Monitoring of the Philippine Department of Education’s Model Senior High School Program

The Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) is currently undertaking a series of major reforms anchored on the implementation of a new K to 12 system as it seeks to improve basic education outcomes for Filipino children and achieve its national Education for All commitments. The new K to 12 Basic Education Program (see Figure 1) involves the introduction of additional years of secondary education in the form of a senior high school, plus a year of mandatory kindergarten anchored on a new 12-year basic education curriculum, benchmarked against international standards. The 12-year curriculum includes six years of elementary education (Grades 1 to 6), four years of secondary education (Grades 7 to 10), and two years of senior high school (Grades 11 and 12).

Senior High School Modeling: Moving towards the new K to 12 Curriculum

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of junior high school (Grades 7 to 10), and two years of senior high school (Grades 11 to 12) marked with multiple pathways and elective subjects supported by a comprehensive career guidance program. In May 2012, DepEd identified 20 secondary schools that will model the senior high school program prior to the official nationwide launch in 2016. The list was modified in August 2012 to exclude five schools that did not proceed with the implementation of the program, and to include 13 additional schools which applied and were approved to implement the program.

In early 2013, SEAMEO INNOTECH undertook a monitoring study to document the developments on the first year of implementation of the Senior High School (SHS) Modelling in selected SHS model schools in the country. The research study was funded through SEAMEO INNOTECH’s Educational Research and Innovation Fund as part of the Center’s complimentary set of program interventions to support DepEd’s need for sustained technical support in operationalizing the new K to 12 Basic Education Program.

### Study Visits: Objectives and Methodology

The study aimed to generate knowledge drawn from the experiences of model schools that can serve as a good resource for refining the guidelines for the full implementation of SHS beginning SY 2016-2017. Specifically, the study aimed to 1) determine the pre-implementation considerations, and actual implementation needs and processes under the SHS Modelling; 2) identify strengths and innovations of the selected SHS model schools; 3) ascertain challenges and potentials for improvement; and 4) formulate policy recommendations based on the lessons learned by the selected SHS model schools.

Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with selected school heads, teachers and SHS students to obtain relevant information on the SHS Modelling.
The study covered the various stages of the SHS Modelling, from pre-implementation to implementation, including the challenges schools have experienced thus far in relation to the modelling (see Figure 2).

The pre-implementation stage considered the factors that influenced the school to take part in the SHS Modelling program. These include establishing linkages with local government units and local businesses and industries; developing appropriate curriculum; capacity building especially for teaching personnel; and acquiring necessary certifications particularly for teaching technical-vocational (TechVoc) subjects.

The implementation stage included the necessary inputs such as human and financial resources, adequate facilities, curriculum, and learning materials including policy guidelines; processes that take place such as intervention programs, use of different teaching methodologies, and student assessment; and outputs such as innovations and student employment as on-the-job trainees generated during the first year of SHS Modelling.

Challenges related to policies and implementing guidelines; available resources; level of community support including local government units (LGUs) and parents; level of awareness; and community linkages were also examined.

Good practices and lessons learned from the first year of modelling were taken into consideration as recommendations were crafted to help address the challenges and maximize any potential for improvement of the program.

**Model Senior High Schools**

Included in the monitoring study are seven SHS model schools composed of four general public high schools, namely, 1) **Sangley Point National High School** (NHS) in Sangley Point, Cavite City, Cavite; 2) **Bacolod City NHS** and 3) **Sum-ag NHS** in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental; 4) **Palo NHS in Palo, Leyte**; and three public TechVoc high schools, namely, 5) **San Pedro Relocation Center NHS** in San Pedro, Laguna; 6) **Doña Montserrat Lopez Memorial NHS** in Silay City, Negros Occidental; 7) **Merida Vocational School** in Merida, Leyte.
Pre-Implementation Experiences

The pre-implementation stage is one of the most crucial stages of SHS Modelling. This stage allows for schools to hold consultations with key stakeholders to determine their specialization, develop their curriculum, and determine the human resource and certification requirements needed to fully implement SHS Modelling.

