

Bajau Ongka-Kumpit and Transition to School (BOAT School) PROJECT BASELINE



August 2021

Executive Summary

This Baseline Study of the BOAT School Project was conducted primarily to serve as benchmark from which later post project assessment will be compared against. The Baseline is composed of 3 sub-studies namely 1) Survey of Parents / Learners 2) Focus Group Discussion of Key Informants and 3) Nutrition Baseline using Age vs. Weight metric. The Background of the Study articulated the objectives of the Survey, FGD and Nutrition sections.

It must be noted that IRDT designed this Baseline referencing the Child Fund Terms of Reference. However IRDT had to revise the ToR since many of the data needed are not possible to gather given the lack of data from the BARMM DepEd such as disaggregated data that are specific on Bajau learner-students.

The Survey is complemented by the FGD which provided the substantive data which are otherwise not captured by statistics-driven Survey. The FGD gave valuable insights coming from the various education stakeholders in Siasi and Pandami.

The following are the highlights of the Baseline Study.

Looking at the demographic data, it is evident from the survey that:

- Majority of the Bajau parents/guardians of the enrolled learners have very low educational attainment which in many ways can affect the learning development of the children.
- Families are very poor but have a big number of household members which makes the child learners compete with the meager resources of the family

In terms of access to learning facilities and materials, the survey suggests that:

- Schools are generally accessible for the 9 target barangays.
- WASH facilities are lacking in schools with no comfort room that the learners can use.
- Majority of the parents/guardians say that their children have almost no access to books and other learning materials.
- Parents/guardians say that while pens and papers are available for purchase in their communities, many of them find it difficult to purchase due to financial constraints.

In the area of parents/guardians' involvement in school activities and after school support to the child-learner, the survey suggests that:

- The parents/guardians have high interaction with the teachers and equally high level of participation with school activities.
- Also another survey finding is the high level of involvement of the parents/guardians with the learners homework. This claim is validated by a separate survey of the learner whether their parents/guardians help them in homework.

Meanwhile the FGD highlights are:

- It also appears as an important protection issue that affects the school participation of many Bajau children and their parents are bullying and discrimination. Bullying and discrimination on top of financial hardships experienced by the Bajau are multi-factor demotivators why some Bajaus would prefer not to send their children to school.
- School building and facilities generally needs improvement. There is also an evident lack of WASH facilities in school which is a serious protection issue that needs to be addressed.
- The availability of teachers especially in remote communities remain a concern. The use of substitute teachers because of the lack of teachers also raises some questions of the quality of education.
- One cultural aspect of the Bajau lifestyle that makes it especially difficult is their nomadic way of life. There is no permanency and consistency in residence which makes schooling very challenging. Early marriage is also a big cultural practice that impacts on the school participation of many Bajau students.

On the nutritional status of the BOAT School learners:

- Overall, 69% of the BOAT Project learners are nutritionally challenged which is an important factor in the learning ability of the project learners.

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Background

ChildFund Philippines in partnership with Integrated Resource Development for Tri-people, Inc. (IRDT) will be implementing BOAT School Project to address access and quality issues faced by Bajau¹ learners in Sulu.

To better and deepen understanding on children and their situation in terms of access to quality education, and the contexts that may affect, positively or adversely, the education situation of Bajau learners in Siasi and Pandami this Baseline Study is conducted. In addition, the Baseline will primarily serve as the basis on which the project outcome indicators will be measured at the end of the project implementation.

Specifically, the Baseline Survey has the following objectives:

- 1.1. Determine how accessible educational facilities are from the perspective of the target barangays' Bajau community.
- 1.2. Determine the availability and affordability of learning materials from the perspective of the target barangays Bajau community.
- 1.3. Determine the extent of Bajau parental engagement in education of their children, including learning and extra-curricular activities at home and in school.
- 1.4. Identify education - specific protection issues that affects the Bajau communities targeted by the project.

This baseline is not reflective of the whole community or the 9 barangays that are included in this project because the focus is only on the 576 learners. It also cannot be used to reflect the whole community because the BOAT School Project itself is limited to the Bajau families and its learners. Furthermore, the learners' profile of the project are only those in a) Pre-school and b) Grade 1. Hence, this baseline cannot be used to infer as reflective of the whole community, barangay and municipality where the Project is located but is only reflective of the BOAT School Project's target beneficiaries.

The Baseline Survey while quantitative, is complemented by **Focus Group Discussion** which provided the substantive information on the education situation in the project communities. The FGD result and analysis is contained in this report.

In addition, a pre-school learner **nutrition baseline** using Age vs. Weight was also gathered to determine the number (and percentage) of pre-school learners who belong to the

¹ While the BOAT School is intended for Bajau learners, data from Child Fund indicate that there are 50 non-Bajau learners (Tausug) who are included in the project. The inclusion of the Tausug learners is largely driven by the observed need of these children due poverty.

underweight / overweight category. The Age vs. Weight benchmark used the national standard set by the National Nutrition Council of the Philippines and Department of Education..

I. Survey

1.2. Survey Methodology

Respondents

The sampled group is the parents/guardians of the 576 enrolled learners, hence the specific respondents of the survey are the parents / guardians with the following disaggregation: 285 at pre-school and 291 at Grade 1 level.

Sampling size

The survey sample is 20% of the 576 enrolled learners which is 115.2. There is no disaggregated sampling selection between pre-school parents/guardians and Grade 1 parents/guardians. The non-disaggregation is because the set of baseline questions are deemed not age or grade level sensitive because the respondents are the parents/guardians and covered matters on accessibility and protection issues.

Sampling method

The 115 individual respondents (which is 20% of the 576 learners) were selected using simple random sampling (SRS) skip method with the master list of learners as sampling reference.

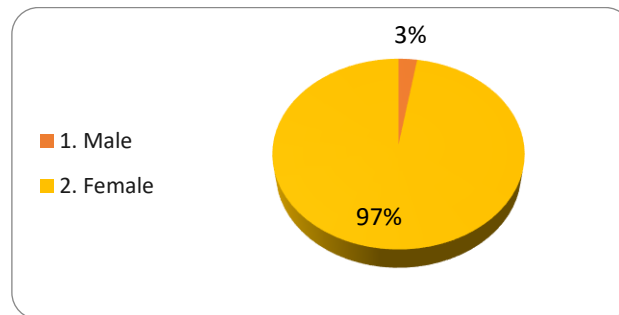
Protocols followed on the conduct of the survey:

1. The survey and its purpose were explained to the selected respondents.
2. It was explained that the selected respondent can either allow or refuse to be the respondent of the survey. The respondents were not forced to participate.
3. Informed consent was asked from the respondents before participating in the survey.
4. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and their identity.
5. The result of the survey will only be used for the purpose it was intended for.

