

**ENHANCING QUALITY EDUCATION THRU THE K+12 PROGRAM  
TOWARDS THE REALIZATION OF ASEAN COMMUNITY 2015  
THE PHILIPPINES COUNTRY REPORT**

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## **Introduction**

The Philippine Education for All (EFA) 2015 Plan is a vision and a holistic program of reforms that aims at improving the quality of basic education for every Filipino by 2015. The Plan is anchored on the Dakar Framework of Action inked during the World Education Forum in April 2000 in Dakar, Senegal and adopted by various participating countries including the Philippines.

The central goal of EFA 2015 Plan is to provide basic competencies to everyone, to achieve functional literacy for all. Ensuring that every Filipino has the basic competencies is equivalent to providing all Filipinos with the basic learning needs, or enabling all Filipinos to be functionally literate.

The EFA 2015 Plan emphasizes the need to provide basic education for all and add a dimension to what has been thus far almost exclusively school based education. It points to an “urgent need to respond to the learning needs of youth and adults are either have never been to school, have dropped out, reverted to illiteracy or need basic or advanced skills to find jobs.” The six EFA goals which the Philippines has committed itself include expanding Early Childhood Care and Education, providing free and compulsory education for all; providing learning and life skill to young people and adults; increasing adult literacy by 50 percent; achieving gender equality by 2015, and improving the quality of education.

Currently, Philippines is pushing for the implementation of K+12 program aiming to increase literacy level and decongest the current basic education curriculum.

## **Philippine Education Development Initiatives**

The Philippine education sector’s movement towards decentralized management and devolving authority, responsibility over resources for education and accountability for outcomes is a major challenge. Migrating from a highly centralized system with limited authority over management matters to an environment that demands action and responsibility at the local level requires major paradigm shifts as well as significant degrees of management capacity upgrading.

Two major reform program was initiated – the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda and the K+12 Education Reform.

Due to the urgent need to address these problems in education, different reform programs were initiated and one of this is the K+12 Education Reform.

### **The Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA)**

Due to the current and emerging challenges, the Philippine Government through the Department of Education, has planned on the improving the system effectiveness in the basic education sector. Packages of initiatives coupled with building operational linkages with the other sub-sectors to upgrade the learning program for the teacher preparation. Among the relevant components of the reform agenda to teachers and professional educators are:

#### *School-Based Management*

This aims to empower the school heads to lead their teachers and students in a continuous school improvement process leading to higher learning outcomes; bring resources, including funds, within the control of schools to support delivery of quality educational services; strengthen partnership with the communities and local government units (LGUs) to encourage them to invest time, money, and other resources providing a better school learning environment; and institutionalize participatory and knowledge based continuous school improvement process. SBM serves as the main tool for continuous improvement of the school.

#### *Quality Assurance and Accountability Framework (QAAF)*

QAAF system guides and drives the decentralized operations of schools and divisions. It generates regular feedback on actual learning outcomes that every school achieves and provides a reliable mix of support aimed at meeting the needs of school that share common difficulties in achieving target learning outcomes. The QAAF has also effectively introduced revisions to the National Testing and Assessment Framework in coordination with the National Education Testing and Research Center (NETRC).

#### *Teacher Education Development Program*

A Memorandum of Understanding among the Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Civil Service Commission, Professional Regulation Commission, Teacher Education Institutions, and the Philippine Association for Teacher Education was established to design a single framework that defines effective teaching in all aspects of a teacher's professional life and in all phases of teacher development. The design was called the National Competency-Based Teachers Standard (NCBTS). This framework also provides a better guide for all teacher professional development programs and projects from the school-level up to the national level.

#### *Alternative Learning System (ALS)*

This basically supported the major objective of EFA 2015 Philippine Plan of Action that stipulates the need for universal coverage of out-of-school youth and adults in the provision of basic learning needs.

#### *Indigenous Peoples/Muslim Education*

This establishes an educational system for all Indigenous/Muslim People and would give them access to quality basic education and ensure the preservation, recognition, promotion, protection of rights to ancestral domain, cultural integrity and heritage.

#### *Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MLE)*

Local and international studies in basic education showed that the use of the learner's mother tongue as first language is the most effective medium in improving learning outcome. The use of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education was institutionalized under DepEd Order No. 74 s 2009.