Rationale

Most of the seven SHS model schools engaged in the SHS Modelling not only to contribute in achieving Education for All, but also to provide greater access to senior high school education to poor and working students as well as employment opportunities and quality education to students while they are unable to enrol in college. At the same time, most of the schools engaged in SHS Modelling to accommodate overaged students.

Linkages

Initially, the SHS model schools held consultations with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the LGUs, and prospective industry partners to help determine the type of specialization that they could engage in. LGUs were seen by the schools as their links to the industry partners. On the other hand, they sought advice from DOLE and local private industries on the possible specializations that they could engage in while taking into consideration job availability in their area.

Curriculum Development

As provided for by DepEd Order (DO) No. 36 series of 2012, “… the model schools are given the flexibility to innovate and develop their own curriculum based on the needs of students and demands of the local industries…”

Most of the SHS model schools have a common academic curriculum, with a few additional specialized academic subjects that were selected based on relevance to their TechVoc or Entrepreneurship specializations. In consultation with DepEd, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), they align the academic curriculum with the General Education Subjects in college to prepare the senior high school students for possible entry to second year or third year college.

Capacity Development

The SHS Modelling school heads and teachers were oriented and trained on the K to 12 Program and SHS Modelling.

SHS Modelling partners such as the LGUs and the industries were likewise oriented on the K to 12 Program and SHS Modelling to prepare them for their roles and responsibilities under the Program.

Certifications

The observations on the type of certifications used were consistent with the number of schools that had TechVoc program specializations. TechVoc program schools usually provide National Certification (NC) Level I for junior high school and NC Level II for senior high school which are obtained by passing the assessment administered by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).
Implementation Experiences

The success or failure of the SHS Modelling depends on a number of factors including human resources, funding, facilities, curriculum, learning modules, and guidelines or policies. Intervention programs, teaching methodologies, and student assessment are also crucial in sustaining the program.

Guidelines/Policies

The SHS model schools were guided by the following governing policies in the implementation of the SHS Modelling Program:

1. DepEd Order No. 36 series of 2012: Guidelines on the 2012 implementation of the Senior High School Modelling in selected technical and vocational and general secondary schools under the K to 12 Basic Education Program;
2. DepEd Order No. 71 series of 2012: Additional information to and changes in DepEd Order No. 36, s. 2012; and
3. Presidential Decree No. 42, as amended: A decree instituting a labor code thereby revising and consolidating labor and social laws to afford protection to labor, promote employment and human resources development and insure industrial peace based on social justice (particularly its provision on apprenticeship with business and industries).

Curriculum

The SHS model schools implement a curriculum that they developed in consultation with DepEd, CHED, HEIs and industry partners. As mentioned earlier, most of the SHS model schools have a common academic curriculum, with a few additional specialized academic subjects that were selected based on the relevance to their career pathway specializations.

Among the core academic subjects are English, Filipino, mathematics, science, social studies, and music, arts, physical education, and health (MAPEH). Literature and philosophy were included based on the General Education Curriculum of CHED.

Human Resources

Different SHS model schools have different human resource requirements depending on their program strategies. With respect to SHS teachers, the schools usually employ those who have a Master’s degree or units.

While some schools employ SHS teachers from their own faculty roster, other schools tap teachers from HEIs or their industry partners.

Funding and Facilities

Only 2 of the 7 SHS model schools were given initial funding by DepEd for SHS Modelling since they were part of the original pilot schools. These were San Pedro Relocation Center NHS and Doña Montserrat Lopez Memorial High School.

Other SHS model schools make use of whatever resources or facilities that the schools have. For instance, some schools alternate the use of classrooms for junior high school and senior high school students. To help augment their financial requirements, some schools seek assistance from government officials, LGUs, or industry partners.