1.3. Survey Results

1.3.1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

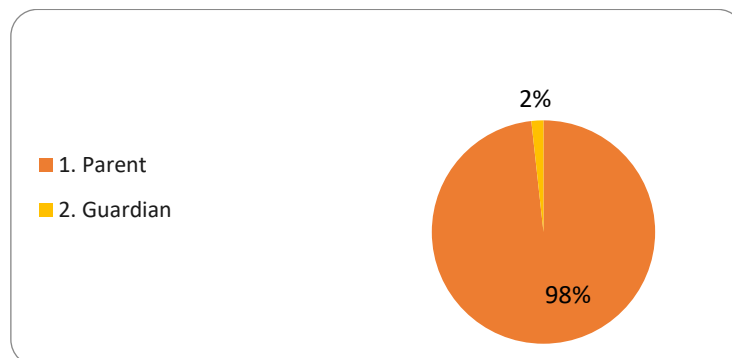
A) Sex: Overwhelming majority of the respondents are female at 97% while only 3% are male.



This can be interpreted as women or mothers in the household as the main source of information when it comes to the child's education.

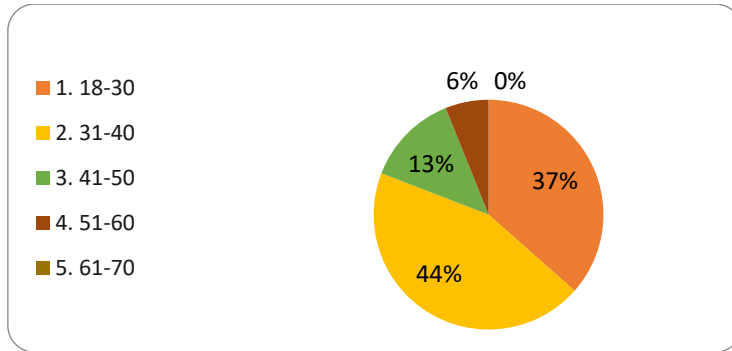
B) Learner's Relationship to the Respondent

Majority of the respondents of the survey (98%) are parents to the enrolled learner.



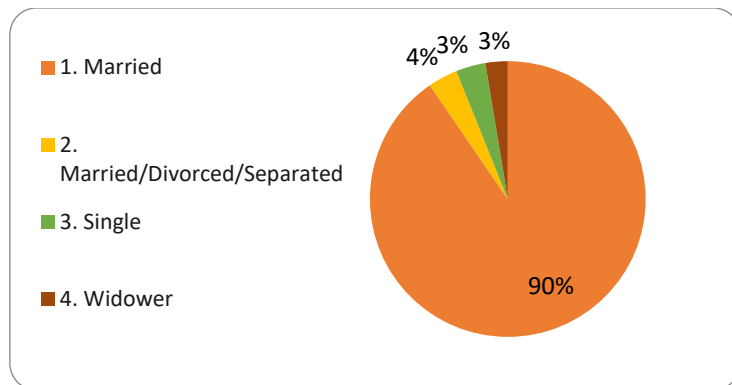
C) Age of Respondents

Majority of the parents of the child learners belong to the 18 – 30 age range (37%) and 31 – 40 age range 44 % which suggest that parents interviewed are relatively of young age.



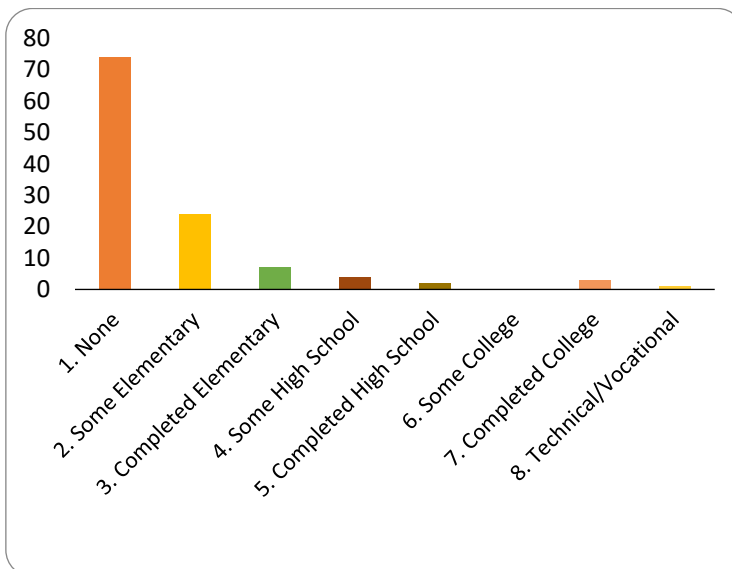
D) Civil Status

Most of the respondents are married at 90%. Only a small minority are either separated/divorced, widowed and single.



E) Educational Attainment

Perhaps the most revealing demographic is that big majority of the respondents claim to have no education at all at 64%. This is followed by some elementary at 21%. Only very few finished elementary, had some high school and finished high school.

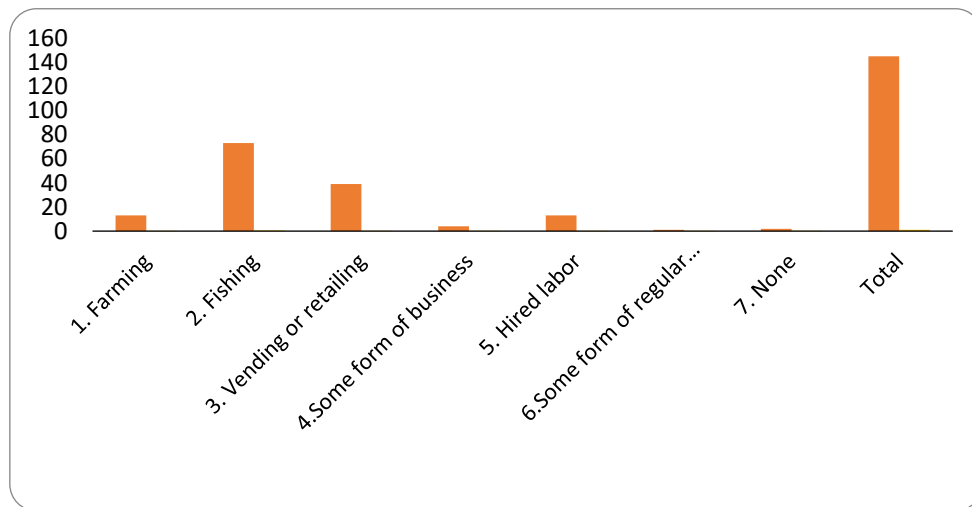


This information is an important element to consider in assessing the level of involvement of the learners' parents/guardians in after school homework and school activities.

Note: while this question is on educational level, it is not indicative of the parents/guardians functional literacy which needs a separate test.

