

## EDUCATION: KEY TO INDIVIDUAL'S PROGRESS

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Education is one of the most powerful tools which develops one's knowledge and skills to be able to survive in the challenging and competing world. The acquired practical experiences in school can be of an advantage for individual's growth and progress. It provides stability and opportunities for employment and improve life status. It enhances self-independence. Once an individual obtained education, it probably improves financial independence. This makes educated people find ways to be self-reliant. Education also allows individuals to be productive citizen of the community. It is observed that community with high literacy rate and huge number of graduates becomes more advanced and richer.

Also, education serves as significant component in the development of the nation especially in terms of technology advancement, eradicating poverty, economy, good political order, safety and security, communication, and the likes. Thus, making education as the backbone and foundation of the society and the nation.

However, with the previous records and status of the Philippine Education System, it is empirical to understand the problems and challenges that the country was previously experiencing up to the present. According to UNESCO, we have recorded the huge dropped back from 96 % down to 84% in 2005 for elementary level. In the same year that completion rate was recorded below 70%. In secondary level, the same scenario had happened which included the backdown from 66% to 55 % net enrollment.

Moreover, most of the graduates of tertiary level especially in the field of medicine tend to spend their services abroad and work in various companies internationally where compensation is highly acceptable.

To address these surfeits of poor performance and level of achievements, the government has initiated Educational Reforms as stipulated in the Philippine Development Plan, 2017-2022. The National Economic and Development Authority of the Philippines aims to increase the academic standards and status of the country and be included in the upper-middle income country by 2022. The education reform aims to increase both the enrollment and completion rates of the DepEd schools from elementary to secondary levels.

There are several elements that need to be assessed and resolved as to the quality of education in the country is concerned. The economic status in the Philippines has been a fundamental subject when opportunity on access to quality education is being questioned. Long before it is very evident that individuals who belong to the middle- and high-class society gain more opportunity in quality education from competitive schools in the Philippines. This is due to the privileged status received of these people.

These are some existing issues and problems that the Philippines has been facing over the past years up to present. By statistics, Philippines doesn't invest much on education compared to the neighboring countries such as Korea and Singapore.

Poverty is still the main reason why children do not go to school and started working at early age. This is due to those children are forced to work to survive and the need for a living. Thus, once they have earned small amount of money and started getting financial aid for their families, children of this age decided to not to go back to school since they are already overaged where the stigma started.

Alternative Learning System (ALS) has changed the landscape of the education in the Philippines. It helps the out-of-school youth to get back in school and finish their high school through non-formal and literacy classes.

The Drop-out Reduction Program under the Alternative Delivery Mode through Open High School Program also gives benefits to the students who at risk of dropping out and failing. In this mode of learning, students are given flexible time and alternative mode of learning with a smaller number of days attending the school and decongested competencies.

This has been the predicaments of the education sector especially when pandemic hits the country. As teachers, we must provide more accessible form of learning through various modalities. It is apparent that with the aid of technology, education becomes more resilient and available to majority of the learners and even teachers. We all know that education is the paramount key in the growth and progress of the country. When the society is occupied of educated people, the advancement and progress are very visible. It can provide noteworthy contribution.

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