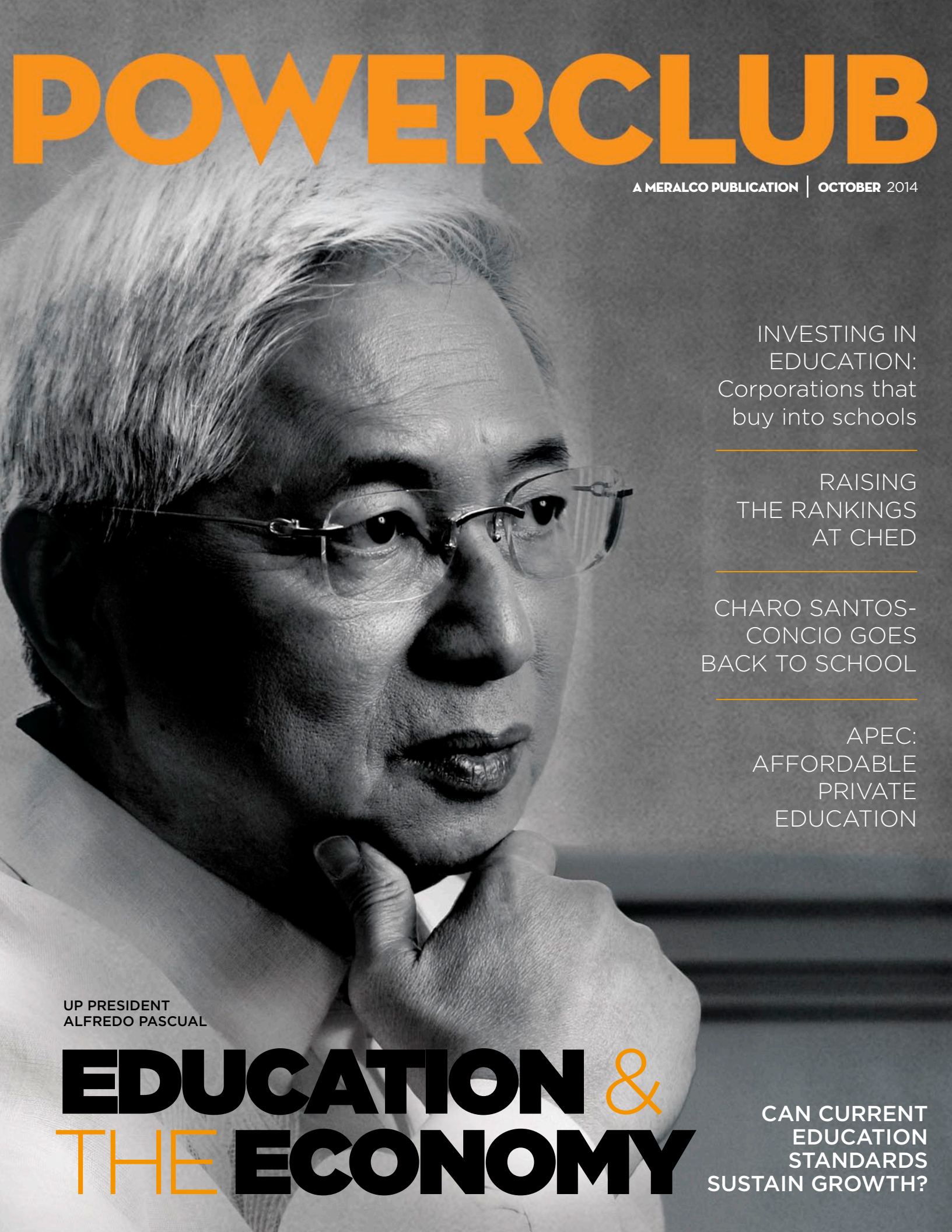


POWERCLUB



A MERALCO PUBLICATION | OCTOBER 2014

INVESTING IN
EDUCATION:
Corporations that
buy into schools

RAISING
THE RANKINGS
AT CHED

CHARO SANTOS-
CONCIO GOES
BACK TO SCHOOL

APEC:
AFFORDABLE
PRIVATE
EDUCATION

UP PRESIDENT
ALFREDO PASCUAL

EDUCATION & THE ECONOMY

CAN CURRENT
EDUCATION
STANDARDS
SUSTAIN GROWTH?

Businesses Should Make Education Their Business

A diploma, to me, represents more than expertise. It reflects what went into acquiring it: hard work, discipline, a love of continuous learning, and the facility to deal with people. Without these traits, a diploma is just a piece of paper.

Yet in our country, a person who has these attributes in abundance has fewer chances to get ahead without a degree. Higher education has become a privilege afforded to the wealthy.

Thus, a company's support of a struggling university goes beyond resources to hire better teachers and obtain new facilities. With new managers and new management practices, old schools can operate more efficiently, and become more affordable.

The Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) works closely with schools and universities in our franchise area, offering advice and technical expertise for new facilities or campus expansion. Through our One Meralco Foundation (OMF), we've helped energize schools outside our franchise area, including six public schools in Isla Verde, Batangas in 2011. In 2013, OMF also sponsored 1-kilowatt solar photovoltaic system at 24 public schools in Northern Palawan, Quezon, Bohol, Dinagat Islands, Cebu and Rizal. The solar panels generate enough power for light bulbs and to charge teaching equipment like laptops.

A nation is only as progressive, as competitive and as enlightened as its people. Thus, when corporations invest in education, they are investing in our people and in the future of our country. ☺



Alfredo S. Panlilio
Senior Vice President and Head
of Customer Retail Services and
Corporate Communications

True Loyalty

Full disclosure: I am a true-blue Atenean, a high-school and college graduate from the Ateneo de Manila University. Among other things, this indicates for which team at the University Athletic Association of the Philippines I cheer loudest.

This kind of lifelong loyalty isn't surprising, since many of us spend a third of our lives at school. It demonstrates the influence that prominent educational institutions can wield over generations, and why education should never take a back seat in the national agenda.

Ironically, our unprecedented economic performance provokes a hard re-assessment of our school system. Manpower shortages continue alongside stubborn unemployment and persistently high underemployment, suggesting a mismatch between talent and the needs of the job market.

The focus must shift from traditional rice-bowl courses like business management, accountancy and nursing, towards math, the sciences and technology. We must develop new courses that anticipate future needs, especially in the face of the integration of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations into one economic power region in 2015.

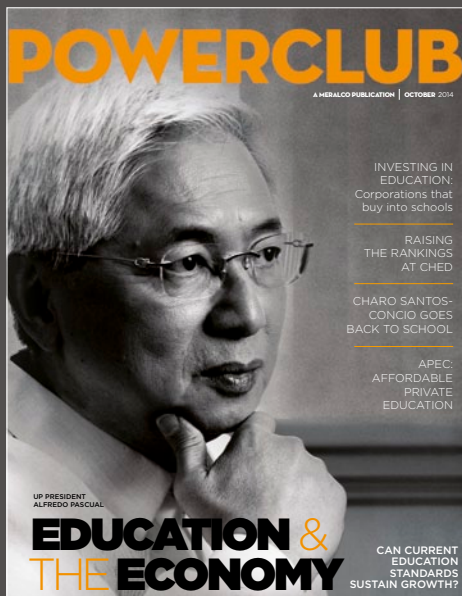
Top universities like the University of the Philippines, the Ateneo, and De La Salle University are meeting these challenges head-on. With Meralco's technical assistance on many projects, they build new campuses with state-of-the-art science laboratories and facilities to engage in advanced academic research.

Perhaps the most significant trend is the rising popularity of technical and vocational courses, driven by growth in service industries such as hotels and restaurants, real estate, and business process outsourcing firms. Many employers realize that a college degree isn't always necessary for an employee to excel.

Whichever way local education evolves, schools need to re-mold the loyalties of their students – not to institutions, but to the nation. Beyond constantly updating their courses, all schools must be continue to instill timeless, lifelong values: discipline, hard work, compassion, and love of country. ☺



Victor S. Genuino
Vice President and Head,
Corporate Business Group



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WHAT'S INSIDE

4 Analysis

RESEARCHING DREAMS

CHED Chairperson Dr. Patti Licuanan wants Filipinos to work in their own country.

8 Meralco Advisory

EXPANDING THE INTERRUPTIBLE LOAD PROGRAM

Meralco urges corporate customers to help address the tight power supply.

9 One Meralco Foundation

SAFE AND SOUND SCHOOLS

The OMF helps check electrical wiring at schools all over Metro Manila.

10 Cover Story

EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY

As the economy picks up steam, can the education system keep up?

16 Sidebar Story

'A' IS FOR 'AFFORDABLE'

APEC seeks to put quality private education within reach of the masses.

18 Industry Trends

INVESTING IN EDUCATION

Universities turn to corporate investment to improve higher education.

22 CEO Corner

ENTERTAINING EDUCATION

ABS-CBN CEO Charo Santos-Concio talks about going back to school.

24 Company Profile

GROWING WHERE THE STUDENTS GO

FEU adapts to a future where K-12 is changing the rules.

26 Company Profile

BUILDING WITH LUXURY

Rockwell Land looks to keep its hand in luxury living.

28 ECP

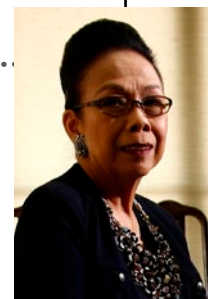
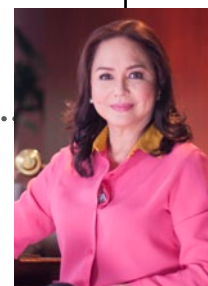
RACING TO RECOVER FROM GLENDIA

Meralco races to restore power, hours after the ravages of Typhoon Glenda.

30 Feature

STABILIZING POWER AT CAVITE ECOZONE

Meralco steps up to the plate as CEZ's official power distributor.



RESEARCHING DREAMS

REVIVING RESEARCH TO RAISE STANDARDS
AMONG PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITIES

BY IRIS GONZALES

The woman dreams. She dreams big and works every day to make this dream a reality.

Dr. Patricia B. Licuanan's dream is to prepare the country's young men and women for the future, so that when they graduate, they will stay in the Philippines and make it better than it was when they were born.

As Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Licuanan combines her skills and credentials as an educator, social psychologist and women-empowerment advocate.

Under her leadership, CHED encourages Filipino graduates to stay in the country and fill the employment gaps, in view of the suffering many overseas Filipino workers endure.

"I won't stop people from going abroad, but I'm not producing them for outside; I'm producing them for the Philippines," she declares.