F) Source of Income

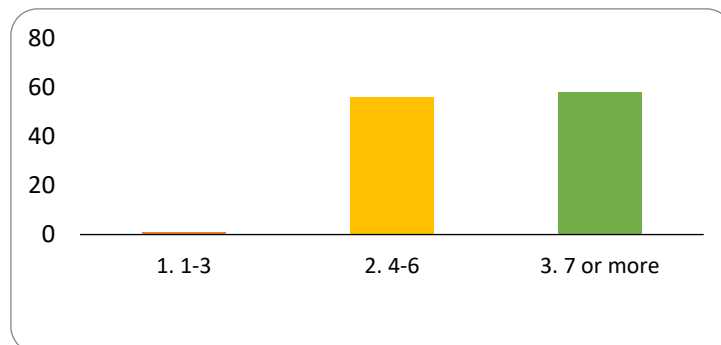
The respondents are mostly engaged in fishing 50% and vending 27%. A few are hired labor and farmers.



Since the question allows for multiple answers, 30 respondents have more than 1 source of income. Generally however, the household only have 1 source of income.

G) Household Size

In terms of HH size, it appears that the learner's come from families with a big number of family members. 50% of the respondents have 7 or more family members while 48% have 4-6 family members.

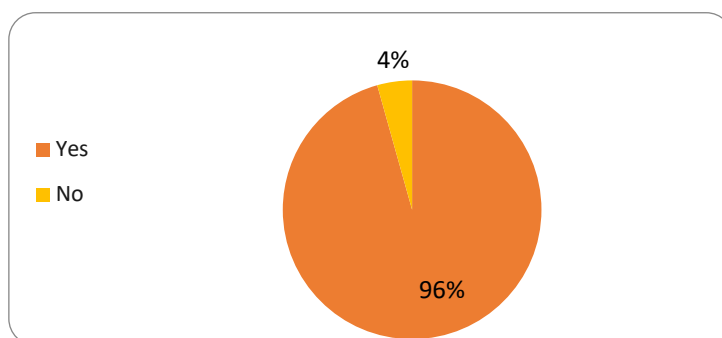


Again in assessing the learners' household situation, it can be deduced that possibly the learner had to compete with meager family resources whose parents are lowly educated.

1.3.2. Access to Education, School Facilities, Learning Materials

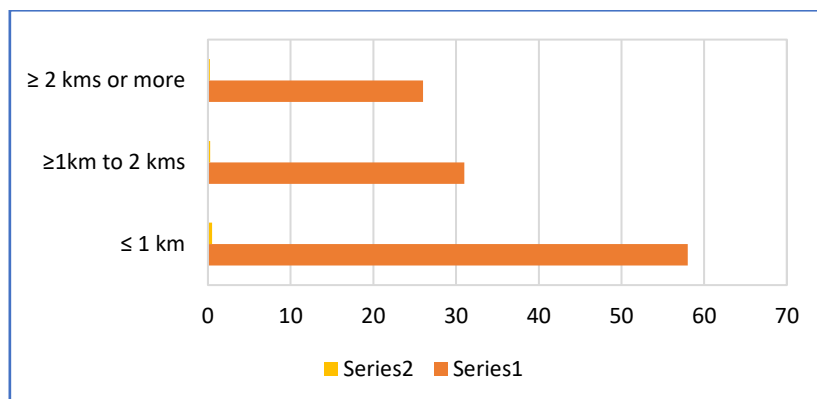
A). Presence of school in the community

The respondents overwhelmingly claims that there is a school within their community at 95%. However a small minority at 5% says they do not have a school in their community. While 4 of the 11 target barangays have no schools, perhaps some of the respondents see that the schools while outside of their barangay is actually part of their community already.



B) Distance to school

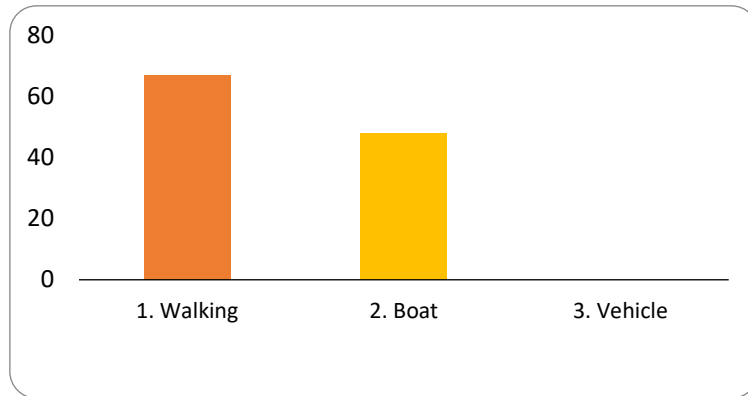
Half of the respondents say that the school is not far from their homes at less than 1 kilometer. 27% says the school is more than 1 km. but less than 2 kms. Meanwhile, 23% says that school is far at more than 2 kms.



Looking at the data it appears that for many, the school is far from their homes although half says the school is below 1 km.

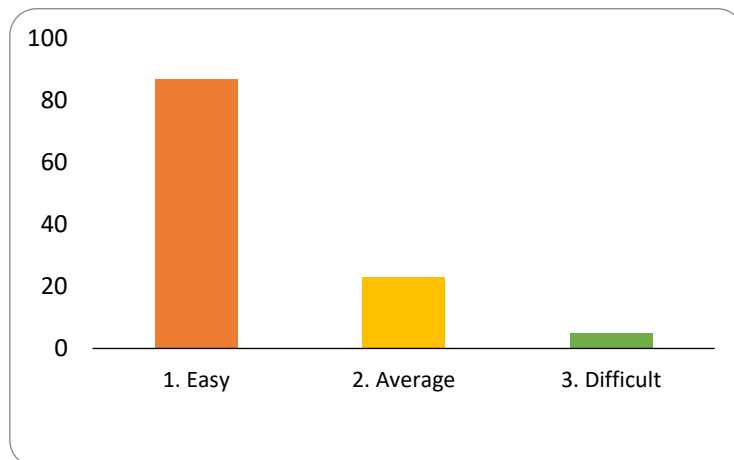
C) Mode of transport to school

Data shows that in the target barangays 58% of the learners go to school by walking while 42% go by boat. While majority of the learners walk, the number is significant for those who take the boat to school. This is important because going by boat entails additional fuel cost to the household expenses and vulnerable to bad weather.



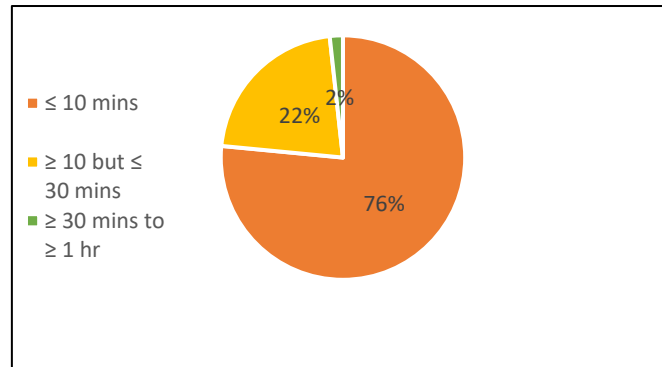
E. Perceived ease in reaching school

A big majority finds that reaching school is not difficult at 76%. Only 20% find it average while very few 4% find reaching school difficult.



