

PROGRESS REPORT □ Juanita G. Trinidad

The classroom is a development arena

EDUCATION is an important and urgent component of nation-building. In his *Notes on the New Society*, President Marcos observes that "the most important field for the Internal Revolution is that of education and culture. And here we must admit numerous and grave problems. Educational reforms will be the work of not one but of several generations working together." Thus, the upgrading of the country's educational system enjoys a high priority in the overall policies of the government. Efforts are being continuously undertaken to integrate educational policies and goals with national development programs.

Education for national development was pinpointed for the first time in the 1969 report of the Presidential Commission to Survey Philippine Education, an agency created by the President in December 1969. The report stressed, among others, new directions and new patterns through new structures to systematize educational policy-making and administration; planned evaluation and innovations to maximize effectivity and efficiency.

From the beginning, the New Society is committed to the principle that quality education is an investment in the future of the nation. The Department of Education and Culture (DEC), in fact, gets the biggest slice from the overall national budget—P1.6 billion last fiscal year. And right after martial law was proclaimed, the President issued PD 6-A, otherwise known as the Education Development Decree of 1972, which subsequently led to the formulation of the ten-year education development plan. The plan restructured the country's educational system so as to make it more responsive to Philippine needs and introduced reforms and changes that focus on the relevance of education to national growth.

Emphasis on Development Skills

INNOVATIONS: As a means to bolster the administration's new educational orientation, a number of innovative approaches have been adopted to upgrade the educational system.

Being an agricultural country, educational reforms primarily put emphasis on producing technicians needed in agriculture and industry. In this regard, the Educational Development Project Implementing Task Force (EDPITAF), an office under the DEC Secretary, is coordinating with the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Resources Research (PCARR) in developing agricultural schools and in implementing the agricultural education programs. This includes the strengthening and expansion of two agricultural universities and 13 agricultural high schools, 11 of which are members of the PCARR-coordinated national agricultural research network.

Along the same vein, the Youth

Civic Action Program (YCAP) requires at least a semester of civic work before a student is allowed to graduate from college. As a result of this program, the youth are being involved in meaningful community development activities such as reforestation, food production, cleanliness, sanitation, beautification and adult education work. Moral virtues and duties of citizenship are now more vigorously stressed; manual work is being dignified. Through private and public school teachers, concepts like the land reform program, cooperative education, drug abuse prevention, population control and environmental pollution are being disseminated by YCAP volunteers to rural folks.

Encouraging Vocational Education

NEEDED: To further improve the quality of education, the President issued PD 146 in 1974 requiring all graduating students from high school to pass an entrance examination for admission to any four-year college course. The decree limits entrance in college to the more capable students. At the same time, it helps channel students into such vocational, technical and technological courses which are needed in economic development but which are not popular among the youth.

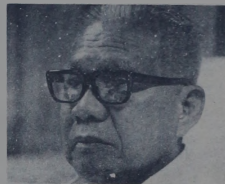
For those unable to pass the National Collegiate Entrance Examination (NCEE), a plan has been conceived by the DEC wherein students will still be allowed to enroll in college, provided they do not intend to get degrees. For those seeking degrees in this program, they will have to undergo another examination.

With the implementation of the NCEE, more students are now enrolled in vocational and technical courses in both the state and private schools. Noting the big shift from nontechnical courses to vocational-related subjects, DEC Secretary Juan L. Manuel said that the trend "is a sign that students now realize it is easier to get employment after finishing technical courses."

Currently, the National Education Testing Center which supervises the NCEE is developing a test that would eliminate the present practice of colleges and universities requiring students to take entrance examinations even after passing the NCEE.

Unlike the ones given in 1974 and 1975, this year's examinations are neither scholastic aptitude nor proficiency test but a test designed to measure the students' potential needed for learning in college. It is expected that some 400,000 high school students will take the 1976 NCEE.

A work-oriented curriculum is also being enforced. Aside from strengthening the implementation of regular curriculum requirements, new subjects are adopted in line with the New Society's development programs. Education now



Sec. Manuel: Restructure Education

is more realistic and the teaching of the New Constitution as a social subject is being required, including subjects like pollution, population control and land reform. The DEC proper itself is involved in ambitious programs like population education, applied nutrition, Magavana 99 rice production and Green Revolution.

The palpable expansion of our food production has been the result of the implementation of a work-oriented curriculum. Last school year, the DEC netted P70,000 worth of harvest from backyard lots, livestock and fishery projects.

