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## Jobs await Muslim skills training graduates

Some 33 foreign and local employers have opened employment opportunities to the first batch of 700 Muslim out-of-school youth who recently graduated from Technical-Vocational Education and Training with Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (TVET with ALIVE).

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo today opens the job fair at the Philippine Trade and Training Center, Roxas Boulevard, Manila. Some 33 foreign and local companies from both public and private sectors are offering diverse employment options for the new graduates.

The TVET is a skills training program that provides Muslim OSYs with employable skills while ALIVE is a 20-day competency-based training that also re-orientes them on the teachings of Qur'an. It also introduces them to basic Arabic language used in the context of the workplace.

The TVET with ALIVE is spearheaded by the Department of Education and implemented in partnership with Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). It is a government intervention program that opens socially and economically productive opportunities to Filipino Muslim youth who are out of school.

DepEd Chief Jesli Lapus said that the first-ever job fair for Muslims will help bridge the gap between employment seekers and job openings. "It will also give hope to those who were not able to finish formal school," Lapus added.

Business process outsourcing companies such as Convergys, Xynet, Stellar, and Infotech Net-based Solutions are present in the event. Recruitment agencies based in Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Cyprus, Dubai and Malaysia are likewise offering job openings for household, hotel, and restaurant work.

Free services are provided by government agencies including the National Bureau of Investigation, Social Security System, National Statistics Office, and Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA).

In addition, flower arrangement, mobile phone repair, and preparation of beverages as *barista* were demonstrated at the job fair for free. A seminar on the proper conduct of oneself during job interviews, including Muslim-inspired power dressing, was also conducted.

This whole day affair is capped with a seminar on entrepreneurship that encourages the graduates to start their own business.

The 2008 job fair for Muslims is jointly organized by DepEd, TESDA, POEA, the Department of Labor and Employment and the local government units through the Public Employment Service Office. **END**