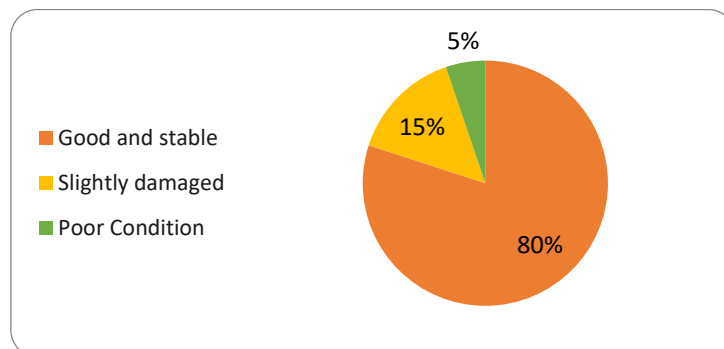
F. Time to reach school

Relative to the distance and perceived ease, majority of the respondents say that it only take the learners less than 10 minutes to reach the school at 76%. This is followed by more than 10 minutes but less than 30 minutes at 23%.



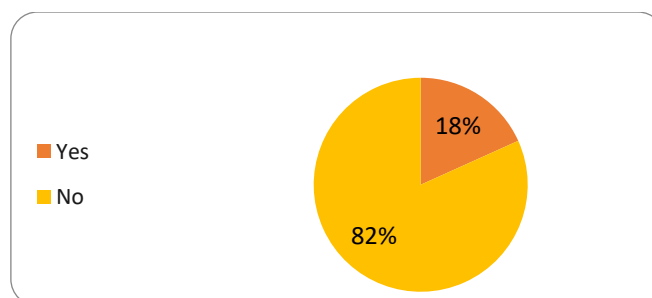
G. Physical state of classroom

For majority of the guardian/parents (80%) the classrooms their children are using are in good and stable condition. Only 15% says the classrooms are slight damaged and 5% says the classroom is in bad condition.



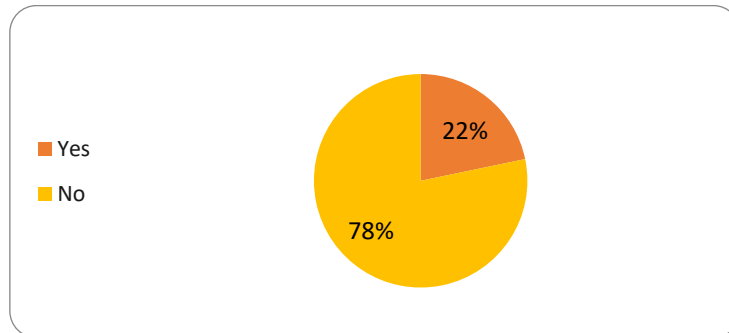
H. Availability of comfort room in the school

A big majority of the respondents (82%) claims that there is no comfort room in the schools. Only 18% claims that there is comfort room in the school. This is a WASH issue that needs to be addressed.



I. Access to water in school

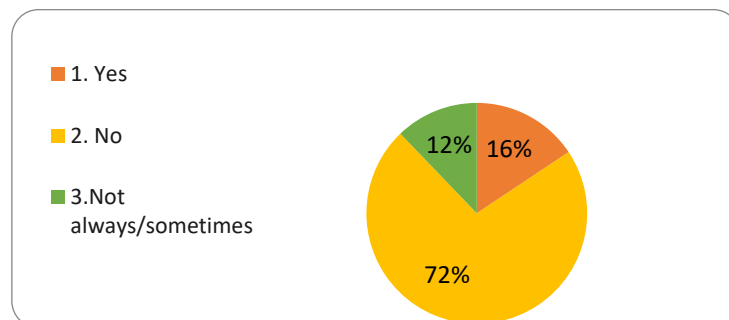
78% of the respondents say that there is no water available in the school campus while only 22% say there is.



Again, similar to the comfort room the lack of water for comfort room, washing and drinking in the school is a WASH issue.

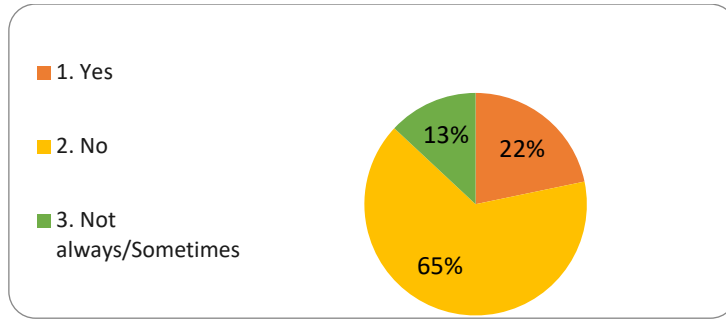
J. Availability of books and other learning materials

Most of the respondents (72%) say that there are no available books and learning materials in the school where their children are attending. Only a small minority says that books are available or sometimes available.



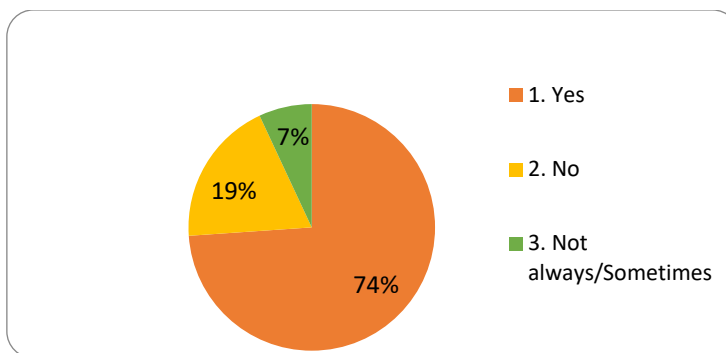
K. Book and learning materials usage

Consistent with the above numbers, majority of the respondents (65%) say that their child has no books or learning materials that they can use while 13% claims that only sometimes their child can get to use books. 22% however says that their child has access to books and other learning materials.



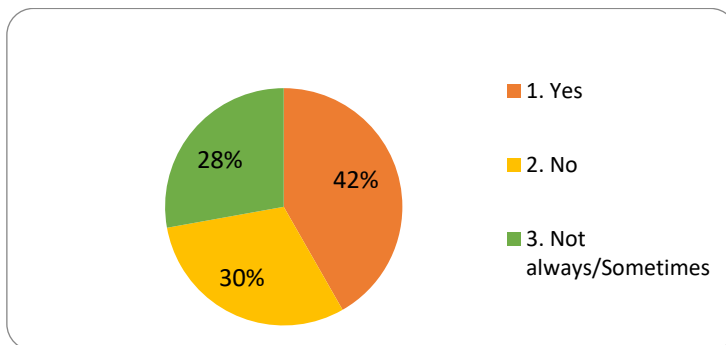
L. Availability of school materials in the community for purchase (notebooks, paper, pens)

74% of the respondents say there are available notebooks, pens and paper that they can purchase within the barangay.



