

**Involving Communities for Better Education:
The Tayud, Consolacion Experience**
by Luchi C. Flores, *Coalition for Better Education*

Colleagues and partners in the education sector, good morning.

I'd like to start with a quote from Hon. Roberto E. Aboitiz, Phil. Hon. Consul to Netherlands and Coalition for Better Education (CBE) Convenor. He says, "Involvement and participation can multiply results. We cannot afford to abdicate attention on matters of vital concern to society or to others. Educating the youth is one of those core issues that require enlisting the support and participation of the private and the public sectors."

Along this line, providing an architecture for such partnership is one of the key strategies of the Coalition for Better Education. This three-folding approach provides for a venue of participation by and between government, private sector and civil society in sustaining education goals.

Institutionalizing this approach Mr. Aboitiz, through the Aboitiz Group Foundation, Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc., and Philippine Business for Social Progress organized the Coalition for Better Education (CBE), a multi sectoral organization that implements interventions in the areas of curriculum, teacher development, governance, academe-industry linkage and community and parents' involvement.

This framework is guided by the three principles of Responsive Education that CBE has set as its standards in pursuing education initiatives:

1. Principle of Balanced Education, education that addresses the 7 dimensions of human development, accessible, relevant and responsive;
2. Principle of Collaboration of Stakeholders, education that is a shared responsibility of the community, school and other sectors;
3. Principle of the Learner-focused Outcome, education that produces Filipinos who are life-long learners, globally-competitive, nationalistic individuals who contribute to nation-building

Translating these principles into tangible experience, CBE launched its biggest project, Involving Communities for Better Education or iNCUBE. It is a systems approach in addressing issues that beset our education sector in the local level. The entire project is a PROBE process where research plays a very important role in steering the community to work towards a common goal.

We are now piloting this project in Barangay Tayud, Consolacion Municipality, Province of Cebu. This project is benefiting around 2000 students, 48 teachers and principals and 1600 households. CBE, together with the Local School

Development Council of Tayud, lead collaborators in the implementation of the project.

We know that our education problem is immense. But why focus on Tayud? The problems in education in this barangay are no different compared to the national perspective. In our iNCUBE experience, we found out that lack of teachers and teacher competence, inadequate learning support system, existing policies and practices are contributing factors to low student achievement rates and decline of quality of education. Along this line, iNCUBE is designed to specifically address these concerns from a bottom-up perspective.

With the CBE principles as our guide, a common strategy for addressing these education concerns through community participation was formulated. This includes a probe process where intervention in the classroom and community level is implemented and monitored over a period of time. Curriculum Development, Teacher Training, Infrastructure Support and Capability Building for principals are essential key result areas under school and classroom intervention while the institutionalization of a local school development council and establishment of a community resource center form the core strategies under community intervention.

iNCUBE achievements

In the last two-and-a-half years, iNCUBE has achieved the following:

1. Creation of a strong and functional School Development Council which is composed of the Mayor, Barangay Council, President of the chamber of business, civil society, PTCA presidents, teachers, religious sector and students. The council has drafted the school development plans of Tayud and now acts as an advocacy body in matters pertaining to Education;
2. Establishment of a Community Resource Center with the barangay's Tayuranon Multi-purpose Cooperative to serve as venue for capability-enhancement and after-school training programs for students and parents;
3. Launching of the Teacher Aide Project mobilizing 14 parents and community volunteers to assist teachers in the areas of classroom management, preparation of instructional materials and providing health and nutrition activities in the school.
4. Trained Teachers in the 21st Century Skills ICT Continuum integrating Values Formation in Core Subject Areas;
5. Partnered with colleges and universities in research and documentation. Through its network of colleges and universities, CBE Engaged graduate students enrolled in the thesis and dissertation program of its member-

schools to adopt Tayud as their focus areas. We now have 4 graduate students doing correlation studies and impact assessment.

