

PHILIPPINE SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY AGENDA: CURRENT SITUATION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

by:

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I. OPENING STATEMENTS

Greetings

I would like to thank the organizers, the British Council Philippines for inviting TESDA to this Policy Dialogue. This is an opportunity for us not only to share our experiences in managing the TVET sector in the country but more so to interact with members of the British Council and with the other participants.

Skills development, employability, workforce development are current themes in the center stage of human resources development. And TESDA, since it became TESDA by virtue of Republic Act 7796 in 1994 has seen this demand on technical education coming. Our economy has nowhere to go but up. The Filipino workforce are all over the world. The challenge for inclusiveness and access to educational opportunities are issues for us Filipinos. The TESDA Law was clear about relevant, efficient, accessible, collaborative and consensual and of high quality technical vocational education and training. Allow me to use the acronym TVET.

Thus, the Philippine TVET System is based on the following principles :

- The National Technical Education and Skills Development Plan is anchored on national priorities spelled out in the Philippine Development Plan and in the Investment Priorities Plan, current labor market information and customer needs.
- The national development priorities spelled out in the national plans become the basis for the TESDA Board in drawing up the National TVET policies and priorities.
- The system is driven by competency standards and training regulations derived from industry requirements and specifications and guided by TVET priorities identified by the TESDA Board.
- The Training Regulations serve as minimum national standards that serve as the basis for the development of competency-based curriculum and learning packages, competency assessment tools and standards and the training and qualification of trainers and assessors.
- The system is accessible to a broad range of customers including the unemployed, the underemployed, displaced workers, new entrants to the labor force, technical vocational institutions and enterprise-based training providers.

- The quality of training delivery is premised on an efficient and Unified TVET program Registration and Accreditation System (UTPRAS) that is incentive-driven.
- The system incorporated a competency based Philippine TVET Qualifications and Certification System (PTQCS) that serves as the basis for the grant of national credentials including trainers and assessors certificates.
- The system recognizes prior competencies acquired through alternative means and through related work experiences through a system of equivalency within the entire education system
- Employment and productivity enhancement are the ultimate metrics of the technical vocational education and training system to effectively bring about the effective matching of labor supply and demand.
- TESDA builds up the TVET sector capability and capacity through financial resource management, human resource development, physical resource management, information management, marketing and advocacy, administrative management, customer feedback, management of external relations and environmental concerns.

II. CURRENT SITUATION

Thus we find the major programs in the Philippine TVET anchored on those principles.

- *The system incorporated a competency based Philippine TVET Qualifications and Certification System (PTQCS) that serves as the basis for the grant of national credentials*

The Philippine TVET Qualifications and Certification System is the basis of the award of National Certificates in the denoted levels. Thus, since 1998, the National Certificates Level 1 to 4 have been issued to signify performance according to the competency standards set based on the descriptors of the levels prescribed for such performance in the Philippine TVET Qualifications Framework or PQF. These levels and descriptors would, in 2012, find its way into the Philippine Qualifications Framework, institutionalized through Executive Order No. 83. The PQF is an eight level qualifications framework where the first 4 levels are National Certificates, level 5 is the diploma level, level 6 is the bachelors degree, level 7 is post baccalaureate or masters and level 8 is doctoral and post doctoral level.

- *The system recognizes prior competencies acquired through alternative means and through related work experiences through a system of equivalency within the entire education system.*

The assessment and certification of competencies in the PTQCS is an open system where competencies acquired at work, at home, in communities are recognized based on evidences submitted or demonstrated. A self-assessment guide is

available for every qualification and anybody who believe he meets the competency standard can apply for assessment.

Competency standards are prescribed by experts in industry. (Show CS format.)

