session.

#### *Program Administration and Management*

- Revision of the MEFP and validation of the reformulated EoPOs
- Enhancement of the MEPA Technology
- Strengthening the M&E Team at the National, Region and Division level
- Enhancement of PRIME Guidelines and Re-orientation on PRIME Guidelines
- Completion of the Baseline Survey - Demand-side in the 24 provinces

Of the seven projects approved and implemented at the national level, five of these are implemented by DepED and two of these are implemented by organizations with national scope of operations. There are still ten proposals in the pipeline that are either on the preparation stage or at the approval stage. One of the most significant contributions of PRIME to DepED is the financial assistance to the IPsEO in its first year of operation.

The PRIME program also made significant contributions to the development of “A Community and Child (Learner) Centered Education System” (ACCESs). Although not programmed as part of the PRIME Program work plan, the program provided key technical inputs in the design and formulation of ACCESs. Emerging from a concern expressed by senior DepED management during the February Joint WB-AusAID BESRA Review Mission that the current SBM practice within the DepED was not delivering the desired results, a review of the DepED’s SBM Program was accelerated. The PRIME Program , as a result of its direct work with communities in determining educational demand was invited to participate in the review of the SBM Framework. Through a series of consultations and workshops, the PRIME Program was able to make significant contributions to the principles and indicators of the ACCESs approach which was formally launched by DepED on 1 June 2012.

A more detailed list of accomplishments is found in **Annex C**.

### *3.1.2 Contributions in Support to BESRA*

The PRIME Program supports the goals and objectives of the National EFA 2015 Plan and the MDG especially the objectives on universal school participation and elimination of drop-outs. The support to the EFA Plan is evident in the support to BESRA – the package of policy reforms adopted by DepED to attain the EFA Goals.



TABLE 1 OUTPUTS ACCOMPLISHED IN SUPPORT TO BESRA (AS OF END OF JUNE 2012)

Key Result Thrust	Outputs
KRT 1. Strengthened school based management	<p>Significant contributions in the formulation and launching of “A Community and Child Centered Education System” (ACCESS)</p> <p>Enhancement of SIPs incorporating the needs and concerns of boys and girls belonging to disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities</p> <p>Provision of grants to schools for local programs to improve enrolment, reduce drop out and increase completion</p>
KRT 3. Enhanced quality assurance through standards and assessment	<p>Institutionalization of the MEPA technology in DepED. The practice will be expanded to non-PRIME regions.</p> <p>Significant contribution in the formulation of the DepED’s Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Framework</p>

### 3.1.3 Progress towards Achieving End-of-Program Outcomes (EoPOs)

After 16 months of Program implementation, the following initial benefits and/or significant changes were observed and validated:

#### **Demand-side EoPOs**

Most of the demand-side interventions of the program are at their initiation phase, especially at the schools and communities. Significant changes in support and benefits to IP and Muslim boys and girls are expected to happen in the next reporting periods. The following significant gains were observed during the mobilization of schools and communities under the PRIME Program:

- Cluster schools began to work collaboratively in identifying projects that will improve access to quality education in their localities. These cluster schools prepared and submitted a single coordinated proposal to address their common concerns on access or participation;
- Community involvement and support in the identification and preparation of viable school and community projects; and,
- Counterpart funds and other resources generated and provided by external stakeholders and partners such as LGUs, civil society and private sector to support school-based projects.

#### **Supply-side EoPOs**

The Regional PRIME Program focal persons and the M&E groups were able to apply the competencies obtained in the training workshop on the MEPA Technology provided by the program and the OPS. The Regions conducted and managed the implementation of Regional MEPAs (1st and 2nd quarters of 2012) using the tools and techniques introduced by the OPS and the PRIME Program. Together with other efforts on planning and M&E, these strengthened their M&E knowledge, skills practices and processes at all levels in DepED, with particular emphasis on the role of the Region in monitoring and evaluating program interventions. Specifically, the following competencies are being demonstrated:

- understanding the types, concepts and principles of M&E;
- use and analysis of data and information, specifically related to access to basic education by disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities;
- Preparation of work and financial plans;
- use of performance measures such as % physical accomplishment and % fund utilisation to track implementation efficiency
- capability to identify and validate appropriate priority targets for DepED interventions; and,

- skills in educational planning and programming with specific emphasis on addressing the needs of disadvantaged IP and Muslim populations.

A major progress towards achievement of the EoPOs is DepED's adoption of the MEPA technology as a mechanism for M&E. The MEPA will be adopted for use by all regions including the non-PRIME regions in their progress monitoring of all programs and projects.

The improved competencies on planning and M&E are also influencing the way education grants are being managed and monitored. Regions have begun to adopt the same M&E techniques in managing their programs especially their 'flagship' program on SBM.

