Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City, Metro Manila  

18TH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session  

HOUSE BILL NO. 623  

Introduced by Representative CARLITO S. MARQUEZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks the establishment of the Piña Handloom Weaving Development Program (PHWDP) by creating the training center to help boost the country’s beleaguered piña handloom weaving industry in the country and to improve the competitiveness of its products. It was approved on Third and Final Reading on May 27, 2019, tackled and deliberated on 2nd Reading in the Senate but no Committee Report was formulated in order to be calendared for plenary deliberations.

There is more to the western part of Panay than Boracay. In fact, there are many interesting places in the provinces of Aklan, Antique and Western Iloilo that just amaze without driving all the way to Caticlan. Ruins, churches, food and rowdy festivals are there waiting. Aklan is proud of its piña (pineapple) fiber. So much so that products derived from processing these fibers into fabrics is one, if not its top export industry: barong tagalog and baro’t saya, the Philippines’ national dress for men and women, worn by presidents and celebrities; bags and mats; shawls and other...
Filipiniana items that are prized by tourists and designers here and abroad.

It is a whole cottage industry that has given hope to idle wives and retirees and poor families that derive their income from preparing, weaving, making products from piña fibers. It is even safe to say that in many towns in the province, there is a community of weavers and craftsmen busily meeting an order.

Piña-weaving in Aklan is an age-old tradition handed down from generations. It dates back during the Spanish colonial era. In the 1970’s, demand for products from piña fibers was realized and from that time, when Aklan started its own industry by having government agencies train Aklanons to fuel the local economy. In fact, Aklan is known as the Piña Fiber Capital of the Philippines. Kalibo’s piña cloth was said to be traded during the Pre-Hispanic times and reached as far as Greece and Egypt during its heyday.

There is no finer and more elegant fiber for the Barong Tagalog than piña fabric. Known as the Queen of Philippine Fabric, the piña fiber is extracted by hand from the leaves of the native pineapple. Each strand is painstakingly knotted by hand and loom woven manually to produce piña cloth that is soft, and usually in ivory color.

The traditional loom weaving industry endures as a source of income and livelihood in this town as residents continuously sustain it despite the occurrence of several modern cloth-making
technologies. Thousands of Filipinos are employed in the industry in various capacities. For many marginalized people living in and on the fringes of the piña handloom weaving, particularly indigenous people, piña weaving provides an opportunity to earn cash. Weaving and embroidery jobs enable women, especially, to earn salaries that allow them to be home rather than being forced to travel abroad to become domestic workers. Since piña fabric is hand loomed by only a few weavers, it is very precious and scarce, which also makes it expensive. Piña cloth is simple and elegant. Products created are considered a work of love and patience. Therefore, a piña garment is considered as an heirloom.

Training weavers is difficult, however, since it requires meticulous patience and dedicated practice. Despite the importance of this handloom industry, the industry is in decline. The government also fails in its support for the industry despite the presence of RA 3470 (An Act Creating the National Cottage Industries Development Authority). It failed to organize, revive, encourage, and promote the establishment of piña handloom weaving industry. When craft dies, it is not only the artisans and their businesses that die. With its demise crashes an entire history, legacy, tradition and knowledge.

The PHWDP embodies core programs such as the Investment Promotion and Facilitation; Production Support and Extension; Research and Development; Market Promotion and Development; and the program on Infrastructure Development for the enhancement of the industry.
Under the bill, the PHWDP is designated to be the lead agency responsible for strengthening the collaboration of the various piña handloom weaving industry players and for engineering the development of the piña fiber sector with the objective of reducing poverty and alleviating living conditions at the community level.

The measure directs the PHWDP to maintain a Pinya Handloom and Weaving Information Center, which shall principally serve as the museum, library and digital repository of all information pertaining to piña weaving.

The PHWDP is likewise mandated to create and maintain its own website that will feature the development of piña weaving in the Philippines, a periodic update and reports on the piña weaving project undertaken by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and information focusing on Philippine piña weaving designs and other relevant market information.

As piña fiber weaving gains momentum, thousands of jobs for weavers are created. The key is to increase profits for the local weavers. Global fashion designers are always searching for innovative materials and new ideas to give them an edge in the industry. Piña handloom weaving has the potential to greatly influence fashion. To date though, adequate support for the industry remains a challenge. The government and consumers can play a pivotal role in the re-introduction of piña fabric weaving. This can be further accomplished through the continued efforts of
local organizations such as TESDA, PTRI, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Advocate of Philippine Fair Trade, and the Aklan Piña Manufacturers & Traders Association. By continually re-introducing piña to the world through such efforts as the Aklan’s Fiber Festival and annual feature presentations in Manila fashion shows, the world is beginning to wake from its sleep. However, piña has yet to secure a global presence. Through the return to their ethnic roots and age-old traditions, the piña salvation is just the beginning to enter the limelight. Businesses are striving to meet current export orders to Japan, Hong Kong, USA, France and UK. International awareness, promotion and marketing of piña cloth will help change the region’s economy by putting piña fabric weaving industry on the map.

This will lead to huge potential and economic rewards for indigenous weavers, their families, and their communities. It will raise the standard of living and benefit the country. As yet, though, local profit margins are small, and are likely to remain so until they can propel themselves into the world marketplace. In order to fully revive this traditional industry, cooperatives need to work together for development, funding and international fair trade.

Immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

ENGR. CARLITO “Lito” MARQUEZ
Republic of the Philippines

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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HOUSE BILL NO. 623

Introduced by Representative CARLITO S. MARQUEZ

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING CENTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF KALIBO, PROVINCE OF AKLAN, TO BE KNOWN AS THE KALIBO, AKLAN TESDA PIÑA HANDELoom WEAVING TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Short Title. — This Act shall be known as the "Kalibo, Aklan TESDA Piña Handloom Weaving Training and Assessment Center Act".

SEC. 2. Establishment. — There is hereby established a Technical Education and Skill Development Authority (TESDA) Piña Handloom Weaving Training and Assessment Center in the Municipality of Kalibo, Province of Aklan, under the supervision of
the TESDA, to be known as the Kalibo, Aklan TESDA Piña Handloom Weaving Training and Assessment Center.

SEC. 3. General Mandate. - The Kalibo, Aklan Piña TESDA Handloom Weaving Training and Assessment Center, hereinafter referred to as the Center, shall primarily provide training and skills development programs to students, out-of-school youths, and residents from low-income families and indigenous communities, including persons with disabilities, in the municipality of Kalibo and the rest of the localities in the province of Aklan, geared towards the acquisition of practical livelihood, employable skills, gainful employment, and entrepreneurship in the art, trade and business of handloom weaving of both natural and synthetic materials, particularly from piña fiber.

The Center shall provide the continuous development and upgrading of the traditional folk craft of piña handloom weaving as a livelihood and economic activity, and in harnessing its market potential for both domestic and for exports demand. It shall elevate the indigenous skills, practical know-how and techniques of traditional piña handloom weaving into a competitive Filipino skills and artistry of global standards.
The Center shall help train local residents to become competitive middle to high-level skilled labor force to hasten the socioeconomic development of the municipality of Kalibo and the adjacent localities in the Province of Aklan, in particular, and to meet the manpower standards for both local and international labor markets, in general, for handwoven piña cloth products.

The Center shall consider in the design of relevant piña handloom weaving training programs to be offered thereat an assessment of the socio-economic profile, employment opportunities, business climate, market and industry potentials, resources available, and presence of support structures such as financing and marketing assistance, including the overall development impact of handloom weaving industry to the economic activities of the host municipality of Kalibo and to the adjacent communities within the operational radius of the Center established herein.

The Center shall likewise consider the relevant skills competencies, craftsmanship and entrepreneurship training
programs and activities needed to deliver the effective livelihood, employment, and other necessary development interventions required to make the municipality of Kalibo and the rest of the localities in the Province of Aklan as human resource and productivity hubs for piña handloom weaving.

Preference in training admission and selection shall be given to the most disadvantaged residents, including indigenous and persons with disabilities, and to the most economically depressed areas of the municipality of Kalibo and the adjacent localities in the Province of Aklan within the service radius of the Center herein established.

The Center, in coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd), the TESDA, the Philippine Textile Research Institute (P TRI), and the National Commission for Culture and the arts (NCCA), shall offer relevant teachers' training assistance and curriculum design to the secondary schools providing the technical-vocational livelihood (TVL) track under the K-to-12 Program of the DepEd in the municipality of Kalibo and the adjacent localities in the Province of Aklan.
SEC. 4. **Training Programs.** - The Center shall offer diverse short-term certificate courses and modular trainings in skills and trade specialization in handloom weaving geared towards achieving the development of a robust inclusive economy within the host area and each of the adjacent localities and communities in the province within the operational radius of the Center, in consultation with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the PTRI, the NCCA, business-industry partners, and such other relevant agencies, both local and international.

The Center may establish research and technology hubs, technology development farms, mobile training programs, and satellite or extension training centers for handloom weaving technology, skills standardization, design concepts, and product commercialization in priority areas through out the Province of
Aklan to create a strong business position and market presence as well as increased competitive productivity for handloom weaving and product demand.

