Philippines

Principles and general objectives of education

In the Philippines the education system aims to:

- Provide a broad general education that will assist each individual in society to attain his/her potential as a human being, and enhance the range and quality of the individual and the group;
- Help the individual participate in the basic functions of society and acquire the essential educational foundation for his/her development into a productive and versatile citizen;
- Train the nation’s manpower in the middle-level skills required for national development;
- Develop the high-level professions that will provide leadership for the nation, advance knowledge through research, and apply new knowledge for improving the quality of human life;
- Respond effectively to changing needs and conditions through a system of educational planning and evaluation.

Current educational priorities and concerns

The growing awareness of the benefits of education, the constitutional provision (a new constitution was adopted in 1987) for free and compulsory elementary education, the demand for education relevance and responsiveness to changing societal needs and the alarming rate of increase in the country’s population have contributed to the problem of providing education for all, a problem which becomes more serious each year. The Department of Education, Culture and Sports (now the Department of Education, DepED) has attempted to implement educational reforms, programmes and projects to address the key issues of access and quality of basic education, relevance and efficiency of the education system. However, many problems are besetting education in the Philippines. Among the school-related causes are the unqualified and poorly trained teachers, inadequate facilities and equipment, and lack of instructional materials (textbooks and teacher’s manuals). Non-school factors include poverty, low educational attainment and illiteracy of parents, and poor health and nutrition.

In recent years, the DepEd has pursued several development programmes and projects through government funding and overseas economic co-operation both multilateral and bilateral. The strategies to improve education include overall review of elementary and secondary education, universal access to and quality of education (notably by emphasizing teaching of English, science, technology and mathematics), provision of alternative delivery schemes (such as multigrade teaching, mobile...

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teaching, and instructional management by parents, community and teachers in disaster areas), management training for principals and school administrators, development of research, improvement of school libraries and teachers welfare. Technical and vocational education was also revised in an effort to cope with rapid technological advancements and to provide young people with more meaningful preparation for their future employment. The strategies include curriculum development, improvement of pre- and in-service education of teachers in both public and private schools, updated instructional materials in various fields, and upgrading of equipment for both public and private institutions.

At the higher education level, the strategies include improving access of the poor and disadvantaged, improving quality—notably by focusing on pre-service and in-service training of teachers—, liberalizing policies for private schools, rationalizing state colleges and universities (SUCs), and strengthening linkages with government professional boards for evaluation.

Among the development programmes implemented in recent years, the following should be mentioned:

The Elementary and Secondary Education Project: the aim of the project has been to meet the sector’s requirement for essential physical resources (facilities and equipment), especially in educationally and economically disadvantaged areas; improve the professional competence of teachers and school administrators; expand the population’s basic knowledge and the skills of children at risk of dropping out of school as well as illiterate out-of-school youth and adults; and further develop DepEd institutional capacities in planning and management of the education system.

Implementing the New Secondary Education Curriculum (1992-93): mass training of Grade IV teachers was undertaken, and complemented with the production and delivery of textbooks and teachers manuals to fully support the implementation of the new curriculum. The physical facilities component of the programme also provided for the construction of 673 packages of equipped and furnished academic classrooms, workshops and science laboratories to augment the accommodations problem in the secondary level.

The School Building Programme: this programme provides for the construction of classrooms, science laboratories and multi-purpose workshops, and the provision of equipment for instruction for selected elementary and secondary schools within the typhoon belt of the country and in remote and rural areas.

Science Teaching Improvement Project: this project aims to develop science equipment through research, prototype production, standards setting and tests, and expertise within the educational sector through workshops, seminars, and training of teachers and staff locally and abroad.

Science Equipment Project: this project addresses the pressing need of the public school system for instructional materials and equipment. The National Science Equipment Centre and three Regional Distribution/Service Centres were developed and institutionalized for the purpose of developing, testing, producing, and distributing science equipment to the public secondary schools.

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Rationalizing programme offerings of state colleges and universities on a regional basis: this programme aims at encourage specialization in each SUC and intra-regionally among SUCs with special emphasis on capital and land-intensive courses such as agriculture, technology and engineering, and technical education. It encourages regional co-ordination among SUCs to minimize duplication of programme offerings.

Among the achievements, benefits and performance of the education system over a ten-year period (1986-1995), the following should be mentioned:

- Education has been given the highest budgetary priority in the national government budget.

- The New Elementary School Curriculum (NESC) and the New Secondary School Curriculum (NSSC) have been fully implemented.

- Free public secondary education has been implemented.

- The programme of assistance for low-income students and faculty in private schools has been expanded.

- The Education for All Plan of Action (1991-2000) to provide access to basic education and eradicate illiteracy has been adopted.

- The Values Education Framework has been formulated and implemented.

- Centres of excellence in teacher education have been established.

- Professionalization of the teaching profession has been achieved through the Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994.

- The National Elementary Achievement Test for Grade VI pupils and the National Secondary Achievement Test for Form IV high school students have been administered.

- Student contact time has increased through a lengthened school calendar and additional time for English, science and mathematics.

- Science education has been strengthened through the establishment of regional science high schools, the formulation and implementation of the Science and Technology Education Plan, the establishment of the Regional Science Teaching Centres, and the organization of the National Science Teaching Instrumentation Centre.

- Policies governing private education have been liberalized—notably as regards curriculum requirements and tuition fee policy—to promote efficiency, autonomy and responsiveness.

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• Educational performance during the period has improved, as indicated by the literacy rate, the improved enrolment rate at the primary and secondary levels, the decrease of repetition rates, and the provision of textbooks and instructional materials.

The DepEd will continue to provide access to basic education. In accordance with the broadening of accessibility to basic education, the programme commitment has the following components: (a) establishment of a school in every barangay not having an elementary school and in every town without a high school (a barangay is the basic governmental unit in the country’s political structure, consisting of a number of families within the same geographic area); (b) organization of multigrade classrooms; (c) completion of incomplete elementary schools; and (d) provision of basic instructional materials, facilities and equipment at the elementary and high school levels.

In addition, the Master Plan for Basic Education (1996-2005) has the mandate of modernizing education. The programme has been pursued through the introduction of modern instructional materials—such as computers and Internet, videos, well equipped science laboratories and machine shops as well as libraries—to enrich instruction through training programmes and further studies, including staff development abroad, teaching techniques and teachers mastery of subject matter. Training programmes have also been provided for the upgrading of managerial skills in planning, project and fund management as well as resource management and community mobilization.

The central goal of the Philippine EFA 2105 Plan is basic competencies for all that will bring about functional literacy for all. Ensuring that every Filipino has the basic competencies is equivalent to enabling all Filipinos to be functionally literate which means having the complete range of skills and competencies—cognitive, affective and behavioral— which enables individuals to: live and work as human persons; develop their potentials; make critical and informed decisions; and function effectively in society within the context of their environment and that of the wider community (local, regional, national and global) in order to improve the quality of their lives and that of the society. This ambitious goal can only be accomplished through the achievement of four component outcomes: (i) universal coverage of out-of-school youth and adults in the provision of basic learning needs; (ii) universal school participation and elimination of drop-outs and repetition in first three grades; (iii) universal completion of the full cycle of basic education with satisfactory achievement levels by all at every grade or year; and (iv) total community commitment to attainment of basic education competencies for all. The most critical tasks envisaged in the Plan are the following:

• Better Schools: make every school continuously perform better

• ECCD: make expansion of ECCD coverage yield more EFA benefits

• Alternative Learning Systems: Transform non-formal and informal interventions into an alternative learning system yielding more EFA benefits

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Teachers: Get all teachers to continuously improve their teaching practices

Longer Cycle: Adopt a 12-year cycle for formal basic education

Curriculum Development: Continue enrichment of curriculum development in the context of pillars of new functional literacy

Financing: Provide adequate public funding for country-wide attainment of EFA goals

Governance: Create network of community-based groups for local attainment of EFA goals

Monitoring: Monitor progress in effort towards attainment of EFA goals

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

In the Philippines, education is a public or state function. Public elementary and secondary education is supported by the national government, the former as mandated by the Constitution (1987), which states that “the State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all”, and the latter by Republic Act No. 6655 (Free Secondary Education Act). Specific provisions on education upon which all decrees, policies, regulations, and rules on education are based, are provided in the Constitution. These are expressly stated by way of the constitutional mandate, Presidential decree, and other legal provisions.

