



FUNCTIONALLY LITERATE FILIPINOS: AN EDUCATED NATION

Philippine Education For All (EFA) 2015 National Action Plan

Republic of the Philippines
National Education For All Committee (NEC)
Manila, Philippines
2006



Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Resolution No. 2, Series of 2006

APPROVING THE NATION ACTION PLAN TO ACHIEVE
EDUCATION FOR ALL BY THE YEAR 2015
(EFA 2015)

WHEREAS, the formulation of the Philippine EFA 2015 is anchored on the Dakar Framework of Action adopted by the participating United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) members, including the Philippines, during the World Education Forum in April 2000, Senegal;

WHEREAS, the Dakar Framework of Action is a re-affirmation of the vision set out in the World Declaration on EFA in Jomtien (1990), that every child, youth and adult has the human right to benefit from education that will meet their basic learning needs including the full development of human personality. Such basic learning needs can be delivered by both the school system and alternative learning system.

WHEREAS, the World Declaration on EFA prescribes that basic Learning Needs (BLNs) shall be made available to all by various means. BLNs comprise both essential learning tools (literacy, numeracy, oral expression and problem solving) and the basic learning contents (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions and to continue learning.

WHEREAS, the central goal of the Philippine EFA 2015 is basic competencies for all that will bring about functional literacy for all. Ensuring that every Filipino has the basic competencies is equivalent to providing all Filipinos with the basic learning needs or enabling all Filipinos to be functionally literate.

WHEREAS, the Philippine EFA 2015 is a vision and a holistic program of basic education reforms of the country that is not confined to the work of the Department of Education (DepEd) but a societal responsibility that can be implemented within the framework of a Grand Alliance of all sectors and forces that will harness and harmonize the use of educational resources.



WHEREAS, a series of consultations and meetings with various education stakeholders through the four (4) technical working groups (early childhood care and development, formal basic education, alternative learning system and governance and finance) from both government and non-government organization (NGOs), have been conducted in the formulation of the Philippine EFA 2015;

WHEREAS, the EFA 2015 has been presented to the Social Development Committee-Technical Board (SDC-TB) last 9 November 2005 where the Board approved the Plan subject to compliance and/or clarification on the recommendations of the members and the SDC Technical Secretariat, and likewise endorsed the EFA 2015 for subsequent review and approval of the SDC-Cabinet Level (SDC-CL);

WHEREAS, the DepEd find the recommendation procedural in nature and therefore can be considered in the implementation of the Plan;

WHEREAS; the SDC-CL approved the EFA 2015 last 1 February 2006 with instruction for DepEd to submit to the UNESCO as the country's long-term Master Plan for Basic Education;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the SDC-CL approves the Nation Action Plan to Achieve Education For All By the Year 2015 (EFA 2015).

Signed, this 16th day of February 2006 in Pasig City.

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A. INTRODUCTION

The Philippine Education For All (EFA) 2015 Plan is a vision and a holistic program of reforms that aims at improving the quality of basic education for every Filipino by 2015. The Plan is anchored on the Dakar Framework of Action inked during the World Education Forum in April 2000 in Dakar, Senegal and adopted by various participating countries, including the Philippines.

The Dakar Framework of Action

The Dakar Framework of Action documents the right of every child, youth, or adult to benefit from education that will meet his/her Basic Learning Needs (BLNs), including the full development of human personality. The World Declaration on 'Education For All' prescribes that Basic Learning Needs shall be made available to all by various means. BLNs comprise both the essential learning tools (literacy, numeracy, oral expression, and problem solving) and the basic learning contents (knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning.

Global EFA Goals

This level and form of education may be delivered to learners through schools or formal education and alternative learning schemes (e.g., informal and non-formal). To meet the basic learning needs of all, the participating countries in the World



EFA Forum in Dakar collectively committed themselves to attain the following goals:

- a. expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantage children;
- b. ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- c. ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
- d. achieve a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
- e. eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality; and
- f. improve every aspect of the quality of education, and ensure their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills.

