

Republic of the Philippines
BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO
Bangsamoro Transition Authority
BARM Compound, Cotabato City

Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
Parliament
BILLS AND INDEX DIVISION

RECEIVED

Name: ADELAH DIPATUNAN Signature: [Signature]
Date: 03/24/22 Time: 1:30PM

Third Regular Session
Bill No. 185

Office of the Minority Leader-BTA
MP Atty. Laisa Alamia

RELEASED

Date: 3/24/22 By: [Signature]

Authors: MP Atty. Laisa M. Alamia, Atty. Lanang T. Ali, Jr., Mohammad S. Yacob,
Mohagher Iqbal
Co-Authors: MPs Atty. Suharto M. Ambolodto, Atty. Rasol Y. Mitmug Jr., Rasul E. Ismael,
Engr. Don Mustapha A. Loong, Engr. Baintan A. Ampatuan, Amilbahar S. Mawallil, Atty.
Omar Yasser C. Sema and Abdullah E. Gayak

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING AN AGRICULTURE SCHOLARSHIP AND RETURN
SERVICE PROGRAM IN THE BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN
MUSLIM MINDANAO, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Bangsamoro Transition Authority in session assembled:

Section 1. Declaration of Policy. – The Bangsamoro Government shall protect and promote the right of all to quality education at all levels and shall maintain and support a complete and integrated system of quality education in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, relevant and responsive to the needs, ideals, and aspirations of the Bangsamoro people. In taking appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all, it shall establish and maintain a system of scholarship, grants, student loan programs, subsidies, and other incentives which shall be available to deserving students both in public and private schools, especially to the underprivileged.

The Bangsamoro Government shall promote its exercise and observance for the continuing intellectual growth, the advancement of learning and research, the development of responsible and effective leadership, the education of high-level and middle-level professionals, and the enrichment of our historical and cultural heritage.

The Bangsamoro Government shall advance agriculture as a key development strategy and promote productivity measures for the benefit of the people, especially the unserved and marginal communities. It shall promote industrialization and full employment based on sound

agricultural development and agrarian reform, through industries that make full and efficient use of human and natural resources, and which are competitive in both domestic and foreign markets.

Section 2. *General Objectives.* – To carry out the foregoing policy, the Bangsamoro Government shall establish a scholarship and return service program for deserving Bangsamoro students desiring to pursue a degree in agriculture and allied fields who shall eventually render services in agricultural communities of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region. This shall strengthen the human resource development in the agriculture sector by providing support to aspiring agricultural professionals who shall, as productive and effective citizens, contribute actively to community and regional development.

Section 3. *Definition of Terms.* –

(a) *Agriculture and related professions* – refer to the following licensed professions in Agriculture, Food, Fishery, Forestry, and Natural Resources, as significant sectors of employment and income generation in the Philippines, regulated by the Professional Regulation Commission:

- (i) Agriculture;
- (ii) Agricultural Engineering;
- (iii) Fisheries Technology;
- (iv) Food Technology;
- (v) Foresters;
- (vi) Landscape Architecture; and
- (vii) Veterinary Medicine.

(b) *Higher Education Institutions* – refer to colleges and universities that offer various degree programs administered and regulated by the Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education. The higher education institutions covered by this Act shall be composed of State Universities and Colleges and Private Higher Education Institutions offering agriculture and related programs in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region.

(c) *Other school fees* – refer to the fees charged by higher education institutions which cover other necessary costs supportive of instruction, including library fees, computer fees, laboratory fees, school ID fees, athletic fees, admission fees, development fees; guidance fees, handbook fees, entrance fees, registration fees, medical and dental fees, cultural fees, and other similar or related fees.

Section 4. *Establishment of the Bangsamoro Agriculture Scholarship and Return Service Program.* – The Bangsamoro Agriculture Scholarship and Return Service Program (“Program”) is hereby created to extend assistance to deserving Bangsamoro students seeking

a degree in agriculture and allied fields. The Program shall be administered by the Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education (MBHTE) to:

- (a) Provide scholarships to finance the education of poor, talented and deserving Bangsamoro youth desiring to pursue a degree or training in agriculture and related fields as are recognized or permitted by law;
- (b) Fill the human resource needs of the agriculture and food sectors of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, consistent with regional plans and policies for economic and agricultural growth and food and nutrition security; and
- (c) Produce competitive high-level and middle-level agricultural professionals who are committed to serve the rural communities of the Bangsamoro.

The Program shall be established for Bangsamoro undergraduate students seeking higher or post-secondary education leading to a bachelor's degree in a specific agricultural and related profession as defined by this Act. The scholarship shall lead to the students taking licensure examinations required to practice such professions.

