

**INTEGRATION OF THE MADRASAH SYSTEM OF EDUCATION  
INTO THE PHILIPPINE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM  
NOVEMBER 2001**

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

Madrasah is an Arabic name for school, the plural form of which is madaris. It is a community-based and community managed school whose teachings are based on the Qur'an. The madrasah was first introduced in the Philippines in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Makhdum Kharim, who built the first mosque in the country in Tubig, Indangan, Simunul, Tawi-Tawi.

In the Philippines, most of the madaris are located in Mindanao, where majority of the Muslim communities are located. They cater mostly to poor rural areas where parents appreciate their community-based approach, strict discipline, socio-cultural relevance and focus on Islam and moral education. The madaris have become an important part of the education system in Mindanao, enrolling 22 percent of the elementary school students and 2 percent of the secondary school students<sup>1</sup>. However, while they play a significant role in the education of the Muslim Mindanao population, they are not recognized by the government, which, ironically, is mandated by the Constitution to provide relevant and accessible education to all its citizens, especially the poor and underprivileged. Instead, the government effectively deprives the Muslim population who undergo schooling exclusively in madaris with opportunities provided those who undergo schooling in DECS schools.

This paper aims to present the state of the madrasah system of education in Mindanao, problems in mainstreaming the madrasah system into the Philippine educational system, and recommendations for the recognition of the madrasah system.

For this study, secondary data shall be sourced from the Regional offices of the Office on Muslim Affairs, DECS -XII and DECS ARMM, and interviews with experts in the field shall be conducted. Research on and review of related literature and past studies on the madrasah shall also be conducted.

***The Philippine Educational System<sup>2</sup>***

The delivery of basic education is the primary responsibility of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS)<sup>3</sup> through its two (2) major structural components: the Central

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<sup>1</sup> Basic data sourced from the project design of the Mindanao Basic Education Development Project (MBEDP).

<sup>2</sup> Facts and Figures, 1997

<sup>3</sup> Renamed to Department of Education (Dep Ed) by virtue of Republic Act (RA) No. 9155 passed by Congress in June 2001 and lapsed into law without the signature of the President in accordance with Article VI, Section 27 (1) of the Constitution.

Office and field offices which consist of regional and sub-regional (division and district) offices. Higher education is the responsibility of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), while technical education is provided through the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

The Education Act of 1982 states the following aims of the educational system in the Philippines:

1. Provide for a broad general education that will assist each individual in the peculiar ecology of his own society to:
  - Attain his potentials as a human being;
  - Enhance the range and quality of individual and group participation in the basic functions of society; and
  - Acquire the essential educational foundation of his development into a productive and versatile citizen;
2. Train the nation's manpower in the middle-level skills required for national development;
3. Develop the professions that will provide leadership for the nation in the advancement of knowledge for improving the quality of human life; and
4. Respond effectively to changing needs and conditions of the nation through a system of educational planning and evaluation.

Education in the country is offered through the formal and non-formal systems, as follows:

1. Formal System

The educational ladder has a 6-4-4 structure, i.e., six (6) years of elementary or primary education, six (6) years of secondary or high school education, and four (4) years of higher education for a degree program (except for some courses like Engineering, Law and Medical sciences which require five (5) or more years of schooling. Pre-school education is optional; private organizations and some public schools offer nursery and kindergarten classes. Some private exclusive schools offer seven (7) years of elementary education, while others require pre-school or kindergarten education. The number of years for formal schooling is one of the shortest in the world.

There are two (2) types of secondary schools according to curricular offerings: the general high school and vocational high school. General high schools offer the four-year general academic secondary curriculum, while vocational high schools offer the same secondary curriculum with additional courses.

The tertiary education level comprises of degree and non-degree programs. Post-secondary or technical / vocational courses are non-creditable to degree programs and these cover one (1) month to three (3) years of schooling. The higher education degree programs normally require at least four (4) years of schooling.

## 2. Non-Formal System

Non-formal education is an alternative delivery system, which cater mostly to out-of-school youth and adults. It focuses on the development of literacy and employable / productive skills coupled with citizenship training.

### ***The Madrasah System of Education<sup>4</sup>***

Generally, the madrasah is a Muslim school that teaches Arabic and Islamic studies, especially Qur'anic reading and Arabic language. Some madaris also offer general courses such as math, science and health in addition to Islamic studies. In Muslim communities, it is considered not only as an institution of learning but also a symbol of Islam and regarded as the proper place to acquire knowledge in Arabic language and Islamic religious teaching. In most cases, Arabic is the medium of instruction and used for conversation with the teachers or among the students themselves.

#### Levels

The number of years to finish the two (2) levels of education in the madrasah system is 12 years: four (4) years for the primary level (Ibtida'i), four (4) years for the intermediate level (I'dade), and another four (4) years for high school (Thanawi). A madrasah offering a complete 12 years program is known as ma'ahad (plural is ma'ahid). If it offers only the primary or intermediate or both, it is simply called madrasah.

#### Management

The Madrasah is a privately-owned schools whose administrative machinery is performed either by the community through an elected group or by a mosque-based organization. In most cases, it is managed personally by its owner(s) and supported by a head teacher or principal (senior ustadz). Financial support comes from the tuition fees and from donations from affluent persons in the community, and occasionally, from Muslim countries in the Middle East for infrastructure and teaching aids like books and other instructional materials.

## **II. STATE OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN MINDANAO (*A Situationer*)**

### ***Situationer of the Education Sector in Mindanao***

#### **A. DECS System**

- Number of Schools, Elementary and Secondary
- Enrollment, Elementary and Secondary
- Participation Rate

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<sup>4</sup> A Madrasah General Education Program for Mindanao (Lolita Junio Damonsong-Rodriguez, Ph.D.)

## B. Madrasah System

The madaris are found in all political regions in Mindanao, where there are roughly 1,171 operating madaris (for basic education only) having a total enrolment of 92,088 students (DECS-ARMM and MBDEP estimates, 1997). Most of the madaris are concentrated in ARMM, where correspondingly, the highest enrolment among all Mindanao regions is found (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of Madaris and Enrolment in Mindanao, 1997

<b>Region</b>	<b>Province/City</b>	<b>Elementary Madaris</b>	<b>Enrolment</b>	<b>Secondary Madaris</b>	<b>Enrolment</b>
<b>IX</b>	Basilan	37	4,364	2	246
	Zamboanga del Norte	14	1,367	1	116
	Zamboanga del Sur	7	415	0	0
	Zamboanga City		4,215	1	121
	Dapitan City	8	642	0	0
	Dipolog City	7	464	0	0
	Pagadian City	4	351	0	0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>11,818</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>483</i>
<b>X</b>	Bukidnon	6	386	1	120
	Camiguin	2	120	0	0
	Misamis Occidental	2	118	0	0
	Misamis Oriental	2	143	0	0
	Cagayan de Oro City	4	276	0	0
	Gingoog City	2	132	0	0
	Ozamis City	2	124	0	0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>1,299</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>120</i>
<b>XI</b>	Davao del Norte	4	286	0	0
	Davao del Sur	2	140	0	0
	Davao Oriental	4	324	0	0
	South Cotabato	56	4,860	3	364
	Davao City	5	342	0	0
	General Santos City	1	74	0	0
	Sarangani	3	275	0	0
	Sultan Kudarat	14	618	1	122
	<i>Total</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>6,919</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>486</i>
<b>XII</b>	Lanao del Norte	99	9,260	4	682
	Cotabato City	17	1,456	1	118
	Iligan City	23	1,964	2	246
	Marawi City	10	1,894	0	0

	North Cotabato	4	250	0	0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>153</i>	<i>14,824</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>1,046</i>
<b>XIII</b>	Agusan del Norte	3	180	0	0
	Agusan del Sur	2	115	0	0
	Surigao del Norte	2	160	0	0
	Surigao del Sur	10	500	0	0
	Butuan City	3	354	0	0
	Siargao	3	342	0	0
	Surigao City	3	272	0	0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>1,923</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<b>ARMM</b>	Lanao del Sur I	160	19,008	5	762
	Lanao del Sur II	80	11,131	2	236
	Sulu	23	657	0	0
	Tawi-tawi	18	132	0	0
	Maguindanao	464	19,056	7	994
	<i>Total</i>	<i>745</i>	<i>51,178</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>11,92</i>

Source of Basic Data: Comprehensive Mindanao Education Program Framework Plan

C. Analysis according to the following:

- School age population, total vs. Muslim
- Number of schools, DECS vs. madaris
- Enrollment, DECS vs. madaris
- Participation rate DECS vs. madaris
- Survey of the quality of education offered by the madaris
  - School buildings
  - Capability of teachers, teacher to student ratio
  - Textbooks and instructional materials

### **Curriculum Content of the Madrasah System vs. National Standard Curriculum**

#### **Madrasah System**

Not all madaris provide complete courses from kindergarten through high school. A madrasah may offer only one (1) or two (2) years of primary, intermediate, and/or secondary education.

In addition, there is no standard curriculum for all madaris, instead, each madrasah adopts its own curriculum. However, in general, the primary and intermediate madrasah curriculum has eight (8) subjects, as follows:

1. Islamic Studies
2. Character Building

3. Arabic Language
4. Social Studies
5. Mathematics
6. Science
7. English Language
8. Military and P.E.

The high school curriculum likewise has eight (8) subjects, as follows:

1. Islamic Studies
2. Arabic Language
3. Social Studies
4. Mathematics
5. Science
6. English Language
7. Livelihood Education
8. Military and P.E.

#### National Standard Curriculum

On the other hand, the standard elementary curriculum has 10 subjects, to wit:

1. English
2. Filipino
3. Social Studies
4. Science and Health
5. Mathematics
6. Technology, Livelihood and Home Economics
7. Music
8. Art
9. Values Education
10. Physical Education

Of these ten subjects, three (3) are not taught in the madrasah, and these are: Filipino, Social Studies and Livelihood and Home Economics. According to Dr. Salippada Tamano, former Regional Secretary of the DECS-ARMM, the Social Studies subject in madrasah deals with Islamic history and geography, and that an enriched Social Studies curriculum of the madrasah which would encompass Filipino, History and Culture, could yield a madrasah curriculum that would well approximate the National Standard Curriculum for Elementary Schools.

The secondary curriculum has eight (8) subjects, as follows:

1. Filipino
2. Araling Panlipunan

3. Edukasyong Pangkatawan, Kalusugan and Musika
4. Edukasyon sa Pagpapahalaga
5. English
6. Science and Technology
7. Mathematics
8. Technology and Home Economics

In comparison, the only subject in the National Standard Curriculum for Secondary Schools that is not offered in the thanawi (secondary madrasah) is Filipino. Hence, Dr. Tamano suggested that Filipino incorporated in the Social Studies course of the madrasah would lead to a curriculum that is parallel with the National Standard Curriculum for Secondary Schools.

### **Existing Interventions on the Madrasah System**

DECS-ARMM has the following programs for the madrasah:

- Accreditation
- Teachers Training
- Piloting
- Administrators in-service training
- Supervision
- Offering of Arabic Language and Islamic Values as subjects in DECS schools in ARMM

### **Discussion on and Compliance to the Provisions of Various Issuances on the Madrasah System of Education**

- Letter of Instruction 1221

The LOI 1221 issued by President Ferdinand Marcos in 1982 directed the Prime Minister, Members of the Cabinet and the Minister of Education, Culture and Sports to:

1. Formulate and adopt a program for the development of madaris;
2. Strengthen the development of programs in Islamic Studies in state institutions especially in Mindanao; and
3. Establish and strengthen programs in the teaching and learning of the Arabic language.

- Final Peace Agreement

Issued in September 1996, this states that the integration of madaris into the Philippine educational system shall have an agreed priority agenda within the overall development plan of the Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD)

### **Problems and Hindrances in the Integration of the Madrasah System into the Philippine Educational System**

The most pressing problems confronting the madrasah system of education are the following:

- Lack of financing assistance
- Lack of standardized/reconciliatory curriculum
- No DECS unit directly supervising it

### **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommended courses of action on the integration of the madrasah system of education into the Philippine educational system.

- Accreditation of existing madaris
- Formulation of a reconciliatory curriculum
- Provision of allocation/funding assistance for madaris
- Organization of a body under the DECS-Central Office and Regional Offices in Mindanao to oversee the operations of the madaris

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