

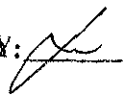
FIFTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



Senate
Office of the Secretary

'11 FEB 22 P5:45

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: 

S.B. No. **2712**

Introduced by SEN. MANNY VILLAR


EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Country Poverty Analysis (CPA) conducted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) identified broad causes of poverty, or factors that conspire to keep poverty levels high and rising in the Philippines. Included as one of the factors is an underperforming agricultural sector and an unfinished land reform agenda.¹ Also from the same report, there has been little intensification, and little expansion in the area under cultivation. Structural weaknesses and other problems in the sector remain unaddressed, which limits the prospects for improved productivity in the sector. As a consequence, poverty rates among farming households have remained very high at over half of all farming households, a proportion virtually unchanged since 1985.²

The Philippine government has declared its commitment to give utmost priority to modernize the agricultural sector in order to deal with the problem of poverty. In relation to this, an increase in the number of a highly competent workforce is needed in order to deliver tangible and expected outputs in this sector. The lack of workforce may be attributed to the continuous decline of enrollees in agriculture courses. Agriculture as a profession has lost its attraction because of the more lucrative job offers from other competing professions. A reflection of the decreasing competitiveness of agricultural courses in the Philippines will ultimately lead to the death of manpower in the sector if not promptly and appropriately aided.

Opportunities in agriculture have to be created, developed and made more lucrative to attract more students to enroll in agriculture courses. In addition, agricultural education policies and curricular programs have to be revised to produce graduates equipped with appropriate and practical knowledge in order to become future agribusiness managers, entrepreneurs and farmers. A strong agricultural sector will reduce poverty thereby uplifting the standard of living not only of our countrymen involved in this sector but also to whole Filipino nation.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

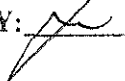

MANNY VILLAR

¹ <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Poverty-in-the-Philippines/chap8.pdf>

² <http://www.adb.org/documents/books/poverty-in-the-philippines/chap6.pdf>

'11 FEB 22 P5:45

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

RECEIVED BY: 

SENATE

S.B. No. 2712

Introduced by SEN. MANNY VILLAR

AN ACT
PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR AGRICULTURE SCHOLARSHIPS, BURSARY AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP ASSISTANCE TO YOUNG FILIPINOS AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress Assembled:

SECTION 1. *Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Agri-Kabataan Program Act of 2011."

SECTION 2. *Statement of Policy.* - The State shall give priority to education, science and technology to accelerate social progress, and promote development. To give realization to this policy, government shall provide opportunities to obtain quality education especially to those poor but qualified students through the granting of scholarships.

SECTION 3. *Objectives.* - The objectives of this Act are:

- a. To develop competency skills and knowledge of students in agricultural technologies and agribusiness;
- b. To provide opportunities to poor but deserving students in order to realize their potentials in agribusiness and entrepreneurship;
- c. To increase food production by utilizing idle lands of state universities and colleges (SUCs);
- d. To commercialize proven viable technologies to increase food production and income of rural communities through the development of livelihoods and markets;
- e. Provide income to students while doing experiential learning and on-the-job training which form part of their degree programs;
- f. Link young farmer-students with credit, financing and marketing institutions; and
- g. Contribute to the alleviation of poverty.

SECTION 4. *Definition of Terms.* – For the purposes of this Act, the following terms shall have the following meaning:

- a. Agri-kabataan scholarship – a scholarship programs designed to benefit poor but deserving graduates of agricultural and vocational high schools including similarly situated freshmen students in agriculture and allied courses;
- b. Agribusiness venture laboratory – laboratory classes of agricultural subjects are designed as business ventures in agricultures such as raising of poultry, goats, corn or rice or crop production and counted as satisfying the laboratory requirement of a course;
- c. Small enterprise technology upgrading program (SET-UP) – a technology transfer program being implemented by the Department of Science and Technology designed to assist small and medium enterprises by providing packages of technologies and interest free capital for the acquisition of technologies.

SECTION 5. *Establishment of a Agri-Kabataan Scholarship Program in State Universities and Colleges in Agribusiness Management and/or Entrepreneurship.* – There is hereby created a program of scholarships, bursary and entrepreneurship assistance to Filipino Youth. The program shall be called Agri-Kabataan Program.

A scholarship program in agriculture and related fields shall be established. A ladderized program in Diploma in Agricultural Technology (DAT), Bachelor in Agricultural Technology (BAT) and Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness (BSAgrib) will be prescribed to the student-scholars. The DAT-BAT curriculum will be enhanced with agribusiness and entrepreneurship components but likewise comply with the minimum standards and guidelines prescribed by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

Target beneficiaries are high school graduates from agricultural and vocational high schools with average high school grades of at least 80 per cent. College freshmen already enrolled in agricultural courses in the State Universities and Colleges (SUC) will be considered for as long as their weighted grade average is at least 2.5.

SECTION 6. *Entrepreneurship Components of the Program.* – To enhance the entrepreneurship components of the curriculum, 25% of the entire curriculum shall be in the form of on-the-job training or related learning experience. Laboratory components of various agricultural subjects shall be in the form of agribusiness ventures. Proven viable agribusiness ventures shall be packaged for students to engage in and these shall serve as their laboratory classes under a supervised farming scheme. Each agribusiness venture shall be under the supervision of a faculty who is also a technology expert in the chosen commodity.

The agribusiness venture laboratory to be developed must have short gestation, where three (3) to twelve (12) months should be science and technology-based agribusiness. The end products should be highly marketable and the facilities needed should be present or existing in the SUC.

SECTION 7. *Scholarships and Agribusiness Venture Start-up Financing.* – Under the Department of Agriculture (DA) issued Administrative Order (AO) No. 19 series of 2008 covering the implementing guidelines on the utilization of the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF) which was created under RA 8178 and amended through RA 9586, 10 percent of the ACEF shall be used for the funding of a comprehensive undergraduate scholarship program in agribusiness, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary medicine, and graduate studies in environmental and marine sciences, hydrology, renewable energy and agribusiness management programs.

There shall be allocated from the ACEF Three Hundred Fifty million Pesos (P350,000,000.00) over the first four (4) years of the program, of which Three Hundred million Pesos (P300,000,000.00) will be used for the full scholarship of five thousand (5,000) student beneficiaries and the Fifty million Pesos (P50,000,000.00) for start-up venture capital of the agribusiness venture laboratory.

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) shall assist the Program by providing additional technology packages and making available funds allocated for the Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (SET-UP) under its own guidelines for funding small enterprises.

SECTION 8. *Management of the Scholarship and Agribusiness Venture Start-up Funds.* – The scholarship funds shall be managed by CHED and will be paid directly to participating SUCs based on billings of tuition and other fees. The venture financing shall be released to the SUCs to be deposited as a trust fund for the purpose. It will also be treated as revolving fund. Student-beneficiaries are required to pay back the venture capital after each cycle of the agribusiness project.

SECTION 9. *Use of Idle Lands for the Agribusiness Venture Laboratory.* – The SUCs shall provide the lands and facilities to be used by the students under the Program. Where appropriate and viable, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) shall make available untenured public lands under its jurisdiction for the use of students in their agribusiness ventures under appropriate arrangements with CHED and the participating SUCs.

SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The CHED shall prepare the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) and promulgate it within one hundred eighty (180) days after approval of this Act. The DOST and the DENR shall assist in the preparation of the IRR with respect to their specific rules in the implementation of this Program.

SECTION 11. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or is inconsistent with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,