It's not just an emotional matter for Licuanan; after all, a country can't maintain a healthy economy if local know-how, skills and experience go elsewhere.

STEMMING THE DRAIN

"I don't see the exodus that we have seen in the past," Licuanan explains. "We lost a lot of teachers because of overseas recruitment, but that was before," she recalls. "The challenge is, can we keep the

ones we train?"

To keep Filipino graduates from leaving the country, CHED constantly evaluates the correlations and mismatches between available jobs and the graduates' university degrees.

"There are some oversubscribed courses, like business administration, nursing and maritime," she says, "so we imposed a moratorium on new programs in these areas.

"For undersubscribed courses such as agriculture and science and technology, we invest in scholarships and extend various forms of assistance to schools."

Meanwhile, she urges Filipinos, most especially employers, to stop thinking that college degrees are absolutely necessary for jobs that high-school or vocational-school graduates are qualified to handle.

"We have too many so-called colleges that cater to this demand for degrees," she remarks. "We close the programs that perform poorly, but many of them manage to stay open through legal maneuvers such as temporary restraining orders and injunctions.

"These questionable schools will disappear when we stop being addicted to college diplomas of any kind."

Licuanan says that CHED oversees the closure or phase-out of substandard or non-compliant programs in both public and private Higher Education Institutions

(HEIs). This is done when a school consistently fails to follow CHED's minimum policies, standards and guidelines (PSGs) and when it shows poor performance in the national licensure examinations.

In 2013, for instance, CHED's intensified monitoring and enforcement efforts led to the closure and phase-out of 676 non-compliant or deficient programs, including 16 in maritime courses and 118 in nursing.

On the other hand, CHED extends development support to deserving HEIs and programs that go over and above the minimum PSGs.

UPS AND DOWNS IN THE RANKS

The rise and fall of Philippine universities is regularly ranked among a list of the world's top 800 universities, by ratings firm Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), which surveys colleges and universities worldwide.

In the 2013 QS survey, the University of the Philippines (UP) dropped in rank to 380 from 348 in 2012, Ateneo de Manila University to 501+ from 451+, and the University of Santo Tomas (UST) to 701+ from 601+.

Only De La Salle University (DLSU) maintained its rank at 601+.

The recently released 2014/15 survey reveals a more improved picture for UP and Ateneo, placing at 367 and 461+, respectively. UST maintains its rank of 701+, while DLSU drops to 651+.

'I WON'T STOP PEOPLE FROM GOING ABROAD, BUT I'M NOT PRODUCING THEM FOR OUTSIDE; I'M PRODUCING THEM FOR THE PHILIPPINES.'

— CHED CHAIRMAN
DR. PATRICIA LICUANAN





'We'd like the companies that want certain technologies developed to hire (local) PhDs to work in laboratories that they fund and support, so that these very highly trained people will have the facilities in which to work.'

The universities are ranked according to academic reputation, employer reputation, faculty-to-student ratio, citations per faculty, international faculty and international students.

According to QS Head of Research Ben Sowter, Philippine universities must boost their influence in research and their ability to attract international faculty in order to improve their global competitiveness.

Licuanan expresses mixed feelings about the survey rankings.

"I am not convinced about what they exactly mean, but they're a reality we have to deal with. When these global rankings come out, like it or not, it affects people's perceptions of the Philippine educational system."

Although she disagrees that the reputation of Philippine universities has lost its luster, she stresses that CHED takes the results seriously.

"We don't like to be unfavorably compared to others, because Philippine universities have their own strengths, particularly the top universities," she adds. "There are certain areas emphasized in those global rankings, and they consider only a very small fraction of all the higher education institutions in the world. But we

ASIDE FROM THE GOVERNMENT ALLOCATION, CHED SOUGHT THE HELP OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO INVEST IN RESEARCH AND EDUCATION.

have to take it for what it's worth."

THE NEED FOR RESEARCH

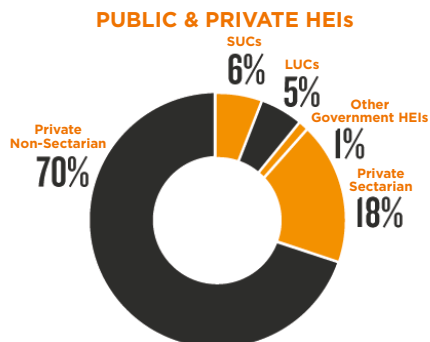
Licuanan says much of the problem has to do with research, constrained by budget limitations.

"In terms of academic reputation and employers' reputation, I don't think we do too badly there. Where we are not competitive seems to be in research, where QS rates the number of citations per faculty member."

In other parts of the globe and even among other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), research funding and support remain extremely high.

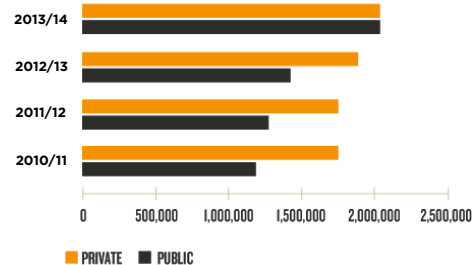
A. PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs), COMPOSED OF STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES (SUCs), LOCAL UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES (LUCs), AND OTHER GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS, MAKE UP **12% OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HEIs**.

B. THE SHARE OF PUBLIC HEIs HAS BEEN STEADILY INCREASING (ORANGE). BY 2013-2014, THE **PRIVATE SECTOR SHARE OF THE MARKET IS ONLY 59%.**



ENROLLMENT SHARE OF HEIs

(Per Academic Year)



Source: The Commission on Higher Education

Florencio Abad, Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has said education, including higher education, is a priority of the Aquino administration.

In February 2014, the DBM approved the release of P1.05 billion to CHED to fund college scholarships nationwide and implement the agency's key programs and projects, which include research initiatives.

DBM data shows that the fund will also support CHED's nationwide rollout of institutional development initiatives (for P234.3 million), rationalization of programs, standards, and guidelines (P114.5 million), and research and development programs (P214.4 million), all to be implemented in 2014.

PRIVATE SUPPORT, INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

Aside from government allocation, CHED seeks the help of the private sector to invest in research and education.

"We'd like the companies that want certain technologies developed to hire (local) PhDs to work in laboratories that they fund and support, so that these very highly trained people will have the facilities in which to work," Licuanan says.

The lack of research isn't the only condition that plagues Philippine universities.

"We also score badly on the proportion of international faculty," she points out. "Our labor laws (create conditions that) are not very inviting, so it's very difficult."

Current Philippine labor laws require stringent processing and impose limitations on foreign nationals who want to work in the country.

"Our universities want to be more international," she says, "but it's very difficult (for overseas hires) to work here."

Licuanan points out that the problem should be addressed in anticipation of the Asean Economic Community 2015, a blueprint for regional integration and equitable development that involves the 10 members of the Association.

"Unless we make our labor laws more competitive," she continues, "other Asean nations will be able to attract better professors and gain an academic edge over the Philippines."

To address this problem, CHED recommends to the Bureau of Immigration and the Department of Labor and Employment an easing of restrictions on foreign faculty and students.

"The key strategies are access to quality education among the poor and disadvantaged, producing graduates with skills that match the requirements of industry and national development, and excellence that is aimed at developing globally competitive HEIs and programs."

DREAMS FROM A MOTHER

At her CHED office, Licuanan is surrounded by photographs of her children and grandchild and by mother-and-child paintings.

Indeed, she sees her role as a mother to Filipino students, one who only wants the best for her children. As with all stories of motherhood, the tale of the country's higher educational system has its share of difficulties.

"It's not easy," she says, "but we have to balance our view by looking at where we started from, where we are and how far we've come."

This remains her dream: to provide Filipinos with the best higher education possible, and enable them to live and work in their own country. Big and ambitious, perhaps – but not altogether impossible. 



Expanding the Interruptible Load Program

Meralco urges participation in the government initiative to address the tight power supply.

A growing number of commercial and industrial establishments are heeding the government's call to collectively address the looming brownouts next year, which government acknowledges is a cause for concern.

But more commercial and industrial companies may need to sign up for the Department of Energy's Interruptible Load Program (ILP) in order to provide a viable solution to the tight power supply. The Department of Energy (DOE) is anticipating a potential power-supply deficit during the summer months of 2015 that could result in rotating brownouts.

The government, through DOE Secretary Jericho Petilla, has aired an appeal for heavy power users to take part in the ILP and help reduce the strain on the Luzon power grid.

Government has found an ally in Meralco, which is committed to full cooperation in the ILP, and will solicit participation from its business customers.

Under the ILP, Meralco's business customers with loads of at least 1 megawatt (MW) are called upon to voluntarily reduce their electricity consumption, if needed, during peak hours of the day by running their own generator sets, instead of drawing their power directly from the grid.

Alfredo S. Panlilio, Meralco Senior Vice President and Head for Customer Retail Services and Corporate Communications, echoes Petilla's appeal and says "there is strength in numbers in addressing the potential power crisis next year.

"Meralco hopes to persuade its business customers to help and participate in the program for the sake of the country and the people. This is a temporary situation during the summer months," he adds.

"Only by working together in a collective effort can we resolve even the greatest of problems and concerns," Panlilio says, underscoring the urgency for business users to immediately

respond to the government's call for ILP support.

Rep. Reynaldo Umali, chair of the House committee on Energy and co-chair of the Joint Congressional Power Commission (JCPC), acknowledges Meralco's role in addressing the projected power-supply shortfall next year.

"We laud the efforts of Meralco and big businesses who have heeded the call to nationalism by fully supporting the DOE's ILP," Umali says.

"The general consensus is that the Interruptible Load Program can help address, in the short term, the projected power-capacity deficit in 2015," he adds.

Through numerous intense dialogues and fora that have been carried out since December 2013, Meralco has already enlisted the support of commercial customers to the DOE's ILP with a combined committed de-loading capacity of 155MW.

Many of these companies are among the Philippines' top 10,000 corporations. (See sidebar for the list of companies committed to join the ILP.)

Meralco estimates that there are more than 300 large enterprises now sourcing power from Retail Electricity Suppliers (RES).

Otherwise known as contestable customers (non-captive), these big businesses have combined 1,100MW of self-generating capabilities. The participation of these RES customers will be a big boost to the success of the ILP.

The DOE initiative was already deployed in the Visayas and Mindanao. In the Visayan region, it was particularly proven to be a big help in improving the supply inadequacy.

Leveraging on the successful outcome of ILP in the Visayas and Mindanao, Meralco is closely coordinating with the DOE, the Senate and House Committees on Energy, and the Energy Regulatory Commission with regard to the program and how it can continue supporting energy security in Luzon. 🌟

Companies committed to serve

Twenty-five of Meralco's top corporate customers are solidly supporting the DOE's Interruptible Load Program - a demand-side management solution to help alleviate power-supply concerns in the Luzon grid.

