

# The Dynamics of Educational Reforms in the Philippine Basic and Higher Education Sectors

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This paper explains the current reforms in basic and higher education in the Philippines. Specifically, internal and external enablers in the educational environment were reviewed as justifications of the reforms both at the national level as well as at the individual teacher. The reforms were treated in the light of four perspectives in the measurement of quality namely; the reputational view, the resources view, the outcomes view and the value-added view.

Keywords: educational reforms, internal and external enablers, quality views

*Show me a people composed of vigorous, sturdy individuals, of men and women healthy in mind and body, courteous, industrious, self-reliant, purposeful in thought as well as in action, imbued with sound patriotism and profound sense of righteousness, with high social ideals and a strong moral fiber, and I will show you a great nation, a nation that will not be submerged, a nation that will emerge victorious from the trials and bitter strife of a distracted world, a nation that will live forever, sharing the common task of advancing the welfare and promoting the happiness of mankind.*

**Manuel L. Quezon: 1936**  
(Commonwealth President)

Education as a dynamic and time-tested social force has long been recognized as the mirror of historical changes. Its dynamism has shown how curricular reforms in the school organization, modes of delivery, policy structures, and even pedagogical philosophies could be altered and enriched by forces in the environment. Changes in the social, economic, cultural, technological and political arenas are forces that every educational system has to reckon with. Failure of any school system to align its modalities to the needs of the times and the varying needs, problems and interests of its clientele may result in either entropy or atrophy. History has become

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an eyewitness as to how and why some educational systems have failed to survive or manage to carve a name or an image.

The Philippine Educational System is a clear example of a boat sailing in a body of changes and challenges. It has in fact followed the same pattern of education as that of the rest of the world. It has passed through various stages of development and undergone dramatic changes depicted in the various epochs of educational evolution. Its long years of exposure and contact with the Spaniards, Americans, and Japanese have created a spectrum of educational variations and lines of emphasis.

The impact of the three colonizers is still reflected on the present-day educational system's thinking and practices. The Educational Decree of 1863 made possible the establishment of a complete secondary and collegiate levels of instruction; the provision for government supervision and control of these schools; and the establishment of teacher training institutions (Estioko, 1994). For almost 333 years, the

Spaniards were successful enough propagating Christianity, thus making the country as the only nation in Asia practicing the Catholic religion. The Americans, for their part, laid down the foundation of a democratic system of education through Act No. 74. The coming of the *Thomasites* not only facilitated the gradual easing of feelings of rancor and animosity of the Filipinos towards the new colonizers but also has infused in them the spirit of democracy and progress as well as fair play (Martin, 1980). More importantly, with academic English Language and Literature as their focus, the American influence on the Filipino mentality has made the Philippines as the third largest English speaking nation in the world. The country's exposure to the Japanese, though short-lived (1942-1945) has made the people realize the country's position as a member of the East-Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere, the true meaning of establishment of a New Order in the Sphere (Martin, 1980).

After the country's liberation from the hands of its colonizers on July 4, 1946, several educational reforms have been instituted and implemented by political leaders as part of their national agenda. These reforms have been made as strategic instruments to realize the following Development Goals of the country (Nolledo, 1995):

- To achieve and maintain an accelerated rate of economic development and social progress
- To assure the maximum participation of all people in the attainment and enjoyment of the benefits of such growth
- To achieve and strengthen national unity and consciousness and preserve, develop and promote desirable cultural, moral and spiritual values in a changing world

Today, educational systems face multiple and diverse problems, among them, that of resources (Bullough et al., 1996). Schools and school systems are being challenged to develop new educational paradigms that will ensure survival and stability and at the same time effect the four pillars of education (Delors, 1996), namely, learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. Such a tall order according to Trow (1994), calls for "soft managerialism", which refers to the maximum effective use of available resources. On the other hand, "hard managerialism" involves redirecting program efforts through the adoption of new management systems, which call for a high degree of openness in school sectors and a kind of systems thinking characterized by alignment of delivery and attunement of

values and value systems. In so doing, educational systems become more responsive and resilient (El-Khawas, 2001); capable of preserving and strengthening quality (Thorens, 1996) and effecting reconstruction efforts (Castillo, 1987); and pursuing quality, equality and equity, institutional diversity, regional development, flexible curricula, stable financing, evaluation and innovation, governability, social relevance and internationalization (Gomez, 1999; Holttä & Malkki, 2000).