M. Affordability of school materials

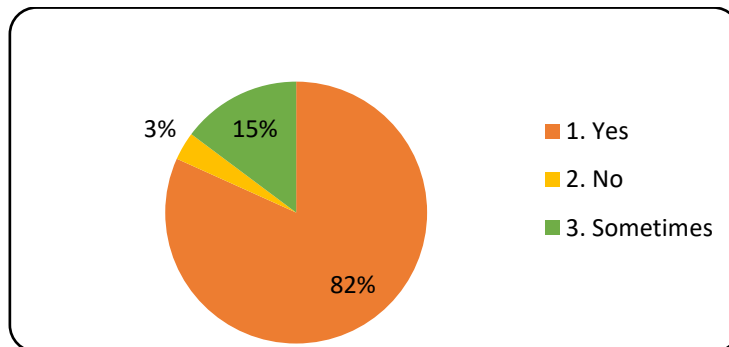
However in terms of if they can afford to buy school materials for their children 45% says yes they can afford it although a big portion says no they cannot afford (30%) it or they can only sometimes afford it (28%).



1.3.3. Involvement of parents in the learners' school activities and support

A. Attendance to PTA meetings

Vast majority of the respondents (82%) claim that they attend school PTA meetings. 15% says sometimes and 3% says no.

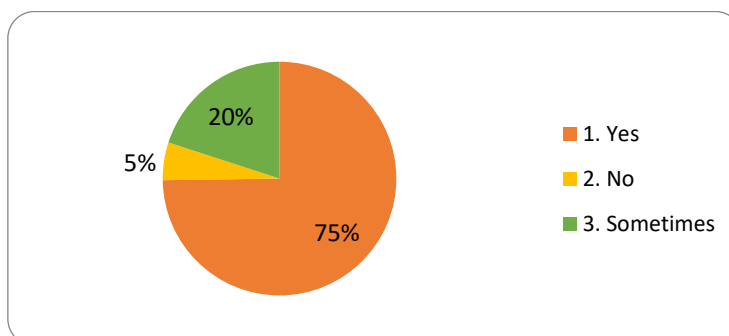


The reasons cited by those who do not attend PTA activities are as follows:

Responses	# of respondent	Percentage
1. No time - busy at livelihood	1	25.00%
2. No time busy at housework	2	50.00%
3. No time busy with other children	0	0.00%
4. Shy embarrassed to join	1	25.00%
5. Shy embarrassed to interact with teachers or teachers	0	0.00%
6. cannot teach child because parent is illiterate / low education.	0	0.00%
Total	4	100.00%

B. Attend parents – teacher classroom meetings

Again majority (75%) of the parents attend classroom meetings while 20% only attend sometimes and 5% answered no.

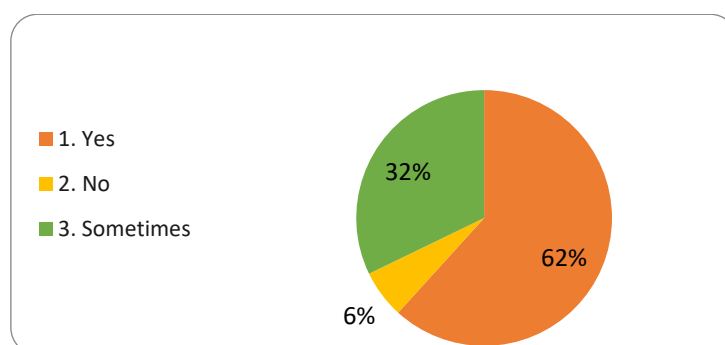


The reasons cited for not attending are:

Responses	# of respondent	Percentage
1. No time - busy at livelihood	3	50.00%
2. No time busy at housework	1	16.67%
3. No time busy with other children	1	16.67%
4. Shy embarrassed to join	1	16.67%
5. Shy embarrassed to interact with teachers or teachers	0	0.00%
6.cannot teach child because parent is illiterate / low education.	0	0.00%
Total	6	100.00%

C. Whether the parents talk to the teachers about their child.

Majority (62%) says they talk to the teachers about their child, while 32% talk to the teachers only sometimes while only 6% said no, they do not interact with the teachers.

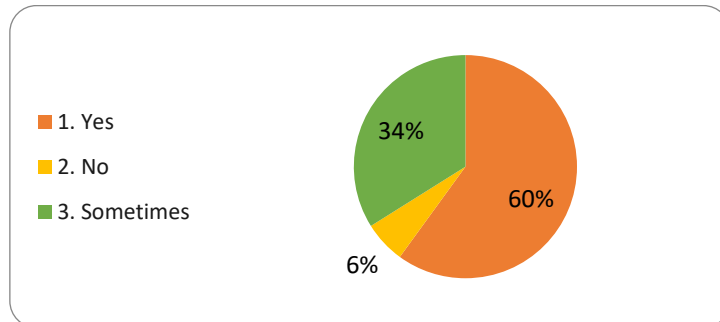


The reasons cited for not talking to the teachers are:

Responses	# of respondent	Percentage
1. No time - busy at livelihood	3	42.86%
2. No time busy at housework	1	14.29%
3. No time busy with other children	1	14.29%
4. Shy embarrassed to join	1	14.29%
5. Shy embarrassed to interact with teachers or teachers	1	14.29%
6.cannot teach child because parent is illiterate / low education.	0	0.00%
Total	7	100.00%

D. On accompanying their children to school

60% of the respondents say they accompany their child to school while 32% answered only sometimes. 6% said they do not accompany their child to school.

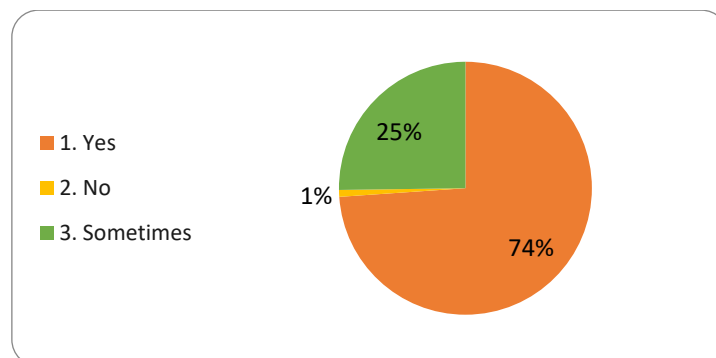


The reasons why they do not accompany their child to school:

Responses	# of respondent	Percentage
1. No time - busy at livelihood	5	71.43%
2. No time busy at housework	2	28.57%
3. No time busy with other children	0	0.00%
4. Shy embarrassed to join	0	0.00%
5. Shy embarrassed to interact with teachers or teachers	0	0.00%
6. cannot teach child because parent is illiterate / low education.	0	0.00%
Total	7	100.00%

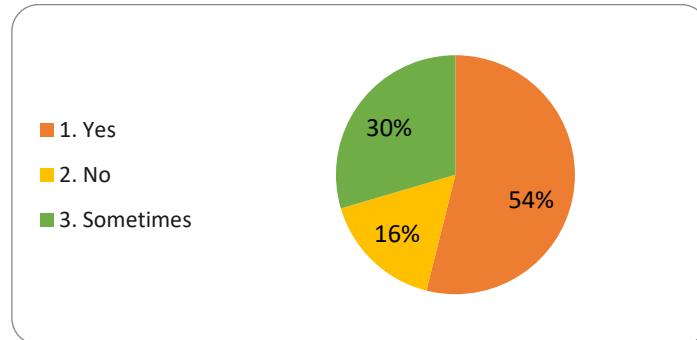
E. On whether the parent/guardian ask their child how h/she did in school

Even majority of the respondents (74%) say that they talk to their child how they did in school, there is 25% of parents/guardians who only do this sometimes. There is only 1% who do not ask their child at all.



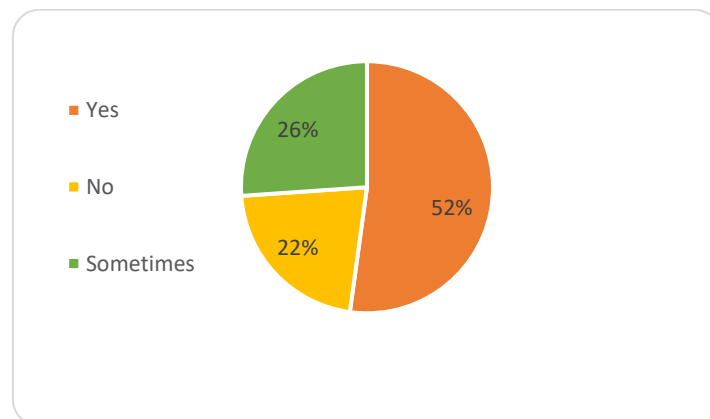
F. On assisting their child in homework

While 54% of the respondents claim to assist their learner in homework, 30% only do this sometimes while 16% do not assist at all. While the number of those who assist their child is majority, this must be taken with a critical eye because of the very low educational attainment of almost all of the respondents.



The 30% who answered no, the reason is that the parent/guardian is illiterate or low education.

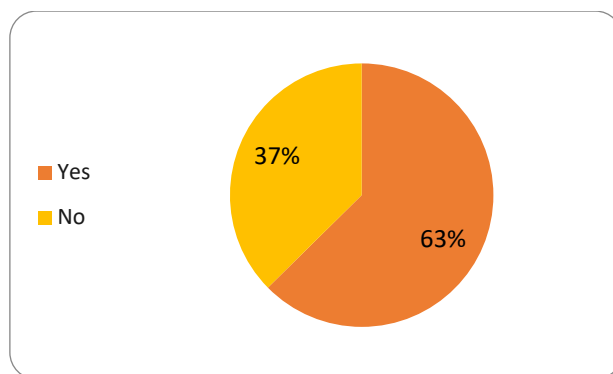
When the learner or child of the respondent was asked if their parents assist them in homework, the response is consistent with the parents' answer:



There is only a 6% variance between the parent-child response on the “no” and 2% variance on the “sometimes”.

G. On awareness if there is any child in the community who does not go to school

63% of the respondents claim that they know of children who does not go to school while only 37% say they are not aware of this.



When asked the possible reason/s why the child does not attend school, the following are the responses.

Level	# of respondent	Percentage
No water	6	6.19%
COVID Lockdown	6	6.19%
No support and cannot afford by parents(financially incapable)	22	22.68%
Livelihood difficulty	2	2.06%
Bullying	1	1.03%
Afraid of stray animal(Dog)	1	1.03%
Over Age	1	1.03%
Working at early age (come to work with their parents eg labor & fishing)	21	21.65%
No access to education facility	4	4.12%
No food	3	3.09%
Shy and afraid in going to school	10	10.31%
Sick (Fever, colds asthma)	16	16.49%
Taking care of young siblings	4	4.12%
Total	97	100.00%

The responses above suggest that financial hardship and children have to help in livelihood are the top reasons for not attending school. Other reasons like being sickly and fear of school are also valid but are quite few.

1.3.4. Analysis and Conclusion

The baseline data gathered and consolidated can confidently infer that it is reflective of the situation of the BOAT School 576 learners' and their parents/guardians.

Looking at the demographic data, it is evident from the survey that:

- Majority of the Bajau parents/guardians of the enrolled learners have very low educational attainment which in many ways can affect the learning development of the children since after learning school support will be very minimal.
- It is worth noting that the child-learners belong to families that have a big number of household members. Since the learners' household are economically poor with majority reliant on fishing for income, it may be that the child learners have to compete with the meager resources of the family in terms of basic needs.
- However, since majority of the parents/guardians are married and relatively young, it may be that even poor the child learners have stable family environment.

In terms of access to learning facilities and materials, the survey suggests that:

- Schools are generally accessible for the 11 target barangays. Schools are easy to reach, less time to reach and can be reached either by walking or by small boats. Access to the schools is not a problem as the survey found out.
- The physical state of the schools are also judged by majority of the parents/guardians as stable and safe. However, WASH facilities are lacking with no comfort room that the learners can use. There is also lack of available water in the school for basic washing and drinking.
- Another issue that the survey was able to establish is the lack of books and learning materials in the schools. Majority of the parents/guardians say that their children have almost no access to books and other learning materials.
- Parents/guardians say that while pens and papers are available for purchase in their communities, many of them find it difficult to purchase due to financial constraints. Previous data show limited livelihood of the household in addition to generally large families. It can be deduced thus that school materials such as pen, paper and books are not in the list of basic needs of the family.

In the area of parents/guardians' involvement in school activities and after school support to the child-learner, the survey suggests that:

- The parents/guardians have high interaction with the teachers and equally high level of participation with school activities. While there is a substantial number of

parents/guardians who participate only “sometimes”, this is one area that can be improved by the project. Overall however, this is a high benchmark that the project should measure itself against with at the end of its implementation.

- Also another unexpected survey finding is the high level of involvement of the parents/guardians with the learners homework and checking on their children relative to their education. This is unexpected because regardless of the low educational attainment of the parents/guardians, they nevertheless claim to help their children in homework. This claim is validated by a separate survey of the learner whether their parents/guardians help them in homework.

Another important survey findings is that majority of the respondents know of children who do not attend school. The reason they claim is economic hardship of the family who think that it will cost money to send their children to school. Another major reason is that the children have to help in the family livelihood which in this case fishing, seaweeds farming and vending.

