

**RECOMMENDATIONS of E-NET PHILIPPINES on
Consideration of House Bill No. 6706, entitled: “AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A RECOVERY
ASSISTANCE PACKAGE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES” Introduced
by: Rep. Mark O. Go**

**(Submission to the New Normal Subcommittee of the Defeat COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee of
the House of Representatives 17 June 2020)**

Current Context

The Philippines is in a State of Calamity and Luzon, its biggest island where Metro Manila is located, has been placed under “Enhanced Community Quarantine” (lockdown) due to COVID-19 outbreak since March 16, 2020. Other cities and provinces outside Luzon have also imposed ECQ as this virus is spreading in their localities. While NCR and other places are now on General Community Quarantine (GCQ) the pandemic virus is still around invisibly and safety measures and preventive actions in all our planning and interventions have to take into most consideration. About 27 million learners in public and private basic education, an estimate of close to 5 Million learners in public and private higher institutions (Data compiled, OPRKM-Knowledge Management Division, 2019) and around 183,563 learners from Technical Vocational Education (1st Quarter 2020, TVET Statistics) are affected by this COVID 19 pandemic. Data on the affected learners with disabilities, out-of-school learners missing education, indigenous people, and disadvantaged women should also be given priorities in the Learning Management System of the Commission on Higher Education.

Access to quality and equitable participation of learners in higher education and even in the Vocational Technical education becomes a formidable issue now affecting their learning continuity. The outcome of the pandemic corona outbreak resulted to loss of jobs of parents, no work, no pay due to the lockdown of companies and economic dislocation among families. Teachers in private schools lost their jobs due to migration of students to public schools and closure of schools. A big impact for higher education is also evident. Closure of training institutions for teachers would mean high risk of shortage of qualified teachers. International students have lost their jobs and likewise resorting to dropping-out.

The efficiency of transitioning from the traditional classroom face to face learning to remote learning whether asynchronous or synchronous mode requires preparation and readiness of the learners, teachers and school leaders in these learning modalities and landscape. The government should ensure the provision of professional development learning and support to all teachers without the skills to provide distance education and/or virtual learning, digital tools, and other alternative delivery modes to support the learning continuity of their learners.

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where everyone has access to multi-cultural, gender-fair, liberating, lifelong education.*

There's no more going back in the past and our education system should adapt to the new normal fast and effective. In adapting to the new normal, the 1987 Philippine Constitution specifically Article XIV, Section 1 that states "The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all" and the government commitment to SDG particularly SDG 4 that "ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" must serve as the guidepost in all its education efforts and targets.

The right to education of our learners must continue and should not to be compromised.

It is in this context, that E-Net Philippines supports House Bill 6706 Introduced by Honorable Mark O. Go: An Act Providing for a Recovery Assistance Package for Higher Education and Technical-Vocational Education and Training Appropriating Funds Therefor, and For Other Purposes. Furthermore, E-Net Philippines puts forward these specific recommendations:

1. Full implementation of Republic Act No. 10929 or the Free Internet Access in Public Places Act, upgrade and rehabilitate ICT infrastructure and connectivity in SUCs. During the 2019 GAA National Budget Senate hearing, out of the country's 112 SUCs, only 17 free Wifi hotspots had been installed as of December 2018;
2. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in education must take into account the cultural diversity of the learners, ethnic identity, values, languages and history of the local communities and consultation with teachers in the choice of the essential content of the curriculum and choice of pedagogical tools of teaching and learning;
3. Training programs for faculty and education personnel to upgrade competencies not only in using alternative modes of instructions as well as in curriculum development and research;
4. Financial assistance to teaching and non-teaching personnel including job-order and contract of service, Part Timers and long-term Casual employees, both the public and private educational institutions;
5. Hardship Pay and Hazards Pay be provided to teachers and non-teaching personnel engaged in hazardous delivery of education services amid COVID-19 and even beyond this pandemic crisis;
6. The condition to ensure flexible blended learning is also guaranteed if the homes of the learners have Internet Access, since learners would have more time in studying stay at home to prevent exposure to the virus and safeguard their health and wellness. Free gadgets, loads, workbooks and other modular materials must be provided to learners in the delivery of flexible learning system. Take the full advantage of using the radio and TV especially government-owned Radyo ng Bayan and PTV4;
7. No increase of tuition and miscellaneous fees in the private schools to prevent the learners from dropping out of the school system;

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8. Financial support should be extended to learners of Vocational Technical Education considering that the scholarship funds of TESDA has been realigned to support the Social Amelioration Program;
9. Learners with disabilities are the most vulnerable in this pandemic. The budget appropriation for Disability-specific appropriation for Learners with Disabilities should be included in this Recovery Assistance Package for Higher and Technical-Vocational Education Bill;
10. Consider in planning the training cum production, life skills training, and social skilling of the marginalized out-of-school youth/learners, indigenous people and disadvantaged women;
11. Provide support in capacitating the parents, guardians and older siblings in supporting the learning of the learners in terms of psycho-social enhancement, knowledge enrichment, attitudinal formation and skills development especially in home-based schooling; and
12. Ensure safe learning environment and provision of support to health measures and wellness of the learners, parents, teachers, school leaders in the provision of learning continuity in higher education and technical-vocational education and training.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to submit our recommendations to the **Consideration of House Bill No. 6706 in this** Honorable NEW NORMAL DCC SUB-COMMITTEE on Defeat COVID of the House of Representatives.

Respectfully yours,



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