



Republic of the Philippines  
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao  
**BANGSAMORO TRANSITION AUTHORITY**  
**OFFICE OF MP MOHAGHER IQBAL**  
BARMM Compound, Cotabato City



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**SPONSORSHIP SPEECH ON THE BANGSAMORO EDUCATION CODE**  
**Bangsamoro Parliament, BTA Special Session No. 6**  
October 28, 2020, SKCC, Cotabato City, BARMM

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***BI-SMILLĀHI R-RAḤMĀNI R-RAḤĪM***

Chief Minister of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao  
(BARMM);

Mr. Speaker of the Parliament;

My distinguished colleagues in the BARMM Cabinet, the Bangsamoro Transitional  
Authority and the Parliament;

Friends, partners, ladies, and gentlemen:

***Asalaamu Alaikum warakmatulahi taala wa barakatuh!***

It is my honor and privilege to present, before this august hall of the Bangsamoro  
Parliament, the official draft of the Bangsamoro Education Code (BEC, or code),  
endorsed by both the BARMM Cabinet and the BTA Committee on Education. This  
code is also one of six critical legislation stipulated in the Bangsamoro Organic Law  
or Republic Act 11054.

While we are presenting legislation for the consideration and approval of my  
esteemed colleagues in the Parliament, I want to emphasize that this document is  
more than just a product of the legislative process. Similar to how the Bangsamoro  
Organic Law meant to our enduring aspiration for meaningful self-governance, the

Education Code is the embodiment of our collective vision for an inclusive, relevant, effective, and transparent educational system in this region. This code highlights our noteworthy advocacy: **No Bangsamoro Child Shall Be Left Behind.**

I often say that education is paramount for the Bangsamoro, and not only because it is a priority of the regional government's development plans, but what quality education can bring to the present and future of this diverse and honorable Bangsamoro nation. The late UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, "Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress in every society in every family." Like most parents or guardians, we invest in our children's education to ensure that they will become productive, principled, and responsible adults. Through proper education, we hope that they will thrive in their selected professional endeavors and effectively contribute to the well-being of their families, communities, and the Bangsamoro region.

However, our good intentions for the Bangsamoro educational system will not be possible without a clear strategy and the necessary instruments to enable its realization. Like any home, it needs a good foundation and solid frame. Otherwise, the house will collapse once exposed to the elements. We at the Ministry of Basic Higher and Technical Education are aware of the challenges our education sector faces. We recognize that our education standards are not at par with the national standards, that we lack critical school facilities, especially in remote areas, and our teacher and personnel development and management systems need improvement. Moreover, dishonest practices have inundated governance in this sector.

Mr. Speaker and Mr. Majority Leader – it would be demoralizing to contemplate that our children will be robbed of a potentially bright future to these existing problems. Indeed, ladies and gentlemen, I cannot think of a greater injustice than our children not allowed to widen their perspective or unlock their potential through education, whether through conventional academic schooling, technical and skills development, or the Madaris system.

With grace from the Almighty, we now have the opportunity to institute the necessary reforms to deal with the protracted difficulties that have affected our education sector even before the establishment of the BARMM. Our achievements so far in this area, which we began more than a year ago, would be reinforced by the approval and implementation of a comprehensive Bangsamoro Education Code.

For the benefit of my esteemed colleagues in the Parliament and instead of merely enumerating its provisions, **I will discuss 23 salient features of the Code**<sup>1</sup> we are filing yesterday.

1. **The Code is rooted in Bangsamoro History and Struggle.** As mentioned earlier, the BEC is a crucial step in promoting, affirming, and strengthening the Bangsamoro Peoples' distinct historical identity and the long struggle to chart their destiny as a people and their ambition to build a future all can live together in justice and peace.
2. **The Code is learner-centered.** Through the code, we will establish an education system centered on all learners in the Bangsamoro. Guided by this code, the corresponding processes, inputs, outputs, and outcomes of the system will be designed to ensure the learners' well-being.
3. **The Code will facilitate a strong partnership with the vibrant education community.** The realization of the Bangsamoro Education System's goals and objectives depends on the support of a dynamic and robust education community or education stakeholders. To foster a spirit of shared cooperation among the educational community, the Code recognizes their rights and duties.
4. **The Code is founded on five (5) Key Education Principles:**

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<sup>1</sup> Previously "25 salient points." Upon review, some points were combined for clarity.

