

## EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: NEW PATTERNS, NEW DIRECTIONS; A SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. OBJECTIVES OF THE SURVEY

Philippine education looks forward to some new directions in the seventies – toward relevance for national development. That is, if the recommendations of the Presidential Commission to Survey Philippine Education are implemented.

The forces of change manifesting themselves in the changing social, economic, political and cultural environment, the need to assess the results of our commitment in education, and the cry for relevance from the national development standpoint necessitated a comprehensive stock-taking of the educational system.

President Marcos created the Presidential Commission through Executive Order No. 202, s. 1969, charged with the responsibility of undertaking a thorough study and assessment of Philippine education in order to analyze the system's performance and relevance to national development goals, to ascertain and recommend ways and means for improving its efficiency within the limits of available resources, and to identify the critical areas in Philippine education requiring more detailed study.

The guidelines for the Survey emphasized the assessment of the educational system's capacity to meet human resources development goals, including manpower requirements of social and economic growth; and the examination of the extent to which current educational aims and content are supportive of development requirements. The emphasis required a thorough review of: (a) the objectives and content of the system, for the purpose of integrating a definite development orientation into Philippine education; (b) the methods currently employed in the educational process, with a view to identifying areas for innovation and improvement; (c) the logistics of the educational system, with a view to improving efficiency; (d) the financing of the system, in order to arrive at a cost analysis that would provide a basis for the introduction of a cost effectiveness system; and (e) the administration and staffing of the system, including the decision-making process, degree of centralization, and the distribution of authority over educational matters among the various government agencies.

## 2. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Survey then sought not only to verify or confirm opinions and observations, but also tried to identify the critical blindspots of Philippine education through some new data. The Survey noted:

- a. There is some basic strength of Philippine education that sets it somewhat apart from the system of other developing economies. There is a unanimous high regard for education among the people that is reflected in some of the highest enrolment ratios in the world, and a favorably high literacy rate and output of educated manpower. The Philippines, for instance, ranks second to the U.S. in collegiate enrolment per 100,000 population. The enrolment participation ratios for all levels are comparable to those of developing economies. All these call for a huge commitment of resources – which in expenditure terms represent about 1/3 of total aggregate expenditures – and a similar proportion in terms of budgetary allocation.

These elements of strength, however, reflect some symptoms of serious distortions or imbalances between: popular expectations and educational standards; facilities and enrolments; supply of graduates and demand for specific manpower skills; location of educational facilities and actual regional development needs; and national investments in education as a social service *versus* investments in economic enterprises.

Among the factors that contribute to these problems are:

1. The present objectives prescribed for Philippine education which are really goals of the entire social system, and are, therefore, unachievable aims for the educational system alone. Philippine education has not therefore been functioning on the basis of a set of feasible operational objectives that may provide the basis for evaluating its performance.
2. The apparent purpose of the educational system in practice, which primarily prepares the student for the next higher year of schooling, instead of preparing him for a worthwhile place in society. This high *social* demand for education operating in the context of almost unregulated free choice on the part of the population has caused a response in kind in terms of the proliferation of educational institutions and programs that are not guided by development priorities. The result is swelling enrolments in low-cost but low-priority programs – such as teacher education, commerce and the liberal arts – while high-priority programs, such as vocational/technical education and engineering suffer from enrolment shortages. This setup is likely to be perpetuated for as long as private higher education financed primarily by student fees continues to predominate – since the propensity for private educational

institutions is to respond to the demand of those who will pay for the education they can afford. Family income structure and the high social demand thus encourage the offering of low-cost higher education programs. In addition, this pattern will continue partly because constitutional commitment has directed national government resources to elementary education — leaving secondary and higher education substantially under private auspices. Yet these are the educational levels that are most relevant for manpower formation in terms of development requirements.

3. The rapid rate of population increase that generates tremendous continuing pressures on school facilities and national resources. Philippine education provided 73 million student-and-pupil years of formal schooling in the 60's. This prodigious effort—and expensive investment—will have to be virtually doubled in the next decade. During 1971-80, extrapolating present conditions, some 129 million student-and-pupil years of formal education will have to be provided. In terms of financial inputs, the effort will cost the nation an annual outlay of P2.8 billion in mid-decade and P3.1 billion in the next year. The two-pronged question is: Can we afford this magnitude and how can we make the best of our investments in education?
4. The need for planning and programming in order to be able to allocate our educational resources better in accordance with national development goals. Planning, however, has not been the major concern in our educational system. This default has encouraged ad hoc measures that appear to be solutions, but are, in fact, sources of further difficulties. Contributory to this lack of educational planning is the lack of a comprehensive national development plan from which the educational system can derive its performance or planned targets. Dynamic changes in the economic, social and cultural environment, and the magnitude of the educational commitment require that plans and programs must be formulated. In brief, we need to put system into our educational system.

### 3. COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of these issues and problems the Commission has presented a number of *policy*, *program*, and *project* recommendations. The more important of the Commission's recommendations therefore stress: new directions; **thorough**, operable, and feasible educational aims; new structures to **systematize** educational policy-making and administration and to make management **responsive** to national and regional needs; and planned evaluation and **innovation** to maximize effectivity and efficiency.

