Under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Goal 1 is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, while Goal 2 is to achieve universal primary education. Many studies in the past have identified education as a strong if not the strongest correlate of poverty. On the other hand, statistics show that the quality of the country’s human capital has been deteriorating, particularly when compared to our ASEAN neighbors. In fact, the MDG Watch being compiled by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) shows that it is Goal 2 where the Philippines will have the hardest time meeting the target by 2015. Against the backdrop of intense global competition and the emergence of knowledge-based economies in the Third Millennium, therefore, the education sector must receive top and urgent priority in the development agenda of our country, if we are to achieve our MDGs by 2015.

It is heartening to note that the current administration has identified education as a priority concern. Towards crafting education policies and programs that address the problems faced by the sector which are probably the root cause why poverty persists in the country, and possibly critical to the achievement of our MDGs, we need to understand better why the quality of our human capital has deteriorated. For this, we need statistics.

This paper will present comparative statistics on the performance of the various schools in licensure examinations in major fields of education, looking particularly at the examinations for accountants, dentists, nurses, physicians, and teachers, providing disaggregation by region and by sex. It will identify the best performing and the worst
performing schools and provide an assessment on whether students and parents are getting value for money that they have invested on education. The paper will also make some recommendations to improve the quality of education in the Philippines.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES: Millennium Development Goals, poverty, education, human capital, licensure examinations, best performing schools, worst performing schools, value for money

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