



Republic of the Philippines  
**Department of Education**  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS SERVICE

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**DepEd receives 100 school-in-a-bag (SIAB) kits from USAID, Smart Communications, and PBSP**

Manila, May 27, 2022 – As part of the United States’ ongoing commitment to strengthen early grade reading, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), partnered with Smart Communications and Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), turned over 100 school-in-a-bag (SIAB) kits worth over PhP 10.4 million (US\$ 208,000) to the Department of Education (DepEd) on May 11.

USAID Philippines Acting Mission Director Brandon Miller Smart Communications Senior Vice President Alex Caeg and Center Head/Assistant Vice President for Stakeholder Management Stephanie Orlino, and PBSP Executive Director Elvin Uy handed over the school-in-a-bag kits to DepEd Undersecretary for Curriculum and Instruction Diosdado San Antonio, Undersecretary for Legislative Affairs, External Partnerships, Project Management Services, and Private Education Office Tonisito Umali, and Undersecretary for Administration Alain Del B. Pascua. Each kit contains a laptop computer, 10 tablets with additional expandable memory, and pocket Wi-Fi preloaded with PhP 500 worth of internet access.

“Through the Smart School-in-a-Bag initiative, we will be able to advance digital literacy amid and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in remote areas that lack access to technology,” said USAID Philippines Acting Deputy Mission Director Brandon Miller. “We will continue to forge partnerships with the private sector, the local government units, and the local community so that no one will be left behind and every child will receive quality education.”

DepEd will distribute these kits to select schools in Regions 5, 6, Maguindanao, Cotabato Special Geographic Area, and Cotabato City, and to schools associated with USAID’s remote learning study. Tablets will be loaded with e-resources such as DepEd TV episodes, interactive literacy primers in mother tongue languages, USAID-supported e-books, and other digital resources that can bridge the digital divide and improve early grade reading, especially those in the most remote areas of the country.

“We’d like to express our utmost appreciation to USAID, PBSP, and Smart Communications for our continuous partnership throughout the years. This partnership is yet another evidence that education is a shared responsibility. We will continue this journey of providing support and opportunities for our learners, especially those in the far-flung areas, together with our allies in attaining accessible and quality education,” Philippine Education Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones said.

The United States government has been a key development champion in the Philippines for six decades, working with individuals, communities, and the government to improve everyday lives.