

UPF Supports the Philippines' Comprehensive Character Education Initiative

Juluis Malicdem
July 20, 2020



Manila, Philippines -- On June 25, 2020, Philippines President Rodrigo Roa Duterte signed the Republic Act 11476, which reintroduces and institutionalizes character education in Filipino schools, public and private, from elementary to high schools, spanning grades K to 12. The government agency that will lead the implementation is the Department of Education.

The Act is a consolidation of two separate bills: one passed by the Senate and another by the House of Representatives in March of this year. Officially it is known as the "GMRC and Values Education Act," wherein GMRC stands for Good Manners and Right Conduct. At the outset, the Act affirms that "the State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and promotes and protects their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being."

The Universal Peace Federation of the Philippines, along with four affiliated organizations (the Women's Federation for World Peace, Professors World Peace Academy, Asian Clergy Leadership Conference, and the International Association of Youth and Students for Peace) wrote a joint statement applauding this initiative, which says:

UPF and its affiliates offer their wealth of experience and strong track record of accomplishments to support the Department of Education as the lead agency for implementing this Republic Act. We acknowledge the importance of the whole school approach and underscore the integral role that parents and teachers play in developing in our youth a patriotic spirit, human dignity, and universal values.

Prior to signing the Act, UPF held a face-to-face consultation with a former lawmaker and then a series of three webinars to solicit advice and input from Ambassadors for Peace, educators, religious leaders and students.

UPF and the supporting organizations have offered the Department of Education their support and have specifically highlighted areas where they would like to make a contribution, namely: writing the rules and regulations, developing a comprehensive values education curricula, and training teachers.

On July 20, UPF held its first virtual meeting since the signing of the Republic Act. It was reported that the one-page Statement of Support was sent to the Office of the President; Speaker of the House, Hon. Peter Cayetano; 24 Senators; and 34 Congressman who authored and contributed to the passage of the Act. In addition, a more detailed response letter was sent to the secretary of the Department of Education, Hon. Leonor M. Briones, and to seven of her undersecretaries as well as to UPF's Ambassadors of Peace working in the interreligious, academic and government fields.

Among those who attended the virtual meeting were principals, educators, religious leaders and youth advocates. They offered their constructive feedback, encouragement and full support to assist with meeting the relevant people and making sure that UPF and its affiliates are part of the team that will develop and implement the values education Act. Many of them said they would circulate UPF communiques personally to colleagues.