Basic Competencies For All: The Central Goal of the Philippine EFA 2015 Plan

The central goal of EFA 2015 Plan is to provide basic competencies to everyone, to achieve functional literacy for all. Ensuring that every Filipino has the basic competencies is equivalent to providing all Filipinos with the basic learning needs, or enabling all Filipinos to be functionally literate.



Issues and Challenges

The result of the 2003 Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) showed that there are about nine million Filipinos, 10 to 64 years old, who are not functionally literate.

Despite many policy and program reforms and huge investments in basic education sector in the past 20 to 30 years, the country still faces the challenge of having more than 1 million school-aged children who are not in school and 9 million Filipinos who are still functionally illiterate. The quality of learning and acquisition of human values and skills fall far short of the aspirations and needs of individuals and society. Among others, this failure can be attributed in part to the following:

- weak political will to pursue and sustain reforms at different levels;
- insufficient financial resources and inefficient use of available ones;
- inadequate attention to the learning needs, particularly of the poor or disadvantaged; and
- lack of attention to the quality of learning.

Lack of Basic Skills and Essential Knowledge. Many Filipinos do not have the basic skills and essential knowledge to secure the kind and quality of education that would equip them to rationally consider detailed and carefully prepared proposals for reforms in national-scale systems, like the country's system of delivering basic education.

Just as poverty should not be an acceptable justification for lack of education, so must one reject the absence of well-informed popular support for education reform as a valid reason for failing to achieve basic education for all. Poverty cannot be an acceptable reason for lack of education because doing so would condemn the poor to a cycle of poverty begetting ignorance begetting more poverty.



Insufficient Capabilities to Grasp Complex Public Issues.

The basic education system leaves many Filipinos with insufficient capabilities to grasp complex public issues that concern them. Since most Filipinos may be unable to understand the rationale



and direction of needed reforms, the lack of popular understanding could render such reforms uncertain and improbable. Yet accepting such reasoning could only paralyze the reformer into inaction.

The responsibility and burden of basic education reform fall primarily on the shoulders of the better educated Filipinos who are able to understand complex problems, identify viable options for action, develop reasoned convictions based on facts, and act with vigor and consistency despite widespread indifference, some resistance, and probably even determined opposition.

Objectives of the Philippine EFA 2015 Plan Document

This document seeks to inform primarily the educated Filipino about the important task of educating all of his or her fellow Filipinos, not just some, but all of the more than 80 million men and women, who are adding to their ranks almost 2 million more each year or about 5,800 new minds and bodies to be nurtured each day.

It is crucial that education for everyone in such a large and rapidly growing population must first be made real and possible in the minds of a few, before it can become concrete and present in the lives of all. The educated Filipinos must be the first citizens not to allow a deluge of ignorance and incompetence to overwhelm intelligence and capability.



Finally, this document seeks to educate a critical mass to mobilize them to educate all. This document seeks to improve education through the ways of education itself, i.e., by informing, affecting, and influencing actions. The first step in such education is to confront the very dire straits of the country's state of basic education.

B. CONFRONTING A SERIOUS NATIONAL BURDEN

Declared Ideals of Desired Education For All

As of 2004, the total Philippine population is estimated at 82.7 million people. How educated are all these Filipinos? Let us begin answering this question by first defining what is meant by an "educated Filipino".

As Defined by EDCOM. The 1991 Congressional Education Commission (EDCOM) defined an educated Filipino as someone:

- "who respects human rights;
- whose personal discipline is guided by spiritual and human values;
- who can think critically and creatively;
- who can exercise responsibly his rights and duties as a citizen;
- whose mind is informed by science and reason; and
- whose nationalism is based on a knowledge of our history and cultural heritage".

Today, we regard an educated Filipino as someone who is functionally literate or with basic competencies. Presumably, these desired capacities are acquired and demonstrated with proficiency in both Filipino and English.

As Defined in the Constitution. The acquisition of essential, intellectual, emotional, and psychomotor capacities comprising the totality of being educated is assumed to be the universal



entitlement of every Filipino. Being educated does not necessarily, and certainly does not exclusively, mean being schooled or having any minimum level of academic credentials. The 1987 Constitution assumes

that every Filipino will have and indeed should have a modicum of human capacities commonly associated with being educated.

