Decentralization of Education in the Philippines

Status, Trends and Challenges

By

Dr. Ethel Agnes P. Valenzuela
SEAMEO INNOTECH

The roles and challenges of District Education Offices in a context of decentralization

Experiences from the Philippines and Sri Lanka

IIEP Workshop in Manila, 12-16 July 2010
Overview of the Philippine Educational System
Educational Governance

Higher Education
Commission on Higher Education handles 4 years post secondary and advance degrees

Technical and Vocational Training
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)
2-years post secondary

Basic Education
Department of Education handles
10 years of primary/elementary and secondary education schooling and some pre-school classes
Why pursue decentralization in the Philippines?

Educational Situation:
• Poor quality of education
• Shortfalls in classrooms
• Shortfalls in textbooks and teachers
• Low achievement in science, math and language
• Disparity in rural and urban areas in terms of achievement
• Declining participation of the private sector
Reform Programs with Recommendations on Decentralization

• EDCOM (1991)
  – Trifocalization of education for improved governance
  – Undertook the assessment of the education system of the country
• Phil Education Sector Study (1998)
  – Saw the demand for local institutions for autonomy from central government to enable them to become more responsive to local problems
• Phil Commission on Education Reform (2000)
• RA 7160- Local Government Code of 1991- expanded the participation of stakeholders in education
Education Reform Recommendations

• Promotion of school-based management as a system of empowering the school to provide leadership and for the community that serves to have ownership of the school

• The trifocalization of education was intended to guarantee concentration on basic education and effectiveness in the delivery of basic education
Aspects of Decentralization

• Decentralization aims to widen decision making while increasing responsibility and accountability.

• The Local Government now plays a role in:
  – Construction, repair and maintenance of school buildings and other facilities of public elementary and secondary schools;
  – Establishment and maintenance of extension classes when necessary
  – Sports activities at the division, district, municipal and barangay levels
Legal Basis of Education Decentralization: **GOVERNANCE OF BASIC EDUCATION ACT (GoBEA) 2001**

Section 2, Declaration of Policy states,

...school shall be at the heart of the formal education system. It is where children learn. Schools shall have a single aim of providing the best possible education for all learners and the state shall encourage local initiatives for improving the quality of basic education.

The state shall ensure that the values, needs and aspirations of a school community are reflected in the program of education for the children, out of school youth and adult learners. Schools and learning centers shall be empowered to make decisions on what is best for the learners they serve...
Section 3, Purposes and Objectives sets out in b), ...define the roles and the responsibilities of, and provide resources to the field offices which shall implement educational programs, projects and services in the communities they and in d),

...ensure schools and learning centers receive the kind of focused attention they deserve and that educational programs, projects and services take into account the interests of the community...

and in e)
...encourage schools and learning centers to reflect the values of the community by allowing teacher/learning facilitators and other staff to have flexibility to serve the needs of all learners...
Legal Basis of Education Decentralization:

**GOVERNANCE OF BASIC EDUCATION ACT (GoBEA) 2001**

The Act leaves the organizational structures to implement these policies, purposes and objectives open, to be proposed by the Secretary, and to be agreed with the relevant offices including that of the President, the Civil Service Department and Department of Budget and Management.
Decentralized Educational Management Framework in the Philippines

- The roles and challenges of DEOs in a context of decentralization - IIEP workshop in Manila - 12-16 July 2010
DEM Framework

• The directive layer of the process provides the overall direction to all the activities and services of the Department. It includes activities and processes like policy formulation and setting standards, quality assurance, setting the overall strategic directions of the entire department to ensure achievement of its vision and mission.

• The mainstream layer consists of the major processes and activities, which directly address the requirements of the learners. It covers processes and programs on ensuring private-public network and alliances, delivery of the basic education services which include pre-school, elementary, secondary ALS, special education, science and technology and technical/vocational high schools. Performance feedback and management reporting mechanisms form part of the mainstream layer to ensure continuous process improvement and informed management decisions.