The objectives of formal education at the elementary, secondary, and tertiary levels as well as those of non-formal education are specified in the Education Act of 1982. The Republic Act No. 6728 deals with private education, notably by setting common minimum physical facilities and curricular requirements for all schools and by liberalizing the subject content of values education.

The Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Law, enacted in 2000, recognizes the importance of early childhood and its special needs, affirms parents as primary caregivers and the child's first teachers, and establishes parent effectiveness, seminars and nutrition counseling for pregnant and lactating mothers. The Law requires the establishment of a National Coordinating Council for the Welfare of Children which: (a) establishes guidelines, standards, and culturally relevant practices for ECCD programs; (b) develops a national system for the recruitment, training, and accrediting of caregivers; (c) monitors the delivery of ECCD services and the impact on beneficiaries; (d) provides additional resources to poor and disadvantaged communities in order to increase the supply of ECCD programs; and (e) encourages the development of private sector initiatives. The Republic Act 6972, known as the “Barangay (village) Level Total Protection of Children Act”, has a provision that requires all local government units to establish a day-care centre in every village; the law institutionalized the features of the day-care programme that provide for young children’s learning needs aside from their health and psychosocial needs.

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The creation of the Commission on Higher Education by Republic Act No. 7722 and of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority separated these entities from the Department of Education where they originally belonged.

The Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act, Republic Act No. 7836, was issued in 1994. The Literacy Co-ordination Council, an interagency body administratively attached to DECS, was created by Republic Act No. 7165 to carry out State policy to eradicate illiteracy. The House Bill No. 1875 entitled “An Act to Strengthen Teacher Education in the Philippines by Establishing Lead Teacher Training Institutions, Appropriating Funds Therefore and for Other Purposes” deals with the improvement of teacher education.

The Republic Act No. 7796, otherwise known as the Technical Education and Skills Development Act of 1994, aims to encourage the full participation of and mobilize the industry, labour, local government units and technical-vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in the skills development of the country's human resources.

In August 2001, Republic Act No. 9155, otherwise called the Governance of Basic Education Act, was passed transforming the name of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) to the Department of Education (DepEd) and redefining the role of field offices (regional offices, division offices, district offices and schools). This Act provides the overall framework for: (i) school heads empowerment by strengthening their leadership roles; and (ii) school-based management within the context of transparency and local accountability. The goal of basic education is to provide the school age population and young adults with skills, knowledge, and values to become caring, self-reliant, productive and patriotic citizens.

According to legislation, primary education is free and compulsory for children aged 7-12. Secondary education is free but not compulsory.

**Administration and management of the education system**

The Department of Education (DepEd) is the principal government agency responsible for education and manpower development. The mission of the Department is to provide quality basic education that is equitably accessible to all and lay the foundation for life-long learning and service for the common good. The Department is primarily responsible for the formulation, planning, implementation and co-ordination of the policies, standards, regulations, plans, programmes and projects in areas of formal and non-formal education. It also supervises all basic education institutions, both public and private, and provides for the establishment and maintenance of a complete, adequate and integrated system of education relevant to the goals of national development.

The current Department structure consists of two parts: the Central Office and the field offices which consist of regional and sub-regional levels. The Department proper consists of: the Office of the Secretary; five Services (Office of Planning Service, Financial and Management Service, Administrative Service, Human

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Resource Development Service, and Technical Service); four Bureaus (Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Non-Formal Education, and Physical Education and School Sports); and Centres (such as Health and Nutrition, and National Education Testing and Research). There are field offices in sixteen regions, each headed by a Regional Director; 157 provincial and city schools divisions, each headed by a School Division Superintendent; and 2,227 school districts headed by a District Supervisor.

The Bureau of Elementary Education (BEE) is responsible for providing access and quality elementary education for all. It also focuses on social services for the poor and directs public resources and efforts at socially disadvantaged regions and specific groups. The Bureau of Secondary Education (BSE) is responsible for providing access and quality secondary education. Its aim is to enable every elementary graduate to have access to secondary education. It improves access to secondary education by establishing schools in municipalities where there are none and reviews the overall structure of secondary education as regards curriculum, facilities, and teachers in-service training.

The Bureau of Non-formal Education (BNFE) is responsible for contributing to the improvement of the poor through literacy and continuing education programmes. Its aim is to provide focused basic services to the more disadvantaged sections of the population to improve their welfare and contribute to human resource development.

The Bureau of Physical Education and School Sports (BPESS) is responsible for physical fitness promotion, school sports development, cultural heritage revival (Kundiman Fiesta), natural heritage conservation, and values development. Its aim is to inculcate desirable values such as self-discipline, honesty, teamwork, sportsmanship, excellence and others and make the Filipino youth fit to respond adequately to the demands, requirements, challenges and opportunities that the next century may bring. The functions of the BPESS were absorbed by the Philippine Sports Commission in August 1999.

Attached agencies to the Department are the National Museum, National Library, National Historical Institute, and Records Management and Archives Office. Other offices are the Instructional Materials Corporation, Instructional Materials Council, Educational Development Projects Implementing Task Force, Educational Assistance Policy Council, National Youth and Sports Development Board, National Social Action Council and Teacher Education Council. The main objective of the cultural agencies of the Department is to preserve, conserve, restore and enrich the cultural heritage, customs and traditions.

The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) was established through the enactment of Republic Act No. 7796 otherwise known as the Technical Education and Skills Development Act of 1994. This Act aims to encourage the full participation of and mobilize the industry, labour, local government units and technical-vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in the skills development of the country's human resources. Overall, TESDA formulates manpower and skills plans, sets appropriate skills standards and tests, coordinates and monitors manpower policies and programs, and provides policy directions and

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guidelines for resource allocation for the TVET institutions in both the private and public sectors.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) is independent and separate from the DepEd. The Commission is responsible for formulating and implementing policies, plans and programmes for the development and efficient operation of the system of higher education in the country. Its coverage is both public and private higher education institutions as well as degree-granting programmes in all post-secondary educational institutions. The creation of CHED was part of a broad agenda for reforms in the country's education system, outlined by the Congressional Commission on Education in 1992. Part of the reforms is the trifocalization of the education sector. The three governing bodies in the education sector are the CHED for tertiary and graduate education, the DepEd for basic education, and the TESDA for TVET and middle level education.

At the national level, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is the agency responsible for overall ECCD policy and programme development, setting and promoting guidelines and standards, providing technical assistance to the local government units through the regional field offices, monitoring and evaluation. With the passage of the ECCD Act in 2000, the day-care programme, as well as home-based ECCD programmes for the under-6 age group, while still a responsibility of the DSWD, will now be accredited by the ECCD Coordinating Councils at the provincial level.

A recent policy thrust of the DepEd is the empowerment of school principals. The principal shall assume more administrative authority and the corresponding accountability for improving teaching competencies and pupils achievement. The policy gives principals the authority to: manage the school’s funds for maintenance and other operating expenses; raise additional funds for the school through Parent-Teachers and Community Associations; design and develop his/her own school improvement programme in collaboration with parents and community leaders; participate in the selection, recruitment and promotion of teachers; plan and develop an innovative curriculum, using the national curriculum as a framework. The Decentralization Programme is being implemented by transferring substantive decision-making powers to the school level.

