

THE MOBILE SCHOOL

*An Educational Innovation Conceived and Organized to Help Develop
the Rural Communities and the Countrysides*

By Melquiades F. Pagne *

“The ultimate yardstick of development in the 70’s and 80’s will be the extent to which it touches and improves the day-to-day lives and welfare of human beings, the Filipinos.”

— President Ferdinand E. Marcos

BASIC CONCEPT

The rural areas of the Philippines are teeming with idle manpower consisting of out-of-school youths and unemployed adults. Census figures show that six out of seven Filipinos live in close to 30,000 barrios dotting the countrysides. Out of the total Philippine population of about 45 million, about 15 million are young people belonging to the 7-24 years age bracket. Over 65 per cent of this country’s youth population are in the rural areas. Ninety-five per cent of the needy youths are out-of-school.

The province of Iloilo is predominantly rural with 72.7 per cent of the total population residing in rural areas and only 27.3 per cent in urban areas.

According to the latest survey the out-of-school youth in the rural areas in Region VI, number 340,777 or 10.7 per cent of the national total of 3,178,459. Iloilo ranks second

in the number of out-of-school youths which is 113,820 or 33.4 per cent of the regional total.

There is an imperative need to train and develop this unutilized manpower in order that they can contribute to the productivity of the nation and generate incomes for themselves and their families.

The Mobile School provides extension services to the rural communities to help train and develop the people so that they will be able to improve their economic and social conditions as well as liberate themselves from a life of constant struggle and deprivation and release their human potentials. By providing the people of the community with skills and by reorienting their attitudes and values, the Mobile School becomes a catalyst of change in the rural communities and in the little places in the countrysides which have long remained dormant, unchanged and undeveloped.

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WHAT IS A MOBILE SCHOOL?

The Mobile School is an innovative project conceived and developed to help improve the rural communities. Bringing its training staff and equipment to the community where the need for training and development is urgent, it provides programs designed to help those who are willing to rise above the present level of living by means of honest efforts and productive pursuits. Through its various services the people especially the out-of-school youths and unemployed adults are helped to become self-actualizing individuals to depend on their own capabilities, talents and human potentials.

The Mobile School is essentially a school on wheels which goes out and penetrates through the remote barrios, villages, and countrysides and other parts of the rural communities. The main focus of the program is directed to the out-of-school youths and adult citizens who have urgent need for education and training. It provides non-formal education embracing the essential aspects of living—social, economic, moral, health, physical and political. The principal activities of the Mobile School consist of assistance programs designed to develop the productivity of the people and help them generate more income.

Although the hub of the total program consists of skill training and related practical work, the mobile school includes a purposeful action-oriented scheme towards the integrated development and transformation of the client community involving the process of community organization and social development. Other significant activities include continuing education, citizenship, literacy, sports and physical fitness, health and sanitation, population education, and other related socio-cultural activities. The mobile school

supplements rather than duplicates the functions of other agencies concerned with the development of the community along these aspects. However, the development of vocational and technical skills useful in the day-to-day life of the people is the main strand of the mobile school program.

OBJECTIVES

Among the major objectives of the Mobile School are the following:

1. To help in the development of cottage industries, agro-fishery, trades and industries, arts and crafts and other related economic activities by developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes especially of the out-of-school youths and unemployed adults in the rural areas and the countrysides.
2. To help expand employment opportunities, increase people's income and utilize idle manpower in the rural areas for productive pursuits.
3. To help the people make effective use of local raw materials and other resources immediate to the community, develop their creative talents and resourcefulness and provide wholesome leisure-time activities.
4. To help out-of-school youths and adults develop their human potentials through functional programs in continuing education, citizenship training and practical activities to raise their earning capacity as well as develop positive habits towards work.
5. To help in the development of cultural and artistic talents especially of the youths and jobless adults.
6. To support the food production, Green Revolution, sanitation and

beautification, applied nutrition, family planning, health and physical fitness programs of the government.