Learning Modules

As of SY 2012-2013, no instructional materials had been developed by the DepEd for SHS Modelling. To compensate for this, the SHS model schools used the following learning materials:

1. Printed modules or digitized resources;
2. Printed text or workbooks; and
3. Online resources.

Intervention Programs for SARDOs

The SHS model schools employ various intervention programs depending on the actual needs of students at risk of dropping-out (SARDOs). In some cases, local officials may offer scholarship programs to deserving students. There is also the adopt-a-child program for teachers that can afford to support a student. The schools may also employ the Open High School Program (OHSP) or home visitation to address the limitations or constraints of some students.
Teaching Methodologies

The SHS model schools apply various learning strategies and approaches depending on their preferences. For instance, 6 out of the 7 SHS model schools indicated that they either apply face-to-face teaching, media-assisted teaching, or work-oriented teaching. Five of the schools said that they either employ flexible learning, group or cooperative learning, or process-oriented learning. Generally, the schools make use of blended learning strategies, particularly the dual learning strategy, to harmonize academic learning and practical learning or skills development.

Student Assessment

All of the seven schools make use of the traditional type of assessment for SHS students. Five schools mentioned that they conduct performance assessment to evaluate their students. Moreover, 4 out of 7 respondents said that they either use portfolio or self-assessment in assessing the SHS students.

Innovations

Among the innovations introduced and/or practiced by some of the SHS model schools include the following:

1. Establishing a strong and sustained partnerships with LGUs, industries, and HEIs to help provide the needed assistance for the Program;
2. Undergoing on-the-job training (OJT) programs as early as Grade 11 to accommodate all students and prevent congestion of trainees at the end of the SHS term;
3. Screening incoming SHS students through qualification tests, scholastic grades and interviews;
4. Making the school accessible to indigent students by strictly implementing a “zero collection” policy;
5. Giving consideration and flexible timeframe to students who are deployed in OJT program to comply with requirements; ICT was likewise used for consultation;
6. Using real life scenarios, skill-oriented learning and treating students as adults to motivate and challenge them to do well in school;
7. Designating one teacher as industry coordinator, one who has been in the industry for a long time, to facilitate the OJT program of the students;
8. Encouraging SHS teachers to have a Master’s degree or units, have a NC Level II, or attend TESDA training programs and competency assessment;
9. Encouraging SHS teachers to conduct action research and develop their own instructional materials to help enrich existing instructional materials;
10. Hiring contractual teachers to help mitigate the lack of teachers; and
11. Providing laboratory access to SHS students through the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) to augment the school’s limited resources.

Generally, the schools make use of blended learning strategies, particularly the dual learning strategy, to harmonize academic learning and practical learning or skills development.
Student Tracking

The SHS model schools have yet to develop a system for tracking their students’ performances on academic, technical and employability skills.

Challenges

In accordance with the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013: Modeling for Senior High School (SHS) was implemented to simulate the transition process and provide concrete data for the transition plan following the guidelines set by the DepEd. The results of the SHS modeling experience in seven school monitored by SEAMEO INNOTECH may be considered in the nationwide implementation of the SHS program by SY 2016-2017.

The interviews with the seven SHS model schools revealed that they have encountered a number of challenges and potentials with respect to guidelines or policies, resources and LGU and parental support, awareness, and linkages.

Policy Guidelines

Since the IRR of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 was not yet issued during the school monitoring visit in March 2013, some model schools found it difficult to immediately hire additional qualified teachers due to misinterpretation of policies on hiring such as the localization law. The IRR and other relevant laws that provide SDOs/schools with greater flexibility in hiring SHS teachers were not widely and fully disseminated to all key stakeholders. One relevant policy is DepEd Order (DO) No. 48 series of 2007 which authorizes tech-voc principals to hire contractual teachers.

In the case of SHS model schools that offer call center service (IT-BPO) as a specialization, they are faced with the fact that most call centers do not allow job immersion for high school students using the companies’ current facilities. Instead, they only provide on-the-job training for prospective call center agents and technical support staff who met the basic qualifications for hiring.

