



## USAID/Philippines Basic Education Project 2017-2022 Redacted Concept Paper

### A. Introduction

This Concept Paper is a key step in the process for designing a sector-wide USAID/Philippines Project Appraisal Document (PAD) and the authorization and award of a new generation of education activities by 2018. The proposed objectives outlined in this Concept Paper build on the current portfolio of activities, some of which are approaching their planned completion dates. USAID/Philippines next education program will continue to play an important role supporting the education priorities of the Government of the Philippines.

### B. Problem Statement and Theory of Change

In 2015, the Philippines failed to meet its targets for the goals set forth in Education for All (EFA), a global commitment made by country governments to achieve quality basic education for all children and youth.<sup>1</sup> The six EFA goals, adopted in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000, are early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children; free compulsory quality primary education for all children; equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs for youth and adults; a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015; gender equality; and improved quality education.

The situation is especially worse in the most remote southern parts of the Philippines, especially conflict-torn Mindanao. Displacement poses a different challenge to education as children are forced to abandon their studies and has had a serious long-term impact on the youth of Mindanao. Children, for example, are being forced to skip schooling either because of conflict in their areas, or because they have to work instead in order to survive.<sup>2</sup> This results in a priority shift, where children who should be learning in preparation for their future are instead working in the fields, or worse, learning to bear arms.<sup>3</sup> The implicit costs of the conflict include the loss of cultural identity, social cohesion, and personal dignity. The rise in the number of school dropouts also result in increased social tensions and crimes, such as kidnap for ransom, drug trafficking, and other illegal activities.

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO *Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges*. For a more detailed discussion on the achievements and shortfalls of the Philippines in these six goals, see Annex A.

<sup>2</sup> A focus group discussion by Save the Children in 2010, cited in Mindanao: The hidden costs of war <http://pcij.org/stories/mindanao-the-hidden-costs-of-war/>

<sup>3</sup> Laisa Alamia, head of the Commission on Human Rights in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, cited in Mindanao: The hidden costs of war <http://pcij.org/stories/mindanao-the-hidden-costs-of-war/>

The Philippines took several actions that made strong progress in achieving the target of 80 percent gross enrollment. The Kindergarten Act (RA 10157) widened the scope of education, as it makes preschool for five-year-old Filipinos free and compulsory. In line with this development are curricular and education cycle reforms that have been legally instituted through the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (RA 10533), also known as the “K to 12 law,” which mandates the government to “create a functional basic education system that will develop productive and responsible citizens equipped with the essential competencies, skills and values for both life-long learning and employment.” Despite curricular improvements and policy changes that increased *access* to education, the Philippine basic education sector continues to face several challenges as it seeks to improve the *quality* of education in the country.

Poor early-grade reading outcomes hinder the academic performance of students throughout their educational careers. Without acquiring the foundational skill of reading, students find it increasingly difficult to learn as they progress through the formal school system. The inability of many students to read well also contributes to persistently high dropout rates, which have produced a large cohort of youth who have left school. The school-leaving rate at the elementary level has been 6-7 percent for the last ten years (boys 7-8 percent and girls 5-6 percent), with Grades 1-3 experiencing the highest rates of both dropout and grade repetition.<sup>4</sup> In many cases, those who have dropped out have not mastered the basic competencies to participate as productive members of their community, such as literacy and numeracy.

In addition to the students currently struggling in school, an entire cohort exists of children and youth who were not successful in school and have dropped out. According to the 2013 Functional Literacy Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS),<sup>5</sup> one in every ten, or about four million Filipino children and youth, were out-of-school.<sup>6</sup> The survey also showed that the top three reasons for not attending school were union or marriage; insufficient family income to cover educational costs; and lack of interest in going to school.

The risk of conflict substantially increases in areas with higher levels of inequality in education achievement.<sup>7</sup> Conflict, in general, lowers mean educational attainment by between 3 percent and 7.6 percent of a year of schooling; it also worsens education inequality. For many years, Muslim areas in the Philippines, specifically in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), have suffered from disparities in educational access and quality. Conflict areas, like ARMM, Regions IX (Zamboanga Peninsula) and XII (Soccsksargen)<sup>8</sup> in particular, are confronted with systemic problems arising from poor quality of teaching and learning, which contribute to high dropout and low cohort survival rates. Youth who drop out of the formal system have limited opportunities and are vulnerable to recruitment for violent extremist activities. Without improving the lives of these youth, particularly in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao, there is risk that they will contribute to instability. These individuals need a renewed sense of purpose,

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<sup>4</sup> Philippine Education for All 2015 Review Report.

