



## **BEAM-ARMM ADM Project**

### **BRAC Progress Report**

**February-June 2012**

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### **ADM PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT**

**FEBRUARY-JUNE 2012**

#### **Summary**

BRAC is implementing the ADM Project, one of the four components of the bigger BEAM-ARMM Program of DepED with a grant funding support from AusAID. The main objective of the project is to contribute in improving access to basic education particularly in the remote and poor communities in the ARMM and contribute to poverty alleviation and the attainment of peace in the region.

Pre-implementation activities for the ADM Project commenced as early as October 2011 with support coming from 3 local consultants, a local firm (Orient Integrated Development Consultants Inc.) directly engaged by AusAID and with 2 BRAC senior staff who were briefly deployed in October and December, 2011.

The activities focused on gathering initial field data to help determine the profiles of priority communities needing the assistance from the ADM Project, establishing exploratory relationships with various civil society organizations and NGOs, enhancing the project implementation plan and advocacy work with DepEd and other local institutions.

Following the signing of grant agreement between AusAID and BRAC in February, 2012, BRAC deployed 8 Bangladeshi nationals to Cotabato City to commence project mobilization and start-up activities. An interim work plan was prepared and submitted to AusAID. The interim work-plan provided details on the specific activities beginning February to June 2012.

The interim work-plan covers all preparatory activities to mobilize and set-up project implementation including the establishment of Project Management Unit, engaging partner NGOs, recruitment and training of project staff and learning facilitators, developing the ADM curriculum for preschool and Grade 1, developing and producing the instructional materials, setting up the Learning Centers and Capacity building for DepEd-ARMM and NGOs.

As expected due to the late start of the pre-implementation activities, BRAC encountered a number of challenges and concerns which were managed well by the team with support provided by AusAID, DepEd and BRAC Head Office.

This first progress report describes the highlights of achievements and problems met by BRAC in the ADM Project implementation during the interim period from February – June 2012.

## Highlights of Accomplishments

The accomplishments and progress of activities of BRAC on the ADM Project are briefly summarized as follows:

### 1. BRAC Project Management Unit (PMU) in Cotabato Established

- Official registration at the Securities and Exchange Commission for the regional branch of BRAC in the Philippines was obtained in February, 2012. The registered name is Stichting BRAC International Inc.
- The Project Management Unit (PMU) was fully established in Cotabato City in April, 2012. Serving as an administration office for the project operations, the PMU is located at No 1, Manara St, Rosary Heights 10, Cotabato City. The PMU is now fully equipped with basic office furniture and equipment such as internet connection, telephone system, tables and chairs, cabinets, photocopier, printers, computers, scanners, etc. The PMU is likewise secured with a CCTV system and a private security agency providing 24/7 security services.
- Eight (8) BRAC staff from Bangladesh were deployed to work full time in the PMU from February. Periodic short-term visits were also made by senior officials and specialists from BRAC HO to provide high level technical and management support to the operations.
- The staff residence for the BRAC nationals is also located in the same compound. Six (6) BRAC staff who are Bangladeshi nationals are currently residing in the staff house. A housekeeper cum cook was hired to support the food and dietary needs of the staff.
- A Provincial Office has been established in Iligan City with 2 Bangladesh nationals assigned to support the NGO operations in the Lanao Sur and Marawi City divisions. The same office serves as staff quarters. Marawi-based NGOs take turns in accompanying the two BRAC staff to and from Iligan City and Marawi City and around the project areas.
- A liaison office has been established in Davao City specifically at the same unit formerly occupied by the BEAM-ARMM at the Mezzanine of ApoView Hotel. This office serves as the hub for the procurement of school supplies, printing of instructional materials, bookings for study tours, coordination with various creditors and suppliers, and transactions with HSBC as the BRAC's depository bank.
- Three (3) new cars (2 Toyota Fortuners and 1 Prado) have been signed off for procurement and now awaiting delivery. Three (3) old vehicles (1 Nissan Patrol, 1 Mitsubishi Pajero, 1 Grandis) were received from the previous BEAM-ARMM project. The Grandis has been out-of-service from the time it was turned-over and is currently undergoing repairs.