More specifically, the major recommendations are as follows:

- a. *New Educational Aims:* The Commission has proposed a restatement of educational aims to make them more achievable. For the purpose of relating educational aims to educational operations meaningfully, the aims are each related to a specific level of the educational ladder.
- b. *Educational Policy-Making:* The formulation of long-term educational policies and the adoption of educational plans are proposed to be invested in a National Board of Education to be established by Constitutional provision. A crucial aspect of these provisions is that Congress cannot legislate on educational matters without the endorsement of such a Board.
- c. *New Educational Ladder:* The new ladder consists of 6 years for the first level (elementary), 5 years for the second level (secondary) and 4 or more years for the third level (higher education). Pre-school will be the subjects of study for eventual formal integration into the educational ladder. Special one-, two- and three-year programs beyond the secondary level for training technicians and technologists are provided for.
- d. *First Level of Education:* In order to provide the first phase of general education for all citizens and the basis for the formation of trained manpower, the first six years of schooling will be compulsory.
- e. *Second Level of Education:* The second phase of general education will last five years. The first three years will be a single stream which will be divided into two streams in the fourth and fifth years. The first of these two will offer vocational training which will either be terminal at the end of the fifth year or prepare the graduate for further training as a technician or technologist. The second stream will be academic to prepare students for higher education.

A network of comprehensive high schools is proposed. Within this, academic and vocational training are to take place. All high schools will eventually be comprehensive secondary schools.

- f. *Middle-Level Manpower Training:* The establishment of special technical institutes beyond the second level to offer training, retraining and in-service programs for the formation of skilled technicians is recommended. Beyond this, higher technician and technological training will be provided in higher education institutions. A scheme of close and regular liaison among these institutes, labor offices and industry is recommended in order to insure the relevance of training to actual requirements, and to maximize employment of graduates through placement services.

- g. **Higher Education:** This level is to be strengthened principally through: regular review and coordination procedures for the development of higher education programs; a national accreditation scheme; a coherent system of state or public universities with corresponding affiliate institutions and to be regionally located; national college admission tests; and grants-in-aid and other incentive schemes to selected and important programs in private education.
- h. **Financing Education:** It is recommended that, as a general rule, the national government shall be primarily responsible for financing public education other than elementary and secondary, except that vocational programs in the proposed comprehensive high schools should continue to receive national financial assistance in the first phase of the long-term implementation period. National assistance shall likewise be available for the vocational programs in the private comprehensive high schools. Primary responsibility for financing public elementary and secondary education should be substantially assumed by the local governments, with the corresponding income sources to be formulated and adopted. Finally, a national equalization fund for education must be established to assist local governments with insufficient funds.
- i. **Reorganization of Administration:** (1) The Secretary of Education will continue to be appointed by the President as at present. However, routine operating responsibility in the Department of Education and Culture will be vested in a professional Undersecretary with permanent tenure. There will be only one Undersecretary, a scheme that corresponds to the setup proposed by the Reorganization Commission; (2) A Bureau of General Education will replace the present Bureau of Public Schools and Bureau of Vocational Education to administer and coordinate elementary and secondary education programs, both public and private. This will do away with the dichotomy of public-private in the first two levels and facilitate coordination and direction.
- (3) A Bureau of Higher Education will replace the present Bureau of Private Schools, which will directly administer only the private sector of higher education. However, a mechanism is provided for review, coordination and developments of both government and private sectors in higher education. Government or state higher-education institutions will be coordinated through a State Colleges and Universities Board, with links to the Bureau of Higher Education and the National Board of Education.
- (4) There will be regional divisions for general and higher education. The regional divisions will maintain national standards, and will be vested with autonomy to relate educational programs to regional development requirements.

- (5) The Office of the Secretary will be strengthened with technical staff offices for dealing with continuing problems of educational logistics, planning, research and evaluation.
  - (6) The other bureaus in the Department of Education and Culture will be the National Library, the National Museum, the Institute of National Language and the National Historical Institute.
- j. *Language of Instruction:* The Commission believes that bilingualism in Pilipino and English is both a fact of Philippine national life today, as well as a desirable condition in the contemporary world. The choice is not either Pilipino or English to the exclusion of others in our educational system. It is recommended that Pilipino be the main language of instruction at the elementary level, with the main vernacular as the language in the first two grades. At the secondary and higher-education levels, it is recommended that Pilipino or English, whenever practicable, be the instructional medium. As a preface to these language recommendations, however, the Commission notes that the language issue facing the nation today has implications transcending the educational system. It therefore expects that the decision on the language question be taken at the level of higher politics, possibly through action by the Constitutional Convention.
- k. *Implementation:* The implementation of the Commission's recommendations will require the formulation of extensive and detailed program designs and project plans of operations (including costings and schedules). The organization of an expert implementation group to undertake this task, and also to facilitate the strengthening of the Department planning and research office, is recommended as a project for immediate approval.
- l. *Financing of the Commission's Recommendations:* A special feature of the Commission's work is a budget for the financial requirements of the major program/project recommendations. This budget identifies: the components suitable for national financing; and those appropriate for funding through external loans and grants. It is strongly recommended that the Government explore and solicit, where necessary, external funding arrangements for this purpose.