### ***Enabling EoPOs***

One of the major progress towards achieving the EoPOs is in improving the attitudes and perceptions of DepED towards disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities and improving the participation of community stakeholders in education planning. The immersion experiences, community consultations and learning visits to model IP schools facilitated the change in perspective among DepED staff especially in the appreciation of the IKSPs of IP communities including their basic education issues and challenges. The shift in paradigm began to manifest in their education plans highlighting the needs and requirements of IP and Muslim children and addressing the unique culture and practices. For the CAR, IP educators serving IP communities have had to acknowledge that decades of assimilation and discrimination have left them with a negative image towards their own identity as IPs. In order for them to be effective supporters of a culturally responsive education they have to work on self-acceptance of their own ethnicity.

Significant gains were also observed in the participation of community stakeholders in education planning. The community strengthened their capacity to deal with DepED and other stakeholders. Their participation to the community education planning has moved from purely exchanging information and consultation towards involvement in decision making. In some regions involved in supporting the development of ADEP, it is the community that takes a lead role as planner and decision maker with DepED providing technical support and resources. It has strengthened their understanding of their role – as facilitator's of education and of the community as rights bearers of the benefits of education.

### ***3.2 Status of Financial Performance***

This reporting period saw a 127% increase in overall spending. The total reimbursable expenditure across all PRIME Program Payment Streams for the six months of January to June 2012 was \$3,363,066.06. The bulk of this is attributable to the large *Grants and Implementation Activities'* expenditure. These activities saw a 432% increase in the six month period. Expenditure under *Specified Personnel*, and *Administration & Equipment* remained comparable to the last reporting period. Short-Term Personnel had minimal spending - an 84% or \$78,000 decrease - in this period as the bulk of program implementation was implemented by local and international long term personnel. *Operational* costs were lower over the period - a 28% or \$156,000 decrease. Only one portion of the contract for the M&E Baseline survey had to be paid in this period. Additionally, once the grant monies were downloaded and grant implementation commenced, fewer activities falling under the training and stakeholders' cost categories took place. The program focused on providing technical assistance to proponents on start up of grant implementation. Similarly, procurement had a significant decrease, as the PRIME Program is now in the implementation phase.

After the last SMPR, the budget was revised to include additions to the *Grants & Implementation Activities* stream. Expenditure across all PRIME Program Payment Streams (including Fixed Fees) for the January-June 2012 has been on target with estimates – under 5% variance to budgets submitted to AusAID.

Table 1 in Annex D shows the variances against budget for each Reimbursable Payment Stream. The majority of the variance is shown in a 10% reduction in *Operational Costs*, and an additional 8% dispersed under *Grants and Implementation Activities*.

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.

### 3.2.1 Summary of Expenditure by Category

During this period of the program's Implementation Phase, there have been significant changes in spending patterns between the reimbursable expenditure categories. The two graphs in Figures 1 and 2 show the changes in expenditure priorities in the first and second halves of the financial year.

A summary of the significant changes in expenditure patterns is as follows:

- **Reimbursable Grants and Implementation Costs** increased significantly in this period. It was previously estimated that these costs would constitute approximately 50% of reimbursable expenditure in early 2012, and in fact these have made up 78% in this period.
- **Reimbursable Operational Costs** have decreased from 37% to 12%. A large part of the operational costs involved payments for the Baseline Survey. Majority of the payments for the survey were made in the first half of the financial year, leaving the final payment for the Baseline Survey this period.

### 3.2.2 Financial Year Budget

Table 2 in **Annex D** illustrates PRIME's budget for upcoming the 2012-13 financial year.

As at 30 June 2012, the PRIME Program has expended 37% of the Program budget. The PRIME Program will be closely monitoring the issues that are likely to affect the the program's financial position over the next reporting period.