The foregoing reality calls for a systemic kind of reform that permeates all aspects of the educational delivery structure. The Philippine Educational System is not a system in isolation. Just like any other system of education, it is open to risks, certainties and uncertainties. Its long history under the different colonizers and not to mention the varying priorities of educational planners vis-à-vis the changing educational and social milieus has rendered it a system of vitality and reflectivity. Hence, this paper provides an avenue to explore various reform efforts initiated at the national level as shaped and influenced by variables operating in the internal and external environments of the school.

## **The Philippine Educational System**

Today, the Philippine School system is said to be one of the largest in the world. The Congressional Commission on Education Study, popularly known as the EDCOM Report disclosed that enrolment at all levels was 16.5 million as of 1991. Recent statistics from the Department of Education (DepEd) alone reveals that as of Curriculum Year 2000-2001, the combined enrolment size in the basic education system 19,138,635 indicating the dramatic increase in and demand for education in the country. This is the resulting scenario of the country's Education for All policy and the explicit provision of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, to wit:

The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.

Further,

Establish and maintain a system of free public education in the elementary and high school levels. Without limiting the natural right of parents to rear their children, elementary education is compulsory for all children of school age.

With only 10 years of pre-university education, the shortest in East Asia (as compared to the longest, 13, of

countries like Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia) (Manila Times, 1994), the Philippines follows the 6-4-4 Plan of education. The 6 years elementary schooling and the 4 years of secondary education are under the control, regulation and supervision of the Department of Education (DepEd). The concept of *resource dependency* explains why the Education Department exercises supervision and regulation over 7,444 private schools in the country as compared to its power to control, regulate and supervise the operations of 40,336 public elementary and secondary schools (DepEd Fact Sheet, 2001).

The Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM) Report provided the impetus for Congress to pass RA 7722 and RA 7796 in 1994 creating the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), respectively.

The *tri-focalization approach* in the management of the present-day education in the Philippines refocused the DepEd's (RA 9155) mandate to basic education which covers elementary, secondary and non-formal education. TESDA now administers the post secondary, middle-level manpower training and development while CHED is responsible for higher education.

## Bases of Curriculum Reforms in the Philippines

In an excerpt from "School Reform in the New World" (1996), Navarro, in her paper "Educational Reform in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" identified the following global reforms in both the lower and higher education levels (Table 1).

The foregoing reforms pose a great challenge to decision-making at the national and classroom levels.

Decisions made by educational planners and classroom teachers are articulated as curriculum policies and structure, implementation strategies, evaluation procedures and research activities. The way these decisions are made and formulated is based on specific variables operating in the internal and external environments of the education sector. The so-called internal and external enablers, as used by Ornstein and Hunkins (1988) have made reforms in the Philippines possible and have rendered these reforms theoretically grounded. These enablers are gathered and culled by educational agencies from school records, research outputs, textbooks and references and other empirically grounded documents available in the field.

External Enablers include legislation, public opinion, education studies, technological advances, societal demands, and industry demands. Internal Enablers, on other hand, refer to research findings, national testing, new leadership, accreditation, cross-country evaluation and available funds.

Table 2 shows how these external and internal enablers have shaped educational reforms in the Philippines.

The foregoing summarized data and information are the bases used by policy-making bodies in the Philippines to chart the system's directions and concerns, specifically along the areas of school improvement, teacher empowerment, democratization of access to education, curricular alignment and retooling, benchmarking with teaching best practices, and strengthening the academic preparation of students in terms of science and technology, mathematics, language proficiency and technological literacy. Moreover, program planners and decision-makers conduct system-wide investigations with the involvement of various sectors in society to identify prevailing strengths and weaknesses and to propose vital measures with quality, excellence, efficiency, responsiveness as the guiding framework.

