GULAYAN SA PAARALAN; MORE THAN JUST ADDRESSING MALNUTRITION

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All schools in the country implements “Gulayan sa Paaralan.” This is a project imposed by the Department of Education in the acts of sustaining welfare for students suffering from malnutrition. Based from DepEd Memorandum No. 95 series 2018, all schools must have a vegetable gardens that grow foods that can be used to feed students. Aiming at eradicating malnutrition, the schools create and intervention to fight hunger. This is in connection to the idea that if a student is hungry consequences on education may occur. A student having an empty stomach may not have focus in attending lessons. This may lead to health problems that will eventually result to absenteeism. Much worse students in constant problem with food can lead to drop outs and leaving schools. They would opt to find work at an early age so as to sustain their needs for nutrition rather than stay at schools scribbling notes and listening to lectures.

But, is addressing malnutrition all that there is to back up the implementation of Gulayan sa Paaralan?

According to Healthy Food House (2019), teaching students to grow food is as important as teaching them how to read and how to write. In the modern time and age where the youth is very much fond of technologies, gadgets and the internet, the skill of food production has received very less attention. This is very important because all living creatures depend on food to survive. Without the proper knowledge of food production, it will be very difficult to have even a morsel of food in a plate. Soon enough food prices will rise so high because there is only very limited people who can manage producing them. This is directly related to the law of supply and demand. Few people know how to grow, produce and process food results to little
supply. Little supply means more demands. More demands means higher prices. And the domino effect goes on. But that is for the distant future. What is important now then?

More to just supplying food is the discipline of preserving and appreciating food. How is this connected with Gulayan sa Paaralan? According to Healthy Food House (2019) children who grow food also learns food empathy. How the feeling towards someone can also be directed to something. If children understand how hard it is to grow food then they will come to understand how to value it and take care of it. As a result, there is less food waste produced and there is more food consumed which then result to healthier people. In a sense the gulayan sa Paaralan is more than just growing food to feed the hungry. It is also a way of developing among students the discipline and respect for food.

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