4. Literacy Education in the Philippines, a Host Country of the Capacity Building Workshop

1) Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE) Programs and Projects: GO-NGO Collaboration

Dr. Rosario J. de Guzman
Director IV
Bureau of Nonformal Education
Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (BNFE-DECS)
Philippines

1. Functional Education and Literacy Program (FELP)

1) It aims at expanding the outreach and improving the quality and relevance of community-based literacy programs for out-of-school youth and adults.
2) Learners of FELP are 15 year old and above out-of-school youth and adults who are basically illiterate.
3) FELP is implemented through the Literacy Service Contracting Scheme (LSCS) and service providers.
4) Some of the Service Providers or Umbrella Organisation are NGOs, local government units, or government agencies. Private and State Universities and Colleges also join this activity.

Service Providers
- NGOs with national and regional affiliate members
- Association for Non-Traditional Education in the Philippines (ANTEP)
- Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities, Inc. – Women in Enterprise Development (NDFCAI-WED)
- Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PHILDHRRA)
- Total of 177 service providers are involved in this scheme and the numbers of learners cared by the Government are 975,662, while 340, 838 learners are financially cared by the outside assistance.

2. The Nonformal Education Accreditation and Equivalency (NFE A & E) System

1) Background
The development of a Nonformal Education Accreditation and Equivalency (NFE - A & E) System was conceived under the umbrella of Education for All – Philippine Plan of Action (EFA – PPA) as part of the original project component of the ADB – Assisted Nonformal Education Project. It is envisioned to provide an alternative means of certification of learning to those Filipinos who are unable to avail of the formal school system, or who have dropped out of formal elementary or secondary education. It aims to:

a) Provide a system for assessing levels of literacy and nonformal education learning achievement based on the National Literacy Standards and NFE Accreditation and Equivalency Curriculum Framework; and
b) Offer an alternative means by which out-of-school youth and adults may earn an educational qualification comparable to that of the formal elementary and secondary school system.

BNFE has been tasked to develop the NFE Accreditation and Equivalency System comprising of National Literacy Standards (NLS), A&E Curriculum Framework, Learning Materials (LM), Equivalency Testing (ET), Certification and Accreditation and Learning Support Delivery System (LSDS). The legal basis of this effort is the 1993 Loan Agreement of the Philippines Nonformal Education Project (ADB Loan No. 1254-PHI SF) signed between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and supporting loan documents including: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU, 1993); Report and Recommendations of the President to the Board of Directors; (RRP, 1993); Project Administration Memorandum (PAM, 1995) and subsequent Memorandums of Understanding (MOU 1997 & 1998).

The development of the NFE A & E System was recently reconfirmed as a national priority of the Philippine government by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the Coordinating Council of the Philippines Assistance Program (CCPAP) and the Secretary of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS). During the development of the NFE A&E System the BNFE will work in coordination with the National Educational Testing and Research Center (NETRC), the Bureau of Elementary Education (BEE), the Bureau of Secondary Education (BSE) and the Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC) and other agencies involved in NFE.

2) NFE A&E System Framework Overview
The NFE Accreditation and Equivalency System to be developed under the Philippines Nonformal Education Project is operationally defined as a system of accrediting/certifying levels of learning of individuals as comparable to the formal education system. In addition to certifying individual learning achievement, it also includes a system for accrediting centers/agencies/institutions involved in providing A&E-related training programs. The NFE A&E Framework is characterized by the followings:

a) Entry Level Assessment:
This involves placement and counselling of individual learners interested in seeking alternative pathways to attain a qualification comparable to elementary certificate and/or secondary certificate;
b) Learning Interventions:
This includes the NFE A&E Curriculum Frame-
work (incorporating National Literacy Standards) Learning Materials, and Delivery System before seeking certification through equivalency testing;
c) Learning Assessment and Evaluation: This is used to assess learning progress, conduct equivalency testing and issue elementary and secondary level certification; and
d) Accreditation of Learning Programs: This includes the accreditation of service providers involved in the delivery of A&E related learning support training programs based on compliance with minimum prescribed national standards and evaluation of the effectiveness of their A&E-related training programs.