Table1. *Educational Reforms in Basic and Higher Education*

Basic Education	Higher Education
Expansion of tertiary level student capacity	Extending public funding to the pre-school age group
System building and institutional streamlining	Central or national government influence on the school curriculum
The shift of the cost of higher education	Intensified emphasis on scientific and technological subject areas
More direct linkage between higher education and industrial research and development	Expanded use of standardized examinations and centralized evaluation procedures to measure student achievement and school performance
Adoption of more quantifiable measure of performance	Greater dependence on the central government to collect, synthesize and report on the performance of educational systems
Greater accountability to the central government	Greater autonomy to schools, thereby doing away with traditional local educational governance

Table 2. *Contextualized Internal and External Enablers in the Philippines*

Enabler	Education studies	Enabler recommendation
Contextualized Enabler	<i>Elementary Level</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase in the number of school, days per year by 8% (from 185 days to at least 200 days)</li> <li>▪ Increase in the daily class time by 36% (from 220 minutes to 300 minutes)</li> <li>▪ Increase in study time for critical subjects such as English, Mathematics and Natural Sciences</li> <li>▪ Administration of the National Elementary Achievement Test (NEAT) to all Grade 6 pupils in all private schools in English, Mathematics and Natural Sciences</li> </ul>
	<i>Secondary Level</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase in the number of school days in a year by 8% (from 185 days to 200 days)</li> <li>▪ Increase in the daily class time by 33% for natural science subjects and home economics (from 60 minutes to 80 minutes)</li> <li>▪ Increase in the number of contact time for academic subjects by allowing individual schools for option to replace Values Education III and IV with either English, Mathematics or Natural Science Subjects.</li> <li>▪ Administration of National Secondary Achievement Test (NSAT) to measure achievement in English, Science and Mathematics</li> </ul>
	<i>Teacher Development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Professionalization of teachers and teaching through the creation of the National Teachers Board under the Regulatory Commission (PRC) which is tasked with giving periodic tests as prerequisite for licensing and certification of teaching competencies</li> <li>▪ Creation of and clear career service paths for promotions and career planning for teachers and administrators</li> <li>▪ Improvement in teachers' welfare and benefits Improvement and strengthening of pre-service service education</li> </ul>
Congressional Committee on Education (EDCOM) 1991	<i>Basic Education Level</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improving access for the poor (run small-scale educational programs; development of larger central schools and subsidize boarding and transportation costs)</li> <li>▪ Improving teacher effectiveness</li> <li>▪ Improving student learning (curriculum reform, increasing the supply of instructional materials and textbooks, programs for early child development, instructional language policy, programs for student assessment, and extending the length of the basic education cycle). Lowering unit costs (More efficient deployment of teachers, use of school mapping rationalize placement of schools, multi-grade teaching).</li> </ul>
	<i>Higher Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Changing the structure and management of higher education Creation of a three-tier public system comprising (i) multidisciplinary state universities focusing on teaching and research; (ii) four-year state colleges focusing on teaching and extension services; and (iii) two-year state colleges focusing on technical and vocational education</li> <li>▪ Improving the quality of teaching and research</li> <li>▪ Introducing a comprehensive program of student financial assistance Improving and expanding the output of university Science and Technology (S&amp;T) programs</li> </ul>
The 1998 Philippine Education Sector Study (PESS)	<i>Basic Education Level</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improving access for the poor (run small-scale educational programs; development of larger central schools and subsidize boarding and transportation costs)</li> <li>▪ Improving teacher effectiveness</li> <li>▪ Improving student learning (curriculum reform, increasing the supply of instructional materials and textbooks, programs for early child development, instructional language policy, programs for student assessment, and extending the length of the basic education cycle). Lowering unit costs (More efficient deployment of teachers, use of school mapping rationalize placement of schools, multi-grade teaching).</li> </ul>
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Table 2. *Continued*