Severe Education Disadvantage

Basic and Functionally Illiterates: Educationally Disadvantaged Filipinos. Based on the 2003 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS), out of 57.6 million Filipinos who are 10 to 64 years old, 3.8 million 10 years old above do not know how to read and write and a total of 9.2 million are not “functionally” literate or unable to compute and lacked certain numeracy skills.

Education Disadvantage from the Point of View of Building a Nation. A survey of young people 7-21 years old showed that 65% do not participate in any community activities; only 37% can sing the national anthem, and only 28% can recite Panatang Makabayan. These low participation in community activities, lack of awareness of Philippine history, and weak engagement with matters of public interest provide a picture of education disadvantage from the point of view of building a nation.

School System: A Major Source of Continued Education Disadvantage. A major source of continued large outstanding education disadvantage is the school system, specifically the weak performance of the large and nearly universal public system of elementary and secondary schools.



School participation. In SY 2002-2003, 90.32% of total population who are 6-11 years old, which are the official ages for Grades 1 to 6 pupils, are enrolled at the beginning of the school year. But the 9.68% that were not in schools, still constitutes nearly 1.2 million disadvantaged children. These school-age children not in school are most likely to eventually join the ranks of adult illiterates or functional illiterates.



School completion and attainment of the desired level of competencies. Educational disadvantage is not only limited to those who never get into a school. The more than 90% of school-age Filipinos who get into schools are along the following lines:

- For every 1,000 Grade 1 entrants:
 - 312 will leave school before finishing Grade 6, most of them in the first two grades;
 - 249 will finish the six-year grade in school in an average of 9.6 years, each repeating some grade levels 2-3 times; and
 - only 439 will graduate elementary in 6 years. Only seven who graduate in Grade 6 have sufficient mastery of English, Mathematics, and Science competencies after exerting effort for an average of 7.31 school years per graduate.

- For every 1,000 entrants to first year high school:
 - 389 will leave school without completing four years;





- 353 will graduate after repeating 2-3 times taking an average of 6.7 years; and
 - only 248 will graduate within the required four years.
- Taking the two levels together, a typical group of 1,000 Grade 1 entrants eventually yield only:
 - 395 finishing high school;
 - only 162 finishing elementary and high school in 10 years;
 - while 233 finishing elementary and high school after each taking up to 16 years to complete the 10-year basic education schooling cycle.

It is highly probable that a very small number of these high school graduates will have acquired the necessary competencies expected from ten years of schooling.

Philippine schools, as a whole system, have failed to deliver overall excellence (high average achievement by all students) as well as assure general fairness (low variation in levels of achievement among individual students) to the 90% of total school-age children that they take into Grade 1 each year, and this failure has continued yearly for at least the past four decades through different economic circumstances and different political administrations.

From these numbers, it is evident that most students either do not complete the full ten years of basic education, or obtain their grade school or high school credentials without necessarily acquiring sufficient mastery of the required competencies, particularly in English.

In sum, how educated are all Filipinos? Most acquire the bare tools of literacy and functional literacy, although a large number (up to 3.8 million are not literate and up to 9.2 million are not functionally literate) do not even have such rudimentary tools.

One of the major sources of this large and continued educational disadvantage in the population is the failure of schools



to assure mastery of basic education competencies in English. The notion of the educated Filipino still requires a modicum of competency in English for certain important domains of use or alternatively the full development of Filipino as the prevalent medium of intellectual exchange, as these alternative conditions are indicative of every Filipino's real ability to engage rationally with many vital social, political and economic issues. In either these two alternative notions, the whole population is still very far from attaining the ideal of an educated nation.

Current Costs of Education Failure

Good education is expensive but lack of education costs many times more. The first costs of lack of education are borne by the uneducated. But the whole society, including those better educated, bear heavy costs for the existence of a large pool of uneducated.

Cost Borne by the Uneducated. It is easy to understand how someone can be disadvantaged by lack of education which prevents that person from acquiring certain essential capabilities to interact with other individuals, with the existing body of human knowledge, and with important social institutions. Lack of education to one degree or another excludes the uneducated from the many opportunities and beneficial options in society. This exclusion primarily punishes the uneducated.