II. Focus Group Discussion Results

The FGD were organized to augment the Survey section of the Baseline. Participated in by Local School Board Members, Chair and members of the LGU education committee, PTA officers, parents, school principals and selected teachers.

2.1. The objectives of the FGD are:

2.1.1. Identify school issues in the Municipality in terms of:

- Physical facilities including WASH
- Manpower / teachers
- Support such as learning materials and books

2.1.2. Identify challenges to education for all:

- Access for the remote and difficult to reach communities
- Participation of minorities (Bajau)
- Parents involvement in education

2.1.3. Identify protection issues

2.1.4. Identify ways to improve access and increase participation

2.2. FGD Summary of Responses

Question 1: What are the main issues facing the state of school facilities in Siasi and Pandami ?

- Schools in Siasi and Pandami are generally in a state of disrepair which needs rehabilitation. No repairs has been done for many years now. There are also not enough school structures to accommodate all the students.
- School buildings and facilities are needed especially in far-flung communities and coastal areas. This is particularly mentioned in Pandami which lacks school buildings.
- School facilities also are in lacking water and bathroom facilities.
- There are schools that are basically difficult to reach and have limited transportation.

Question 2: What are the main issues facing the availability and quality of teachers in Siasi and Pandami?

- Many teachers in the Siasi and Pandami are not from the community. This is an issue because according to the participants, since teachers have to go home and travel everyday, there are times that they come in late or not at all. If the weather is bad, it also affects teachers' attendance. This in turn impacts on the quality of education of the students.
- Some far flung areas also lack teachers because few are willing to be assigned in remote areas and islands.
- Another issue is that some teachers are not regular teachers but only substitute teachers. This happens because, again, lack of qualified and willing teachers.
- However, most teachers in Siasi and Pandami are capable of teaching because they are given training in teaching methodologies, approach and strategies. However this is not usually true for teachers assigned in remote communities.

Question 3: What are the main issues in terms of availability of learning materials and books?

- According to the school heads and principals the books from BARMM are not sufficient and are generally lacking.
- Their experience also says that books are late in arriving in Siasi and Pandami. These books are nevertheless used by the teachers as reference materials for their lessons. However, since the onset of the Pandemic, these books are not in use anymore because of the new modular home based schooling.

Question 4: What do you think are the main reasons why some children do not attend school?

- According to the FGD participants one big reason is financial difficulties. Simple school related expenses such as materials, pens , paper and sometimes school contributions are not affordable for the parents.
- Many Bajau families also migrate constantly, they change homes from time to time because of their livelihood which is fishing. There is no stability in place of residence hence the children's education is disrupted.
- There are also cases where Bajau students are bullied by Tausug students. School bullying discourages them from attending school for good.
- Many Bajau families also experience discrimination in the community which is a big factor why they avoid schooling altogether.
- For some reason, there are parents who are afraid of teachers. Maybe the reasons on discrimination and bullying, Bajau parents are hesitant to approach the school teachers.
- Some parents are not motivated to support their children's education or do not believe in the value of education.

Question 5: Is education a priority of the Bajau family?

- According to the FGD participants there are 2 Bajau views on this. There are Bajau families and parents who believe in education for their children. Many families and parents support the education of their children as well.
- However, at least according to the FGD participants, most Bajau families could not prioritize education simply because of financial difficulties. Many are discouraged to send their children to school because of the anticipated expenses related to schooling even if primary and secondary education are free. There are still expenses to be incurred when children are sent ton school.
- Another reason is the nomadic lifestyle of the Bajau. They are very mobile and easily move from place to place. There is no permanence of residence.
- Another cultural dimension is that Bajaus generally marry at an early age. For the Bajau in Siasi and Pandami, it is an embarrassment if one is not married at the age of 13 or 14. This is also a factor why the low school attendance among the Bajau.

Question 6: What can be done to increase the school participation of Bajaus ?

- The FGD participants suggested that the school teachers and administrators give more attention to the Bajau communities by engaging with them more. Talking about the importance of education will help.
- The communities must also be taught to appreciate the Bajaus in their barangays and lessen cases of discrimination and bullying.
- Always engage and invite Bajau families in school activities.
- The LGU should take extra effort to make the Bajaus feel welcome in the schools.

Question 7: Are there any culture based strategy to increase school participation among Bajau children?

- Highlight and give the Bajau culture, stories, games and legends a big space in the community.
- Provide more extra curricular activities that are related to the Bajau culture.

5.3. Analysis

It appears from the FGD responses that there is no difference between the situation in Siasi and Pandami. The following are the main salient points of the responses:

- School building and facilities generally needs improvement. While some needs repair / rehabilitation there are communities that have no school at all. There is also an evident lack of WASH facilities in school which is a serious protection issue that needs to be addressed.
- On the quality of teachers, there is not much of an issue. However, the availability of teachers especially in remote communities remain a concern. The use of substitute teachers because of the lack of teachers also raises some questions of the quality of education.
- Books are said to be not enough if measured against the number of students and learners in Siasi and Pandami. Pre-pandemic, the delivery of books are also observed to be late. However, in the current modular-home schooling modality, books are not of much use.
- It also appears as a critical protection issue that affects the school participation of many Bajau children and their parents are bullying and discrimination. Bullying and discrimination on top of financial hardships experienced by the Bajau are multi-factor demotivators why some Bajaus would prefer not to send their children to school. Bullying and discrimination are thematic protection issues that are not addressed at the present.

- One cultural aspect of the Bajau lifestyle that makes it especially difficult is their nomadic way of life. There is no permanency and consistency in residence which makes schooling very challenging. Early marriage is also a big cultural practice that impacts on the school participation of many Bajau students.

III. Underweight – Overweight Baseline Analysis

The Project conducted weighing of all listed learners and measured it against their age and benchmarked with the national standard of the National Nutrition Council of the Philippines.

