



Looking at 2019 Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the Philippines with Adult Learning and Education Lens

Introduction

The Civil Society Network for Education Reforms or E-Net Philippines is a national network of civil society organizations from diverse groups that come together to advance the education rights of all Filipinos. E-Net is committed to expand and strengthen people's participation in pushing for education reforms and developing alternative learning systems with special concern for the marginalized, excluded and vulnerable sectors (MEVS). For this purpose, E-Net links up and engages with national and local government units, the academe, corporate foundations, local communities and as well as local and international organizations to effect positive and meaningful changes in education policy and practice.

E-Net is one among organizations that actively engage in SDG and SDG4 processes at local, national and international levels. It participates in the available platforms with the government and creates own spaces to push for the SDG4 agenda. E-Net Philippines takes part in the regional SDG processes, particularly in UNESCO's Annual Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED), and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific's (UN ESCAP) Annual Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD). At the national level, E-Net has contributed to the CSO National Spotlight Report in 2016, which fed into the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the Philippines for the 2016 High-Level Political Forum. For the 2019 VNR, it has engaged the process particularly on the preparation of the report on SDG4. It has submitted its 2019 CSO Spotlight Report to the Philippine government and CSO networks engaging in the 2019 HLPF.

The Philippines uses the VNR as venue to report on its progress on the SDGs, and plans to periodically participate in the VNR. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an inter-governmental commitment and “a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity”. It has 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) integrating targeting the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental”.

The development of the SDGs is a reaffirmation of the need for a humanistic approach to education and development where economic growth is guided by environmental stewardship and concern of social justice. It acknowledges the paradoxical development trends happening at the global and country levels - greater wealth but rising vulnerability and inequality; increasing ecological stress and unsustainable patterns of consumption and production; increasing levels of intolerance, of violence and conflict despite the growing connectivity and availability of information and knowledge.

Education is central to the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the education of adults is crucial in the achievement of the SDGs particularly in addressing critical issues facing humanity today such as climate change, peace and sustainable development.

It is in this context that E-Net Philippines is undertaking this review of the Voluntary National Review in the lens of adult learning and education not only in reference to SDG 4 but to all the SDG's covered by the VNR.

This review analysed the 2019 VNR by looking at the following:

- Reference to adult learning and education in the terms of skills training, awareness building, non-formal education, literacy and other forms of learning intervention involving adult learners. Is ALE referred to in the VNR, noting that ALE can be referred to in several ways (skills training, awareness building, Non-Formal education, literacy, etc.) and not only in reference to SDG4. If yes, how and to what extent;
- Provisioning for adult learning and education;
- Policies on adult learning and education including its financing. How is ALE attended to in the specific policies since 2015;
- Reporting of adult learning and education provisioning by the national government; and
- ALE's contribution in addressing inequality

Voluntary National Review Highlights

The Philippines presented its Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the SDGs to the 2019 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development in New York last July 9 to 18, 2019. Focusing on empowerment, inclusiveness and equality, the 2019 VNR highlights Goals 4 (Quality Education), 8 (Decent Work), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 13 (Climate Action), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnership for the Goals).

The development of the 2019 Voluntary National Report was led by NEDA by engaging the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) to draft the report with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) providing financial support.

The Philippines VNR underwent a consultative process involving government and non government actors. Consultations were conducted during its planning and identifying numerical targets. Data and input gathering were conducted via inter-agency workshops in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao as well as inter-agency workshops involving children, children focused CSO, labor unions and CSO's.

The review strongly emphasized the need for synergies between government and non-government actions involving different stakeholders to ensure inclusiveness and equality.

The 2019 VNR has the following main messages:

- Sustainability and inclusivity are both goals and principles and engaging stakeholders is necessary for an initiative to gain traction and be owned by a broad section of society who are driven to make it work and succeed.
- The primary catalysts for action highlighted in the VNR are the AMBISYON NATIN 2040 and PDP 2017-2022, which incorporate the SDGs. AmBisyon Natin 2040 represents the collective long-term vision and aspirations of the Filipino people for themselves and for the country. It describes the kind of life that people want to live, and how they want the country to be by 2040. The PDP 2017-2022 serves as the implementation mechanism of the SDGs in the Philippines with the 17 goals integrated into the Plan.