Enabler	Technological Advances	Enabler Recommendation
Contextualized Enabler	DepEd's Schools of the Future Project	Making computer education accessible to all school clientele
	ICT as a separate Study Program	ICT cutting across discipline boundaries
	Societal Demands	Operationalization of the Department's Values Education framework (DECS Order NO. 8, s. 1988)
	The Need for Value Transformation	
	Mismatch between the competencies of school graduates and industry requirements	Fostering an improved industry-academe linkage Periodic curriculum review and revision, if necessary
	National Testing	Aligning the instructional system with the competencies tested by the examinations
	National Elementary Achievement Test (NEAT) National Secondary Achievement Test (NSAT)	
Licensure Examinations given by the Professional regulations Commission (PRC)	Improving the achievement rate of both elementary and secondary school students Improving program delivery of the school's study program	
Enabler	Cross-country Evaluation	Enabler Recommendation
Contextualized Enabler	Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, 1995)	Develop renewed culture of science among students
		Teacher Development Programs
		Curricular Simplification
		Production of low-cost instructional materials
	Change in the medium of instruction	
Asiaweek Survey of the Top 50 universities in the Asia	Make use of these rankings as benchmarking mechanisms	
Accreditation	Standardization of Accreditation instruments to be used by FAAP member accrediting agencies	
Federation of Accrediting agencies of the Philippines		
Philippine Quality Award, ISO Certification	Increasing the number of accredited institutions	
Commission on Higher Education's Centers of Excellence and Development	Increasing the number of schools as quality systems institutions	
	Increasing the number of HEI's enjoying deregulated and autonomous status	
	Maintaining institutions with high level of standards in the quality of their instruction, research and extension	

### Current Reforms at the Basic and Higher Education levels

Reform efforts at whichever level of education should be understood from the perspective of causality and paradigmatic shifts. Educational programs, projects and activities are designed, developed, implemented and evaluated from the context of the reasons for which they are intended and in the

light of benefits they will bring to the school in general and the school clientele in particular. In so doing, a clear-cut framework has to be adopted to ensure that individual and collective understanding of systemic strategies is achieved. This is the *raison d'être* as to why the reputational view, resources view, outcome view and value-added view are used to situate the concept of "true quality reform efforts" in the Philippines.

Table 3. *Quality Reforms in Basic Education*

Quality View	Reputational View	Reform Strategies
		<p><i>Checkless Payroll System</i> Aims to remove the bottleneck that have delayed salaries and started the teacher on the vicious cycle of debt and deduction</p> <p><i>Loan Restructure</i> Aims to make credit sources available to teachers with low interest rates.</p> <p><i>Increasing the Take Home Pay</i> The DepEd stopped erosions in the salary of teachers by correcting unauthorized deductions by private lending agencies; by giving clothing allowances in cash; by acting against illegal contributions and by stopping excessive X-Ray fees.</p> <p><i>Increase in Election Per Diem</i> An increase from 800 to 900 Php was made and stipulated through MOA that teachers be paid directly and on the election day.</p> <p><i>Salary Increase</i> Aims to keep the salary structure keep in touch with reality. The end-goal is a public school system with a professional corps so much that when a 20 year old graduate becomes a teacher, she or he will have enough opportunity to move up the career ladder, support a family after marriage and by the time she or he retires at age 65, the educational system would have optimized her or his creativity and experience for the benefit of the students.</p>
Education Reform	Improving Teacher's Welfare	
Quality View	Success Indicators	Reform Strategies
		<p><i>Zero Collection Policy</i> The DepEd strictly implemented the ban on collections of contributions and fees during enrolment.</p>
	Widening the Poor's Access to the School	<p><i>Non- Commercialization</i> The DepEd has stopped all official endorsements or accreditation of goods and services as endorsements distort market forces. The Department institutional name and logo will henceforth be used for public purposes only.</p>
Reputational View	Good Governance Measures	<p><i>Increased Public Access</i> The Department entertains problems and suggestions of ordinary citizens through text messaging, e-mail, letters, phone, through a weekly radio program and by being available to the media</p> <p><i>Transparency or the "Sunshine Principle"</i> Civil society has been involved in formulating educational policy; specifically in evaluating textbook content, improving teacher's welfare, improving the curriculum and in solving particular problems of public and private schools.</p>
		<p><i>Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP) and Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDIP)</i> Initiates the procurement system for cheaper textbooks, desks and armchairs.</p>
Resources View	Decentralized Programs	<p><i>Adopt-A-School Project (RA 8525)</i> The DepEd has tapped into the local business sector and external funding bodies for assistance such as school building and facilities construction.</p> <p><i>Multigrade Program in Philippine Education (MPPE)</i> This is supported by UNDP and UNICEF which aims to maximize the utilization of existing physical and manpower resources in order to expand the delivery of services where there are small class sizes.</p>

