

Burn eyebrows for now

This year's National Expenditure Program slogan read (un)funny: People centered growth for inclusive and resilient future. Cringe enough, the Department of Budget Management must have mistaken "people" for their congress counterparts - at least supposed to - who is next in line on the budget deliberations. This year's fiscal planning season invited cynics, critics, skeptics, and basically all those who actually care about nation-building - and rightly so. With no drastic institutional reform after waves - no, tsunamis - of corruption scandals, budget scrutiny remains an eyebrow burning activity, as it dimlyingly was decades ago.

It must first be understood that the NEP is the only low fidelity design with a high risk. Not because the budget is corrupt, but because the notorious congress crafts the final say. Budget deliberations undergo tedious, crucial stages, with the NEP drafting being one, and congress' insertions - etc. inputs - next to form the General Appropriations Bill, leading up to the final General Appropriations Act. Going back last year's scandal, keywords allocables, leadership funds, and insertions surfaced amid confident allegations on congress. Even further back the infamous PDAF scams that associated itself with several lawmakers, both legislative houses would be shamed for a time from lump sum budgets. The method of plunder, whether done or inserted, is out of the question when the same chambers undertake the process annually with no institutional checks whatsoever. Guarding the coffers is then an acknowledgement of history that refused to be addressed, merely mutating into innocent forms.

In Sir Pablo Querubin's paper in early 2016 he argued that no one can achieve true change unless he changes the system it thrives on. With two waves - no, tsunamis - of corruption scandals, something further than a fiery demonstration, short-lived political crises, and reflexive name tagging that fail to accumulate into long term reforms has to be done. We got none of it. Besides, no elected-lawmaker would seek the removal of profitable ventures, especially when it comes with power and popularity.

These cases were confidently attributed to lawmaking houses, with Senators Bong Revilla and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada as living proofs. If this year's budget is going to be different, maybe we proceed to both short-term and long-term measures.

One is include civil society groups, budget watchdogs, and further transparency in these processes. It is high time that the congress and senate gets regular third-party checks to assure cleanliness. Public office, after all, is public trust under Article 28 of the constitution.

Part to actively push down risks upon budget finalizations, for a long time, strictly setting materialized budgetary standards to access funds must be implemented across government agencies.

All of these precipitate into an active effort to guard our coffers, as rightly so. These are our democratic counterparts who did not pond lists in EDMA. And until such measures are passed, we must keep burning eyebrows for Budget scrutiny.

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Icarus

Exposing the uncertainty about the 2027 national budget and its true intentions for the Philippines

Icarus flew too close towards the sun, and our debts have decided to reach for the stars. The proposed 4.200 trillion budget advocates for an inclusive and citizen-centered nation. With severe corruption present in the government, it is tentative whether the budget is truly inclusive, or will it eventually leave Filipinos behind.

No amount of gaslighting can ever remove the fact that the Philippines is drowning from massive debt. Though, it is ironic that the government aims for inclusivity when we were always neglected for what we need most.

The Department of Education (DepEd) is such a problematic sector. 5 years after 2021, education remains ineffective; the scores in PISA 2020 results reveal illiteracy, constant reforms and implementations continue to overload teachers and students, and with the recent school shuttings exposing security flaws. Proposing 976.0 billion and having the sector be the number 1 recipient despite no major results risks a massive amount of money. Students need quality education, but not at the expense of money for unnecessary programs and curriculums that produce minor results.

A massive amount of the budget is supposed to be allocated for Public works which focus on building infrastructures. As the national budget's top 2 recipient, I beg to wonder if this money will be meant for actual issues such as flood control projects or create another scandal reminiscent to the "Discayas" issue of 2025.

Current uncertainty of the budget worsens when 15.9% of it is to pay for our country's debt burden. Paying our debts is not inherently bad, it is the irony that we use our proposed budget, which is technically loaned, to pay for our debts.