The VNR have highlighted and recognized the role of non-government and private sector stakeholders who are also taking responsibility for the agenda and delivering services to rights holders:

- **For quality education** - thru the Alternative Learning System, the Department of Education, working with the private sector, has been reaching out to what they call the "last mile schools," which includes out-of-school youth and other vulnerable groups, to deliver education services;
- **For decent work** – the transition to a greener economy, thru the Philippines' Green Jobs Act which incentivizes enterprises to offer jobs using green production practices;
- **To reduce inequality** – thru the Conditional Cash Transfer which provides targeted interventions to disadvantaged families, and Republic Act 10524 otherwise known as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability which reserves employment for persons with disability;
- **For climate action** – thru the Climate Risk Management Framework which provides risk information to enhance adaptive capacity, and a Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan is now being formulated to provide a coherent framework for climate action;
- **For peace, justice, and strong institutions** – thru the major milestone which is the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, which was a result of cumulative initiatives, including those by the international community, to address a long-standing conflict in southern Philippines;
- **To ensure effectiveness of partnerships** - the Philippines has been conducting the Official Development Assistance Portfolio Review. However, SDG implementation is still mostly financed from domestic resources.



SDG Goal 4:

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

For SDG 4, the VNR highlights the following:

- It underscores the pursuit of quality education as a priority of the government and reiterates the importance of lifelong learning or education and skills development;
- Progress in increasing access to basic education;
- Progress in providing access to education for vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, out-of-school youth, and overseas Filipinos by institutionalizing key education inclusion thru legislation;
- Increased access to education through various Inclusive Education Programs to address the needs of vulnerable learners (Alternative Learning System [ALS], Alternative Delivery Modes [ADM], IP Education, and Special Education)
- Making tertiary education more accessible through the implementation of the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education in 2018
- Free Technical and Vocational Education and Training benefiting 51,325 by the end of 2018;
- Providing access to education to Filipinos who are unable to physically attend formal schooling thru ICT like the TESDA Online Program, an open education resource was rolled out to make technical education more accessible to who want their skills upgraded. This also include online education programs of universities; and
- Partnership with private sector and CSO to improve access and quality education in the basic formal education and ALS including skills development and training.



The VNR mentioned the following policies: Alternative Learning System through the Governance Basic Education Act of 2001; Indigenous Peoples' (IP) Education, through the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997; the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013; Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education, by virtue of RA 10931; and TESDA Online Program and massive open online courses (MOOCs), through the Open Distance Learning Act. These policies may in one way or another provide access and provision of adult learning and education. **However, the report did not mention any explicit reference on how these policies relate to adult learning and education.**

Under SDG 4, Adult Learning and Education (ALE) is mostly referred to in the Inclusive Education Programs which includes Alternative Learning System [ALS], Alternative Delivery Modes [ADMs], IP Education, and Special Education.

The report outlines its achievements in numbers i.e. a total of 4,024,897 learners have benefited from these programs - over 600,000 learners across the country have benefitted from the ALS; 648 special education centers have been recognized by DepEd; an addition 307 schools have been established to serve indigenous learners. It also acknowledges partner delivered ALS services and recognition.

There is recognition of the engagement of DepEd with CSOs in terms of delivering education services especially in far-flung communities – “in 2018, over 1,500 learners received their high school diplomas through partner-delivered ALS services from the Motortrade Life and Livelihood Assistance Foundation, Tanglaw ng Buhay Foundation, and Uplift Cares Global Movement Foundation.” **However there is no indication whether adult learners were reached by these services.**

ALE is also referred to as lifelong learning. The VNR mentioned that both AmBisyon Natin 2040 and Philippine Development plan, also reiterate the importance of promoting lifelong learning or education and skills development as part of its strong commitment in accelerating human capital development and in the achievement of the SDGs.

Programs on retooling and upskilling such as special training programs and open distance learning are also mentioned and can be a part of Adult Learning and Education. These programs are being implemented to cater to those who do not have the opportunity to physically attend trainings due to workload, physical disabilities, or other restrictions. One notable initiative is from Escuela Taller de Filipinas Foundation Inc., a non-profit organization located in Intramuros, Manila, that implements skills development and training targeted towards indigent youth. Their students specialize in protection, conservation, and restoration of cultural heritage sites. Through open distance learning programs, the government is maximizing ICT in providing access to education to Filipinos who are unable to physically attend formal schooling. For example, the TESDA Online Program, an open education resource was rolled out to make technical education more accessible to professionals, laborers, unemployed, out-of-school youth, students, and overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) who want their skills upgraded. Several universities have also started offering MOOCs and online Masters programs.