As of October 17, 2014, the enlisted companies have committed a de-loading capacity of more than 155MW. More Meralco corporate users are expected to join the program.

The DOE and Meralco are encouraging businesses to participate in the program.

The following is an initial list of companies that are heeding the call to be part of a solution to the national concern:

- SM Prime Holdings, Inc.
- Robinsons Land Corp.
- Waltermart Malls
- Ayala Land, Inc.
- Rustan Supercenters, Inc.
- PLDT/Sun/Smart
- Shangri-La Plaza Corp.
- Xin Tian Ti Development Corp. (Marco Polo Ortigas)
- Alphaland Development, Inc.
- Megaworld Corp.
- Ortigas & Company
- GMA Network, Inc.
- Fort Bonifacio Development Corp.
- Sunstar Mall (Laguna)
- Trafalgar Plaza Condominium Corp.
- Makati Sky Plaza, Inc.
- Prestige Tower Condominium
- ABC Development Corp. (TV5)
- Raffles Condominium Corp.
- The JMT Condominium Corp.
- Manta Equities, Inc. (NAC Tower)
- Feature Realty Holding & Development (Bay City Mall)
- Power Concessionaires, Inc. (EGI Rufino Plaza Bldg.)
- Citystate Centre Condominium Corp.
- Seda Hotel - BGC

For additional details on DOE's ILP and how to pledge participation to the program, please contact your Meralco Relationship Manager or call **16-210**

safe & sound schools

OMF JOINS DepEd IN ENSURING SAFETY AT SCHOOLS

Below: Meralco linemen and engineers examine the electrical junction panel of a public school building, to ensure that it can handle the power usage of several classrooms.



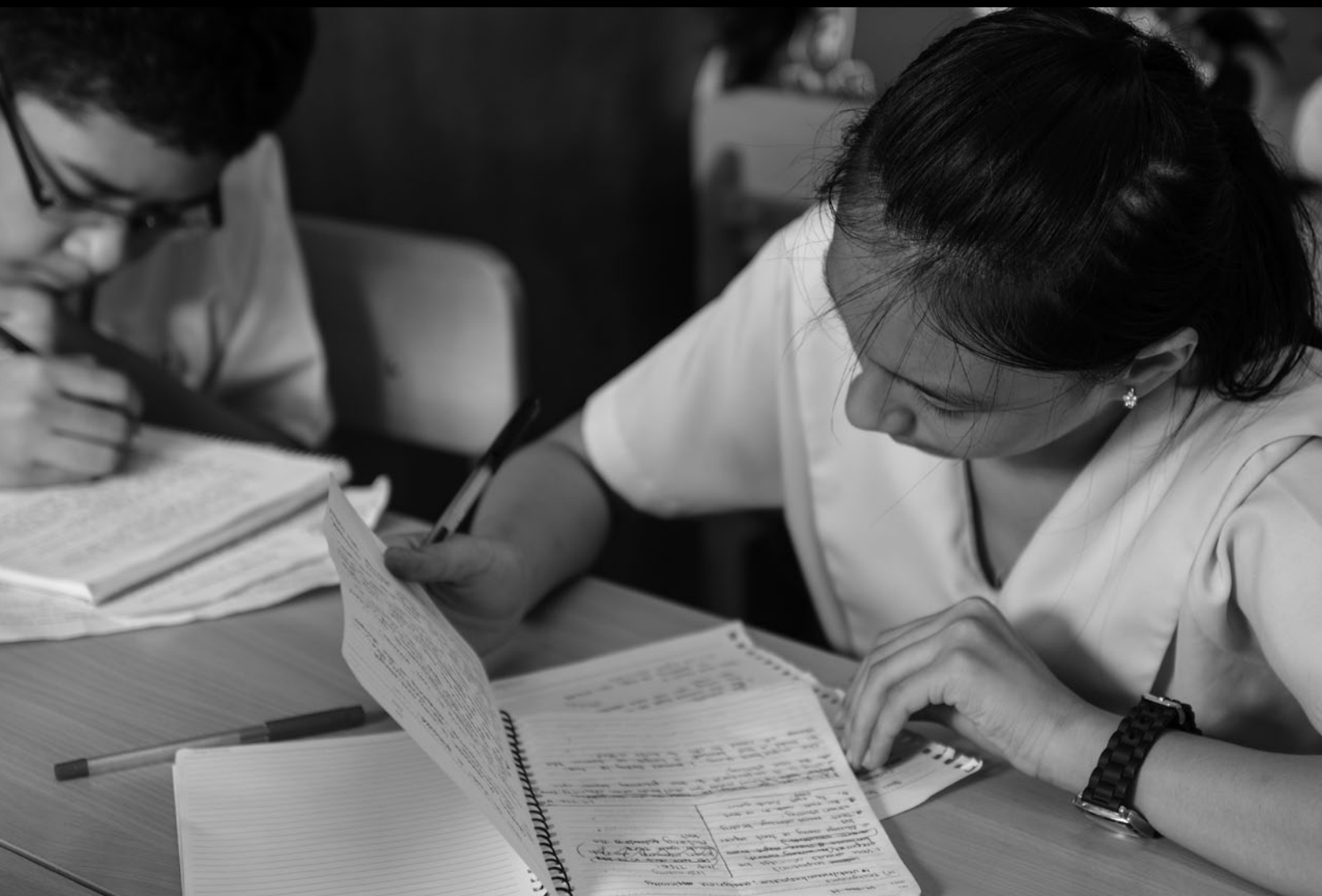
To support the Department of Education's annual "Brigada Eskwela," the social development arm of the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), the One Meralco Foundation (OMF), launched the "Safe ang School ko!" (My School is Safe) project, to help public schools prepare for the opening of classes.

The foundation partnered with Meralco's Business Centers and Network Sectors, tapping the expertise of the power distributor's linemen and engineers to assess electrical safety in school buildings. From May 19 through May 23, the safety teams visited schools throughout Meralco's franchise areas, examining electrical connections, trimming tree branches that interfere with power lines, and orienting school officials on the safe and efficient use of electricity. Participating schools included the Duplas High School in Doña Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan in the north, and the Cagsi-ay II Elementary School in Mauban, Quezon in the south,

"Our 'Safe Ang School ko!' project has benefited more than 1,800 public schools within Meralco's franchise area," says OMF President Jeffrey O. Tarayao. "We are able to do this because of our employees' strong spirit of volunteerism and our determination to serve in the best way we can."

"It is the goal of our 'Safe ang School ko!' project to keep teachers and students safe by ensuring that their schools conform to electrical safety standards," he concludes. 





BY VERONICA UY

Education and the Economy

CAN ONE SUSTAIN GROWTH
WITHOUT NURTURING THE OTHER?



As a partner in nation-building, Meralco is committed to support schools' and universities' expansion plans and provide advice on energy-efficiency matters. The distribution utility enables these learning institutions to improve and expand their facilities, keep operational costs down and allow more Filipinos to afford quality education.

Thanks to a study undertaken with Meralco, UP saves up to P6 million a year on cost-effective energy utilization, freeing up funds for expanded operations and new buildings. Projects such as studies to develop a battery-powered vehicle, financial sponsorship to compete in the design of fuel-efficient vehicles, and the university's Automated Guideway Transit, also benefit from this partnership.

Meralco advises and assists Ateneo's Institute of Sustainability in the development of its own renewable-energy program. Ongoing discussions set the stage for Ateneo's other projects.

Meralco also provides Enderun with technical consultations to develop and construct a new kitchen lab and upgrade three existing labs. These entail assessments of existing facilities, guidance on the new kitchen's electrical schematics, cost-benefit analyses between LPG and Induction Heat Cookers, aid in procuring kitchen equipment, and assistance for Enderun's management to better understand the campus' energy consumption.

akapagpatapos. This congratulatory adjective, a Filipino idiom from the phrase, "*nakapagpatapos sa kolehiyo*," refers to one who has enabled another to earn a college degree. The graduate's elevated status becomes his family's communal triumph, often marked by framed or laminated college diplomas that grace the walls at home. Given this fixation, it's no surprise that college attendance is on the rise.

In the year 2000, the Philippines ranked 48th in college attendance by ratio of population (just over 31 percent), figures from statistics web site NationMaster indicate. This is well above the rate for Indonesia (85th), Brunei (86th), or even Malaysia (57th). The National Statistics Office (NSO) finds that college graduates took up over 10 percent of the population in 2010, more than double the 4 percent in 2000.

And yet, the quality of higher education in the Philippines has declined despite – or due to – the cultural obsession to finish college, intimates Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Chair Patricia Licuanan (see "*Researching Dreams*," page 4).

Notwithstanding the surging economy, unemployment in July 2014 stood at 6.7 percent, according to the NSO.

More significantly, the under-employment rate shows 18.3 percent of Filipinos work less hours than the normal eight-hour schedule due to the lack of firmer job opportunities. This suggests a disparity between the graduates' courses and the demands of the job market (see "*Investing in Education*," page 18).

The key to continued economic growth, then, lies not in boosting college enrollment, but in changes to the way people across all sectors approach education.

A CRUCIBLE FOR MOLDING CHARACTER

It's hard to argue against the view that the University of the Philippines (UP) has a significant impact on the nation's cultural, political and economic landscape. Since its founding more than 100 years ago, UP graduates have dominated local politics, among them seven Philippine Presidents, 13 Supreme Court Chief Justices and many more congressmen and women, senators and Cabinet Secretaries.

"UP attracts the best minds of the country for a whole range of human activity, not only from the country but the whole (Southeast Asian) region," says UP President Alfredo Pascual, who admits there is still a need to foster "a

national identity that can be embraced by all the people of the Philippines, based on our common roots and common history."

Fr. Jett Villarin SJ, president of the Ateneo de Manila University, agrees that higher education can and should bolster the spirit of nation-building. "For the Ateneo, nation-building at this point means defeating poverty, reforming governance and politics, and cultivating love of country."

He proudly names Ateneo's notable graduates, including national heroes Jose Rizal, Gregorio del Pilar and Juan Luna, through to Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle and President Benigno S. Aquino III, as exemplars of this spirit.

"Our mission is to form the entire person to live for others. We want our students to learn while serving, to serve while learning," Villarin says. "Through our research, innovation, and creativity, we want our students – and the Ateneo itself – to serve the common good using their God-given talents."