Table 3. *Continued*

Quality View	Success Indicators	Reform Strategies
Outcomes View	Improved Teacher Training Programs	<p>At the classroom level, deliberate efforts have been made to continually upgrade the quality and competence of the teaching force. New joint programs for teacher training were initiated which complemented the summer workshops and degree work schemes. These endeavors provided opportunities for the teachers to earn degrees and continuing education units without necessarily leaving their respective work assignments.</p> <p><i>DepEd Preschool Program</i> This is intended for disadvantaged areas, specifically in the priority provinces of the Social Reform Agenda. The program provided training for 5-year olds before they formally entered Grade 1.</p>
	Institutionalization of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)	<p><i>DepEd Preschool Service Contracting Scheme</i> This is a six months preschool program for prospective grade I pupils in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class municipalities and urban poor areas.</p> <p><i>Early Childhood Development Program with ADB and WB</i> This is aimed at ensuring that pupils entering Grade 1 have appropriate preparatory learning experience.</p>
	Strengthened English, Science and Mathematics Education	<p><i>Philippine Australian Project in Basic Education (PROBE)</i> A five-year project which seeks to strengthen English, Science and Mathematics education at the public elementary and secondary levels.</p> <p><i>Project RISE (Rescue Initiatives in Science Education)</i> This program, initiated by DepEd and Department of Science and Technology (DOST) aims at enhancing the teaching capabilities of Science and Mathematics teachers at both elementary and secondary level. Participants are Grade 3 teachers at the elementary level and General science and Mathematics I teachers at the secondary level. Non-major teachers are given first priority.</p>
	Modernized Basic Education	<p><i>Computerization Program</i> The program aims to expose students and teachers to recent technological advances</p> <p><i>Localization and Indigenization of Curriculum</i> This strategy intends to make the curriculum more-learner focused, enhance creativity and innovations at the school level and heighten the relevance of learning. Media channels were utilized for promoting and coordinating government-initiated historical and cultural celebrations with the DepEd units down to the school level.</p>
Value-Added View	Institutionalization of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)	<p><i>DepEd Preschool Program</i> This is intended for the disadvantaged areas, specifically in the priority provinces of the Social Reform Agenda. The program provided training for 5-year olds before they formally entered into Grade 1.</p> <p><i>DepEd Preschool Service Contracting Scheme</i> This is a six months preschool program for prospective grade I pupils in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class municipalities and urban poor areas.</p> <p><i>Early Childhood Development Program with ADB and WB</i> This is aimed at ensuring that pupils entering Grade 1 have appropriate preparatory learning experience.</p>
	Improved Implementation of the Lingua Franca Project	<p><i>Lingua Franca Project</i> This a pilot project which aims to define and implement a national bridging program from the vernacular (Tagalog, Ilocano, and Cebuano) to Filipino and later to English. Through the bridging program, the lingua franca will be used as the language of instruction to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills.</p>

The four quality measurement views are based on the paper “Quality Assurance in Higher Education” presented by Father Nebres, S. J. during the Centennial Congress on Higher Education” on October 28-29, 1998. According to Nebres (1998), the reputational view assumes that quality cannot be measured and is best inferred through the judgment of experts in the field. The resources view emphasizes the human, financial and physical assets available to the program. The outcomes view of quality draws attention from resources to the quality of the product. Faculty publications, accomplishments by graduates, and satisfaction of employers with program graduates are indicators used. The value-added view directs attention to what the institution has contributed to a student’s education. The focus of this view is on what the student has learned while he was enrolled.

The foregoing interpretations of quality views were reinterpreted and operationalized to serve the purpose of this paper. The reputational view, as used in this paper refers to the reforms instituted by the educational agency intended to improve the image of the system. The resources view includes programs, projects and activities that ensure that both human and non-human resources are optimized to serve the ever-increasing educational needs of the system’s catchment area. The outcomes view pertains to the educational paradigms introduced for purposes of upgrading the delivery craft of teachers and increasing the access rate of students to educational opportunities. Finally, globalization, localization, and improved networking mechanism efforts are termed as value-added reforms in this paper.

