

THE MATATAG AGENDA: TRANSFORMING EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

by:

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Historically, the Philippine education system has faced ongoing issues, ranging from curriculum reform to improved teaching techniques (Oracion et al., 2020). A variety of approaches to education were introduced in different eras. The transformations became adapted to change as the generations switched and technology advanced.

Recently, the government's announcement of the MATATAG Agenda marks a comprehensive attempt to address long-standing difficulties and achieve long-term growth in the education sector. To address the education gaps in education, the MATATAG Agenda, introduced in January 2023, provided a road map of specific objectives and pledges that DepEd intends to meet by 2028. It seeks to solve the "wicked problems" that have plagued the Philippine education system, such as curricular deficits, poor teaching quality, and structural inefficiencies in educational governance.

The MATATAG Agenda includes MAKing the curriculum relevant to producing competent, job-ready, active, and responsible citizens; taking steps to accelerate the delivery of basic education facilities and services; taking good care of learners by promoting learner well-being, inclusive education, and a positive learning environment; and Giving support to teachers to teach better.

These actions show a determined attempt to maintain the Philippine educational system's cultural and linguistic roots while bringing it into compliance with international norms. According to Acosta and Acosta (2017), one scholar observes that "the outcome it is seeking implies that the K-12 program is ultimately connected to the globalization of

education." In keeping with this, MATATAG's emphasis on mother-tongue instruction and local governance suggests an effort to ground education in the distinctive sociocultural context of the Philippines. The first steps in making the curriculum relevant are reordering the learning competencies, emphasizing the fundamental to complicated, and contextualizing instructions.

The MATATAG agenda is a revolutionary step for Philippine education, but its ultimate success will depend on political will and efficient execution. According to Oracion et al. (2020), despite their excellent intentions, previous reforms have "not succeeded in improving the quality of education in terms of sustainable outcomes on a national scale." In line with this, policymakers must be clear about their objectives and make a deliberate effort to close the gap between research and practice.

This curriculum reform seeks to address issues within the existing K to 12 Curriculum by focusing on developing foundational skills, including literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional skills, especially for kindergarten to Grade 3 learners.

One of the MATATAG Curriculum's primary characteristic is the decongestion of curriculum content. The number of learning abilities was reduced by 70% to concentrate on key skills and simplify the content.

It also strongly emphasizes morals and character growth. It emphasizes how learners are developing their morals and character through the Values Education Act and the Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC).

Furthermore, it highlights 21st-century skills, including contemporary skills like conflict mediation and peacekeeping abilities.

Kindergarten, Grades 1, 4, and 7, will be the first to benefit from the gradual implementation, beginning in School Year (SY) 2024–2025 and continuing to other grades in the following years.

The MATATAG Curriculum addresses the educational demands and problems of the Philippines to generate competent, job-ready, active, responsible, and patriotic citizens (DepEd).

Moreover, MATATAG guarantees assistance to educators, arranging orientation courses and capacity-building exercises to ensure teachers' readiness for the new curriculum.

With education continuing to be a top priority for the Philippine government, the MATATAG agenda provides a road map for revolutionary change. Its ambitious breadth and attention to local and global imperatives suggest a holistic vision for education that could open the door for a new age of progress. Saguin & Ramesh (2020).

References:

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