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Structure and organization of the education system

Philippines: structure of the education system

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Note:
- Pre-school education is optional but not a requirement.
- Students may enter the primary education.
- Age may vary in entering post-baccalaureate, master’s, and doctorate program levels.
- Graduate education includes post-baccalaureate, master’s, doctorate, and post-doctorate.

Source: Commission on Higher Education.

**Pre-school education**

Pre-school education consists of nurseries and kindergartens that cater to children aged 3-6. This level of education is not compulsory.

**Primary education**

Elementary education is compulsory and provides basic education to pupils aged 7-12. It consists of six years of study except in a few schools—mainly private—offering a seven-year course. Elementary education is organized into two levels: primary, which covers Grades I-IV; and intermediate, which covers Grades V and VI (or VII). After completing the six-year elementary programme, pupils receive a certificate of graduation.

**Secondary education**

Secondary education (high school) is a continuation of the basic education provided at the first level. It is expanded to include learning (general education) and training in basic employable skills (vocational/technical education). This covers a period of four years of formal schooling and is addressed to students aged 13-16.

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Tertiary education (higher education) provides prescribed courses of studies which are credited towards degrees in academic disciplines or professions. It includes two-year post-secondary technical and vocational courses, various professional courses, and general higher education, including graduate and post-graduate studies (for students aged 17-25). Normally, a baccalaureate degree takes four years. Graduate and post-graduate courses normally take two to three years to complete.

According to the DECS (now DepEd) Order no. 16 of 2001, at the elementary and secondary levels the 2001/02 school year began on 4 June and ended on 27 March of the following year. It consisted of 203 days, or about thirty-three weeks of classes in public schools.

The financing of education

Many of the problems of education today are linked to the under-investment in education. The increase in the education budget from 1986 to 1989 was not sustained in the succeeding three-year period. After reaching a peak of 13.2% of the national budget in 1989, the share of education declined to 11.7% in 1991. Real per capita expenditures declined starting in 1990. The growth in the nominal size of the education budget was attributed to the growth of salary inputs which account for about 70% of total education expenditures. The level of spending is very much below those of other ASEAN countries. Actual expenditure per student increased from 783 pesos (P) in 1986 to P1,380 in 1994 at the elementary level. During the same period, a slight decline was observed at the secondary level from P1,271 to P1,257 per student.

However, education has been given the highest budgetary priority in the national government budget in recent years. Realignments within the DepEd budget have been made to augment the financial resources for elementary education. In addition, two-thirds of the President’s Social Fund have been committed primarily to establish new schools in barangays without an elementary school. The share of education in the national budget increased to 14% in 1995. The education budget (DepEd and state universities and colleges) increased from P13.13 billion in 1986 to P53.7 billion in 1995. The average teachers salary increased from P1,553 per month in 1986 to P5,902 which is probably the highest rate of increase among the various professional groups in the national government. To implement the Master Plan for Basic Education (1996-2005), it is estimated that P50 billion will be allocated for the modernization of basic education in the next ten years.

The national government is authorized by the Constitution to contribute to the financial support of educational programmes. The DepEd is likewise asked to formulate measures to broaden access to education through financial assistance and other incentives to schools, teachers, and students. Public elementary schools, national secondary schools, vocational and technical schools, other special schools, and chartered and non-chartered tertiary educational institutions are funded primarily from national funds. Local governments are encouraged to assume the operation of non-national public schools, while the national government provides funds and adequate sources of revenue. Government educational institutions are allowed to receive grants, legacies, and donations for purposes specified by existing laws. The management and use of such income is subject to government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

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Private schools throughout the country are funded from capital investments, equity contributions, tuition fees and other school charges, grants, loans, subsidies and other income sources in accordance with current legislation. The national, regional, provincial, city and municipal governments may also aid school programmes with loans, grants and scholarships to recognize the complementary role of the government and of private schools in the educational system.

A number of programmes have been funded through international finance assistance. For instance, the Secondary and Elementary Education Project (1990-94) was financed through a support loan from the World Bank with co-financing by the Overseas Economic Co-operation Fund of Japan. The Philippine-Australia Technical and Vocational Education Project aimed at improving the sub-sector was supported by the Australian bilateral assistance. The Science Teaching Improvement Project was jointly financed by the German government and the Philippine government. The Science Equipment Project (1989-1992) was implemented with the financial assistance of the German government.

**The educational process**

**Pre-primary education**

There are four modalities through which ECCD services are delivered, i.e. through day care centres, homes, pre-schools and health centres or clinics:

- **Centre-based ECCD:** A network of public, private and NGO-managed centres carries out the day-care programme. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) used to undertake the establishment of public day care centres, but this programme was devolved to the Local Government Units (LGUs) after the enactment of the 1991 Local Government Code.

- **Home-based ECCD:** The local government units (LGUs) also currently implement another devolved program of the DSWD, namely the Parent Effectiveness Service (PES) Program that was initiated in 1978. This home-based intervention in ECCD aims to help parents, surrogate parents, guardians and other care givers to enhance their knowledge, skills and attitudes in parenting. In an effort to extend coverage, a PES-on-the-Air program entitled *Pamilyang Pinoy sa Himpapawid* (Philippine Family on the Air) was launched in 1993.

- **School-based ECCD:** Most private pre-schools are located in highly urbanised areas and cater mainly to the higher income groups. Consequently, there are many entrants to Grade I who have no exposure to pre-school education and therefore manifest significant adjustment and learning gaps.

- **Clinic-based ECCD:** This is an integral part of Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services, which are made available primarily through a network of public and private hospitals, private clinics, municipality-based main health centres (MHCs) and barangay Health Stations (BHSs). The MHCs and BHSs are government facilities that are primarily responsible for the delivery of
basic health care services to communities especially in the rural areas. A doctor and a public health nurse man the MHCs. On the other hand, the BHSs are simple clinics staffed by a rural health midwife who is assisted by a barangay health worker.

The public day-care system is the largest provider of early childhood care and education services for 3- to 4-year-olds. In terms of public ECCD services, the village health centres are the main service delivery points for decentralized maternal and child health services that complement the group experiences in day-care centres. These include immunization and a programme for the integrated management of childhood illness, both designed to improve prevention and treatment of common childhood diseases.

In 2005, the National Pre-School Education Programme was conceived. This programme aims to ensure that all 5-year old children have access to quality pre-school education. Specifically, it aims to expand access and coverage to all five-year old children, initially focusing on the poorest and disadvantaged; and upgrading the quality of pre-school education in order to ensure that children are school ready integrating health and nutrition components (weighing, de-worming and supplemental feeding). The program aims to reach all 5-year olds by using existing day care centers and opening new pre-school classes in areas where there are no existing day care centers and public pre-school classes.

Pre-school education at the kindergarten level (age group 5 years) must aim to develop children in all aspects (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive) so that they will be better prepared to adjust and cope with life situations and the demands of formal schooling; and to maximize the children’s potential through a variety of carefully selected and meaningful experiences considering their interests and capabilities. The kindergarten curriculum focuses on the following areas:

- **Physical development:** it includes gross and fine motor co-ordination through play and manipulative activities like games, simple works, etc.
- **Personal-social development:** it involves skills and social behaviours and it includes the development of health habits, independence, abilities to follow rules and routines. Learning about the family and other people is part of the concerns in this area.
- **Affective development:** it includes experiences that help children develop love for God, self, others and the community, and develop awareness of their feelings and sense of the right and wrong.
- **Cognitive development:** it includes the development of communication skills and sensory-perceptual and numeracy concepts and skills. Communication skills refer to competencies in expressing ideas and feelings both in English and Filipino (oral expression and basic readiness skills of listening, pre-reading and writing). Sensory-perceptual and numeracy skills refer to the ability to observe, discriminate, compare and classify, and to understand, count, read and write numbers.
- **Creative-aesthetic development:** it includes exploration of sounds, music and rhythms, and the development of children’s creative expression through drawing, painting, manipulative activities, etc.