Section 5. *Covered Courses and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions.* – The MBHTE shall organize a program to accredit the academic degree programs covered by this Act. The following agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and natural resources (AFNR) programs, baccalaureate or ladderized, shall be qualified for accreditation:

- (a) Agriculture;
- (b) Agricultural Engineering;
- (c) Agribusiness, Agribusiness Management;
- (d) Agri-Biotechnology;
- (e) Agricultural Technology;
- (f) Agricultural Education, Rural Sociology, Community Development;
- (g) Agricultural Economics;
- (h) Agro-Forestry, Forestry, Forest Ranger;
- (i) Agricultural Extension;
- (j) Agricultural Extension;
- (k) Agricultural/Development Communication;
- (l) Agricultural Chemistry;
- (m) Poultry-Animal Husbandry, Dairy-Animal Science;
- (n) Entomology, Pest Management, Plant Pathology;
- (o) Entrepreneurial Technology;
- (p) Environmental Science and Natural Resource Management, Landscape Architecture;
- (q) Fisheries, Fishery Technology;
- (r) Food Technology;
- (s) Marine Biology;
- (t) Plant Breeding;
- (u) Rubber Production; and
- (v) Veterinary Medicine

The MBHTE, for this purpose, shall promulgate the accreditation guidelines within one (1) year after the effectivity of this Act.

Section 6. Assistance under the Program. – Any scholar under the Program is entitled to financial assistance from the Bangsamoro Government which shall include the following:

- (a) Tuition and other school fees;
- (b) Allowance for prescribed books, supplies, and equipment;
- (c) Clothing or uniform allowance;
- (d) Transportation expenses and monthly living allowance;
- (e) Internship fees;
- (f) Board review and licensure fees, including financial assistance during review; and
- (g) Other education-related miscellaneous subsistence or living allowances.

Section 7. Qualifications. – In order to qualify for the Program, the applicant must:

- (a) be a Filipino citizen and a resident of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao;
- (b) be a member of the top ten percent (10%) of the high school graduating class;
- (c) be of good moral character and in good health;
- (d) have passed the entrance examinations and complied with other related requirements for admission in the higher education institution (HEI) where the scholar intends to enroll, as well as the other requirements of the MBHTE and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Agrarian Reform (MAFAR) and Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Energy (MENRE) as partner ministries; and
- (e) be willing to undertake the licensure examinations and the mandatory return service after their graduation.

Section 8. Conditions for the Grant of Scholarship. – Any grantee under the Program shall be subject to the following conditionalities:

- (a) Must sign an agreement stating the terms and conditions of the scholarship on a form prescribed by the MBHTE and the MAFAR or MENRE pursuant to the provisions of this Act;
- (b) Must carry the full load of subjects prescribed per semester by the HEI, and shall not, under any circumstance, drop a course which will result in underloading;
- (c) Must finish their entire degree program within the prescribed timeframe of the HEI where the scholar is enrolled in, subject to the retention policies of the HEI: *Provided*, That the grantee, before actual enrollment in the first semester as a scholar, may be allowed for valid and justifiable reasons, to defer enrollment or to file a leave of absence: *Provided, further*, That a scholar who is already enrolled, may be allowed, for valid and justifiable reasons, to file a leave of absence;

- (d) Must undertake their internship either in the MAFAR or MENRE, its field offices or any government agency or entity, civil society/sectoral organizations, cooperatives, or family-owned farms accredited by or affiliated with the MAFAR or MENRE: *Provided*, That, for this purpose, the MAFAR and MENRE shall annually identify priority institutions where internships can be undertaken;
- (e) Must take the board examination within a maximum period of one (1) year after the completion of his/her degree program: *Provided*, That if the scholar fails to pass the licensure examination within one (1) year after graduation, the scholar will shoulder all the necessary expenses for the succeeding professional licensure examinations; and
- (f) Must render return service as provided under Section 10 of this Act.

Section 9. Disqualifications. – The scholarship grant shall be terminated, and the scholar shall repay the full cost of scholarship and related benefits received, including all the expenses incurred during participation in the Program in case of the following circumstances:

- (a) If the scholar accepts another scholarship from other government or private agency or entity while enjoying the benefits under this Act;
- (b) If the scholar fails to meet the academic requirements or to complete the course within the prescribed period without valid cause as may be determined by the HEI or the MBHTE and partner ministries through appropriate regulations, such as, but not limited to, absence without notice, willful neglect or other causes within the control of the scholar;
- (c) If the scholar fails to obtain a passing grade in the licensure examination within six (6) years from the time the scholar has graduated: *Provided*, That instead of repaying the full cost of the scholarship and related expenses, the scholar may opt to engage in work within the regional agriculture or food sector, such as engaging in agriculture-related research work for the regional government or any BARM state university or college, or teaching agriculture-related subjects in a public educational institution for a period prorated to the number of years of mandatory return service provided under this Act; and
- (d) While being a scholar, the scholar commits gross misconduct in a manner that would bring significant damage to the HEI concerned or to the community as a whole.

