

REVITALIZING THE PHILIPPINE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: ROAD TO PROGRESS

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The Philippines' educational sector faces significant challenges, as evidenced by the outcomes of international student evaluations such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). However, these challenges are not impossible to overcome. They can serve as reform catalysts for the education system, bringing stakeholders together to co-create an enhanced egalitarian framework.

Awareness inspires action. The national conversation began after PISA results placed the Philippines at 78 out of 78 in 2018, then 77 out of 81 in 2022. Public institutions, teachers, and community leaders prioritize the use of tried-and-true problem-solving techniques. The First Congressional Commission on Education (EdCom I) highlighted the essential criterion for higher education funding, which has begun to receive widespread support. The current expenditure per student falls short when compared to similar nations in the region, such as Vietnam and Singapore, and government support for continuing budget appropriations is progressively increasing. The shift is a significant step toward achieving the goal of addressing resource inadequacies in basic education.

Curriculum Reforms for Balance. Here are some study findings that must be addressed: Many critics of the current educational program, which is currently undergoing a comprehensive evaluation, say students face an excessive workload. Proposals exist to reduce Senior High School's 55-hour weekly workload to meet international educational guidelines. These improvements promote learning methodologies that prioritize learning quality above quotas, thereby catering to student needs.

Empowering Educators. Education relies largely on teachers, so promoting their professional well-being should be one of the top concerns. Educational dialogues are currently underway to reduce the weekly workload of supplementary jobs, which previously required 17.8 hours, exceeding the limit stipulated in DO 005. Following an assessment of educational requirements, EDCOM 2 identified teaching specialization to be a critical matter. The adoption of retraining programs to bring instructors' knowledge closer to their teaching subjects (particularly for the 62% of high school teachers who teach outside their major field) is now being addressed since it leads to increased teaching quality.

Learning from Experience. Different programs in the past, such as the mother tongue-based bilingual education program, had difficulties but taught vital lessons. Before implementing reforms, governments now prioritize sustainability and stakeholder consultation. This method reduces trial-and-error and encourages long-term solutions.

Collaboration for Progress. Progress is dependent on unity. Various groups, including government agencies, schools, and parents, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), collaborate increasingly frequently. Decision-making processes at EDCOM 2 have demonstrated that inclusive decision-making is an important element. The local government launches mentorship programs and digital learning resources in a variety of communities to improve classroom instruction.

Vision for the Future. The Philippines is on a transformational journey. A resilient educational system takes shape in the country as resources are allocated to teacher development, curricula enhancement, and research-based policymaking. Partnerships between grassroots organizations and rigorous implementation procedures can help students develop critical thinking skills while also becoming innovative leaders.

When stakeholders work together, criticism evolves into a collaborative effort. Let us demonstrate that, with our combined efforts, even hurdles may be used to pave the way for a brighter future.

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