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

Fig 1: PRIME Reimbursable Expenditure by Category, Jan-June 2012

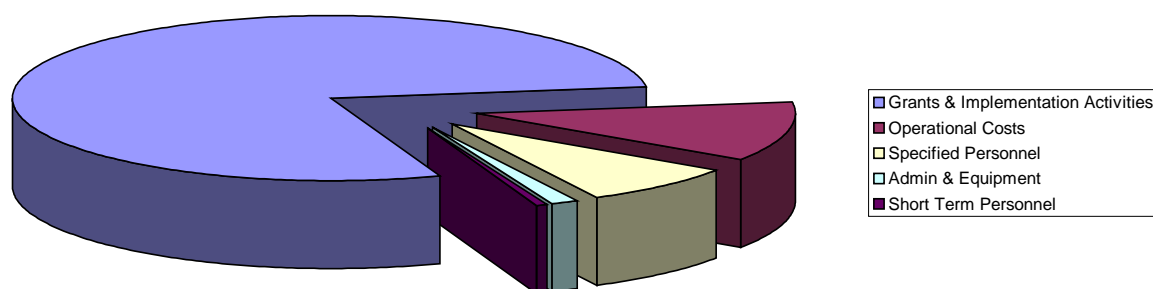
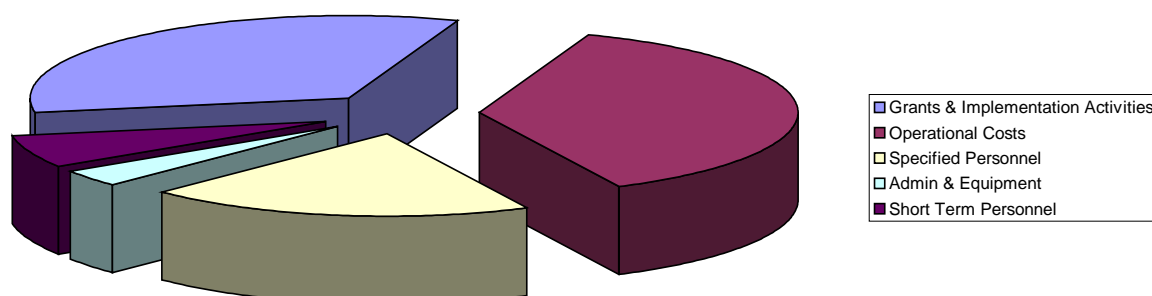


Fig 2: PRIME Reimbursable Expenditure by Category, July-December 2011



## 4 Status of Program Strategies, Operational Plans and Manuals

### 4.1 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Plan (MEFP)

The PRIME Program M&E system will provide two critical inputs towards efficient and effective program implementation. First, the M&E system will keep track of program implementation to ensure activities are within scope, time frames, cost and quality. The system will be used to systematically validate, document and report on the program benefits and results. And secondly, the M&E strategies, technologies and instruments of the program will be introduced and used to improve the M&E system of DepED. Included in the scope of the PRIME Program is the strengthening of the Region and National Office in monitoring and evaluation.

The PRIME Program M&E strategies are contained in the MEFP. Recognizing the importance of M&E in governance, accountability and transparency, the MEFP has undergone major revisions in the last six months since the submission of the 1<sup>st</sup> SMPR to ensure the M&E strategies are relevant, replicable and sustainable. The MEFP contains the scope and strategies of the PRIME Program in M&E. Specifically the MEFP contains the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF) which defines the different results and outcomes the program aims to achieve including indicators and sources of verification. The MEFP also outlines the M&E Implementation Plan (MEIP) describing the activities the program will undertake in the next three years.

After a series of enhancements, the MEF was finalized in May 2011. The following M&E principles and practices were considered in the enhancements:

- i. hierarchy of results to clearly define and distinguished the program's goal, objectives, and outputs;
- ii. clear linkages between objectives and outputs by ensuring outputs are adequate and necessary in the achievement of the desired objectives;
- iii. objectives refer to the desired situation the program aims to achieve at the end of program implementation;
- iv. these end of program situation are referred to as EoPOs;
- v. use of progress markers by establishing the backward and forward link of each indicator; and,

- vi. logical link between indicator and processes and/or sources of verification.

The MEIP was also revised based on the changes in the MEF. The highlight of the revised plan is the identification of five M&E strategies that will be employed during program implementation. These include:

1. **Baseline establishment.** The conduct of baseline studies will provide the program with important data, information and insights needed in strategic planning, designing interventions, and in the preparation of detailed implementation plans. The following baseline studies are to be conducted:
  - Baseline survey on Demand-side. Profile of IP and Muslim Communities and Determinants to Participation
  - Case Study on Demand-side with IP and Muslim Communities to determine and validate reasons for data findings of the initial Baseline survey on the Demand-side
  - Baseline survey on Supply-side. Perception of DepED staff about IP and Muslim practices and beliefs and the Readiness of DepED to provide basic education services to disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities.
2. **Progress M&E.** The aim of progress M&E is to ensure efficiency in the performance of activities, delivery of outputs and utilization of program funds. The activities will include:
  - Conduct of Quarterly MEPA. The MEPA is a quarterly meeting of DepED Region and Division staff to report on the status of PRIME Program implementation, discuss implementation issues and make adjustments in the plan. MEPA will help strengthen the decision making competencies of DepED staff especially in addressing implementation challenges and issues. The MEPA addresses the four critical implementation concerns: PRIME Program scope to ensure all target outputs are accomplished, (ii) time management to determine the delays program delivery, (iii) cost management to assess the efficiency in the use of funds, and (iv) quality management to evaluate compliance to standards and agreements. The process involves the central,, regions' and divisions' presentations and discussions of: i) accomplishments and financial performance in the preceding three months; ii) the quality of outputs delivered; iii) issues and causes of program delays; and , iv) issues and causes of poor funds utilization. The issues are resolved through the preparation of a catch-up plan which contains activities that will address the issues and put implementation on track.
  - Preparation of the SMPR. Similar to MEPA, the SMPR focuses on documentation and reporting of initial benefits demonstrated and gathered during the previous six months of implementation.
  - Preparation and submission of the Quarterly Reporting of Physical Accomplishments and Funds Utilization.
  - Conduct of Process Audit. Activity to verify the sources of data and information provided by program implementers.
  - Preparation and submission of Activity Completion Reports (ACRs)
3. **Initial Gains Evaluation.** An M&E activity that focuses on collection, validation and documentation of outcomes or results generated during implementation. Activities will include:
  - Defining and Utilization of Progress Markers. The progress markers are major outcome milestones that will help the program track progression towards achievement of the EoPOs;
  - Sustainability Review (programmed for September 2012 to inform the preparation of the Annual Plan)
  - Documentation and Analysis of Most Significant Change (MSC) stories. Involves documentation of the changes taking place in the school, communities, divisions, regions and central office as a result of program interventions and stimulus.
4. **Outcome Evaluation.** Documentation of program results which includes changes in behavior, practices, and application or utilization of outputs delivered by the Program.