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In order to attain and ensure the holistic development of children, a well-planned curriculum and a well-balanced programme of activities are necessary, although they may vary according to each pre-school’s approach. Indoor and outdoor plays are essential whatever approach the pre-school follows. The language spoken by the child should be valued. It is necessary that such language be used initially and until the children have attained the facility and confidence in expressing themselves in English and Filipino. Most pre-school programmes run Monday to Friday, and those with large enrolments generally operate two or three shifts of three- to four-hour sessions per age group. There are no full-day kindergarten or nursery classes.

Most ECCD programmes can be described as eclectic in their approach to philosophy, conceptual frameworks and curriculum design. However, while the theories that influence their development may be rather similar to one another, the specifics of the curricula are a more accurate indicator of these programmes’ orientation. These curricula can be broadly classified under three categories, described here in terms of their focus and their methods.

The first type of curriculum is geared towards the traditional primary school, which is organized in terms of subject matter areas and focuses mainly on cognitive, literacy and numeracy skills. Children are mostly engaged in teacher-directed, structured, sedentary classroom tasks, and their experiences are limited to paper-pencil tasks with a sprinkling of arts and crafts, music and movement.

The second type of curriculum is informal, play-based and activity-oriented that allows children to explore a variety of topics in a comparatively random fashion. The learning experiences are designed to support physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive development.

The third type follows a similarly diverse and comprehensive pattern, to respond to all dimensions of child development. However, a more integrated and well-balanced curriculum that shows careful attention to content is achieved by organizing activities around well-selected themes or topics of study. These programmes are more learner-centred and emphasize children’s active participation. There are also ECCD centres that implement or adapt specific programme models, such as those based on Maria Montessori’s work, the developmental-interaction approach associated with Bank Street College, the Waldorf School, and the Kumon method from Japan. Their curricula can also be seen in terms of the three types mentioned above.

The curriculum of the public school kindergarten and the day-care centre is designed to be more like the second type mentioned, with some features from the third type of curriculum. The day-care centre’s activity plan is organized around topics or themes and is designed to provide a variety of activities: dramatic, manipulative and group play, arts and crafts, music, storytelling and other language experiences. The day-care workers’ main references are: 1) the original Weekly Plan Activity Guide, with selected topics for a ten-month period; and 2) the Resource Book on ECCD which includes additional themes and recommended concepts and learning experiences. The daily routines and the physical space of the day-care centre are similar to the pre-schools that are compatible with an activity-centred curriculum. There are well-defined play or activity “corners” and the children’s daily schedule is

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divided into blocks of time for specific activities and transitions between e.g. play, storytelling and meals.

The Department of Education’s kindergarten curriculum is more explicitly focused on supporting “school readiness” and promotes the use of compiled worksheets, manipulative play materials, as well as teacher-made resources. Kindergarten teachers are provided with a “Pre-school Handbook” which describes the instructional objectives and concepts or content to be covered, recommended classroom activities and learning materials. The daily schedule and some guidelines for classroom management are also included. Another reference provided by the DepEd is a copy of the “Eight-week ECCD Curriculum in Grade One.” This is based on the full-year kindergarten curriculum and designed to be implemented during the first eight weeks of the school year for all Grade One students. A work book for the children and several story books suitable for five- and six-year-olds are also included in what is similar to the basic kindergarten classroom “package” recommended for use in the public schools.”

Most of the day-care centres operate half-day sessions comprised of supervised play and group activities (arts and crafts, music and movement, storytelling), childcare for personal hygiene, supplemental feeding, health and nutrition education, learning experiences for early literacy and mathematics, and socialization experiences to support social and emotional development. Growth monitoring and assessment of children’s developmental status using a Child Development Checklist are also included. Most public day-care centres provide only one meal, generally a snack each day. The ones that function also as child-minding centres serve lunch and possibly a second (morning or afternoon) snack. All day-care workers in the public system are guided by a national programme developed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in collaboration with multidisciplinary partners in academe, civil society and international agencies like UNICEF. In the best situations, day-care centres provide children with developmentally-appropriate experiences that respond to their needs and capacities in a holistic manner.

Most barangay (village) day-care centres (also referred to as childcare centres, crèches and nurseries, but day-care centres it is the term most used) function as three-hour or half-day activity- and playgroups for three- to five-year-olds, five days a week. A day-care centre functioning at full capacity usually serves two different groups of children in two shifts: one in the morning and another in the afternoon. A few centres provide childcare services for those children whose parents seek them. In the late 1990s, a national policy was introduced to promote the establishment of day-care centres in the workplace. As a result, there are an increasing number of government offices, as well as private corporations, which provide full-day childcare programmes that match parents’ working hours, that is, from 8 a.m. or 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. or 5 p.m. Some of these are linked to the local government units of cities which are also the employers of public civil servants. There is now a public day-care centre in virtually every village of the country (there are 41,924 villages in the country; as of 2000, there were 32,787 day-care centres; a few villages may have more than one; in 1998, 26.7 per cent of the villages did not have access to any such programmes).

In 2004, the gross enrolment ratio at the pre-primary level was 60.5%.

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Primary education

Elementary education provides basic education to pupils aged 7-12. The elementary course comprises six years (in some cases, seven years), the first four years termed primary grades and the last two years, intermediate grades.

The overall mission of elementary education is to enable pupils to acquire a basic preparation that will make them an enlightened, disciplined, self-reliant, God-loving, creative, versatile and productive citizens in a national community. The main objectives of elementary education are:

- to provide knowledge and develop the skills, attitudes and values essential to the children’s personal development and necessary for living in and contributing to a developing and changing social milieu;

- to provide learning experiences aimed at increasing the children’s awareness of and responsiveness to the demands of society, and to prepare them for constructive and effective involvement;

- to promote and intensify the children’s knowledge of, identification with, and love for the nation and the people to which they belong;

- to promote work experiences aimed at developing and enhancing the children’s orientation to the world of work and creativity, and to prepare them for an honest and gainful work.

Curriculum policies are usually set forth by the Department of Education through various orders, circulars, memoranda and bulletins. They are aligned with national priorities and contribute to the achievement of development goals. However, several laws passed by the national legislature specifically relate to the school curriculum.

Development of the basic education curriculum is the responsibility of the Central Office Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education, Curriculum Development Divisions. This bureau defines the learning competencies for the different subject areas; conceptualizes the structure of the curriculum; and formulates national curricular policies. These functions are exercised in consultation with other agencies and sectors of society (e.g. industry, social and civic groups, teacher-training institutions, professional organizations, school administrators, parents, students, etc.). The subject offerings, credit points and time allotments for the different subject areas are also determined at the national level. In this sense, a national curriculum exists in the Philippines. However, while curriculum implementation guidelines are issued at the national level, the actual implementation is left to school-teachers. They determine the resources to be used; teaching and assessment strategies and other processes. Furthermore, schools have the option to modify the national curriculum (e.g. content, sequence and teaching strategies) in order to ensure that the curriculum responds to local concerns.

The approach to curriculum design in the country is based on content topic and competency. The Department of Education prescribes competencies for the

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subject areas in all the grade/year levels. The Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education develops, publishes and disseminates these learning competencies to the field. Most of the subject/learning areas have a list of learning competencies expected to be mastered by the children at the end of each grade/year level and also at the end of elementary/secondary schooling. Some subject/learning areas have a combination of both (i.e. learning competencies under each content/topic). The curriculum is designed to be interpreted by teachers and implemented with variations. Schools are encouraged to innovate and enrich or adapt, as along as they have met the basic requirements of the curriculum. In this context, the regional science high schools offer an enriched science and mathematics programme whereby students take additional science and mathematics subjects. In some private schools, English, science and mathematics subjects are taken in lieu of values education; this is because subjects like religion, moral values and ethics already have been incorporated. In addition, students are required to participate in co-curricular activities. These are managed by students with the teacher as facilitator/moderator.

