ISSN: 3082-3846
Volume 1, Issue 1, 2024
Graduate Education Association of Public Higher Education Institutions
GEAPHEI RESEARCH JOURNAL
Website: https://geaphei.org/

Escalating the Madrasah Education Program Towards the Development and Implementation of Inclusive Education and Responsive Programs

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Article Information

Article History:

Received: *09/27/2024*
Accepted: *10/29/2024*
Published: *10/29/2024*

Keywords:
madrasah education program, asatidz, muslim learners, escalation

DOI: 10.65223/ZCWR1031

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Abstract

The study investigated the implementation of the Madrasah Education Program (MEP) in providing appropriate and relevant educational opportunities within the context of Muslim culture, customs, and traditions. Mixed methods of research were utilized with context, input, process, and product (CIPP) as a conceptual framework model. As a result of context evaluation, most of the respondents agreed that the program is effective in providing appropriate and relevant educational opportunities for Muslim learners. However, in the evaluation of input, process, and product, the study revealed the plights of school heads, *asatidz*. Muslim parents, and learners in the implementation of MEP in the Schools Division of Bulacan. A proposed intervention plan was crafted out of the findings of the study. It consists of projects and activities focusing on the escalation of the program for further realization of the Department of Education (DepEd) strategic goals and core values.

Introduction

Anchoring education services to the local context is one of the challenges in educational reform. Changes in local contexts, like migration from other places, may be attributed to the said challenge. The penetration of other people with different cultures in mainstream society, for any reason, either in favor of the migrants or both migrants and locals, will lead to the emergence of a new society. This poses the necessity of anchoring education services to suit the needs of everyone for the sustainable development of the community. This kind of scenario suggests that learners' educational needs are not permanent in a local setting. Education services also seek reform once a community reveals its changing society.

In search of livelihood and other reasons, Muslims continuously migrate even to cities and municipalities predominantly occupied by Christians. As a result, local government services such as public education need to adapt to the change in the community context. Like what happened in the Municipality of Santa Maria, Bulacan, which is known for 230 years of Christian domination when the Church of Pandi, with *La Purísima Concepción* (The Purest Conception) as a patron saint, was established in 1792, which in turn to the foundation Santa Maria de Pandi (Santa Maria of Pandi). After more than 200 years after its establishment as a Catholic estate of Pandi, the Sta. Maria Elementary School, the first and more than a century-old basic education institution in Barangay *Poblacion* of the said municipality, offered the Madrasah Education Program (MEP), a particular program

ISSN: 3082-3846
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for Muslim learners in basic education in 2005 to cater the Muslim learners. After seven years of the implementation of MEP at the said school, the San Jose Elementary School at San Miguel, Bulacan, followed by adopting the same program in 2012 using DepEd Order no. 40, s. 2011, otherwise known as the amendment to DepEd Order no. 51 s. 2004 (Standard Curriculum for Elementary Public Schools and Private Madaris), as the legal basis for its implementation. As of today, the said school is one of the two public basic education institutions offering MEP in the entire Schools Division of Bulacan.

However, the existence of only two schools with MEP poses a problem to the big schools division with a growing Muslim population. In the 2015 population census, the Province of Bulacan had 12,672 Muslims included in the 3,292,071 population which is expected to increase as the years go by (PSA, 2017). The report also states that Bulacan has the largest Muslim population among other provinces of Central Luzon, having 2,338, 4,607, 9,849, 3,214, 6,174, and 298 only for Bataan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales, and Aurora, respectively. Given the number of their existence in the province, the researcher believes that escalating MEP is essential due to the discernible problem of the possible inaccessibility of a large percentage of Muslim learners of the province to learn ALIVE in existing MEP-implementing schools.

Cognizant of the necessity of having program offerings to basic education according to the contemporary context of the community, escalating MEP will give way to the sustainable development of DepEd's mission statement realization. This is the reason why the researcher pursued this study which provided an output for suggestions in escalating the implementation of MEP. This premise is expected to contribute to the strategic goals of DepEd, such as the expansion of access to basic education and improving the quality and relevance of basic education, where DepEd core values will be significantly emphasized by escalating MEP through the development of soft skills of Muslims in connection to their religion and culture even in the place where they are considered the minority. This is in accordance with the principle that Muslims shall have the intellectual and educational capacity to participate actively in the country's social, economic, and political endeavors. Moreover, the study complies with the principle that Muslims shall ensure sustained and permanent peace through access to an Islamic-friendly educational curriculum and quality basic education comparable to the rest of the Filipino children.

Methodology

The study adopted the mixed methods research approach, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The research was guided by a measurement instrument that satisfied the needs of collecting quantitative data. Then, interview guide questions that collected qualitative data, were also used not just to enhance the credibility of the results of the study but also supporting the gathered quantitative data and government reports.

Research Design

The study was subjected to a concurrent triangulation design to define relationships more accurately among variables of interest (Creswell et al., 2003). The integrity of the research findings was carried out by verification done by qualitative data to the quantitative data. The design led to a concrete basis for crafting the proposed intervention in escalating the implementation of MEP in the Schools Division of Bulacan.

Participants

As approved by the BulSU-ERC and the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent of Bulacan, the researcher gathered data from DepEd people to satisfy the needs of the study. Proper coordination through different channels was done by the

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researcher to reach out the subjects of the study. Table 1 presents the number of subjects considered in the study. Table 1 presents the population of the study.

Table 1.
Population of the Study

Method	School Head	%	*Asatidz*	%	Muslim Parent	%	Muslim Learners	%
Quantitative	5	83	2	100	30	100	30	100
Qualitative	5	83	2	100	5	17	5	17

In the quantitative method of this study, as shown in Table 1, the researcher involved the participation of 5 school heads, where 3 of them are former while 2 are current school heads. In addition, 30 Muslim learners in the intermediate level of the SY 2021-2022, 30 Muslim parents, and 2 *asatidz*, of schools with MEP were also involved as respondents of the study. On the other hand, in the qualitative method, the researcher still involved the participation of the same school heads and *asatidz*. The participation of randomly selected 5 Muslim learners and 5 parents was also considered in qualitative data gathering.

Instruments

The quantitative portion of the study utilized five-point Likert scale questionnaires to evaluate the level of effectiveness of MEP in terms of providing Muslim learners with appropriate and relevant educational opportunities, recognizing the cultural context and unique purposes of the learners for participating in the program offerings, integrating content and competencies which are relevant and of interest to Muslim learners, and sustaining partnership in providing quality basic education for Filipino Muslims nationwide. The instrument passed the content and face validity of experts and reliability test. For the qualitative section, the study used an interview guide for semi-structured interviews conducted with randomly selected informants. The interview guide is also a product of a series of recasting due to the consolidated suggestions of the experts. The semi-structured interview guide ensured the reliability, validity, and fit of the questions in gathering qualitative responses from the informants with different levels of perspective in MEP implementation - school heads and *asatidz*, Muslim learners, and Muslim parents. Instruments used in the said research approaches were submitted to the Bulacan State University Ethics Review Committee (BulSU-ERC) and SDO Bulacan for the grant certification to gather data from the target participants.

Procedure

For the quantitative method of this study, the researcher involved the participation of 30 Muslim learners in the intermediate level of the SY 2021-2022, 30 Muslim parents, two *asatidz*, and three former and two current school heads of school with MEP as respondents. The 5-point Likert scale research instrument was administered to 2 MEP implementing schools in the Schools Division of Bulacan – the Sta. Maria Elementary School in the Municipality of Santa Maria and the other one is the San Jose Elementary School in the Municipality of San Miguel since these are the only two public basic education institutions offering the said program in the aforementioned schools division. Due to mobility constraints brought by Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) at the beginning of data gathering, the soft copy of request letters for the said activity as well as the consent form, assent form, and research tool in Google Form format were sent to the public schools district supervisor and concerned school heads via Facebook messenger through the help of researcher's district supervisor. The school heads and *asatidz* respondents accomplished the Google form except for Muslim parents and learners due to their incapacity to use the said online platform. As a remedy made by the school head of one of the MEP implementing schools, the said school head is the one who provided the hard copy of

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the consent form, assent form, and research instruments for Muslim parents and learners. After its administration, the school head delivered the accomplished research instruments to the researcher via courier service. In other MEP-implementing schools, luckily and coincidentally, the community quarantine status of Bulacan was downgraded to Alert Level 2. It provided a chance for the researcher to collect quantitative data from target Muslim parents and learners, who were identified by their school heads, using a hard copy of the research instrument following the health safety protocol of the school and the guidelines set by the BulSU-ERC, and data gathering scope and limitations provided by the SDO Bulacan.

The data were gathered from different sources to provide satisfaction in the input portion of the research paradigm. The current number of Muslims per municipality was obtained from the Bulacan Muslim Affairs Consultative Council (BMACC) through the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO) and the Office of the Governor. Then, the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Bulacan about the number of MEP implementing schools, school heads of MEP implementing schools about the number of *asatidz*, and the *asatidz* themselves about their educational attainment, current employment status, number of teaching experience, monthly salary and allowance, and seminars and pieces of training attended.