Resources

Many challenges and concerns raised by the SHS model schools were resource-based. Among the resource-related concerns are the following:

1) TESDA assessment fee for National Certification (NC) (e.g., PhP 550 per student, school uniforms and other paraphernalia required by TESDA)
2) Transportation expenses of students who are undergoing their work immersion programs
3) Accommodation expenses of students who need to stay near their workplaces for their job immersion purposes
4) Cost of insurance premium for SHS students who are undergoing their work immersion programs
5) Some of the SHS students do not have their own classroom.
6) In some SHS model schools, there is insufficient number of computer units for SHS students.
7) Since SHS is to be fully implemented only starting in 2016, some of the SHS model
schools have no budgetary allocation from its MOOE for SHS Modeling. This situation forces the teachers to personally pay for some of the students’ requirements for the SHS Program. These expenses include photo copying of student worksheets, transportation, meals and accommodation particularly for the indigent students.

**LGU support**

While the SHS model schools are able to access support from LGUs using the Special Education Funds (SEF), there are constraints under COA regulations related to purchases of equipment/gadgets for tech-voc trainings. Under COA rules, cost of any equipment valued at PhP 10,000 and above must be funded from a separate budget for capital outlays. There is therefore a need to further examine how the SEF can be maximized to augment the school’s limited MOOE capital outlay funds in terms of allocation and utilization.

**Parental support**

Some parents are not convinced of the merits of the K to 12 education program, hence, the schools kept on advocating the program thru radio broadcast, posters, flyers and assembly meetings.

**Awareness**

DepEd needs to intensify a stakeholder approach in SHS program implementation, awareness building and promotion of the program in a collaborative way among the school, the LGUs, the industry partners, the HEIs, the parents, and the students. This will help counter resistance to the full implementation of K to 12 from other sectors.

Also interviews revealed that some SHS students were not properly guided on how they can participate in non-academic programs during the SHS program modeling. Some Grade 11 students expressed that there were no extra-curricular, co-curricular and other voluntary activities available for SHS to participate.

**Linkages**

One of the challenges with respect to linkages was on the possible mismatch between specialization and labor demand.
**Moving Towards K to 12 Implementation**

Following are the recommendations that may help DepEd prepare for the full implementation of the K to 12 program:

1. **Guidelines/Policies**

   1.1 Regional and Division Offices may need to conduct orientation or refresher course on new and existing policies and revised/latest implementing guidelines affecting SHS program implementation to clarify issues such as hiring of SHS teachers.

   1.2 Institutionalize the designation or hiring of industry coordinators for SHS model schools.

   1.3 Advise senior high schools to consider the following in selecting specialized tech-voc programs:

      - Adequate and timely labor market information;
      - Identification of one or two jobs that can be readily offered by the schools;
      - Availability of instructors-trainers who have the necessary competencies, education and training;
      - Availability of basic technical facility and resources needed to teach and train students;
      - Integration of a strong career guidance program;
      - Availability of funds for the operating expenses; and
      - Enhancement of the job or trade to attract students to consider it as their career.

   1.4 Develop doable policies and strategies in support of the K to 12 program and to address the challenges in SHS implementation.

   1.5 Adopt all applicable safety guidelines of TESDA and DOLE relevant to basic education in all secondary schools offering SHS.

   1.6 Explore the adoption of Dual Training System (DTS) in partnership with public and private sectors.

   1.7 Clarify the interpretation of policy on teaching hours among SHS teachers who are working outside the school premises beyond the standard eight hours teaching load.

   1.8 Promote use of student government/councils as a mechanism to support the SHS program.

2. **Sources of Funds**

   2.1 Provide sufficient budgetary support for additional classrooms, training facilities for hands-on activities and equipment such as LCD projectors and laptops, and learning materials of the SHS students.
2.2 Ensure timely release of funds and conduct orientation-briefing on new guidelines to be developed on the utilization of financial assistance for the implementation of SHS under the K to 12 Basic Education Program.