FROM SOFT SUBJECTS TO HARD SCIENCE

For over 150 years, Ateneo built a reputation on a core curriculum based on the liberal arts and humanities. "Nearly half of the usual college curriculum is dedicated to this core, which includes philosophy and theology," explains Villarin.

However, today's rapidly changing technological society has impelled the university to create tech-heavy interdisciplinary courses, like the BS Management program with a Major in Communications Technology, which integrates communications, computer programming and marketing. New subjects are constantly being introduced, like Mobile Apps Development, Information Design, Data Science, Sustainability, and other such courses that are responsive to the needs of the times.

"One of our objectives is to promote systems thinking," Villarin says. This discipline seeks to understand how systems work and how actions in various elements of a system bring about certain outcomes. It allows for modularization, fosters problem-solving, and encourages critical and flexible thinking so that new insights and multiple perspectives emerge.

Looking towards global sustainability, Ateneo plans to introduce courses on sustainable development, business continuity, inclusive mobility, disaster risk reduction, and other related

'ATENEO MUST WORK TOWARDS DEFEATING POVERTY, REFORMING GOVERNANCE AND POLITICS, AND CULTIVATING LOVE OF COUNTRY.'

- ATENEO DE MANILA
PRESIDENT
FR. JETT VILLARIN SJ



programs. "In sustainability, we need to look at the interconnected resources that are affected by our activities. In other words, the bottom line is not just profit, but people and planet as well," stresses Villarín.

For UP's Pascual, a key to improving standards is funding. He helped arrest years of budgetary decline and increased the government's allocation to the state university by selling to decision-makers the value of UP to the nation and emphasizing the UP budget as an investment rather than an expense.

UP's increased operating budget enables it to provide increased financial assistance to poor but deserving students. It also gives faculty more funds for research and research dissemination grants, as well as international publication awards.

Research contracts with various government agencies, particularly in science and technology (S&T), once ranged from P500 million to P700 million annually. Today, contracted research funding exceeds P1 billion.

With more budget for capital outlay, UP can modernize existing research facilities and build new ones. It is constructing a P1-billion home for the Philippine National Institute of Health in Manila to house 10 research institutes. It is also building the Philippine Genome Center, enabling translation of knowledge in genomics

for applications in health, agriculture, biodiversity, and forensics.

A supercomputer will enable the Genome Center - among others - to perform complex tasks like DNA sequencing. "The state-of-the-art labs in UP should attract *balik* (returning) scientists and PhDs," Pascual declares.

A new UP Professional Schools campus was opened last year in Cebu's reclaimed South Road Properties, near the business process outsourcing (BPO) companies. Another UP Professional Schools campus will open in the Bonifacio Global City next year, offering law and professional masters programs in business administration, statistics and industrial engineering, as well as executive development programs.

Pascual remains committed to the idea that UP - primarily subsidized by Filipino taxpayers - must develop the "pride of the Filipino." He is committing more funding for culture and the arts - to promote a common national consciousness while showcasing the wide range of talents we have in the country. "This is where our strength lies."

FOLLOWING THE JOBS MARKET

While hallowed institutions seek to raise Philippine education to global standards, newcomers help students match the very real needs of the job market.

Founded in 1983, STI College was among the first schools to venture into "tech-voc" (technical-vocational) education with a focus on IT.

'UP ATTRACTS THE BEST MINDS OF THE COUNTRY FOR A WHOLE RANGE OF HUMAN ACTIVITY, BUT WE STILL NEED TO FOSTER A NATIONAL IDENTITY THAT CAN BE EMBRACED BY ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE PHILIPPINES.'

- UP PRESIDENT
ALFREDO PASCUAL



STI stood for Systems Technology Institute, but the full title was dropped as it expanded beyond information and communications technology. Newer courses include accounting, mass communications, business, travel and tourism, computer education, engineering, maritime studies, and criminology.

STI President Monico Jacob says regular consultation with companies such as SPI, Kawasaki, and recently India's Tata, ensures that STI's programs remain relevant.

The expansion in programs is fuelled by rising demand for degrees that promise quick employment. As a result, STI is now among the largest private-education networks in the Philippines, with over 80 campuses in 80 urban centers. Adding enrollees at STI-owned schools like Philippine Women's University, Negros College, I-Academy, De Los Santos College and Makati Medical College, STI today has over 85,000 students.

Jacob, whose management team took over from the founders in 2003, says while "we (at STI) recognize that

technical courses are important to the economy, we continue to emphasize training in the values of citizenship."

As STI focuses on making its schools widely accessible, the upscale Enderun Colleges runs its international hospitality and business programs from a single campus.

"We offer a unique education driven by well-defined careers and entrepreneurship," explains Enderun Colleges' President Dr. Edgardo Rodriguez. "For instance, our business course does not offer general finance but wealth management; digital marketing, and not general marketing."

Enderun students know their career paths before they get their diplomas. Upon graduation, they are qualified to take over the family business, or work as junior executives. Of the five batches of Enderun graduates since 2010, about 40 percent are in corporate jobs, and another 20 percent are now entrepreneurs.

Enderun can "enter a new area quickly" because its size allows for flexibility. It pairs its fine-tuned curricula with classes that simulate business enterprises. Practical internships can run to 1,000 hours, with clear competencies evaluated with industry partners.

In 2007, Enderun became the only school outside France to partner with Michelin-starred Chef Alain Ducasse, establishing the Ducasse Institute Philippines. Students of this institute often apprentice in any one of Ducasse's 27 restaurants located in France, the United Kingdom, the United States or Japan; graduates are quickly snapped up by the world's top restaurants and hotels.

"Our teachers come from the industry," states Rodriguez, "and know what the real-life situation is like. This differentiates us from the others: practical, career-driven experience is glued together in the education process." One notable faculty member is prominent environmentalist and urban planner Architect Felino Palafox Jr., who teaches hotel planning and design.

Through Enderun Extension, the school also provides short courses for working professionals, enabling them to update their knowledge and skills. These include certificate programs in culinary arts, pastry arts, hospitality management, business administration, entrepreneurship, and other lifestyle courses.

SUCCESSFUL AND EMPLOYABLE WITHOUT A DEGREE

STI's Jacob insists the fixation on a four-year degree course – even for jobs where a vocational certification suffices

Schools like STI, Tesda and Enderun see specialized technical and vocational skills as viable options for today's students.





- arose from employment practices. "An employer will always choose a degree holder over a certificate holder," he laments, "for the same job with the same salary."

This is a paradigm Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) Director-General Joel Villanueva works to change. His efforts are aided by the robust economy, as practical skills grow in value over book knowledge.

Tesda and its network of public and private institutions offer more than 200 technical-vocational courses, ranging from welding, automotive repair, machining, and heavy equipment operation, to health care, computer graphic design and the performing arts.

The agency also qualifies experienced workers who need certification to secure a job locally or overseas; over the last four years, this program alone has accredited 3.28 million skilled workers.

In 2012, Tesda acquired ISO certification 9001:2008 so that employers here and abroad can be confident that all graduates meet international standards.

Since Villanueva's term began in 2010, Tesda has produced about 6.28 million tech-

'WE OFFER A UNIQUE EDUCATION DRIVEN BY WELL-DEFINED CAREERS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP.'

- ENDERUN CEO
DR. EDGARDO RODRIGUEZ



'WE (AT STI) RECOGNIZE THAT TECHNICAL COURSES ARE IMPORTANT TO THE ECONOMY. WE CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE TRAINING IN THE VALUES OF CITIZENSHIP.'

- STI PRESIDENT MONICO JACOB



voc graduates. In 2013, over 65.3 percent quickly found work here and abroad, an unprecedented achievement given the previous 48.5 percent employment rate in 2005.

These graduates make up the legions of steel men, masons, and welders working on infrastructure projects all over the country. Others work in hotels, restaurants and leisure complexes as housekeeping staff, chefs, bartenders, and baristas.

Through the agency's partnership with the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Foundation Inc., an astounding 91.43 percent of Tesda's tech-voc graduates have been absorbed by electronics and semiconductor companies.

Other Tesda partners include the Philippine Software Industry Association, Cebu Contractors Association, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Garment Business Association of the Philippines, Makati Development Corp., Coca-Cola Philippines, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Corp., and Toyota Motor Corp., among others.

These collaborations help find ready work for its graduates, while keeping programs aligned with in-demand jobs – especially in the booming sectors of tourism, manufacturing, and information and communication technology (ICT).

"The ICT sector is projected to increase its investment to almost a billion pesos in 2014," Villanueva says, "and it needs medical transcriptionists for a projected 34 million additional clients.

'TESDA IS NOW ABLE TO PRODUCE GRADUATES WHOSE SKILLS MEET INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS.'

**- TESDA DIRECTOR-GENERAL
JOEL VILLANUEVA**

The BPO sector says it needs 130,000 more people every year."

He is optimistic that as the country draws more foreign investment, more skilled talent will be needed. "We cannot fulfill these requirements for skilled manpower fast enough," he reveals, "but this is a good problem to have.

"If I were in high school now, I would take any of the courses Tesda offers," he declares.

With the new K-12 school program currently being implemented, however, today's high school students might find even Tesda superfluous.

CHANGE MUST BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING

To be globally competitive, the Philippine government made sweeping changes to primary education with the K-12 program that began in 2010. The previous system required students to

complete six years of grade school and four years of high school.

In contrast, the K-12 program takes a longer period, with a more encompassing curriculum. It requires high school students to master concepts and technical-vocational-livelihood skills that qualify them for Tesda certification upon graduation.

To instill a stronger sense of national pride and community, respond to the changing needs of industries, or adhere to stricter international standards: these goals to improve the state of Philippine education cannot be achieved by higher-education institutions or by vocational schools alone.

All stakeholders – public and private entities, children and parents, students and teachers – must see education, not as a framed diploma on the wall, but as a never-ending process that must always be nurtured. 



'A' IS FOR 'AFFORDABLE'

BY IVY LISA F. MENDOZA

BRINGING PRIVATE EDUCATION WITHIN REACH OF THE PUBLIC

Not every school can say that their classrooms are highly wired, but the Affordable Private Education Center (APEC) Schools can certainly make that claim. Here, all the teachers use laptops and LCD projectors to demonstrate the day's lessons.

This dependence on technology might make APEC seem like a posh private institution, but in fact, these tools enable the school to cater to less-privileged Filipino students.

APEC Schools President Beth G. Lui says technology allows them to formulate lessons in module form, creating streamlined lesson plans that are fast and easy to implement. "No matter which APEC school you attend, the same subjects are being taught on the same day. Even the same tests are given simultaneously."

Quips APEC Schools Chairman Alfredo I. Ayala, "our classrooms are really dependent on electricity."