On the other hand, for the qualitative method, the researcher involved the three former school heads of schools with MEP, two current school heads of the said schools, two *asatidz*, five intermediate Muslim learners enrolled in MEP during SY 2021-2022, and 5 guardians of the said Muslim learners as informants of the study. The Muslim parents and learners were chosen randomly with the assistance of their respective school heads based on the requirement of the research and their availability to participate in the interview session in reference to the COVID-19 health safety protocols of the school and community amidst COVID-19 Alert Level 2. Also, following the health safety protocol of schools where the informants are stationed, data gathering guidelines set by BuLSU-ERC, and data gathering limitations provided by the Schools Division Office of Bulacan, the researcher conducted qualitative data gathering using the validated interview questions through in-person one-on-one interviews to school head and *asatidz* respondents while focus group discussion to Muslim parents and learners. To record the qualitative data in a precise, fast, and convenient way, the researcher asked the consent of informants to record the entire interview sessions using a smartphone. The informants agreed to the researcher's request except for one informant who chose to be anonymous in any part of the interview session and pleaded to the researcher to record the responses in written form.

Results and Discussion

Context of MEP in the Schools Division of Bulacan

The context of MEP in the Schools Division of Bulacan was evaluated based on its effectiveness according to the responses of ten *asatidz*, five former and current school heads, 30 Muslim learners in the intermediate level, and 30 Muslim parents of MEP implementing schools. They evaluated the level of MEP effectiveness according to the following objectives of MEP: (a) providing appropriate and relevant educational opportunities; (b) recognizing the cultural context and unique purposes of the learners for participating in the program offerings; (c) integrating of content and competencies which are relevant and of interest to Muslim learners, and (d) sustaining partnership in providing quality basic education for Filipino Muslims nationwide. They evaluated the level of MEP effectiveness using five statements per objective with a 5-point Likert scale checklist with a range of interpretations and remarks. Since the Province of Bulacan is under MECQ during the quantitative data gathering process, Google Form was utilized in obtaining responses from the abovementioned participants. Through recorded responses in the Google Sheet, the data were processed using statistical software as an aid for fast and precise statistical treatment. Then, the result of their responses was presented in tables for discussion.

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Table 2 presents the descriptive measures of *asatidz* and school heads' evaluation of providing appropriate and relevant educational opportunities.

Table 2.
Descriptive Measures of School Heads, Asatidz, Muslim Learners, and Parents Evaluation on Providing Appropriate and Relevant Educational Opportunities

Respondents	Over-All Mean	SD	VI
School heads and *Asatidz*	4.56	0.85	Always
Muslim Learners	4.67	0.73	Always
Muslim Parents	4.83	0.52	Always

A closer look at the statistical results in Table 2 reveals that the said idicator were unanimously given an "always" rating by the school heads and *asatidz,* Muslim learners, and parents. This finding is statistically supported by the computed over-all means of 4.56, 4.67, and 4.83, respectively. The overall means indicate that MEP always provides appropriate and relevant educational opportunities to Muslim learners. The findings also backed by the commonality of responses of each participant by the overall standard deviation of 0.85, 0.73, and 0.52 which are less than 1.

As Alexander and Moore (2016) mentioned about categorical obligations in their Control Theory of Agency, it is most observable when humans and animals, especially if they are immigrants in a particular place, keep themselves free of moral taint to be safe and safely secure. The said theory supports the notion of MEP as the promotion of equity toward harmonious coexistence among all learners in school which is also one of the categorical obligations of Muslim learners considering their Islamic faith and values. Since the presence of Muslim learners in a Christian-dominated school is a matter of choice, MEP-implementing schools play an important role in supporting Muslim learners to keep their moral house in order by making the said program a provider of appropriate and relevant educational opportunities to Muslim learners as the result of the evaluation by *asatidz,* school heads, Muslim learners, and Muslim parents. In relation to the Control Theory of Agency, the findings derived from Tables 1, 2, and 3 show that MEP contributes to control hindrances that may affect learners' holistic development as Muslims in the comfort of schools pre-dominated by Christians

The escalation of providing appropriate and relevant educational opportunities to Muslim learners in a broad scope of jurisdiction of the Schools Division of Bulacan will be a better realization of the 1987 Philippine Constitution that mandated the State to protect and promote the right to the quality and accessible education to all (Article XIV, Sec. 1). The constitution directs the establishment, maintenance, and support of a complete, adequate, and integrated education system relevant to the needs of the people and society, as stated in paragraph 1 of Article XIV, Sec. 3. This means that adequate MEP is necessary, which will bring quality and accessible ALIVE to Muslim learners in different points of the Schools Division of Bulacan.

Table 3 presents the respondents' evaluation on recognizing the cultural context and unique purposes of the learners for participating in the program offerings.

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Table 3.
Descriptive Measures of School Heads, Asatidz, Muslim Learners, and Parents on Recognizing the Cultural Context and Unique Purposes of the Learners for Participating in the Program Offerings

Respondents	Over-All Mean	SD	VI
School heads and *Asatidz*	4.74	0.49	Always
Muslim Learners	4.60	0.84	Always
Muslim Parents	4.81	0.32	Always

As presented in the statistical results in Table 3, it reveals that all respondents were given an "always" rating on the said indicator. This finding is statistically supported by the overall computed mean of 4.74, 4.60, and 4.81 obtained from school heads and *asatidz,* Muslim learners, and parents, respectively. The consensus remark of the participants, that they always recognize the cultural context and unique purposes of the learners for participating in the program offerings, is supported by the overall standard deviation of 0.49, 0.84, and 0.32 which are less than 1.

In connection with the findings of the *asatidz*, school heads, Muslim learners, and parents' evaluation of the said MEP's objective to the Segmented Assimilation Theory of Xie and Greenman (2012), it can be gleaned that MEP is a course of action in order Muslim learners adjust their assimilation behaviors in response to the local contexts. In Bulacan where one of the given contexts of each school is having a Christian mainstream, the way for Muslim learners to preserve their culture while blending with their Christian counterparts is their attendance and learning in ALIVE classes through MEP implementation. The segmented assimilation theory of Xie and Greenman supports the unanimous positive results of respondents' evaluation of the level of effectiveness of MEP in recognizing the cultural context and unique purposes of the learners for participating in the said program. Since Muslim learners cannot take away themselves from assimilation due to their minority status, the beauty of MEP implementation is that acculturation of Muslim learners to the mainstream culture will not become the purpose of basic education in Christian-dominated schools since the program preserves their Islamic faith and values which also promoting harmonious coexistence among all learners in school. Thus, MEP prevents Muslim learners from being acculturated by mainstream society but instead just assimilating, blending with the mainstream without compromising their culture and beliefs.

Implementing MEP to the remaining inaccessible majority of the Muslim community means that education stakeholders don't neglect a major aspect of a learner's identity and foster an environment where differences are accepted and understood, mainly if those differences have historically been ignored or disparaged. This notion is even supported by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) in the socio-economic report 2017. NEDA also stated in the said report that despite the significant milestones achieved by the cultural sector in 2017, the culture sector still has a long way to go in pursuing and securing broader reforms to promote Philippine culture and values. According to the said government agency, given the recent developments in Marawi, it is also vital for the government to support madaris— schools that teach basic tenets of Islam and Qur'an recitation to young Filipinos. The culture sector also works to foster an understanding of Islamic culture. The public needs to be engaged in constructive and educational discussions about terrorism and must be able to distinguish between acts of terrorism and legitimate religious practices and traditions. The dream towards the multiplication of MEP-implementing schools in the Schools Division of Bulacan is a realization of recognizing the cultural context and unique purposes of the learners for participating in the program offerings of MEP. The greater access of a large percentage of Muslim learners in the schools division to learning ALIVE will contribute to the realization.

Table 4 presents the respondents' evaluation on integrating content and competencies which are relevant and of interest to Muslim learners.

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Table 4.
Descriptive Measures of School Heads, Asatidz, Muslim Learners, and Parents on Integrating Content and Competencies which are Relevant and of Interest to Muslim Learners

Respondents	Over-All Mean	SD	VI
School heads and *Asatidz*	4.71	0.71	Always
Muslim Learners	4.44	1.07	Always
Muslim Parents	4.55	1.03	Always

As gleaned from the statistical results in Table 4, it reveals school heads, *asatidz*, Muslim learners, and parents were given an "always" rating on the said indicator. This finding is statistically supported by the overall computed mean of 4.71, 4.44, and 4.55. There is a commonality in the responses of school heads and *asatidz* as dictated by the standard deviation of 0.71 which is less than 1. However, the result of the evaluation of Muslim learners and parents is heterogeneous as presented by the overall standard deviation of 1.07 and 1.03, respectively, which are greater than 1.

The remarkable results of the evaluation of *asatidz*, former and current school heads, Muslim learners, and parents of MEP implementing schools in the Schools Division of Bulacan on MEP effectiveness in integrating content and competencies that are relevant and of interest to Muslim learners are supported by Sinnott-Armstrong (2015), in his Pluralistic Theory of Value, affirming the denial of many consequentialists that all values can be reduced to any single ground such as pleasure or desire satisfaction. The theory of Sinnot-Armstrong provided the notion that the values of Muslim learners, as humans with different preferences, are not reducible in a single ground even amidst their blending with their counterparts in the school. Like their Christian counterparts, they also value different things. Due to the irreducible values of Muslim learners and their dominant counterparts, MEP plays an important role in incorporating the vision, mission, and core values of the school into the Muslim context in order to give an equal right the Muslim learners to contextualize it that will result to the common value of promoting respect and harmonious relationship among learners. This is the reason why *asatidz* and school heads, Muslim learners, and Muslim parents gave an overall rating ranging from often to always on the effectiveness of MEP in integrating content and competencies which are relevant and of interest to Muslim learners like the conduct of different activities concerning the learning of Arabic language and realization of Islamic values.