- Conduct of a longitudinal study to comprehensively document, through case studies the impact of Indigenous Peoples' and Muslim Education program in terms of manifest changes in knowledge, attitudes, practices, and skills of learners, learning facilitators, and among community stakeholders, towards education in general and education services facilitated through the DepED and other providers in both schools and community-based contexts. The study will be undertaken in the remaining two years and it is intended to be sub-contracted to service providers under the supervision of technical adviser.

#### 5. Capability Building on M&E

- Managing the M&E System. A basic course on planning, monitoring and evaluation for National and Regional staff.
- Course on MSC Technique. A course in preparation for the documentation of experiences, changes and challenges that may take place during program implementation.

The PRIME M&E activities completed in the last six months are as follows:

- On Baseline establishment. Baseline information and data have been collected since program inception. The major accomplishment in the last six months is the Baseline Survey on IP and Muslim Communities in Target Areas. Last May 2012, the Social Weather Station (the sub-contractor) presented the results of the survey.
- On Progress M&E. PRIME activities include conduct of R-MEPA in the nine regions and CO-MEPA at the national level. These MEPAs facilitated the review of PRIME Program implementation in all regions and provided the process for enhancing DepED's implementation plans.
- On Initial Gains Evaluation. The use of the MSC technique was introduced last May 2012. The aim is to document initial gains or successes of the Program and challenges faced in implementing a program for disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities. Stories were collected in May and June for presentation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SMPR.
- On Capability Building on M&E. Through the PRIME Program, the OPS has implemented two major training courses on M&E which include (i) Training on Impact Evaluation, and (ii) Training on Use of MEPA Technology.

The revised MEFP is provided in **Annex B**.

## 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.

With 16 months having elapsed since the start of the program, this SMPR provides the opportunity to update the Sustainability Strategy. The most significant changes in the revised Sustainability Strategy are related to ensuring alignment with the revised MEFP and the requirement to address one of the key sustainability risks of the Risk Management Plan/Matrix (RMP) – specifically the ongoing concern over the short duration of the program. The revised strategy includes reference to the contracting of a Sustainability Advisor prior to the preparation of the next Annual Plan to provide advice to AusAID and DepED as to what needs to be done in the future to improve the sustainability of benefits.

A revised Sustainability Strategy is provided as **ANNEX E**.

### 4.3 Risk Management Plan/Matrix

A RMP 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 SMPR provides the opportunity to identify and assess existing and emerging issues and challenges to the implementation of the program. This SMPR provides an opportunity to update the RMP. As a result, the following adjustments have been made to the RMP:

**TABLE 2 RISK ASSESSMENT, NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS AND RATIONALE**

#	Risk	Adjustment	Rationale
1	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 agenda
3	Political intervention in program activities at the local level	Decrease from High to Medium	The concern expressed in the previous RMP of the increased probability of local elected officials interested in using the program to advance their own agendas has not materialized to the extent anticipated. However, with appropriate advocacy, local officials have provided positive support to program interventions
4	Peace and Order Problems/Security situation deteriorates in certain areas	Decrease from High to Medium	The strategy of using existing organizations to deliver services in certain areas reduces the need for program staff to be exposed to potential security concerns
8&11	Changes in DepED leadership and management staff  Lack of availability of DepED staff for participation in key program management activities – including re-assignment	Remains at High – with increased likelihood (4 to 5)	The recent departure of four key OPS management and staff position for AusAID scholarships has affected the program. In addition, two more OPS staff are preparing for the next round of scholarships – resulting in a limited OPS managers and staff to provide guidance
9	Lack of coordination and cooperation between stakeholders and within stakeholder agencies	Decrease from High to Medium	The experience during the previous period with the Baseline Survey has resulted in an increased effort by MC technical advisors to assist DepED to engage stakeholders – resulting in improved coordination and cooperation
16	Inadequate levels of GoP financing provided	Decrease from High to Medium	Advocacy to apply other funds sources within General Appropriations Act (GAA) rather than a separate counterpart for PRIME has been effective with a DepED decision to utilize other sources including the SBM Grants Program Support Fund at the region and division levels
29	Duration of PRIME Program	Assessed as High (same as previous)	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 Sustainability Advisor will be contracted to provide advice to AusAID and DepED on sustaining benefits

A revised RMP Matrix is provided as **ANNEX F**.



