

# THE ILOILO SCHOOL OF ARTS AND TRADES, AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIES IN THE WESTERN VISAYAS

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No other institution in the Western Visayas has enhanced the development of industries in the Western Visayas than the Iloilo School of Arts and Trades. It has prepared technically trained men who have been instrumental in the development and promotion of the leading industries in this section of the country for the last forty-five years. During this span of time, we have witnessed the change of control of some industries from the hands of the foreigners to those of the Filipinos.

Established in 1905 with a small and poorly equipped semi-permanent building, the Iloilo Trade School was very insignificant beside the imposing and attractive Iloilo High School. It attracted only few poor men's sons. These boys, however, were not afraid to work in order to learn the trades of the carpenter, cabinet-maker, automechanic, and electrician. These were the first courses offered on the elementary level, which were later raised to a secondary level in 1927. In 1939, by authority of Commonwealth Act No. 313, the school was converted into a national regional trade school and it became known as the Iloilo School of Arts and Trades.

Since then courses both in the secondary and collegiate level have been offered. These include wood-

working, building construction, drafting and art appreciation, practical electricity, automechanics, and the teachers of arts and trades courses. Lately, the girls' trade courses have been introduced.

Prior to the establishment of the Iloilo Trade School, the Japanese and Chinese skilled men practically monopolized the furniture making and building construction industry in Iloilo. Likewise, imported furniture, like the "Vienna" were in great demand. However, as the years went by, graduates from this school gradually replaced these foreigners until they gained control of the trades. Today, the few remaining Chinese-owned furniture factories employ mostly graduates from the trade school. In the building trades, Filipino engineers dominate the field who employ skilled foreman and skilled labor from the trade school.

The development of the various industries in Iloilo and neighboring provinces has been inseparably linked with its own growth. She has established a name which puts her on the level of high quality for her products, for her technical training of our young people, and for the part she has played in promoting the growth of our various trades and industries. She has also contributed, to a large

extent, to the social welfare of our people. She has rendered a great service to the country which may be equalled but not excelled by any other school of its type.

The word "ISAT" has become the trademark of quality and reliability. A graduate of this school is a symbol of proficiency in his specialized trade.

When it comes to employment, whether as a mechanic, electrician, draftsman, marine engineer, car driver, carpenter, building constructor, or as a vocational teacher, a trade school graduate needs no other recommendation than his diploma or a certificate from the school. They are regarded everywhere as proficient and reliable because of their rigid training while in school. They are in demand in the government service as well as industrial establishments and transportation companies.

There is hardly any industrial plant, lumber mill, sugar central, and other enterprises requiring technical skills where ISAT graduates are not found. They have grown with the companies and their companies have grown because of them.

A limited survey of our graduates in the field has disclosed the fact that a majority of them are cabinet-makers, furniture manufacturers, vocational instructors, building contractors, mechanics, electricians, marine engineers, ship engine oilers, army officers, soldiers, desk engineers, train brakemen, car drivers, construction foremen, skilled workers in construction works or mines, machine shop operators, air transportation inspectors, offshore patrol officers, artist-painters, skilled workers in sugar centrals,

lumber mills and other industrial establishments.

When a housewife buys furniture for her new house, she prefers to buy those manufactured from the trade school and pays willingly for the price even though they cost higher than those sold by outside dealers. She takes pride in showing to her friends her "ISAT" brand furniture of superior craftsmanship.

Since most furniture factories are either owned or operated by graduates from this school, they generally adopt the standard government specifications. They vary only in designs. Oftentimes, they go to the school and ask for information or advice regarding the latest trends in woodcraft.

The furniture industry has grown by leaps and bounds within the last decade and competition since then has been very keen. On account of this, each factory vie with each other in trying to maintain a high standard workmanship and to charge moderate prices.

The Iloilo School of Arts and Trades has been responsible for the rehabilitation of the furniture and other equipment of practically 95% of the schools in the Division of Iloilo and a number of schools in the Division of Antique.

The growth of cities and towns in the Western Visayas has been largely attributed to the numerous graduates who have been employed by engineers and building contractors. The rehabilitation of the town and cities which were destroyed during the war have been done through the work of trade school graduates.