Moreover, the evaluation of *asatidz*, school heads, Muslim learners, and Muslim parents on the effectiveness of MEP in integrating content and competencies that are relevant and of interest to Muslim learners shows that the MEP-implementing schools put into realizing the importance of education as emphasized in *The Qu'ran* (2004) with frequent injunctions, such as "God will exalt those of you who believe and those who have the knowledge to high degrees" (58:11), "O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge" (20:114), and "As God has taught him, so let him write" (2:282). Such verses provide a forceful stimulus for Muslim learners to strive for education and learning. These are some of the manifestations that the implementation of MEP is also highly motivated by the passage in the Koran. As a government action in promoting inclusive education, the passage of RA 10533, or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, brought one of the salient features of the K to 12 Basic Education Program which is making the curriculum relevant to learners. This is through activities, songs, poems, stories, and illustrations that are based on local culture, history, and reality that make the lessons relevant to the learners and easy to understand. However, the researcher believes in the essentiality of MEP to be escalated especially in the pre-dominated Christian schools division so that the DepEd's contextualization principle in delivering basic education will further enhance its execution.

Since the 2 MEP implementing schools were evaluated by *asatidz*, school heads, Muslim learners, and parents with effective MEP in integrating content and competencies which are relevant and of interest to Muslim learners, it is a manifestation that MEP is a responsive program to the needs of Muslim learners and their communities and feasible for escalation by putting up MEP implementing schools in other areas under the jurisdiction of Schools Division of Bulacan so that the enjoinment of Muslim learners in the comfort of the existing MEP implementing schools will be experienced by their

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Muslim counterparts in other municipalities. The said MEP escalation is in accordance with the 1987 Philippine Constitution that mandated the State to ensure equal access to cultural opportunities through the educational system, public or private cultural entities, scholarships, grants and other incentives, community cultural centers, and other public venues (Section 18, Article XIV). This can be gleaned that the MEP objective of integrating content and competencies which are relevant and of interest to Muslim learners is also the right of Muslim learners in other areas of jurisdiction of the Schools Division of Bulacan.

Table 5 presents the respondents' evaluation on sustaining partnership in providing quality basic education for Filipino Muslims nationwide.

Table 5.
Descriptive Measures of School Heads, Asatidz, Muslim Learners, and Parents on Sustaining Partnership in Providing Quality Basic Education for Filipino Muslims Nationwide

Respondents	Over-All Mean	SD	VI
School heads and *Asatidz*	4.12	1.16	Often
Muslim Learners	4.71	0.52	Always
Muslim Parents	4.84	0.41	Always

The statistical results in Table 5 reveal that school heads and *asatidz* were given an overall rating of "often" on the said indicator while both Muslim learners and parents evaluated it as "always". The findings are statistically supported by the overall mean of 4.12, 4.71, and 4.84, respectively. There is no commonality in the responses of school heads and *asatidz* as dictated by an overall standard deviation of 1.16 which is greater than 1. On the other hand, Muslim learners and parents have almost similar evaluations on it as revealed by the overall standard deviation of 0.52 and 0.41, in that order, which are less than 1.

Since that *asatidz* and school heads, Muslim learners, and parents showed an overall remarkable perception of the effectiveness of MEP in sustaining partnership in providing quality basic education for Filipino Muslims nationwide, it is an indication of the realization of culturally recognized goals by having partners in the implementation of MEP. It is a good indication that the often realization of the said objectives as a result of the evaluation of *asatidz* and school heads is perceived by Muslim learners and parents as always. The state of anomie is unlikely to happen based on the result of the evaluation of the abovementioned stakeholders. As Merton (1938) stated, in his Anomie Theory, most people strive to achieve culturally recognized goals. A state of anomie develops when access to these goals is blocked to entire groups of people or individuals. The result is deviant behavior characterized by rebellion, retreat, ritualism, innovation, and/or conformity. According to Merton, anomic conditions are no longer seen in the gap between needs and satisfaction, but in the discrepancy between goals and means. Crime arises from the divergence between the social objectives recognized as legitimate and the limited access to the means necessary to achieve these objectives. In this sense, the state of anomie on the part of Muslims is impossible to happen since their status as a minority is not an issue for private and public institutions and individuals to recognize and support MEP as a way to inculcate and preserve the Islamic values among Muslim learners as can be gleaned in the result of the evaluation of Muslim learners and parents that gave homogeneous responses and overall rating of always.

The results of *asatidz* and school heads, Muslim learners, and parents' evaluation of four objectives that served as indicators of the effectiveness of MEP show the beauty of MEP in implementing inclusive education and responsive program for Muslim learners. The said beauty of MEP is also an indication of the escalation of MEP in terms of putting up MEP-implementing schools in other areas of the Schools Division of Bulacan with enough numbers of Muslim learners. This is for other areas to experience the effectiveness of MEP implementation as is being done in San Jose Elementary School and Sta. Maria Elementary School.

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Inputs on MEP Implementation in the Schools Division of Bulacan

Since input involves the resources, infrastructure, curriculum, and content needed to implement the teaching-learning processes (Stufflebeam, 2003), the evaluation of MEP in this portion includes using hard data and informants' statements about their experiences in the implementation of the said program.

Muslims in Areas Under the Jurisdiction of the Schools Division of Bulacan

The presence of Muslims in the Province of Bulacan is the main reason for input in different undertakings of MEP implementation. Table 6 shows the number of Muslims per municipality under the jurisdiction of the Schools Division of Bulacan. Excluding the component cities of the Province of Bulacan, there are 21 municipalities within the administration of the schools division in the delivery of basic education. The municipalities are presented alphabetically.

Table 6.
Number of Muslims per Municipality

Municipality	Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
Angat	90	1.54
Balagtas	450	7.72
Baliuag	750	12.86
Bocaue	150	2.57
Bulakan	150	2.57
Bustos	150	2.57
Calumpit	105	1.80
Doña Remedios Trinidad	75	1.29
Guiguinto	20	0.34
Hagonoy	105	1.80
Marilao	150	2.57
Norzagaray	800	13.72
Obando	30	0.51
Pandi	600	10.29
Paombong	120	2.06
Plaridel	300	5.15
Pulilan	180	3.09
San Ildefonso	225	3.86
San Miguel	390	6.69
San Rafael	90	1.54
Santa Maria	900	15.44
	Total = 5,830	**Mean = 277.61** **SD = 267.51**

In relation to DepEd Order no. 41, s. 2017 or the Policy Guidelines on Madrasah Education in the K to 12 Basic Education Program, schools can organize ALIVE classes for classes with 15 to 40 pupils. If a school has less than 15 Muslim learners, the school head may coordinate with the Division ALIVE Coordinator for possible collaboration with the nearest school offering ALIVE Program within the district of schools division. Out of the 5,830 population of Muslims under the jurisdiction of the Schools Division of Bulacan, 1,348 are Muslim learners at the elementary level as reported in the mapping of Muslim learners conducted by SDO Bulacan before the end of SY 2021-2022 last July 2022. Out of 1,348 Muslim learners, only 62 and 40 Muslim learners were catered by Sta. Maria Elementary School and San Jose Elementary School,

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respectively, during the said school year. This is equivalent only to 7.57% of Muslim learners in the Schools Division of Bulacan. This means that the 1,246 or 92.43% of Muslim learners in the said schools division have no access to the program.

Resources

To satisfy the need for inclusivity of Muslim education in the Schools Division of Bulacan, resources for implementing MEP were provided to realize the DepEd mission statement. Among these are the establishment of MEP in select schools and the provision of *asatidz.* The resources for the current implementation of MEP in the said schools division were evaluated according to the number of MEP implementing schools, *asatidz,* and their profile for a better understanding of the status of the said program implementation.

Table 7 presents the number of MEP-implementing schools in the Schools Division of Bulacan.

Table 7.
Number of MEP Implementing Schools in Schools Division of Bulacan

School	Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
San Jose Elementary School, San Miguel	1	50.00
Santa Maria Elementary School, Santa Maria	1	50.00
Total	**2**	**100.00**

In reference to the 5,830 Muslims in 21 municipalities as shown in the previous table, it can be gleaned that there is purportedly 2,915 Muslims in each MEP implementing school in the Schools Division of Bulacan. The presence of two MEP implementing schools in two different municipalities seems that the larger percentage of the Muslim population, the 77.87% of Muslims distributed in 19 municipalities in reference to Table 6, is deprived of having a school that will teach ALIVE to their youth. The said number of MEP implementing schools in Table 7 against the number of Muslim people in 21 municipalities presented in Table 6 shows the disproportionality of delivery of inclusive education among Muslims.

Table 8 presents the number of *asatidz* in the Schools Division of Bulacan.

Table 8.
Number of Asatidz

School	Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
San Jose Elementary School	1	50.00
Santa Maria Elementary School	1	50.00
Total	**2**	**100.00**

Since the number of *asatidz* in Table 8 is the same as the number of MEP-implementing schools presented in Table 7, it also poses the notion of disproportionality with the number of Muslims in the municipalities under the jurisdiction of the Schools Division of Bulacan. In the reviewed data, it can be gleaned that the number of *asatidz* is seeking an emphasis in any initiatives of realization of escalation of MEP in the schools division. It is due to the data presented in Table 8 that there is also a dearth of ALIVE teaching force relative to the number of Muslims in the Province of Bulacan.