The curriculum plan (learning competencies) does not present teaching methods and learning activities that teachers must follow in implementing the curriculum. The guiding philosophy is that the creativity of teachers is stimulated by the option to plan and use the appropriate teaching/learning activities independently. However, teacher’s manuals or guides do incorporate higher-level content areas and suggestions for teaching and assessing. (See Mariñas & Ditapat, 2000).

The features that make the new 2002 curriculum for elementary and secondary education different from previous curricula (NESC and NSEC) are: (i) restructuring of the learning areas, reducing them to five (Filipino, English, science, mathematics and Makabayan); (ii) stronger integration of competencies and values within and across learning areas; (iii) greater emphasis on the learning process and integrative modes of teaching; and (iv) increased time for tasks to gain mastery of competencies of the basic tool subjects. The objectives are expressed in terms of competencies, which are knowledge, skills and attitudes that the learner is expected to acquire at the end of the programme. A significant feature of the competencies is the inclusion of the use of ICTs, articulated in terms of skills in accessing, processing, and applying information, and using educational software in solving mathematical problems and conducting experiments. Content is delivered using a variety of media and resources. The teaching-learning process considers the learner an active partner rather than an object of pedagogy. The learner takes on the role of constructor of meaning, while the teacher serves as facilitator, enabler and manager of learning. (Department of Education, 2002).

The weekly lesson timetables for elementary education (1999 and according to the 2002 basic education curriculum) are shown below:

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
### Elementary education: weekly lesson timetable (1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Weekly time allocated to each subject (in minutes)</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character-building activities</td>
<td>100–150</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino language</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civics and culture</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History, geography, civics</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and health</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and physical education, home economics and livelihood education</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total weekly minutes</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,100–1,150</strong></td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total minutes per day</strong></td>
<td><strong>220–230</strong></td>
<td>220</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Mariñas & Ditaapat, 2000.*
In 2001/02, the gross enrolment rate at the elementary level was 114.4% (113% in 2004) and the average teacher-pupil ratio in the public sector was 1:36 (1:35 in 2004). The cohort survival rate was 67.1%. The average drop-out rate in 2000/01 was 7.2%.

The National Elementary Achievement Test (NEAT) is an achievement test given to Grade VI pupils completing the elementary education course. In 2000/01, the overall achievement rate was 51.7%.

“Students at the elementary level are annually promoted from one grade to the next provided that they meet the achievement standards set for the grade. [...] In Grades I–VI, students are rated in every subject four times during the year. A cumulative rating system is used as the basis for promotion. The pass grade is 75 percent. The periodic ratings are reported to the students and their parents through an
individual report card which provides for a brief narrative evaluation of the student’s behaviour. After satisfactorily completing the six-year elementary curriculum, the students receive a certificate of graduation from the elementary school. No examination is required for admission to public secondary schools.” (Sutaria, 1995, p. 791).

**Secondary education**

Elementary school graduates are admitted into the secondary level which is a continuation of the elementary education programme and a preparation for higher education. The secondary course consists of four years. Curricular offerings are classified as either general or vocational/technical secondary. Elementary and secondary education levels are considered basic education. Secondary education is addressed to students aged 13-16.

The New Secondary Education Curriculum was implemented in 1992/93. The major subject areas are science, mathematics, technology, Filipino, English, and civics/national culture. Technical and vocational education was also revised and adapted to technological progress and employment needs in recent years.

The weekly lesson timetables for secondary education (1999 and according to the 2002 basic education curriculum) are shown below:

**Secondary education: weekly lesson timetable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Weekly time allocated to each subject (in minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino language</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and technology</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical education, health and</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>music</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values education</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology and home economics</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total weekly minutes</th>
<th>Total minutes per day</th>
<th>Total hours per day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>6h40m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>6h40m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>6h40m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>6h40m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Marifas & Litapat, 2000.*
Vocational and technical education [...] covers five main fields, namely, trade (technology, communication, electronics, computers, transportation, etc.), agriculture, fisheries, home industries, and non-traditional courses. These comprise more than 250 different courses of six months to three years duration. These courses include formal school work in the field of specialization and related academic subjects. In the one-, two- and three-year courses, these are combined with supervised industrial training in a co-operating firm.” (Sutaria, cit., p. 788).

Under the proposed TESDA Occupation, Qualification and Certification System (TOQCS) qualification requirements will be based on the National Occupational Skills and Standards approved by the TESDA Board while certification requirements will be addressed by occupational skills tests. The proposed system will introduce four levels of certification. The first three levels will correspond to the existing levels of certification in the National Skills Certification Programme (NSCP). The fourth one will be intended for Technician or Master Craftsman certification. Each level will have a set of competencies as qualification requirements. These requirements will correspond to the competencies stipulated in the existing occupational skills standards for each specific trade. The system calls for a competency-based learning scheme, which will correspond to the set of competencies identified in each level. A certificate of competency will be issued upon completion/passing of the test. Completion of competencies within a level will entitle
a person to a "statement of competency". The system has a provision for ease of entry and exit in the education system through recognition of prior learning whether acquired in school or in the workplace. The attainment of a license and certificate are not time-bound since the system will give emphasis on the skills and knowledge required to gain qualification rather than the type and length of the training/course.

The existing occupational skills standards will be the basis of all qualification and certification activities. Under the existing skills testing and certification system, occupations are classified into three categories, namely Third Class, Second Class and First Class (the highest). In some cases, occupations may be classified into two classes (Class A and B) or one category. These categories/levels have corresponding tests that serve as an instrument in evaluating the level of knowledge and skills competence for a particular occupation/job. The TOQCS will adapt the existing system with additional level intended for Technicians or Master Craftsman to form part of the framework. The following are the basic features of the qualification and certification system:

- **Recognition prior to Learning (RPL) whether acquired in a learning institution or enterprise-based.** It provides a framework that would make it possible for the ease of entry and exit in the educational system through the recognition of skills and knowledge acquired either in school or in the workplace. This means that for workers who want to pursue further schooling relevant to their work, their job experiences can have equivalent units earned in the formal educational system.

- **The TOQCS recognizes two ways of achieving certificate and license.** The first one being through institution-based learning while the second one is through work-based learning. Although these two ways have their own evaluation system (i.e. learning evaluation for institute-based and performance assessment for work-based), occupational assessment is a must for qualification under the proposed TOQCS. The proposed system will use the existing skills testing instrument in the skills assessment.

- **Modularized and competency-based learning based on occupational skills standards.** The system calls for a modularized and competency-based learning such that each level has set of qualification requirements (i.e. a set of competencies). These competencies are the identified duties set forth in the occupational skills standard developed and endorsed by the industry. The duties under the occupation are converted into modules (learning environment), while tasks are converted into learning elements.

- **Accumulation of certificate of competencies towards license/certificate through a "statement of competency".** Upon completion of each competency, a Certificate of Competency will be issued attesting that the learner possesses the required skills and knowledge for the particular competency. A learner has to complete all the competencies within a certain level.

- **Self-pacing.** The attainment of a certificate or license is not time-bound since the system will give emphasis on the skills and knowledge required to gain qualification rather than the type and length of training programmes.
In 2001/02, the gross enrolment rate at the secondary level was about 86% (84% in 2004) and the average teacher-student ratio in the public sector was 1:39. The cohort survival rate was 73.2%. The average drop-out rate in 2000/01 was 8.7%. The National Secondary Achievement Test (NSAT) is a test given to students completing the secondary level. In 2000/01, the overall achievement rate was 53.4%.

“As in the elementary school, secondary school students are rated four times a year. If a student fails in a particular subject, he or she repeats the subject the next year, but is, nevertheless, promoted to the next higher year. A certificate is issued to secondary school graduates. All high school graduates seeking admission to post-secondary programmes requiring a minimum of four years study are required to qualify in the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) administered by the National Educational Testing and Research Centre.” (Sutaria, cit., p. 791).