<sup>5</sup> The survey covered around 36 million population in the Philippines aged between 6 and 24.

<sup>6</sup> Out-of-school children is defined in the FLEMMS as persons aged 6 to 14 years who are not attending school while out-of-school youth as persons aged 15 to 24 years who are not attending school, have not finished any college or post-secondary course, and are not working.

<sup>7</sup> Omoeva, Carina, Rachel Hatch, & Wael Moussa (2016). *The Effects of Armed Conflict on Educational Attainment and Inequality*. Education Policy and Data Center Working Paper, FHI 360: Washington, DC.

<sup>8</sup> Composed of four provinces (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Sarangani) and one of its cities (*General Santos*).

relevant life skills that can lead to employment and confidence in their local governance structures.

The large number of children that make up these two cohorts -- those that struggle to read and those who have already left the formal school system -- is concerning for the long-term economic development of the Philippines. As such, to address the interrelated issues of poor student performance and vulnerable youth,<sup>9</sup> the purpose of the project is to improve education outcomes. The desired education outcomes are improved early-grade reading skills (fluency and comprehension) of public elementary school students, and basic education (foundational) and life skills enhanced in vulnerable youth, particularly in Mindanao.

The Development Hypothesis/Theory of Change: The realization of the project's<sup>10</sup> purpose, which may be comprised of more than one activity<sup>11</sup>, is premised on the hypothesis that improving early-grade reading leads to improved educational achievement, which reduces the rate of school dropout in the early grades and provides the platform upon which youth can develop the knowledge and skills necessary for inclusive growth in the country. For those students who have already dropped out, increased access to life skills, workforce readiness and other basic education provides the foundation for them to be more productive members of society.

## **B. Relationship to the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) and Applicable Agency Policies and Strategies**

USAID assistance to the Department of Education (DepEd) contributes to the Agency's global goal of improving reading skills for 100 million children by scaling proven approaches for the Philippines and elevating local successes that improve lower-elementary reading instruction. In addition, USAID provides value-added technical assistance to local government units, development alliances, school boards, and School Governing Councils to improve transparency and accountability in education governance; provide vulnerable youth skill development; and boost community engagement.

The new Basic Education Project will fully align with the Mission's CDCS (2013-2018), USAID's *Global Education Strategy* (2011-2015), USAID's policy on *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency* (September 2011), *Department of State & USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism* (May 2016), and Philippine government priorities for education, as specified in the Republic Act No. 105/33, labeled *The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013*. The project will support DepEd's goals to improve early-grade reading, as well as provide additional opportunities for vulnerable youth, which feed into the Philippine government's larger goals of reducing poverty and enhancing economic opportunities by improving the quality of education.

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<sup>9</sup> "Vulnerable youth" is defined as youth in conflict and crisis environments.

<sup>10</sup> USAID's definition: A project is a set of executed interventions, over an established timeline and budget intended to achieve a discrete development result (i.e. the project purpose) through resolving an associated problem. It is explicitly linked to the Country Development Cooperation Strategy Results Framework. (Automated Directives System Chapters 200-203)

<sup>11</sup> USAID's definition: An activity is a sub-component of a project that contributes to a project purpose. It typically refers to an award (such as a contract or cooperative agreement), or a component of a project such as policy dialogue that may be undertaken directly by Mission staff (Automated Directives System Chapters 200-203)

The component principles and products of the new education project will continue to contribute to USAID/Philippines' Development Objectives: DO 1 (to accelerate and sustain broad-based and inclusive growth by strengthening education) and DO 2 (to support youth development as part of work to ensure societal stability and community peace and progress). The current *CDCS* recognizes the important role that education plays to develop human capital and provide economic opportunities. The fundamental development hypotheses is that improving early grade learning outcomes and building complementary support programs for vulnerable youth contribute to inclusive economic and social development.

The project will work closely with other donor activities, such as the World Bank's \$300-million *Learning, Equity, and Accountability Program Support Project*,<sup>12</sup> which facilitates EGRA development in 12 major mother-tongue languages; professional development for about 12,000 teachers in selected regions to use the EGRA lessons in reading instruction; and rationalization and institutionalization of EGRA with available tools (e.g., School Readiness Assessment and the *Philippine Informal Reading Inventory*). Similarly, the new Pathways Project of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will complement systemic development and management components of the Basic Education Project with its general management and delivery improvement support to the DepEd ARMM Mindanao in its early-grade programs. The Pathways Project is a nine-year, \$90-million project to assist education development in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao.

### **C. Evolution of New Basic Education Project**

The proposed project will build upon USAID's long engagement with DepEd, as well as upon the experiences and lessons learned from its most recent education activities.

#### **Current Basic Education Project**

##### Early-Grade Reading

The 2011-2015 USAID Education Strategy put forward three strategic goals, two of which are relevant to basic education. Goal 1 is All Children Reading (ACR), which aimed to improve reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades by 2015. While the ambitious goal was not met, the ACR programming reached 37.7 million students and measured learning outcomes for 10 million.<sup>13</sup> Of those 10 million, only 1.5 million met the definition of improved reading.<sup>14</sup>

USAID/Philippines exceeded its Goal 1 target of one million students, reaching 1.6 million students. Working with the Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in DepEd, the USAID/Philippines' Basa Pilipinas activity has been an important source of expertise and resources for the national program. It has trained more than 12,900 teachers and 2,200 school administrators. After four years of Basa implementation targeting Grades 1 to 3, reading assessments and teacher observations have shown improvements in early grade reading outcomes. Moreover, Basa Pilipinas' systemic support to MTB-MLE has reinforced productive instructional approaches in reading;

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<sup>12</sup> The World Bank. (February, 2014). PAD for a *Learning, Equity, and Accountability Program Support Project*. Report No. 74241=PH.

<sup>13</sup> 2011-2015 USAID Education Strategy Progress Report.

<sup>14</sup> 2011-2015 USAID Education Strategy Progress Report; Improved reading skills is defined as increases in fluency and comprehension in reading grade level text (2011 USAID Education Strategy Technical Notes).

provided frameworks and guidance in materials development; offered expertise in designing and reviewing in-service training in reading; and tested models to implement LACs.

The 2016/2017 Basa Pilipinas Evaluation Report analysis of Grade 2 Filipino EGRA data shows that by the end of Grade 2, after one full year of reading instruction in Filipino, students are demonstrating beginning reading skills in Filipino. In the third year of the Basa intervention, learners who benefitted from the Basa intervention perform better on key measures of literacy, such as reading comprehension, than students before Basa. However, learners are still “learning to read” in Filipino. The EGRAs for school years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 show a decline in the proportion of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate they can read and understand the meaning of grade-level text. In school year 2015-2016, only 34 percent of Grade 2 students met the combined fluency and comprehension benchmark<sup>15</sup> and only 29 percent met the said benchmarks in school year 2016-2017.

By the end of Grade 3, learners showed substantial improvements, with seventy-six percent (school year 2015-2016) and seventy-five percent (school year 2016-2017) of Grade 3 students meeting the benchmarks. Results suggest that most students are reading at a sufficient level to transition to Filipino as the primary language of instruction in most subjects in Grade 4. By the end of Grade 3, students are fairly proficient Filipino readers with the majority attaining both the fluency and comprehension benchmarks set by DepEd. This suggests that most of them are ready to transition to Filipino as the primary language of instruction in most subjects in Grade 4. However, by the end of Grade 3 a significant proportion of students still do not demonstrate that they understand what they read in English. This indicates that more must be done to help prepare students to learn math and science in English in Grade 4.<sup>16</sup>

The new project will devote resources to help the Philippine government effectively evaluate the implementation of the MTB-MLE. One of the major motivations in implementing the mother tongue policy was the desire to achieve the EFA 2015 goals, and results have shown that the country has failed to meet these targets. Given the results of the Basa Pilipinas impact evaluation and other studies on the transition process of mother tongue policy in other countries, it is valuable to test the current model of the MTB-MLE as it is being done in the country.

USAID’s Education Governance Effectiveness (EdGE) activity has also contributed to the Education Strategy’s first goal. Guided by the paradigm that “It takes a village to raise a child,” EdGE strengthens community participation in school management. EdGE mentors local chief executives; school division superintendents and supervisors; local school board members; and school heads on education planning, management and evaluation. The activity has built the capacity of more than 6,000 administrators and officials to strengthen education governance at the local level. To date, 33 local school boards and 439 school governing councils (SGCs) have convened stakeholders’ meetings, elected officers, formulated by-laws, and are involved in implementing School Improvement Plans. To date, the activity has reached over 1.3 million learners.

While EdGE has supported the transformation of local school boards and aided the functioning of school governing councils, much work needs to be done to further decentralize education governance

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<sup>15</sup> DepEd Filipino fluency benchmark of 40 words correct per minute and the reading comprehension benchmark of three or more comprehension questions correctly (untimed).

<sup>16</sup> 2016/2017 Basa Pilipinas Evaluation Report.

and make local stakeholders more accountable in the education agenda. The need also exists to link gains in improved school governance to reading outcomes. While EdGE was originally designed to complement the Basa Pilipinas activity, its implementation led to an expansion into locations different from the Basa Pilipinas areas. This disaggregation of the two activities made it difficult to evaluate the qualitative impact of the local school boards and SGCs on learners.

### Education for Vulnerable Youth

The 2011-2015 USAID Education Strategy Goal 3 is Education in Crisis and Conflict (EiCC), which targeted access to education in crisis and conflict environments for 15 million learners by 2015. Similar to Goal 1, the target was not reached, but 11.8 million children and youth in crisis and conflict environments have benefitted from improved or newly established quality education opportunities in safe learning environments.<sup>17</sup>

USAID/Philippines contributed to Goal 3 results by reaching more than 52,000 learners<sup>18</sup> in crisis and conflict environments. USAID/Philippines' Mindanao Youth for Development (MYDev) is one activity that has delivered results. The activity works through local stakeholders in Mindanao to provide participating out-of-school youth with life skills; livelihood skills and opportunities; access to ALS; and community engagement opportunities. MYDev facilitated the establishment of Out-of-School Youth Development Alliances (OSYDA), which drove the process to identify key trades, activated youth engagement opportunities and coordinated events to address education and employment gaps. This work, in addition to deepening the engagement of institutional partnerships with DepEd and the Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA), worked with more than 17,000 out-of-school youth. Early evaluation results show that 70 percent of these out-of-school youth improved life, work readiness, and leadership skills for civic engagement, and 32 percent received new or better employment or livelihoods. Moreover, 67 percent of participating youth indicated that they had improved their perceptions of their government or community.

The education work in Mindanao is especially relevant, given the changing countering violent extremism (CVE) context in Asia. Mindanao remains a geographic priority of the Duterte administration of the Philippines. Additionally, CVE is likely to be a major focus of the Trump administration of the United States. The 2016 State/USAID CVE Policy notes that CVE "includes both disrupting the tactics used by violent extremists to attract new recruits to violence and building specific alternatives, narratives, capabilities, and resiliencies in targeted communities and populations to reduce the risk of radicalization and recruitment to violence. CVE can be a targeted component of larger efforts to promote good governance and the rule of law, respect for human rights, and sustainable, inclusive development." MYDev's work is considered as relevant, as it incidentally improves conditions that may erode support for violent extremists.

MYDev's work in CVE consists of giving youth an alternative to violent extremism. Education cannot prevent an individual from committing a violent act in the name of an extremist ideology, but the provision of relevant education of good quality can help create the conditions that make it difficult for violent extremist ideologies and acts to proliferate. More specifically, education policies can ensure that places of learning do not become a breeding ground for violent extremism. They can

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<sup>17</sup> 2011-2015 USAID Education Strategy Progress Report.

<sup>18</sup> 17,000 youth beneficiaries in Mindanao (MyDev) and 35,000 students in Samar and Leyte (Rebuild).

also ensure that educational contents and teaching/learning approaches develop learners' resilience to violent extremism. The role of education is, therefore, not to intercept violent extremists or identify defenses, within learners, against violent extremism and strengthen their commitment to non-violence and peace.<sup>19</sup>

### **Proposed Basic Education Project**

The Philippine Basic Education Project 2017-2022 is a system-level project that will emphasize and expand the systemic influences and delivery accomplishments of the Basa Pilipinas, EdGE and MYDev activities to deal with issues related to educational vulnerability. Basa, EdGE, and MYDev have limited scopes and focus on accelerating learning outcomes through improving early-grade reading, dealing with skill-deficit precursors and mitigating the effects of early school dropout. In addition to scaling, improving and updating the accomplishments of prior projects, the Basic Education Project will expand reading initiatives to the kindergarten level to analyze needs for reading instruction as soon as formal schooling begins. Research has shown that reading preparedness starts as early as preschool and kindergarten. Accumulated evidence indicates that instructing children in phonemic awareness in kindergarten (and Grade 1) enhances reading achievement.<sup>20</sup> The long-term benefits of a carefully developed kindergarten curriculum that emphasizes on word study and decoding skills, along with the availability of grade-appropriate sets of stories, are that children are better able to practice these skills in meaningful contexts. High school seniors who received this type of instruction in their early years of school outperformed their counterparts on reading achievement, attitude towards schooling, grades and attendance.<sup>21</sup> In 2012, the Kindergarten Education law was passed, making kindergarten the compulsory entry stage to basic education. Moreover, kindergarten is now the first of the series of levels made to implement the MTB-MLE policy.

The Basic Education Project will leverage lessons learned and best practices from Basa Pilipinas' work in two mother-tongue languages and will apply them to other languages. DepEd's MTB-MLE program currently features 19 local languages,<sup>22</sup> of which USAID/Philippines currently only works with two. Moreover, the Project will also take into account the Basa Pilipinas Impact Evaluation recommendations (when finalized in September 2017) in the activity design.

Building upon past interventions, the project will implement systemic interventions to improve the quality and delivery effectiveness of DepEd's MTB-MLE and ALS programs. Planned interventions that have been informed by the former project include:

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<sup>19</sup> UNESCO (2017) Preventing violent extremism through education: A guide to policymakers

<sup>20</sup> Stanovich, K. E. 1986. Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of reading.

Reading Research Quarterly 21: 360–407.; Lundberg, I., Frost, J., & Petersen, O. (1988). Effects of an extensive program for stimulating phonological awareness in preschool children. Reading Research Quarterly, 23, 263–284.; Byrne, B. and Fielding-Barnsley, R. (1995). Evaluation of a program to teach phonemic Awareness to young children. A 2- and 3- year follow up and a new preschool Trial. Journal of Educational Psychology, 87(3), 488-503.

<sup>21</sup> Hanson, R. A., and D. Farrell. 1995. The long-term effects on high school seniors of learning to read in kindergarten. Reading Research Quarterly 30(4): 908–933.

<sup>22</sup> The initial 12 are Tagalog, Kapampangan, Pangasinense, Iloko, Bikol, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Waray, Tausug, Maguindanaoan, Maranao and Chabacano. In 2013, DepEd added seven more, which cover Ybanag for pupils in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan, and Isabela; Ivatan for the Batanes Group; Sambal in Zambales; Aklanon in Aklan, Capiz; Kinaray-a in Capiz, Aklan; Yakan in ARMM and Surigaonon, covering Surigao City and provinces.

- **Kindergarten.** The project will expand the principles and guidance in reading instruction to the development of the Kindergarten program, providing a strong base for learner transition to reading instruction in the early grades.
- **Pre-service training.** The project will both upgrade in-service training for reading instruction and examine strategies for upgrading the long-term quality of teacher education through collaborative development programs with local tertiary education institutions. Thus, an added focus will be pre-service training with strategies that include developing formal language and literacy education programs within teacher education institutions; establishing an Institute of Language and Literacy Education; establishing criteria and formalizing a designation for Centers of Excellence for institutions that have language and literacy expertise and that can be tapped to continue assisting reading and language programs; and/or establishing a scholarship for graduate study at U.S. universities that excel in early-grade language education.
- **Gender Disparity.** Based on a preliminary study on the gender achievement gap in reading, factors seem to include teacher and parent expectations and attitudes about what girls and boys like to do; teachers' tendencies to call on those who are already performing well (which is often the girls); and the need for materials that appeal to boys as well as girls. The project intends to address this gap by reinforcing the use of appropriate classroom management to address differing learning styles and equal engagement of boys and girls. It will also include strategies to engage parents on ways to foster literacy skills and interest in reading among both girls and boys.
- **Technology.** The project will explore the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance early-grade literacy education. It will work to develop teaching and learning materials accessible via digital devices using software that enables writers to easily create or adapt simple leveled and decodable books in multiple scripts. These software applications are important to provide books for all underserved language communities and help students practice reading more. The project will work with DepEd to provide a link between the nationwide computerization project and literacy learning via the promotion of digital storytelling and PowerPoint presentations during reading lessons. It will also build on the experience of a pilot online teacher training course conducted in 2015 and a pilot ICT reading program involving the use of tablets in 2017. It will explore the use of social media platforms (e.g., Facebook) to conduct sessions to complement the LACs.
- **Relevant Education.** The project will develop age-appropriate teaching and learning materials on: (1) preventive drug education; (2) health and body function awareness; (3) environmental awareness; and (4) disaster preparedness, by providing real-life lessons via formal schooling and alternative learning methods.
- **Private Sector Partnerships.** The project's work with the ALS program will foster a bigger role for the private sector. In particular, through the partnerships with the private sector, the project aims to produce a comprehensive mentoring activity that will help vulnerable young people advance toward productive adulthood. Local



businesses supply jobs, facilitating greater youth involvement in their communities. Partnering with local businesses also gives youth who graduate from ALS programs the competitive advantage of being equipped with timely and relevant skills. Finally, the private sector will be instrumental in informing programming and providing critical training and post-training support to youth in civic engagement, entrepreneurship and job placements.

- **Geographic Scope.** The project will widen its geographic reach and target the lowest performing regions, like ARMM, where the education burden is the greatest. It will also focus work on conflict-affected areas identified through interagency collaboration by the Mindanao Working Group. The project will also seek opportunity to align with USAID priorities, such as Cities Development Initiative (CDI) cities, helping to strengthen the linkage between these urban centers and the surrounding rural areas to facilitate knowledge and technology transfer.

Given USAID/Philippines' comparative advantage and experience, the new education project intends to expand upon past successes. It will continue to:

- Improve the quality of program materials and practices in reading, evaluating the application of concepts and products developed under the Basa Pilipinas activity;
- Widen the geographic reach and language development and implementation of MTB-MLE and research to maximize learning transitions between locally used languages and the official languages for instruction in the formal education system;
- Make policy and operational adjustments based on data and dialogue on results within DepEd from continued mainstreaming of the EGRA diagnostic tools;
- Enhance the quality of Learning Action Cells, using, for example, the lessons from the Basa Pilipinas activity;
- Promote inclusive education by targeting the educational needs of students with vision and hearing impairments;
- Strengthen education governance at the local level by improving government resource allocation and utilization, as well as bolstering private sector engagement, while supporting the Philippine government's thrust on education decentralization and its adopted school-based management approaches;
- Mobilize community participation in development alliances and related community service projects in conflict-affected areas to increase the civic engagement of youth to address gender, disability, conflict, employment and other issues related to inequitable development;
- Support and improve the availability and quality of the DepEd Alternative Delivery Modes programs, while promoting the school as the hub for all education program access; and
- Consult with government departments and related agencies associated with project activities, including DepEd's Division of Teaching and Learning, TESDA, agencies and groups associated with EGRA and assessment, ALS central personnel (currently located within several bureaus), Professional Regulation Commission, tertiary education institutions, universities and relevant labor and local government units/departments.

Due to the complexity of educational outcomes, the project will help DepEd and education experts address the interconnected factors that contribute to low reading outcomes. The project will also support interventions in mother-tongue instruction; provide appropriate textbooks and materials; improve the quality of teacher education and training instruction; support better assessment, monitoring and evaluation practices; overcome poor implementation governance; and enhance local schooling. The aim is to enable more efficient and effective local capacity to address specific local issues and improve overall implementation of the reading agenda and youth development. The details of assistance in these areas are related to scaled actions developed and initially institutionalized in the Basa Pilipinas, EdGE and MYDev activities, as conceived and refocused.

The project investment in youth skills, leadership, and local government capacity through functional local government units will focus on select conflict-affected areas in Mindanao. These ideas, developed and operationalized in MYDev, are anchors for the scaling of youth interventions to offset the problems faced by dropouts. Coupled with national investments in improved quality for lower-primary reading skills instruction, the project will address fundamental policy and capacity issues in DepEd and the links between basic skills, employment, and community development.

The project will seek to contribute to the current Philippine government priorities, particularly in the areas of reproductive health and drug awareness. Age-appropriate health and environment reading content will be developed. Additionally, the Philippines is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world; typhoons, floods and earthquakes continue to affect the country on a regular basis. Should needs arise, the project may find it beneficial to cooperate with DepEd to respond to targeted recovery and rehabilitation work constructing and rehabilitating learning structures and providing teaching and learning materials.

#### **D. Preliminary Logical Framework**

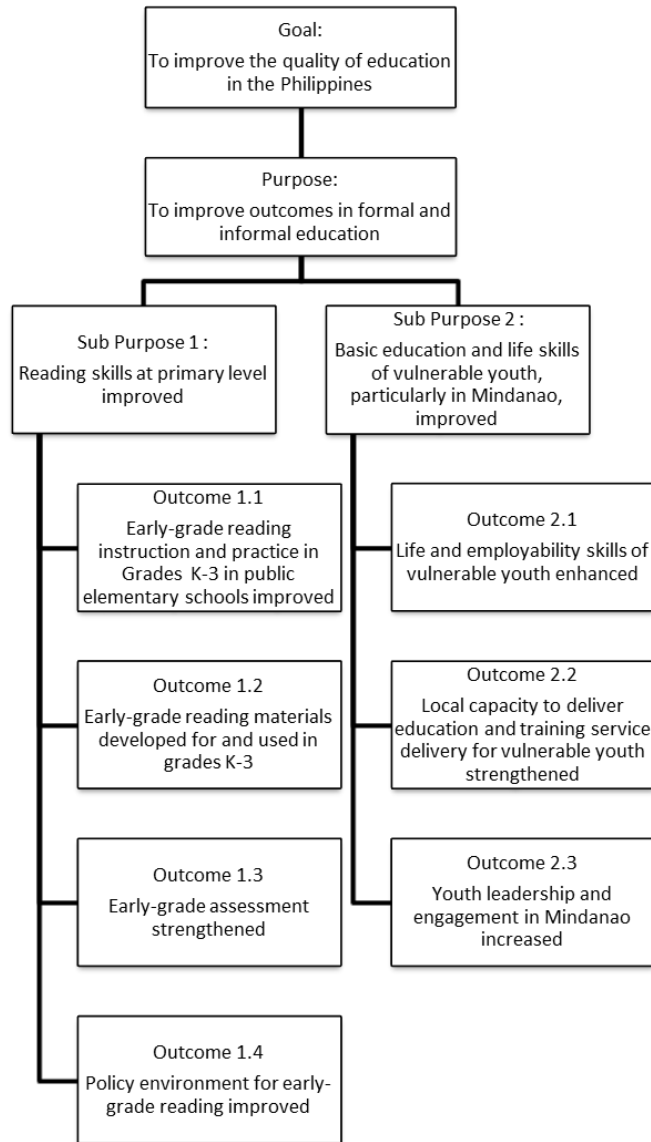
Purpose: To Improve Outcomes in Formal and Informal Education

##### **Sub Purpose 1: Reading skills at primary level improved**

USAID will work with the Philippine government and partners to improve early-grade reading instruction and practice in Grades K-3 in public elementary schools. USAID will build on teacher training and support, and develop early-grade reading materials to be used in grades K-3. Activities to be implemented will include systemic interventions to improve the quality and delivery effectiveness of DepEd's MTB-MLE program.

##### **Sub Purpose 2: Basic education and life skills of vulnerable youth, particularly in Mindanao improved**

USAID will build upon past interventions to provide life skills and basic educational skills training to enable youth to take advantage of formal education or succeed in the local labor market; deliver training for vulnerable youth to participate in productive economic activities; and establish internship programs and placement opportunities for learners who complete training programs, and provide post-training support for employer networking. USAID will also work to develop capacity of DepEd, local school boards, or similar local education governance bodies as well as enhance teacher skills to educate vulnerable youth.



USAID/Philippines welcomes public comments about this Concept Paper. Please send them to [manilausaieducationproject@usaid.gov](mailto:manilausaieducationproject@usaid.gov) by September 22, 2017.