Table 9 presents the description of the personal profile of *asatidz* in the Schools Division of Bulacan.

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Table 9.
Description of Personal Profile of Asatidz

Variables		Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
Age (years)	42	1	50.00
	50	1	50.00
	Mean Age = 46.00	SD = 5.66	
Gender	Male	0	0.00
	Female	2	100.00
Highest Educational Attainment	College Undergraduate	1	50.00
	College Graduate	1	50.00
Position	ALIVE Teacher	2	100.00
Number of Years of Teaching ALIVE	1	1	50.00
	11	1	50.00
Employment Status	Contractual	2	100.00
Monthly Allowance	Php 3,001.00-8,000.00	2	100.00
Seminars/ Trainings/ Courses attended in relation to MEP	Language Enhancement and Pedagogy (LEaP)	1	50.00
	Arabic Emergent Reading (AER)	1	50.00
	Accelerated Teacher Education Program (ATEP)	1	50.00
	Division Online Writeshop on the Development of learning plans, modules, and activity sheets in MEP	2	100.00
Examination taken and passed in relation to teaching ALIVE	Qualifying Examination in Arabic Language and Islamic Studies (QEALIS)	1	100.00
	Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET)	0	0.00

For the purpose of research, even though the Schools Division of Bulacan has *asatidz* who are in-charge in teaching Muslim learners in MEP, it can be gleaned that most of the given descriptions of *asatidz* in Table 9 need prioritization for MEP escalation. Regardless of the age and gender of the teacher as well as the dearth of graduates in education concerning Arabic language and Islamic values, it is better to have a college graduate *asatidz* as an initial passport for probationary status. The baccalaureate degree serves as an entry point to get the other essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes in teaching ALIVE such as undergoing LEaP, AER, ATEP, and other related training. The college degree will also be a gateway for a madrasah teacher to pursue other in-service professional development such as taking and passing the QEALIS and LET in order to be a full pledge *asatidz.* As a consequence, Muslim learners will benefit from such professional development of *asatidz.* The equipped *asatidz,* following madrasah teacher standards stated in DepEd Order No. 41, s. 2017, have complacency in ensuring the quality delivery of ALIVE among Muslim learners enrolled in MEP. It will also ensure that ALIVE will be taught according to the set standards.

Given the data in the preceding tables that the number of asatidz in the Schools Division of Bulacan is outnumbered by the Muslim population in the province, it is a synonymous situation in Table 17 that education standards, employment status, remuneration, and professional development of *asatidz* should also be emphasized in the escalation of MEP. In cognizant of the statement of the 1987 Philippine Constitution on Section 5, Article XIV, the government has the mandate to enhance

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the right of *asatidz* to professional advancement and ensure that education will attract and retain its rightful share of the best available talents through adequate remuneration and other means of job satisfaction and fulfillment. Based on the current status of MEP implementation in the Schools Division of Bulacan, it seems that there is a need to escalate it in conformity with the said provisions of the constitution.

Overcoming Challenges on Other Resources for MEP Implementation

To further evaluate other resources of MEP implementation, the researcher conducted interviews with 2 *asatidz*, 3 former school heads, 2 current school heads, 5 Muslim learners, and 5 Muslim parents of the 2 MEP implementing schools of the Schools Division of Bulacan. One-on-one interview sessions were conducted with *asatidz* and school heads while focus group discussions were administered with Muslim learners and parents. The conducted interviews focused on how the *asatidz* and school heads overcome the challenges in the inputs of MEP implementation.

No separate budget appropriation for school-based management of MEP. As remedy to the challenge, school head 2 said *"Kaya ikaw na principal, gagawa ka ng paraan, hahanap ka ng resources para matugunan mo yung pangangailang ng bata."* That's why you as a principal, you will make a way, you will find for resources to meet the needs of children). And the school head 2 added, *"Kaya sir, alam mo kung saan ko nakita yan? Isasama mo na sila sa AIP mo. Nakapaloob sila sa AIP sa program mo. Kaya nandodoon madrasah class. Mag aalot ka ng budget. So siguro, doon pumapasok yung sinasabing national fund. Kasi yung AIP natin, yung pondo natin from MOOE is galing sa national. Kaya kung hihingi ka ng separate na pondo sa national, baka isagot sa iyo, hindi ba nakasama sa AIP yan?. So ikaw na principal, isama mo sa AIP mo funded by the MOOE, maglagay ka ng separate funds budget para dun sa madrasah."* (That's why sir, do you know where I learned it? You will incorporate them in the AIP. They are included in your program in the AIP. There the madrasah class. You will allot budget. Perhaps, the said to be national came in. Because our AIP, our fund from MOOE is came from national. So, if you will be asking a separate fund from the national, they might be answered, was it incorporated in the AIP? So, you as principal, include in your AIP funded by the MOOE, allot a separate funds budget for madrasah.)

Class time constraint for ALIVE class. School head 3 said that *"even Saturday minsan nakakapunta ako para mamonitor ko yung klase nila."*. (Even Saturday I went to [school] to monitor their classes).

Breach of commitment. School head 4 mentioned, *"Sa pagkakaroon ng double compensation, ipinaliwanag ko sa asatidz na hindi pwede ang double compensation. Sa kinalaunan siya ay nagresign dahil sa pag-uwi niya sa Marawi City. Kumuha ako ng Muslim parent volunteer na College graduate kapalit ng nagresign na ustadz."* (In having double compensation, I explained to the *asatidz* that double compensation is not allowed. Later on, he resigned due to his return to Marawi City. I hired a college graduate Muslim parent volunteer as a replacement for the resigned *ustadz*)

Online communication constraints. As remedy to the problem, *ustadzah 2* said *"Hindi kasi sila lahat may kakayanan. So talagang isisingit lang nila kapag may time. Minsan naman nakikipano-panood. Yun yung ginagawa nilang pamamaraan. Minsan nakikitawag. Minsan pinupuntahan si ustadzah mismo sa palengke. Dahil kasi nga walang internet connection."* (Not all of them are financially capable. They only find ways if there is a time. Sometimes they are watching with the devices of others. That is how they are doing. Sometimes they borrow telecommunication devices to call. Sometimes they are going to the market to meet the *ustadzah*. Because there is no internet connection.)

The challenges on other resources for MEP implementation are related to the results of the study of Sali and Marasigan (2020) who conducted a study to explore the implementation of MEP in selected ALIVE schools in Quezon City, Philippines, and identify some challenges faced in their implementation practice. The study identified some major challenges affecting the program implementation in selected ALIVE schools such as lack of permanent infrastructure,

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limited instructional resources, learners' absenteeism, low and delayed *asatidz* allowances, and cultural variances among Muslim Filipinos. However, in connection to the current study, the good thing about the challenges encountered by informants in the implementation of MEP is they can provide remedies so that the sustainable development of the program in their respective current contexts could not be fully affected by the challenges.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure is one of the important inputs in the implementation of the MEP. These are basic physical facilities needed for teaching and learning such as classrooms, electrical supply, hygiene facilities, and other essential facilities in the promotion of a good learning environment. In this regard, verbal statements on how *asatidz* and school heads overcome the challenges of infrastructure were used to evaluate the condition of school facilities in the implementation of MEP.

No classroom for ALIVE class. In order to assure the safety of teachers' belongings in the utilization of their classroom for ALIVE class, school head 1 said: "Tapos gumawa kami ng MOA. Nagkaroon kami ng MOA with, together dito sa asatidz na kung halimbawa dumating yung time na may masira or may ano, ay ipagagawa para maingatan yon, maingatan nila… Di ba iyong lang yung ano, iyon lang naman ang remedy don? Para hanggat pansamantala, na hanggat wala silang matutuluyan na classroom para sa madrasah ay maisagawa nila yung programa na magkaroon ng madrasah. Maituro nila yung Islamic values sa mga bata. And then later on nga, nung makakuha sila ng mga pondo sa foundation ay nagsarili." (Then we secured MOA. We had MOA with, together with the asatidz if in the case for the time that there are materials will be destroyed or untoward incidence will happen, they will fix it to take care of it, for them to take care [pause]. Isn't that only [way], that is only the remedy on that matter? So that in the meantime they can implement the program of madrasah. To teach Islamic values to the children. Then, later on, they secured independently when they obtained funds from different foundations.)

The way how the said school head addressed the challenge of the absence of a classroom for the ALIVE class is supported by target 4.a of SDG 4. This target is about building and upgrading education facilities that are child, disability, and gender-sensitive, and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all. This target also addresses the need for adequate physical infrastructure and safe, inclusive environments that nurture learning for all, regardless of background or disability status (United Nations General Assembly, 2015).

Content

Arabic language and Islamic values are the content taught in MEP. As stated in DepEd Order No. 41, s. 2017, the component of the Arabic language for this program aims to develop the learners' functional literacy in Arabic which will enable them to read and understand the Holy Quran. The Islamic values component, on the other hand, aims to help learners acquire the desired Islamic values that would guide them to the Core Values of DepED: to be *maka-Diyos, makatao, makakalikasan,* and *makabansa*; thereby making them agents in advocating and promoting brotherhood, peace, unity, justice, and equality. In connection to this, the evaluation for this input of MEP utilized the statements of *asatidz* and school heads about their experience in overcoming the challenges posed by the content of teaching ALIVE under the said program.