- A senior finance official from BRAC was deployed to head the finance unit at the PMU. Three senior finance officials from BRAC HO (Director Finance, General Manager- Finance and A Programmer) came to Cotabato City and helped establish the finance and accounting system at the PMU.

## **2. Contracting Support NGO**

- Exploratory talks were undertaken with a number of national and local NGOs to become the Support NGO. These include the CARD, HESH, OIDCI, PBSP, IPED. The talks have not prospered due to some contracting concerns.
- BRAC has undertaken initial discussion with the Community and Family Service International (CFSI), BRAC's largest Partner NGO which has been contracted to manage learning centers in Maguindano and Lanao Sur for the possibility of providing admin support to BRAC. CFSI has already agreed in principle to provide office space and admin support to BRAC at its Manila head office. The agreement document is still being finalized.

## **3. Contracting Research and Evaluation Partnership with Local Institution**

- BRAC has made initial discussions with a number of institutions for possible partnership in the ADM Project. Included in the initial discussions were SEARCA (Los Banos), USM (Kabacan), NDU (Cotabato City) and MSU system.
- The draft of agreement with SEARCA for the conduct of research has been prepared. The first major research planned to be undertaken through SEARCA is the conduct of baseline study in the ADM project areas. The Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC is now preparing the TOR for this study.

## **4. Recruitment of staff and advisers for BRAC PMU**

- A staffing structure with detailed job description for each position in the PMU was prepared.
- The following core staff for the PMU were recruited and have started working in the project from April 2012:
  - Curriculum and Materials Development Officer
  - Curriculum and Training specialist
  - Graphics Designer
  - Communications Officer
  - IT/MIS Officer
  - Procurement and Logistics Officer
  - Finance Assistant

- Office Assistant
  - Utility
- Recruitment of other staff was not completed due to the delay in the engagement of a Support NGO.
  - Bangladesh nationals deployed to the PMU include the following:
    - Project Director
    - Project Manager
    - Curriculum Specialist
    - Materials Development Specialist
    - Finance Manager
    - 3 Provincial Coordinators
  - A Project Management Consultant was hired to provide advisory and technical support to the various operations of the project.

## **5. ADM Pre-School and Grade 1 Materials Developed**

- BRAC conducted a series of workshops participated in by experts from DepEd CO, DepEd-ARMM, AusAID and BRAC to review the K to 12 DepEd curriculum for Kindergarten and Grade 1 and translated them into a budget of work and instructional delivery framework to be used in the BRAC Schools. The proposed curriculum framework and materials were presented to officials of DepEd-ARMM, DepEd CO, AusAID and NGOs at a workshop held at the NEAP, Davao City on March 15, 2012. The said materials were in general endorsed by the mentioned entities.
- Teacher guides corresponding to each competency in all subject areas in the pre-school and Grade 1 were developed guided by both the DepEd and BRAC pedagogical methods. The teacher guides in Grade 1 covered the first grading period only since the DepEd curriculum guide and instructional materials have not been released yet.
- Appropriate Pre-school & Grade I teaching and learning materials were developed corresponding to the competencies and teacher guides. Selected manipulative toys and learning materials for the preschools have been ordered from the Tahanang Walang Hagdan Foundation and delivered on the last week of June, 2012.
- Teacher guides were translated into Filipino and were printed & distributed to the partner NGOs during the conduct of teacher's training. A total of 150 guides for Grade 1 and 600 teachers' guide for pre-school were printed and were distributed to the NGOs during their teachers' training.
- 850 copies of 9 story books written and designed by the team were printed and distributed to the partner NGOs. Four story books in the mother-tongue (2-

Maguindanao, 1-Teduray, 1-Iranun) were likewise developed and printed to be used in the BRAC schools in Maguindanao.

- A set of student materials and school supplies based on the DepEd curriculum and BRAC experience were determined and procured for distribution to all NGOs.
- Assessment tools corresponding to each learning competency in the teacher guide were developed and printed.