Section 10. Mandatory Return Service. – Upon passing the licensure examinations administered by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and conferment of the PRC license, the scholar shall undertake the mandatory return service program under this Act. The scholar shall be integrated into the regional public AFNR services through the MAFAR or MENRE for at least four (4) years, and shall receive the appropriate civil service rank, salary and related benefits for such service.

Qualified scholars shall serve in the MAFAR or MENRE, preferably in the provincial offices closest to their hometown: *Provided*, That if the scholar decides to apply and be successfully employed in the local agriculture office of the municipality or city where he/she resides, the

period of employment shall be counted in the required number of years of return service program under this Act.

Section 11. *Sanctions.* – A scholar who has availed of the Program but fails or refuses to comply with the mandatory return service and integration provided under this Act shall be required to pay two (2) times the full cost of scholarship, including other benefits and expenses incurred by reason of participation in the Program.

In case of nonpayment, as provided in the preceding paragraph, the Bangsamoro Government shall coordinate with the PRC to deny the scholar's renewal of his/her license. *Provided*, That the penalties mentioned above shall not apply to professionals who fail to comply with the required return service on account, or by reason of, severe or serious illness.

Section 12. *Evaluation and Selection Process.* – The Bangsamoro Government, through the MBHTE, shall ensure the institution of a fair, efficient, and transparent procedure of reviewing and approving scholarship applications. The MBTHE, MAFAR, and MENRE shall constitute yearly an Evaluation and Selection Team to administer the review and selection process of the Program. The MBHTE shall promulgate a Terms of Reference for this purpose, subject to the approval of the Chief Minister.

Section 13. *Distribution of Scholarship Slots.* – The MAFAR in line with this Act shall provide for a proportional and equitable allotment of slots for identified agriculture and related fields to attain a balanced distribution of manpower in terms of number and expertise. The MBHTE shall organize a program geared towards enlisting at least ten (10) scholars in each municipality and five (5) scholars in each city of the BARMM. *Provided*, That the distribution may be changed based on the human resource inventory provided under Section 16 of this Act. Qualified members of the cultural minority in appropriate cases shall be given due preference.

Section 14. *Harmonization of All Regionally-Funded Agriculture Scholarship Programs.* – Upon the effectivity of this Act, all regionally-funded agriculture scholarship programs shall be harmonized, rationalized and consolidated under the Program. The harmonization, rationalization and consolidation of scholarship programs under the Program shall be led by the MBHTE in coordination with relevant ministries and policy-determining bodies that govern any of the said scholarship programs.

Section 15. *Role of the MBHTE.* – The MBHTE shall be the lead implementing agency of the Program. It shall perform the following functions:

- (a) Formulate, promulgate, disseminate and implement the necessary policies, standards, guidelines, and rules and regulations for the effective implementation of the Program under this Act;
- (b) Organize the programs for the accreditation of the covered courses and the distribution of scholarship slots pursuant to this Act;

- (c) Promulgate the terms of reference of the Evaluation and Selection Team and lead the same in performing its functions every year;
- (d) Implement, in coordination with relevant regional and national offices, the sanctions stipulated in this Act;
- (e) Coordinate with the MAFAR, MENRE, and HEIs, for the integration of the scholars into the regional public AFNR services;
- (f) Initiate capacity-building programs to enhance the agricultural education curriculum standards to further prepare the graduates for the board examinations and government service;
- (g) Require HEIs to implement and submit a tracking, monitoring, evaluation and assistance system to keep track of the status of the scholarships;
- (h) Ensure the timely and adequate release to the partner HEIs of the funds necessary for the implementation of the Program, and monitor the timely and adequate release of the same by the partner HEIs to the scholar-beneficiaries under the Program; and
- (i) Recommend, in coordination with the partner HEIs, to the Ministry of Finance, and Budget and Management (MFBM) the amount necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

Section 16. Role of the MENRE and MAFAR. – The MAFAR and MENRE shall perform the following functions in the implementation of the Program:

- (a) Every after five (5) years, and in partnership with the Ministry of Labor and Employment and other relevant agencies, conduct a review of the implementation of this Act, which shall include a human resource inventory in AFNR, taking into consideration the developments and emerging trends in the regional economy, agriculture industry, and labor market, to be submitted to the Parliamentary Oversight Committee as provided under Section 19 of this Act;
- (b) Conduct regular information dissemination on the Program and in the recruitment of scholar-applicants;
- (c) Assist the MBHTE in coordinating and implementing the sanctions stipulated in this Act;
- (d) Take part in reviewing and considering scholarship applications through the Evaluation and Selection Team, and ensure a fair and merit-based selection process under the Program;
- (e) Ensure the integration of scholars into the regional public AFNR services, or coordinate such integration with concerned local government units, and monitor the scholars' performance during the mandatory return service period;
- (f) Ensure that the scholars' professions, skills, and expertise will be matched with the appropriate positions with salary grades commensurate to their educational achievement, training, and other qualifications, and propose the creation additional plantilla positions, if necessary, for this purpose; and
- (g) Craft a career pathway for agricultural professions who are beneficiaries of the Program in the public AFNR sector to incentivize them to continue serving therein.

Section 17. *Role of the Higher Education Institutions.* – The HEIs shall perform the following functions in the implementation of the Program:

- (a) Monitor the progress of all scholars in their respective educational institutions, identify those who have low or failing grades, and counsel them to improve their academic performance;
- (b) Coordinate with the MBHTE on the performance of the scholars and other necessary or vital information regarding the Program;
- (c) Assist the MAFAR and MENRE in the conduct of regular information dissemination on, and recruitment to, the Program;
- (d) In coordination with relevant national and regional agencies, review, modify and enhance the agricultural education curriculum to further prepare the graduates for the board examinations and government service;
- (e) Recommend strategies to the MBHTE and partner ministries to improve the implementation of the Program;
- (f) Institute a tracking, monitoring, evaluation and assistance system to keep track of the status of the scholarships, including a tracer study on the whereabouts of their respective scholars after graduation from their institution and submit the results thereof to the MBHTE;
- (g) Recommend to the MBHTE and MFBM the budget necessary to implement the Program in their respective institutions, based on their projected capacity and evaluation of the adequacy of the funding under the Program; and
- (h) Perform such other functions as may be deemed necessary for the success of the Program.

Section 18. *Parliamentary Oversight Committee.* – There is hereby created a Parliamentary Oversight Committee (“Oversight Committee”) to monitor and oversee the implementation of the provisions of this Act. The Oversight Committee shall be composed of sixteen (16) members to be designated by the Speaker of the Bangsamoro Parliament. The Oversight Committee shall be co-chaired by the chairpersons of the Committee on Basic, Higher and Technical Education and Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Agrarian Reform of the Parliament. The Speaker shall select the other Oversight Committee members from the membership of the abovementioned committees: *Provided*, That the Speaker shall ensure that the Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Energy shall be sufficiently represented. *Provided, further*, That the minority shall be entitled to pro rata representation but shall have at least three (3) representatives to the Committee.

Section 19. *Mandatory Review on the Implementation of this Act.* – Within five (5) years after the effectivity of this Act, the Parliamentary Oversight Committee shall conduct a systematic evaluation of the accomplishments and impact of this Act, for purposes of determining remedial legislation. The MBHTE and partner agencies shall submit to the Committee a report on the implementation of the Program at the end of the fifth year from the date of enactment and every five (5) years thereafter.

Section 20. *Funding.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year’s Contingent Fund, as appropriated. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its continuous implementation shall be included in the Bangsamoro Appropriations Act under the MBHTE, MENRE, and MAFAR. The said ministries shall include in their yearly proposed budgets the necessary amount to fund the Program.

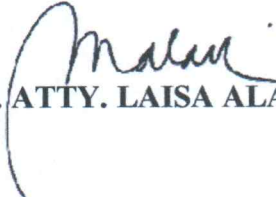
Section 21. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The MBHTE, in coordination and consultation with the relevant agencies, HEIs, and civil society and school-based organizations, shall formulate and promulgate the rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act within ninety (90) days from the effectivity thereof.

Section 22. *Separability Clause.* – If any part, section, or provision of this Act shall be held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provisions not otherwise affected shall remain valid and binding.

Section 23. *Repealing Clause.* – All regional laws, orders, rules, and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 24. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of local circulation in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Authors:


HON. ATTY. LAISA ALAMIA

HON. ATTY. LANANG ALI, JR.

HON. MOHAMMAD YACOB

HON. MOHAGHER IQBAL

Co-authors:

HON. ATTY. SUHARTO AMBOLODITO

HON. ATTY. RASOL MITMUG, JR.

HON. RASUL ISMAEL

HON. ENGR. DON MUSTAPHA LOONG

HON. ENGR. BAIN TAN AMPATUAN

HON. AMILBAHAR MAWALLIL

HON. ATTY. OMAR YASSER SEMA

HON. ABDULLAH GAYAK