Incompetency brought about by the language barrier. School head 3 said, *"Nung gumagawa kami ng mga books, ng instructional materials, umaano pa kami ng experts sa Arabic. Pinapatranslate pa naming para itong mga batang ito hindi nila malilimutan yung kultura nila. Kasi sa regular classes Tagalog ang salita nila eh. Para na rin hindi nila makalimutan yung sarili nilang lengwahe bilang Muslim at yung Arabic kaya gumagawa kami ng instructional materials, big book."* (During the time that we are developing books and instructional materials, we are [seeking the help] of experts in Arabic. We asked for a translation so that children do not forget their culture. Because their language during regular classes is

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Tagalog. In order for them not to forget their language as Muslim and the Arabic that's why we are developing instructional materials, a big book.)

The aforementioned qualitative findings about infrastructure are supported by Solaiman's (2017) study, in his descriptive research, which gathers information about the implementation of Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) and the prevailing conditions regarding the teaching of ALIVE in Marawi City, Philippines. The study had shown that there were no sufficient books and learning materials for ALIVE students. Solaiman's study recommended providing sufficient updated books and other references for every pupil, making the distribution a 1:1 ratio.

Process in the Implementation of MEP in the Schools Division of Bulacan

The research also used the suggestions of the informants for the evaluation of the MEP implementation process. The process includes the teaching-learning processes, co-curricular activities, and all the processes that are necessary for the implementation of different activities and learners' formative evaluation (Stufflebeam, 2003). Such experiences became the basis of the informants as they provided suggestions for escalation MEP.

Teaching-Learning Process

The delivery of Arabic language and Islamic values education happens through teaching-learning. In the same way as the regular class, the process involves the presence of *asatidz* and Muslim learners. The study used the informants 'suggestions to escalate MEP implementation to evaluate the program's learning process.

MEP to be part of the curriculum. As school head who stayed and served for the maximum number of years in his former school with MEP, his experiences equipped him to shared improvement mechanisms to escalate the implementation of MEP. School head 1 said, *"Kung nagawa ng MTB, yung Mother Tounge, nung naging parte siya ng curriculum, bakit hindi naman yung madrasah ang iimplement. Kasi nahihirapan lang tayo sa pagtukoy kasi nga multi-ethnic tayo eh. Halimbawa magagawi sa amin, nakapokus siya sa Maranao, eh may dumating mga Tausug. Iba yung orientation nila. Pero Muslim din sila. Pwede siguro may partikular. Kung Arabic, Arabic. Ganun na lamang sila. Regardless kung anong partikular ethnic group ka."* (If the MTB made it, the Mother Tounge, to become part of the curriculum, why not madrasah be implemented? Because we find difficulty in specifying because we are multi-ethnic. For example that there are *Maranaos* who enrolled to us, then later on followed by Tausug. They have different orientation. But they are also Muslims. Perhaps, it is possible to be particular. If Arabic, Arabic. They are just like that. Regardless of your particular ethnic group.)

***Asatidz* with much merit and fitness for the job**. School head 1 mentioned, "*Kasi yung mga nagiging usually standing asatidz, they are not teachers. Actually naging ano lang sila, yung naging asatidz sila dahil sa may mga seminar lang inatendan so yun yung mga qualifications na ipinipresent nila. Pero kung kagaya natin na teacher, di ba nag-aral tayo, tapos nagboard tayo, so ganun din sana gusto natin. Halimbawa sa high school teacher kunwari Bachelor of Science Major in English, Bachelor of Science Major in Arabic, di ba? Ganoon para ano teacher talaga ang magtuturo sa kanila"* (Because they become *asatidz* due to the seminar that they attended so that is the qualification that they are presenting. But if teacher like us, we study, then we took board examination, so we would like the same. Example in a high school teacher like Bachelor of Science Major in English, Bachelor of Science Major in Arabic, isn't it? It should be like that so children will be taught by a full pledged teacher.)

Additional *asatidz* as a key for the continuity of MEP in the higher grade level of basic education. According to school head 3, *"Sa akin mas maganda kung mayroong qualified naman na magtuturo ng madrasah mas maganda may sasalo. Sa ganda ng kultura nila hindi dapat kalimutan. Yung edukasyon ng madrasah hindi dapat mawala. Sana continuous siya. May continuity pagdating ng high school dapat. Kasi sayang yung paghihirapan mo."* (For me much better if there is a qualified

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to teach [in] madrasah and it is a good thing if there is the next level. Due to the beauty of their culture, it should not be set aside. Madrasah education should not be lost. Hoping that it is continuous. There should be continuity in high school. Because it's a waste of hard work if not to be continued.)

Availability and readiness for utilization of self-learning modules. Concerning to self-learning modules, school head 5 said: *"Para sa akin siguro sir kailangan, di ba tayo may lumalabas na mga ready made na ganito iimplement na lang ni teacher hindi nahihirapan yung sa ibaba na siya yung gagawa nung mga ganito. Di ba mas maganda na iimplement mo na lang para bang tayo di ba yung mga modules natin naka ready na, kumpleto na siya, tapos may mga weekly home learning plan."* (For me sir perhaps there should have readymade modules in ALIVE, as we have in regular subjects so that the teacher will proceed immediately to the implementation rather than having a hard time for teachers to develop the module in ALIVE. Much better if ALIVE modules are available and ready for implementation like our modules in regular subjects which are complete then there is already a weekly home learning plan.)

Provision of electronic devices as an aid for teaching. *Ustadzah 2*, a madrasah teacher of one of the two MEP implementing schools, provides statements for improvement mechanisms to escalate the implementation of MEP. In terms of devices for assisting teaching, *ustadzah* 2 said that "*Kailangan ko yung laptop at yung printer kasi yung binigay sa aking printer sira kaagad. Kaya dapat palitan yun. At tsaka yung TV para makapanood sila. Yun ang maganda sa mga bata para makita nila yung mga ano."* (I need a laptop and printer because the printer issued to me is not functioning already. And also TV so that they can watch the video lesson.)

Co-curricular Activities

As with regular and other special programs for basic education, co-curricular activities are included in the MEP. One of these is the *Musabaqah* Skills Exhibition which aims to allow ALIVE learners to showcase their skills and talents through the exhibition of their performance (DepEd Memorandum No. 172, s. 2007). Schools also conduct co-curricular activities based on their action plan in the said program. The informants' suggestion to escalate MEP implementation was also used in this study to evaluate co-curricular activities as one of the MEP implementation processes.

Additional budget. School head 1 mentioned that *"Maganda ang program, kailangan lang ng full support".* (The program is worthful, it only needs full support) In connection to this statement, school head 1 added: *"Ang programa na walang tulong ng external stakeholders ay hindi nagsasucceed."* (The program with no support from external stakeholders does not succeed.)

Extra dynamics in MEP implementation.

School head 2 said, *"Marami sir, unang una nga ay dapat dyan ay yung more on programs yung mga seminars nila at tsaka more on activities sa Muslim kasi the more na nagkakaroon ng activities at programs sa Muslim, the more na nagiging active ang MEP."* (Many sir, first of all, it should be more on programs their seminars, and more activities for Muslims because the more of having activities and programs for Muslims, the more MEP become active.)

The improvement mechanisms provided by the informants to escalate the implementation of MEP are supported by An et al. (2016), in their Density Theory, stating that the proportion of people from a different culture surrounding an individual may prompt a shift in one's beliefs and attitudes. The escalating of MEP may avoid the consequence of the said theory where the proportion of people from a different culture surrounding an individual may prompt a shift in one's beliefs and attitudes. Escalation of MEP, based on informants' suggestions, has no purpose of excluding the Muslim learners from the

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mainstream to keep the serenity of their culture away from the bad influence of other cultures but in order for them to learn to use their culture as the great foundation of attaining the common mission, vision, and core values of school-age children in the country that will lead to the development of efficacious comradeship among them and all learners in the school.

Product of MEP Implementation in the Schools Division of Bulacan

Product evaluation involves skills, values, attitudes, and results that are needed to identify the outcomes and effectiveness of the educational program (Stufflebeam, 2003). In relation to the procedures undertaken by the informants to overcome the challenges of MEP implementation specifically with its inputs and despite what still needs to be done to escalate the process of implementation of said program, they gave a narrative on MEP product identifying its outcomes and effectiveness in the Schools Division of Bulacan. When given the opportunity to implement MEP in the high percentage of the Muslim population in the province, the products related to MEP's contribution to the development of the intellectual and educational capacity of Muslims to participate actively in social, economic, and political endeavors of the country will be enjoyed by most Muslim learners.

Skills

The learning of Muslim students in Islamic values coincides with the need for the development of their proficiency in reading and writing the Arabic language. Like other parents, Muslim parents have high regard for their children's education which is the reason for their economic endeavors coupled with the appreciation of their culture. The paragraph that follows is the testimony of informants in relation to the support of the parents in the development of their children's skills in the comfort of MEP.

