

PRESS RELEASE

## Spain commits to support teaching of Spanish in Philippines

Some 21 Spanish-speaking countries with economic activities worth US\$4 trillion await the services of the Business Process Outsourcing sectors which demand call center agents that speak Spanish.

The signing recently of a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Education and Spain's Ministry of Education, Cervantes Institute, and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID) is expected to boost the chances of Filipinos landing a job in the BPO sector as the agreement will strengthen the reintroduction of Spanish language in public secondary schools.

"Aside from its direct link to our cultural heritage, learning Spanish in the 21st century can be a very potent tool for the Filipinos to compete in the global job market," said Education Secretary Jesli A. Lapus.

Lapus added that "the relearning of Spanish language in our country also allows us to have better ties, including economic ties, with all Spanish speaking nations in the world." He also sees this undertaking also as a quest to understand our nation's past.

*"Tiene perfecto sentido para nosotros hoy en día para aprender el Español (It makes perfect sense for us to learn Spanish today),"* Lapus said.

According to Lapus, this agreement will push for the advancement of the quality of teaching and the promotion of Spanish language and culture in the education system of the Philippines.

Memorandum Order No. 276 signed by President Arroyo in 2007 directs the DepEd, CHED, and TESDA to encourage the teaching and learning of Spanish throughout the country.

The agreement was signed by Secretary Lapus and Jose Manuel Martinez Sierra, Director General of Ministry Education Affairs, Carlos Elberdi, Director of AECID, and Carmen Caffarel, Director of Cervantes Institute in Barcelona, Spain.

The support of the Spanish government in the teaching of Spanish language will be implemented in two phases, from 2009-2010 to 2013-2014 school years.

The pilot phase which started in June 2009 reintroduced the Spanish language in 15 secondary schools around the Philippines. A total of 35 teachers were trained and some 1,000 students benefited from this program.

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The expansion phase, on the other hand, will cover 50 more schools, 100 teachers, and an estimated 8,000 students per school year from 2010 to 2011, and 2011 to 2012.

Mainstreaming of the program will cover the 2013-2014 school year.

“With this initiative, we desire to equip our students with new skills that will allow them to become highly competitive in the global market,” Lapus explained.

As specified in the agreement, the Spain’s Ministry of Education will provide assistance to DepEd in designing and developing the Spanish language curriculum. The Ministry will also help build capacity among our teachers through trainings.

Grants will also be provided to teachers to allow them to attend intensive or summer training and professional development courses organized by Spanish universities.

On the other hand, the Cervantes Institute will conduct face-to-face teaching of Spanish language among selected teachers. Their Aula Virtual de Español (AVE) or Spanish Virtual Classroom will also serve as a follow-through program to the trainings conducted. Distance education/learning will also be implemented by the Institute.

The Cervantes Institute will also grant *Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera* (DELE) or Diploma of Spanish as a Foreign Language to teachers and school heads who participated in trainings and teaching activities.

Also contained in the agreement is the commitment of AECID to finance the design of curriculum and development of instructional resources for the teaching of Spanish language in the secondary curriculum and other Spanish teaching programs. They will also supply bibliographic and electronic resources to our schools.

Meanwhile, DepEd will collaborate with the Spanish Ministry of Education in the production of curriculum and syllabus and the printing of the teaching guide for the teaching of Spanish language as adapted in the Philippine education system.

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