

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

**18<sup>TH</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

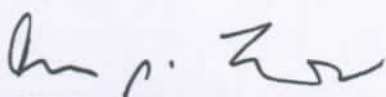
As piña fiber weaving gains momentum, thousands of jobs for weavers are created. The key is to increase profits for the local weavers. Global fashion designers are always searching for innovative materials and new ideas to give them an edge in the industry. Piña handloom weaving has the potential to 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**

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**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 HANDLOOM**  
**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:*

1       **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the  
 2       **“Kalibo, Aklan TESDA Piña Handloom Weaving Training and**  
 3       **Assessment Center Act”.**

4       **SEC. 2. Establishment.** – There is hereby established a  
 5       Technical Education and Skill Development Authority (TESDA)  
 6       Piña Handloom Weaving Training and Assessment Center in the  
 7       Municipality of Kalibo, Province of Aklan, under the supervision of

1 the TESDA, to be known as the Kalibo, Aklan TESDA Piña  
2 Handloom Weaving Training and Assessment Center.

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

14  
15 The Center shall provide the continuous development and  
16 upgrading of the traditional folk craft of piña handloom weaving as  
17 a livelihood and economic activity, and in harnessing its market  
18 potential for both domestic and for exports demand. It shall elevate  
19 the indigenous skills, practical know-how and techniques of  
20 traditional piña handloom weaving into a competitive Filipino skills  
21 and artistry of global standards.



1  
2 The Center shall help train local residents to become  
3 competitive middle to high-level skilled labor force to hasten the  
4 socioeconomic development of the municipality of Kalibo and the  
5 adjacent localities in the Province of Aklan, in particular, and to  
6 meet the manpower standards for both local and international  
7 labor markets, in general, for handwoven piña cloth products.

8  
9 The Center shall consider in the design of relevant piña  
10 handloom weaving training programs to be offered thereat an  
11 assessment of the socio-economic profile, employment  
12 opportunities, business climate, market and industry potentials,  
13 resources available, and presence of support structures such as  
14 financing and marketing assistance, including the overall  
15 development impact of handloom weaving industry to the  
16 economic activities of the host municipality of Kalibo and to the  
17 adjacent communities within the operational radius of the Center  
18 established herein.

19  
20 The Center shall likewise consider the relevant skills  
21 competencies, craftsmanship and entrepreneurship training



1 programs and activities needed to deliver the effective livelihood,  
2 employment, and other necessary development interventions  
3 required to make the municipality of Kalibo and the rest of the  
4 localities in the Province of Aklan as human resource and  
5 productivity hubs for piña handloom weaving.

6  
7 Preference in training admission and selection shall be given  
8 to the most disadvantaged residents, including indigenous and  
9 persons with disabilities, and to the most economically depressed  
10 areas of the municipality of Kalibo and the adjacent localities in  
11 the Province of Aklan within the service radius of the Center herein  
12 established.

13  
14 The Center, in coordination with the Department of  
15 Education (DepEd), the TESDA, the Philippine Textile Research  
16 Institute (PTRI), and the National Commission for Culture and the  
17 arts (NCCA), shall offer relevant teachers' training assistance and  
18 curriculum design to the secondary schools providing the  
19 technical-vocational livelihood (TVL) track under the K-to-12  
20 Program of the DepEd in the municipality of Kalibo and the  
21 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



1 Aklan to create a strong business position and market presence as  
2 well as increased competitive productivity for handloom weaving  
3 and product demand.

4  
5 To address the development and manpower needs for skilled  
6 artists, craftsmen, artisans, and designers of the municipality of  
7 Kalibo and the other adjacent localities of the Province of Aklan,  
8 including the international market, the Center shall offer the  
9 following TESDA-registered training programs with competencies  
10 assessment leading to National Certification Levels I-III:

- 11 a. Skills training in handloom weaving through use of  
12 emerging new techniques and methods, and operation  
13 of small and medium-scale handloom weaving  
14 machinery and equipment, especially for piña hand  
15 weaving;
- 16 b. Short-term basic skills trainings and seminars focused  
17 on the re-introductions of handloom weaving, revival of  
18 traditional handloom weaving techniques and designs,  
19 including funding and infrastructure support for  
20 handloom machines and equipment, and relevant

1 market information on product promotion in both  
2 domestic and international trade exposition;

3 c. Practical training methods in the use of natural and  
4 synthetic fiber materials, including piña fiber, modern  
5 cloth-making technology, and development and  
6 production of alternative handloom weaving materials  
7 and sources;

8 d. Training programs on handloom weaving design  
9 concepts in both indigenous patterns and modern  
10 designs, and product diversification and uses,  
11 specifically for piña cloth;

12 e. Livelihood trainings and small business literacy  
13 programs on accelerated institutionalization and  
14 commercialization of Philippine handloom weaving  
15 training especially for piña cloth, and end products in  
16 all aspects promoting handloom weaving through  
17 research and development, production support and  
18 extension, education and training, fiber processing and  
19 utilization technologies, market promotion and  
20 investment facilitation, infrastructure development,  
21 standards implementation and trade regulation,



1 including international demand benchmarking for  
2 handloom-made products;

3 f. Strengthening collaboration of the various handloom  
4 weaving industry stakeholders, and development of the  
5 handloom weaving fiber sector;

6 g. Basic business literacy training in financial  
7 management and marketing, practical accountancy,  
8 bookkeeping and office procedures, business processes  
9 and application procedures including registration,  
10 licensing, documentation, business patent and  
11 intellectual property regulation, business financing and  
12 investment opportunities sourcing, import-export  
13 accreditation, including online home-based business  
14 operation and use of social media business marketing;

15 h. Other relevant trainings that may be needed by the  
16 people of Kalibo and the Province of Aklan to enhance  
17 their capacities for practical livelihood, gainful  
18 employment and entrepreneurship skills specifically  
19 focused in the development potentials of handloom  
20 weaving industry for piña cloth weaving  
21 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-trainers 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;



- 1 d. Assurance that the training programs offered on  
2 handloom weaving specialization are fully aligned with  
3 the minimum standards of competency-based quality  
4 technical-vocational skills in the context of the ASEAN  
5 and Philippine Qualification Framework (PQF)  
6 benchmarking for technical-vocational education; and  
7 e. Compliance with such other TESDA conditionalities and  
8 standards in establishing a TESDA-accredited training  
9 center, as may be applicable.

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

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

18 The Administrator shall enter into mutual agreements with  
19 locally-based private and public counterpart agencies or  
20 instrumentalities and persons, subject to approval by the TESDA

1 Director-General, for such assistance as may be necessary to  
2 effectively implement this Act.

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

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

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

19 **SEC. 9. Separability Clause.** – If, for any reason, any  
20 section of this Act shall be deemed unconstitutional or invalid, the



1 other sections or provisions hereof shall not be affected and shall  
2 remain in force and in effect.

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

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

10 *Approved.*