

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 13, 2008

DepEd, Rotarians scale up Megumi Project 1.8 M Grade 3 pupils expected to benefit

The Department of Education (DepEd) and Partners for Universal Literacy (PULL) Foundation today forged an agreement for the second phase of the Megumi Reader project -- a reading device which helps elementary pupils to read and improves teaching-learning process in the classroom.

The Megumi Reader is a low-cost, portable, versatile and simple-to-use electronic reader named after wife of a Japanese Rotarian who donated the seed money to jumpstart its development. The gadget prototype is assembled by Ionics, a Filipino-publicly listed electronics company in its Cabuyao, Laguna facilities.

PULL Foundation aims to distribute the reading device to some 1.8 M Grade 3 pupils nationwide. It is an initiative founded by Mat Caparas, President of Rotary International in Rotary Year 1986-87. He sounded off a small group of Filipino Rotarians on a basic idea to promote universal literacy through the use of an electronic reader.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said, "The Megumi Reader is perhaps one of the more promising efforts to improve the student-centered learning environment. Beyond being an educational tool that enhances the teaching-learning process, its interactive features may develop within our pupils' metacognitive skills – the ability to learn how to learn. "

"Its versatility will also help the Department to save resources as courseware can now be developed electronically and loaded unto the device," he added.

Lapus was joined in the signing by DepEd's Adopt-A-School Program Executive Director Mari Paul Soriano, PULL Chairman Antonio Tambunting, Jr., PULL President Herman Gamboa, and PULL Vice-President Herminio Coloma.

Last March, DepEd and PULL signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the adoption of Megumi reader. The Megumi Reader unit is estimated to cost between \$50 to \$100. The total cost for the implementation of the Phase I of the project is Php 3,500,000. This cost was shouldered by PULL Foundation. It was piloted in 3 elementary schools in NCR.

Based on the first grading evaluation results after the implementation of Megumi Reader Project Phase I, significant indicators of success of the program have been observed and validated.

For the second phase of the project, DepEd will provide the curricula and other materials that will be developed into the official software. The official software

PRESS RELEASE

that will be used will be approved by DepEd prior to its use. DepEd will also provide the needed monitoring and evaluation services.

Lapus enthused, "With PULL and other organizations behind us, DepEd looks forward to having the Megumi Reader in the hands of our Grade 3 pupils soon. We are excited at the prospect of having this Filipino-made device dramatically improving literacy among our young."

During the signing ceremony, PULL also committed the promotion of DepEd's Adopt-A-School Program (ASP), through its network of civic organizations, Rotary Clubs and other associations for more funding for the introduction of the Megumi Reader.

ASP facilitates private sector assistance for public education. It was re-launched in September 2006 by Secretary Lapus to help generate more resources and interventions from the private sector. Through the Adopt a School Act of 1998 or RA 8525, private entities who assist all public schools in the country can avail of the 150 percent tax incentives.

ASP Executive Director Soriano said, "We invite more people to invest in the education of our children—the future of this country. We are all stakeholders here."

For more information, interested donors and partners may contact Ruel Bonito, Adopt-A-School Resource Mobilization Manager at 638-86-37, 638-86-39 or email asp_secretariat@deped.gov.ph.

END

PRESS RELEASE