Because of these breakthroughs, a leading educator commented that "we have made great advances in the implementation of a work-oriented curriculum. We have succeeded in opening the minds of the students on the possibilities of our natural resources and inculcated in them better work attitudes."

Pilipino in Schools

BLINGUAL EDUCATION: The use of English and Pilipino as media of instruction in all schools began last year. In grades one and two, the vernacular used in the locality or place where the school is located is the auxiliary medium of instruction. The use of the vernacular, however, is resorted to only to facilitate understanding of the concepts being taught through the prescribed medium for the subject, English, Pilipino or Arabic as the case may be.

Bilingual education covers two phases. The first phase started last school year through school year 1977-78. It will be the transition period in the use of Pilipino as the medium of instruction for social studies, social science, work education, character education and health and physical education. English remains the medium of instruction for all other courses.

Mass Education. Project Impact is a devised system of mass primary education calling for programmed teaching in levels one and two where teachers use specially prepared materials and, in the higher elementary levels, community human resources as high school students, home tutors, parents, and skilled resource persons are enlisted to provide instructions.

An interesting feature of this system is the use of older students to assist younger students. Learning is through modules or topics, each module covering the amount of instruction which normally takes one to two weeks to master. There are very few set classes. Students may drop out and reenter at any time. Here, the education that is being developed is non-formal, that is, without the conventional classrooms, teachers for every subject and school-building or textbooks. A community learning center takes the place of the usual school.

No Grades. The Bureau of Elementary Education has a policy called Continuous Progression which is still eliciting remarks and criticisms as when it was formulated four years ago. In line with this policy, the pupils in elementary and high schools are studying and are being taught according to their pace of learning. In this non-grading scheme, the students are individually observed by

the teachers concerned and their potentials encouraged and developed.

Likewise, the bureau is of late battling for the adoption of a new kind of curriculum. Called Curriculum Continuum, its most significant features include:

□ Schooling extends throughout the whole year wherein a child is admitted anytime he is old enough to be in school, say, three or four years old.

□ Vacation period may be scheduled at anytime agreed upon by the learner and teacher since the former is involved in planning his activities. To achieve this, schoolchildren will be assigned to a team of teachers rather than to a grade under one mentor.

□ There would be no failure since every child would be pursuing his own particular goals at his own rate of learning. Performance is judged in terms of his own progress, not based on a group standard set.

□ The practice of dropping out is eliminated. The child can resume where he left off when he returns to school.

□ Annual promotion is done away with. It is replaced by a continuous direction toward success and growth. As a result, rating cards are eliminated.

□ Sources of the curriculum content are from anywhere, anytime. The venue of learning is everywhere, not just in school.

Restructuring the College Program

HIGHER EDUCATION: Higher education is also being restructured. At present, the DEC is drawing up a ten-year development plan to maximize the role of higher education system in the country's development. The plan, which will be completed in March 1977, will be incorporated into the overall development program being prepared by the National Economic and Development Authority.

The plan will give emphasis on the private education system in the country in accordance with a Presidential directive to look for a more innovative and lasting solution to the financial problems of private schools. Once completed, the plan will become the basis for policies on higher education by the National Board of Education, such as the dispersal of schools in Metro Manila and the improvement of opportunities for higher education in the rural areas.

In upgrading Philippine education, the teaching population has not been overlooked. In recognition of the vital role they play in nation-building and as an incentive to raise their morale, PD 1006 was issued by the President recently to professionalize the teaching profession in the country.

As a whole, education nowadays is no longer solely for improvement of the mind but of the spirit and muscle as well. With the innovations, changes and incentives, what is projected in education over the next 25 years? An education effort that puts this way of thinking as the formal system continues to grow, educators foresee an expansion of the nonformal system. Vocational, technical and scientific courses will be top priority. College education will be extremely selective. Methods of instruction and curricula content will be locally-oriented. Private industry will share a larger burden of the costs of education. Bilingualism is expected to be fully accepted. Many of our educational programs will be created around regional needs and resources.

In terms of highly-skilled professions, it is foreseen that professionalization of management in the Philippine setting will be firmly entrenched. As a matter of fact, it is predicted that Filipino graduates will be in the most vital exports. Computerization will be pervasive. Planning and coordination between the government, the public and the private sectors will be close and continuous. □



Educating the masses through the adult education program.