

INSIGHT FROM A DBM JUNIOR LEADER

How DBM Supported K to 12

As a budget and management specialist, I have been handling the budget of the Department of Education (DepEd) since 2009. Back then, shortages and gaps in basic education inputs like classrooms, teachers, seats, and textbooks were the major setbacks of the DepEd. These problems mainly originated from the limited funding needed to address these gaps. That the biggest chunk of the annual Budget goes to education that is not even making a dent in addressing the problems on shortages and gaps is to me an irony.

But things changed in 2011, specifically during the preparation of the 2012 National Budget. I remember vividly what transpired when we presented DepEd's budget to DBM's senior officials at the Executive Review Board (ERB) that year. I remember. We were recommending that the agency's budget include the requirements for basic education inputs based on more or less the average amount given each year due to the limited budget ceiling. In the past, pre-ERB, the government usually provided annual budgets, on the average, for the creation of 10,000 teacher positions and construction of less than 5,000 classrooms, among others.

After presenting DepEd's budget proposal that year, Secretary Abad commented, "I don't like to see the usual budget provided for DepEd. [What we need to identify is] how much they really need to address the shortages and gaps. And then we provide the budget for it." According to him, the perennial problem in education would never be addressed if the government continued to provide less than what it truly needed. Likewise, the ERB pointed out that the implementation of the K to 12 Program, which was still a bill at that time, would be hampered by these problems.

Relative to the new marching order from the DBM in 2011, closing the gaps in the basic education inputs was included among the priority programs/projects in the annual Budget Priorities Framework (BPF). Together with DepEd, we, in the

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DBM, started to reshape the budget for basic education. We adopted the parameters and standards shown in the Medium Term Expenditure Plan (MTEP), as crafted by Chat Manasan of Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS). The MTEP provides that the budget for basic education must be based on current enrollment data using the Basic Education Information System (BEIS), the service standards (i.e., Teacher – Student Ratio), and the standard cost for delivering basic education inputs. In addition, we also utilized the long-overdue Boncodin Formula in the computation of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) requirements of Schools, Division Offices, and Regional Offices. Through the help of these new systems, the budget of DepEd is now more logical and rational, and addresses the real needs of the education sector.

With the sincere desire and perseverance of the DBM management to support the K to 12 Program and the newly adopted budgeting systems for basic education, DepEd's budget has increased from P 175 billion in 2010 to P 437 billion in 2016—a 14 percent increase in six years.

Time and again, this administration kept on iterating the agenda of "spending on the right priorities," and DBM has stayed true to this principle through such programs as the K to 12 Program. Funding the K to 12 Program is still a work in progress—it will go through many changes along the way. There will still be lingering problems, such as shortages and gaps in classrooms or teachers as enrollment increases. Though such problems may appear in a small scale, the government will pursue effective solutions to make the youth's learning experience easier and more valuable.

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