Many graduates have machine shops, automobile service stations, electric power plants or rice mills

of their own in many towns of this region. They have replaced the foreign engineers and electricians and those who learned the trade by the apprentice system.

During the war, shortly before the Japanese landed in Iloilo, the Iloilo School of Arts & Trades was selected by General Christie, Commanding General of the USAFFE in Panay, as a manufacturing plant and repair shop for minor weapons and equipment in which the teachers and students were employed. They worked day and night notwithstanding the frequent raids from the enemy. When the enemy occupied Panay, these teachers and students joined the guerrilla forces which harassed the enemy during the occupation period. Many of them became distinguished officers and enlisted men.

Other activities of the Iloilo School of Arts and Trades which, to a considerable degree, contributed to the economic and social welfare of the people in Western Visayas are vocational adult education, food production, hobby and thrift campaign, and other community service.

There are two types of vocational adult education offered in this school—the practical or apprenticeship type and the direct or formal type. In the first type, graduates or student-contractors are allowed to bring in their relatives, who have practically no background in furniture-making, to help them in their contract jobs with the understanding that these relatives be taught the techniques of the work, including the interpretation of plans and blueprints. As soon as they become proficient, they are given certificates of proficiency which serve as their re-

commendations when they seek employment.

The second type is the formal offering of shop courses by the moderate-allowance teachers. Instruction is given in shopwork once a week, for six hours, and for a period of six months. At the end of the period, those trainees who demonstrate sufficient manipulative skills in the particular trades are given certificates of proficiency.

Many of those who take advantage of this educational opportunity are already in the jobs, but those who desire to upgrade their vocational skills come back for further training. Some of them are shop-operators.

In consonance with the government-sponsored campaign to raise more food in order to increase our food supply, all efforts have been made to launch an intensive food production in the surrounding communities. Teachers, employees, and students are required to have school and home gardens and raise poultry and swine in order to serve as models to the people.

For the purpose of staving off the rising tide of lawlessness and communistic influence among our people, especially the unemployed, a hobby and thrift campaign has also been launched by the school. Starting with the organization of a hobby club by the students in this school, students of many elementary schools in the city and province of Iloilo, as well as several Boy Scout organizations, followed. In order to give impetus and encouragement to this movement, a hobby exhibit is held every year in conjunction with the trade school day celebrations in the Iloilo School of Arts and Trades in which attractive prizes are award-

ed to the best work accomplished. A special booth is provided for this purpose.

Hobby club members make good use of their leisure time by engaging in some productive endeavors. The organization promotes closer relationships among the members and encourages the exchange of ideas. Many have made an avocation out of their hobbies.

It has been the policy of the school to require every student contractor to deposit at least 25% of his earnings. This would develop the habit of thrift and economy so that by the time the students graduate, they will have a little amount to start with.

The role played by the rural schools as the center of all activities in the school-community relation has also been adopted by the Iloilo School of Arts and Trades. Teachers are assigned to cover certain portion of the community for the purpose of getting first-hand information about the living conditions of the students and people, particularly, their economic, sanitary, and social problems, with a view to finding ways and means of helping them solve these problems. The dissemination of information regarding the accomplishments and activities of the different agencies of the government for the welfare of the people is also part of this community service.

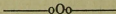
The school, because of its high reputation as a training center for

technical men, has been consulted by proprietors of furniture factories, operators of machine shops, or building contractors about industrial trends that would help them in their business. Industrial information is also given to those desiring to engage in cottage industries.

A portion of the school ground has also been converted into a children's playground. It is provided with swings, slides, see-saws, and basketball court. Children in the neighboring communities who used to frequent the streets have been encouraged to play in this playground. This provides them protection from untoward accidents which might result from reckless driving.

Every year a number of useful articles manufactured by our students, like trays, kitchen utensils, and toys, are donated to the Philippine National Red Cross (Iloilo-Antique Chapter) for free distribution to hospitals and charitable institutions. Safety posters are also given to the Boy Scout Organization to be displayed along sharp curves or near school zones for the purpose of minimizing accidents through careless driving.

The Iloilo School of Arts and Trades, about which the people of Iloilo were first skeptical as to its importance in the educational system, has successfully proven its worth in community life through four decades of humble and silent operation.



## FLASH!

Construction of the PPSTA  
Building will soon be started!