3) Objectives of the NFE A & E System Development

a) Establish an Accreditation and Equivalency System designed to certify and accredit the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values of Out-of-School Youth and Adults, gained through nonformal education or other alternative learning opportunities as comparable to the formal education system;
b) Establish a Nonformal A&E Curriculum Framework incorporating National Literacy Standards for assessing literacy and nonformal learning achievement deemed to be comparable to the formal school system;
d) Develop National NFE-Accreditation and Equivalency Testing instruments based on the A&E Curriculum Framework and content of the learning materials, as a means for issuance of educational qualifications comparable to the formal elementary and secondary school system; and
e) Provide alternative pathways of learning by which Out-of-School Youth and Adults may continue their learning outside of the formal education system through the development of A&E learning support delivery system.

4) Areas of Concentration

In order to attain these objectives, the following core components of the NFE A&E System will be developed:
- NFE A&E Curriculum Framework
- NFE A&E Learning materials
- NFE A&E Learning Support Delivery System
- NFE Equivalency Testing, Certification and Accreditation.

5) NFE A&E Curriculum Framework

The conceptual framework of the NFE A&E Curriculum will be based on the National Functional Literacy Definition and Indicators developed by the Literacy Coordinating Council (Please refer to Appendices). These functional literacy indicators set out the range of skills and competencies - cognitive, affective and behavioural – which enable individuals to: a) live and work as human persons, b) develop their potential, c) make critical and informed decisions to be able to function effectively in society in the context of their environment and that of the wider community (local, regional, national, global) in order to improve the quality of their life and that of society.

The NFE A&E Curriculum will be comparable in a general way to that of the formal school system but not parallel in terms of specific content. The content, skills and competencies of the NFE A&E Curriculum framework will cater directly to the specific priority learning needs and contexts of NFE clientele. The NFE A&E curriculum framework will thus emphasize “functionality” and not conform to the traditional subject-based content approach of the formal system. There will be degrees of similarity between competencies and skills addressed in the two systems, and they will intersect at certain points, however, the emphasis, content coverage and delivery strategies will be different.

The NFE A&E Curriculum will integrate National Literacy Standards along a learning continuum in three levels of literacy. The three levels can be described as follows:
a) Basic Literacy – illiterate level for those who have no literacy skills and the first step to basic/simple literacy towards functional literacy.
b) Elementary Level – semi-literate level for the reinforcement of basic reading, writing and numeracy skills or capabilities to a self-sustaining (neo-literate), and
c) Secondary Level – adequately functional Literate or Self-learning level for Continuing Education.

The three levels will not be directly parallel to the formal elementary and secondary curriculum in content, coverage, approaches or assessment strategies. They represent a system designed to serve adults who wish to become literate and/or gain skills needed to function effectively in society and to do this outside the formal school system. Those who complete the elementary and secondary levels will take an examination, normed on sixth graders or high school senior which if they are successful will result in their being awarded a certification deemed comparable to a sixth grade certificate or a high school certificate. This does not mean the NFE A&E System will be inferior or of lower quality, it will simply be different and uniquely nonformal in character.

The NFE A&E Curriculum Framework will be used as the basis for the development of the A&E Learning Materials and A&E Equivalency Test instruments. The A&E Curriculum framework developed by BNFE during a series of workshops with the assistance of NFE experts, curriculum...
writers and consultants consisted of set of skills and competencies in five learning strands such as Communication Skills, Problem Solving and Critical Thinking, Sustainable Use of Resources/Productivity, Development of Self and A Sense of Community and Expanding One’s World Vision (Please refer to Appendices). This was done in collaboration with the DECS Bureau of Elementary Education (BEE), Bureau of Secondary Education (BSE) and Physical Education and School Sports (BPESS), the National Educational Testing and Research Center (NETRC) and the Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC).

6) NFE A&E Learning Materials
A series of learning materials will be developed based on the A & E curriculum framework designed to provide learning support for OSY and adults who wish to continue learning outside of the formal school system, particularly in preparation for certification of learning achievement through successful accomplishment of a National NFE Accreditation and Equivalency Test. They will include, primers, facilitators’ guide, self-learning materials and supplementary materials (print and non-print).

The functional content of these learning materials will specifically focus on the needs and problems of out-of-school youth and adults and will be consistent with the national development goals. Basically, these materials will serve as the avenue for developing the reading, writing and numeracy skills, which comprise the core functional education and literacy skills of learners. The functional literacy indicators developed by LCC which cover concepts such as: political literacy, civic literacy, scientific literacy and critical literacy, economic literacy, and global literacy, will also be given special consideration in the development of these materials with the end in view of promoting awareness and empowering the learners to be able to participate in the development efforts of the community and the country.

7) NFE A&E Learning Support Delivery System
The A&E Learning Support Delivery System aims to develop and implement innovative delivery strategies and mechanisms to support the progression of learners along the learning continuum of basic literacy level to continuing education. It is designed to provide learners a range of alternative pathways in order that they may develop the minimum requirements in terms of knowledge, attitudes, values and skills (KAVS) which are necessary for them to take NFE Accreditation and equivalency tests.

Basic literacy and elementary literacy level learners may avail of literacy training programs under the Literacy Service Contracting Scheme (LSCS) provided by Literacy Service Providers (GOs, NGOs, POS, SCUs etc). The CEP Learning Support Delivery System includes utilization of the learning materials and a range of learner support strategies and structures, (such as learning facilitators, learning group sessions tutorials and learning centers), alternative delivery modes (i.e., self-instruction, classroom-based instruction, peer learning, multi-media) and A&E administrative support system.

8) NFE Equivalency Testing, Certification and Accreditation
Accreditation under the NFE A&E System is of two types: a) Certification of outcomes of learning of individuals; and b) Accreditation of learning programs.

a) Certification of Outcomes of Learning of Individuals: This comprises in-program Post Learning Assessment of learners skills developed as a result of their accessing the learning interventions, and Equivalency Testing and Certification. Post Learning Assessment includes utilization of nonformal assessment methodologies such as portfolio assessment as well as pre-and post-module and other term of assessments. Equivalency testing utilizes test instruments based on the A&E Curriculum Framework and Learning Materials for two levels of certification, which are deemed as comparable qualifications to the elementary certificate and secondary certificate of the formal school system. Equivalency testing will be administered by the NETRC in accordance with test administration guidelines, which will jointly be developed by the BNFE. Successful NFE A&E passers will be issued certificates signed by the DECS Secretary.

Passers will have access to counseling for advice regarding options and possible pathways after successfully completing the NFE A&E System. NFE Learners wishing to re-enter/return to or shuttle from the NFE System to the formal school system will need to take the existing Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT) for an assessment of their specific formal subject skill levels for placement purposes. They may also need to undertake additional training in specialized technical content areas such as higher-level science and mathematics in preparation for their return to the more academically focused formal system.

b) Accreditation of learning programs: This includes accreditation of institutions/agencies/organizations offering NFE related Nonformal Education programs. It will involve institutional collaboration with partner NFE agencies to facilitate articulation of programs and formulation of national standards and summative evaluation of learning programs to ensure quality control of A&E-related NFE programs offered by independent NFE Service Providers.

9) Target Clientele
The Target Clientele of the Nonformal Education – A&E System includes: OSY and Out-of-School Adults (OSA), functional illiterates, functional education and literacy program (FELP) completers, unemployed OSY and adults, elementary and secondary education drop-outs; and industry-based workers. The first batch of A&E enrollees are expected to take the equivalency exams for both elementary and secondary levels by May 1999 and results to be announced by June 1999. The target number of test examinees for the elementary certificate level is 20,000
while for secondary certificate the target is 10,000. Successful learners who undertake the proposed National Nonformal Education – Accreditation and Equivalency Test will receive either an NFE elementary certificate or secondary certificate depending on their achievement level.

