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PRESS CLIPPINGS

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #11

(Increased Access to Quality Education and Livelihood Skills in Selected Areas, Particularly Those Most Affected by Poverty and Conflict)

EDWIN MUL

USAID, DepEd ink agreement

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department of Education have signed a memorandum of agreement for a fiveyear education program to improve access to quality basic education in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and other conflict- and poverty-affected areas of Mindanao.

The agreement outlines the implementation of USAID's Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQuALLS) project. The agreement was signed at DepEd by Undersecretary Ramon Bacani and USAID Philippines acting mission director Francis Donovan.

The EQuALLS project also covers a partnership with the US Peace Corps and a number of public and private alliances, like the International Youth Foundation, Save the Children-Philippines, Knowledge Channel Foundation, Synergeia Foundation, Real World Productions, and Brother's Brother Foundation.

The firm helping USAID in coordinating the project is the Creative Associates International.

Through EQuALLS, USAID assistance is focused on building foundation skills of young students, especially in Grades 1-3; acquiring and distributing supplementary educational resources; and improving the training of teachers.

To respond to the needs of the sizable and growing number of out-of-school and unemployed youth, the project also seeks to strengthen and expand employment opportunities for these disadvantaged youth.

EQuALLS also assists *madaris* (Muslim religious schools) that are interested in adopting the DepEd's standard curriculum for private madaris, which introduce instruction of science, math, English and Filipino.

(Manila Standard Today, 8/5/05, (page B7)