The VNR also highlighted Higher Education Institutions particularly tertiary education and Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET). Free higher education through the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education has been officially implemented beginning Academic Year (AY) 2018-2019, which benefitted around 1.3 million students in 190 state/local universities and colleges (SUC/LUC) nationwide. This law provides free tuition for students in state-run colleges, universities, and state-run technical-vocational institutions (TVI) regardless of socioeconomic status. A Tertiary Education Subsidy is also being provided to poor students, whether they are enrolled in private or public higher education institutions. There are about 2,353 higher education institutions (HEI) and satellite campuses but the quality is compromised by the low number of HEIs with accredited programs. Quality is also reflected in the low national performance in licensure exams (from an average of 39.3% in 2015

to an average of 36.8% in 2017). Free Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) was also rolled out in September 2018, which benefited 51,325 by the end of 2018. Data show that certification rate of TVET graduates has increased from 91.1 percent in 2015 to 92.9 percent in 2017. It is worth to mention an Executive Order 330 (1996) had been issued to adopt the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation (ETEEAP) as an integral part of the educational system whereby individuals can access opportunities and acquisition of higher expertise while in the world of work and beyond the confines of the classroom as exemplified by the Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT) of the Accreditation and Equivalency Program, the distance education programs of pioneering higher education institutions (HEIs), and the Dual Training System institutionalized through Republic Act 7686. **Most of the recipients of this program are adult learners whose aim is to accredit their relevant experiences at work or in communities with additional theoretical inputs in the field of their expertise.**

With the huge government investments in making tertiary education accessible, measuring quality is vital that's why the report stated that pedagogical methods should be improved in tune with technological advancements. The VNR indicated that integration of information and communications technology (ICT) and innovative practices in education need to be scaled up to improve learning outcomes of students. Education and training institutions also need to pursue more partnerships with industry and academe not only to upgrade their curricula but also to capacitate its educators and boost research and development.

The major gap in the VNR review is that there is no mention of adult literacy. Literacy is an important aspect of education as it does not only refer to the ability to read but also the ability to read well, to

process information and solve problems. Effective literacy skills in adults help them maximize their potential and opens doors to more educational and employment opportunities that pull them out from poverty. Literacy also enables individuals to understand their rights and basic information on their health.

The VNR did not also mention SDG 4.7 because the Philippine government did not adopt this target. SDG 4.7 is education for sustainable development and global citizenship. It ensures that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development- and adults have prominent place in contribution to this. **There is a rich initiative on adult education among CSO's within the framework of SDG 4.7 and similarly by national government agencies and local governments. However this is not being captured in reports and if mechanisms are in place to monitor and report these.**

To sum it up, Adult Learning and Education is referred to in various ways such as Alternative Learning System, skills development, trainings, TVET, HEI, and Open Distance Learning. Although the report mentioned that the main focus of the SDG4 review lies in the Alternative Learning System, it is more focused on basic education and formal learning. Notably, the government gave recognition in the programs and actions of NGOs, CSOs, and private sector. Apparently, programs and initiatives for adult learners are in place. However, capturing and incorporating data and information on education and training programs that caters to adult learners is a major gap.



SDG Goal 8:

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

For SDG 8, the VNR highlights the following:

- It stresses that development begins with addressing spatial and socioeconomic inequalities;
- The Philippine government developed the National Spatial Strategy to identify geographic development challenges and opportunities to accelerate economic growth while taking into account the increasing role of cities as drivers of such growth and poverty reduction;
- The development of National Green Jobs Human Resource Development Plan thru the enactment of Philippine Green Jobs Act of 2016 (RA 10771);
- The preparation of Philippine Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Action Plan;
- The recognition of Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in providing employment opportunities to the country's growing labor force;
- The Department of Labor and Employment and the Department of Social Welfare and Development locate and assess the child laborers and their families providing them with needed interventions such as educational, medical, and livelihood assistance; and
- Sustainable tourism is envisioned to provide socioeconomic benefits to stakeholders, including stable employment and income-generating opportunities for host communities.

Review and Analysis from ALE lens:

The government enacted the Philippine Green Jobs Act of 2016 (RA 10771) which fosters a competitive, low-carbon, and environmentally sustainable economy, through the promotion of green jobs. The law mandates the development of a National Green Jobs Human Resource Development Plan which lays down strategies to support the development of green skills and competencies required in a green economy. It mandates the just transition of work by providing adequate and sustainable social protection for job losses and displacement and ensuring skills development and social dialogue. Inclusive business is defined as a private-sector approach to providing goods, services, and livelihood on a commercially-viable basis, either at scale or scalable, to people living at the base of the economic pyramid (BOP) making them part of the value chain of companies' core business as suppliers, distributors, retailers, or customers. **Both of these strategies requires the provision of skills development and trainings that can be related to ALE.**

ALE can be referred to in the provision of trainings and skills development to workers. The report made mention of the promotion of sustainable tourism that is envisioned to provide socio-economic benefits to stakeholders, including stable employment and income-generating opportunities for host communities. One example is the Medium-Term Boracay Action Plan which includes in its strategies the conducting trainings to match skills with industry needs; (b) improving access of informal workers to livelihood programs. The government also partners with the business sector like Nestle Philippines which established the NESCAFE Plan which aims to have a sustainable innovative coffee farming. The program provides training to farmers and ensures a ready market for their produce.

