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Innovations in education

IN 1972, the Filipino nation and its national educational program were like hopeless fishermen in a dark night drawing up empty nets. Now, in 1975, our educational system is a vigorous partner of government and society in saving the Filipino people from the perils of a bloody Jacobin revolution and a precarious democracy corrupted by an unjust economic or social system headed toward an oligarchy, from a disastrously plummeting economic retrogression, and from the annihilation of its national and cultural identity.

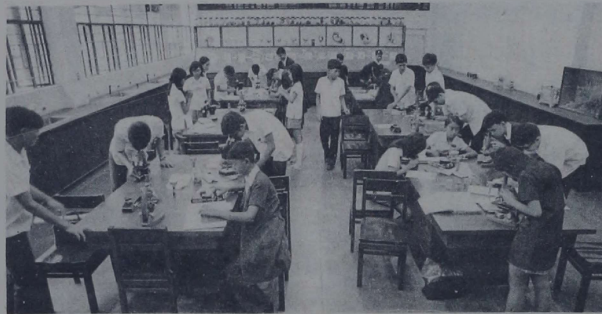
In 1972, the upsurge of violent events in Philippine schools and universities reached its apogee in the so-called "commune" exercise of power, even briefly but eminently on the University of the Philippines campus. The Philippines, like other developed and developing nations, has been swept into the "world educational crisis" of today, which was foreseen by the Williamsburg, Virginia international conference of world educational leaders, intellectuals, scientists, researchers, and adult education specialists nearly ten years ago. This goal to national survival which was experienced by the Philippines in the crisis of 1972 is embraced in the felicitous, if innocent-sounding categorization by Dr. Philip H. Coombs of "fantastically swift environmental changes" responsible for the world educational crisis.

Thus the challenge to a national educational system consists of the inexorable adjustment it has to make to accommodate these environmental changes. Herein lies the major near-inevitable disadvantage from which any educational system suffers. In the face of such "fantastically swift" changes, there is a "consequent disparity" between them and the educational system. There is a compounding, moreover, of the burden on the system, for it must cope with its own inherent growth, which may proceed at a headlong pace without reference to the new demands of societal relevance. It is no wonder that even in the more highly advanced, modernized, and affluent countries of this age, the problem of education is acknowledged unanimously by the countries' heads and leaders, in the words of Jean Thomas, Inspector General of Public Instruction in France, as the first problem of the state.

Nations Biggest Industry

THE magnitude of this problem of the state is partially indicated by education in the Philippines being the nation's biggest industry. This is in addition to the complexity of the twofold aspects of growing and changing as one of the national sub-systems and in response to a fast revolutionizing material and human environment. The size of this prime enterprise of nation building can be seen from the total enrollment in all levels in 1974-75 having reached 11.1 million out of a total population of about 42 million, or more than one in school or college out of every four Filipinos. The teaching force in all levels in the same year is a little under half a million or about 450 thousand. The personnel complement of staff services for education in the general office and the regional offices is a total of 3,302.

This vast national enterprise, however, while impeding in its sheer size and quantitative growth, must also be assessed for quality. The foundation of high quality education is to be sought first in the vision of a great society and the good life which the national leadership, the educational leadership, and the people share. It is the goals set for national development in the New Society, the educational system's restructuring and redirection in relevance to these goals, and the dynamic flexibility of its management and performance



Priority: teaching modern technology.

that invests its size with value and leads to the attainment of the professional ideal of a good quality of education. The achievement of such an ideal is in its true sense the educational system's contribution to society and government in their goal of national development as the enhancement of the quality of human life.

New Educational Policy

TO the long-standing and familiarly recognized constitutional principles of a free, public, adequate, complete, and integrated system of education, there are added specific mandates expressive of the new aspirations of the people and of the times, such as the strengthening of basic education and the raising of the provision of universal education up to the secondary level; the need for education to be relevant to national development goals; the expansion of academic freedom; the promotion and development of the national Filipino language; the pursuit of a population control policy conducive to national welfare; and the injunction for education and the other fields of social science to enhance the enjoyment by the people of a decent quality of life, including the preservation and enrichment of their national, ethnic, and individual cultural dignity and identity.

Among the most important presidential decrees promulgated by President Marcos to implement these Constitutional mandates are PD No. 1 on the reorganization of the executive branch of the national government, PD No. 6-A on educational development projects, PD No. 78 on the population program, PD No. 146 on the national college entrance examination, and PD No. 170 on the Filipinization of alien schools. The National Board of Education policy declaration on bilingual educational program is also a far-reaching decision.

While most of these decrees express policies and guidelines for specific matters and individual major problems confronting education, it is PD No. 6-A which clarifies for the entire provinces of education in relation to national development goals the basic principles of policy, the major and urgent objectives, and the strategies and methodologies guiding the implementation of the ten-year educational program of the New Society. The Presidential Commission to Survey Philippine Education, which rendered its report to President Marcos in 1970 had performed the authoritative groundwork for the new imperatives of direction for education in the New Society. The most important parts of PD No. 6-A are as follows:

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the government to ensure, within the context of a free and democratic system, maximum contribution of the educational system to the attainment of the following national development goals:

(a) To achieve and maintain an accelerating rate of economic development and social progress.