But the costs of lack of education are not borne solely by the uneducated. The whole society, including those better educated, bear heavy costs for the existence of a large pool of uneducated.

Cost Borne by the Society. The costs imposed on society by the large group of people who go through elementary and secondary schooling without acquiring the essential competencies expected from such schooling are particularly heavy. First, these children waste their years of effort and expense in schooling that fails to benefit them with the basic knowledge, skills, and attitudes desired and expected by their own society.



Second, the educational system wastes its efforts and resources accommodating them in schools without enabling them to acquire the competencies necessary for them to become self-reliant and to even contribute in society.

Third, the larger society further wastes its efforts remedying whatever was missing from their school education and selecting which among these nominal graduates really have the required competencies.

Social Exclusion: Greatest Cost of Educational Failure. The costs of failure to attain universal education are incalculably large and could even be socially devastating. Lack of education condemns those uneducated to fewer options and less possibilities than their educated countrymen. The inability of a large uneducated segment of society to effectively function with others, access available knowledge and interact with existing institutions imposes further costs on the whole society that still has to function with their continued presence.

Good Intentions Without Significant Gains

A failure of such massive proportions and such historic duration cannot be blamed on one person or group alone. The



many good intentions of all Secretaries of Education, various Congresses, and several Presidents – all have failed to yield significant gains, except when one considers the successful prevention of even worse outcomes as an achievement.

In sum, past efforts failed because those who are better educated failed.

- The first failure must be those of national political leaders, in the executive and legislative, primarily of their collective inability to take the tough decisions in public finance (both in revenue raising as well as in spending authorization) to effectively and equitably allocate limited public resources that can be efficiently used to adequately meet the needs of good quality basic education for all.
- The second failure must be those of the professional educators who manage and operate our schools for their collective avoidance of facing up to the stark reality that the vast majority of our schools are failing to teach and as a result many students are failing to learn.
- The third failure must be those of the best educated and most articulate influentials in society, who are working in media, government, business, academe, and civil society, for their lack of consistent and unified attention to getting the whole society committed to breaking the back of growing mass incompetence of Filipinos through adequate basic education for all.
- The fourth failure must be those of community leaders (government officials, business leaders, and professionals active in their localities) for their lack of demand, support, and action for the attainment of quality basic education for everyone in their communities, not just for their own children.
- The fifth failure and last failure must be those of education reform advocates for their lack of constancy of purpose, muddled vision, and mistaken strategies, all of which



weakened or confused the direction and drive of the process to improve basic education for all.

C. OVERALL GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF EFA 2015

Real Dimensions of EFA

Anchored on the World EFA, the Philippine EFA Action Plan aims to provide basic competencies to everyone or functional literacy for all. This ambitious goal can only be accomplished through the achievement of four component objectives:

1. **Universal Coverage of Out-of-School Youths and Adults in the Provision of Basic Learning Needs.** All persons beyond school-age, who for various reasons have failed to acquire the essential competence to be functionally literate, should finally be made functionally literate in their native tongue, in Filipino, and in English.

This outcome involves reaching and educating up to about 9 million functionally illiterates as of year 2003.

2. **Universal School Participation and Elimination of Drop-outs and Repetition in First Three Grades** All children aged six should enter school ready to learn and prepared to achieve the required competencies for Grades 1 to 3. Attainment of this

outcome is just the first installment for insuring that education disadvantage does not take root early, thereby limiting the future options available to disadvantaged pre-school children. This outcome involves reaching about 5.7





million children, 3 to 5 years old, with about 20% of these (1.2 million children) comprising those least likely to enter Grade 1 and most likely to repeat or drop out between Grades 1 to 3.

- 3. Universal Completion of the Full Cycle of Basic Education Schooling with Satisfactory Achievement Levels by All at Every Grade or Year.** All children aged 6 to 11 should be on track to completing elementary with satisfactory achievement levels at every grade, and all children aged 12 to 15 should be on track to completing secondary schooling with similarly satisfactory achievement levels at every year. This outcome involves a school-age population of 12.6 million children, 6 to 11 years old (elementary schooling) and another 7.6 million who are 12 to 15 years old (high school).