The importance of promoting continuing education is also stated in the report of SDG8 that's why the Alternative Learning System and UAQTEA are mentioned. These provide opportunities for the youth-at-risk to acquire relevant skills and improve their employability.

There was a substantial reduction in the proportion of youth not in employment or education (NEE). Continuous efforts resulted in the lowest recorded proportion of youth NEE since 2006 (24.5%), registering at 19.9 percent in 2018. Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile money-service provider increased from 31.3% in 2014 to 34.5% in 2017. **However, there is no indication provided if these two progress is due to programs related to youth and adult education.**

The number of economically active persons declined in 2018, with schooling as one of the primary reasons for those who dropped out of the labor force. This is reflected in the decline in unpaid family work, which is likely a result of programs, and policies encouraging school participation of the youth, such as the PantawidPamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), a conditional cash transfer program. **One of the major components of the 4Ps program is family development sessions which is not highlighted in the VNR. These sessions can be considered as non-formal education to parents as they discuss topics on responsible parenting, health, and nutrition.**

The recognition of female laborers and workers is notable through the following policies: Expanded Maternity Leave (RA 11261), the Act Strengthening the Prohibition on Discrimination Against Women (RA 6725), and Magna Carta of Women. Female labor force participation is also encouraged by the Telecommuting Act (RA 11165) which allows employees in the private sector to work from an alternative workplace with the use of telecommunication and/or computer technologies. **However, there are no clear statements on how these policies work in encouraging and promoting female labor force participation, as this may require education and trainings for women.**

In a similar manner, **there are also trainings and education services for adults in general by the Department of Labor and Employment which are not mentioned in the VNR.** These are on the role of workers and their organizations towards promotion

of trade unionism, workers' empowerment and sound labor management practices, Occupational Health and Safety in the Workplace, and training activities aim to enlighten and educate jobseekers and employers on their rights and responsibilities, work ethics, values and skills, and other relevant information, among others.

The report also gave highlights in the role of non-profit organizations and social enterprises. For instance, Messy Bessy, a producer of home and personal care products, has been providing education, employment, and rehabilitation to youth-at-risk.

There is an implied component to adult financial literacy in the report through the promotion of social security coverage and basic deposit accounts frameworks. The Social Security System introduced the AlkanSSSy and the KaltaSSS-Collect programs for informal sector workers, including contractual and job order employees, who have little to no access and membership to statutory social protection programs. The Basic Deposit Accounts framework simplifies the process of opening a bank account for the unbanked, particularly by addressing prevalent barriers such as cost and lack of money and documentary requirements. However, there is no clear statement if this program includes education, training and awareness building.

In the review of SDG 8, the relevance of Adult Learning and Education is strongly implied particularly in skills development and training. The report also recognized the role of policies and programs promoting continuing education in addressing inequality and have acknowledge the initiatives of non-profit and social enterprise organizations and the private sector. The report indicated the projects and policies addressing employment and decent work, however there is no indication as to the contribution of adult learning and education in the form of trainings and skills development to the progress made in achieving under this goal.



SDG Goal 10:

Reduce inequality within and among countries

For SDG 10, the VNR highlights the following:

- The PDP 2017-2022 stresses the reduction of inequality through the expansion of economic activities, development of human capital across all sectors, and equitable regional development;
- Various social protection programs have been adopted to respond to various types of risks and vulnerabilities that confront households and individuals;
- The government instrumentalities and legislation ensure participative decision-making with Civil Society Organizations;
- The importance of RA 7432 (as amended by RA 9994, on the benefits and privileges of senior citizens) and RA 10070 (on establishment of Persons with Disability Affairs Office), which lead LGUs to establish local offices for senior citizens and persons with disability, among other sectors. These offices help ensure that their sectoral concerns are considered in local development planning, programming and budgeting;
- EO 12 enjoins concerned agencies to locate couples and individuals with unmet needs for modern family planning, capacitate local structures to accelerate the implementation of the RPRH Law, and engage CSOs and the private sector in attaining zero unmet needs for modern family planning in their respective localities. As this enables families to limit or space the number of children, families can better manage their assets, giving them the flexibility to invest in activities that may increase their incomes; and
- The recognition that private organizations play a significant role in reducing inequalities. Government agencies often collaborate with NGOs and private companies in implementing programs and ensuring inclusive plans and policies.

Review and Analysis from ALE lens:

The country has passed legislation to ensure that the rights of vulnerable groups are upheld. These include Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities (RA 7277), Magna Carta on Women (RA 9710), Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (RA 8371), Expanded Senior Citizens Act (RA 9994), and The Child and Youth Welfare Code (Presidential Decree No. 603). In addition to the recognition of these groups' rights, these laws also highlight the mechanisms to empower and ensure their wellbeing.