## 6. Procurement of School Supplies

- Based on the teacher guides and instructional plan developed for both the pre-primary and Grade 1 classes, school supplies and support materials were procured and distributed to all Partner NGOs. Some of the major items purchased include school bags (12,240 pcs), writing slates (12,240 pcs), manipulative toys (6 sets X 800 per set, alphabet & number charts (430 pcs), attendance registers and assorted school supplies (pad papers, pencils, cartolina, crayons, etc). The manipulative toys were supplied by the Tahanang Walang Hagdan Foundation.

## 7. Contracting of Partner NGOs

- A total of 11 NGOs were contracted from the original shortlist of 19. The selection was based on the evaluation of their proposal, organizational profile, experience and willingness to commit to the ADM project goals and guidelines.
- The Partner NGOs for the first round of ADM implementation are as follows:

PROVINCE	PARTNER NGO	NO. OF LEARNING CENTERS		
		Pre-Primary	Grade 1	Total
Maguindanao	SSGRCD	10	10	20
	CFSI	19	4	23
	KDSAI	15	11	26
	NDU	21	8	29
	BRAC	8	4	12
Lanao Sur	MARADECA	72	26	98
	TAPUKAN FARMERS	18	-	18
	CFSI	39	22	61
	KALIMUDAN	31	2	33
	LYECAP	32	11	43
Tawitawi	MIT	8	7	15
	ILMO	6	9	15
	MUFTI	10	7	17
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>289</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>410</b>

- BRAC will be directly managing the Learning Centers in the division of Maguindano 2 to showcase a typical BRAC school.
- The relatively larger NGOs with proven capability were assigned to cover bigger number of schools to operate than the smaller NGOs.
- All Partner NGOs have hired their core staff specifically Project Coordinators (PC), Project Organizers (PO) and Learning Facilitators/Teachers.
- The NGOs have revisited the communities assigned to them and have undertaken community mobilization such as profiling, recruitment of learners and learning facilitators and school house refurbishment and construction.
- The budget to support the operations of the 410 schools were developed and the first tranche have been transferred to the project bank account of the Partner NGOs
- The NGO heads were given a preliminary orientation-briefing on the ADM project during the MOA signing in Cotabato City last March 22, 2012.
- A separate one day orientation for NGO heads were conducted by Dr. Safiquil Islam, Director of BRAC Education Program on April13, 2012.
- Separate orientations for all NGO Heads, Project Coordinators (PC) and Project Officers (PO) were conducted by BRAC staff in the offices of the partner NGOs. The orientations were focused on the mechanics for school opening specifically a) conduct of school/barangay profiling; b) establishment of classrooms; c) recruitment and hiring of Learning Facilitators, d) formation of Parents School Committee, and e) recruitment of learners.
- Capacity building activities for the Partner NGOs were started through the conduct of study tour and exposure in BRAC Bangladesh. The tours are as follows:
  - a) Study Tour for Project Coordinators of the Partner NGOs on May 27-June 8, 2012. The PCs will be managing on full-time capacity the operations of the learning centers and they will serve as the focal person for the Partner NGO.
  - b) Study Tour for Project Directors/Executives of the Partner NGOs on June 10-18, 2012. Ten (10) heads of partner NGOs participated in the tour aimed at familiarizing them with the operations and management of BRAC education program so that they can also effectively manage the BRAC Learning Centers they assigned to them in ARMM.

## **8. Establishment of Project provincial Office**

- The Provincial Office for Lanao Sur and Marawi City operations has been established in Iligan City. Two Bangladesh BRAC nationals are stationed in this office. Partner NGOs provide support to the operations of the office.

- Support to the provincial operations in Maguindanao and Tawitawi is being undertaken directly by the PMU

## **9. BRAC-ADM Orientation and Advocacy for DepEd and LGUs**

- BRAC management conducted a series of meetings with the new DepEd-ARMM Secretary including the new Regional Governor and oriented them on the ADM Project. Expressions of support and cooperation to the project were articulated by both the Governor and Regional Secretary.
- To fully orient DepEd on BRAC education program, a study tour to Bangladesh was undertaken for the Senior officials of DepEd CO from May 27- June 2, 2012. Together with 2 delegates from AusAID (Counselor Elaine Ward and SPO Evelyn Daplas), the DepEd executives were provided with a first-hand information and exposure to the BRAC education program and were able to express their full support to the implementation of the BRAC in ARMM.