To be clear, the budget is not the problem. It is the infamous status of the government that can turn positive goals for our country into uncertainty and distrust. Compared to the 2026 budget, which was 6.713 trillion pesos, the government proposed for 7.200 trillion pesos more than 2026. The amount continues to rise but Filipinos continue to wonder if it is actually for them.

Some could argue that quality education, public works, or even other sectors need a budget despite the current reputation of their departments. The top 10 recipients are what Filipinos and the Philippines need to thrive.

However, money becomes waste when it is not managed properly. Defta could have a massive budget but still provide poor results due to mismanagement, corruption, or ineffectiveness of reforms.

Just like Icarus, our budget can reach the sky but without proper governance, Filipinos get left behind. The Philippines can never achieve its goals if the money is not used properly, potentially leading to more debt.

The Philippines must strengthen the laws that prevent sectors and politicians to abuse the budget. The country must give Filipinos reasons why the budget should be trusted. This is by managing and building systems that ensure results and a positive impact to the country. With better governance, the Philippines can indeed reach for the sun without leaving the Filipinos behind.



to its intentions for the people

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CORRUPTION CYCLE

A large amount of money is crucial for the development of our nation. Through this — we will thrive.

But stop and look around for a minute and observe your surroundings. Do you think we are thriving?

Based on our current state right now — I must say, we are still labeled as a third-world-country.

It is ironic how Basic Education DepED (Department of Education) is ranked as the first recipients with the largest budget of Php 976.0 B — and yet, students still complain about "low quality" education.

But did I lie? Absolutely not.

If I was, then the recent PISA assessment result would have made a huge difference from the previous recorded data. The 2026 budget is Php 6.793 Trillion, that is still a huge amount compared to the year 2027 budget. However, it is important to note that our education level is still five years behind compared to the other countries.

But hey, I might be too quick to judge. Since, they might actually use the proposed budget towards the right path. And yes, might.

With the recent issues of corruption, it is not entirely impossible for these government officials to get blinded by a large amount of cash. I mean, what else do you expect of our government? If you are hoping for a brighter future then you must do a reality check.

People centered growth for an inclusive and resilient future — Nobody is falling for that — at least not me.

To the Filipino's who are still fooled by the lies of the government. It is time for you to break-free from the "sugar-coated" promises and demand accountability.

This country could have thrived long ago if we were vigilant enough. Everything is political. And in this country, corruption is almost an every year issue.

That is why, do not let this cycle from keep on spinning.



Like a Magicians Disappearing Act

Yearly budgets are proposed and allocated for the betterment of the country and its citizens. Billions of Filipinos' taxes meant for their benefit. All of this become moot, however, when those responsible for the proper distribution and use of these funds find ways to make them disappear in thin air.

A hefty ₱ 7.200T as the proposed national budget for the year 2027 is admittedly larger than the last, though the happiness in hearing this is short-lived, for even now with our current ₱ 6.793T budget, we barely feel any support and improvement. How can we be so sure that it'll be any different next year, no matter how much larger the amount may be.

It's the same

Basic education and DEPED being one of the top ten recipients with ₱ 976.0B is laughable, as all that money will either be pocketed or spoon-fed to schools in urban areas. What of those in rural ones, the ones who actually need it? Have those responsible for this even considered what it's like? Imagine students struggling with learning materials unfit for their needs. Imagine teachers pulling hard-earned money from their own pockets just to aid their students.

Social Welfare being allocated ₱ 644B is good, but baffling in the sense that even now, every DSWD worker I have personally talked to have all said the same thing when asked if their salary and funding matches their efforts; "Hindi talaga siya sapat." Further demonstrating how unfair the distribution of budgets is.

Another hypocritical budget allocation is the ₱ 261.7B intended for agriculture. Imagine the gall you must possess in order to propose this much money all while slowly approving of AI Data Centers that lead in the ruination of trillions of pesos worth of agriculture that no budget will ever help us recover from.