#### **4.4 Gender, Poverty Inclusion and Disability Awareness (GPIDA) Strategy**

GPIDA activities have focused on the effort of DepED to develop the Inclusive Education Demonstration Project. The conduct of joint consultations with Special Education Division of the Bureau of Elementary Education (SPED-BEE), key disability Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Disabled Peoples Organizations (DPOs) and the Prime Disability Adviser has resulted in the decision to implement the project in six DepED divisions based on a prioritization process. It was also decided that the SPED-BEE of the DepED will be the proponent for the project. A series of meetings were conducted to pilot test the division selection process which resulted in the selection of Bukidnon as the priority Division and the Talakag Central Elementary School as the demonstration area. The five other divisions and schools will be selected using this established selection process and criteria. These consultations also informed the critical elements for the TOR which is currently under review by SPED-BEE.

Progress has also been made in the consultations with the Gender and Development (GAD) Secretariat. In meetings between the GAD Secretariat, OPS, the Prime GAD Adviser with the AusAID gender focal person as observer, several gender issues have been identified both at the client-focused and at the organization-focused level. One of these was the need for the establishment of a GAD Focal Point System. In line with this a draft DepED Order was drafted and is awaiting the signature of the Secretary of Education.

Updates on the implementation of the GPIDA strategy are found in **ANNEX G**.

#### **4.5 Grants Management**

The PRIME Program provides a significant amount of grant funds to support the efforts at the national, regional, division, school and community levels to improve basic education services to the disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities. The grants are an enabling mechanism for the development of appropriate and inclusive basic education policies, programs, and projects that are cognizant of and responsive to the varying cultures and contexts of the targeted communities.

The program has conducted orientations on grant funds management and convened audit workshops with the participation of the Regional and Division PRIME Program Focal Persons and Accountants. Similar activities were conducted by the regions and divisions for schools and communities with newly approved proposals.

Following the recent grants audits conducted in Mandaluyong and Cagayan de Oro city in late May and early June, the program will conduct various activities to strengthen DepED grant management capacity at all levels, monitoring of project activities and provision of technical support for the implementation of grant policies and timely acquittals of expenditures, as follows:

1. Debriefing and training of PRIME Program Administrative Assistants at all regional offices. Training will include strategies for monitoring and reporting.
2. Training of DepED region and division personnel on monitoring grants to schools and communities.
3. Monthly monitoring of region and division grants by PRIME Program regional Administrative Assistants (AAs).
4. PRIME Program National Office personnel will conduct quarterly site visits to all DepED regional offices. These site visits will be conducted jointly with Educational Development Projects Implementing Task Force (EDPITAF) and provide tailored mentoring, coaching and support for financial management of grants by relevant DepED and PRIME Program staff.

Prior to the release of the grants to the different DepED levels, the program undertook intensive information campaign or advocacy on the timeframe and schedules of grant releases through the regional



or national workshops attended by regional and divisional participants. This advocacy and orientation allowed the divisions to fast track the preparation, approval and awarding of the grant proposals in time for School Year 2012-2013.

The status of the grant releases to schools, communities, divisions, regions and national office are provided in **ANNEX H**.

A revised PRIME Program Grant Guidelines handbook was prepared and issued in March 2012. This served as the guide for the April 2012 grant proposals and management. The Grant Policy, Systems and Process Review Workshop was conducted to give DepED staff in the regions and divisions first-hand experience on how to use the Grant Guidelines.

The PRIME Grant guidelines will be reviewed and enhanced to further streamline and simplify the grants process and documentary requirements. This will be undertaken prior to September 2012 to guide the next grant releases programmed for October 2012.

#### **4.6 Information, Advocacy and Communications Plan (IAC)**

The Information, Advocacy and Communications Plan (IAC) of the PRIME Program has been geared towards linking with stakeholders through the use of the social medium, Facebook. The PRIME Program will now be utilizing increasingly its Facebook Page <<http://www.facebook.com/DepEDprime>> more than its website <<http://prime.DepED.gov.ph>> to connect and interact with the majority of its stakeholders, specifically those from DepED. To date, the Facebook Page has garnered more “likes” in the past three months as compared to the number of users who have registered on the website in the same period. The number of views for the stories posted in the Facebook Page has likewise increased in the same period.