• The supportive layer provides the major support processes to the mainstream programs and activities. The Administrative processes include procurement services.
Shared Governance Principle

• *Shared Governance* is a principle which recognizes that every unit in the education bureaucracy has a particular role, task and responsibility inherent in the office and for which it is principally responsible for outcomes.
Principles

• Section 3.1 *Principle* – Shared governance is a principle which recognizes that every unit in the education bureaucracy has a particular role, task and responsibility inherent in the office and for which it is principally responsible for outcomes.

• Section 3.2 The principles of accountability and transparency shall be operationalized in the performance of functions and responsibilities at all levels of governance.

• *Section 3.3* The process of democratic consultation shall be pursued as the decision-making process at appropriate levels. Whenever feasible, stakeholders shall be consulted on matters that affect the welfare and instructional needs of the learners.

• Section 3.4 The communication channels of field offices shall be strengthened to facilitate flow of information and expand linkages with other governmental agencies, local government units and nongovernmental organizations for effective governance.

• Feedback mechanism shall be established to ensure coordination and open communication among the central office, the regional, division, district and schools/learning center levels.
Duties and responsibilities in a Decentralized Environment

National Office:

(1) Formulating national educational policies;
(2) Formulating a national basic education plan;
(3) Promulgating national educational Standards;
(4) Monitoring and assessing national learning outcomes;
(5) Undertaking national educational research and studies;
(6) Enhancing the employment status, professional competence, welfare and working conditions of all personnel of the Department; and
(7) Enhancing the total development of learners through local and national programs and/or projects.
Duties and Responsibilities in a Decentralized Environment

Regional Office: Consistent with the national educational policies, plans and standards, the regional director shall have authority, accountability and responsibility for the following:

• (1) Defining a regional educational policy framework which reflects the values, needs and expectations of the communities they serve;
• (2) Developing a regional basic education plan;
• (3) Developing regional educational standards with a view towards benchmarking for international competitiveness;
• (4) Monitoring, evaluating and assessing regional learning outcomes;
• (5) Undertaking research projects and developing and managing region wide projects which may be funded through official development assistance and/or or other finding agencies;
• (6) Ensuring strict compliance with prescribed national criteria for the recruitment, selection and training of all staff in the region and divisions.
• (7) Formulating, in coordination with the regional development council, the budget to support the regional educational plan which shall take into account the educational plans of the divisions and districts;
Duties and Responsibilities in a Decentralized Environment

**Regional Office**

- (8) Determining the organization component of the divisions and districts and approving the proposed staffing pattern of all employees in the divisions and districts;
- (9) Hiring, placing and evaluating all employees in the regional office, except for the position of assistant director;
- (10) Evaluating all schools division superintendents and assistant division superintendents in the region;
- (II) Planning and managing the effective and efficient use of all personnel, physical and fiscal resources of the regional office, including professional staff development.;
- (12) Managing the database and management information system of the region;
- (13) Approving the establishment of public and private elementary and high schools and learning centers; and
- (14) Preforming such other functions as may be assigned by proper authorities.
Duties and Responsibilities in a Decentralized Environment

The DepED Division Office:

A division shall consist of a province or a city which shall have a schools division superintendent, at least one assistant schools division superintendent and an office staff for programs promotion, planning, administrative, fiscal, legal, ancillary and other support services.
Duties and Responsibilities in a Decentralized Environment

The DepED Division Office:

(1) Developing and implementing division education development plans;
(2) Planning and managing the effective and efficient use of all personnel, physical and fiscal resources of the division, including professional staff development;
(3) Hiring, placing and evaluating all division supervisors and schools district supervisors as well as all employees in the division, both teaching and non-teaching personnel, including school heads, except for the assistant division superintendent;
(4) Monitoring the utilization of funds provided by the national government and the local government units to the schools and learning centers;
(5) Ensuring compliance of quality standards for basic education programs and for this purpose strengthening the role of division supervisors as subject area specialists;
(6) Promoting awareness of and adherence by all schools and learning centers to accreditation standards prescribed by the Secretary of Education;
(7) Supervising the operations of all public and private elementary, secondary and integrated schools, and learning centers; and
(8) Performing such other functions as may be assigned by proper authorities.
Duties and Responsibilities in a Decentralized Environment

Schools District Level

Upon the recommendation of the schools division superintendents, the regional director may establish additional schools district within a schools division. School districts already existing at the time of the passage of the law shall be maintained.