PRIVATE SCHOOLING FOR P50 A DAY

APEC was created by the Ayala Corp. in partnership with the Pearson Affordable Learning Fund (PALF), the world's largest education provider, to make quality private



education affordable to the broadest possible segment of the Philippine population.

The annual tuition at APEC Schools runs to as low as P18,400 – or P50 a day – and includes books and other learning materials. This fee is well within the reach

of 60 percent of the population, whose average annual income is about P191,000, according to a 2011 survey by the Social Weather Station.

Operated by Livelt Global Services Management Institute, Inc. (LGSMI) – Ayala Corp.'s education arm – APEC opened its pilot school in Emilio Aguinaldo College (EAC) in Manila last July 2013. Eleven more schools were opened in July this year, close to the communities they intend to serve: in Tondo and Sampaloc, Manila; Barangay Holy Spirit, Quezon City; Caloocan; Pasig; and Marikina. Although the EAC branch offers Grades 7 to 9 this school year, the rest of the APEC Schools are starting with incoming Grade 7 students.

A WORKING CURRICULUM

Ayala emphasizes that employability provides a strong impetus for the school.

"We are looking to deliver a reliable pool of high-quality talent – young Filipinos who can speak good English, are able to think critically, have a strong work ethic and can live core values, such as determination, integrity and compassion."

The Schools' standards are carefully formulated by APEC curriculum developers

and expert teachers to more than comply with the Department of Education's minimum requirements. The focus is on transforming high school students into professionals, through a curriculum that combines industry-relevant knowledge; skills like critical thinking, leadership and time management; and values like determination, proactiveness, and discipline.

All APEC graduates have the sufficient proficiency to immediately secure white-collar jobs with service companies. These cover sectors such as banking, telecom, retail, hotel and restaurant, as well as information technology and business process outsourcing (BPO). However, students are strongly encouraged to pursue higher education, even if they have to work part-time to afford it.

"Our experts have developed an enhanced curriculum with at least 40 teachers covering Grade 7," says Lui. "Dynamic learning is part of the innovation. The method is not traditional, not a classroom-theater style, because we encourage the students to face each other, interact, and ask questions. They do not just wait for their teachers to ask the questions."

Half of APEC Schools' 1,350 students today come from public schools, and the other half are transferees from private schools. Prospective students do not undergo tough entrance exams, but undergo diagnostic tests to determine their learning proficiencies and deficiencies.

"We employ assessment tools to understand where students miss fundamental concepts," Lui states. "From these assessments, we develop individual learning guides that supplement the daily lesson guides."

APEC Schools also pair the brightest students with those who need help.

"This goes beyond education outcome," Lui stresses, "because through this, you develop values. Bright students can learn compassion - this is not just about learning, but helping others move to the next level. Those that are being helped learn gratitude at an early age, and I think that will make them good citizens."

BRIDGING THE SKILLS GAP

APEC Schools are a response to the keen demand for a skilled and highly employable workforce. When Ayala Corp. started investing in the BPO sector in 2006, it realized how much the whole world wanted to hire young Filipinos.

"The BPO sector has grown from zero in 2000 to a million people in 2014," Ayala notes, "but that number could easily be two million. Many Filipino graduates are still informally employed, despite the fact many global companies want to hire more Filipinos, if only they were more employable.



'APEC Schools seek to build an additional bridge between the academe and industry. We work with government and the private sector to help kids become more employable.'

- APEC Schools Chairman
Alfredo I. Ayala

'Bright students can learn compassion - this is not just about learning but helping others move to the next level.'

- APEC Schools President
Beth G. Lui

"APEC Schools seek to build an additional bridge between the academe and industry. We work with government and the private sector to help kids become more employable, by responding specifically to what industry is looking for."

Lui recounts how they spoke to the human resources heads of Ayala companies and BPOs to look at the types of jobs for which they have openings. "The companies let us come into their workplaces and observe," she says, "and we were told that students need the most help when they are about to graduate."

LGSMI thus initially approached EAC, Jose Rizal College, and the University of Iloilo to offer its Professional Employment Program (PEP) for their college students.

"We teamed up with the schools so we could come in during the second semester of the senior year and teach students to learn by doing - not just through theories, homework or lectures, but by simulating real work."

The employment figures show the initial partnerships were a success. Sixty days after graduation, Lui reports 95 percent of the students were hired, at an average of 30 percent + premium compared to other college graduates. Half of them found jobs with Ayala Group companies, and the remainder went to other leading companies and multinationals.

In 2012, Pearson learned about LGSMI efforts in higher education and suggested expanding the program to the high school level. PALF had been working on building chains of low-cost private schools in basic education, pioneering best-education practices on a no-frills basis in countries such as Bangladesh, Kenya, India, and South Africa.

This collaboration with PALF led to the

creation of APEC and the opening of its first school in EAC.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Based on comments posted on its official Facebook page, APEC Schools' students - and parents - are a very satisfied lot. Mothers are ecstatic over the fact that their children now speak English, or that they do not have to force their sons and daughters to go to school because the environment is truly conducive to learning.

Other short- and long-term benchmarks are already in place, Ayala says, such as international standards that will be used to rank the schools vis-à-vis their global and local counterparts. "But in the end, employability or getting into a good college will be our measures for success."

With about US\$7.5 million committed to the venture, Ayala Corp. and PALF plan to build several dozen private high schools nationwide, with new locations being eyed for the 2015-2016 schoolyear. Existing schools and property owners have approached APEC wanting to partner with the chain, or franchise the system. Many individuals, companies, and foundations have also inquired about funding scholars at APEC Schools, and Ayala is open to all of these.

At the official launch of APEC Schools in May 2014, Ayala Corp. President Fernando Zobel de Ayala said venturing into education is another way that the Ayala Group can further contribute to nation building. "Rather than complain, why not get involved?" he said.

As APEC Schools hone the edge of the country's future workforce, the Ayala Group goes beyond merely getting involved: it blazes trails and leads the way. 🌟

investing in education

FOR SOME UNIVERSITIES,
CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP
GOES ALL THE WAY

The drive along Manila's Claro M. Recto Street shows rows of old buildings, shops, banks and eateries, when a break in the parade of glass and concrete opens to an oasis of green. It is the Tan Yan Kee garden, an unusual endowment to the University of the East (UE) by business magnate Lucio Tan.

"A few years after Dr. Tan bought into the university, he donated this lot to the school," recounts UE President Dr. Ester A. Garcia. "A very generous gift – the property values in this area are very high! But the condition of the donation stated that we couldn't build anything on this lot: just a garden, so the students can have a place that is open, green and fresh."

In a way, this garden symbolizes the effect of corporate investment on some old schools.

COMPETING FOR TALENT

Human-resource experts say that demand for qualified people in key positions is exceeding supply, worsened by the exodus of Filipino workers and managers to other countries.

The shortfall is ironic given the 2.6 million jobless Filipinos, as well as 7.05 million underemployed recorded by the National Statistics Office in July 2014, and incongruous in the face of the strong 6-percent growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in the first half of 2014.

Many attribute this disparity to the flagging quality of Philippine education. But rather than bewail the situation, some private companies are trying to address the problems themselves.

Venerable institutions like UE, the National University (NU), and the Mapua Institute of Technology (MIT) were purchased or bought into by some of the country's biggest corporations, owned by reputable business tycoons, infusing these schools with much-needed financial and technical resources.

REVIVING PAST GLORIES AT UE

In 1946, business educators led by Francisco T. Dalupan Sr. set up the University of the East, to create the professionals the country needed to recover from the devastation of World War II.



'WE WILL REVIVE THE ACCOUNTING HONORS PROGRAM TO BRING BACK THE GLORY DAYS OF ACCOUNTANCY.'

- UE PRESIDENT DR. ESTER A. GARCIA

Although a private institution, UE was an attractive choice for students from the less privileged classes. "UE caters to academically qualified but perhaps financially disadvantaged students," Garcia adds. "Even when I was a college student, the poorer segments of the population came to UE.

"Some of them became titans in this country: Andrew Tan (founder of real estate firm Megaworld Corp.), Ambassador Antonio Cabangon Chua (owner of the Philippine Business Daily Mirror publishing empire and CityState Savings Bank), and Panfilo O. Domingo (former president of the Philippine National Bank and later UE chairman). They were not very rich when they studied here."

Over decades, UE built a solid reputation with its flagship accountancy and dentistry programs, and spread out to

campuses in Manila, Caloocan, and Quezon City.

UE weathered upheavals such as the peso depreciation in the mid-1980s, the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s, and student protests. However, falling enrollment and rising costs plunged it into debt, and the university was almost sold to a foreign religious school.

Its new lease on life came in 1990 when it was purchased by Dr. Lucio Tan. Jaime Bautista, UE Vice Chairman and one of Tan's trusted deputies, says, "Dr. Tan has long maintained a profound concern for the intellectual nourishment of young Filipinos, especially among the masses."

Although not an alumnus, Tan bought into UE because of the school's "record performance in various professional licensure examinations through the decades, its history of solid achievements

and, most of all, the possibility that UE could still contribute to the national good," Bautista adds.

Tan's first move was to bring in the late Panfilo O. Domingo. As UE's chairman of the board and president for most of the 1990s, Domingo is credited with steering the school back to profitability.

In 2006, Garcia, former chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and vice president for academic affairs of the University of the Philippines (UP), took over as president and focused on restoring the university's academic standing.

The dentistry program was largely unaffected by the university's woes, and Garcia made it the starting point to rebuild UE's brand as the go-to school for business and accounting students. "We revived the Accounting Honors program," she says, "to

bring back the glory days of accountancy.”

Those efforts are paying off. In 2012 and 2013, UE students beat by a healthy margin the national passing average for the Certified Public Accountants’ board examinations. It is a turnaround from the 1990s, when UE graduates didn’t meet the national average.

The renaissance of the accounting program alone has boosted enrollment by 20 percent. The over-all improvement in the school’s reputation has made it a magnet for foreign students, notably from Iran and South Korea, who flock to UE’s Dentistry and Business Management programs.

In 2009, CHED awarded UE its Autonomous Status, with some of its programs accredited as Centers of Excellence and Centers of Development. Autonomous Status is a distinction given to selected higher educational institutions with excellent standards.

RE-ENGINEERING MIT FOR GLOBAL STANDARDS

Meanwhile, corporate investment allows the Mapua Institute of Technology to literally reach for the world.

Founded in 1925 by the country’s first registered architect, Tomas Mapua, MIT began with 80 students of civil engineering and architecture. It is now the country’s largest engineering school, with at least 15,000 enrollees every school year.

MIT dramatically expanded its curriculum after it was acquired by the Yuchengco Group from the founding Mapua family in 1999. Along with its core engineering and architecture subjects, MIT offers programs in information technology, multimedia arts and digital filmmaking, and business management. Courses such as eco-friendly design and green energy technology are now mandatory components.

These programs, says MIT President and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Reynaldo B. Vea, will position the school as a global center of excellence that contributes to national economic growth.

“We want to provide a robust platform that can serve industries in a big way,” he elaborates, “providing them with graduates to help make our firms globally competitive.

“Philippine-based companies have the same need for highly qualified people (as do overseas firms), and to work here or abroad, we must educate our students to the highest global standards.”

While MIT benefits from the corporate expertise of the Yuchengco Group, Vea – a former Dean of the UP College of Engineering – says the work to develop and implement academic programs still

‘WE WANT TO
PROVIDE A ROBUST
PLATFORM THAT CAN
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BIG WAY.’

– MIT PRESIDENT AND CEO
DR. REYNALDO B. VEA



'WE BELIEVE NU IS A WAY FOR SM TO GIVE BACK TO SOCIETY, WHAT SOCIETY HAS GIVEN TO SM, BY GIVING QUALITY BUT AFFORDABLE EDUCATION.'

- NU PRESIDENT
TEODORO JHOCSON OCAMPO

falls on the shoulders of seasoned and forward-looking educators.

MIT is a private school that needs to be profitable, because it must remain a viable business. A healthy bottom line allows it to sustain its academic excellence and offer even more quality programs.

At a June 2014 institutional planning exercise, Veja reveals, MIT reanimated its vision to become one of the best educational institutions in the world. "Whatever that means, whatever it takes, we will plan it out and get there," he declares.

NU REMAINS BULLISH ON EDUCATION

The views of retail tycoon Henry Sy Sr. on the importance of education are reflected in his endowments and donations for scholarships and infrastructure projects to schools such as De La Salle University. He reaffirmed his conviction in 2008 when his SM Group became a majority corporate partner in National University.

Founded in 1900, NU is the oldest non-sectarian, private higher-learning institution in the Philippines. NU President Teodoro Jhocson Ocampo says his grandfather, university founder Mariano Fortunato Jhocson, envisioned an "even playing field"

with higher education offered to less-privileged students.

Education is meant to enable graduates to find good jobs and provide for themselves, so it makes Ocampo happy that the SM Group did not enter into an arrangement with the school with only profit in mind.

He admits: "The corporate support has greatly helped in our image-building. We are perceived as having the financial muscle to implement major innovations while staying true to our mission."

SM's backing gives NU a second wind to propel it well into the 21st century. This fresh infusion brought new infrastructure, upgraded facilities, enhanced academic standards and improved faculty recruitment and retention programs. The school's sports program has since raised its standings in the University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP).

This year, the NU Bulldogs won its first men's basketball crown in 60 years.

And, of course, "after graduation, the job-placement opportunities for our students come with the SM brand," Ocampo adds.

He reports a dramatic increase in enrollment, particularly in engineering and

business courses, as the student population rebounded from a low of 4,000 and grew to 7,000 students. "We will be comfortable with 10,000 students in this area. Already, we are thinking of expanding (our facilities in Manila)."

He underscores NU's adherence to its original philosophy, a "dynamic Filipinism" that produces graduates who contribute to nation-building. "We believe NU is a way for SM to give back to society, what society has given to SM, by giving quality but affordable education."

To MIT, NU and UE, corporate ownership enables them to acquire facilities, attract talent, and expand their course offerings. Like new seed in reclaimed land, or gardens nurtured into orchards, today's labors already bear fruit and the promise of major harvests.

Corporate investment in higher education is an act of hope as well as a hedge against future need. The expectation is that these schools do more than produce managers and employees with vastly improved skills; they must also nurture a generation of Filipinos who will choose to live and work in this country, and contribute to its long-term development. 

Entertaining Education

CHARO SANTOS-CONCIO TALKS ABOUT GOING BACK TO SCHOOL BEFORE TAKING ON TV'S TOP JOB

As a formidable actress, she garnered four nominations from the Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences Awards, two from the Gawad Urian, and the 1977 Asian Film Festival Best Actress award for the Mike de Leon film, "Itim." As a producer, she created in 1991 the Philippines' and Asia's longest-running TV drama anthology, *Maalaala Mo Kaya* (Remember When). But today, at 58, it is as president, chief executive officer (CEO), and chief content officer of ABS-CBN Corp. that may well set Charo Santos-Concio's legacy in stone.

"I don't like mediocrity," she declares. "Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well."

This outlook has certainly shaped her sterling career. Santos-Concio joined the broadcast company in 1987 as a production consultant, and rose to become ABS-CBN president and chief content officer in 2008. In 2013, she became the network's first female CEO, taking over from Eugenio "Gabby" Lopez III, who remains as chairman of the network.

Yet when she was first offered the top post, she wasn't entirely confident about running the company. So, she agreed to go back to school.

HEADED FOR HARVARD

In 2007, Santos-Concio went to Boston, Massachusetts to attend an eight-week intensive executive program at the prestigious Harvard Business School.

"Gabby had told me about Harvard's Advanced Management Program," she notes, "but I did not expect he would really send me to attend the program. I was very

surprised, and excited."

A consistent honor student, she was undaunted by her return to the classroom. She finished at the top of her elementary and high school classes at the Holy Infant Academy of Calapan, Mindoro. In 1976, she graduated *cum laude* with a degree in Communication Arts from St. Paul's College, Manila.

Her anticipation was stoked by the experiences of her husband, businessman Cesar Concio Jr., who holds a Master of Business Administration degree from Harvard.

"I always hear stories about Harvard from my husband," she explains. "So I had always wanted to go to Harvard, even for a short course. I really value learning, and I always wanted to improve myself."

According to the Harvard Business School web site, executives who wish to take the Advanced Management Program must be "nominated, sponsored, and financially supported by their current employers."

The program fee, which covers tuition, books, case materials, accommodations, and most meals, costs \$75,000 (or about ₱3.28 million) today.

Companies that have sponsored their executives include Unilever, Boeing Co., Johnson & Johnson, Starbucks Corp., PepsiCo Inc., Toshiba Corp. and a host of other global corporations.

'DON'T CALL ME FOR RECITATION'

Santos-Concio's enthusiasm for Harvard was tempered with anxiety over holding her own in a class of 165 senior executives from around the world. She

dreaded one particular course.

"Oh my God! There was a subject about Finance!" she recalls. "They give you assignments before you leave, including a book on Finance that I had to read from cover to cover!"

"I am familiar with financial concepts," she corrects herself. "But these are not instinctive to me. Ask me anything about program content, and I can answer you right away."

"I was so scared," she confesses. "I told the professor, 'I don't have any finance background, so please don't call me in class for recitation.'"

Her professor reminded her that, as a senior executive, she will have people to do the numbers; she just needs to comprehend their work.

"And he (the professor) didn't even call me for recitation!"

Santos-Concio found that most of her classmates, heads of enterprises in fields as diverse as health care, petrochemicals, government ministries, and non-government organizations, also had limited financial knowledge.

She was encouraged to just learn all that she could and "enjoy the Harvard experience."

"I went to the libraries, I went to the cafeteria, I went to the dorm where my husband stayed, and I sent (my husband) a lot of pictures."

IT'S YOUR CHARACTER THAT MATTERS

Of all her classes, Santos-Concio loved the Leadership course best.

"All the other classes are (about management) tools, but to wield those tools, it is your character, as seen in your leadership, that matters," she states. "You can have competent people in your team, but you have to be attuned to your core (as a person). You have to be authentic about what you stand for as an individual."

She particularly enjoyed the Leadership class lectures by company executives who described their experiences in handling and overcoming crises at their respective corporations.

"It was very inspirational, I was in tears," she remembers. "They talked about inner courage and strength of character. Even male executives teared up when they shared their stories. To me, that is leadership. That resonated with me."

Since her return from Harvard, her own leadership has been tested daily by harried producers, harassed scriptwriters, and temperamental actors. She also answers to the rest of the ABS-CBN board of directors. She is, in turn, master, mentor, motivator – and when the situation demands it, a very tough mother.

Does she recommend that other CEOs go back to school? Her answer is brisk: "Yes." 📚

'ALL THE OTHER CLASSES ARE (ABOUT MANAGEMENT) TOOLS, BUT TO WIELD THOSE TOOLS, IT IS YOUR CHARACTER, AS SEEN IN YOUR LEADERSHIP, THAT MATTERS.'

– ABS-CBN CORP. PRESIDENT,
CEO AND CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER
CHARO SANTOS-CONCIO

'PEOPLE SHOULD
INVEST IN THEMSELVES.
WHEN YOU DO
THAT, YOU PROMOTE
ECONOMIC GROWTH IN
THE COUNTRY.'

— FEU PRESIDENT
DR. MICHAEL M. ALBA

BY JING LEJANO

GROWING WHERE THE STUDENTS GO

OPPORTUNITIES
AND THREATS
DRIVE FAR
EASTERN
UNIVERSITY'S
EXPANSION
PLANS

It's a sign of the times that, rather than at the historic campus in Manila's University Belt, Far Eastern University (FEU) President Dr. Michael M. Alba chooses to meet at the spanking-new FEU Makati for this interview.

The facilities are up-to-date, the classrooms are modern and even the traffic is far more tolerable than what is normally encountered in downtown Manila. More pointedly, FEU Makati's location in the country's premiere business district is very appropriate, given its intense focus on accountancy, information technology and business administration courses. There's a strong expectation that many of the students here will find employment not far from where they graduated.

Makati is just one of many locations in FEU's expansion in its more than 80 years of history. Its campuses include the FEU Institute of Technology in Manila, FEU-FERN (Nicanor Reyes Educational Foundation) College in Diliman, Quezon City, and Far Eastern College in Silang, Cavite. The combined population of students runs to about 40,000 – a testament to the school's ability to offer solid and respectable degree

programs while keeping education accessible and affordable.

Indeed, the halls of these campuses echo with the heartwarming stories of students who have gone to great lengths to acquire a good education.

A HUMBLE LEGACY OF SUCCESS

There is Joy Ann de Vera, who graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management. Chosen as her graduating class' commencement speaker, Joy used to sell *puto* and *kutsinta* (steamed and brown rice cakes) in her younger years to fund her school expenses and support her younger siblings.

Dr. Juliet Gabiola, a College of Nursing graduate and now a Professor of Medicine in Stanford University, recalls her humble background, where her family would often subsist on *kuhol* (snails).

And, of course, there is SM founder Henry Sy Sr., the self-made tycoon and

one of the university's most revered alumni, who worked hard and studied even harder to earn an associate in arts degree in 1950.

This, according to Dr. Alba, is what FEU is proud of: providing quality higher education to the working class. "The idea," he says, "is to give them the education that will advance their standing in society."

This is the spirit that has driven FEU since the very beginning. In an era where Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) in the Philippines were mostly foreigners, Dr. Nicanor Reyes had envisioned a school that would shatter the ceiling and offer accounting courses to Filipinos. In 1933, he founded FEU, which proceeded to change the local business landscape. With its

Fortunately, FEU has the financial resources to ride out this transition period. The university is looking at this five-year window as a golden opportunity to transform itself into an even better institution of learning.

For starters, FEU will soon offer a senior high school program to provide a more seamless transition to college for students. Alba says the university has already developed the curriculum that will give definitive advantages to students pursuing the academic track.

The fallow period also gives FEU space to improve facilities, build new infrastructure and expand existing ones. Alba credits FEU's harmonious

relationship with the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) in helping accelerate the rate of expansion. Not only has the power provider been diligent in serving FEU's electrification needs, it also provided crucial advice in the area of efficient power management.

Gesturing at the fully air-conditioned Makati campus, Alba also stresses the importance of Meralco's power advisories. "If we know there will be power interruptions, we can immediately make adjustments to our class

schedules."

KEEPING UP WITH THE CHANGING TIMES

Beyond training for relevant and practical skills, FEU is transforming its students into life-long learners and graduates with a competitive edge. "The world is changing so fast," Alba observes. "If you get out of college now, your skills might become irrelevant in two or three years."

A re-tooling of the curriculum, one that emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills together with moral sensibility and civic engagement, is thus underway.

"Part of the DNA of FEU is to provide students with educational opportunities," Alba underscores. "People should invest in themselves. When you do that, you promote economic growth in the country." 🙌



graduates topping CPA board exams, FEU suddenly made going to business school a very attractive option.

TURNING HARD TIMES INTO BOUNTIFUL OPPORTUNITIES

Past and present successes notwithstanding, Alba says changes in the national education system – notably the adoption of the K-12 program beginning 2010 (see "Education and The Economy," page 10) – presents FEU with a prospective drop in revenue.

With K-12 in full swing, all universities, FEU included, will experience a dramatic decline in enrollment beginning 2016. This is because there will be no high school graduates over the next five years.

"It's going to be a bad time for the education business," he predicts. "The year 2017 will really be the tough year; more than 50 percent of our population will be gone."

BUILDING WITH LUXURY

BY IRIS C. GONZALES

ROCKWELL LAND MAKES ITS MARK ON PRIVILEGED LIVING WITH IMPECCABLE STYLE



Residential towers in the Rockwell Center, Makati:

(1) Amorsolo Square, (2) Luna Gardens, (3) Edades Tower and Garden Villas, (4) The Manansala, (5) Joya Lofts and Towers, (6) Rizal Tower, (7) Hidalgo Place, (8) One Rockwell



With its exceptional living environment, sleek residential towers, and gleaming office spaces, it's difficult to imagine that the Rockwell Center was once home to an outdated 130-megawatt thermal power plant.

The plant was 40 years old when it was retired in the 1990s. Today, the 15-hectare development is a popular draw for people from all over Metro Manila.

Rockwell Land Corp. (RLC) of the Lopez Group of Companies came about from the bold plan to retire an aging, high-maintenance power plant and blaze a trail in the high-end property market. (The memory of that power station lives on in the name of the sprawling Powerplant Mall).

The company has developed 10 high-rise luxury residential condominiums, and has since then gone beyond Makati City with residential and commercial developments in Ortigas, San Juan, Quezon City and, in its first provincial venture, Cebu.

A BRAND FOR A SIGNATURE LIFESTYLE

To maintain its reputation, RLC fulfills its promise to bring what it calls the signature Rockwell lifestyle to each new destination, creating "quality living spaces for those who seek the good life."

'OUR COMPANY HAS A CERTAIN EDGE: THE SERVICE IS DIFFERENT, THE LOOK OF OUR PRODUCTS IS DIFFERENT.'

– RLC PRESIDENT
NESTOR J. PADILLA



RLC's prime property, Rockwell Center in Makati, is home to eight residential towers and its signature Powerplant Mall. The upcoming Lopez Tower will reflect the latest in ecologically responsible living, including alternative power sources such as solar panels.

The Rockwell Center is a campus as well; the Ateneo de Manila University's Professional Schools are built on property donated by RLC. The 5,000-square-meter campus houses Ateneo's Graduate School of Business, School of Government, Law School, and Information Technology Institute.

The company is expanding beyond Makati, with four ongoing residential projects rising in Ortigas, San Juan and Quezon City, as well as in Cebu.

It created the Rockwell Business Center in Ortigas, which features 73,000 sqm of leasable space, a fully equipped information technology infrastructure and redundancy power back-up systems.

RLC is also venturing into the hotel and leisure business with its serviced-apartments property, Aruga by Rockwell. Located within the Rockwell Center, the Aruga – which means “nurture” in Filipino – seeks to bring hospitality and service to a higher level, with 114 fully-furnished apartments in studio, single, or two-bedroom units.

FINANCIAL EXPERTISE STEERS REAL ESTATE SAVVY

Guiding this extraordinary growth is RLC's president of nearly two decades, Nestor J. Padilla.

The son of a humble sugar-industry

worker, Padilla was born in a land where the tallest building for decades was the three-story Kapitolyo (the provincial capital, where the governor holds office). “I grew up in Negros Occidental,” he says, “and my dream was to build homes, but I went to Ateneo and took up business management instead.”

After his studies, he joined Ayala Investment and Development Corp. (AIDC) as a money-market trader and then as the Bacolod city branch manager of AIDC and its stock brokerage. His five years at AIDC set up his career in the world of banking and finance.

“I ended up being a banker,” Padilla muses, “I thought that was my career.” But his path took a turn in 1991, while he was still posted in Indonesia with Ayala International.

From 1993 to 1995, he was chief executive officer of Lippo Land, the Lippo Group's property development arm with township developments, high-rise offices, residential condominiums, and resorts.

One day, Padilla received an offer to head what would become RLC. “When the headhunter told me about this job, I said I'd pay for the plane ticket to fly home – I was intrigued,” he admits.

A lunch meeting with the late Lopez scion and broadcasting legend Eugenio “Geny” Lopez Jr. eventually convinced him to say yes. “I realized we could do something different.”

Padilla came back to the Philippines and joined RLC as president the year it was formed, in 1995. “With this job, I've found the love of my life,” he confesses. “It has been almost 20 years now.”

THE ENERGY OF OPTIMISM

Padilla is quick to point out that what truly defines the RLC brand is not so much style, but youthful spirit. “At Rockwell, I'm

the oldest guy in the office,” claims the 59-year-old executive. “The average age of our employees is 26.”

This, he adds, accounts for their energy, passion and determination to excel. “That gives our company a certain edge: the service is different, the look of our products is different.”

This youthful energy feeds his optimism for the whole industry. “I don't think there's a real-estate bubble,” he asserts. “We can feel the slowdown because that's natural; it's a cycle. When everybody is conscious of a bubble, it doesn't happen; when people are in denial, it happens.”

ENERGIZING THE COMMUNITY

The pressing crisis that Padilla believes is more threatening to the industry and to the economy is the looming shortfall in power supply, predicted to affect the country in 2015.

However, rather than stand on the sidelines, he wants the company to do its part in keeping power supplies available. Padilla is already in talks with Meralco with plans for RLC to participate in the Interruptible Load Program (ILP).

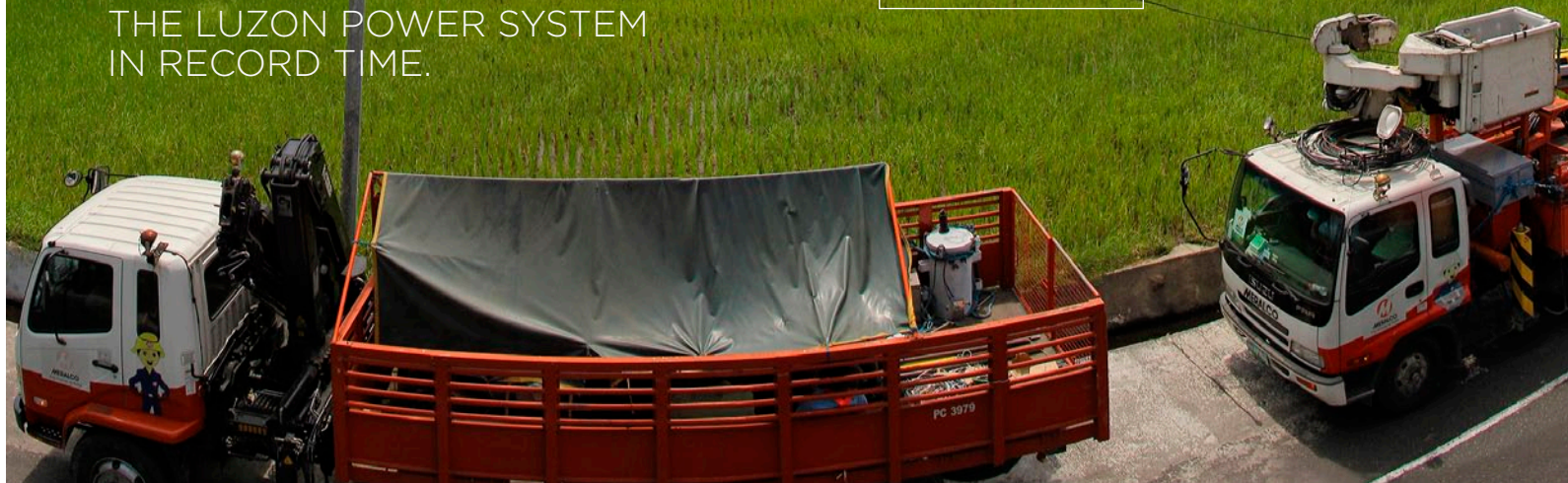
Promoted by the Department of Energy and supported by Meralco, ILP offers incentives to qualified businesses to reduce consumption and use their own generating facilities during peak hours. The voluntary involvement of companies like RLC enables distribution utilities such as Meralco to reduce the strain on the country's energy supply reserves.

It is this active engagement that makes RLC more than a builder of luxurious homes or a creator of elegant lifestyles. This spirit of participation invigorates the all-important sense of community that turns RLC's real estate into exclusive yet welcoming living spaces. 🏡

RACING TO RECOVER FROM GLENDa

MERALCO REVIVES THE LUZON POWER SYSTEM IN RECORD TIME.

