

# Chapter 13

## Philippine Experience in Dual Training System



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Dual system education programs combine school-based (theoretical training) and work-based (practical training) education. This is intended to address the job-skills mismatch and guarantee that students will gain adequate knowledge and practical skills that will enhance their employability. Such an approach is operationalized in the form of apprenticeships, on-the-job trainings, and internships, among others. Many highly developed countries like Australia, Germany, and Switzerland have successfully adopted this approach in their vocational education systems and have benefited remarkably from it.

Germany has one of the most esteemed and modeled-after training systems. The Government of Germany identifies shared responsibility between government, employers, and trade unions as one of its key strengths in ensuring quality education while also responding to the emerging needs of the economy.<sup>1</sup> Australia, which has adopted the dual training system approach, likewise highlights shared responsibility among stakeholders as the key to a successful and efficient Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system. Aside from industry engagement, effective regulation, and a quality training market, its notable strength is its qualifications system, which “meets both industry’s needs (employment skills match) and individuals’ needs (portable skills to move across the labor market and support life-long learning).”<sup>2</sup> Given its success in maintaining low youth unemployment levels, Germany, together with other countries adopting the same system (Austria, Denmark, Luxembourg, and Switzerland), has launched an online “Apprenticeship Toolbox”

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<sup>1</sup>Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The German Vocational Training System. Retrieved from <https://www.bmbf.de/en/the-german-vocational-training-system-2129.html>.

<sup>2</sup>Caggiano, M. 2018. Technical Vocational Education and Training Models in the World: The Australian VET System. Retrieved from <https://sustainableskills.org/australia-tvet-experience/>.

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to provide support for decision-makers who want to implement the key principles of dual training system schemes.<sup>3</sup>

In the Philippines, the Dual Training System (DTS) was institutionalized in February 1994 through Republic Act No. 7686 or the Dual Training System Act of 1994. The law mandates the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) to promote, coordinate, and administer the dual training system and provides tax incentives to encourage the participation of companies in the DTS.

## Issues and Challenges

Despite many initiatives and government programs, reducing unemployment continues to be a major challenge in the Philippines. Job-skills mismatch is often cited as one of the reasons for high unemployment, especially among the youth. Particularly, graduates are not equipped with the skills and competencies needed by industries. On the other hand, many businesses are also not aware of the qualifications that they need.

Reforms were instituted in basic education in 2013 through the K to 12 Program, to strengthen the relevance of the curriculum and better prepare high school graduates, whether they want to seek college education or employment. The Technical–Vocational–Livelihood (TVL) track introduced in senior high school was particularly designed to equip learners with job-ready skills. However, as with any newly implemented initiative, K to 12 Program implementation is facing birth pains or challenges in terms of lack of resources (i.e., infrastructure, teachers, classrooms, materials). The TVL track is particularly facing gaps in facilities (for practical learning, skills development), needed human resources (assessors for national certificates), and limited companies willing to engage/support student immersion programs.

## Proposed Solutions

The DTS is being promoted by the Government, because such an approach specifically addresses the issue of job-skills mismatch, given that it promotes partnerships among Technical Vocational Institutions (TVIs). Such collaboration enables schools and TVIs not only to determine the skills needs of industries, but also to foster linkages that will encourage companies to directly employ students/graduates and/or support their partner schools and institutions (through, e.g., curriculum development, sharing of knowledge and facilities, investment in resources).

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Local studies in the Philippines affirm that dual training systems and other TVET modalities that promote industry partnerships result in high employment rates.<sup>4</sup> Further, a cost-benefit study also shows that DTS produces positive spillover effects, because DTS-trained workers are more productive.<sup>5</sup> However, despite these benefits, DTS accounts for only a very small portion of trainees in the TVET sector in the Philippines.<sup>6</sup> Promoting DTS as a mode of TVET delivery continues to be a challenge, despite existing laws and incentives intended to scale it up.

## Examples of Good Practices in the Philippines

In the Philippines, several government–academe–industry collaborative initiatives and innovative programs have brought promising results in TVET.

