RAINBOWS OVER THE CLASSROOM: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION’S EFFORT FOR A GENDER-SAFE SCHOOLS

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“Bakla!, Bakla”

“Hoy ano Pangalan mo sa gabi?”

“Ganda mo pero bakit tomboy ka”

These are some of the insulting words that we can hear when a member of the LGBTQ+ community walks by. In a conservative country like the Philippines, it can be said that being a homosexual is tolerated but not totally accepted. This can be seen by awful remarks of some people when a gay or lesbian couple passed by and the presence of counter rally during Pride March.

According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), approximately 246 million children experience school-related violence, this includes School-related gender-based violence or SRGBV (UNESCO, n.d.). Although the Philippines ranks 7th in terms of Gender Equality according to the 2016 World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Gender Gap Index (UNFPA Philippines, n.d.), School-Related Gender-Based Violence still exists.

Human Rights Watch conducted a study about discrimination against LGBT Students in the Philippines and according to the result of their interview to secondary students, Discrimination and SRGBV are still prevalent in schools (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

Discrimination can lead to bullying and different kind of abuse which are detrimental to the wellbeing of a student. It can result to depression, poor health condition, and prevent the student to continue studying which can compromise his/her future and limit her opportunities.
In line with the Department of Education’s mission to provide child-friendly, gender-sensitive and safe and motivating environment for our learners, DepED issued DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017 or Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy. This order aims to integrate the principles of gender equality, gender equity, gender sensitivity, non-discrimination and human rights in the basic education. Through this Order, the Department commits to: Make its strategic framework gender-responsive, Mainstream gender in all Policies and Programs, Projects, and Activities (PPAs), Ensure gender parity in staffing and create an enabling work environment, and Strengthen gender and development institutional mechanisms. With proper implementation of this Order, and with the cooperation of all DepEd officials, school authorities, students, and other stakeholders, soon, our schools will be free from gender-based violence.

When the rainbows don’t need to hide from their closets, that’s also when the flowers in the school starts to bloom and colors of the classrooms begin to glow.

References: