

Questions and answers

World of PES Webinar: the Philippines

Philippine Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) & WAPES

25th June 2025, 10:00 – 11:00 (CEST), ZOOM

1. **(1)The ILO among others encourages public private partnerships (PPP) in the delivery of front-line public employment services, especially insofar as these support socially disadvantaged or otherwise marginalised job seekers. What is the approach to PPP in the Philippines for example in the operation of PESOs? (2) What is the approach to Disability Employment Services in the Philippines?**

Reply from DOLE: PESOs actively collaborate with private employers, particularly during their regularly scheduled job fairs where employers may participate and use them as direct platforms for matching jobseekers with opportunities. These partnerships are also central to the implementation of youth and adult employability programs, such as the Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES) and JobStart Philippines, which often involve private sector engagement in training, mentoring, and placement.

In the education sector, private schools and training institutions enter into Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the Department to establish themselves as Job Placement Offices (JPOs), which are in-campus employment facilitation units that assist students and graduates in transitioning to the workforce. There are currently around 385 JPOs operating across the country.

PESOs likewise work with NGOs and community-based organizations to deliver employment support services tailored to disadvantaged and marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, single parents, and out-of-school youth.

In terms of providing employment services for persons with disabilities, these are anchored in Republic Act No. 7277 (Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities), as amended by RA 10524, and supported by DOLE Labor Advisory No. 15, s. 2023. These laws mandate equal employment opportunities for PWDs in both public and private sectors.

The PESOs serve as frontline providers of employment assistance to PWDs, offering job matching, career counseling, skills training referrals, and accessible job fairs. They are also registered in the Public Employment Information System, with thousands of vacancies from employers open to hiring them. PESOs also work closely with employers to identify suitable roles, provide workplace inclusion guidance, and refer PWDs to programs like JobStart, SPES, and government internships.

2. Does the PES of Philippines has a mature level in digitalisation and AI sectors?

Reply from DOLE: The Philippines is currently scaling up its digital transformation of PESO operations through the PESO Digitalization Roadmap which has since been endorsed to the Philippine Senate. While some LGUs are still dependent on manual processes, the goal is to institutionalize 80% of PESOs within two years and train 90% of staff in digital technologies. AI-driven job matching and predictive analytics are being introduced to improve placement accuracy and reduce job matching time by 30%.

3. What is the relationship between PESO and private employment agencies and private job portals? Are they required to report job vacancies and placements they facilitate to PESO? Is there any data integration? Does PESO provide any rewards to them for reporting placements?

Reply from DOLE: The relationship between the PESOs and private employers and job portals often materialize through co-organized job fairs where they are invited to participate alongside local employers. Another key area of collaboration is the cross-posting of job vacancies through the PhilJobNet portal. Private entities that opt to partner with PESOs may have their listings posted on PhilJobNet, increasing their visibility to a broader pool of jobseekers registered through PESOs nationwide.

While there is currently no formal data integration system between PESOs and private employment agencies or job portals, monitoring mechanisms are in place to track employment facilitation outcomes. These data are monitored monthly through the Statistical Performance Reporting System (SPRS) of the DOLE. Moreover, the ongoing efforts for digitalization and labor market information system upgrades under the PESO Digitalization Roadmap aims to enhance interoperability, encourage data sharing, and build a more integrated labor market database in the future.

Participating employers with high placement rates are prioritized to join DOLE-initiated activities like job fairs.

4. How do you ensure the placed jobseekers are paid effectively and efficiently by the employers?

Reply from DOLE: The Department of Labor and Employment highlights the importance of labor inspection in the labor administration system as the primary mechanism to carry out the fundamental function of labor law enforcement and effective compliance, including compliance with the labor standards on payment of minimum wages.

While for most instances in labor inspection, the regulatory approach is typically applied to medium-sized facilities, more stringent guidelines are utilized for those establishments whose nature of operations are exposed to health, sanitary and life hazards that may affect the workforce. Examples of these laws include the prohibition in hiring employees below 18 years old in establishments producing flammable materials, sanitation requirements for food processing establishments and mandatory use of PPEs on selected establishments like construction firms and hospitals. On the other hand, self-regulation is used in large and unionized businesses where labor relations are already established to ensure that labor standards are implemented. Further, advisory services such as training and education and assistance visit (TAV) aim to promote voluntary compliance with labor laws amongst small and medium establishments.

5. What are the main features of the Unemployment Benefits system? What proportion of employees are covered? As it has been implemented recently, are there any insights regarding its effects on labour transitions and informal employment?

Reply from DOLE: In the Philippines, the Unemployment Benefits system is primarily administered through the Social Security System (SSS) for private sector employees, with a specific focus on the Unemployment Benefits program introduced under Republic Act No. 11199 or the Social Security Act of 2018. The UIB program provides financial support to eligible members who experience involuntary job loss. To qualify, members must be under 60 years old at the time of separation (with exceptions for certain mining and jockey professions) and have accumulated at least 36 monthly SSS contributions, 12 of which must fall within the 18 months immediately preceding their separation. The separation must be due to authorized causes as defined by the Labor Code, such as redundancy, retrenchment, or company closure, and the member must not have received a UIB within the past three years.

The coverage of the Unemployment Benefits system is limited to private sector employees who are actively contributing to the SSS.

While the Unemployment Benefit system is relatively new, comprehensive data on its long-term effects are not yet available. However, based on preliminary observations, the availability of unemployment benefits provides a mechanism to encourage more workers to register with the SSS. This access to a safety net may, in turn, promote increased participation in formal employment.

6. What approach do you use to get employers advertise their vacancies through PESOs?

Reply from DOLE: As a one-stop employment facilitation hub, PESOs provide recruitment assistance to employers at no cost, including organizing job fairs, facilitating candidate screening through the Public Employment Information System, and offering access to jobseeker databases. Employers are encouraged to submit job postings through the PhilJobNet, as part of their partnership with PESOs, which also helps them fulfil corporate social responsibility, and local training and hiring goals.

7. Thank you for the information, what are form of PESO in Philippines, centralized or decentralized, and how to deliver the training to the PESO Officers in level of provinces or municipal?

Reply from DOLE: PESOs are decentralized and operate under local government units through their respective Local Chief Executives. Meanwhile, DOLE, through the Bureau of Local Employment, provides technical supervision and provides capacity building training for the PESOs to equip them with employment facilitation skills. Training for PESO officers is cascaded from the DOLE Central Office to regional implementers via a national Training of Trainers program. This TOT uses a standardized Manual on Public Employment Services which includes 12 modules delivered through interactive and modular formats.

8. We want to learn more about the Jobstart relating with SCST (Soft/Core Skills Training) module, could we have more explanation or collaboration together? and how PESO make database dan monitoring evaluation of vulnerable groups, relating disability, elderly person, youth and woman?

Reply from DOLE: There is an ongoing exploratory talks with TESDA (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority) that JSP (JobStart Philippines) beneficiaries who completed SCST and TTI may be granted NC1 (National Certificate I) to increase the chances of youth employability. The modules of TESDA and DOLE needs to be compared for the revisions needed. Final module revision would need funding as well as capacity building for the trainers.

9. Thank you for the details and explanations, for the rural area. What are PESO strategies to change the jobseeker mindset to work in urban area and also those rural area some still not have awareness on the AI and lack of knowledge of technology.

Reply from DOLE: One key strategy is the conduct of localized job fairs. This brings employment opportunities directly to rural communities, rather than requiring rural jobseekers to travel to bigger cities. The PESOs coordinate with local officials to organize these municipality- or barangay-level job fairs. These

events feature both local and urban-based employers, providing jobseekers with a clearer view of the range of opportunities available, including those outside their immediate locality. To complement this, PESOs actively coordinate with local industries and enterprises within the province or municipality to identify in-demand skills and match jobseekers to relevant opportunities.

Moreover, through the Career Development Support Program, PESO personnel are trained to deliver individualized and group counseling sessions, helping rural jobseekers explore their personal aspirations, weigh the benefits and challenges of working in urban settings, and build confidence in their skills.

10. Besides job training or placement programs, are there any youth policies, including those for NEETs, that offer direct cash support? For example, support for living expenses, monthly rent support for young people in big cities, or transportation costs for job interviews.

Reply from DOLE: Yes, there is. We want to share that the Philippines enacted Republic Act No. 11261, also known as the First Time Jobseekers Assistance Act. The Act aims to assist first-time jobseekers (FTJs) by providing free issuance of government documents that are typically required for employment applications, whether locally or abroad. These include clearances, birth and/or marriage certificates, medical certificates from a public hospital, transcript of academic records issued by state colleges and universities, among others.

11. How do Employers recognize or value the bridging education and employment program?

Reply from DOLE: Employers in the Philippines generally recognize and value bridging education and employment programs by forging partnerships with the Department of Labor and Employment on JobStart and Special Program for Employment of Students programs, for their role in preparing young individuals for the workforce. These programs equip beneficiaries with practical skills and work experience, making them more appealing to potential employers, while also offering incentives that enhance their attractiveness to businesses.

The JobStart program focuses on enhancing the employability of young Filipinos through life skills training to develop essential soft/core skills, technical skills, and internships that provide hands-on work experience.

The Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES) targets students and out-of-school youth, offering temporary employment during summer or Christmas breaks. This allows participants to earn money to support their education, and gain real-world work experience.

Employers participating in SPES benefit from a cost-sharing model where they pay only a portion of the participant's salary, with the government subsidizing the remainder.

12. Do collaboration goes with universities to help individuals gain qualifications? Or does cooperation only take place with vocational schools?

Reply from DOLE: Yes, the most available avenue for possible industry-academia linkage and collaboration to ensure that graduates meet the requirements of industry are the Job Placement Offices (JPOs) in various universities and higher education institutions nationwide. These offices serve as bridges between the academic sector and the labor market, ensuring that graduates have access to career guidance, job-matching services, and labor market information. JPOs collaborate with Public Employment Service Offices (PESOs), employers, and training institutions to enhance employability and workforce readiness. They also help facilitate internships, apprenticeships, and industry linkages to align students' skills with labor market demands.

13. What is the unemployment rate in the Philippines?

Reply from DOLE: The country's unemployment rate fell to 3.9 percent in May, from 4.1 percent in the preceding month, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported on Tuesday, July 8.

(<https://business.inquirer.net/534610/philippines-unemployment-rate-dropped-to-3-9-in-may>)

14. What contribution does the diaspora make to the implementation of the national strategy for promoting employment?

Reply from DOLE: The Philippine diaspora significantly contributes to the implementation of the national strategy for promoting employment through several key avenues. One of the most prominent contributions is through the Personal remittances by Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). Beyond meeting basic needs, these funds often fuel entrepreneurial activities by their family, such as the establishment of small businesses like retail shops, food stalls, or service providers.

Also, it enhances employment prospects through the transfer of skills and knowledge. Filipinos who return home after working overseas often bring back expertise gained in fields such as technology, healthcare, engineering, or hospitality.

15. What is the national policy regarding the labour migration?

Reply from DOLE: For the Philippines, labour migration policies aim to provide benefits, welfare, and protection for the migrant workers themselves, their

families, and society as a whole. It highlights the regulation, protection, reintegration, and support to families of migrant workers.

Regulation involves a number of official interventions, including the recruitment and placement of workers. OFWs are also protected. Prior to their deployment, they are enrolled for health, life insurance, and social security. Migrant Workers Offices (MWOs), which are located in Philippine embassies and consulates around the world, ensure that the employment rights, benefits, and welfare of Filipino migrant workers are protected.

Also, the DOLE and the Department of Migrant Workers recently signed the Joint Memorandum Circular on Establishing the National Reintegration Network (NRN) for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and their Families. This aims to provide the full-cycle comprehensive National Reintegration Program that requires a whole of government, whole of society approach and the participation of other government agencies and stakeholders in order to fully support the productive reintegration of OFWs and their families and address their multi-faceted needs.