

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT (GAD) ON EDUCATION

by:
Agnes I. Conocido

Gender equality, as defined by the United Nations Agency for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, refers to the equality of rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of both genders: women and men, girls and boys. It also means that the different needs, interests, and concerns of women and men are considered equally as social class, religion and ethnicity are duly recognized. Their rights and opportunities are human rights that do not depend on whether they are male or female.

Empowering women is essential to advance human development and reducing poverty. It is evident in the contribution of empowered women, ensuring the health and productivity of their families, communities, and the potential of future generations. Moreover, gender equality and its importance are underscored by being included in one of the eight Millennium Development Goals. Gender equality is essential to achieving seventeen development goals. It is considered a prerequisite and a predictor of sustainable human-centered development to expand women's and men's freedom to enable them to live healthily and well-being.

Annually, every school conducts a Learning Action Cell (LAC) on Gender and Development (GAD). It integrates the principles of gender equality, gender sensitivity, non-discrimination, and human rights. It is in line with the DepEd mission to ensure access for all to quality education. Gender and Development's (GAD) central theme is child protection policy, ensuring that all children in the school, regardless of age, gender, or status, are protected by the DepEd's policies in line with the department's vision, values, and mission.

Teachers are constantly reminded of children's right not to do anything that could hurt or abuse them. The Department of Education mandates Child Protection Policy and appropriate policies and guidelines to protect the rights of students and ensure their safety and well-being within the school, regardless of age or gender, to protect them against exploitation and abuse. Therefore, schools, especially counseling offices, must follow policies to accommodate the student's needs. The schools should focus on preventing adverse situations and problems and take necessary actions, especially advice, to deal with the problem. Additionally, the school's counseling teachers must be keen on assisting students who face criticism, bullying, abuse, and domestic problems and whose rights and freedoms have been deprived for any reason.

Perigo and Mangila (2020) stated that institutions with GAD programs must provide maximum support and necessary facilities and resources. Education sectors should also adopt a bottom-up approach to GAD policy development and implementation to ensure the involvement and participation of all school stakeholders, especially at the grassroots level. GAD personnel, system members, and support personnel should be regularly sent to various GAD seminars and training courses to ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to implement the program efficiently and effectively.

Gender inequality is still rampant in the Philippines not only because of the discrimination and criticism faced by the women and LGBTQIA+ community but also because of the misogynistic behavior of Filipinos. The LGBTQIA+ community is acceptable, but the disenfranchised are not. Women are discriminated against because they are women. Our country is far from gender equality. Therefore, the right approach to education about gender and equality is needed to achieve a favorable change that uplifts everyone regardless of gender.

References:

Perigo, M. and Mangila, B. (2020). Extent of Implementation of the Gender and Development Program in a State College of the Philippines. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 8(3). 33-45.

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