A schools district shall have a schools district supervisor and an office staff for program promotion.

- The schools district supervisor shall be responsible for:
- (1) Providing professional and instructional advice and support to the school heads and teachers/facilitators of schools and learning centers in the district or cluster thereof;
- (2) Curricula supervision; and
- (3) Performing such other functions as may be assigned by proper authorities.
The Schools District Level

Section 8.1 Powers, Duties and Functions

The Schools District Level – A schools district shall have a schools district supervisor and an office staff for program promotion.

In consonance with the policy, purposes and objectives, and the principles enunciated in R.A. 9155 the school districts shall have the following authority, accountability and responsibility:

8.1.1 Monitor, assess, supervise and evaluate the implementation of various curricula in basic education in both public and private schools/learning centers including early childhood education, special education and alternative learning system in the district or cluster thereof.

8.1.2 Provide professional and instructional advice and support to the school heads and teachers/facilitators of public and private elementary and secondary schools and learning centers including early childhood education, special education and alternative learning system in the district or cluster thereof.

8.1.3 Perform such other related functions as maybe assigned by proper authorities.
A school district already existing at the time of the passage of this Act shall be maintained. However, an additional school district may be established by the regional director based on criteria set by the Secretary and on the recommendation of the schools division superintendent.

For this purpose, the Secretary of Education shall set standards and formulate criteria as basis of the Regional Director in the establishment of an additional school district.
Duties and Responsibilities in a Decentralized Environment

School Level

• There shall be a school head for all public elementary schools and public high schools or a cluster thereof. The establishment of integrated schools from existing public elementary and public high schools shall be encouraged.

• The school head, who may be assisted by an assistant school head, shall be both an instructional leader and administrative manager. The school head shall form a them with the school teachers/learning facilitators for delivery of quality educational programs, projects and services. A core of nonteaching staff shall handle the school's administrative, fiscal and auxiliary services.
Duties and Responsibilities in a Decentralized Environment

**School Level**

- (1) Setting the mission, vision, goals and objectives of the school;
- (2) Creating an environment within the school that is conducive to teaching and learning;
- (3) Implementing the school curriculum and being accountable for higher learning outcomes;
- (4) Developing the school education program and school improvement plan;
- (5) Offering educational programs, projects and services which provide equitable opportunities for all learners in the community;
- (6) Introducing new and innovative modes of instruction to achieve higher learning outcomes;
Duties and Responsibilities in a Decentralized Environment

School Level

- (7) Administering and managing all personnel, physical and fiscal resources of the school;
- (8) Recommending the staffing complement of the school based on its needs;
- (9) Encouraging staff development;
- (10) Establishing school and community networks and encouraging the active participation of teachers organizations, nonacademic personnel of public schools, and parents-teachers-community associations;
- (11) Accepting donations, gifts, bequests and grants for the purpose of upgrading teachers' learning facilitators' competencies, improving and expanding school facilities and providing instructional materials and equipment. Such donations or grants must be reported to the appropriate district supervisors and division superintendents; and
- (12) Performing such other functions as may be assigned by proper authorities.
Promotions within DepED

• The Secretary of Education shall create a promotions board, at the appropriate levels, which shall formulate and implement a system of promotion for schools decision supervisors, schools district supervisors, and school heads. Promotion of school heads shall be based on educational qualification, merit and performance rather than on the number of teachers/learning facilitators and learners in the school.

• The qualifications, salary grade, status of employment and welfare and benefits of school heads shall be the same for public elementary, secondary and integrated schools.

