PROMOTION OF GENDER INCLUSIVITY IN SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

by:
Jeanette V. Jorge
Teacher III Balsik Elementary School

Philippines remains at the top in gender equality over all Asian countries. The Philippines declined 8 notches in world ranking of gender equality from 8th place to 10th place all based at the latest Global Gender Gap Index. There are 144 countries ranked with these factors being considered: educational attainment, health and survival, economic opportunity and political empowerment. This Global Gender Gap Index only applies to the sex’s female and male.

Over these past few decades, there are only two categories of sexes that are considered as a gender for it was once believed that gender and sex have the same depth of meaning. On one hand, sex is derived with one’s physiological features (genitals), and there are three sexes namely; male, female, and hermaphrodite. On the other hand, gender is a perception of an individual of his or her own being. People identified its categories as the gender spectrum which includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning, intersex, pansexual, agender, and asexual and these are according to a gender-based Filipino movie “Ang Dalawang Mrs. Reyes”.

Certainly, the youth is highly affected of these biased treatments. Some studies suggest that students are at their most vulnerable state when they are being harassed and bullied for being a transgender or gender-expansive. These result to non-binary students more prone to negative mental health outcomes and lesser school productivity. The treatment of the world to Gender Spectrum members are way different to their treatment to people who identify as their assigned gender. These members and some non-members of the Gender Spectrum are fighting for gender inclusive environments like schools and
universities. Gender inclusivity is accepting all genders without the exclusivity of its privileges to certain groups of people. School psychologists appeal to create a school climate for non-binary students that would foster an appropriate environment and would alter these negative effects. Psychologists aim for diversity acceptance and security.

Moreover, creating gender inclusive environment in schools and universities would be preferable. Students, faculty and staff would not be confined to the usual conservative environment meant only for men and women. They would be able to express themselves freely without the confinement of societal expectations and stereotypes assigned only to the sexes. Being able to breathe away the burden that the members of the gender spectrum carry is like letting the whole country that they belong to breathe a sigh of relief too. Everyone, as long as they are citizen of the country and/or living in the state, should be prioritized regardless of gender biases for they are one of the building blocks of our society which we are trying to protect and improve.

Creating a gender inclusive environment in schools and universities may also depend on the school that we are trying to implement it to. There are schools that are very conservative in nature like private schools or private catholic schools. They have rules that were already implemented far from their existence. Gender inclusivity here may be stretched or bent in order to implement it with consideration to the schools’ grounds. There should be restrictions in order for the schools and the gender spectrum members harmonize. These restrictions may vary to the strictness of the school or how they give importance to their values. For instance, one may be welcoming to all genders but there is such a rule that they are not allowed to cross-dress but are allowed to express themselves in a different manner.

Indeed, gender inclusivity holds a lot of benefits. This current generation that we are living on is more welcoming of new concepts and ideas. Introducing the idea of a gender-neutral environment to schools would not be that much of a problem. It would also help our country prove its place to the Global Gender Gap Index not limited only to
both men and women but to all of the genders in the gender spectrum. It would showcase how diversified the Philippines is in terms of gender acceptance and there would be a reflection of how we execute our perception of gender equality.

References:

https://www.genderspectrum.org/blog/the-importance-of-gender-inclusive-schools/
https://www.genderspectrum.org/blog/what-we-mean-by-gender-inclusive/