The report stated the adoption of the country of the Conditional Cash Transfer or the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), which was recently enacted into a law. The program seeks to improve human capital outcomes related to health and education by giving targeted interventions to disadvantaged families. **However, the report only highlighted that this program aims to stop intergenerational poverty by investing in children in early life.**

Aside from the regular CCT program, a modified conditional cash transfer program is also in place, which targets homeless street families, indigenous peoples (IPs) in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDA), and families in need of special protection as beneficiaries. **But, there is no mention if a part of this program includes education.**

Responding to Republic Act 10524 otherwise known as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability) which reserves employment for persons with disability, companies such as Lamoian Corporation employ handicapped people who comprise a significant proportion of their personnel. To offset regional disparities, the Assistance to Disadvantaged Municipalities provides a support fund for poorer local governments to build access roads, water systems, and reproductive health services, among others.

The Magna Carta for Persons with Disability reserves at least one percent of all positions in all government agencies, private offices or corporations for persons with disabilities. This law also provides private organizations with tax incentives when hiring persons with disabilities. **Proper implementation of this law requires training and education for PWD however, it was not mentioned in the report.**

There is a recognition from the government that CSOs plays an important role in ensuring effective participative decision-making. It is mentioned that CSOs and government agencies and bodies like Philippine Commission on Women, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, the Council for the Welfare of Children, and the National Council on Disability Affairs were established to ensure that sector-specific issues are considered in the development discourse. These Commissions and Councils formulate plans and policies for their respective sectors and raise sectoral concerns during development planning and programming committees and forums. **Effective participation requires capacity building of CSO's in the form of trainings in local governance and participation, however, initiatives or programs to address this is not mentioned.**

Reproductive health and family planning is also one important part of adult learning and education. The 2017 National Demographic and Health Survey revealed that the modern contraceptive prevalence rate registered at 40.4 percent while the unmet need for family planning was at 31.6 percent. It also showed that women from the lowest income quintile have higher fertility rates at 4.3 live births per woman compared to 1.7 live births among women from the highest income quintile. As higher fertility rates place more pressure on families' resources, there is an urgent need to address family planning concerns. To strengthen the implementation of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health (RPRH) Act of 2012, the President issued Executive Order No. 12 in January 2017 to "intensify and accelerate the implementation of critical actions necessary to address unmet need for modern family planning particularly, for all poor households." **However, the VNR didn't mention any education and awareness building done to ensure that Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health is streamlined among adults.**

Adult Learning and Education in the form of trainings, skills development, and capacity buildings is strongly implied in the following programs and initiatives:

The National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA) has been utilizing opportunities presented by developments in ICT to spur the economic productivity of persons with disability. For instance, the NCDA worked with a local animation studio company to train persons with disabilities on 2-D Animation. The program also organizes them as a group of animators capable of accepting contracts and projects from animation companies. The Integrated Livelihood Program of the Department of Labor and Employment provides training on setting-up and operating livelihood undertaking and continuing technical and business advisory services to beneficiaries. Persons with disabilities have also been beneficiaries of livelihood grants and capacity building services.

Capacities of localities and community members in municipalities are being enhanced through the Local Government Support Fund Assistance to Municipalities (LGSF-AM) aims to address policy and governance gaps in the implementation of local programs and projects through the harmonization of LGSF-AM's processes with the existing systems of the local government, strengthening the latter.

DSWD's Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services uses the community-driven development approach which: (a) helps communities in poor municipalities identify challenges in reducing poverty and make informed decisions on a range of specific, locally-identified options for development; (b) gives communities control over resources to address local poverty; and (c) builds the capacity of both state (including LGUs) and civil society stakeholders to provide assistance and respond to calls for support from poor communities as they implement development initiative

The relevance and contribution of adult learning and education in the form of trainings, skills development, and capacity buildings is strongly implied under this goal. Capturing and indicating the specific contributions and effect of these trainings and capacity development will give more flesh to the significant role of ALE in achieving this goal.



SDG Goal 13:

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

For SDG 13, the VNR highlights the following:

- The PDP 2017-2022 embodies a number of strategies to address climate and disaster risks across various sectors (e.g., agriculture, infrastructure, and environment and natural resources);
- Sectoral and framework plans have also been updated to incorporate climate change and disaster risk parameters such as the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Plan, Philippine Energy Plan, Environment and Natural Resources Framework Plan, and river basin master plans. At the local level, Comprehensive Land Use Plans and Comprehensive Development Plans are also made climate and disaster risk-informed;
- The establishment of the GHG Inventory Management and Reporting System through EO 174, s. 2014 to enable the country to transition towards a climate-resilient pathway for sustainable development;
- The challenges which include critical knowledge and data gaps, and limited technical and absorptive capacities to in the implementation of risk reduction activities;
- The Green, Green, Green program, funded under the Local Government Support Fund – Assistance to Cities, to promote the development of public open spaces and create greener, and more sustainable cities all over the country.
- The development of a National Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production being done by NEDA; and
- The recognition that the success of DRR initiatives and policies depends on the community.