2.3 DepEd may need to discuss with TESDA the following propositions:
   - For TESDA to consider waiving their fees for the competency assessment.
   - For DepEd and TESDA to jointly review the polices regarding standard costing for competency assessment activities to make it affordable for all techvoc SHS students.
   - Continue/Adopt the modified TESDA assessment scheme, a.k.a., National Competency and Certification Program (NatCAC) in SY 2012-2013, to support the Strengthened Tech-Voc Program (STVEP) of DepEd.
   - During the transition period, DepEd, TESDA and DBM may need to revisit the financing policy framework for granting scholarship to high school students to cover the assessment fees for national certification/certificate of competency (NC/COC).

2.4 Clarify the process of funds disbursement for the implementation of the national competency and certification to address the bottlenecks in the release of funds to schools.

2.5 Examine the management of Special Education Funds (SEF) in terms of priority allocation and utilization in order to maximize LGUs’ support for SHS under the K to 12 education program.

2.6 Verify the application/allocation of proceeds of the additional one percent tax on real property accruing to the Special Education Funds (SEF) in the purchase of capital outlays for SHS program.

3. Capacity Building
   3.1 Provide skills training to build the capacities of SHS teachers.
   3.2 Conduct training for career advocates (class advisers and parents) on career guidance and counseling/coaching.

4. Linkages
   4.1 Encourage and promote multi-stakeholder partnerships between the academe, the industries, and national and local government institutions.
   4.2 DepEd, CHED, TESDA, TVIs and HEIs need to identify, implement, and review strategies that ensure the academic, physical, financial, and human resource capabilities of HEIs and TVIs to provide educational and training services for graduates of the enhanced basic education program.
   4.3 Operationalize the guidelines on K to 12 partnership building activities.

5. Curriculum Development
   5.1 Incorporate a strong career guidance component in the curriculum.
   5.2 Review the planned SHS curriculum and incorporate lessons learned from its SHS Modeling experience.
   5.3 Adopt the best practices of SHS model schools with respect to curriculum development.
   5.4 Technical-vocational skills alignment should be subject to labor market priorities and not driven by supply.
5.5 Review/Adapt/Modify TESDA’s existing training programs:
   - Special Training for Employment Program (STEP)
   - Training for Work Scholarship Program (TWSP)

5.6 Provide SHS students more exposure to hands-on learning activities to facilitate skills development and application of knowledge, attitude, skills, and values.

5.7 Promote the use of flexible learning opportunities.

5.8 Provide students access to insurance services (i.e., PhilHealth, Coop-Life Mutual Benefit Services Association or CLIMBS of Metro Ormoc Credit Cooperative, Inc. or OCCI) to secure their protection for their mobility during the dual training program, apprenticeship, or job immersion program.

5.9 Learner assessment and certification maximize links with TESDA certificate mechanism and also HEIs for cross credit recognition and recognition of prior learning (RPL).

5.10 Sustain the formation of Technical Working Groups (TWGs) and the conduct of consultations.

5.11 Draft the training regulations and qualification standards for all SHS programs.

5.12 Put emphasis on soft skills in the SHS curriculum such as work readiness, values, and attitudes since these are priority competencies of business firms and industries.

6. SHS Program Management

6.1 Application of school-based management (SBM) approach (DepEd Order No. 48) will provide the school with greater autonomy to manage its SHS program based on the needs of business community.

6.2 The Schools Division need to monitor the SHS.

6.3 Strengthen the first 140 tech-voc schools to lead and guide the 40,000 public secondary schools as they serve as model schools or training centers for SHS.

6.4 DepEd together with TESDA, CHED and other relevant stakeholders need to develop a long-term plan on career guidance and counseling advocacy.
Conclusion

The SHS Modelling Program offers a rich learning experience from which DepEd and other stakeholders can benefit from. In support of DepEd’s new K to 12 Basic Education Program, the full report serves as a venue for knowledge sharing in preparation for the full implementation of the new Senior High School Program in 2016.

The full report on “Monitoring of the Philippine Department of Education Model Senior High School Program” can be accessed through www.seameo-innotech.org.