## **10. Identification and Selection of Pre-School Sites and 100 Grade 1 Sites**

- A total of 646 barangays were visited through a scoping survey which served as basis for prioritization for the first round of schools in the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao Sur, Marawi City and Tawi Tawi. Of this number, 289 communities were proposed to be supported by pre-school and 121 communities for Grade 1. The barangays were clustered according to their proximity to each other, mobility for supervision and monitoring and familiarity of the Partner NGO to these areas.

## **11. Pre-School and Grade 1 Establishment by partner NGOs**

- Following the blue-print and architectural plan prepared by the BRAC PMU, the Partner NGOs have started constructing or renovating the classrooms that will be used for the BRAC schools. A total of 70 new classrooms will be built while 340 existing buildings will be renovated. The design of the classroom building blended the prescribed specifications by DepEd as well as the model in BRAC schools.
- All pre-schools are targeted to open in early July of 2012, immediately after the Learning Facilitators have completed their Basic training.

## **12. Training Program for Learning Facilitators**

- A Basic training program for the Learning Facilitators of Pre-Primary and Elementary (Grade 1) was developed by the team in Curriculum component of ADM. The training was designed with the following objectives:



- i. Provide teachers with the general orientation on how to open and start the schools'
  - ii. Orient them on the curriculum for the whole program (pre-primary and elementary), including the competencies to be covered and allocation of time.
  - iii. Orient them on the new teacher's guides/teaching manual
  - iv. Provide them with foundation skills on instructional delivery methods
- The Project Coordinators of the Partner NGOs who participated in the familiarization tour in the BRAC in Bangladesh underwent a Trainers' Training upon their return at the NEAP, Davao City on June 9-12, 2012. The PCs also served as the lead trainers during the teachers trainings in the 3 provinces.
  - BRAC PMU staff monitored and provided support during the actual conduct of teacher's training.

### 13. Training for Pre-School and Grade- I Learning Facilitators

- A total of 15 training batches were organized and conducted for the training of Learning Facilitators for the pre-school during the period June 16-28, 2012. A total of 289 Learning Facilitators were targeted to be given the 6-day Basic training for pre-schools.
- A total 06 training batches were organized and conducted for the training of elementary Learning Facilitators for the period of June 23-July 10. A total of 121 Elementary Learning Facilitators were targeted to be given the two weeks training.
- Modules and support materials for teachers' training were developed.

Facilitators From	Venue/s	Number of Training Batches	
		Pre-Primary	Elementary
Maguindanao	St. Joseph Seminary, Cotabato City	3	2
	CFSI Training center, Cotabato City	1	
Lanao Sur/Marawi City	MARADECA, Marawi City	2	
	MSU, Marawi City	6	3
	CFSI, Cotabato City	1	
	St. Joseph Seminary, Cotabato City	1	
Tawitawi	Rachels Inn, Bongao	1	1
Total		15	6

## 14. Capacity Building for PMU

- Development of a capacity development program for the PMU staff has been initiated and will be finalized upon the completion of the staffing. Included in the plan are the following activities:
  - i. Technical training - Staff will be included in the study tours to BRAC in Bangladesh to provide them with the full orientation and exposure to the operations of the BRAC education program.

Two staff have already attended the study tours:

- a) Bella Lanestosa – the Curriculum & Materials Development Specialist joined the tour with the Project Coordinators of the Partner NGOs. Upon return from the tour, she led the conduct of Training of Trainers and supported the conduct of teachers training in Maguindanao.
  - b) Aldis James Moral – IT/MIS Officer joined the tour with the Head of Partner NGOs. He had a full exposure on the operations of the BRAC and upon return he assumed more roles in office IT/MIS management at the PMU.
- ii. Staff orientation–The following staff orientation sessions will be conducted:
    - a) Orientation on the security plan
    - b) Orientation on the office admin
  - iii. Special training for Bangladesh nationals
    - a) A special training will be organized for the Bangladesh nationals on the Filipino language. This will be conducted during weekends.
    - b) The IT/MIS Officer provided hands-on mentoring to all the staff on basic IT tools and maintenance operations.