Review and Analysis from ALE lens:

The report mentioned the following policies and measures on climate change adaptation: Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729) which established the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and directed the formulation of national and local climate change actions plans; National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 (RA 10121) which provides for the overarching country policy for DRRM, and established the national and local DRRM funds; and People's Survival Fund Act of 2013 (RA 10174), which established a special fund of at least PHP2 billion (US\$45 million) from the 2013 to 2015 annual national budget to augment financial support for local adaptation projects.

While adaptation remains the country's priority, there are also mention of policies and measures on climate change mitigation: Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act of 2019 (RA 11285), which intends to secure sufficiency and stability of the country's energy resources by promoting the development and utilization of efficient renewable energy

technologies and systems; Green Building Code of 2016 that promotes resource efficiency in buildings; Green Jobs Act of 2016 (RA 10711) that encourages the creation of green jobs, and provides incentives to business enterprises that use green technologies to produce environmental goods and render services; and Securities and Exchange Commission Memorandum Circular No.4 s. 2019 that provides the Sustainability Reporting guidelines to help publicly-listed firms manage non-financial performance along with economic, environmental, and social aspects of their organization, including their contributions in attaining the SDGs.

Adult Learning and Education can be referred to as knowledge and awareness raising in disaster risk reduction and management. The Climate Risk Management Framework provides risk information to enhance adaptive capacity. Project NOAH exemplifies the partnership between the academe and government in providing timely weather information for disaster preparedness. A ban on

single-use plastics is already implemented in several cities and municipalities. A Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan is now being formulated to provide a coherent framework for climate action. There is improved knowledge and awareness, and heightened action towards low-emission development.

The report mentioned various challenges including enhancing resilience and adaptive capacities especially with the increasing intensity of hazards and uncertainties of climate change impacts. From 2016 to 2018, the number of persons directly affected by disasters declined but the number of casualties and missing persons remains relatively high. Critical knowledge and data gaps also persist. The government needs to be equipped with the right tools and approaches based on best-available science to effectively address the emerging challenges posed by climate change and prioritize adaptation investments and actions. Moreover, appropriate indicators to measure adaptive capacity and resilience are still lacking. More support is needed to generate accurate, timely, and local-specific climate risk information, and raise greater awareness and understanding on the use of such information especially by the LGUs and communities. Limited technical and absorptive capacities impede effective implementation of risk reduction activities.

The role of capacity building, trainings, and education particularly on adult is crucial in addressing these challenges. As mentioned in the report, capacity-building support is needed to help local governments understand their risks, implement needed risk-reduction measures, and manage residual risks to minimize losses and damage. One hundred percent of the LGUs in nine of the 17 regions have incorporated risk-reduction strategies in their respective local plans; yet, LGU capacity to implement remains limited by financial constraints and technical expertise. Beyond funds, LGUs need knowledge in translating their risk-informed plans into implementable and bankable projects.

The success of national risk reduction policies depends on community-level actions. Community-based Early Warning System (CBEWS) has been successfully replicated in several areas of the country such as the Agos River CBEWS in Quezon Province, which has been devastated by extreme typhoon events. The system consists of rain gauges, flood watchpoints, radio communication devices, and a defined set of emergency measures aimed at preventing loss of lives and damage to properties. After the destruction caused by Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, the municipalities of Daanbantayan and Medellin in the province of Cebu have successfully implemented community-led disaster recovery and rehabilitation efforts that resulted in timely rehabilitation of schools and restoration of tourism livelihood. The province of Albay, which is exposed to multiple natural hazards such as typhoons and volcanic eruptions, has been a model of “zero-casualty” due to its effective response measures and proper coordination with relevant agencies. The successful implementation of these initiatives is a result of strengthened collaborations among LGUs, NGOs, national government agencies, academic institutions, and the private sector.

Enhancing resilience and adaptive capacities is the given framework of the report in addressing the challenges and impacts of climate change. Adult Learning and Education in the form of awareness raising, trainings and capacity buildings of different stakeholders is strongly acknowledged. The governments initiative in developing a National Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production is very noteworthy. **Policies and programs under these goal should have a stronger pronouncement on continuing adult education programs that is crucial in enhancing adaptive capacities, developing resilience and addressing sustainable consumption that require not only skills but changing mindsets and behaviours.**



SDG Goal 16:

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

For SDG 16, the VNR highlights the following:

- The passage of the Bangsamoro Organic Law and the recent establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao marked the beginning of achieving lasting peace in Mindanao;
- The creation of Inter Agency Committee on Good Governance (IAC-GG) was created through Memorandum Order No. 01-2018 to facilitate coordination among government agencies for the formulation, implementation, monitoring, assessment, and updating of development administration framework of the national development plan.;
- The promotion of inclusion while ensuring security and privacy in the National ID System;
- The enactment of the PhilSys Act went through a rigorous consultation process to ensure security of information and to protect peoples' rights to privacy and confidentiality in accordance with existing data privacy laws and regulations;
- Crime reports such as the decrease in cases of homicide, murder, and rape;
- The reduction of bribery in the government;
- The promotion of freedom of information and ease of doing business act; and
- The recognition that women have become more visible in terms of political participation with a steady increase in the number of women elected in the legislative seats and local government positions.