### ***The Department of Education (DepEd)***

The Department of Education is almost one hundred years old. Since its inception, it has grown to become one of the largest government bureaucracies largely due to the ever-increasing school age population and the high value given by Filipinos to education. This department continually pursues the Constitutional mandate of ensuring the peoples’ right to education, to wit: “The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.” (The 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article XIV, Sec. 1)

The Department’s two primordial goals are to (1) raise the academic standards of basic education; and (2) enhance administrative efficiency in the delivery of educational services in the light of its vision to “develop a highly competent, civic-spirited, life-skilled and God-loving Filipino youth who actively participate in and contribute towards the

building of a humane, healthy and productive society.” And “Bawat Graduate- Bayani at Marangal (*Every Graduate is a Hero and a Dignified Person*).

Programs, projects and activities of the department are based on the identified Five Priority Sector Activities (PSAs) as contained in the national reform agenda of the government. These are (a) expanding access to basic education; (b) improving the quality and relevance of basic education; (c) improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the schools and the system (central, region, division); (d) institutionalization of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD); and (e) strengthening of local culture and arts, media, and school sports.

Table 3 presents the reform strategies instituted in basic education system based on the four quality easures. With the implementation of reforms in basic education, both tangible and intangible benefits were realized by the system. Specifically, the reforms have truly rendered teaching as a profession and teachers as professionals as promulgated by Republic Act No. 7836. The reforms have in fact conferred upon teachers the dignity and the worth they have been dreaming of through the years. Today, teachers from government institutions are now at par with their private counterparts not only in terms of monetary benefits but also in terms of opportunities for professional growth through attendance in various in-service education programs intended to upgrade their conceptual, technical and human relation skills. Through these reforms, highly bureaucratic have been simplified and have given teachers the status as persons and as professionals. Moreover, education has become a great equalizer procedures with the poor enjoying wide access to educational opportunities via formal and alternative learning structures. The present-day curriculum has infused the use of information technology to facilitate access to information by both the teacher and the learner. The revitalized curriculum has made the instructional delivery “hi-teach”, hi-touch” and “hi-tech.”

### **The Commission on Higher Education (CHED)**

Higher education with its missional triptych of teaching, research and community service needs to continuously change and evolve in order to adapt and respond continuously to the challenges and opportunities of the ever-changing national, global environments of the 21st century and the era of intelligence restructuring (CHED, 2000; Conceicao & Heitor, 1999; University Council, 1998).

Table 4. *Quality Reforms in Higher Education*

Quality View	Success Indicators	Reform Strategies
Reputational View	Quality Program Delivery	<i>Establishment and Development of Centers of Excellence (COEs) and Centers of Development (CODs)</i> It aims to provide leadership and assistance to other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) within their areas of coverage in terms of academic innovations, program and methodology/curriculum development and other quality upgrading activities.
	Establishment of the Zonal Research Centers (ZRCs)	This is envisioned to be the extension of office of CHED in selected HEIs in the regions to decentralize the research management of the CHED Research Division. It is tasked with, amongst other things, to implement viable strategies to continuously upgrade the research capabilities of HEIs..
	Improved Institutional and Program Delivery Practices	<i>Benchmarking and Comparative Studies of Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSGs) of Asian, and European Universities in CHED Priority Areas</i> This is being done to identify the “best practices” of institutions of high caliber for possible adoption without losing sight of the local culture.
	Improved Publication Index	<i>Publication of the Refereed Journal of Higher Education</i> Aims at determining quality research outputs, studies and professional paper for possible publications in a high impact journal.
	Improved Educational Delivery Services	<i>Institutional Capability Building Project</i> The availability of scholarships and fellowship grants abroad was consistently maintained through collaboration and coordination and coordination with foreign countries <i>Policy on International Linkages</i> The Polices and Guidelines on Linkages and Twinning Programs were recently approved to establish legal bases for the execution of plans relative to networking and twinning.
	Resources View	Expanded Access to Educational Opportunities
Greater Access to Educational Services		<i>Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP)</i> This is an education assessment scheme that recognizes knowledge, skills and prior learning obtained by individuals from non-formal and informal educational experiences
Outcomes View		Improved Institutional and Program Delivery Practices
	Responsive and Timely Curriculum	Emphasis on a curriculum that is needs-based, competency-based, values-based and future-based.