(b) To assure the maximum participation of all the people in the attainment and enjoyment of the benefits of such growth and

(c) To strengthen national consciousness and promote desirable cultural values in a changing world.

Section 3. Statement of Objectives. To this end, the educational system aims to:

(a) Provide for a broad general education that will assist each individual, in the regular ecology of his own society, to (1) attain his potential as a human being; (2) enhance the range and quality of individual and group participation in the basic functions of society; and (3) acquire the essential educational foundation for his development into a productive and versatile citizen.

(b) Train the nation's manpower in the middle level skills required for national development.

(c) 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, and

(d) Respond effectively to changing needs and conditions of the nation through a system of educational planning and evaluation.

Section 4. Guiding Principles of the Ten-Year Program. In order to lay the foundation and to advance the attainment of these objectives, a ten-year national education development program shall be formulated based on the following:

(a) Improvement of curriculum programs and quality of instruction of all levels by way of upgrading physical facilities, adoption of cost-effective instructional technology, and training and re-training of teachers and administrators.

(b) Upgrading of academic standards through accreditation schemes, admission testing and guidance counseling.

(c) Democratization of access to educational opportunities through the provision of financial assistance to deserving students, skills training programs for out-of-school youth and continuing education program for non-literate adults.

(d) Restructuring of higher education to become more responsive to national development needs through a planned system of incentives and assistance to both public and private colleges and universities and synchronization of curricular programs, staffing pattern and institutional development activities.

(e) Expansion of existing programs and establishment of new ones designed to train middle-level technical and agricultural manpower.

(f) Instilling reforms in the educational financing system to facilitate the shift of funding responsibility for elementary and secondary education from the national to the local government, thereby increasing government participation in higher education.

Orientations and Structures

THE survey revealed circumstances that led the proponents to propose their projects. Of the 30 representative ones in this category, 20 are related to socio-economic goals—work education, agricultural and vocational arts, population education, applied nutrition and Green Revolution. It is apparent that a large percentage of these are suggested by and originated from the central level, the DEE.

Some projects cater to the needs of the cultural minorities and attempts to

provide training schemes for out-of-school youth. Among those reported are the projects of the UP, Los Baños, Capiz Mobile School, Division of Queen III, Marong Folk School, Mindoro Agricultural School, Mountain State Agricultural College and the Bureau of Public Schools. It is very interesting to note that some of these projects have innovated new structures (Mobile School, itinerant teachers) to achieve their ends.

Community development and rural upliftment on a comprehensive scale and using systematic city-wide or even province-wide planning is one emphasis. The Silliman University Extension Program (SUEP) is one outstanding example; Manila Central University's Lingap sa Nayon another example. The Cotabato Rural Uplift Movement (CORUM) of the Southern Christian College is also a comprehensive program, by comprehensive here is meant the inclusion of varied activities in line with development goals—population, nutrition, youth training, legal assistance to indigents and economic production projects among others. A notable comprehensive health program using the community as the context is undertaken at Bay 1 Laguna under the UP Comprehensive Community Health Program (CCHP).

The In-School-Out-School Approach (ISOSA), although in the experimental stage, envisages the maximum utilization of facilities by the use of a new structure of scheduling where 80 pupils or 2 classes can make use of a classroom in a day. It is an attempt to solve the problem of inadequate classroom and facilities for the projected expanding school population. Project IMPACT (International Management by Parents, Community and Teachers) now being experimented in Cebu is a more comprehensive structure.

Work orientation is reflected in the Green Revolution Program of the DEE, practical arts programs of the Iloilo and Antique School of Arts and Trades, and the Bayandian School Program of the Palawan National Agricultural College and the Workers' Education Program of the Unos College, Butuan City. The Unos College is unique in the sense that it includes training of household helps who are out of school youth desiring to engage in domestic occupations.

A new orientation exposes the students to actual work and experience in civic and community programs. Such is the Youth and Civic Action Program of the DEE. The scheme requires students to work in the community for hours before graduation from college.

Population Education, a new program of the DEE, has encouraged some institutions to look at novel ways of motivating target couples. Such a unique project has been undertaken by the Gencorda College.

Some Generalizations

THE study of these representative innovations has given insights into the status of trends in educational changes. Some generalizations are worth enumerating here:

1. There is a growing interest in the upliftment of the community through extension program, demonstration effects of school projects and emphasis on community improvement.

2. There are various degrees of attempts at effective basic education and a tearing down of the traditional walls between the school and the environment or community.

3. Education tends to be personalized hence individualized.

4. Innovations provide incentives and opportunities for the disadvantaged. For those living in remote rural areas opportunities for professional advancement are provided through distance learning techniques like lectures over the radio (University of the Air, UMI).

5. Inadequate funding evokes many other problems in teacher training, material production and research. □

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