### *K to 12 Plus Project*

When a TVL track was rolled out as part of the K to 12 basic education reform in the Philippines, the K–12 Plus Project was initiated by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI). It supports the K to 12 Program of the Government by introducing these features: (i) conduct of industry needs assessments, (ii) bundling of competencies to make the graduates attractive to employers, (iii) training supervisors in companies to become qualified in-company trainers, and (iv) increasing immersion in companies from 80 h to up to 1,000 h. With the goal of preparing students for high-quality jobs in the labor market, the K to 12 Plus Project provides Level III and Level IV Skills Certificate programs that last from six months to two years. It is also working on a ladderized arrangement to allow its students/graduates to work and enable them to pursue higher education later on, should they want to.

An important and strong feature of the K to 12 Plus Project is its facilitation of linkages among government, training centers, and industries. They have engaged with key industry chambers and associations (e.g., Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Human Resources Development Foundation, Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, German–Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Mindanao Microfinance Council) and German partners German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) and German Confederation of Skilled

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<sup>4</sup>Orbeta, A.C., and Esguerra, E.F. 2016. The National System of Technical Vocational Education and Training in the Philippines: Review and Reform Ideas. PIDS Discussion Paper 2016-07.

<sup>5</sup>Mapa, D., Almeda, J. and Albis, M. 2016, “Cost-Benefit Study of the Dual Training System (DTS) in the Philippines.” School of Statistics, University of the Philippines Diliman.

<sup>6</sup>Orbeta, A.C., and Esguerra, E.F. 2016. *op. cit.*

Crafts and Small Businesses (ZHD), and government agencies such as the Department of Education (DepEd), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

The K to 12 Plus Project and PCCI also supported initiatives to promote the Dual Training System (DTS) among businesses. Because many businesses do not know the qualifications they need and are not aware of the benefits of Dual Education and Training (DET), PCCI conducted qualifications mapping and identified training programs/institutions wherein businesses can obtain these qualifications. The qualifications mapping also serves as information for prioritizing of DET programs. A cost-benefit study of DTS implementation in the Philippines was conducted by PCCI, which revealed that the benefits of the DTS outweigh the costs incurred by businesses if they implement it. This will help PCCI convince businesses to adopt and/or engage DTS.

### ***e-TESDA: TESDA Online Program (TOP)***

The e-TESDA or TESDA Online Program (TOP), an initiative launched in 2012, caters to unreached Filipinos locally and globally through information and communication technology driven learning tools and methods. TESDA is also notably the first Philippine institution to offer free Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) in the country.<sup>7</sup> The goal of the TOP is to help workers trapped in low-paying jobs to upskill and find better job opportunities by giving them access to technical education anytime and anywhere for free. Its primary target clientele is those who do not have the opportunity to physically attend trainings due to workload, physical disabilities, and other restrictions. These include students, out-of-school youths, unemployed adults, local and overseas Filipinos workers, and professionals.

The program uses the Moodle platform to display both video and texts for self-directed learning. There are 647,000 registered users, 77% of them in the Philippines and the rest from abroad, mostly from countries with high concentrations of Filipinos. The male–female ratio is about equal (50:50).

Further, a case study also revealed that the TOP shows potential for improving the efficiency of TVET by reducing training costs.<sup>8</sup> Through the use of a blended program, students may combine face-to-face instruction with online learning. Such an approach allows students to finish the course in a much shorter time while still acquiring the required competencies and being certified successfully.<sup>9</sup> Surveys done

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<sup>7</sup>Dumaua-Cabautan, M., Calizo, S. C., Quimba, F.M., and Pacio, L.C. 2018. E-Education in the Philippines: The Case of Technical Education and Skills Development Authority Online Program. Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) Discussion Paper 2018-08.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

by TESDA have also showed that e-TESDA users who have undergone national assessment perform well (high passing rate at 90%).<sup>10</sup>

Nonetheless, more needs to be done to maximize the potential of the TOP. Aside from improving the learning modules and course offerings, a daunting challenge for TESDA is the assessment and certification of e-TESDA users, especially those who live abroad. In nearby economies (e.g., Hong Kong, China), TESDA is able to send assessors several times a month. However, in places like Dubai and other countries in the Middle East, sending assessors on a regular basis would be too costly. To ensure sustainability, TESDA is training assessors in far countries and remote places, and exploring the possibility of online assessment for e-TESDA users/graduates.

### ***Don Bosco Training Institute***

The Don Bosco Training Institute, established in 1971, provides skills training to underprivileged youth so that they can find gainful employment. The school produces 800 graduates annually. Some students get free board and lodging. The school receives financial support from donors and equipment donations from corporate partners.

