

## Assessing Gender Mainstreaming Practices in the Philippine Basic Education System

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**Abstract :** Female drop-outs due to teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence in schools are two of the most contentious and current gender-related issues faced by the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines. The country adopted gender mainstreaming as the main strategy to eliminate gender inequalities in all aspects of the society including education since 1990. This research examines the extent and magnitude by which gender mainstreaming is implemented in the basic education from the national to the school level. It seeks to discover the challenges faced by the central and field offices, particularly by the principals who served as decision-makers in the schools where teaching and learning take place and where opportunities that may aggravate, conform and transform gender inequalities and hierarchies exist. The author conducted surveys and interviews among 120 elementary and secondary principals in the Division of Zambales as well as selected gender division and regional focal persons within Region III- Central Luzon. The study argues that DepEd needs to review, strengthen and revitalize its gender mainstreaming because the efforts do not penetrate the schools and are not enough to lessen or eliminate gender inequalities within the schools. The study found out some of the major challenges in the implementation of gender mainstreaming as follows: absence of a national gender-responsive education policy framework, lack of gender responsive assessment and monitoring tools, poor quality of gender and development related training programs and poor data collection and analysis mechanism. Furthermore, other constraints include poor coordination mechanism among implementing agencies, lack of clear implementation strategy, ineffective or poor utilization of GAD budget and lack of teacher and learner centered GAD activities. The paper recommends the review of the department's gender mainstreaming efforts to align with the mandate of the agency and provide gender responsive teaching and learning environment. It suggests that the focus must be on formulation of gender responsive policies and programs, improvement of the existing mechanism and conduct of trainings focused on gender analysis, budgeting and impact assessment not only for principals and GAD focal point system but also to parents and other school stakeholders.

**Keywords :** curriculum and instruction, gender analysis, gender budgeting, gender impact assessment

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