- a. **It is rooted.** It is rooted in the diverse contexts of learners, educational institutions, and communities, including the historical narrative and aspirations of the Bangsamoro People and the Indigenous People.
- b. **It is balanced** or anchored on a holistic education approach where a learner's intellectual, spiritual, psychological, and physical growth is given importance.
- c. **It is inclusive**, and therefore, will ensure equal access to quality education regardless of beliefs, cultures, ethnicities, genders, needs, and abilities and socio-economic backgrounds.
- d. **It is equitable** and will guarantee access to educational services and opportunities for all.
- e. It is anchored on **Moral Governance**, being is reinforced, which advocates ethical and legal principles, practices, and behavior in managing the education system.

5. **The Code establishes an integrated system of education.** We envision a one learner-centered education system that integrates all levels and types of education and allows for multiple entries and exits, between public school system, Madrasah system and alternative learning systems, for all learners. It is a system where all education processes and delivery modes are seamlessly coordinated to meet the learning needs, ideals, and aspirations of the Bangsamoro people. The system is also designed to deliver learning that is measured, monitored, and maintained with an array of assessment and management tools that are also part of that system.

6. **The Code ensures coordination of all aspects of education.** Education is delivered in a comprehensive, coherent, and sequential manner through these delivery systems, streams, modes, and types, *viz*:

- a. Reliable early childhood education provides a strong foundation of learning and well-being throughout life;
- b. Basic education in both the school system and the madrasah system meets basic learning needs and provides the foundation on which subsequent learning can be based;

- c. Alternative learning systems;
- d. Higher education which shall produce high-level and middle-level professionals;
- e. Technical education and skills development which will develop the middle-level professionals;
- f. Lifelong learning and continuing education develop the peoples' Knowledge, values and competencies beyond the regular schooling years;
- g. Pathways and equivalencies that enable access to qualifications aligned with national and international qualifications framework;
- h. Islamic and Arabic studies in the madrasah and higher education levels; and
- i. The indigenous education system provides equitable access to quality education for indigenous peoples (IP) learners and maintains, protects, and promotes IP culture and tradition.

7. **The Code highlights clarity in levels of education.** We are referring to Elementary and Secondary Education, which comprises the Basic Education sector and interconnects with the Madrasah systems; and Higher Education, which includes Islamic Higher Education.

8. **The Code employs a set of comprehensive delivery systems.** In other words, education is delivered through formal and non-formal learning systems.

9. **The Code mandates that technical education and skills are anchored on the Bangsamoro's needs.** Technical education and skills development (TESD) graduates shall become active and productive members of society. All TESP programs, irrespective of delivery systems (whether formal or non-formal), aim to prepare middle-level skilled human resources by providing general education, technology-related sciences, and related occupational skills training.

10. **Common High Standards for Basic Education.** The delivery of basic education (both school and madrasah systems) is governed by the standards to be developed by the Ministry in critical areas of Basic Education including, but not limited to, the

curriculum and competency, teachers, textbooks and learning materials, infrastructure, and quality assurance. In the development of these standards, the Ministry considers the rules of the Philippine Education System.

**11. Uniform Standards for Higher Education and Technical Education.**

Likewise, higher education and technical education and skills development in the Bangsamoro are also governed by the standards issued by the Ministry, subject to the existing national government regulations.

**12. The Code empowers the Ministry to adopt guidelines on qualifications, competency, licensure examinations, appointment, promotion, professional development, welfare and benefits**

Subject to existing national policies, the Code mandates the adoption and implementation of the necessary guidelines on teachers' qualifications, competency, appointment, promotion, professional development, welfare and benefits, and teacher management. Also, the Ministry will consider adopting its Licensure Examination for Teachers, subject to the applicable laws.

**13. All universities, schools, and colleges in the Bangsamoro are now, subject to their charters, under the regulation of the Ministry.**

I would like to emphasize that the participation of representatives of private schools in matters relating to them is safeguarded.

**14. The Chair of the Committee on Education in the Parliament is now a member of the board of all state-owned colleges and universities.**

This will make sure that these state-owned colleges and universities are in step with the strategic direction of the BARMM.