Economic endeavors of parents as supporting the enrichment of the skills of Muslim learners. In relation to economic endeavor of Muslims, school head 5 said, *"Sa economics naman, para rin pong katulad natin. Mga Muslim ay masisipag naman po yung mga, yung Muslim community na na ano dito sa school. Lahat sila ay may trabaho. At saka yung mga bata nakikta mo na naibibigay ng mga parents yung mga pangangailangan nila. Kasi nakikita mo yung kapag may program sa school, sila yung nagbibigay ng mga intermission number, yung mga talent nila, dito mayron sa mga ballroom dancing ako mismo wala pa rito yung time na iyon napapahanga na Muslim po iyan. Talagang nahahanga ako sa ano nila. Yung talent nila. Nageexcel sir. Yung Muslim dito sa amin. At iyon nga ang sinasabi sa akin ng mga teacher."* (In economics, it looks like us. Muslims are industrious, the Muslim community near the school. All of them have job. And then you can evidently see children that their parents providing their needs. Because you can see once there is program in school, they are performing intermission number, their talents, here there is a ballroom dancing even before my time as school head of this school and that time I was impressed by the said Muslims. I am really impressed on what they have. Their talent. They are excelling sir.)

Values

Respect for others is common in any teaching of values education whether it is a regular class or madrasah education. This is one of the important elements that everyone should have in socializing. The following paragraphs are informants 'statements regarding the values that Muslim students acquire as one of the products of MEP implementation and the foundation of their social interaction.

MEP as a gateway for Muslim learners' social endeavors and an instrument to sustain culture. As confirmed by school head 3, "*Kahit may activities kami na para sa eskwelahan na kunyari ay pangrelihiyon, hindi naman sila umiiwas. Sumasali rin sila sa mga ganon. Kahit yung fiesta ng San Jose, halimbawa San Jose Nights. Sumasali sila run eh iyon ay fiesta ni San Jose. Nagppresent sila ng special number. Kaya lang ang ipinalalabas nila ay yung kultura nila. Yung mga sayaw ng*

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Muslim, yung mga awit ng Muslim. Piniprisent nila yun at ipinapakita nila na kami ito ang kultura naming mga Muslim." (Even though we have school activities such as religion-related, they are not really getting away from it. They also participating on those kinds of activities. Even feast of Saint Joseph, like Saint Joseph Nights. They are participating even the activity is about feast of Saint Joseph. They are presenting a special number. However, they presenting their culture. The Muslim dances, Muslim songs. They are presenting and showing that here we are our culture as Muslims.) It can be gleaned in this statement of school head 3 that MEP made Muslims be accepted by the pre-dominant Christian community to exercise their social, economic, and political endeavors as a result of their intellectual and educational capacity that they gained from the said program of the school.

This informant's statements are in accordance with the study of Javiniar (2018) who revealed the findings of his case study about the desired education of Muslim Filipino parents for their children in a public school. As a result, Javiniar found that Muslim Filipino parents expressed their desire for holistic education that would prepare their children to become productive citizens and at the same time good Muslims. The process of educating Muslim Filipino children to become good Muslims requires attaining knowledge about their Muslim identity. They also needed to be challenged to live responsibly and ethically with the Quran as a criterion for living. In the current research, the results derived from the interviews show that this statement of Javiniar is already in reality due to the implementation of MEP. In relation to informants' statements, the implementation of MEP goes to the turning point where Muslim parents show support for the education offered by the program to their children while assimilating with their host culture, being accepted by their Christian counterparts, and showcasing their talents and productivity in social endeavors.

Attitudes

The way of thinking of Muslim students in Christian-dominated schools and society is settled by MEP. This program is also a way for mainstream society to understand and appreciate the cultural diversity that the focus is on the goal of unity and harmonious relationship of each other. The next paragraph is an evaluation of the informants 'narratives on the confidence Muslims have gained in MEP to participate in mainstream society's activities.

MEP as booster of Muslim learners' confidence within Christian-dominated society. Still in connection to the contribution of the implementation of MEP to the development of intellectual and educational capacity of Muslims to participate actively in social, economic, and political endeavors of the country, school head 2 – also a former school head of MEP implementing school – said that *"Malaki sir, napakalaki, kasi unang-una nagkaroon sila ng tiwala. Binigyan mo sila ng tiwala, Karapatan at tsansa, kung baga sa ano ay binigyan sila ng pagkakataon na mailabas nila ang kanilang knowledge at kanilang expertise, not only their expertise pati yung kanilang isheshare mo yung kanilang kaalaman. Kasi yung pinagkatiwalaan mo sila, the more na nagiging malapit sila sa iyo, the more na naeexpose sila at tumataas ang moral nila. Kasi dati set aside lang sila eh. Tingnan mo nga kung madadatnan mo nasa palenke lang. Ngayon nakilala sila because of madrasah."* (Goodly sir, too goodly, because first they acquired trust. You give them trust, right, and chance, as in you give them chance to show their knowledge and expertise, not only their expertise but also sharing their knowledge. Because you trust them, the more they become close to you, the more they enable to expose themselves and boost their moral. Because before they are set aside. As you can see that you can find them only in the market. Now they were recognized because of madrasah.)

Addressing vulnerability caused by sensitivity. The importance of communication without prejudice is confirmed by school head 2. As school head 2 mentioned, *"Sa tingin ko sir iyan din ang hinahanap ng mga terorista. Yung mga rebelde. Yung mga taliwas. Kasi parang nagkakaroon ng discrimination eh. Siguro kapag ibinigay mo sa kanila yun ay mawawala na ang mga krimen. Mahihinto na yung mga issues na ganyan. Kasi binigyan mo na siya ng importansya. Kaya lang talaga*

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lilimitahan mo lang. Dapat alam mo kung paano." (I think sir that's what terrorists are looking for. The rebels. Because it seems that having discrimination. Perhaps there will be no crimes if you will give their [rights]. The issues about that will stop. Because they give them importance. However, you need to set the boundaries. You should know how to deal with it.)

Results

As stated in DepEd Order No. 41, s. 2017, DepEd promotes the right of the nation's cultural communities in the exercise of their right to develop themselves within the context of their cultures, customs, traditions, interests, and beliefs consistent with its vision, mission, and core values. In the same issuance, the DepEd also recognizes education as an instrument for maximum participation in national development and ensuring their involvement in achieving national unity. The opportunity to participate in political activities and be heard in relation to the development of skills and lifestyle is a great thing for any Filipino regardless of ethnicity. The next paragraphs are the evaluation of the informants 'statements regarding the result of the MEP implementation. The proposed development program in the implementation of MEP is also included as the result of the product component.

MEP as promoter of Muslim learners' political endeavors. In relation to the contribution of the implementation of MEP to the development of the intellectual and educational capacity of Muslims to participate actively in political endeavors of the country, school head 5 said: "*Yung mga anak nila ay talagang inirerespeto na rin nung kapwa naming na anak nung mga Katoliko. Hindi mo makikita yung difference ng Muslim at Katoliko. Hindi binibigyan ng special treatment, pantay-pantay lang sila. Kahit sa mga contest na sinasalihan nila, nageexcel sila. Sila yung mga magagaling sumayaw, magaling umawit, at nananalo pa sa mga organization na sinasalihan nila. At ang mga magulang nila, suportado rin ang paaralan."* (Their children are really respected by the Catholic children. You cannot see the difference between Muslim and Catholic. No special treatment is given to them, they are all equally co-exist. Even in contests that they participated, they are excelling. They are excellent in dancing, sound in singing, and also winning a post in the organization that they are joining.)

Supplication along with several contributions of MEP to the development of the intellectual and educational capacity of Muslims. Despite most informants' affirmation of the several contributions of MEP to the development of the intellectual and educational capacity of Muslims for their active participation in social, economic, and political endeavors, some points need to escalate in MEP implementation on the said matter. Parent 1 stated negative viewpoints about the contributions of MEP to the development of the intellectual and educational capacity of Muslim learners. The said informant stated: *"Wala. Nung nag-aral siya, wala eh. Kami pa rin nagtuturo ng daddy niya. Parating wala yung teacher. Kapag wala siya siyempre mag-uuwian na ang mga bata."* (Nothing. Since she started studying, nothing. We are still of her daddy who teaching her. The teacher is always absent. If the teacher is absent of course children will go home.) Parent 1 added, *"Ok sana kung nandito kaya lang more on absent or late."* (It is alright if the teacher is here but most of the time absent or late.)

Continuous support to Muslim learners and parents. Parent 4 said, *"Sa akin po siguro kung ikocontinue pa po nila yung pagsuporta nila sa amin at hindi sila magsasawa sumuporta sa amin, siguro po mas mapagtutuunan pa po ng pansin ang mga bata yung pag-aaral. Kasi po halimbawa po sila principal or si ustadzah na nakikita ng mga bata na well supported siyempre yung mga bata dito parang masaya sila or magiging ano sila 'ay pag supported ang teacher kailangan ganito kami. Kailangan galingan naming kasi dala-dala din naming ang pangalan ng school. Yun po siguro yung ano kung hindi po sila magsasawa. Sana po huwag silang magsasawa sa amin. Kaya mas lalu pa po siguro magiimprove hanggang sa mga apo ko pong maliliit. Dito po sila talaga mag-aaral. By support ng mga teacher at principal dito mas gaganda pa po ang pamamalakad po rito."* (or me, maybe if they continue to support us and they don't tire of supporting us, maybe the children will be able to pay more attention to their studies. Because for example the principal and *ustadzah* were evidently seen by learners that they are well supported with turning point that children become happy and motivated to pursue improvement

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to their school endeavors. We need to perform well because we also carry the name of the school. That's it if they do not get bored. Hoping that they do not get bored to us. It will give further improvement until to my younger grandchildren. They will be enrolled here. With the support of the teachers and principals here, the management here will be even better.)

