

Through the years Notre Dame of Marbel University (NDMU) has implemented and developed a range of programs that have adequately provided services needed in the deprived, depressed and underserved communities. Particularly addressing the education concerns of the increasing number of the out-of-school youth, the University has implemented innovative programs that increased access to education of the school drop-outs:

#### 1. Alternative Home Education Agenda for Development (AHEAD) Program.



Project AHEAD is a viable and cost-effective mode of access to education. In this program, out-of-school youth beneficiaries study at their own time and pace, and their regular physical presence is not required in school. AHEAD Program increases the accessibility and equity of basic education by lowering the cost of educational delivery. The project minimalizes or even makes unnecessary many of the direct and indirect cost connected with school-based system. By shifting from textbooks to self-learning modules, the cost of instructional materials is drastically reduced. Besides opening the doors of education to

wider and more diverse social classes, project AHEAD provides greater access to out-of-school youth who are constrained from going back to school due to different reasons including, among others: poverty, chronic illness and being over-aged. The program, which has been supported by Ford Foundation for more than six years, is an attempt to re-engineer an approach to educate the out-of-school youth in the country.



#### 2. Alternative Learning System (ALS) for the Post-Conflict Areas in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

The context of the post-conflict areas involves a reality, among others, of dire poverty, malnutrition, deprivation of opportunities and the inadequate social services, such as educational opportunities for the out-of-school youth and adults (OSYA). In the service areas of the University, about 60% to 80% percent of the OSYA are unable to go back to school due

to dire poverty, distance, and the peace and order situation. Through the ALS program, advocacy for the welfare of the OSYA was strongly promoted.

The ALS project aims to complement and contribute to the goal of the Philippine Government Department of Education's Accreditation and Equivalency (A & E) program by enhancing the accessibility of basic education for out-of-school youths in school-less communities in the post-conflict areas of Mindanao. Included in the program component are the development of livelihoods, construction of community learning centers, and the involvement of the local government units in the project implementation, monitoring and in the sustainability of the programs implemented.

With the project initially serving 400 Muslim-Maguindanao out-of-school youth, USAID, through the Education Development Center (Philippine Office) has made commitment to support another 1,000 OSY in the Provinces of Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and Maguindanao for this School Year 2007-2008.