QUALITY EDUCATION AMIDST PANDEMIC

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Quality education enables people to develop all of their attributes and skills to realize their potential as a citizen and members of society. Achieving quality education for all reaffirms the assumption that education is one of the foremost powerful and proven vehicles for sustainable development.

Educators, learners, and their parents around the world are feeling the peculiar ripple effect of the novel coronavirus as schools are shutting down while quarantine methods are imposing to cope with the global pandemic. Though government and health officials do their best in slowing down the outbreak of the virus, education systems are collaborating to collectively respond and ensure the quality of education for all during these difficult times.

To secure the quality of education in the country during the pandemic, the Department of Education adopted four teaching-learning modalities such as face to face learning, blended learning, distance learning and, homeschooling. The first two modalities, face-to-face, and blended learning will adopt in areas of the country where there is no Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) and General Community Quarantine (GCQ). However, the last two modalities, distance learning and, homeschooling will apply in all areas under ECQ or GCQ.

Face-to-face modality, when adopted, is still subject to physical distancing & minimum health standards. Moreover, a minimum class size of fifteen to twenty students per classroom will also observe. A blended learning modality is a combination of face-to-face and online distance learning, modular distance learning, and TV/radio-based instruction.
A distance learning modality that will observe in areas under ECQ or GCQ will make use of either Modular distance Learning, Online Distance Learning, or TV/Radio-based Instruction. Modular distance learning is consisting of using printed materials crafted by some teachers and, authors will be delivered to the household by the teachers or through the Local Government Officials. Online Distance Learning may make use of the modalities provided by the Department like DepEd Commons - an online platform developed by education partners for students and teachers. The use of local TV/Radio stations can also be an alternative in coordination with the Presidential Communication Operations Office. The fourth modality is Homeschooling. This modality was facilitated by a qualified parent or guardian who has undergone relevant training and subject to regulation.

The mission of education systems is still the same. It is to overcome the educational crisis we were living and respond to the pandemic we are all facing. Our challenge today is to reduce the possible negative impact this pandemic will have on teaching and learning and build on this experience to get back on a path of faster improvement in learning. As education systems deal with this crisis, they need to think of how they will recover stronger with a renewed sense of responsibility and with a better understanding and a sense of urgency of the necessity to shut the gap in opportunities. Also, they must ensure that every child has an equal opportunity for high-quality education.

Indeed, it is a challenging task for the Department of Education to organize the schools in a different set-up but they are committed to their duty to form education accessible to all, even within the most challenging time.
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