

EMBARGOED: For release October 29th, 2016

APEC schools' model undermines education quality

Teachers' unions call for greater funding of public education, not private



Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación
Bildungsinternationale

Headquarters
5, Bd du Roi Albert II
1210 Brussels, Belgium
Tel +32 2 224 06 11
Fax +32 2 224 06 06
headoffice@ei-ie.org
http://www.ei-ie.org

Amid an educational system “overburdened and underresourced,” the Affordable Private Education Center (APEC) Schools, a joint venture of international education company Pearson and Philippine business giant Ayala Corporation, seek to provide for-profit secondary education through an edu-business model approved by the Department of Education (DepEd) raising questions on quality and teachers’ rights.

Drawing from his study supported by Education International (EI), an international federation of education unions, doctoral student Curtis Riep of the University of Alberta in Canada exposed the cost-cutting measures APEC implements to allow it to offer what it has marketed as “world class education,” at the *Forum on Education Corporatisation and Privatisation in the Philippines* held at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines.

With over 10,000 students in Grades 7 to 9 and Grade 11, the education chain now operates schools in 29 sites in Metro Manila and nearby provinces. APEC aims to establish 500 schools in 10 years enrolling up to 250,000 students.

Through an agreement signed in 2013, DepEd has in effect waived its existing regulations for private schools in basic education in favor of APEC and its “market-based solutions in order to grow more private schooling ... , instead of building more government schools.”

APEC has been renting unused office spaces in commercial buildings instead of constructing school facilities on purchased land, a practice which would have been in violation of DepEd regulations on size, location and accessibility of school buildings, Riep’s research revealed. Other facilities such as science laboratories, libraries, and gymnasiums are either inexistent, not fully equipped, or shared among APEC schools.

Riep’s study also found that up to 70 percent of APEC’s teachers are not licensed. The teachers are then paid low wages and asked to stick to standardized lesson plans.

In an [earlier statement](#), the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) called on DepEd to repeal its agreement with APEC and for the government to divert to the public education system the P12 billion fund now being allocated to vouchers, which are given to students to attend private schools like APEC.

“P12 billion could have built around 30,000 classrooms and could have catered to more than one million students. Solving the problems of public education is not through privatization schemes. The voucher system is designed to shift money away from public schools and to private schools including for-profit schools such as APEC, making education highly profitable in the Philippines,” said Raymond Basilio, ACT national secretary-general.

He added that APEC’s non-compliance with DepEd requirements for private schools shows how APEC values profiting from students and the voucher system, putting profit before the well-being of Filipino youth.

In the [DepEd budget hearing at the House of Representatives](#) on September 2, Education Secretary Leonor Briones said that APEC’s agreement with the department has not been renewed for the present school year and is under review.

Press Release

Other [previous research](#) by EI and Riep has also expressed concern over the growth in countries such as Kenya and Uganda of private for-profit school chains employing unqualified teachers, providing scripted lessons and using unsuitable environments for learning to drive down costs.

Riep's study titled "Corporatised Education in the Philippines: Pearson, Ayala Corporation, and the emergence of Affordable Private Education Centers (APEC)" can be accessed [here](#).

Media contact:

Raymond Basilio, ACT Teachers: +63 917 638 9151

Curtis Riep, University of Alberta: riep@ualberta.ca