10) A&E Project Development Plans
The development of the NFE A & E System is one of the key project development efforts of the ADB-funded Philippines Nonformal Education Project. The development of the system is currently on-going and is scheduled for pilot testing in four sites (2 urban and 3 rural) in January 1999. It is anticipated that the NFE A&E System will be fully implemented nationwide upon successful completion of the pilot test phase, currently targeted for June 1999. A detailed A&E System Project Implementation Plan for April 1998 to June 1999 has been developed which outlines the critical activities and outputs to be accomplished against a very strict and demanding time frame. The activities detailed by the PIP are illustrated in the Flow Chart. In order to fast track the NFE A&E System development the BNFE will be contracting the development of the Learning Materials and Equivalency Test instruments to qualified and reputable educational institutions/agencies.

11) Innovation and Linkage
The BNFE will also be working closely with the NETRC, Literacy Coordinating Council and Bureaus of Elementary and Secondary Education during all phases of the A&E System development. They will be requested to provide technical inputs and assistance in the development of the NFE A&E Curriculum framework as well as in setting guidelines for the accreditation, certification and equivalency system. As per Presidential Executive Order No. 733 of 1977, the NETRC, in coordination with the BNFE, will be responsible for the administration of the A&E test instruments, processing of test results and issuance of the elementary level certificate and secondary level certificate.

12) The NFE A&E Support System
The following four systems are strengthening the capability of the NFE A&E System:

a) NFE MIS
NFE MIS develops and operationalises a comprehensive and integrated computer-based management information system at various levels of the BNFE-DECS System.

i) NFE Mobile Programme: It makes education accessible to OSY and adults, raises the level of literacy in the target areas, and improves the quality of life of individuals and families in remote and underserved communities.

ii) The Army Literacy Patrol System (ALPS): I collaboration with DECS, soldiers serve as literacy facilitators to people in areas threatened by insurgency and those out of reach of the formal school system.

iii) Community Learning and Resource Center (CLARC): It is operated with funding assistance from UNESCO PROAP and gives access to basic education in remote and hard to reach areas. It serves as a center where community members converge.

iv) ACCU literacy programmes: ACCU funds in materials development, personal training, network building, and the development of the Asia-Pacific Literacy Data Base.

v) An equitable learning system for indigenous peoples: People such as Aetas is one of the indigenous peoples to be benefited by the projects.

b) Capability Building Programme
Training is provided to: Nonformal Education Facilitators for Cultural Communities (TNFECC), instructional managers, service providers, DECS officials, and so forth. BNFE has a library, learning resource center, and clearinghouse that have access to vital information, learning materials, technical and communication infrastructure, technical assistance, and capability building initiatives.

c) Monitoring & Evaluation

i) GO-NGO Collaboration
GO and NGOs collaborate in project development, project implementation, networking and advocacy, and resource mobilization, and have a strong partnership.

ii) Project development

iii) Project Implementation
NGOs participate in:
- Being members of the Project Steering Committee (PSC): a policy-making body,
- Being members of the NFE Coordinating Committees in various levels,
- Providing services to FELP and NFE A&E, and tri-partite scheme,
- Training organization in Project Management (NDFCAI-WED)
- Being international consultants (World Education)
- Being national consultants (NDFCAI-WED)
- Participating in process evaluation, consultative conferences, workshops, and training

d) Advocacy and Social Mobilization
Networking and advocacy are conducted in several manners such as launching ceremonies at national and local levels. Advertisement is also done in substantial ways such as in the style of a bookmark, a car sticker flyer, a
tricycle sticker, and on IEC materials on NFE. Campaigns also take place for learners and test registrants and when the GO hosts education officials from the other countries.

3. **Resource Mobilization**

GO supports for test registration and administration, takes pictures of registrants, and prepares food for examinees. GO also becomes a sponsor. BNFE-DECS is a co-sponsor and a collaborator of NDFCAI-WED in organizing the 1st Mindanao Summit on Literacy, REFLECT Training, and ACCU 2000 CBW in Cotabato. GO-NGO partnership is a key to successful sustainable quality NFE programs. Maramiknhg Salamat Po at Mabuhay.