Development Education Planning In The Philippines

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Through the Senior Specialist grant at the Institute of Advanced Projects that the East-West Center has given me, I have been pursuing and am about to complete my study-research on planning education for national development with particular reference to the Philippines.

The report of my study-research will include three principal parts. The first part will deal with a summary discussion of development education planning in general—its history, principles and techniques, administrative organization for planning, and common problems encountered in educational planning. The second part will deal with a discussion of critical problems and issues in Philippine education which must be resolved for purposes of planning. The third part—and this should probably be my most useful contribution to our planning efforts—will be a list of practical suggestions pertinent and applicable to the development of a strategy for educational planning for economic and social development in the Philippines.

Systematic planning on a long-range and comprehensive basis is valuable in any large enterprise in order to insure the integration and continued operation of the various phases of the enterprise. National planning for economic and social development, including educational planning, is a common practice at present in developing as well as economically developed countries. But especially for a country like the Philippines which, on the one hand is confronted with needs and problems that are both multifarious and of vast magnitude, and on the other possesses limited resources to meet such needs and problems, overall and long-range planning is an urgent necessity. Through the adoption and implementation of a properly developed long-range plan, the country will be able to maximize the value and impact of the application and utilization of the resources available by dealing with the educational needs and problems in an integrated wholesale fashion instead of on a piecemeal basis. Through the study and projection of educational needs for a long period of time extending into several years and decades, the country is enabled to plan out educational expenditures well in advance and to muster all the resources that may be made available to meet such expenditures. It is able to establish priorities in educational expenditures on the basis of their urgency and their relative contribution to economic growth. Through the integrated plan, the possibility of duplication and consequent waste can be forestalled.

Some of the problems which face Philippine education today are of such magnitude that they appear to be almost insurmountable under existing conditions in the country. One problem is the exploding population. The population of the Philippines today is approximately 30 million and is increasing by 3.2% annually, without any reversal of the trend in sight. Even giving allowance for around 15% of the children of school age who live so far away from schools and who for this and other reasons will not be able to attend schools, and for an additional 10% who will enroll in private schools, the government must provide facilities to enroll more than half a million additional pupils every year.

Financial Problems

The financial requirements needed to meet salaries of new teachers, additional classrooms and equipment, and textbooks and other instructional materials are such that they will tax the financial capacity of the government almost to the breaking point unless this problem is considered in relation to other important needs of the government.

Even in terms of current educational needs alone, the government has never been able to provide adequate support for the educational program. About 40% of the buildings now in use are substandard, many dilapidated. The supply of textbooks and instructional aids is not enough to supply all the pupils. Even with the five-year textbook replenishment program now in operation with the aid of the United States, the ratio of textbooks to pupils will only be around 80%.

The shortage of funds for education has also prevented the employment of additional supervisory personnel to help the increased number of teachers who are in critical need of close supervision because of their inadequate pre-service preparation. Administrative help is also

needed by school principals to relieve them of the burden of routine activities so that they can devote their time of supplying educational leadership to their teachers.

Vocational schools and courses which have been established for the training of industrial and agricultural workers are ill-equipped to give effective instruction. As a result students are being graduated who do not possess the vocational skills expected of them.

To be sure, there are many other shortages and shortcomings in the present educational system that only increased financial resources will be able to meet, but it is believed that systematic and long-range integrated planning of the entire educational enterprise will constitute a first step toward the eventual liquidation of this problem. This financial situation which obtains in the Philippines seems paradoxical when it is realized that the National Government is already devoting approximately 30% of its operational annual budget to education. It is a certainty that it will not be able to further increase the share of the budget allotted to education without unduly jeopardizing the other essential services of the National Government.

The present system of financing the elementary and secondary levels of education, which constitute the base of the educational system, is both inadequate and unstable. A long-range educational plan must envision a revised system of educational financing that will raise enough funds to meet increasing educational costs and that will earmark specific sources of revenue for school purposes. The gross defect of the present scheme of school financing is that the National Government exclusively bears the burden of school support. The revised system must provide for the participation of the provincial and municipal governments in financing elementary and secondary education. In this connection, the question may be asked: Are the people in a position to bear an increased financial burden so that they can support their schools adequately? A few comparative figures will serve to answer this question in the affirmative. In 1961-62 the percentage of the National Gross Income devoted to education was 3.68% while that of the Gross National Product was 3.22%. The corresponding figures for Japan were 6.26% and 5%, respectively; but Japan is of course an economically advanced country. In the African countries, the average expenditure for education is expected to be 4% of the Gross National Product in 1965 and 5% in 1970. The Philippines is certainly better developed economically than most, if not all, of the African countries.

Recent Trends

One of the recent trends in economic and educational thought is the recognition of the major role that education plays in economic development. Although the exact and detailed nature of that role is still a matter for continuing research and investigation, it has been amply demonstrated in recent contemporary economic development that good education and economic progress go hand in hand. Examples of countries are many which, despite their relatively poor natural resources, have been able to attain substantial economic progress because of their advanced state of educational development. Japan and Denmark are often cited as the best examples of these countries. On the other hand, many more countries can also be cited which possess abundant natural resources but have attained slow educational development because of their low educational level.

One of the objectives of educational planning in the Philippines is to convince the national leaders, particularly those in the government, of the primacy of education as an instrument for economic development. This is necessary so that education may receive the high importance and priority that it deserves in national plans for economic and social development. It is a fact that not many of those who decide on the allocation of government revenues and resources among the different branches of the government believe in this truism. To them education is not an "income-producing" branch of the government and therefore insofar as the factors for economic growth are concerned, education occupies a low priority and importance, if it is regarded at all as such.

This is probably the reason why despite the fact that there have been successive "socio-economic programs" adopted by the government since 1950, there has not been any similar long-range planning for education either separate from or as a part of the larger socio-economic plan. It is true that there has always been "some" provision for education in those national socio-economic programs but such provision was neither based on recommendations of the educational authorities nor prepared and decided upon with their participation. It was only a year ago that an honest-to-goodness attempt at long-range educational planning was started. To date only *ad hococ* machinery has been set up to undertake this most delicate and important task.

A peculiar phenomenon that exists in the Philippines relating to education is the domination of education in the secondary and university levels by private enterprise. About 65% of all the secondary school population in the country are enrolled in private schools while 95% of all college and university students in the country are enrolled in private educational institutions. This is a situation that presents an almost insuperable obstacle to overall national planning for education. Since these schools are not under the control of

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