Review and Analysis from ALE lens:

The report mentioned the creation of Participatory Governance Cluster by virtue of EO 24, s 2017, which aims to enhance citizen participation in governmental processes. The Cluster formulates mechanisms to enable the public to properly understand, rationalize, and implement national government programs and projects based on specific realities. It also seeks to strengthen consultation mechanisms to ensure effective implementation of national programs and projects in the local government and grassroots level, and propose policies, programs, and projects that would foster participatory governance and build the capacities of LGUs. However, there is no mention as to the process of the consultation and if it has a training or capacity building on it.

It is also mentioned that the Philippines is one of the founding members of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) launched on September 20, 2011. The OGP aims to help governments become sustainably more transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs of their citizens. This initiative encourages participation of the various stakeholders by soliciting their commitments and including these in the Philippine OGP National

Action Plan. Through OGP, CSOs and NGOs, can participate in the governance process but it is not stated in the report the series of capacity building and regional workshops done in the OGP that caters the marginalized sectors.

The review on SDG16 has no explicit or implied reference to Adult Learning and Education. The major gap in the report is that there is no mention of peace education. Conflict and violence can be prevented through multi-sectoral action and one way is through education. **Peace Education is important in the promotion of culture of peace, and respect to human rights and diversity, which are all crucial in the attainment of SDG16. Since Adult Learning and Education deals with different aspects of the society, it can also be used for reconciliation and restoration of peace in our communities and nations becomes inevitable. One notable program that should have been stated in the VNR is the role of education in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DRR) of rebel groups. Re-entry of former rebels in society requires education, trainings, skills, and development.**



SDG 17:

Partnership for the Goals: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

For SDG 17, the VNR highlights the following:

- The Tax Reform for Accelerated Inclusion (TRAIN) enacted in late 2017 provided higher revenue for the government, but also contains provisions that discourage bad health habits;
- Investment liberalization measures to boost investment and induce greater participation from the private sector;
- Official development assistance (ODA) remains a vital component in achieving the country's development programs and projects and more broadly in achieving the SDGs;
- Domestic resource mobilization has improved to complement external financial resources. The ratio of national government revenue to GDP increased from 15.8 percent in 2015 to 16.4 percent in 2018;
- The challenge on improving the performance of revenue agencies and LGUs in revenue generation; and
- The recognition that Overseas Filipinos (OFs) can be made active partners in pursuing the SDGs by increasing the portion of remittances directed to savings and investment.

Review and Analysis from ALE lens:

The VNR recognized that in achieving the SDGs there should have effective and cohesive partnerships among various actors such as national and local governments, the development community, civil society, the private sector and other organizations to make optimal use of available resources.

The reference to Adult Learning and Education in SDG 17 is limited in the implied financial literacy of Overseas Filipinos and investments in Higher Education. The Philippine government must invoke a mutually beneficial agreement with Receiving Countries of our Overseas Workers to protect Overseas Workers from abuse, curtailment of rights, discrimination and injustice from foreign employers. Though Empowerment activities through education on the Rights and Responsibilities of Overseas Workers and mechanism where to report in case of violation of their rights are incorporated in the orientation, but then this becomes futile due to the system of justice prevailing in the host country and the lack of bargaining power of the Philippine Embassy.

As mentioned in the report, Overseas Filipinos (OFs) can be made active partners in pursuing the SDGs by increasing the portion of remittances directed to savings and investment. The volume of remittances stood at 9.7 percent of GDP in 2018. While a significant portion of remittances is used in household consumption, investment among OFs can be promoted by exploring savings and investment instruments for overseas Filipinos, such as diaspora bonds, remittance bonds, and provident fund. Financial institutions, such as the Overseas Filipino Bank, among others, also need to actively

promote savings and quality investments of remittances. In addition, the BSP in partnership with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, redesigned its approach to financial literacy campaign among OFWs, branded as PiTaKa (Pinansyal na Talino at Kaalaman) for OFWs and their families. PiTaKa includes modules on financial planning and management, which aims to change financial behaviors and enable OFWs to transition from being big spenders to become regular savers, investors, and even business owners. The Overseas Filipinos Remittances for Development (OF-RED) project³⁴ also set up a collective fund for investment in select local development projects. Remittances invested in the fund were also matched by the international partners and the LGUs.