**15. Islamic Subjects and Arabic Language Curriculum under the School and Madrasah Systems.**

Islamic Subjects and Arabic Language Curriculum will be taught to Muslim learners in both the school and madrasah systems. But also allows non-Muslim students to attend similar programs.

**16. Islamic Higher Education is now a reality.** Higher learning for Islamic and Arabic studies may be provided through Islamic study programs, schools, institutes, and universities in Bangsamoro, subject to the Ministry's regulation. Islamic higher learning shall instill Islamic values necessary for the realization of the Bangsamoro education goals.<sup>2</sup>

**17. Indigenous Peoples (IPEd) Education is preserved.** Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) is provided to promote the distinct cultural identity, integrity, and heritage of indigenous peoples and communities and ensure the recognition of and respect for all indigenous peoples in the Bangsamoro.

**18. As provided in the Bangsamoro Organic Law, peace education is mainstreamed.** Peace education is offered to instill in the learners the values and knowledge and develop the attitudes, skills, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment. Peace education is a core component of Bangsamoro education strategically integrated into the curriculum of all educational levels.

**19. The power to create educational institutions is established.** The establishment of educational institutions in the Bangsamoro must conform to the legal requirements. Therefore, education institutions must seek prior authorization from the Ministry before they can operate in the Bangsamoro.

**20. Financial Support to Public Education Institutions, including (public) Madrasah.** The Bangsamoro Government, in collaboration with the National Government and local government units, will contribute to the financial support of educational programs to be implemented by the Ministry. In all other cases, the

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<sup>2</sup> MP Iqbal's note: Questions and comments regarding Islamic Higher Education can be discussed in the proper time and venue.

Ministry will be guided by the Code's specific provisions on financial aid to public education institutions.<sup>3</sup>

**21. Subsidy for Private Education Institutions.** The Bangsamoro Government may assist private educational institutions in the form of grants or scholarships, or loans from government financial institutions, in recognition of their complementary role in the educational system. However, such programs should meet specific defined educational requirements and standards and contribute to the attainment of Bangsamoro and national development goals.

**22. Education Incentives for Education Community.** The Ministry may provide an incentive program to encourage the community's participation in the development of the educational sector.

**23. And finally, I want to emphasize that the right of sectarian schools to propagate their religious beliefs is not curtailed.**

As you can see, we try to cover as much in the draft Bangsamoro Education Code we are presenting today. We aim to offer a code that governs the education system in the Bangsamoro and sets the strategic direction for the implementation of a balanced, accessible, and high standard educational structure that reflects the existing context and culture.

I anticipate that many of you here have specific questions that are operational and administrative. Therefore, I should reiterate that the code is essentially a legal system that lays down the authority and responsibilities of the BARMM, the public, and interested parties to develop accessible and quality education in the Bangsamoro. Moreover, the code will contribute to the creation of harmonized relationships to ensure effective collaboration among all education stakeholders in the Bangsamoro region.

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<sup>3</sup> MP Iqbal's note: For further discussion is the provision of subsidy for private Madrasah.



Specific operational questions can be addressed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) that will be drafted once Parliament approves the code. While it would be challenging to come up with a "perfect" education code, what is essential that the resulting draft would include the provisions relevant to the Bangsamoro people, and there will be room for improvement.

Before I end my speech, I want to take this opportunity to thank our friends and partners who helped the Education Ministry in the crafting of the Bangsamoro Education Code: esteemed members of the Education Board and Technical Working Group on the BEC and its Secretariat, The Asia Foundation and Institute of Bangsamoro Studies, the Australian Government through the Education Pathways to Peace Program, the Development Academy of the Philippines, and independent consultants engaged in this endeavor.

I hope my presentation provided you with enough information on the relevance of the code. I look forward to your questions and comments, mainly if they help improve the draft we have filed. I recognize that we, as MPs and BARMM officials are as diverse as the Bangsamoro homeland itself. Despite our differences, we are all dedicated to our constituents and our respective advocacies. And I believe that providing quality, inclusive, and relevant education to our children is one of the priority areas we can all accept. Let our diversity be a source of strength, and the overarching tenets of the Bangsamoro Organic law and Moral Governance be our guide.

Wassalam, and may we have a productive day!

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