Existentialist philosophical thoughts further support the attitudes of school heads in the implementation of MEP. School heads look at Muslim parents and learners as responsible for giving their own life meaning and living that life passionately and with sincerity despite existing problems and issues regarding their presence in a Christian-dominated community in relation to the philosophy of Kierkegaard (1844, as cited in Watts, 2003). Thus, school heads are trying their best to overcome their sensitivity in order to provide them an opportunity to be informed of school programs, projects, and activities and learn ALIVE through MEP to freely practice their enjoyment of responsibility to passionately live as Muslims and show the sincerity of their good presence in the mainstream society.

PROPOSED INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR THE ESCALATION OF MADRASAH EDUCATION PROGRAM IN THE SCHOOLS DIVISION OF BULACAN

I. INTRODUCTION

This proposed intervention program for the escalation of the MEP is an output of the research entitled Madrasah Education Program Towards the Development and Implementation of Inclusive Education and Responsive Programs. Its content was derived from the findings taken from the mixed-methods research approach conducted during the SY 2021-2022. The findings were taken from the responses and statements in research questionnaires and interviews, respectively, of former and current school heads, *asatidz*, Muslim parents, and Muslim learners of MEP-implementing schools in the Schools Division of Bulacan. As dictated by the research conceptual framework, research-based notions were used in proposing this development program.

A glimpse from the findings of the study, the research is encouraging SDO Bulacan to implement MEP in at least one per municipality. This is to provide wide accessibility to Muslim learners to study ALIVE because 77.87% of the Muslim population in the Province of Bulacan was not given the privilege of the said program, unlike the Muslim learners at San Jose Elementary School and Sta. Maria Elementary School. This suggestion is one of the features of the proposed development program believing that escalating MEP will be realized once the majority of Muslim learners in the Schools Division of Bulacan have better accessibility to learn Arabic Language and Islamic Values (ALIVE) in the comfort of the said program.

The research also suggests the hiring of additional *asatidz*. As another feature of the proposed intervention program, additional *asatidz* in each MEP implementing school could escalate the quality of learning delivery in ALIVE since it will lessen the multi-grade class scenario as ALIVE class management of madrasah teacher, utilization of teachers from the regular class in the preparation and development of ALIVE learning materials, discontinuation of ALIVE in Grade 5 and 6, and uneven flow of learning due to absences of the lone madrasah teacher.

Since the 2 MEP implementing schools have been utilizing *asatidz* under COS ever since the establishment of the said program, the research also suggests that a permanent *asatidz* position should also be considered in the hiring of teachers. The hiring of permanent *asatidz* positions in accordance with the yearly hiring guidelines for Teacher I positions and DepEd Order No. 41, s. 2017 otherwise known as Policy Guidelines on Madrasah Education in the K to 12 Basic Education Program will escalate the implementation of MEP in terms of delivery of quality education since Muslim learners will be given a much better privilege to learn ALIVE through the guidance of an *asatidz* who has a molded hard and soft skills as a teacher from Teacher Education Institution (TEI). In addition, the enjoyment of a good salary, benefits, and privileges like greater accessibility in webinars using own DepEd email will make *asatidz* perform better than the contractual one with the turning

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point of having an escalated MEP implementation. In this sense, TEIs will be contributing to the escalation of MEP by providing appropriate manpower in the field to facilitate the learning of Muslim learners in ALIVE. This is the reason why the research also encouraged TEIs to offer Arabic as one of the specializations in their teacher education program or even as one of the choices in the foreign language subject of the said program.

In relation to continuous upskilling of *asatidz*, the research also recommends that DepEd top management who are assigned as stewards of MEP should consider particular trainings of *asatidz* in reading and writing Arabic and teaching Islamic values using the Arabic language. Since the source of Islamic values is written in Arabic, it is essential for the escalation of MEP implementation that *asatidz* will be trained further on how to teach the subject with a greater focus on Arabic. And since MEP has an additional operational expense like the utilization of school facilities in ALIVE class and needs of the *asatidz* in performing their key result areas, budget on the said program should also be given emphasis either as additional allotment in the MOOE or even separately downloaded as MEP fund to each MEP implementing school.

As an attempt to realize the improvement mechanisms for the escalation of MEP in the Schools Division of Bulacan, a proposed development program is being offered.

II. PLAN

Table 10.
Intervention Plan

Priority Improvement Area	Access
Name of Project	a. Project GAME (Greater Accessibility on Madrasah Education)
Issues/ Concerns	77.87% of the Muslim population in the Province of Bulacan was not given the privilege of the said program, unlike the Muslim learners at San Jose Elementary School and Sta. Maria Elementary School.
Objectives	Implement MEP in municipalities with a high Muslim population.
Persons Responsible	Schools Division Superintendent, Assistant Schools Division Superintendent, Education Program Supervisor in MEP, Public Schools District Supervisor, Members of the Local School Board, and School Principal of schools with a high number of enrolled Muslim learners
Activities/ Time Frame	Mapping of Muslim learners -August 2022 Identification of schools with the potential to implement MEP based on their accessibility to the Muslim community -August 2022 Incorporation of MEP in the enhanced school improvement plan (E-SIP) of schools that will be implementing MEP. – September 2022 Local School Board Meeting with MEP implementation as one of the agenda – September 2022 Searching for *asatidz* who is willing, able, and capable to be capacitated in teaching ALIVE- September 2022

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	Enrolment of Muslim learners in ALIVE class (Oplan Balik Eskwela Period) – September 2022 Monitoring of Muslim learners' enrolment in each school in the Schools Division of Bulacan – Quarterly
Resources Needed	Manpower (Teachers and *Barangay* Volunteer for mapping and *asatidz* to be hired in the newly established MEP in select schools in 19 municipalities) Materials (Internet connection and school supplies for mapping and enrolment of Muslim learners) Monetary (Honorarium/ salary of the *asatidz*)
Funding Source	MOOE, Local SEF
Expected Output	The Muslim population in the Province of Bulacan with no greater access to MEP will be reduced from 77.87% to 30% or lower.
Expected Outcome	Most of the Muslim learners in the Schools Division of Bulacan will be given greater access to learn ALIVE in the comfort of MEP-implementing schools in their localities. The teaching of values education to Muslim learners based on Islamic beliefs will be given emphasis and realization.
Expected Impact	Muslim learners will be able to blend harmoniously with their Christian counterparts without compromising their values and beliefs. Long-term promotion of peace and harmonious relationships among Filipinos regardless of religion, culture, values, and beliefs.

Priority Improvement Area	Access
Name of Project	b. Project DREAMT (Desire's Realization through Additional Madrasah Teacher)
Issues/ Concerns	There is only 1 *asatidz* in each MEP implementing school in the Schools Division of Bulacan. The 2 MEP implementing schools have been utilizing *asatidz* under a contract of service since the commencement of MEP implementation.
Objectives	To increase the total number of *asatidz* in the Schools Division of Bulacan from 2 to 4.
Persons Responsible	Schools Division Superintendent, Assistant Schools Division Superintendent, Education Program Supervisor in MEP, Public Schools District Supervisor, Members of the Local School Board, Division Selection Committee of Teacher-Applicants, and School Principal of schools with a high number of enrolled Muslim learners
Activities/ Time Frame	Reviewing the result of early registration-July to August 2022 Local School Board Meeting with the hiring of additional *asatidz* as one of the agenda – August 2022

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	Installing a job order *asatidz* to MEP implementing schools – September 2022 Monitoring the beginning of the school year (BoSY) and end of the school year (EoSY) enrolment of Muslim learners for updates on teacher-pupil ratio in MEP – Year round
Resources Needed	Material Resources (Printed data from early registration and mapping of Muslim learners) Monetary (Honorarium/ salary of additional *asatidz*)
Funding Source	Local SEF, GAA
Expected Output	The total number of *asatidz* in two MEP implementing schools will be increased from 2 to 4. One of the MEP implementing schools will be escalated in offering MEP from 4 to complete elementary grade levels.
Expected Outcome	Better administration of teaching and learning ALIVE will be realized since each implementing school has 2 *asatidz* that can work collaboratively in complex undertakings. A better quality of learning ALIVE is expected among Muslim learners enrolled in MEP.
Expected Impact	Muslim learners will be grounded with soft skills which are essential in the realization of their roles in building the nation.
Priority Improvement Area	Quality
Name of Project	c. Project SAFE ARAL (Strengthening *Asatidz's* Fluency and Expertise in the Arabic Language)
Issues/ Concerns	There is a need for strengthening *asatidz's* fluency and expertise in the Arabic language as observed by the school head-informants to the madrasah teacher as well as the suggestion of most of the informants for the escalation of MEP.
Objectives	Strengthen the fluency and expertise of 2 *asatidz* in the Arabic language.
Persons Responsible	Schools Division Superintendent, Assistant Schools Division Superintendent, Education Program Supervisor in MEP, Public Schools District Supervisors of MEP implementing schools, School Principals of MEP implementing schools
Activities/ Time Frame	Training needs assessment of the *asatidz* – July 2022 SDO partnership with Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) National Language Skills Institutes (NLSI) – June – December 2022 Intensive training of *asatidz* in reading, writing, and comprehension of Arabic scripts – August 2022-August 2023 Monitoring and evaluation of *asatidz* following Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) cycle – Year-round
Resources Needed	Material resources (Memorandum of Agreement and Understanding Between SDO Bulacan and TESDA NLSI) Human Resources (SDO Bulacan and TESDA NLSI officials to be involved in MOA and MOU signing)

