

AAIG 2021 SUMMIT WEBINAR 3 TRANSCRIPT - DR LEO ABERION

Employees Compensation Program: A Comfort in the Storm

Good morning everyone. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the UST Alumni Association and of course Dean Henry Tenedero my friend and colleague also in our organization. So, actually, I do not believe in an accident, right? I was not an education graduate but after joining the corporate world, one of the best experiences that I had is in the education sector. So, UST Alumni have been there for our benchmarking because I'm also one of the officers of the USJR (University of Jan Jose Recoletos) Alumni Association and I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the warm accommodation. So moving on to my topic this morning is about Employees Compensation Program: A Comfort in the Storm. So the most affected sector during the Covid-19 pandemic especially during the lockdown, this was the private sector. It's not only the big schools, but especially the small and medium-sized private schools all over the country. Based on the data gathered last year, almost 900 to 1000 small medium-sized schools all over the Philippines closed shop and now is still going. It's very unfortunate for us, even my institution, because we were struggling for four months from April to July before the opening of classes. We tried our best what to do especially from the financial assistance to our teachers considering that they are just earning a little. Unlike in the government institutions wherein they are paid regularly even during the pandemic. I would like to focus on my presentation on the pandemic, the effects of Covid-19, the pandemic and the education sector, and second is on the pandemic and the private sector especially the small and medium-sized schools all over the Philippines. During the early months of the lockdown, the Federation of Association of Private Schools Administrators or FAPSA was gathering data in relation to the schools that were affected with the Covid-19 pandemic. Nobody volunteered in the regions of Visayas and Mindanao. And even if I am just an ordinary school administrator in a small school in Cebu, I volunteered to take the opportunity to help especially to our affected school administrators, teaching and non-teaching personal. So I joined, I volunteered to Sir Ely (Eleazar Kasilag), the president of FAPSA, that I am interested to represent Region 7 in the central Visayas. But I think it's not unfortunately, it's a blessing that I fully represented the whole Visayas Regions 6, 7 and 8, including most of the regions in Mindanao. Especially that majority of the education sectors were not given enough assistance during Camp 1. We tried our best to make a survey in order for us to gather information from schools that are greatly affected during the pandemic. We gathered data and then we gained more than 4,000 schools all over the country and it's over 100,000 affected teaching and non-teaching personnel. Because of that, we wrote a letter to Secretary (Leonor) Briones regarding our concern on how we could help our teaching and non-teaching personnel especially that we do not know when would this pandemic end. So we sent a position paper to the Lower House and also to the

Senate, but we were not given the chance to air out our concerns especially that we are just representing small schools, we don't have much voice to the Congress. But what we did, we didn't surrender. So we wrote another letter addressed, I am not campaigning but this is just based on experience that we had, we wrote a letter to Senator Bong Go through the Office of the President and he immediately responded and endorsed us to the Department of Labor and Employment. With that instance, with that particular opportunity, we were given the chance to immediately connect or partner with the central office of the Department of Labor and employment. Allow me to express our gratitude to the Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment, and all the undersecretaries and assistant secretaries and of course the staff and the regional directors all over the country. I as an ordinary teacher, administrator was able to make a difference and also was able to meet teachers, administrators all over the country. I made sleepless nights just to get their emails especially in assisting them just to get the financial assistance. But of course the budget was limited because it's only 300 million good for only 60,000. And more or less based on the data that we had, the teaching and non-teaching personnel all over the country for the private schools is almost 300,000 or beyond 260,000. So what we did was we just catered those who were given the opportunity or the chance to be successful in their online application and then later on there was another opportunity for them because there was an extra budget from another region and then with those who were not given or the assistance during the release of the first tranche of the Camp 2, they were given an opportunity. And after that, we did not stop. We were able to help the private schools especially that I was given an opportunity also to take partnership through my friend in Region 6. I would, if you allow me to take this opportunity [to mention], the one in charge, the Public Information officer Stephen Barredo from Region 6 or in western Visayas, in Iloilo We were able to conduct a series of webinars in terms of employees compensation program. That's why my title was *A Comfort in the Storm* because it was only this June that we were able to get the data or information about the benefits that we get from the Employees Compensation Commission. So what is the emotion or the feelings from the school administrators, the teaching and non-teaching personnel who were affected, and we didn't have any knowledge about the services that the employees compensation has given to the both the public and the private sector. So for the information of everybody, the Employees Compensation Commission is an attached agency of the Department of Labor and Employment and its administering agency is the Social Security System. We do not know, many of us, I do not know if everyone or most of us, we do not know that our monthly contribution of 10 pesos or 30 pesos, we can get assistance or still a benefit outside from the Social Security System. So it's the employers who pay the monthly premium of 10 pesos or 30 pesos depending on the bracket of the monthly compensation. With this especially the Covid-19 pandemic, the Employees Compensation Program has disseminated several schools so that's why we already conducted for 15 batches or more than 3,000 administrators, teaching and non-teaching personnel especially that the

coverage of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. So every now and then we are still continuing because we are given the opportunity to have regular schedules in partnership with the ECC because the one who prepared the program, it's the central office through our humble director, Director Stella Banawis. And the Employees Compensation Program helped a lot especially from those affected teaching and non-teaching personnel because before they do not know that Covid-19 is covered with the Employees Compensation Financial Assistance. So they made it, the process, simple like for example if there is, if you are affected or if you got infected with Covid-19 pandemic, you're just required to submit the SSS sickness notification approval, the certificate of employment and of course your medical certificate. Then we assisted as much as we can through our partnership from different regions. By the way during the webinar series, it's not only dominated by Region 6 but they also tap the different regions of the country in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. So during our webinar we really experienced the hardships of the education sector especially the administrator's survival in keeping strong especially that we are still here continuing our educational journey. So what is the nature or the situation of the private schools today, of course we are struggling. I think this is very evident with the experiences that we have, we are still surviving and of course with the help of God almighty we keep going. We don't surrender and of course we need in order to survive to sustain our existence because the main purpose of education is nation building. We are partner of the government in nation building and we hope that the government will continue to assist us especially in facilitating our students to continue their studies amidst the pandemic. And also we need cooperation between parents, students and other stakeholders in the academe. What is the best thing that we should do is we are partners with the private and the public sector. We go hand in hand especially in journeying our children, to give quality education so that we can rise above being in the Philippines. Okay so I think that's it, that's all for my talk this morning. Thank you so much for the opportunity and if there are administrators or any other teaching and non-teaching personnel who wish to ask or inquire about the financial assistance regarding the Employees Compensation Commission. By the way for the Employees Compensation Commission, it's only work related injuries, sickness and death. There are only three instances. The rest in terms of problems between compensations and any other labor issues, it is to be addressed to the Department of Labor and Employment. So if you have questions, clarifications, because we have the so-called prescriptive period. In terms of prescriptive period, it's three years. But even if you have relatives or friends who have been, who passed away for example for 20 years but you were able to report to the Social Security System or to the GSIS, the prescriptive period will be erased. There's no more deadline when you have reported that 20 or even 20 or 30 years ago. The prescriptive period only applies for those who were not able to report the incident to the Social Security System for the private sector and to the GSIS for the public sector. So once again if you have concerns I have contacts from the different regions all over the country.

This is Leo Aberion assisting the private sector through the Employees Compensation Commission. Thank you so much and good morning.