7. To bring about better school and community relations to the end that the various development projects of the government may be better carried out.

ORGANIZATION

The Mobile School is a joint and cooperative human resources development program, initiated and organized by the Division of Iloilo with the cooperation of the local or national government or other private agencies.

Barangay leaders, PTA officers, local clubs, social and civic club members and other government agencies and community members are involved in the program. Their experience, and their material and psychological support are solicited to insure the successful accomplishment of the project.

Teachers, demonstrators, and lecturers from private sectors, contribute to the success of the project by helping in the training and by giving technical assistance when needed.

As much as possible local materials and local talents are utilized in the undertaking of any project of the mobile school.

BASIC GUIDE FOR ORGANIZING AND MANAGING THE MOBILE SCHOOL

1. Establish relationship with the community;
2. Help people identify their needs;
3. Determine community resources;
4. Help people decide suitable training programs and projects;

5. Translate intent into action; try out the project;

6. Develop attitudes and behavior of the clients so that they will support the Mobile School program;

7. Stabilize the Mobile School program and insure the continuance of the program;

8. Create a self-renewal capacity among the clients;

9. Plan disengagement from the project;

10. Make terminal assessment of the program undertaken.

TRAINING COURSES

Courses suitable to the needs of the locality are offered by the Mobile School upon request of enough number of applicants. Examples of these practical courses are the following:

- Bamboo craft
- Buri craft
- Basketry
- Coco vinegar-making
- Dressmaking
- Embroidery
- Fiber craft
- General mechanics
- General metal work
- Farm mechanics
- Horticulture
- Fish processing and food preservation
- Fish culture
- Fish capture
- Mushroom culture
- Flower-making
- Patis-making
- Shrimp kroepeck-making
- Shell crafts
- Slipper-making
- Tailoring
- Wood craft
- Weaving

Supplemental instructions are provided hand in hand with the

principal courses offered along other useful areas of community living to provide a well-rounded and integrated program as well as to meet such other development needs of the government as follows:

Food and applied nutrition
Population education
Environmental education
Health, sanitation and beautification
Family planning (planning for better family living)
Citizenship training
Literacy
Continuing education

TRAINING SCHEDULE

The schedule and length of training is flexible. The length of the training time depends upon the course selected. However, a minimum of 300 hours is needed for a regular course. A course may take a few weeks or several months to terminate depending on its difficulty or complexity and frequency of meetings.

SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS

Training is offered free to participants and no fees of whatever kind are charged.

Tools may be self-provided or may be donated by some private persons, clubs, organizations or agencies.

Supplies and materials for projects of participants undertaking personal assignments are supplied by them and the finished products become the property of the participants concerned.

CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY

A certificate of proficiency is awarded upon successful completion by the participants of the course taken.

Demonstration classes and lectures on any of the above courses are given in between classes whenever the need arises. Mass media channels are utilized including PTA meetings, community assemblies, club meetings, and other effective means of mass communications.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The following are the requirements for admission in the Mobile School:

- 1 Applicants must show interest and aptitude for the course;
2. He must be physically fit for work;
3. He must be at least twelve years old;
4. He should preferably belong to the lower income level family;
5. He must show evidence that he can profit from the training offered;
6. Out-of-school youths and jobless adults are preferred.

A certificate of attendance is given to those who attend demonstration classes of short duration.

OUTCOMES OF THE MOBILE SCHOOL

The mobile school has demonstrated through its action-oriented programs a high capacity to carry out desirable community changes especially in increasing the skills and abilities of the people and in modifying their behavior. It has proven that by bringing the resources of the school to the people of the communities, development, growth, or advancement of the community can be well enhanced.

The mobile school has been found to be an effective instrument in strengthening the bond of relationship between the school and community. Lessons from the project experience were many and varied, and consi-

dering the impact that this innovative project has made in the rural communities, its potential as the catalyst for change and rural development is great and far-reaching.