- 4. Total Community Commitment to Attainment of Basic Education Competencies for All.** Every community should mobilize all its social, political, cultural, and economic resources and capabilities to support the universal attainment of basic education competencies in Filipino and English. Education for all demands nothing less than all for education. This outcome involves organizing a community-level effort at each of 79 provinces, 114 cities, 1,496 municipalities, and possibly 41,945 barangays.





Potential Benefits of Success

Social, Political, Economic, and Cultural Improvements. An educated society would allow for faster accumulation and more equitable distribution of national wealth, faster improvement in political responsiveness to the true will of the people, and a more dynamic development of culture and society.

Quality Collective Decisions, Greater Social Capacity to Manage Crisis and Social Cohesion. There are many important social and collective processes that can be facilitated by universal basic education competencies. New knowledge and relevant information can be diffused much faster. Better quality collective decisions in politics, culture, and commerce can be made and with greater participation. There could also be greater social capacity to more effectively prevent, and to better manage if unpreventable, those crises, shocks, reversals and mistakes that every society inevitably encounters. There could also be greater social cohesion simply from the much more efficient communication among various segments of the whole population.



Larger Stakes to the Nation

Education enables a person, and education for all enables everyone. The benefits of good education are so obvious that most



Filipino families (more than 90%), including those headed by uneducated parents, get their children to school at the opening of classes each year. Beyond the benefits to individuals, however, education of everyone in fact ultimately defines the whole nation.

Nation-Building. The concepts of nation building as primarily a process of collective self-conception are suggested as applicable to the Filipino nation in the words of Apolinario Mabini as quoted by Jose Diokno:

“You always look upon your countryman as something more than a neighbor. See in him the friend, the brother, or at the very least, the companion to whom you are bound by a single fate, by the same joys and sorrows, and by common aspirations and interests... As long as the frontiers of nations exist ... to him alone should you unite in perfect solidarity of views and interests, in order to gather strength, not only to fight the common enemy, but also to attain all the goals of human existence.”

The concepts of the Filipino nation as a collectively imagined community are realized in every Filipino’s head and heart through language. Language is the common vessel of our shared culture, the consciousness of our own history, and the main tool and instrument for the formation of our thinking and knowing.

Despite being a multilingual country, Filipino nationhood remains robust. Mastery of English is not regarded as a betrayal of Filipino-ness, nor is use of Pilipino regarded as the exclusive qualification of being Filipino, nor is use of vernacular regarded as symptomatic of alienation from the national identity.

National Identity. Prof. Randy David offers a sense of the complexities that current and future generations face in this matter of national identity. Contrasting the nationalism propagated in other countries which became the language of reaction and conservatism of ruling elites to subsume smaller communities and exclude marginal peoples, Prof David writes:

“...Today, the formation of personal identities taps a variety of sources: gender, ethnicity, religion, and work. Young people rightly



question tradition, and for them national identity often constitutes but a small fragment of their personal identity. No other generation has demanded more of its elders that they prove the moral value of national identity. Loyalty to nation is no longer taken for granted. The nation-state has to show its worth in the everyday lives of its citizens.”

Such new knowledge about the Filipino people will enrich future image of the Filipino nation. Such new knowledge, along with many other advances in knowledge about the natural and physical universe being created everyday around the world, will make it possible for what Prof. David hopes will be a “*deep capacity for awe for the great achievements of the secular imagination*” among the truly educated Filipino. Education should not only develop critical thinking, but also “*enlarge horizons and explore utopias, as well as to inspire self-reflection and hope in every generation.*”

Building Social Capital. Educating the individual usually enables him or her to advance materially. The explicit and widely understood promise to the individual seeking to be educated is that education will facilitate his or her economic success. Delivering on this promise to every Filipino is then viewed simplistically as the formula for economic success as a nation. The idea is that if every Filipino is educated, then everyone can advance economically, which will then enable the country to advance its economy.

Educating everyone in the nation creates a society that is more capable of advancing its collective interests far beyond the mere aggregation of individual successes. Social capital, like any other form of financial or physical capital, is productive because it makes possible the achievement of certain ends that would not otherwise be attainable in its absence.

