

Making Children Fit for School in ARMM

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Contents

- Rehabilitation of School WASH Facilities
- Piloting of School Transparency Boards
- Inception of the Fit for School Feeding Concept
- School Health Personnel Workshop

Welcome to the 7th edition of the GIZ Fit for School ARMM newsletter!

This publication covers the latest developments in component 2 (school health) of the Basic Education Assistance of Muslim Mindanao (BEAM ARMM) program, the Department of Education (DepEd) ARMM's flagship education program. BEAM-ARMM is widely supported by the Australian Government. Component 2 is co-funded by the German government and is managed by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

In this issue of the newsletter we are going to report to you about the continued rehabilitation of school WASH facilities throughout Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur. Further GIZ Fit for School and DepEd ARMM are pleased to announce the launch and piloting of two new and exciting concepts, the School Transparency Boards and the School Feeding Program, which will both further strengthen and complement the Essential Health Care Program and overall school health in ARMM. Finally, we would like to use this newsletter to cover the school health personnel workshop held in early September.

We hope that you enjoy reading this edition of the newsletter.

With best regards,
The GIZ Fit for School Team



TVET Plumbing Team in action at Hadji Edza ES.

Rehabilitation of School WASH Facilities

In order to sustain and expand the EHCP achievements reached so far, it is crucial to provide school sanitation facilities which are adequate for the needs of children. DepEd ARMM, GIZ Fit for School and the TVET (Technical Vocational Education Training) workforce under Xavier University's Sustainable Sanitation Center (XU-SuSan) have teamed up to provide technical support and know-how to schools throughout ARMM to improve their WASH facilities. Schools are encouraged to take simple, inexpensive steps which are designed in a way that during every school day all learners can wash their hands with soap, and are provided with clean and well maintained sanitation facilities.

School principals, teachers, students, parents, community members, as well as school nurses and officials can be proud of what they have collaboratively achieved so far their commitment is essential for further progress.

Hadji Edza ES is one of many schools to have shown such great commitment. After a GIZ-XU sanitation team constructed two cubicle classroom toilets in the school back in June of this year, the principal of the school, Ms. Tarhata M.Nasa, asked for further assistance to convert the water line of the hand washing facilities from a PVC pipe to a more permanent GI Pipe. The engineers responded by providing a bill of the materials for the conversion and once the school had purchased them the team provided technical support.

School Health Personnel Workshop

From 8-9 September 2015 the Department of Education invited school health personnel to Cotabato City. During the workshop the division nurses and coordinators had the chance to discuss lessons learned and plan future activities for EHCP – DepEd's flagship school health program.

The chief of DepEd ARMM's Health and Nutrition Unit, Ms. Sittie Pieron Abutazil-Du, chaired the meeting which brought together different participants from the mainland and island divisions of ARMM. The workshop included a field visit to the award winning Sarmiento West Elementary School, where the participants had the opportunity to witness EHCP in action and engage in discussions with different stakeholders.

Other topics discussed during the meeting included updates on school-based deworming activities, engagement of community members and operational planning for EHCP.



Piloting of School Transparency Boards

DepEd ARMM is currently piloting a project on transparency and accountability at school level: 10 schools have been selected to set up so called transparency boards – physical boards visible to the whole community with information on projects, funds, successes and needs of the respective school.

The boards are set up in a joint process with different stakeholders – parents, teachers, school heads, local government and community representatives – to foster participation and accountability and thus encourage the broader school community to support the school's efforts and school based management.

A competition on Facebook will complete the pilot phase – lessons learned and implications for upscaling feed into DepEd ARMM's policy development. GIZ Fit for School supports the piloting of the project with technical input.



M. Adil Elementary School transparency board.

Inception of the Fit for School Feeding Concept

In early September, DepEd ARMM and GIZ started an innovative school feeding concept supported by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, represented by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). This pilot initiative is being implemented in five elementary schools of ARMM, namely Margues, Kamasi and Datang in Maguindanao and Akbar and Ubit in Basilan.

The overall goal of GIZ's school feeding concept is to enhance the existing school feeding program of the DepEd by simplifying and optimizing underlying procedures using the Fit for School Approach and hence, making it more effective and assisting DepEd in its management. In order to simplify school lunch recipes for children that were classified as 'wasted' and 'severely wasted', GIZ has designed 20 different recipes, which are based on mungbean and rice but are amended with locally available vegetables, fish or meat. The lunch recipes, which are all "halal", were developed using the following criteria : (1) meeting the minimum nutritional requirements set by DepEd; (2) local availability of ingredients (market, school and home gardens); (3) variety of taste to avoid eating fatigue; (4) higher amount of vegetables and legumes with less focus on meat; (5) and fostering healthy eating habits.

Order from upper left to bottom right:
Parents distributing healthy snacks.

Parents preparing the lunch, monitored by the school principal. Menu of the day: Boiled rice and guinataang munggo with squash, okra and kamote leaves.

Du'a before eating.



Unless otherwise stated all photographs are courtesy of GIZ Philippines.

We invite all partner organizations, schools and communities to share their experiences in the improvement of school health and to contribute to the next issue of this newsletter.

Please submit your contributions to katherine.pizzacalla@giz.de



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