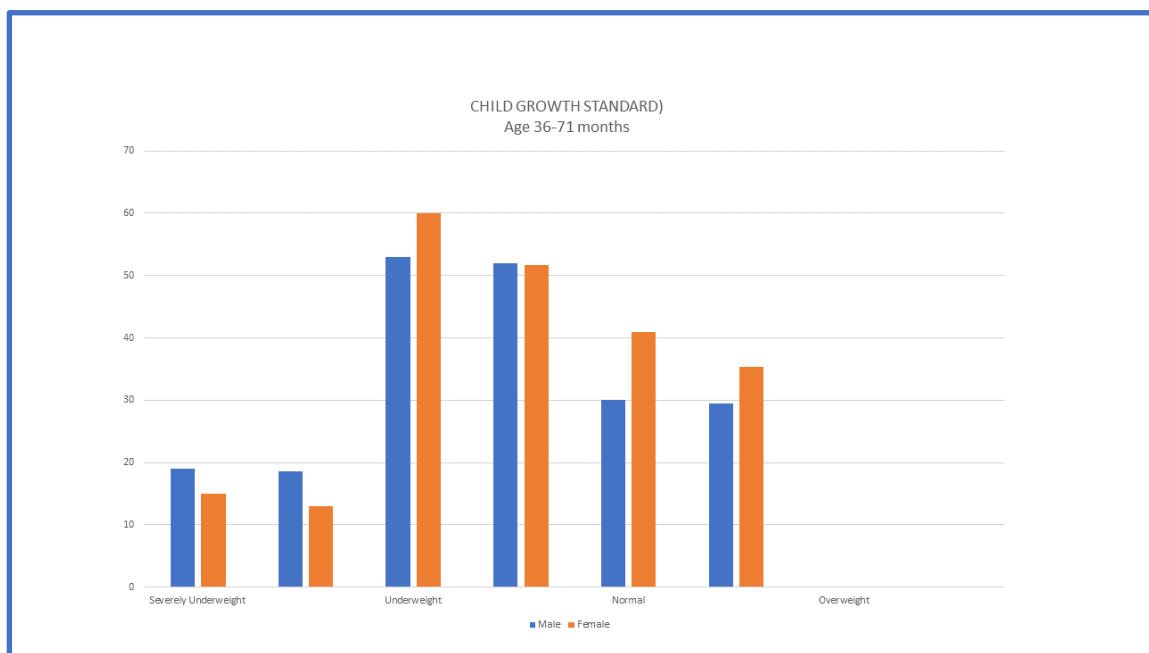
The results are:

WEIGHT TO AGE

Total # of Pre-school students- 285 children

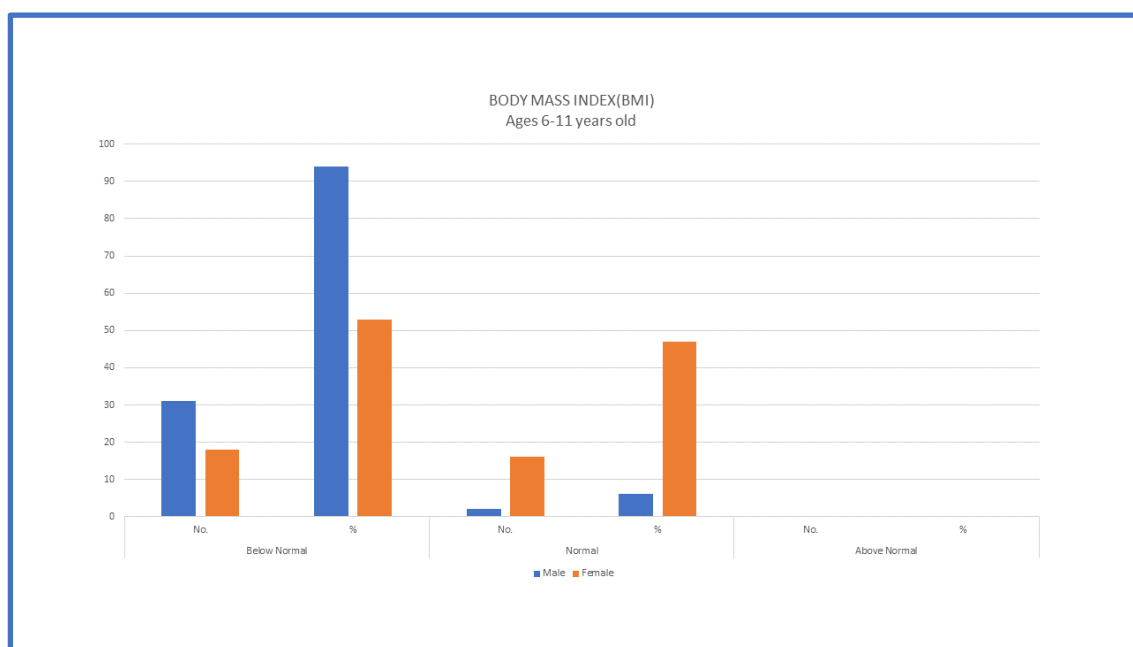
SEX	CHILD GROWTH STANDARD Age 36-71 months								Total
	Severely Underweight		Underweight		Normal		Overweight		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Male	19	18.627	53	51.961	30	29.412	0	0	102
Female	15	12.931	60	51.724	41	35.345	0	0	116
Total									218

Note: Benchmark used is from the National Nutrition Council of the Philippines on Child Growth Standards for Boys and Girls 0-71 months



For learners who are above 71 months, the Project used the Department of Education International Reference Standard in determining that nutritional status of Filipino Children:

SEX	Weight to Age Ages 6-11 years old						Total
	Below Normal		Normal		Above Normal		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Male	31	93.939	2	6.0606	0	0	33
Female	18	52.941	16	47.059	0	0	34
Total							67



3.1. Analysis

- Data shows that 18.6% of the Bajau male learners ages between 36 months – 71 months are severely undernourished while 52% are undernourished. This brings Bajau boys who have nutritional deficiencies close to 71%.
- Among Bajau female learners, 13% are severely undernourished while 52% are undernourished which brings Bajau girls who have nutritional problems at 65%.
- Among Bajau male learners who are more than 71 months, 94% are below normal weight while female learners who are below normal are at 53%.
- Overall, 69% of the BOAT Project learners are nutritionally challenged which is an important factor in the learning ability of the project learners.

IV. Recommendations

The Survey, FGD and Nutrition baseline data provided the following insights and some recommendations for future programming:

4.1. Include survey inquiry into the existence of Bajau family's legal record of birth. Birth records are an important requirement of the BARMM Ministry of Education. It may be that some Bajau children are do not avail of education because of this requirement.

4.2. Include in future programming, protection issues that will directly address community discrimination and school bullying of Bajaus because of their ethnicity. Communities where Bajaus are minority may need to have some form of intervention that seeks to confront ethnic discrimination. Discrimination as this study shows is a significant factor for the non-participation of Bajau families in the formal education of their children. In similar manner Bajau children who managed to participate in schools also experience bullying from non-Bajau students.

Programming interventions might include social conversations on societal acceptance of minorities. Teachers may also need to address discrimination and bullying in schools more actively in the classroom setting and parent-teachers meetings.

4.3. The study unquestionably showed the concern of parents and other stakeholders on the almost non-existent WASH facilities in school grounds. Water and comfort rooms are critical for the health and well-being of the learners. In addition, it is difficult to promote the value of basic hygiene practices among the learners if there is no WASH facility in the first place. Second, is protection concerns for young girls if there are no private and secure comfort rooms. Hence, in the future programming of this project establishment of WASH facilities should be seriously considered.

4.3. Intensify a) feeding program with b) basic household education on proper nutrition. As the baseline data shows, close to 70% of the Bajau learners are nutritionally challenged some even falling under the severely undernourished category. It is recommended therefor that feeding with education – training on proper nutrition should be made part of the program package.