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Luistro: DepEd is serious on its EFA goals

To move closer towards hitting the 2015 Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets, the Department of Education (DepEd) intends to undertake, a ground mapping of all six-year old children by way of pre-registration all over the country.

“As President Benigno Aquino III puts education as the top priority in the next six years, DepEd is set to scale up basic education performance to ensure that all school- aged children are in school by 2015,” furthered Luistro.

Beginning the remainder of 2010, DepEd will start the pre-registration to determine the interventions needed to ensure that the MDGs is within the department’s reach.

Education Chief Br. Armin Luistro, together with the entire department, is taking the positive stance that we are anchored on the right direction in meeting our commitment, saying, “the Philippines is on track in implementing education reforms to meet its commitment under the Education for All (EFA) goal by 2015, the deadline set by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).”

“The Education for All, more than a commitment, is a guiding principle to make basic education accessible to as many learners which we can consider a solid investment for the future. We are all stakeholders of education. Education is not a sole responsibility of DepEd. At the end of the day, we are all accountable in the education of our people,” Luistro urged.

The pre-registration list shall serve as the basis of the schools and local government units (LGUs) within the School-based Management (SBM) framework in deciding what local interventions needed to be done to ensure a net intake rate (NIR) of close to 100 percent of six year olds entering grade one.

“By giving our school heads the authority to fully implement what they have set out to do, we can bring out the best in them, and consequently, bring out the best in their teachers and students,” explained Luistro on how SBM could be a factor in meeting MDG targets.

Relative to this, the department will strengthen the utilization of the electronic Instructional Management by Parents, Community and Teachers (e-IMPACT) project. Being implemented in some schools in the country, the project promotes the adoption of Alternative Delivery Modes (ADMs) to formal basic education with the aim of making the schools more inclusive and responsive to the educational needs of disadvantaged and marginalized children.

E-IMPACT was conceptualized and developed by Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO-INNOTECH) with the cooperation of DepEd. The project is the revised package of IMPACT, which is a mature and tested model since

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the 1970s. It now includes downloading of educational videos in Math and Science using mobile satellite technology.

In fact, DepEd is allocating 200 million pesos in the 2011 budget to support project e-IMPACT for the mainstreaming, adoption and expansion of tried and validated ADMs. Through this, there will be greater retrieval and retention of schoolchildren who have left school, or are in danger of dropping out and those who have difficulties in school participation under the conventional delivery of primary education as may be determined by the School Governing Council (SGC). SGC is composed of representatives from the student body, teachers, community, local government, and the school head. Government and non-government organizations and private sectors are also invited to be part of the council.

On top of this corrective and compensatory approach, DepEd also intends to harness the initiatives and creativity of the schools in undertaking local or school-based projects. The department believes that this will address problems of participation by allocating P2 billion pesos for FY 2011 to expand the amount and number of beneficiary-schools for SBM installation and support.

Luistro also added that, “when school heads are given the freedom to strategize on their own, they can better enjoy the fruits of what they have sown and appreciate more the dividends from all their physical, intellectual, and emotional investments. As they see the positive transformation in their school, the motivation and commitment among the principals will be strengthened, hence they will strive for more.”

On the other hand, because DepEd sees that much of the problems of children from poor families are related to their health and nutrition status, it will also allocate P126M for its health and nutrition programs. This will consist of P85 million for school feeding and P41 million for medical, dental, optical and nursing services.

“The department, even before my term, has long recognized that the state of health and nutrition is a factor with a direct effect on children’s attendance and performance in school. We believe that by enhancing their health and well-being, there will be an improved retention and completion of children in primary education,” Luistro pointed out.

This nature of intervention is in addition to the MDG-related Conditional Cash Transfer Program or Pantawid Pampamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) which have already been addressing the poverty factor in children’s access to formal basic education.

It may be noted that the six EFA goals which the Philippines has committed itself to achieve include expanding early childhood care and education; providing free and compulsory education for all; providing learning and life skills to young people and adults; increasing adult literacy by 50% percent; achieving gender equality by 2015 and improving the quality of education.

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The education chief assured the people, that, “we are doing our mighty best to deliver what is expected of us given the perennial lack of resources that continues to hobble the Department.”

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