K-12, IS IT A THREAT OR A HELP?

by:
Ryan A. Manalo
Teacher III, A.G. Llamas Elementary School

K-12 Curriculum is the newly embraced curriculum in the Philippines. It is a set of courses that starts from Kindergarten plus 12 years of basic education, from elementary to senior and junior high school. Its introduction in the Philippine archipelago creates chaotic incidents to people of the nation. Some like it, some just don’t. Some understand it widely, some narrowly and some mind closely.

As the K-12 is introduced many people were puzzled with its additional two years. The additional two years is said to cover up the overview and primer of vocational studies that will entitle them to job opportunities. Another reason is to follow other countries’ 10-year basic education curriculum entitling graduates for job breaks and chances abroad.

The intention is good, for Filipinos to be globally competitive and to provide opportunities to people who weren’t lucky enough to enter college. However, the big problem is that, the country is obviously not yet ready for K-12 implementation. Why? Even with BEC curriculum wherein there are no additional years to augment, still many schools lack sufficient professional and effective teachers, classrooms and books, what more with K-12 that is obviously in need of more trained educators, classrooms, and reference books. Actually, some references of K-12 Curriculum for grade 1, 2, 3, and 4 in elementary schools all over the archipelago are not yet distributed due to lack of supply and budget. K-12 is good, but what we need now, is to get ready for it first.

K-12 also demands for mother tongue based approach. In view of this, Mother tongue approach could help a child follow the lessons well and understand it having his first language as the medium of instruction. Nevertheless, mother tongue is a total burden for teachers for there are some concepts that is impossible to translate to the dialect the child knows, especially Science and Math concepts. It will also be difficult for a teacher to explain everything in mother tongue based even in best of his capacity in a way the child could best understand.
Mother tongue should be insisted to those subjects that are suitable for its usage, just spare Math and Science.

Still, the new curriculum had its benefits; around the globe, most nations have their 12 years of basic education. Employment abroad also requires the 12 years of basic education in order for them to have the job. It is an edge that could go a long way for an opportunity that only K-12 could manage to give. Also, because of the need for quality and more effective teaching for the K-12 curriculum, teachers are trained and seminars are given time by time, this is a one of a kind opportunity for professional growth. This kind of deal actually hits two birds with just one stone, free professional growth opportunity for teachers and efficient teachers for students. Another thing, some families weren’t able to send their children to college, one reason why K-12 actually materializes. In K-12, senior high school level students are trained with skills that will enable them to find jobs after they graduate. They are still free to get to college and end up a 4 year course, but they are also entitled with certificates making them more competent and job ready if ever fate permits.