BY ESMI BARRERA



Typhoon Glenda (international codename: Rammasun) exited the Philippines last July 16, leaving much of southern Luzon – including Metro Manila – devastated and in darkness.

Although not as massively destructive as Supertyphoon Milenyo (Xangsane) in September 2006, Glenda brought widespread damage to homes and infrastructure, notably to the electricity grid. Airborne debris and broken branches snapped power lines. Whipped by wind gusts at speeds of up to 250 kph, trees and hundreds of electrical poles toppled as saturated ground gave way.

The damage to the power system was especially severe as Glenda made landfall and raked right through the Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon (Calabarzon) region, the location of major power plants, transmission lines, and industrial parks. In contrast, Milenyo's landfall in the Bicol region missed the areas where the bulk of industrial companies are located.

At the height of Typhoon Glenda, a total of 627, or 89 percent, of the Manila Electric Co.'s (Meralco) distribution circuits were knocked down, and affected 87 percent of

the power firm's customers.

BATTLING AGAINST TIME

Yet even before Glenda exited Metro Manila, Meralco teams were already racing to undo the damage and restore power. By the very next day, July 17, about 83 percent of the circuits were restored, although 36 percent of customers still remained powerless.

Working 'round the clock, Meralco restored all circuits to operational levels by July 21. As of July 30, only 597 subscribers - 0.01 percent of its customers - remained without electricity. These were in areas in Rizal and Quezon that remained inaccessible due to floods and infrastructure damage.

While Meralco was quick to restore its facilities, the supply of electricity was still inadequate, due to the massive disruption to power plants and transmission lines owned by the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP).

Among the power-generation plants affected were Therma Mobile Inc. of Aboitiz Power Corp. in Navotas, as well as the Quezon Power Producers Ltd. of Egco

A convoy of Meralco service vehicles race against time to reach typhoon-affected communities in Albay.



and the Pagbilao Power Plant of Team Energy in Quezon province. Batangas saw damage at SEM-Calaca of DMCI, Ilijan of Kepco Philippines, and the Santa Rita and San Lorenzo plants operated by First Gen Corp. These plants produce 4,790 MW of power to the Luzon grid, 70 percent of which is consumed in the Meralco franchise area.

By July 24, eight days after Typhoon Glenda struck the country, six of the power plants were back online, but only had limited capacity of 60 percent out of the 10,000MW required by the entire Luzon grid.

SHARING THE LOAD

Given the magnitude of damage to the transmission lines serving the Luzon grid, the NGCP had to implement a Manual Load Dropping (MLD) scheme on July 17 to prevent a Luzon-wide system blackout. This is because the process flow from power generation, transmission and distribution to consumption happens in an instant, so sufficient electricity must constantly meet the demand. Any delay in the generation response would destabilize the Luzon



power grid, with a calamitous effect on the entire system.

The system frequency indicates the supply-demand balance, and as system operator, NGCP is responsible for maintaining this balance in collaboration with distribution utilities like Meralco. Ideally, the fundamental frequency is maintained at 60 hertz with allowable limits of ± 3 percent under normal conditions.

MLD is one of the most effective methods to fend off an extreme imbalance in the power grid. It involves the manual and deliberate shutting down of pre-selected loads from a power system, enabling available electricity to be shared among consumers while maintaining the integrity of the entire power network.

As the country's largest distribution utility, Meralco was mandated by the DOE to work closely with the NGCP to implement the MLD scheme. This would ensure the Luzon grid's stability until downed transmission lines and offline power plants could be repaired. Given the gravity of the situation, requests for exemptions from MLDs could not be granted to customers since the priority was to sustain the grid's equilibrium.

Thanks to Meralco's relentless power-restoration efforts and skillful management, all circuits damaged on July 16 after Glenda pummeled the franchise area were fully restored in less than one week. This compares favorably to the nine days it took to completely restore power in the Meralco franchise area after being wrecked by Typhoon Milenyo. Despite all obstacles, Glenda-related power losses were addressed within five days, and the MLD managed the system's balance until power plants returned to full capacity. 🌀

Meralco linemen brave pouring rains, falling trees and flying debris to clear roads and restore power as quickly as possible. In less than 24 hours, they were able to restore 83 percent of electrical circuits. By working 'round the clock, the service crews were able to restore circuits to operational levels less than a week after the devastation of Typhoon Glenda.

STABILIZING POWER AT

CAVITE
ECOZONE

BY KATHLEEN VALLE

MERALCO, PEZA ADDRESS LOCATORS' DEMANDS FOR BETTER SERVICE.

As part of the Department of Trade and Industry, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) is tasked with, among other things, administering the smooth operation of 311 special economic zones all over the country, providing incentives for the creation of more ecozones, and attracting investors into these zones.

One day, Peza found that it had also become an electricity distributor.

It wasn't a role that Peza sought; it was the outcome of a series of complex changes among power companies, distributors, export zone agencies and the rules of the system.

This unusual situation took place at the Cavite Economic Zone (CEZ) and had been unfolding for years.

POWER CHANGING HANDS

Located between the towns of Rosario and General Trias, about 30 kilometers south of Manila, the 347-hectare CEZ is home to around 406 local and international companies. These companies are engaged in a wide range of activities, from manufacturing to medical, financial and industrial services.

Originally, the operation and management of the distribution system of the ecozone fell under the National Power Corp. (Napocor), a government-owned and -controlled corporation that, in 1979, was the country's largest electricity provider. When the power industry sector was restructured under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) in 2001, the tasks were split. Transmission went to the government-owned National Transmission Corp. (TransCo), while the role of utilities regulator – including light and power inside the ecozones – went to Peza.

"For a long time, Peza ran the system as the operator as well as its regulator," admits Tereso Panga, Peza's Deputy Director-General for Policy and Planning.

The complexity of Peza's role meant it had to provide power for CEZ, maintain and improve the power system infrastructure, expand the distribution system, repair damage caused by natural causes and accidents, and manage a system to bill and collect

payments from CEZ locators.

In the long run, Peza realized it needed to find the best – and most efficient – way to ensure reliable electrical supply and raise utility services in CEZ to "best in class" standards. So it brought in the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), which is also the franchisee distribution utility where CEZ is located.

TRANSFER OF EXPERIENCE

Following two years of negotiations, Meralco and Peza entered into a 25-year concessionaire agreement. Under this agreement, Peza remains the distribution utility while Meralco runs the zone's electric distribution system and provides for the upkeep, replacement, and upgrade of its facilities. Peza is giving up revenue from distribution, but as it continues to own CEZ's distribution system, Meralco will be paying an agreed concession fee.

Along with a focused management team and highly skilled engineers and linemen, Meralco brings its 100 years of expertise as a power distributor. Keen to become a strategic partner of the CEZ business community, the company is also eager to work closely with Peza to bring in more foreign investments, particularly in manufacturing, to the Philippines.

Rene Acuña, Meralco head of the Electric Distribution Development Office, says working with Peza to provide services to a public economic zone is "a bold experiment in innovating our business."

Meralco-CEZ General Manager Ronald R. Torres underscores his particular goal to improve customer interactions within his first 100 days.

Given Meralco's experience in customer relations, he is confident that a favorable working relationship will emerge with customers at CEZ, which is one of the country's largest economic zones.

"Coming from the corporate business group, my major role is to understand the customers and the business," he stresses.



Sharing a light moment:
(from left) Meralco
Electric Distribution
Development Office
Head Rene Acuña, Cezia
President Hoo Won
Hwang, Peza Director-
General for Policy
Planning Tereso O. Panga,
Meralco-CEZ General
Manager Ronald Torres,
and Meralco-CEZ Finance
and Administration Head
Ma. Cielo Naranjilla

AIMING FOR WORLD-CLASS FACILITIES

When Meralco stepped in to manage CEZ's power distribution in May 2014, the first order of business was a total systems audit.

"We learned we weren't complying with the distribution code standards," Panga concedes. "Unacceptable, if you want to compete in the global market."

The items on Meralco's to-do list for its distribution lines include improvements to its safety and reliability, and enhancements to the aesthetics. Torres explains: "We will handle the preventive maintenance of the whole energy supply chain – consistent with Peza's one-stop-shop policy – giving problem-free electric distribution to all locators."

Panga clarifies that Peza would continue to play a significant role: "We're engaging Meralco as a distribution utility, but the power supplier will still be Peza. We are negotiating directly with our preferred supplier, and passing all the benefits on to the locators. This is one of the reasons why Cavite has one of the lowest rates in Luzon and Visayas, at ₱6.90 per kilowatt-hour.

"Cavite used to be serviced by a single dedicated line," recalls Panga. "We've had outages especially whenever there's been a calamity. We now have a second line, a redundant line to give us a reliable power supply."

ENGAGING DIRECTLY WITH CUSTOMERS

At a Town Hall Meeting held at the Cezia Clubhouse last June 4, 2014, officials from Meralco and Peza met with many of CEZ's locators to publicize Meralco's first venture into the operation of a public ecozone power distribution system.

The gathering was an opportunity for Acuña, Torres, and Ma.

Cielo Naranjilla, Meralco-CEZ Finance and Administration Head, to personally meet with the CEZ business community, and assure them that the long list of much-needed service improvements will be attended to. They took turns answering questions about billing and payments, and allaying misgivings about higher power rates.

"The good thing is, we're working with Peza and they have very good rates, they have very good sources of supply," Acuña explains. "If we are able to work with them on how to properly design a rate structure and incentivize positive customer behavior, it could result in better rates."

Torres points out that power rates will be subject to review every four years throughout the 25-year agreement, for possible adjustments. "Extraordinary inflation would be one of the main reasons for possible adjustments."

Panga was keen to assure the locators that this partnership would be beneficial to them on several levels: "Meralco will now assume customer-related services. You can be sure of better services, including compliance with regulations."

Locators were also urged to settle their bills promptly and enter into a service agreement with Meralco, which Panga said was an established industry practice even outside economic zones.

Just as CEZ locators should adjust to the new arrangement, Peza and Meralco will need to constantly fine-tune their operations and systems.

"This is a special engagement," Acuña disclosed during the Town Hall Meeting. "We deal with 5.3 million customers outside; here (at CEZ) we have around 406 customers. This is a unique opportunity for Meralco to work intimately with them and improve the infrastructure to help grow their businesses." 🌱



Ready for CEZ: Meralco-CEZ General Manager Ronald Torres,
Electric Distribution Development Office Head Rene Acuña,
and Meralco-CEZ Finance and Administration Head Ma. Cielo Naranjilla

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