BOONS OF INTEGRATING AGROECOLOGY PRACTICES IN SCHOOL GARDENS

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School gardens are common areas that offer extra activities for children outside their class hours. It is used as a way of recreation and to break the monotonous scene of the classroom. In addition, school gardens are also a way of encouraging young green thumbs toward the field of agriculture. However, there is a way to make school gardening more beneficial for the people involved—Agroecology.

In the field and practice of agroecology, the need for industrial input is being abandoned and helpful natural processes are being maximized. Hence, there are no fertilizers, chemical pesticides, no industrial feeds for livestock and fishes, and the use of gasoline is very limited.

To deal with this lack of assistance from inputs, people that practice agroecology use animal manure, farming waste, or food waste instead of industrial fertilizers. Furthermore, because of the lack of pesticides, they tend to rely on polyculture farming and other organic and biological means to lessen infestations. In addition to all these, instead of using pieces of machinery that often consume gasoline, they also use animals for the draft. All these measures are being taken to combat the environmental damages that the more popular “industrial farming” is inflicting.

Nevertheless, if educational institutions were to adapt some of these practices and apply them in their own school gardens, the benefits of this move extend not only to the student and faculty but also to the community.
In a study conducted by Gebrim Doria and company, they were able to conclude that students’ perception toward school gardens has categories that relate to health and nutrition. Combining this already preexisting view with the one of the main vision of agroecology—to provide organic and chemical-free food—will only increase the effectiveness of school gardens as health and nutrition promoters.

Furthermore, a case study led by Bruce Ferguson showed that introducing agroecology in school gardens also benefited the children and the community surrounding the school. It says in his study that teachers and community members in Chiapas, Mexico had an increase in awareness of the advantages of agroecology and started practicing them individually. This newly acquired enthusiasm did not only lift their local knowledge but they, apparently, acknowledge their eating habits as well.

In conclusion, integrating agroecology practices in the school garden is a step that all educational institutions must take. Not only does it not need many resources, but, it also yields a lot of boons.

References:


[2] Bruce Ferguson, Scaling Out Agroecology from the School Garden: The Importance of culture Food and Place, Pub.2019, retrieved from: Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems Vol.43