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

The National Educational Testing and Research Centre (NETRC) assumes the lead role in the field of educational measurement, evaluation and research as a means of providing information necessary to improve the state of the education system. Among the tests that are annually developed are the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), the National Technical and Vocational Examination (NTVE), and the Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT), the latter for drop-outs desiring to be re-admitted into the formal system. The Centre, in collaboration with the Civil Service Commission, annually develops the test for the Philippine Board Examination for Teachers (PBET). The Centre also develops the National Elementary Achievement Test (NEAT) and the National Secondary Achievement Test (NSAT).

Achievement levels in elementary and secondary education still fall below standards. In 1988, achievement scores of elementary pupils stood at only 55.2% against a standard of 75%. Results of the NEAT reflect national mean scores below the target mean score. The lowest scores were registered in language/reading, science and mathematics. It was further revealed that only 29% or 38 of 131 competencies/skills were learned by the children. The problem of poor quality has been traced to a number of causes which include socio-economic factors, teacher-related factors, inadequate learning materials, and the short and congested school curriculum, among others.

Based on the NEAT scores, there was an increase in the percentage of elementary pupils who mastered basic competencies in reading/writing and in mathematics between 1995 and 1998. During the same period, there was a decrease in the percentage mastering basic competencies in life skills/other.

Nationwide, the percentage of pupils mastering reading/writing increased from 59.0% in 1995 to 61.6% in 1998. Males and females had essentially the same rate of increase between 1995 and 1998. There was practically no improvement in the urban areas; in contrast, there was a significant improvement in the rural areas. In terms of the percentage of pupils mastering reading/writing, the urban areas nevertheless had an edge over the rural areas in 1995 (urban: 64.2%; rural: 51.7%) and in 1998 (urban: 64.5%; rural: 57.7%).

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
Nationwide, the percentage of pupils mastering mathematics increased from 67.7% in 1995 to 78.2% in 1998. Males and females had essentially the same rate of increase between 1995 and 1998. The rural areas experienced a higher increase (76.3% in 1998 vs. 63.1% in 1995) than the urban areas (79.7% in 1998 vs. 71.0% in 1995). In terms of the percentage of students mastering mathematics, the urban areas nevertheless had an edge over the rural areas in 1995 (urban: 71.0%; rural: 63.1%) and in 1998 (urban: 79.7%; rural: 76.3%).

Nationwide, the percentage of pupils mastering competency in life skills decreased from 61.7% in 1995 to 60.9% in 1998. Test scores from the science and HEKASI (geography, history and civics) were used to form the measure for life skills, these subjects being the closest proxy available in the NEAT. There was no change in male performance between 1995 and 1998; however, female performance deteriorated, causing the overall decrease in life skills competency among pupils. Nonetheless, the percentage of females (66.5% in 1995 and 60.9% in 1998) was greater than that of the males (56.7% for both 1995 and 1998) during both years. While urban performance declined (67.2% in 1995 vs. 64.9% in 1998), the rural areas experienced a slight increase (55.6% in 1998 vs. 54.5% in 1995). In terms of the percentage of students mastering life skills, the urban areas nevertheless had an edge over the rural areas in 1995 (urban: 67.2%; rural: 54.5%) and in 1998 (urban: 64.9%; rural: 55.6%). The decreased level of performance in life skills has been attributed by the DECS to the inadequacy of inputs to support the component subjects, particularly science (DECS, 1999).

**Higher education**

As stated in the Long-Term Higher Education Development Plan 2001-2010, the vision for higher education is as follows: The higher education system of the Philippines is a key player in the education and integral formation of professionally competent, service-oriented, principled, and productive citizens. Through its tri-fold function of teaching, research, and extension services, it becomes a prime mover of the nation's socioeconomic growth and sustainable development. The missions of higher education institutions are: (i) to educate and train Filipinos for enhanced labor productivity and responsible citizenship in an environment where educational access is equitable; (ii) to inculcate nationalism and patriotism in the hearts and minds of the students and graduates; (iii) to accelerate the development of high-level professionals ready to meet international competition; and (iv) to serve as centers of research and development.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) was established by virtue of the Republic Act No. 7722 otherwise known as the 1994 Higher Education Act. The Commission is responsible for the operation of all higher education institutions—both public and private—their policy formulation, planning and programme recommendations. The Commission regulates the establishment or closure of private higher education institutions, their course offerings, curricular development, building specifications and tuition fees.

In order to provide advisory services to the Commission, a panel of experts in the nine major course clusters were appointed for an initial three-year period (1995-97). The Technical Panels were involved in areas such as development and revision of...
policies and standards, setting directions for their specific programmes, and monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

Public higher education institutions (PHEI) are basically composed of chartered state universities and colleges (SUCs). Other PHEIs include: colleges and schools supervised by the CHED, community colleges, local universities and colleges (LUCs) and other government schools.

Private higher education institutions, both confessional and non confessional, are fee-paying and enrol about 80% of the total number of collegiate students (2.01 million in 1995/96). Confessional HEIs are usually non-profit institutions owned by religious orders, while non confessional HEIs are owned by private corporations and they are not affiliated to any religious organization.

Charted state universities and colleges are organized according to their charters. SUCs are authorized to award degrees or open new courses upon approval of the Board of Regents/Trustees. Private HEIs are organized under the corporation code. They are governed by special laws and the general provisions contained in the corporation code. Private institutions usually follow the regulations and orders of the CHED but they enjoy a certain degree of autonomy when they reach Level III accreditation.

In response to the continued mismatch between manpower supply and demand and the issue of enhancing the employability of graduates, information dissemination on relevant and in-demand courses based on regional/local needs has been intensified. Course offerings were rationalized to avoid duplication or undesirable competition between and among private tertiary schools and state universities and colleges through continuous review and evaluation of educational programmes by the Regional Development Councils. Tertiary institutions have modified their curricula to suit the needs of their service areas. Alongside, the institutions strengthened their respective areas of specialization by developing the managerial capability of professionals in various fields through building a strong research capability in agriculture, research, technology and environment, and natural resources development.

Higher education institutions have adopted a scheme of voluntary accreditation to upgrade the quality of programme offerings. Other quality assurance mechanisms have been developed to improve various programme clusters, namely: agriculture education; humanities, social sciences and communication; information technology; medical and health related professions; engineering, architecture and technology; science and mathematics; teacher education; business accountancy and industry; and maritime education. Programme offerings include associate diploma courses, baccalaureate courses, and graduate degree courses at the master’s and doctoral levels.

In the academic year 2002/03 there were 1,470 HEIs in the country, of which 1,297 in the private sector. Public HEIs included 111 state universities and colleges, forty-four local universities and colleges, five special HEIs (mainly providing training in areas such as military science and national defense), twelve government schools (usually TVET institutions offering higher education programmes), and one CHED-supervised post-secondary education institution. In the academic year 2000/01 total

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enrolment in HEIs amounted to 2,637,039 students (of whom 73.1% in the private sector). Teaching staff amounted to 93,884, of whom 8.2% were holders of doctorate degrees. For the academic year 1999/2000 the participation rate was 21.2% and the graduation rate was 59.1%.

**Special education**

Special education develops the capabilities of children who are physically, mentally, emotionally, socially or culturally disabled as well as gifted children. Children with special needs are being attended to through modified curricula, special services and physical facilities for the maximum development of their potential.

Educational patterns for these children include the special class plan (self-contained/segregated plan), resource room plan, special education centres, special schools, and the itinerant teacher plan. On the whole, the ultimate goal of the special education programme is the mainstreaming or integration of children with special needs into the regular school system to lead as normal a life as possible. A mobile training course is also organized on current trends in classroom management and supervision of special education programmes as well as the utilization of publications on special education, educating the gifted, the Braille Code, basic sign vocabulary, and regulations and standards for special schools.