6. We have also completed an assessment profile of Teachers in the areas of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. Major assessment results showed that:
 - a) 80% scored very poorly in English Proficiency both in grammar and communication.
 - b) a relationship exists between teachers' resistance to change to poor achievement rates of students as reflected in the Personal Values Rating component;
 - c) the majority of the teachers had low to very low leadership values;
 - d) a relationship exists between acceptance of head of school in the school and community to student achievement

The results of the assessment have now become our basis in the formulation of a comprehensive teacher enhancement program for teachers in Tayud.

iNCUBE's impact in the last two years

The results of our intervention are remarkable:

1. Through the lobbying activities of the council, the Mayor approved a 20% increase in the budgetary appropriation for education from the municipal Special Education Funds. He has also requested the local school development council to submit a proposal for new budget allocation to be included in the 2007 budget;
2. By enhancing curriculum to include Values Formation and ICT Integration, Tayud National High School improved rank standing in National Achievement Test from top 35% to top 14% in the division in 2005;
3. There was also Increased Mean Percentile Scores in the Division and Regional Achievement Tests in all subject areas from 37-40% to 65-75% in 2005;
4. In the same year, Tayud National High School also received a special recognition for Outstanding Achievement in Math in the National Achievement Tests. It is noted that the Math Area is where teachers have implemented fully ICT integration in their classroom activities;
5. The ICT Training increased percentage of teachers with ICT Skills from 10% - 98% in H.S. and 4% to 96% in Elementary School

6. Results show that there was an increased Performance Rating of Teachers based on Learner's Achievements (which is 20% of total Performance Rating of Teachers)
7. Finally, Improved Community-School Relations was achieved as shown in the increased interest and participation of parents and community to participate in school development programs. For instance, in the Teacher Aide Program the local governing council was mainly responsible in crafting the program mechanism, recruitment, hiring and provision of allowances to the volunteers.

We have attributed BETTER Community Participation as a key factor in the improvement of overall school performance. However, the issue of sustainability comes into question.

In our experience, the entire process of collaboration was not an easy task. It took CBE one year to do this. Issues confronting the education sector in the national, regional and local level were identified. Having done this, the tedious process of short-listing these issues followed taking into consideration available resources and competencies.

Allowing the stakeholders to participate in shortlisting the issues from the very start gave them a sense of ownership of the entire project. This was the KEY in initializing COLLABORATION from all sectors. Once this is achieved, then strategies and roll out plans became the next steps to agree on.

Beyond that, the most essential aspect of managing progress is establishing mileposts and units that will capture the essence of the progress...establishing whether or not we are moving in the right direction or measuring how soon and fast can we see changes. After addressing organizational matters, a Strategic Planning session was conducted with members of the newly inducted officers and selected representatives from the community to define the vision, mission and key result areas, outcomes in relation to the INCUBE framework. Believing in the tenets that it takes the community to educate a child, the strategic plan outlined not only a blueprint for the school development plan but also of the entire community of Tayud.

The roles of the collaborators were defined. The PUBLIC sector took the role of the main CONVENOR, providing the legislative mechanism to implement the project in the local level.

The private sector role here is very important. It brings with it the discipline of managing variables in any process. It brings with it the system and data capture necessary to track achievement over the program.

The following slides will show you a matrix of collaboration of public/private sector in Tayud based on the INCUBE framework.

What gains did we get from the iNCUBE experience?

1. It affirms the private sector's and the community's support for the Schools' First Initiative and BESRA of the Department of Education.
2. It enabled stakeholders to formulate a sound education policy agenda in the areas of:
 - a) Student Achievement;
 - b) Curriculum Development, particularly Values Formation and ICT Integration;
 - c) Teacher Training and Development;
 - d) Learning Support System enhancement; and
 - e) School Governance through Community Involvement.
3. Finally, Involving Communities for Better Education offers opportunities for replication in other areas of endeavor.

While the gains have been accounted for, much has to be done in our quest to improve the quality of education. Our next steps are to:

1. implement the Teacher Enhancement Program through the Center for Teacher Excellence which CBE co-manages with Cebu Normal University;
2. establish standards in the formulation of a Performance Reward and Incentive Scheme for Teachers;
3. facilitate the enhancement of learning support systems and ancillary services;
4. lobby for education reforms using the experiences and impact gained in iNCUBE as basis for POLICY AGENDA; and
5. capacitate and empower the local school development council and heads of schools in the governance of the school with transparency and accountability

With a road map and agreed upon checkpoints, the coalition or effort can register its gains or lack of change. This sharpens our focus on RESULTS rather than just "FEEL GOOD" efforts.. In this type of collaboration, we should not compromise the need for positive results in the work we are involved in...we have to PLAN TO WIN..

The intra discipline inherent in the cooperation of both sectors provides the formula for meaningful participation. Good intentions are not enough in a society where systemic change needs to produce results. We are beyond “photo ops” and “CRS” for the media mileage it provides. Results-oriented cooperation is a great way to share expertise and register gains.

iNCUBE has by far undertaken the challenge of going through this process. When all stakeholders understand, believe and own the process, sustainability of the partnership follows.

Thank you ug Maayong Buntag Sa Inyong Tanan!