- *The system is accessible to a broad range of customers including the unemployed, the underemployed, displaced workers, new entrants to the labor force, technical vocational institutions and enterprise-based training providers.*

For accessibility in terms of resources and time of the poor learners, the Competency-based TVET is modularized and short –term but the modules can be bundled together towards occupations or qualifications that are needed by a rapidly changing structure of work. The smallest module is equivalent to a certificate of competency which is a cluster of competencies that is employable in itself. The learner can accumulate the clusters to merit an NC. (Show samples of NC.) The NCs can be accumulated to satisfy the requirements of a whole occupation or multiple and crosscutting requirements of a job.

The competency standards, contained in what is called training regulations, are the basis for developing a curriculum and the learning materials. They are also the basis for developing the assessment packages.

- *Employment and productivity enhancement are the ultimate metrics of the technical vocational education and training system to effectively bring about the effective matching of labor supply and demand.*

There is an annual tracking of the graduates of the TVET system both in terms of the certification rate and the employment of the graduates. For 2014, the certification rate is ___% of those who undertook the assessment and 65.4% of the graduates are employed within 6 months after finishing the training program.

Minding the Gaps

Inspite of all of the above, we are mindful that there are gaps.

- Timely and useful labor market information

TVET's relevance is largely dependent on the information and signals it get from industry, whether primary or secondary. This keeps us on our toes all the time. The competency standards for example is set by industry. Then we say who industry. We are working with industry associations who nominate the experts who formulate the competency standards and the assessment packages. Are we getting the right experts? Do the experts consider the national requirements as well as regional requirements? Are they informed of emerging technologies?

We are looking currently at the experiences of a number of countries working with industry skills councils.

- Keeping up with technological changes and knowledge requirements

TVET is not only skills. The workplace has become knowledge-based and so is TVET. This year, we have started innovating on the units of competencies. We have put focus on what previously we have termed underpinning knowledge to required knowledge. This then put pressure on trainers and academic supervisors to constantly upgrade and research on their trade.

- Globalization of the workplace

When we started writing the competency standards, the knowledge and skills required were for the local workplace. Now, the standards are for the local industries but then the local industries are part of a multinational system or a multi country operation in a value chain. So the standards have to be global. The globalization put pressure on the trainers, the training providers and the providers of resources.

- Competitiveness of the workforce depends on competitiveness of the educational system. Innovation and reinventing the Philippine education system for the here and now requirements and the future requirements. New and old concepts. What apply to us now and in the future? What are available and tested systems where? Importantly, how does the Filipino worker compare with others?

Quality assurance is important. There has to be a warranty for reliability. TESDA itself started with an ISO certification for its regulatory programs and the concomittant support processes. This year we got the certification from a German certifying agency that all the TESDA operationg units all over the country and the program managers in Central Office comply with the management requirements.

The accreditation systems for TVET programs are voluntary and by independent 3rd parties. The accreditation is seen as beyond the mandatory system of program registration and compliance audit.

TESDA has subscribed to the APACC and the EASTVET Quality Assurance System.

Benchmarking and regional referencing of standards are also measures of competitiveness.

The ASEAN Qualifications Referencing Framework is an agreed system of comparability of National Qualifications Framework in the ASEAN and is a support program to the ASEAN Economic Community goals.

The APEC Integrated Referencing Framework for Occupational Standards

The International Labor Organization Mutual Recognition of Skills in the ASEAN

The Australia supported Project on Benchmarking on Transport and Logistics

The Australia supported Project on Benchmarking in Manufacturing, Construction and Agriculture

The bilateral agreement on benchmarking and technical assistance with Thailand and with Indonesia.

The pursuit of comparability with other OFW destination countries in the Middle East.

There are a lot of benchmarking not only to compare with more superior comparators but also to see how competitive the Filipino workers' competencies are. And we can only confidently go into benchmarking if we are confident of our system and the outcome of all the programs and activities of Philippine TVET.

➤ Public-private partnership in education

Delivery of TVET specially in highly technical qualifications / enterprise-based training/ apprenticeships and the dual training system

Provision of resources/ scholarships and educational subsidies

Provision of LMI

Closing Statement

So there you are, ladies and gentlemen. Philippine TVET has achieved great strides.