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Funding Source	SDO human resource development fund, Fund for Madrasah Education Program
Expected Output	The expertise of 2 *asatidz* in the Arabic language will be strengthened.
Expected Outcome	The appropriate medium of instruction in teaching ALIVE will be generally utilized by madrasah teachers. Muslim learners will be able to learn in accordance with the required competency of learning ALIVE.
Expected Impact	The internalization and application of Islamic values will be derived by learners from direct reading and comprehension of Islamic values education resources such as *Qu'ran*.
Priority Improvement Area	Quality
Name of Project	d. Project META UP (Madrasah Education Teaching Aids Upskilling)
Issues/ Concerns	*Asatidz's* concerns for their teaching aids needs like a laptop computer, printer, wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi) internet connection device, television, and internet connection for teaching ALIVE.
Objectives	Provide the 2 *asatidz* with a computer, printer, Wi-Fi internet connection device, and television for their teaching aid. Train the 2 *asatidz* in the utilization of the most essential computer software for teaching ALIVE.
Persons Responsible	Schools Division Superintendent, Assistant Schools Division Superintendent, Education Program Supervisor in MEP, Public Schools District Supervisors of MEP implementing schools, School Principal of MEP implementing schools, ALIVE Coordinators
Activities/ Time Frame	Inventory of available school ICT resources of the school used by teachers in teaching – June 2022 Provision of computer, printer, and television to *asatidz* – August 2022-August 2023 Train the 2 *asatidz* in the utilization of the most essential computer software for teaching ALIVE. – Year-round Monitoring of *asatidz's* utilization of teaching aids through class observation and midyear and year-end RPMS reviews. - Year-round
Resources Needed	Material resources (Provision of laptop computer, printer, Wi-Fi internet connection device, and TV to the *asatidz*)
Funding Source	Local SEF, School MOOE, Madrasah Education Fund
Expected Output	The teaching capability of the 2 *asatidz* will be enhanced through the aid of a laptop computer, printer, Wi-Fi internet connection device, and TV.
Expected Outcome	Learning ALIVE will be done efficiently through *asatidz's* effective utilization of information and communication technology devices.
Expected Impact	Muslim learners will be given a notion of the alternative sourcing out of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in ALIVE through the use of ICT. Thus, learning Islamic values will not be solely dependent on printed materials such as modules and *Qu'ran.*
Priority Improvement Area	Quality

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Name of Project	e. Project REAL R (Re-evaluation of ALIVE Learning Resources)
Issues/ Concerns	The development of ALIVE learning materials was carried out in a short time by a madrasah teacher in collaboration with some regular teachers who were not well-versed in Arabic and Islamic values.
Objectives	Re-evaluate the 100% of learning resources in ALIVE developed by MEP implementing schools of Schools Division of Bulacan
Persons Responsible	Education Program Supervisor in MEP, Education Program Supervisor in LRMDS, Public Schools District Supervisors of MEP implementing schools, School Principal of MEP implementing schools, ALIVE Coordinators, School LRMDS Coordinators, *Asatidz*
Activities/ Time Frame	Review the previously developed division-based learning resources in ALIVE – June 2022 Issuance of Division Memorandum for the re-evaluation of previously developed learning resources in ALIVE Re-development of division-based learning resources in ALIVE – July – August 2022 Re-evaluation of division-based learning resources in ALIVE – September 2022 Reproduction of re-evaluated learning resource in ALIVE – October 2022 Monitoring of utilization of re-evaluated learning resources in ALIVE through the school head's monthly accomplishment report – Monthly
Resources Needed	Computer, Printer, Bond paper, Soft and hard copies of previously developed learning resources in ALIVE, Copy of feedback on the content and other features of the previously developed learning resources in ALIVE
Funding Source	School MOOE, Provincial SEF, Local SEF
Expected Output	100% of previously developed learning resources for remote learning in ALIVE will be further enhanced.
Expected Outcome	Feedback from school stakeholders on the content and other features of ALIVE learning resources will be addressed through re-evaluation. Assurance of quality learning of Muslim learners in ALIVE.
Expected Impact	Appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the re-evaluated learning resources will be obtained, internalized, and applied by learners.
Priority Improvement Area	Quality
Name of Project	f. Project DASH (Development of ALIVE Self-learning modules for Homeroom guidance)
Issues/ Concerns	Integrating Islamic values into homeroom guidance is a way for Muslim learners to further internalize and practice it in life.
Objectives	Contextualize ALIVE in 100% of the homeroom guidance modules for Muslim learners.
Persons Responsible	Education Program Supervisor in MEP, Education Program Supervisor in HGP, Education Program Supervisor in LRMDS, Public Schools District Supervisors of MEP implementing

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	schools, School Principals of MEP implementing schools, ALIVE Coordinators, School LRMDS Coordinators, *Asatidz*
Activities/ Time Frame	Conduct capacity building activity for *asatidz*, ALIVE coordinators, LRMDS coordinators, and selected teachers of MEP implementing schools about contextualization of ALIVE in homeroom guidance modules for Muslim learners – August 2022 Evaluation of the conducted capacity building activity for *asatidz*, ALIVE coordinators, LRMDS coordinators, and selected teachers of MEP implementing schools about contextualization of ALIVE in homeroom guidance modules of Muslim learners – August 2022 Writing of self-learning modules for homeroom guidance for ALIVE learners – August to October 2022 Evaluation of developed self-learning modules for homeroom guidance for ALIVE learners – October 2022 Reproduction of developed self-learning modules for homeroom guidance for ALIVE learners – October 2022 Monitoring of utilization of developed self-learning modules for homeroom guidance for ALIVE learners through the school head's monthly accomplishment report
Resources Needed	Computer, Printer, Bond paper, Copy of quality assured learning resources in ALIVE, Copy of curriculum guide in ALIVE, Copy of curriculum guide in homeroom guidance, Copy of module templates provided in the capacity building activity
Funding Source	SDO human resource development fund, School MOOE, Provincial and local SEF
Expected Output	100% of ALIVE grade levels will have homeroom guidance modules with ALIVE contextualization for Muslim learners' utilization.
Expected Outcome	Muslim learners will be given a chance to follow up and apply their ALIVE lessons through ALIVE-based homeroom guidance modules.
Expected impact	Muslim learners will further internalize the ALIVE and apply it as partakers in building the nation.

Conclusion

It was concluded that MEP has good objectives in providing appropriate and relevant educational opportunities within Muslim culture, customs, and traditions. However, the beauty of MEP could be fully realized if the challenges encountered by stakeholders in MEP-implementing schools were gradually addressed and the large percentage of the Muslim population in the Province of Bulacan under the jurisdiction of the Schools Division of Bulacan had access to the said program. The escalation of MEP implementation in the said manner will further emphasize the core values of DepEd among Muslim learners.

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Recommendations

From the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby forwarded:

1. The SDO Bulacan is encouraged to implement MEP in at least one school per municipality to provide Muslim learners greater access to study ALIVE since 77.87% of the Muslim population in the Province of Bulacan are underprivileged in madrasah education which is not like what Muslim learners enjoy in Santa Maria and San Miguel.

2. This research recommends the collaboration of SDO Bulacan and municipal governments of the existing MEP implementing schools for the hiring of additional *asatidz*. Additional *asatidz* in each MEP implementing school can escalate the quality of learning delivery in ALIVE through the avoidance of multi-grade class scenarios such as ALIVE class management of madrasah teacher, utilization of teachers from the regular class in the preparation and development of ALIVE learning materials, discontinuation of ALIVE in Grade 5 and 6, and uneven flow of learning due to absences of the lone madrasah teacher.

3. Since the 2 MEP implementing schools have been utilizing *asatidz* under COS since the establishment of the said program, a permanent *asatidz* position should also be considered in hiring teachers. The hiring of permanent *asatidz* positions in accordance with the yearly hiring guidelines for Teacher I posts and DepEd Order No. 41, s. 2017 otherwise known as Policy Guidelines on Madrasah Education in the K to 12 Basic Education Program will escalate the implementation of MEP in terms of delivery of quality education since Muslim learners will be given a much better privilege to learn ALIVE through the guidance of an *asatidz* who has a molded hard and soft skills as a teacher from TEI. In addition, the enjoyment of a good salary, benefits, and privileges like greater accessibility in webinars using own DepEd email will make *asatidz* to perform better will make *asatidz* to perform better than the contractual one with the turning point of having an escalated MEP implementation.

4. TEIs are encouraged to offer Arabic as one of the specializations in their teacher education program or even as one of the choices in the program's foreign language subject. In this sense, TEIs will be contributing to the escalation of MEP by providing an appropriate workforce in the field to facilitate the learning of Muslim learners in ALIVE.

5. The DepEd top management assigned as stewards of MEP should consider particular pieces of training of *asatidz* in reading and writing Arabic and teaching Islamic values using the Arabic language. Since the source of Islamic values is written in Arabic, it is essential for the escalation of MEP implementation that *asatidz* will be trained further on how to teach the subject with a greater focus on Arabic.

6. Since MEP has an additional operational expense like the utilization of school facilities in ALIVE class and needs of the *asatidz* in performing their key result areas, the budget on the said program should also be given emphasis either as additional allotment in the MOOE or even separately downloaded as MEP fund to each MEP implementing school.

7. It is recommended that researchers of the same endeavor should conduct further studies on the escalation of MEP to realize the strategic goals of DepEd, such as expanding access and improving the quality and relevance of MEP, where DepEd core values will be greatly emphasized.

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