“As of the school year 1990-91, there were eight special education centres, 25 special schools, and 97 elementary schools with integrated classes. Only 22,096 children with special needs were enrolled in the government schools. The number served is less than two percent of the estimated exceptional population in need of special services.” (Sutaria, *cit.*, p. 788).

**Private education**

The private sector has been a major provider of educational services, accounting for about 7.5% of primary enrolment, 32% of secondary enrolment and about 80% of tertiary enrolment. Private schools have proven to be efficient in resource utilization. Per unit costs in private schools are generally lower when compared to public schools. This situation is more evident at the tertiary level. Government regulations have given private education more flexibility and autonomy in recent years, notably by lifting the moratorium on applications for new courses, new schools and conversions, by liberalizing tuition fee policy for private schools, by replacing values education for third and fourth years with English, mathematics and natural science at the option of the school, and by issuing the revised Manual of Regulations for Private Schools in August 1992.

The Education Service Contracting scheme of the government provides financial assistance for tuition and other school fees of students turned away from public high schools because of enrolment overflows. The Tuition Fee Supplement is geared to students enrolled in priority courses in post-secondary and non-degree programmes including vocational and technical courses. The Private Education Student Financial Assistance is made available to underprivileged but deserving high
school graduates who wish to pursue college/technical education in private colleges and universities.

In the school year 2001/02, there were 4,529 private elementary schools (out of a total of 40,763) and 3,261 private secondary schools (out of a total of 7,683). In 2002/03, there were 1,297 private higher education institutions (out of a total of 1,470).

Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure

Despite the rapid expansion of the public school system, out of 43,000 barangays nationwide, more than 12,000 rural barangays (27%) do not have an elementary school. In 1993/94, about 34.5% of public elementary schools were incomplete, i.e. not offering the full six-year elementary programme. At the secondary level, 61 or 3.4% of the 1,800 municipalities in the country are without either public or private high schools, while 175 municipalities or 9.7% of these 1,800 municipalities are without a public high school.

At the elementary and secondary levels, the availability of textbooks has been assured thanks to the Education for All Programme. However, other basic educational requirements such as school buildings, teachers and instructional equipment have not been fully provided. This led to the adoption of measures like increasing class sizes, holding multiple shifts and assigning teaching overloads. Even with such measures, school buildings and teachers are still inadequate. During the school year 1992/93, assuming a class size of 50 students, there was a shortage of close to 3,900 classrooms in public elementary schools, and 4,100 classrooms in secondary schools, while more than 6,500 teachers were needed in public high schools.

Failure of the education sector to modernize was evident in the past because of the absence of some basic services, facilities and equipment which proved crucial to efforts at maximizing the advantages of technological developments. The Master Plan for Basic Education (1996-2005) has the mandate of modernizing education, notably by introducing modern instructional materials which include computers and Internet, videos, well-equipped science laboratories and machine shops as well as libraries to enrich instruction. Information and telecommunication systems will also serve as basic tools for carrying out educational administration and supervision.

The current situation in the country is that new information technologies have only affected a negligible fraction of the education system. Only 0.03% and 16.2% of public elementary and secondary schools, respectively, have computers and only 1.9% and 53.4% of public elementary and public secondary schools, respectively, have science laboratories. Computer literacy is just now growing in importance and very few teachers have adequate training and access to computers. The teachers can avail of computers and other information technology facilities in a few public schools and elite private schools.

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Adult and non-formal education

Non-formal education includes organized school-based educational activities aimed at attaining specific learning objectives for a particular clientele, especially the illiterate adults and out-of-school youths. It is one of the intervention strategies for human development, especially for the economically, socially and educationally disadvantaged population groups, ethnic minorities and other cultural communities. Non-formal education objectives cater directly to the immediate and current needs of people, rather than preparing them for some future gains. The Bureau of Non-formal Education (BNFE) conducts consultative conferences on the School On the Air Programme and educational television on Maghanap Buhay Tayo. It continues to pursue the development of a manual on literacy evaluation and a literacy project for the hill tribes.

In recent years, non-formal education and training has focused on three programme areas: functional literacy, living skills development, and values development. The Literacy Co-ordination Council, an interagency body administratively attached to the DepEd, has been created to carry out the policy of the State to give priority to the eradication of illiteracy. Non-formal education and training accomplishments for 1993 included various training workshops and meetings, along with assessment, pilot testing and printing of literacy materials. To strengthen the implementation of the NFE programmes and projects, the BNFE maintains its links and co-ordination with both local and foreign governmental and non-governmental organizations. For better implementation of the functional literacy programme, the BNFE, in its aim to reduce illiteracy and contribute to poverty alleviation in the country, has provided leadership and technical assistance in the implementation of literacy programmes, projects, training workshops and other activities, including:

- **Female functional literacy and parent education**: this non-formal education component of the Area-Based Child Survival and Development Programme provides parents, particularly mothers, with essential competencies and skills to better perform their roles in child survival, protection and development.

- **Literacy project for cultural communities**: this project aims to provide more accessible educational services to cultural communities (such as hill tribes) who are unable to attend formal schooling.

- **Development of literacy measures**: in view of the need for a more useful tool for identifying illiterates, the BNFE undertook a project on the development of literacy measures through seminar-workshops. The literacy measures currently consist of seven items that measure the functional literacy of the target clientele. This is accompanied by the Manual of Instructions indicating the way to administrate of the measure and its scoring.

- **Development and production of instructional materials for the eradication of illiteracy and functional literacy**: a primer for Level I of literacy and a facilitator’s guide were developed. Another set of materials, consisting of booklets, posters, folder poster, comics and facilitator’s guides were also

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Development of an alternative learning system: the development of the alternative learning system in the Philippines is essentially a research and development project with the following components: (a) development of a non-school-based essential learning continuum; (b) development of alternative delivery modes; (c) development of learning materials; and (d) development of an expanded accreditation and equivalency system. For instance, the BNFE has been involved in the development of the essential learning continuum, of the School on the Air Programmes, and of an expanded accreditation and equivalency system with the National Educational Testing and Research Centre.

Field implementation of literacy projects and activities: functional literacy classes have been organized in the fourteen regions. A total of 6,320 classes have been organized, with a 14% increase over the last years. The total enrolment of 119,162 learners has a breakdown of 53,085 or 45% out-of-school youth and 66,078 or 55% adults. Although the number of classes, enrolment and graduates in functional literacy has increased in recent years, it is still short of the target clientele. Living skills development projects and activities have also been implemented in the regions.

Among the problems and issues which are internal to the education sector, about 15% of 10.2 million children continue to be out of school. The low survival rate in the elementary and secondary education largely contributes to the increase of out-of-school youth and illiterates. Studies further reveal that pupils who drop out of school before Grade IV revert to illiteracy if no continuing education is provided. Of the entire population, 2.6 million are basically illiterate and 11.7 million are functionally illiterate. The literacy rate rose from 82.8% in 1980 to 93.5% in 1994.

According to the 2003 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS), the country’s population of 57.6 million (age group 10 to 64 years) included some 3.8 million Filipinos 10 years old and above who are unable to read and write and a total of 9.2 million who are not “functionally literate” or unable to compute and lacked certain numeracy skills.

Teaching staff

Anyone who chooses a teaching career in the Philippines must hold a degree in teacher education. Teachers in public and private elementary schools must have at least a bachelor’s degree in elementary education. High school teachers are expected to have a bachelor’s degree in secondary education with specialization (a major and a minor) in high school subjects. Both degrees are awarded upon successful completion of approved teacher education courses in recognized institutions. Teaching in colleges or professional degree programmes at the tertiary level requires at least a master’s degree in a particular area of specialization. A doctorate is required of those who teach courses in graduate programmes.
The following qualifications for day-care staff are prescribed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD): female; between 18 and 45 years of age; high school graduate; physically healthy—if she has any disabilities, these should not pre-empt performance of tasks as a day-care worker; must be of good moral character; preferably with prior work experience with pre-school children; willing to undergo training and accept technical supervision from the DSWD; must render full-time service for a minimum of two years.