The PRIME IAC Plan has been completed and incorporated as part of the DepED CO’s advocacy campaign. However, since the advocacy plan is yet to be completed, all advocacy activities for IP Education at the national level will be directed by the IPsEO. More participation from external and internal stakeholders is expected from this arrangement. This action is also seen to contribute to helping DepED stakeholders understand IP Education as a regular DepED program instead of IP Education being supported through a foreign-assisted project.

The status of advocacy activities that have been completed from January to June 2012 can be found on **ANNEX J**.

#### **4.7 Financial Management Manual**

The Financial Manual prepared as part of the submission of the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Plan in October 2011 has now been updated. The significant changes are as follows:

- a. Deletion of R. Rufino and Z. Gonzales and the addition of R Macalindong as signatories for the Manila Account;
- b. Included a statement under Section 10.2 that the program is also guided by the PRIME Budget Preparation Notes that clarify the allocation and use of funds, especially the Grants (there have been four Budget Preparation Notes issued);
- c. Inclusion of additional financial forms for grant reporting purposes, in particular the Liquidation Report and Cashbook Report Forms, under Section 10.2.

Minor changes are as follows:

- a. Incorporated a statement under Section 4.3 that the replenishment of the petty cash fund is deposited to the authorized individual accounts of the Field-based Program Officers (FbPOs);
- b. Included a statement under Procurement Guidelines, Section 4.4 that all goods purchased and classified as Assets must be recorded in the Asset Register.

The revised Financial Management Manual is provided in **ANNEX L**.

## 4.8 Operations Manual

The Operations Manual submitted as part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Plan has been updated with significant changes as follows:

- a. Included 4.7.13 as an additional section under the Locally Engaged Staff and Consultants, providing statements about Cessation of Contract of Services of Locally Engaged Staff and Locally Engaged Consultant (LES/LEC) and that an additional form “Personnel Clearance Form” forms part of the Annexes;
- b. Included a provision under Section 12.3 stating a policy on the loss of and damage to the program assets.

Slight changes are as follows:

- a. Included a statement under Section 4.8 that travel by plane is subject for approval by the Program Director, while all other forms are subject for approval by the staff member’s nominated Senior Field-based Program Officer and that travel costs may also be paid or reimbursed through the Regional PRIME Program Office petty cash fund.

The revised Operations Manual is provided in **ANNEX M**.

## 5 Significant Observations and Key Issues

This section describes the facilitating factors, challenges and implementation difficulties encountered from January to June 2012. These include significant observations and key issues gathered at the schools and communities, divisions, regions and at the central office level.

### 5.1 EoPOs Demand-side

- a. Targeting children not in school. There appears to be a reliance on existing documents, such as the SIP and DEDP among schools and divisions in determining targets for enrollment, drop out and completion. This practice narrowed the coverage of PRIME Program supported interventions to children who are in school, eventually negating children who are not in school. This reliance of existing plans must be addressed by the concerned regions and divisions in order to come up with more realistic targets and strategies. It is also important for the regions and divisions to focus on the projected increase in number of IP and Muslim boys and girls that will be covered in the next two years.
- b. Changes in perceptions and attitudes. The initial gains generated in the last six months showed significant changes in the perception and attitudes of DepED implementers and stakeholders. Most of the change stories in the nine regions pertain to change in the perspectives, attitudes and awareness among school heads, division staff with regard to the beliefs, practices and issues affecting disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities. The changes in perspectives and awareness also served as the stimulus to act and challenge the status quo of existing interventions (or the lack thereof). The changes are primarily the result of the immersion and advocacy activities initiated in the regions and divisions. This phenomenon suggests the need to prioritize strategies on advocacies, awareness building and community immersion programs prior to the design of specific interventions by DepED. This approach will also hasten DepED understanding of the barriers and bottlenecks affecting participation of children belonging to disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities. Significant stories have been collected during this reporting period and are provided for in **Annex N**.
- c. Limited accomplishments for Muslim Education initiatives. At the National Office level, almost no activities were recorded in the Muslim education component. Limited accomplishments were also

observed in some regions in the last six months. A series of discussions between the OPS and the Office of Madrasah Education (OME) were held, however, issues of scope and ownership by OME of the PRIME Program PIP for Muslim Education still persists.

## **5.2 EoPOs Supply-side**

- a. Strengthen capability building efforts. There is a need to review the plans of the divisions, regions and CO on capability building on M&E. Most of the regions and divisions have limited intervention on this area considering the need to enable DepED to properly and appropriately respond to the current and projected demands to basic education services.
- b. Critical processes and mechanisms. Majority of activities outlined in the PIPs are about workshops, orientations and attendance to training. There seems to be limited effort on the development and design of critical processes, mechanisms and systems that will facilitate divisions' and regions' responses to support the reforms being implemented at the school and community level. There is a need to fast track the conduct of the Baseline Survey - Supply-Side. The results can help identify the areas of strengths and weaknesses of DepED in basic education service delivery which will help the national office, regions and divisions identify priority areas for improvement in their operations.