### **K+12 Education Reform**

The K+12 has been initiated by the Aquino administration where students will have to undergo a new system of education. This program will require all incoming students to enroll into two more years of basic education.

This program aims to uplift the quality of education in the Philippines in order for graduates to be easily employed. The program also aims to meet the standards required for professionals who would want to work abroad.

Most importantly, the program aims to fully enhance and develop the students in order for them to be well prepared especially in emotional and cognitive aspects. Through this, graduating students will be able to face the pressures of their future workplace.

The Department of Education or DepEd is tasked to formulate and implement plans for the K+12 programs. After considering various proposals and studies and consultation with various stakeholders, the model that is currently proposed by DepEd is the K+6+4+2 Model. This model involves the Universal kindergarten, 6 years of elementary, 4 years of junior high school and 2 years for senior high school.

#### Features of K-6-4-2

1. Kindergarten and 12 years of quality basic education is a right of every Filipino, therefore they must be and will be provided by government and will be free
2. Those who will go through the 12 years cycle will get an elementary diploma (6 years), a junior high school diploma (4 years), and a senior high school diploma (2 years).

3. A full 12 years of basic education will eventually be required for entry into tertiary level education (entering freshmen by SY 2018-2019 or seven years from now).

The additional 2 years senior high school will provide the students in-depth specialization depending on the occupation/career track they wish to pursue. This also intends to provide time for students to consolidate acquired academic skills and competencies.

The new curriculum will allow specializations in Science and Technology, Music and Arts, Agriculture and Fisheries, Business and Entrepreneurship.

#### Phases of implementation

1. Universal kindergarten will be offered starting SY 2011-2012
2. DepEd will begin unclogging the basic education curriculum in SY 2012-2013
3. The enhanced 12-year curriculum will be implemented starting with incoming Grade 1 students of SY 2012-2013.
4. Incoming freshmen of SY 2012-2013 will be the first beneficiary of a free Senior High School education that will be made available by DepEd in public School beginning SY 2016-2017. Electives to be offered in Senior HS (arts, music, tech-voc, etc.).

Adding two more years will decongest and enhance the basic education curriculum and to provide better quality education for all. The Philippines is the only remaining country in Asia with a 10-year basic education program. K+12 is not new. The proposal to expand the basic education dates back to 1925.

Studies in the Philippines have shown that an additional year of schooling increases earnings by 7.5%. Studies validate that improvements in the quality of education will increase GDP growth by 2% to 2.2%. Minus 2 instead of plus 2 for those families who cannot afford a college education but still wish to have their children find a good paying job. Right now, parents spend for at least 4 years of college to have an employable child. In our model, parents will not pay for 2 years of basic education that will give them an employable child. In effect, we are saving parents 2 years of expenses. The plan is not "Plus 2 years before graduation" but "Minus 2 years before work."

To inspire a shift in attitude that completion of high school education is more than just preparation for college but can be sufficient for a gainful employment or career.

With the development of this new program, teachers will be given sufficient trainings to implement this program. There will be no additional workload due to the K+12 program and they will only teach for up to six hours a day as stated in the Magna Carta for public school teachers. The decongested K to 12 curriculum will allow teachers to master the context and competencies that they will develop among the students and will enable them to focus on their areas of expertise.

Pre-service training for aspiring teachers will also be modified to conform to the requirements of the program.

## **Conclusion**

As the state and the Department of Education works hand in hand to improve the quality of education thus helping to meet the target set in the Philippine Education For All 2015 vision. The new education system is expected to prepare future Filipino citizens who must operate in a broader sphere. This new program will prepare the young for future competitiveness and to function well amidst a multi-cultural and multi-national environment thus helping the country's economic status. Several studies have shown that the improvements in the quality education will increase GDP growth by as much as 2%. Studies in the UK, India and US show that additional years of schooling also have positive over all impact in the society.

PPSTA will continue to support these initiatives by continuing its partnership with DepEd and to continue helping the teachers in their professional and personal growth. PPSTA will continue honoring teachers as the unsung heroes of today.

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### *Sources:*

- *Briefer on the Enhanced K+12 Basic Education from the Official Gazette of the Office of the President of the Philippines*
- *DepEd Discussion Paper on the Enhanced K+12 Basic Education Program; Oct 5, 2010*
- *Factoidz (education-teaching-careers.factoidz.com)*