

# A work-oriented system



Present curriculum is work-oriented.

by Iluminado Varela Jr.

The opening of school year 1978-1979 in June signals the implementation of some major programs outlined in the Ten-Year Educational Development Plan (1978-1987).

Designed to support the socio-economic growth and development goals of the New Society, the Ten-Year Plan has been revised to focus on the role of education and manpower development as a major income redistribution mechanism.

The plan's major thrust is to bring about qualitative and quantitative educational development.

Qualitative improvement would insure the achievement of regional and national goals and the maintenance of desirable educational standards. Quantitative expansion, on the other hand, would increase the outreach of educational services and facilities for school children and out-of-school youths and adults.

The thrust of the plan for the next ten years falls under the following major areas: basic education, tertiary education, nonformal education and cultural development.

The DEC is funding the projects and programs under the plan with assistance from international agencies like the IBRD, UNESCO, UNICEF and WHO.

A major project this year is the development of a learning continuum which will emphasize the three R's—Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic—and cultural development subjects.

Known as "The Experimental Elementary Education Program, 1977," the project was approved by the National Board of Education and will be tried out for two years beginning school year 1978-1979 from Grades I to VI in selected public and private elementary schools.

A total of 126 public and private elementary schools, 45 from urban areas and 81 from rural areas, are participating in the project.

The program is the response of the DEC to a survey on the outcome of elementary education (the SOUTELE Report) in June, 1976, which gave a "dismal picture of the situation in elementary education."

In the revision of the elementary curriculum, a "return to the basics" is needed so that even students who leave school before graduation will be equipped with knowledge, skills and attitudes to make them productive and respectable members of society.

This points to a simplified curriculum in which fewer subject areas are offered and more time is allotted to the development of learn-to-learn skills, specifically the three R's.

The other projects and programs outlined in the Ten-Year Educational Development Plan are:

- Provision and distribution of textbooks in 1:2 ratio, or one set of textbooks for every two students. As of school year 1977-1978, the Educational Development Projects Implementing Task Force (Edpita) had completed 4.2 million copies, or 16 percent, of the target 7.8 million copies of 17 titles for mass use.
- Development of *barangay* high schools into community centers to function both for the educational and socio-economic development of the community. The centers will also serve as training and marketing centers. Initially, P1 million is earmarked for this project.
- Establishment of learning resources centers to serve as multi-purpose centers for communities (library, audio-visual rooms, nontraditional learning spaces).
- Research and study program for the improvement of education on all levels, both private and public.
- Planning and management projects to serve as effective instruments for carrying out educational policies and reforms and linkages to society at large.

**Curriculum reforms.** Reflecting the government thrusts in social and economic reforms, DEC's curriculum reforms focus on the integration into the curriculum of such subjects as agrarian reform, cooperatives development, population and nutrition education,

food production, green revolution, environmental education, taxation, tourism, drug eradication and consumer education.

"Each of these areas reflects a current problem, some with alarming consequences for the country unless responded to in a timely way by the citizenry," Secretary Manuel said.

The curricular enrichment is designed to make students understand better the conditions around them and respond in a responsible way.

To develop in children an awareness of the value and dignity of work, the DEC will pursue this year on-going and new work-oriented programs.

Aside from correcting prevailing attitudes which do not recognize the value of work, the work-oriented programs are also designed to correct the imbalance in a large number of unemployed liberal arts graduates and a large number of job requirements in technical and skilled fields.

The DEC has allowed teachers to institute programs requiring considerable time—up to 40 percent of the total school time—in actual productive work. For example, children who do work like helping in planting or harvesting are credited for such work in work education.

An important feature of the work-oriented program is the development of a core curriculum based on community resources or activities which are work-oriented. For example, in a coconut region, lessons in science would be tailored to facts that have to do with propagation of coconuts; themes in communication arts would be on activities or industries related to coconuts; and practical work would utilize raw materials from coconuts.

## Reforms in higher education

The lack of a national system to regulate admission into the higher educational level has resulted in overcrowding in certain college courses, poor quality of graduates, and consequently, unemployed or unemployable graduates.

To achieve the objective of quality education in the tertiary level, the National College Entrance Examination was instituted in 1973 under P.D. 146.

Initially, the DEC entered into agreement with the Fund for Assistance to Private Education (FAPE) to prepare and administer the first NCEE in 1973. In 1974 the DEC had greater participation in the test preparation and administration.

Today, the NCEE Center, now the National Educational Testing Center, has full charge of the college entrance examination.

Already a marked trend has been noted in the post-secondary enrolments. More and more students are taking vocational and technical courses.

In government vocational and technical schools, the number of enrollment doubled from 5,637 in school year 1971-1972 to 11,875 in SY 1974-75.

Enrollment in private technical schools increased from 111,904 to 128,699, or 4.5 percent, during the same period.

The other major programs for reforms in higher education are the survey of existing recruitment and staff development policies of private institutions, and the private higher education development plan.

Involved in these programs are 495 higher educational institutions, 43 chartered universities and colleges, and 52 vocational and technical colleges.

## Out-of-school youths

While the Philippine public school system serves 11.3 million youths in the acquisition of a formal education, there are close to 5.7 million who unfortunately do not share in educational benefits. These are the out-of-school youths.

To give substance to the government's goal of equal opportunities for all Filipinos, President Marcos directed the Department of Education and Culture to institute a system of "nonformal education" to serve children, youth and adults who, for economic or other reasons, cannot avail of the benefits of formal education. The program is headed by a special Undersecretary for Nonformal Education.

Nonformal education has been defined as any "organized systematic educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal educational system." The programs involved in this system do not require any credentials or qualifications, and participants can enter and leave the program at any time. And

now DEC will give credits for knowledge and skills gained outside the formal school system.

Among recent developments in the area of nonformal education are the joint program of DEC and the National Electrification Administration called TANGLAW (Toward Aggressive National Growth Through Light and Water) and *Lingap ng Pangulo sa mga Barangay*, a school-on-the-air program designed for out-of-school youths, housewives and farmers who are organized into listening groups by their respective barangays with the help of a teacher-coordinator.

### Educational innovations

The DEC has launched several other important innovations, particularly to benefit out-of-school youths and needy students. Among these are:

- **Distance Study System.** This program seeks to deliver development-oriented educational programs to people who have no access to formal schooling. It uses a multimedia approach—radio, television, self-learning modules, etc.), with most students getting instruction in radio broadcasts supplemented by printed materials.
- **The In-School, Off-School Approach.** Under this method, a teacher can handle as many as 80 pupils, half of whom, forming one group, stay in school for

one week and are taught by the teacher, with the other group meanwhile studying on their own in their homes with self-learning kits. This arrangement is intended to insure maximum use of classrooms, teachers and community resources.

□ **Project IMPACT.** This project—"Instruction Managed by Parents and Teachers"—calls for programmed teaching in Levels 1 and 2, where teachers use specially prepared materials. In the elementary and higher levels, the community's human resources—high school students, home tutors, parents and other skilled resource persons—are used. Project IMPACT was launched by the Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (INNOTECH), one of seven research and development centers of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SLAMEO).

□ **Study-Now-Pay-Later Plan.** Another innovative approach as provided for by PD 932 (Educational Assistance Act of 1976) this is designed to further broaden assistance to needy but deserving students. Initially funded by the Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System, the plan started with a P10 million appropriation. In selecting beneficiaries of the plan, priority is given to the brighter students with relatively low family income.