## **5.3 EoPOs Enabling Outcome**

- a. Few activities on changing perspective and awareness. Changing perspectives and raising awareness are two of the critical enabling outcomes of the PRIME Program. However, there were very few activities implemented on this area by some divisions and regions in the last six months. Among the EoPOs, changes in perspectives and awareness must be achieved at the beginning of the program as these will provide the critical stimulus to challenge the status quo and enable change.

## **5.4 Program Administration and Management**

- a. Clarification of PRIME Program scope. The revision and communication of the revised MEFP to the national office, regions and divisions allowed for a common understanding of the EoPOs and projects that are eligible for PRIME Program grants. The revised MEFP helped avoid the initial confusion arising from different interpretation of the outputs and activities covered by the program. The revised MEFP will also support and enable a smooth transition to 2013-2014 program activities.
- b. Accomplishment and utilization. Relatively low physical accomplishment and lower than anticipated utilization of GOA funds in some regions and divisions from January to June 2012 was due in part to the DepED-wide launching of the K to 12 Program and the MTB-MLE. Most of the activities planned in April and May 2012 were not implemented as a direct result of this conflict in programming schedules.
- c. Strengthen the appraisal process. The experience of DepED in managing the service contractors can be enhanced by strengthening their competencies on how to appraise or review proposals. This will allow DepED to set up appropriate control requirements needed to manage the service providers. Such an approach will facilitate appropriate tracking and evaluation of CO grants and the subsequent implementation.
- d. Departure of DepED staff assigned to the PRIME Program. The departure of four key staff from OPS (who were involved in the implementation of the PRIME Program) due to participation in the AusAID scholarship program has temporarily delayed implementation of activities outlined in the CO-PIP. Additionally, the program was informed that an additional two OPS staff members are

preparing for the next round of scholarships which is reducing their ability to contribute to and guide program implementation.

- e. Limited accomplishments due to limited counterpart from GOP. Insufficient 2012 GOP counterpart funds for PRIME Program have been provided which is hindering implementation of program activities in the field. However, there have been recent efforts by the DepED to source funds from other budget line items most significant is the approval of DepED for Regions and Divisions to utilize the SBM Program Support Fund as part of the GoP counterpart for PRIME activities.
- f. Increasing demand from CO. Higher than anticipated demand on the CO Grants allocation is being anticipated – including the desire to expand the Inclusive Education Initiatives to additional sites, more IP Education CO proposals and emerging demands in relation to – Muslim Education – which are expected following the findings of the Review of Muslim Education Initiatives of DepED.

## 6 Major Recommendations and Proposed Adjustments to Implementation Approach

Based on the results of implementation from January to June 2012, the following activities are suggested to be undertaken in the immediate succeeding months:

- a. Address children who are not in school. There is a need for DepED to identify strategies that will “pinpoint” all children of school age who are in the target communities. This approach will allow the schools and divisions to assess the effectiveness of their existing enrollment and drop out reduction programs. The strategies may include the conduct of community education mapping, linking with barangay health workers and other public sector agencies and non-government organizations for data sharing and engagement of community members in actual community mapping. Funds for these activities could be allocated by using the community grant allocation of the PRIME Program.
- b. CO activities related to Muslim Education. There is a need to ‘engage’ with the OME to address issues regarding the limited implementation of the Muslim Education component of the program. The forthcoming review of Muslim Education initiatives is an opportunity to enhance coordination mechanisms between PRIME, OPS and OME. Additionally, leadership and staffing issues in the OME, particularly the need to appoint a permanent Coordinator and Advisor to the Secretary on Muslim Education, should be addressed. The PRIME Program may be requested to contract a senior Technical Advisor to assist the office.
- c. RO activities related to Muslim Education. OPS should conduct a conference with Regional PRIME Program Focal Persons to discuss the limitations of the Regions to implement activities related to Muslim education. This may include assessment of the regions’ current capacities to design and formulate programs for Muslim education as well as an assessment of the focal persons’ perception, attitudes and awareness towards Muslim education concerns.
- d. Focus on critical activities. Identify and prioritize ‘foundational’ activities that will be used as input to other initiatives. A capability training program on how to translate DO 62, the Muslim Education Roadmap for Muslim Education, MTB-MLE and other related policies and national plans will facilitate the alignment of interventions of schools, communities, divisions and regions. Awareness and understanding of such policies will facilitate congruence of effort at the national and regional levels to provide the necessary support to the division and school/community levels.
- e. Integrate the CO capability building program. OPS should take the lead in integrating the CO’s capability building program with the regions’ implementation plans. This integration should

address the limited efforts of the regions to strengthen planning and M&E which is one of the core concerns of the PRIME Program. This disconnect between the capability building programs must be addressed as part of the next planning sessions.