• No appointment to the positions of regional directors, assistant regional directors, schools division superintendents and assistant schools division superintendents shall be made unless file appointee is a career executive service officer who preferably shall have risen from the ranks.
Duties and Responsibilities in a Decentralized Environment

The school heads shall have authority, accountability and responsibility for the following:

1. setting the mission, vision, goals and objectives
2. creating an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning
3. implementing curriculum and being accountable for higher learning outcomes
4. developing a school education program and SIP
5. offering education programs, projects and services which provide equitable opportunities for all learners in the community
6. introducing new and innovative modes of instruction to achieve higher learning outcomes
Duties and Responsibilities in a Decentralized Environment

- administering and managing all personnel, physical and fiscal resources
- recommending staffing complement based on its needs
- encouraging staff development;
- establishing school and community networks and encouraging active participation of teachers organizations, non-academic personnel of public schools and PTCAs
- accepting donations, gifts, bequests and grants for the purpose of upgrading teachers/learning facilitators competencies, improving and expanding the school facilities and providing instructional materials and equipment; such donations or grants must be reported to the appropriate district supervisor and divisional superintendents
- performing other functions as may be assigned by proper authorities.
Perception on Decentralization of Education in the Philippines (SEDIP Survey)

• DepED personnel at all administrative levels have some general idea of what education decentralization entails.
• Most associate this with the transfer of power and responsibility to divisions and schools, and some others, with the empowerment of field officials and other stakeholders. Still a few others, equate education decentralization with school-based management.
• Not surprisingly, the latter two responses (empowerment of field offices and school-based management) are more likely to be mentioned by respondents at the district and school levels rather than those at the higher levels (Central, Regional and Division Offices) of the education hierarchy.
Perception on Decentralization of Education in the Philippines (SEDIP Survey)

In terms of the division of labor and of tasks and responsibilities across the educational hierarchy, there is also some convergence in the views of respondents as to which administrative level/s should assume the greater responsibility for a given educational task or function under a decentralized set-up.

It should be noted that this does not necessarily equate to a consensus of views among the survey respondents. In general, it should be borne in mind that some territorialism is evident in the survey respondents, (i.e., respondents tend to vote for their own administrative level as that which should be performing a given task.)
Perception on Decentralization of Education in the Philippines (SEDIP Survey)

- The Central office is seen as assuming a major role in the performance of educational policymaking; the setting and formulation of education quality standards; and the development and design of curriculum content and structure.
- The Division Office on the other hand, is seen as primarily responsible for the hiring and termination of teachers, as well as for monitoring learning outcomes and educational performance, and the procurement of textbooks.
- The respondents also view the latter two functions (monitoring and textbook procurement) as responsibilities, which the Division should share with the schools in their areas.
Perception on Decentralization of Education in the Philippines (SEDIP Survey)

Under a decentralized set-up, the schools are seen as primarily responsible for several tasks. In descending order of importance these tasks/functions are as follows:

- the repair and maintenance of school buildings;
- the development of instructional materials;
- the performance evaluation of teachers;
- the procurement of school furniture and equipment,
- the construction of school buildings and facilities;
- the generation and mobilization of resources;
- and the allocation and utilization of fiscal resources.

In addition, schools are perceived along with the Division Offices as also primarily responsible for planning, program development and the in-service training of teachers.
Perception on Decentralization of Education in the Philippines (SEDIP Survey)

Other Findings:

– The most widely cited reason, as the barrier to the full implementation of RA 9155 is the *lack of cooperation from stakeholders* followed closely by *lack of manpower or manpower preparation*.

– There is still a large concern about the readiness of personnel/offices to handle devolved duties mostly citing that *personnel lack skills and require more training*.

– A majority also expresses some concerns about redundancies, the proportion being highest at the district level.

– As to concern about additional jobs/tasks that may be assigned with no additional compensation as a result of decentralization, understandably the concern is mainly at the lower levels. Majority at the central office, regional office, and the division office are not concerned but majority at the district level and school level are concerned about additional tasks.

• Finally, it is interesting to note that despite perceived concerns about decentralization, a very large majority of respondents at all levels are in favor of decentralization and believe that it will improve the quality of the educational system.
THANK YOU

Dr. Ethel Agnes P. Valenzuela
Research Specialist and Head, Research Studies Unit