Has education become a privilege rather than a right?

Ideally, the access to education should be a right and should not be a privilege. It should be given to those who can afford, and to those who can’t. Every child should be given access to it because in a classroom setting, it is a relationship between a child and the teacher. But in today’s time, we cannot fully grasp the ideal setting being education as a right rather than a privilege. There was a time during former president Noynoy Aquino’s term where protesters expressed their voices regarding Filipinos’ right for quality yet affordable education. They called out the administration and said that the education in our country was slowly becoming something that has its price tag to where it was exclusive only to those who can afford to pay. We cannot turn a blind eye by how tuition rates rise every year, miscellaneous fees are being approved without concrete basis resulting to more and more students dropping out for they no longer afford the cost of education.

And now, the corona virus pandemic has taken everyone by storm. The normal we thought that is working, isn’t working anymore. The education system was thrown off balance, showing that no one was really ready when such situation occurs. Schools raising their tuition fee or even failure to adjust their rates are all over the news. Students’ cries and dissents can be read everywhere, asking how can the tuition rates still stay the same or even rise when there will be little to no assurance that they can show up and use the school facilities given the situation we are in now. Statistics also show that the enrollment dropped by more than 25% this year to where only 20.7
million have expressed their intent to enroll in kindergarten, elementary, and high school. This represents 74.6% of the over 27.7 million students in public and private schools last year. This drop of enrollment was only one of the many effects of this pandemic raising safety concerns and many parents losing their jobs thus resorting for their children to consider this year a gap year for education.

The battle is still ongoing. Solutions done by the government are being implemented in correspondence with whatever problems we still might face. Late enrollees, as per the guidelines issued in 2018, will still be accepted provided that the students are able to meet 80 percent of the prescribed number of school years. Modular learning and online classes are the options used to still cater to the students’ needs. Although many cannot afford this new normal of learning, still, we still need to help each other out. Offer help to those in need, volunteer in order for no student to be left behind during these trying times. After all, the common good for the public should be put as the top most priority; access to education should be literally accessible to all students. We must strive and fight for education to remain a right, specially this time, rather for it to be a privilege.

References:

2. Quality Education for all during Covid-19