The duration of Don Bosco's training program is 15 months, comprising ten months of school training and five months of On-the-Job Training (OJT). Some students even do their OJT in Dubai, where partner companies are based. One of the keys to the success of Don Bosco's training program is its curriculum. The first two semesters provide students with basic skills, while the third and fourth semesters focus on specific skills required by partner companies. This implies the strong involvement of companies in the development of the training curriculum. As a result of this partnership, the employment rate of graduates is 98%.

Don Bosco has also pursued a successful partnership project with the Porsche Training and Recruitment Center Asia (PTRCA). Aside from financial support, PTRCA has also conducted training of trainers, curriculum development, quality management, and marketing of graduates. As a result, PTRCA received the "Innovation Award for Vocational Education" in 2015 from the German-Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

### ***MFI Foundation***

The MFI Foundation, Inc. (formerly known as the Meralco Foundation) is a nonstock, nonprofit science foundation that provides quality education and technical training anchored on work values to enable Filipinos, especially the less privileged, to be productive and competitive. It has two operating centers that utilize technologies to

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

cater to the industry and agriculture sectors: the MFI Technological Institute and the MFI Farm Business Institute.

The MFI Technological Institute implements dual training system programs and the Industrial Technician Program (ITP), which offers postsecondary, nondegree courses in industrial technologies, especially to less privileged students. These courses are offered with scholarship on a selective basis. The Institute also offers free training under the Special Training for Employment Program (STEP) and Training for Work Scholarship Program (TWSP), in partnership with the Government (TESDA).

The MFI Farm Business Institute aims to provide quality education and training programs for the agribusiness sector, and to serve as a catalyst in the development of agri-entrepreneurship. It targets individuals and communities from all economic strata, gender, age, educational, and professional backgrounds. The MFI Farm Business Institute also partners with the University of Rizal System (URS) and the Management Association of the Philippines to offer a ladderized agriculture-focused entrepreneurship program.

On top of having produced successful graduates, the MFI is recognized as a “Model Center of Excellence” by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Economic Ministers–Japan Economic and Industrial Cooperation Committee, as attested by the Department of Trade and Industry Center for Industrial Competitiveness in industrial, technical, and vocational education.<sup>11</sup> It has become one of the leading TVET institutions by producing competitive and up-to-date programs needed by industry, and by strategically partnering with key government, academe, and industry stakeholders.

## **Application of These Good Practices or Examples**

The models discussed above are easily replicable and scalable, given that their common strengths/features are well-targeted schemes and government–academe–industry linkages. These initiatives have been successful because the programs are focused, well targeted, and aligned with the needs and priorities of government and industry. They maximize their partnerships with stakeholders to identify needs of their target groups and adequately cater to them. The MFI and Don Bosco target poor and underprivileged youth to provide them with quality training, while the e-TESDA program caters to learners unable to physically attend trainings. On the other hand, the K to 12 Plus Project works with technical vocational institutions and enterprises to improve the dual system approach in the K to 12 TVL track. It is also notable that all of these initiatives strategically maximize their multi-stakeholder partnerships to pool the needed resources to achieve their program objectives.

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<sup>11</sup> Information retrieved from <http://apskills.ilo.org/network/mfi-foundation-inc>.

## Implication for the Future

Because of rapid changes in the skills and employment landscape due to the digital revolution, TVET also needs to evolve to become even more responsive to the needs of the economy. Particularly, training systems need to be flexible enough in terms of updating curriculum and adopting new and up-to-date technologies. This also entails capacitating trainers to enable them to swiftly adjust and foster the needed competencies among learners. Scaling up successful and innovative DTS models will be crucial in ensuring flexible training systems because of their strengths and features that facilitate expeditious sharing of labor market information, expertise, and/or resources.

## Conclusion

Strong multi-stakeholder partnerships (among government, industry, schools/TVIs) are crucial in the success of TVET. Linkages brought about by these partnerships allow for strategic and productive opportunities to sustainably implement effective TVET programs. Because the nature of the dual training approach is rooted in such partnerships, promoting it would be a practical strategy to ensure a successful TVET system. As such, there is a need to intensify efforts in scaling up DTS. This would involve stronger advocacies and exploring more enticing incentives that would encourage TVIs, nongovernment organizations, and businesses to engage in DTS.

Link to the presentation material: <https://events.development.asia/materials/20171213/k-12-plus-project-philippines>.

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