

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE }
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES }
First Regular Session

'04 JUN 30 P7:39

SENATE

S. No. 576

RECEIVED BY: Dulu

INTRODUCED BY HON. MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE


As a policy, the State recognizes the need to help shape the Filipino character and identity of younger generations of Filipinos overseas. By exposing them to Philippine history, culture and heritage, they would be able to imbibe the knowledge and values that Filipinos are recognized for.

While there are some community schools for Filipino children in some Middle East countries which are officially operated by Philippine Embassies, these are not enough and are inadequately managed.

This proposal mandates the government to encourage and provide incentives and support to Filipino individuals or private associations desiring to establish and operate Philippine community schools abroad, as well as those who are presently operating such type of schools. The schools to be established shall offer formal courses of instruction in the elementary and secondary levels.

For the implementation of this measure, the Department of Education is tasked to promulgate guidelines on the establishment of the said institutions and to provide professional, technical and administrative support services as may be requested by schools. The Department of Foreign Affairs shall generate interest and conduct an intensive campaign to encourage the establishment of the said schools. The Department of Labor and Employment shall assist in the conceptualization and implementation of income-generating community activities and projects of overseas Filipinos to support school operations.

In light of the foregoing considerations, approval of this measure is earnestly recommended.


MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.

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AN ACT
TO PROMOTE FILIPINO EDUCATION AND HERITAGE THROUGH THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF PHILIPPINE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ABROAD FOR
CHILDREN OF FILIPINO MIGRANT WORKERS AND OTHER OVERSEAS FILIPINOS

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

SECTION 1. *Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Filipino Education and Heritage Program Act of 2004."

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the policy of the State to develop and promote the provision of critical education needs, as well as the continued exposure of younger generations of Filipinos living abroad, to Philippine history, culture, art and music in order to keep them from being alienated from their native country. The State recognizes the need to provide formal and non-formal education at the elementary and secondary levels aimed at providing children of Filipino migrant workers and other overseas Filipinos the necessary knowledge, values and training that would help shape their Filipino character.

In the implementation of the above-stated policy, the government shall encourage and provide well-coordinated support and assistance to individuals or private associations desiring to establish and operate Philippine Community Schools abroad, as well as those who have heretofore been operating and maintaining such type of schools.

SECTION 3. *Establishment of Philippine Community Schools.* - The Philippine Community Schools to be established abroad pursuant to this Act shall primarily provide courses of instruction in the elementary and secondary levels in accordance with the following guidelines and such other additional guidelines as may be promulgated by the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) under Section 4 hereof:

- a. The community schools shall be established and operated as private juridical entities by Filipino individuals or private associations. In the case of Philippine schools abroad which are presently officially operated by Philippine Embassies, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) shall

- take the necessary steps to organize and operate these schools as a separate juridical entity from that of the Philippine Mission pursuant to the provisions of this Act;
- b. Permits for the establishment and operation of such schools shall be secured from the DECS, through the Chief of the Philippine Mission abroad and supported by requirements as provided in pertinent DECS issuances. A similar permit or authority shall also be secured from the host government;
 - c. In instances where the host government requires ownership and control over these schools by the Philippine Government, the Chief of Mission shall propose alternative arrangements for the establishment and operation of the same to the DECS, through the DFA home office;
 - d. A governing board, consisting of private Filipino individuals, shall be established in each school to formulate policies and to manage its operations; and
 - e. No spouse or relative of officers or staff of Philippine Missions abroad may be involved in the administration or management of these community schools.

SECTION 4. *Responsibilities of Government Departments and Agencies Concerned.* In order to have a close cooperation and coordination in the carrying out of the objectives of this Act, the departments and agencies concerned shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

A. The Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) shall:

1. Review and promulgate necessary guidelines governing the establishment and operation of Philippine community schools abroad and prescribe guidelines for each school in maintaining its academic standards;
2. Establish qualification standards in the selection, recruitment, appointment and promotion of school personnel;
3. Develop guidelines for the supervision of school personnel and administration of disciplinary standards and procedures;
4. Evaluate the performance of Philippine community schools abroad and recommend changes, whenever necessary, to improve the overall efficiency of the school concerned;
5. Develop a standard performance appraisal and reporting system on the operation of these schools abroad; and
6. Provide professional, technical and administrative support services as may be requested by the said schools abroad.

B. The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) shall:

1. Conduct an intensive campaign to encourage the establishment of Philippine community schools abroad, particularly in countries where there are large Filipino population, whether migrant workers or permanent residents and to disseminate the policies and guidelines promulgated by the DECS governing the establishment and operation of such schools abroad;

2. Accept applications to establish and operate Philippine community schools abroad and endorse the same to the DECS for accreditation and/or recognition;

3. In cooperation with the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), assist the DECS in monitoring and determining the level of compliance by the schools on the guidelines prescribed by DECS to ensure effective and efficient management and operation of schools abroad;

4. Provide assistance to the said schools abroad by way of representing these schools before authorities of the host countries as may be required and in facilitating observance of compliance with relevant local requirements in the establishment and operation of such schools

5. Provide advice, in cooperation with the CFO, to the various school boards whenever necessary, or when requested, to ensure effective and efficient operation of Philippine community schools; and

6. Provide, whenever feasible, facilities for the school in the premises of Philippine Missions abroad.

C. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) shall:

1. Assist the DFA and DECS in disseminating the policies and guidelines on the establishment and operation of Philippine community school abroad;

2. Generate interest among Filipino communities abroad in the establishment and operation of these schools at overseas duty stations and provide assistance as may be needed in the process of establishment;

3. Provide technical assistance in the preparation and evaluation of feasibility studies for the establishment of these schools abroad;

4. Assist in the conceptualization and implementation of income-generating community projects and activities of overseas Filipinos to support school operations;

5. Provide, whenever possible, facilities for the school within the premises of Filipino Workers Development Centers during the formative stages of the school;

6. Assist in the hiring and deployment of teachers, instructors, principals and other personnel, as well as in the procurement of instructional materials and other items needed by the schools abroad; and

7. Extend modest loan packages or subsidies thru the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), for school projects/requirements, subject to OWWA Board policies and program thrusts.

The above-mentioned Departments may constitute an Inter-Agency Committee or Task Force as it may deem appropriate for the effective discharge of its functions under this Act.

SECTION 5. *Submission of Reports.* - The Philippine Community Schools abroad shall submit periodic reports to the DECS as are required, with copies furnished the Philippine Mission in the country where the school is located.

SECTION 6. *Day-Care Centers.* - Day-care centers or units shall, whenever feasible, also be provided within the premises of the Philippine Community Schools abroad to look after the small children of working Filipino mothers residing temporarily or permanently abroad.

SECTION 7. *Appropriation.* - For the initial implementation of this Act, the sum of Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated from available savings in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated. Thereafter, the amounts necessary shall be included in the respective budgets in the General Appropriations Act of the government departments charged with the implementation of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree, executive order, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SECTION 9. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,