## Challenges Met

Implementation of the ADM Project using the BRAC model faced a number of challenges and issues during the mobilization period. Being large and a new project, it was met with high expectations and excitement from the various stakeholders. The following problems and challenges were part of BRAC's mobilization experience in the Philippines:

### 1. *Legal requirements*

Being an NGO based in Bangladesh, BRAC had to register itself in the Philippines in order to have a legal personality as it implements the ADM project. BRAC got its registration certificate only in February 2012, consequently, this delay affected the conduct of many planned mobilization activities such as: a) contracting a building to house the PMU in Cotabato City; b) hiring of local PMU staff; c) opening of bank account, d) transfer of fund from AusAID; e) procurement of office furniture and equipment, and f) contracting the Partner NGOs.

## **2. Curriculum development**

The need to align the curriculum to be used in the BRAC learning centers with the new curriculum of DepEd's K to 12 reform program needed more time than what was earlier expected. The curriculum both for the kindergarten and Grade 1 had more competences which need to be translated into the delivery structure of BRAC model, e.g. shortened completion for elementary, and in the ARMM context. Moreover, reference materials on the new curriculum were limited to kindergarten and the first grading period in Grade 1. Follow-up workshops will have to be undertaken to complete the teacher guides and support materials for the remaining grading periods in Grade 1.

## **3. Instructional materials development.**

The teacher guides likewise need to be translated into the Filipino language for easy use by the learning facilitators. This lengthened the time spent in completing the teacher guides.

## **4. Partner NGOs**

There were not enough NGOs in ARMM who met the selection criteria as partners in the management of BRAC schools. This concern was more pronounced in Lanao Sur divisions where the largest numbers of targeted barangays are located. Moreover, many NGOs declined to cover some of the targeted barangays because of the negative reputation regarding these areas, e.g. security problems, remote location and uncooperative communities.

## **5. Geographic constraints**

There was difficulty in gathering and validating basic profile information in many of the targeted communities because of distance, poor transportation facilities to these areas, and unstable peace and order condition associated with the "rido" or family feud. Many of the barangays originally included in the proposed list actually did not qualify and had to be replaced after the NGOs conducted their own field validation. Several communities targeted in Tawi-Tawi are located in far-flung islands where cost of transportation is high and communication is difficult.

## **6. Security and safety**

Many of the targeted communities have security issues making it difficult to conduct community profiling and monitoring the progress of school construction.

## **7. Organizing the study tours**

The study tours met some difficulty due to issues associated with passports and the availability of the senior officials. Airline reservations became complicated resulting to increased fares.

## **8. Work Permits**

Movement and travels of Bangladesh nationals became restricted due to the delays in obtaining special work permits from the Department of Justice.

### **Lessons learned**

- The participation of DepED Central Office and DepED-ARMM at the critical phases of project implementation hastens the completion of activities as well as ensures immediate support and ownership in the project. A specific example was in the restructuring of the time allotment and competencies in the curriculum and the writing of teacher guides for the kindergarten and Grade 1 whereby specialists from DepED-CO and DepED-ARMM were directly involved.
- The hiring of local professionals particularly those with work experience in ARMM and in projects as staff in the PMU greatly helped facilitate the effective conduct of activities because of their local knowledge and the adjustment period needed by the Bangladesh nationals to work in the Philippines and ARMM setting.
- The engagement of local NGOs with substantial experience in community development and education was useful in jumpstarting project implementation despite limitations in time. Many NGOs proceeded to conducting community mobilization in their respective assigned communities despite the lack of in-depth orientation and training by BRAC. By employing their own knowledge and approaches and utilizing capable and professional Project Organizers, many NGOs were able to proceed with the critical school opening requisites such as teacher selection, community profiling, organizing the parent's committee, etc.
- BRAC management (M. Nazrul Islam, Muhammed Rezaul Karim and others), conducted personal visits to the offices of the partner NGOs, a strategy which was useful in providing them with a better understanding of and getting the full cooperation of the NGOs.