All teachers complete a four-year degree programme. The usual programmes are the Bachelor of Secondary Education and Bachelor of Elementary Education. Specialist programmes are also available in agriculture, business, industrial and physical education. Courses include a core of general education, at least one year of professional education and studies in the major teaching area. Curricula for each programme are approved by the Commission on Higher Education and institutions have flexibility to vary these models. Until now, the curriculum for the pre-service training is still the 1986 curriculum with some modifications and revisions in accordance with DECS Order No. 3 of 1993, which provides for new minimum requirements in the general education and other components of initial bachelor-level courses of study. Non-education graduates may complete an eighteen-unit Certificate of Professional Education in order to qualify as primary or secondary teachers. After completion of these programmes, the students are required to take the Philippine Board Examination for Teachers to qualify to teach at the elementary and secondary levels.

The Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (Republic Act No. 4670) enacted in 1966 states in Section 15 that teachers salaries “(a) shall compare favourably with those paid in other occupations requiring equivalent or similar qualifications, training and abilities; (b) shall be such as to ensure teachers a reasonable standard of life for themselves and their families; (c) shall be properly graded so as to recognize the fact that certain positions require higher qualifications and greater responsibility than others, provided that the general salary scale be such that the relation between the lowest and highest salary paid will be of reasonable order.” In the case of the private school teachers, the law also provides that “the remuneration paid to them shall, as a general rule, be comparable to current salary rates for corresponding government positions.” The teachers’ salary was increased in 1995; however, the average teachers’ salary at present is inadequate as source of livelihood.

The Magna Carta similarly states that “any teacher engaged in actual classroom teaching shall be required to render not more than six hours of actual classroom teaching a day, preparation and correction of exercises and other work incidental to his/her normal teaching duties.” Secondary teachers shall be assigned to no more than six daily forty-minute periods of instruction. For college, the normal teaching load of a full-time instructor shall be eighteen hours a week. The teaching load of part-time instructors who are full-time employees outside of teaching shall not exceed twelve hours per week.

Teachers belong to the government service and they are governed by civil service laws, rules and regulations. Teachers can only join the service if they meet the prescribed qualifications, such as: appropriate civil service eligibility, bachelor’s
degree in education or its equivalent, master’s degree and doctorate degree, good moral standing, etc.

Training activities at the national, regional, district and school levels are conducted by the DepEd, teacher education institutions, other government and non-government agencies, and international agencies as part of staff development programmes and to meet in-service training needs of teachers. The Department through linkages with other agencies and associations, initiates, plans and implements in-service training programmes. Such programmes take the form of conventions, conferences, short-term courses, summer institutes, workshops and seminars. These activities are designed for teachers, supervisors and administrators of various levels.

Poor quality of education is due, among other causes, to deficiencies in pre-service training and in-service training of teachers, and unqualified teachers teaching subjects outside their areas of specialization. For instance, only slightly more than half of the mathematics teachers in high school majored in this subject, while only 4% of physics teachers majored in this subject. There is a need for an institutionalized support system to strengthen in-service training, clearly defined career paths and prospects of mobility in the teaching profession to enhance motivation. Also there is the question of regulation of the teaching load, which according to a study conducted revealed that the Filipino teacher has seventy-two tasks other than teaching. In the 1980s, massive staff development programmes were institutionalized. For 1992, the Bureau of Elementary Education conducted various training programmes at the local level, including seminars and workshops on the maintenance of school facilities and other instructional tools and devices, and on the management of Learning Resource Centres for elementary school administrators, seminars and workshops on effective instructional management of multigrade classes for teachers, and a training course designed to upgrade the competencies of public school teachers in assessing children with special needs.

The Supervisory Skills Enhancement Programme was also launched. This programme sought to strengthen the supervisors commitment to their role, update their knowledge of the content and process of instruction in their areas of supervision and improve their methodology of evaluating and monitoring teaching-learning. At the first stage of implementation, 1,049 division supervisors participated in the programme. Science and mathematics supervisors underwent an additional week-long training, sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology-Science Education Institute. The training was intended to enrich the supervisors stock of knowledge of the content and methodology in their areas of supervision, especially as 7.7% of the science supervisors and 18.2% of the mathematics supervisors were found to be non-specialists in their respective fields. Likewise, a one-week follow-up workshop for 56 fourth-year private high school trainers in technology and home economics was conducted. A total of 35,704 fourth-year teachers from public and private secondary schools underwent training in content, strategies and evaluation in science, mathematics, English, Filipino, social studies, values education, physical education, health education, music, technology and home economics. While the institutionalization of in-service training is being vigorously pursued, the provision of local and foreign fellowships remains a part of staff development.

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At the tertiary level, schools prepare their own training programmes. Recently, the College Faculty Development Fund Programme was formulated to help update the competencies of teachers, specifically for the faculty of private colleges and universities. Similarly, faculty members in private colleges and universities were also accorded a chance to pursue graduate education through the Faculty Development Fund. In 1992, a total of twenty-eight college teachers benefited from the fund. Training programmes have also been organized to upgrade the competencies of vocational/technical subject teachers.

Ad hoc bodies of experts in various fields of specializations or disciplines including teacher education have also been strengthened to provide the required expertise and serve as consultative and advisory bodies. These are the Technical Panels which are involved in the areas of development and revision of policies and standards, setting directions for specific programmes, and monitoring and evaluating of programmes.

In addition, the DepEd Integrated Scholarship Programme which is covered by an annual Memorandum of Agreement between the Department and the participating institutions has been in operation for the last decade. In recent years, the grants have concentrated on short-term training programmes so that more teachers can benefit from the in-service training programmes. Other training programmes include management skills for secondary school principals, conference-workshops for school administrators and master teachers, and short-term courses for both elementary and secondary school teachers.

Among the measures taken to improve the quality of education in the future, a massive training programme for teachers will be implemented to develop skills for effective use of modern school facilities. The programme will consist of a pre-service and in-service training component. Pre-service will involve deregulation and re-orientation of the study programmes of teacher education colleges towards specific teaching competencies evolved from an analysis of clientele needs as well as adaptation of successful teacher education programmes both locally and abroad. In-service programmes will sustain professional upgrading or development of teachers through the revitalization of an existing school-based structure (Learning Action Cells) and by strengthening linkages with teacher education programmes. A teacher induction programme shall be considered to commence entry into the teaching profession. This phase will subject a newly hired teacher on probationary status to on-the-job observation by master teachers. Only after completing the teacher induction programme where on-the-job training and skills certification shall be undertaken will tenure be granted to a newly hired teacher.

In line with the provisions of Republic Act No. 7836 (Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994), a career progression scheme for teachers, administrators and specialists will be developed and tied up with the Continuing Professional Education under the Board for Professional Teachers. Performance evaluation will likewise be undertaken on a regular basis to focus on certain accountability targets to measure performance. Merit-based incentives and rewards will be an integral part of the merit evaluation scheme.
**Educational research and information**

To establish a basis for policy and strategy formulation as well as development of programmes and projects in the education sector, several studies on the following issues have been undertaken by the Department of Education through its different Bureaus in recent years: drop-outs at the elementary level; survey of existing material resources of the Learning Resource Centres including the school libraries; search for the most effective public elementary schools; implementation of the New Secondary Education Curriculum; review and assessment of the Government subsidy for private secondary education; efficiency and effectiveness of four literacy programmes.

The National Education Testing and Research Centre (NETRC) has undertaken a research entitled *School Assessment System* to develop an assessment system for pupils in Grades II, IV and VI of elementary education.

**References**


**Web resources**