Table 4. *Continued*

Quality View	Success Indicators	Reform Strategies
Value Added View	Improved Information System Delivery	<i>Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS)</i> This was designed to provide improved data gathering and processing for effective decision-making of the Commission through the use of Internet Technology. It was also designed to respond to the challenge of adopting IT in its information management to be eventually shared with other components of the Philippine education system, specifically the DepEd, TESDA, and other concerned institutions.
		<i>State Universities and Colleges Network (SUCNET)</i> This project was initiated by PASUC (Philippine Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PASUC) to enhance the institutional capacity of SCUs through the use of modern technology and promote resources sharing among SCUs through library resources and pools of experts.

The Philippine Commission on Higher Education ensures the attainment of empowered and, globally competitive Filipinos through (a) provision of undergraduate education competitive with international standards of quality and excellence; (b) generation and diffusion of knowledge in the broader range of disciplines relevant and responsive to the dynamically changing domestic and international environment; (c) broadening access of deserving and qualified Filipinos to higher education opportunities; and (d) optimization of social, institutional and individual returns and benefits from the utilization of higher education resources.

In the light of the preceding goals of the Commission, Table 4 highlights the major reforms of the higher education sector in the Philippines.

Reforms initiated in higher education were intended to avoid obsolescence, ensure survival and stability, and meet civic/community responsibility (Nuttman & Cheong, 1995; Van der Wende, 2001); and to establish better connection between academic and civic knowledge, through collaborative agenda setting, research and scholarly work (Eckert & Henschel, 2000; Walshok, 2000). Specifically, institutions of higher learning in the Philippines are now in the process of institutionalizing various program efforts that speak of quality and excellence through voluntary accreditation systems, programmatic research agenda, partnering with the community and business for a more relevant and industry-oriented curriculum, and automation of various institutional processes for improved information delivery.

### Conclusions

Today, formal schooling is no longer preparation for life where the linear paradigm is to study, work and retire. There is an urgent need for a paradigm shift (Cheong, 2000). Education today is not only life itself. More importantly, it is investment in human capital. Any systemic reform in education calls for a high degree of pro-activity, which in turn, defines the system’s quality. Quality education is a process which involves focusing on meeting and exceeding customer expectations, continuous improvement, sharing responsibilities with employees and reducing scrap and rework (Schargel, 1991). The heart of defining quality “is the mechanism of policy formulation, planning, delivery and evaluation of education” (Hallak, 1995) to effect desired products of education. There is need to underscore the fact that quality products in education systems come from quality processes (Kasim, 1995).

Despite the fact that the Philippines is committed to the ideals of liberal democracy (Castillo, 1987), its educational system is still bound to be globally oriented but locally responsive and at the same time ensure program quality. If education is to contribute to the maintenance and development of a true social order and as a vital instrument to combat social ills, then a continuous re-examination of its retooling efforts is deemed necessary.

There is no doubt that reforms instituted and implemented at both the national and local levels are geared toward the attainment of efficiency and effectiveness; quality and excellence; relevance and responsiveness; and access and equity. These indices once achieved, determine the viability of the program efforts of educational agencies in the country.

Efforts to reform the program delivery call for aggressive but participative management strategies and a dynamic and transformational leadership. Moreover, quality investment efforts are to be supported by empirical studies that measure the internal efficiency and the external productivity of the system.

The Philippine Educational System cannot dissociate itself from worldwide realities. The direction towards which the system is moving is beset with problems, issues and dilemmas taking place in its internal and external milieus. Change Priority Areas will have to be aligned with the system's capability and coping ability. A new order will have to be defined guided by a sound practice of truly internalized human values coupled with a strong political will in the light of the philosophy of change. The time has finally come when efforts from the national to the individual level are needed to create a profound positive balance between growth and equity; internationalism and relevance; technological modernity and cultural preservation; and individual development and cohesion.

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*Notes:* Data and information presented in Tables 2, Table 3, and Table 4 were culled from various government reports and edicts such Making Education Work (1993), Philippine Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The 1998 Philippine Education Sector Study (1996), PRODED Primer (1982), Bureau of Secondary Education Manual of Information (1993), CHED Order No. 32, s. 2001, CHED CY 1999 Annual Report, CHED Long-Term Higher Education Development Plan 2001-2010 (2000), Briefing Materials 2002 Budget Hearing (2001), DECS Annual Report (1999), DECS Fact Sheet (2001) and The PCER Report (2000).

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