Everything I've mentioned above and many more attribute to my final point. All that money, all those plans, and all those promises will never amount to anything when the system itself is corrupt.

Improper reliance, unfair distribution, and having "priority lists" would make this ₱ 7.200T look no different to ₱ 0 to me.

Everyday all the people who this budget was allocated for in the first place struggle, while those close to the source remain the sole benefactors. Teachers, students, farmers, drivers, social workers, and many more suffer because of the greed of officials who govern this so called democratic country. One of the most prominent examples of these officials — though there are many more — is Vice President Sara Duterte, as the secretary of the Department of Education and VP of this country, she would have access to all funds in relation with basic education, yet she is facing impeachment — and unavoidable arrest — for embezzlement.

The root of the problem does not lie within the people, but within the system and the officials themselves. No amount allocated will ever be enough when it falls into the hands of irresponsible people. This is a systematic failure that our country has failed to address. part of the system

The people of this country fight everyday, but we must all fight harder for something we have the right to demand. Our so called democratic government must learn to listen to their people for once, because in due time, they will no longer have anything left to govern if its people itself turns its back on it.

No amount of funds will ever be sufficient when we're governed by magicians who've mastered the art of turning trillions of Philippine pesos into thin air, exactly like a skilled magician's infamous disappearing act. (#)

Daylight Robbery

The proposed 2027 National Budget is a carefully planned political plot that aims to enhance our country's performance on a global scale. The Philippines is flooded by issues of corruption while the National Budget continues to rise annually. Has our country learned its lesson of choosing a righteous leader when millions and billions of Philippine Pesos are being stolen by corrupt individuals each day?

With Php 7.200 T as the initial proposal, it has been divided into five sectors: 15.9% is allocated for our National Debt - approximately Php 1.143 T -, 34.1%, receiving the largest sum, is the social services sector; Php 2.456 T, 6.3% - that is Php 452.4 B for the defense sector, 25.5% - around Php 1.833 T - allotted for the Economic Services, and finally, 18.3%; about Php 1.317 T alone for General Public Services. These allocated funds may sound promising, however, Government leaders should still live by their words and serve with full transparency.

These political officials preach about true governance but engage in true hypocrisy. Hundreds of millions, if not Billions, were stolen on this year's issues about Ghost Flood Control Projects in the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) agency alone. This is a leading problem we should all learn from since our country is heavily prone to calamities.

The year 2027 is fast approaching with only three months left. Our current 2026 National Budget is fading fast too. With Php 6.733 T consumed by the gutter through corrupt individuals. To be frank, I don't think I ever felt the Trillions of Philippine Pesos' reflecting across our country. Perhaps those men in Barongs spent them on a trip to New York, but who knows?

We should acknowledge the priorities and consistent efforts our government is making. For example, making political alliances with countries like the U.S. through Pax Silica, and even siding with Israel to improve our economic state. Morale goes low, however - with these rash decisions made by the President. But who are we to judge when it helps our economy?

On a recent news reported by Inquirer.net, DepEd secretary Sonny Angara stated that Public Schools will not be hiring new teachers in the year 2027 due to budget cuts. However, on a note given by the Department of Budget and Management, it shows that the DepEd will be allocated Php 976.0 B for Basic Education alone. A fishy agenda that will drive us into a rabbit hole.

We can safely assume that there will be improvements on how we live our day-to-day lives for the following years with the Budget increase of our country. However, as a Filipino citizen, a part of me is concerned that this money will only feed the rich, corrupt lives of politicians and contractors alike, and not the impoverished.

I fear that the "People Centered Growth for an Inclusive and Resilient Future" may just be a title meant to mislead the People of the Philippines. These numbers may as well be just numbers when the people are still experiencing a crisis of inflation, assault, and neglectful learning.

This invisible robbery that occurs in pure daylight has no right to leave us wilting. I call upon our Constitution to heed the Filipino people's plea and allow them to see, feel, hear, and breathe the life they are paying to live.