Investment liberalization measures to boost investment and induce greater participation from the private sector. In 2016, restriction on foreign ownership of financial companies was lifted. This increased net FDI in the sector from an annual average of USD 186 million in 2010 to 2015 to USD 532 million in 2016 to 2018. In 2018, restrictions were also lifted in five investment areas with the shortening of Foreign Investment Negative List (FINL): internet businesses, investment houses, teaching at higher education, training centers engaged in short-term high-level skills, and wellness centers.

The major gap of the report under this goal is it narrowed down the partnership only in economic terms and the potential role of Overseas Filipinos as partners in development particular in investments, as such the reference to adult education is limited to financial and investment terms.

Overall Analysis and Conclusion

The significant role of adult learning and education is strongly implied in the initiatives and programs in achieving the goals under the report. The framework of lifelong learning and continuing education were mentioned.

The review of SDG 4 and SDG 8 have the strongest reference particularly the Alternative Learning System (ALS), and skills development. SDG 10 and 13 have implied the existence of adult learning activities in the various related programs that may indicate trainings and capacity building mentioned in the VNR. Though they indicated the strong relevance of adult learning and education not only in terms of skills development but also in changing mindsets and behaviours, specific programs and policies for adult learning and education in these goals is lacking.

Despite the importance of Peace Education in the promotion of culture of peace, and respect to human rights and diversity, there is no mention of any explicit or implied statements on ALE in SDG16

which could have been vital in the promotion of peace, justice and strong institutions.

Lastly, there is limited implied reference in the review of SDG 17 on partnerships that is narrowed to overseas Filipinos in terms investments and financial literacy, and investment in higher education institution.

Overall, there are programs and policies that are mentioned in the VNR review that have strong ALE component but the specific roles and processes are not indicated. Adult Learning and Education is generally indicated in various references such as trainings, skills development, and capacity building. However, capturing and indicating the specific contributions and effect of these trainings and capacity building initiatives are not mentioned that will indicate the significant role of ALE in achieving these goals. With the exception of SDG 4, specific policies and programs for adult education provisioning and its financing is lacking in the VNR.

Recommendations and Ways Forward

The governments VNR is a space for continuing advocacy on ALE to effect a wider horizons of partnerships from the perspective of civil society organizations in order to come up with an objective content of reporting that involves adult learning and education. In the recent E-Net discussion-workshop on ALE with member-organizations and ALE practitioners the following recommendations were made to pursue ALE advocacies:

- Engage in the development/improvement of Alternative Learning System (ALS) Bill with ALE lens and actively campaign for the passage of the bill. Simultaneous consultations would be initiated with the Department of Education to have a common ground on ALS Bill and at the same time participate in the congress deliberations;
- Identify partners and champions in Department of Education for ALE and put forward horizons of ALE as practiced by CSOs in terms of human rights, active citizenship, gender fairness, peace, sustainable development, alternative learning systems, and climate actions;
- Coordinate with select government agencies and local government units to map/scan the existing programs including its nature of interventions and reach to identify and develop ALE. Advocate support for grassroots interventions in programming, delivery system, and funding in their existing programs. In effect, work with government to identify the whole universe of ALE;
- Coordinate with select CSOs and private sectors to map/scan ALE programs and identify its nature and reach;
- Pursue conversation series on ALE among member-organizations and ALE practitioners to unlearn and learn more about ALE and establish a clear framework on Adult Learning and Education which highlights lifelong learning to capture the wider adult education practice beyond the Alternative Learning System; and
- Develop E-Net's Adult Learning and Education Advocacy agenda for recognition and financing of adult learning and education programs.

About ASPBAE

The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) is a regional association of more than 200 organisations and individuals working towards promoting quality education for all and transformative and liberating, lifelong adult education and learning. It strives to forge and sustain an Asia-Pacific movement dedicated to mobilising and supporting community and people's organisations, national education coalitions, teachers' associations, campaign networks, and other civil society groups and institutions in holding governments and the international donor community accountable in meeting education targets and commitments, ensuring the right of all to education, and upholding education as an empowering tool for combating poverty and all forms of exclusion and discrimination, pursuing sustainable development, enabling active and meaningful participation in governance, and building a culture of peace and international understanding. ASPBAE publications form an integral part of ASPBAE's information, education, and advocacy activities and efforts, and seek to support sharing and learning among education stakeholders, advocates, practitioners, analysts, and policymakers. The reader is therefore encouraged to write to ASPBAE if they wish to use the material contained herein for reproduction, adaptation, and translation and to provide feedback that could help in further improving these publications.



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