To address the development and manpower needs for skilled artists, craftsmen, artisans, and designers of the municipality of Kalibo and the other adjacent localities of the Province of Aklan, including the international market, the Center shall offer the following TESDA-registered training programs with competencies assessment leading to National Certification Levels I-III:

a. Skills training in handloom weaving through use of emerging new techniques and methods, and operation of small and medium-scale handloom weaving machinery and equipment, especially for piña hand weaving;

b. Short-term basic skills trainings and seminars focused on the re-introductions of handloom weaving, revival of traditional handloom weaving techniques and designs, including funding and infrastructure support for handloom machines and equipment, and relevant
market information on product promotion in both domestic and international trade exposition;
c. Practical training methods in the use of natural and synthetic fiber materials, including piña fiber, modern cloth-making technology, and development and production of alternative handloom weaving materials and sources;
d. Training programs on handloom weaving design concepts in both indigenous patterns and modern designs, and product diversification and uses, specifically for piña cloth;
e. Livelihood trainings and small business literacy programs on accelerated institutionalization and commercialization of Philippine handloom weaving training especially for piña cloth, and end products in all aspects promoting handloom weaving through research and development, production support and extension, education and training, fiber processing and utilization technologies, market promotion and investment facilitation, infrastructure development, standards implementation and trade regulation,
including international demand benchmarking for handloom-made products;
f. Strengthening collaboration of the various handloom weaving industry stakeholders, and development of the handloom weaving fiber sector;
g. Basic business literacy training in financial management and marketing, practical accountancy, bookkeeping and office procedures, business processes and application procedures including registration, licensing, documentation, business patent and intellectual property regulation, business financing and investment opportunities sourcing, import-export accreditation, including online home-based business operation and use of social media business marketing;
h. Other relevant trainings that may be needed by the people of Kalibo and the Province of Aklan to enhance their capacities for practical livelihood, gainful employment and entrepreneurship skills specifically focused in the development potentials of handloom weaving industry for piña cloth weaving commercialization and marketing.
SEC. 5. **Compliance with TESDA Requirements** - The provisions of this Act notwithstanding, the Center established herein shall become operationally effective only upon the determination and declaration of the TESDA, through the issuance of a formal recommendation and certificate of compliance, that the Center has satisfactorily complied with the minimum requirements for quality standards prescribed by TESDA governing the following competency assessment criteria:

a. Standard procedures and guidelines (SPGs) for the establishment and operation of TESDA-accredited training center;

b. Operational sustainability of the Center established herein, in terms of the availability of licensed or accredited skilled faculty-trainors and personnel, equipment, training and laboratory facilities, instructional materials, and other standard requirements as TESDA-accredited Center for handloom weaving;

c. Sustainable funding source and allocation of budget requirement of the Center herein established;
d. Assurance that the training programs offered on handloom weaving specialization are fully aligned with the minimum standards of competency-based quality technical-vocational skills in the context of the ASEAN and Philippine Qualification Framework (PQF) benchmarking for technical-vocational education; and

e. Compliance with such other TESDA conditionalities and standards in establishing a TESDA-accredited training center, as may be applicable.

SEC. 6. Administration – The Center shall be headed by a Technical-Vocational Administrator, under the supervision of the TESDA, who shall render full-time services and be responsible for the administration and operation of the Center.

The Technical-Vocational Administrator shall be appointed by the TESDA Director-General in accordance with Civil Service rules and regulations and the qualification requirements for such office.

The Administrator shall enter into mutual agreements with locally-based private and public counterpart agencies or instrumentalities and persons, subject to approval by the TESDA
Director-General, for such assistance as may be necessary to effectively implement this Act.

**SEC. 7. Appropriations.** – The amount needed to implement the provisions of this ACT, and its continued implementation thereafter, shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

The LGUs concerned, in consultation with the TESDA, shall likewise set aside from any available local revenue an amount deemed appropriate as annual counterpart fund to support the operation of the Center established herein.

**SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act, the TESDA, shall, in coordination with the DOLE, the DTI, the DOST, the DA, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the DILG, the NEDA, the PTRI, the NCCA, the concerned LGUs, and such other relevant agencies and industry-business partners of the host locality of Kalibo, prepare and issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

**SEC. 9. Separability Clause.** – If, for any reason, any section of this Act shall be deemed unconstitutional or invalid, the
other sections or provisions hereof shall not be affected and shall remain in force and in effect.

SEC. 10. Repealing Clause. – All laws, executive orders, decrees, instructions, rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 11. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.