Norm of Generalized Reciprocity. Imagine a Philippine society where every person is educated and has therefore imbibed the common knowledge, values, capacities, and aspirations as everyone else. Such a society is likely to exhibit the norm of “generalized reciprocity” which refers to ‘a continuing relationship



of exchange that is at any given time unrequited or unbalanced, but that involves mutual expectations that a benefit granted now should be paid in the future.”


Such a state is somewhat akin to Filipino cultural practices of *utang na loob*, *bayanihan*, *paluwagan*, and *pakikisama*. Employed by all members of a community and a nation of persons who are all equally educated, these cultural values can be a highly productive component of social capital allowing communities and the whole country to efficiently restrain opportunism and resolve the well-known problems of collective action such as free-riding, cut-throat competition, and individual refusal to serve the public good.

Social Solidarity. Material progress of the nation will follow the emergence of more broadly based conscious social solidarity made possible by education for all. It will not be the other way around, as widely enjoyed material progress is unlikely without social solidarity nor will economic advance by itself provide the basis for social solidarity.

Poor families do not rise from poverty by breaking up to pursue individual ambitions, or by making children earn instead of studying, or by making wrong investments in bad education or in pursuit of questionable livelihood for quick and easy money. Similarly, the whole country will not rise from poverty by ignoring the many who are uneducated in favor of the few who are the most talented, or by taking short-cuts in the proper formation of each generation in favor of their immediate economic contribution, or by making bad decisions on public spending for education and livelihood of the many who are poor.

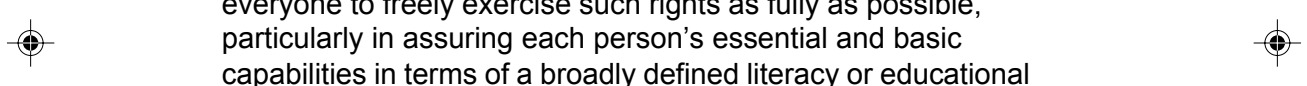
This is about educating a nation by educating each member of that nation on the belief that only a nation of free educated individuals can achieve its collective goals.

Full Exercise of Freedom by All. Education for all is really about assuring the capacity to fully exercise freedom by all.



Education is part of the “*substantive freedom – the capabilities – to choose a life one has reason to value*” since education provides a person with “*alternative combinations of functionings or lifestyles that are feasible for her or him to achieve*”. In this perspective, poverty is seen as principally the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely as lowness of incomes. Of course, low income is clearly one of the reasons for the deprivation of a person’s capabilities, and therefore one important aspect of poverty. Therefore, education that truly expands the capabilities of people with low incomes to freely choose lives they have reason to value, is the central part of the ‘education for all’ agenda.

Our country has clearly chosen the path of democracy and free markets because we value the free exercise of political and economic rights by themselves, apart from the larger benefits we have reason to believe will come as matter of course from the free exercise of these rights.



It is, therefore, crucial that our society decides to truly enable everyone to freely exercise such rights as fully as possible, particularly in assuring each person’s essential and basic capabilities in terms of a broadly defined literacy or educational competence. The point of ‘education for all’ is not merely to turn peasants, fisherfolks, vendors, etc. into Filipinos, but to enable them to become truly free Filipinos. Then they can define and determine for themselves collectively what kind of a nation the Philippines can be.

Realize, Resolve, Reform

The first and most important resolution must be to reform the way our country addresses basic education. It is important that all educated Filipinos act now, not merely issue documents, make statements or publish declarations. It is important to focus the actions on strategic matters that are also feasible. For example, the education sector must lobby to government for increased budget on capacity building, infrastructure, research and development of new curricula that are globally competitive, etc. What will not do is merely a little more resources (as these can



easily be overwhelmed as they have been in the past by population growth and inflation) or some minor policy changes on the margin (as these can easily be reversed or undone by declines in the whole system).

There are limits to how much more resources can be mobilized for basic education. The economy is not likely to yield much more than the current modest rates of growth in total output. Public spending for basic education is not likely to expand radically as fiscal deficits will have to be gradually eliminated to prevent a debt crisis. Words that remain in the minds of readers or listeners without changing their behavior will not make a difference. What is crucial is the substance, vigor, depth, and reality of reform.

