

MTBMLE

Department of Education (DepEd) A Strategic Planning for Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MLE)



The first ever Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) Grand Alliance StratPlan was held last November 5 - 6, 2009 at Tagaytay International Convention Center (TICC). I was invited to represent DILA Philippines Foundation, Inc. (Defenders of the Indigenous Languages of the Archipelago) and with me was Andrea Gatchalian who represented Akademyang Kapampangan (AKKAP) and Angeles University Foundation (AUF).

We arrived at 5:30 PM on November and some attendees were already there. It was drizzling and we were greeted by a cool gusty wind when we alighted out of the car into the registration area. We roomed in one of the 3-story town-house-style villas at the back of the Convention Center and it was quite a long windy walk to the Convention Center, but at 6:30 PM, we were ready to have dinner with the other early birds.

Among the VIPs who arrived early were Asec. Teresita Inciong, SIL stalwarts Greg and Diane Dekker, Dr. Ricardo Nolasco, Nap Imperial, Paraluman Giron, Yolanda Quijano, Dina Ocampo, Jess Tirol, Julian Abuso, and many others. Among the Ngos, Juliet Herras represented "Save the Children Foundation". She turned out to be our roommate.

Invited participants were selected DepEd officials (national, regional and division levels) and other representatives from TEIs, language & culture groups, international aid agencies, NGOs and business groups. The event included a workshop to plan on the various aspects of MLE's countrywide implementation.

The next morning we had an early breakfast and at 8:30 A.M. the program started with the National Anthem and a lovely video doxology. DepEd Asec. Teresita Inciong formally opened the Strategic Planning Session.



At 10:30 A.M. we were assigned into Planning Groups and Greg Dekker gave us the Mechanics, and we were fortunate to have no less than Dr. Ricardo Nolasco as the facilitator of our "MLE the NGO's). But before that, Ched Arzadon asked the NGOs to introduce their advocacies and I stood up and presented 2 books, a Kapampangan Grammar book and a book of Childrens' Poems in Kapampangan. I told the group that Pampanga was ready to train teachers to teach in Kapampangan, our L1, as we already had a grammar book in Pampanga and were in the process of publishing a preschool reader.

There were around 60 participants from as far North as Kalinga and Cagayang de Oro in Mindanao and among those I befriended were Freddie Famador, who was also our roommate. She was with DepEd Region 10 and flew all the way from Cagayan de Oro City. There were two other very articulate ladies from Nueva Vizcaya, Dr. Gloria Baguingan and Dr. Ella Tumaneng of St. Mary's University, Bayombong. During lunch I sat next to Julian "Johnny" Abuso of U.P. and also met Joey Carreon, PR of SIL (Summer Institute of Linguistics). It turns out he was a Kapampangan but never learned to speak the language and was very eager to learn it. Lucky for him, Andrea brought some copies of Garalitang Kapampangan (a Kapampangan Grammar Book penned by Dr. Evangelina Lacson of Magalang, Pampanga) plus we gave him some copies of "Ing Susi", the official magazine of AKKAP.



After the Lunch Break we were all eager to continue the workshops and we broke into 7 groups:

- Group 1: Social Preparation and Advocacy*
- Group 2: (2A) In-Service Training (INSET) of Teachers and Managers and
(2B) Materials Development*
- Group 3: Pre-service Education of Teachers and Teacher-Educators*
- Group 4: (4A) Resource Mobilization and Allocation;
(4B) Policy Development*
- Group 5: Assessment, Monitoring, Evaluation & Accreditation*

For our Group One, Dr. Ricky Nolasco as the facilitator challenged our group to come up with:

- 1) a form of strategy in the Advocacy/Communications Campaign
- 2) to identify the KEY Partners of DepEd for MLE implementation
- 3) a Working Group was assigned to undertake to produce an education inventory of Regions or Districts where L1 Education was already happening
- 4) to identify at least 3, preferably high-profile School Districts in the North (Luzon), in the Visayas, and in the South (Mindanao) where training and resources should be focused in the first two years for capacity building in trainers and teachers toward implementation of MLE programs.



With Juliet Herras, a computer whiz, as our documenter, Freddie Famador, Andrea and I and Dr. Jess Tirol of the University of Bohol and Akademyang Bisaya in our group, we deliberated for more than two hours. So when Greg Dekker came over and warned us that we should be ready in 10 minutes...we were! We were the first to make a report on the final output and Andrea Gatchalian did the presentation.

The other groups made their output presentations and there was an open forum before Ma'am Para Giron made the briefest Closing Remarks by asking everyone to stand as dinner was waiting at the lobby. After the group broke up and had the farewell Dinner, we lingered over coffee before we bid our adieus and promised to see one another again in the First Philippine Conference Workshop on Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education to be held in Capitol University in Cagayan de Oro City come February 18 - 20, 2010.



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