- f. Special session with PRIME Program replacement staff. To mitigate the effect of the departure of four key staff from OPS (and potentially two more OPS staff next scholarship cycle), replacement staff should be appointed and undergo a special briefing session to apprise them of the program, implementation status and the challenges and issues affecting the program. The replacement staff should also be made aware of the issues and challenges involved in addressing the basic education needs of disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities.
- g. Strengthen the CO's appraisal process of grants and activities. The CO's appraisal process must be strengthened to address the limited coverage of the regions' capacity building efforts, the disconnection between CO and Region PIPs, and to further enhance the efficient and effective review, awarding and monitoring of PRIME Program CO Grants. The appraisal process must be reviewed together with the PRIME Program Grant guidelines.
- h. Explore cost sharing and pairing up with other programs. The problem with the provision of GOP funding counterpart may not be fully resolved in the next six months. Meanwhile, divisions and regions need to catch up and deliver outputs targeted in the next two quarters. A short term strategy to mitigate this funding shortfall is by cost sharing and pairing up of PRIME Program activities with related DepED programs with similar target groups. Examples include the SBM, MTB-MLE, Multi-Grade Schools support, Alternative Delivery Modes (ADMs), the drop out reduction program (DORP) and other similar initiatives aimed at improving access to basic education.
- i. Increase CO Grant allocation. Given the increasing and anticipated demand for CO Grants, the program will need to assess the capacity of divisions and regions to utilize their current grant allocations and where feasible transfer outstanding balances to the CO allocation.

## 7 Plans for the Next Period (July - December 2012)

After 16 months of program implementation which included start up, preparation of guidelines, setting up mechanisms and convening planning workshops, the activities of the PRIME Program will start to shift increasingly towards the conduct of M&E activities especially on the review of program implementation, financial audits, adjustments in program plans and policies and documentation of benefits and attainment of EoPOs. In this regard, the major program activities from July - December 2012 are as follows:

- a. Implementation of grants. Currently, 317 schools and communities have started implementing projects received from PRIME grants. In the pipeline are 219 project proposals from schools and communities for review or appraisal. These proposals are expected to be approved and start implementation by October 2012.
- b. Continuing development of the IP Education Curriculum Framework that will be used as reference by regions and divisions in the crafting of their IP education curriculum.
- c. Formulation of an IP Advocacy Plan
- d. Expansion of the Inclusive Education (IE) Initiatives. On request of AusAID, the PRIME Program has been requested to expand the number of IE pilot sites from 1 to approximately 6. The TOR for the implementation of the IE pilots is expected to be completed by the end of July with the implementation beginning in September 2012.
- e. Conduct of basic course on Managing M&E for National and Regional Staff. This training will enable DepED to respond to the monitoring, tracking and evaluation demand of the program. The focus of

the capability building will be on basic skills in planning and M&E including establishing and managing the M&E system. This work will also include further discussion of the PRIME Program MEFP.

- f. Financial audits will be conducted in August and November 2012.
- g. Sustainability review to be conducted by an independent reviewer in September of 2012.
- h. MEPA in September and December 2012.
- i. Course on Qualitative Evaluation focusing on Process Documentation and use of MSC Technique. The course is in preparation to harvesting the significant initial gains and outcomes that will be achieved through the program interventions.
- j. Stage 2 of Baseline Survey - Demand-side. Development of selected case studies on the practices, perception, beliefs and issues affecting access or participation of boys and girls belonging to the disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities. This is to deepen the understanding of the data presented in the quantitative Baseline Survey.
- k. Longitudinal Study. Preparations to the longitudinal study started in July with initial research expected to commence by October 2012. The duration of the study is just under two years – until the end of the PRIME Program. DepED intends to continue the longitudinal study after the PRIME Program using the Basic Education Research Fund (BERF) as well as other funding sources.
- l. Review to enhance Muslim education initiatives. The review is forecasted to start in August 2012.
- m. Baseline survey - Supply-side. Includes preparation of terms of reference defining the scope of the survey. This study is an institutional assessment of DepED focusing on the current capacities of DepED to provide education policy support to IP and Muslim education and basic education services to disadvantaged IP and Muslim communities.
- n. PRIME Annual Planning in October. The PRIME Program will conduct its last major planning session to cover the timeframe of October 2012 to June 2014. This will include the program's phase-out activities from January to June 2014.
- o. MSC stories. Conduct of initial gains in all program areas through collection, collation and selection of significant changes or stories emanating from the schools, communities, divisions, regions and central office.

The bar chart representing the major activities for the next period is found in **Annex O**.