The main body of this Plan offers proposed reforms that if implemented with intelligence and energy, can alter the nation's present course and move us towards finally and truly realizing basic education for all.

D. Nine Most Urgent and Critical Tasks

The nine main tasks may be categorized into two general classes. Successful execution of six “production tasks” will yield the desired educational outcomes. But an adequate foundation and supportive environment created by the three “enabling tasks” will be necessary to sustain effective implementation of the production tasks.

A. Six Production Tasks

1. **Better Schools: Make every school continuously perform better.** Instruments for every school to assess its capabilities and performance in attaining EFA goals are developed, introduced, propagated, and adopted. Stakeholders at every school – school heads, teachers, students, parents, and community leaders - use the process and results of school assessment as their platform for identifying and implementing school or community actions for continuous (and accountable)



improvement of school quality. The assessment process leads to the formulation of a “social contract” between the school and the community, with the support of the educational authorities. Activities are geared to get stakeholders at every school in the country to take collective responsibility for their own school’s educational performance.

2. ECCD: Make expansion of early childhood care and development (ECCD) coverage yield more EFA benefits.

Cost effective quality assurance standards are defined for early



childhood care and development programs for pre-school aged children between three to five years old. National government funding is made available to co-finance local government programs meeting quality assurance standards that cover on a priority basis the children of the least educated parents.

3. Alternative Learning Systems: Transform non-formal and informal interventions into an alternative learning system (ALS) yielding more EFA benefits. Cost-effective alternative

learning options for achieving adult functional literacy in regional languages, Filipino, and English are defined and propagated. National government funding is provided to finance the integration of these alternative learning options for the effective acquisition of functional literacy of adults as an essential and routine part of every public, private and civil society socio-economic development initiative reaching disadvantaged persons and communities. Adult literacy organizations work more closely with organizations already involved in community development and poverty alleviation.



- 4. Teachers:** Get all teachers to continuously improve their teaching practices. Measures are adopted to enhance capacity for quality teaching practice among future eligibles for admission into the teaching profession who will work in schools, ECCD or ALS programs. Better policies, standards, and procedures are developed for selecting, hiring, deploying, and utilizing teachers who are more capable of continuously improving their teaching practices. Processes in managing schools and ECCD or ALS programs include: creation of conditions, capabilities, and procedures that can motivate and



enable teachers to continuously improve their teaching practices throughout their career.

5. **Longer Cycle: Adopt a 12-year cycle for formal basic education.** Two more years are added to the existing ten-year basic education schooling that every Filipino child should get.





6. **Curriculum Development: Continue enrichment of curriculum development in the context of pillars of new functional literacy.** Public funding and official encouragement are provided to increase volume, variety, and quality of technical and scientific work on the basic education curriculum and instruction in Filipino and English. The scope of institutional participation in curriculum development for basic education is expanded to include: private schools, non-government organizations, teacher training institutions, individual professional educators and education scientists, and other organizations such as media, advertising, and cultural entities.



B. Three Enabling Tasks:

7. **Financing: Provide adequate public funding for country-wide attainment of EFA goals.** The national government adopts a new public funding framework for basic education that coherently combines national and local government funding to support the most cost-effective local efforts to attain quality basic education outcomes in every locality across the whole country.
8. **Governance:** Create network of community-based groups for local attainment of EFA goals. A knowledge-based popular

movement is launched. It reaches, engages, and organizes persons in each locality, whose education and social consciousness enable them to understand and act responsibly, to form a nationwide network of multisectoral groups advocating, supporting, and monitoring attainment of EFA goals in their respective localities.

9. **Monitoring:** Monitor progress in effort towards attainment of EFA goals. Steady flow of reliable measurements of educational outcomes and of actual effort related to these outcomes are generated. Ample supply of objective information about level of effort expended and extent of progress attained keeps the nation's (and each community's) attention focused on these results. Of particular importance is the development and implementation of indicators of "quality education" based on the measurement of attainment of the EDCOM definition of the educated Filipino.

