INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Education for All. These three words highlight the current efforts of various academic and affiliated institutions to promote an inclusive education. Education and its various aspects underwent both drastic and minor changes for the previous years. All of those were geared towards providing quality and holistic learning experiences to millions of Filipino learners. However, despite the numerous advancements through the years, millions of children who were hindered by various conditions and circumstances were still deprived of schooling and were being left behind.

As of 2018, it was estimated that there are at least 93 million children with disabilities in the world (UNESCO). In the Philippines, there were 5.49 million children with special needs wherein only 2% were receiving government’s assistance and 97% of seven to 12-year-old children were not in school (DepEd). Indeed, a huge number of these children were still hindered by their conditions to access their rights which include medical healthcare and education. As a result, a study conducted in the country revealed that the rates of literacy and school participation is lower for women and children who have disabilities and they were predominantly found to have lower educational attainment (Mori, Saya, et.al, 2014). These studies further amplified the need for various individuals and institutions to uphold and advocate the attainment of an education where exclusivity could not foster.

Inclusive education is defined as “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion from education and from within education
(Acedo).” It is an education where all learners, abled or not, would be learning in the same classroom. They would be attaining quality education hand in hand where diversity is appreciated and respected. In the same way, it identifies and removes all barriers that would likely limit the participation of these learners in school.

Tracing its roots from the Universal Declaration on Human Rights to Education for All (EFA), it is discernible that there is a continuous drive for various institutions to establish an educational system equipped to serve all its learners. Among those institutions include the Department of Education which continuously promotes inclusiveness in education through the conduct of programs, training and allocations that are needed by Special Education schools, classrooms and educators in the country.

A turn to an inclusive education entails numerous changes through its various aspects. There is a need for an inclusive curriculum, highly skilled/trained educators, appropriate learning environments for each classroom, coordination of parents and the participation of children with disabilities. These are lots of work to be done which necessitate the coordination of various institutions in the country. It might be costly and impossible as it seems but a change from an exclusive to an inclusive education will signify the country’s commitment of providing quality education to all the Filipino learners.
References:


