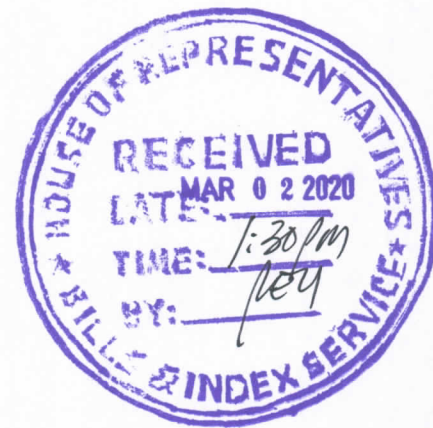


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6419



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE CONRADO M. ESTRELLA III**

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL
GARDENING PROGRAMS IN ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ELEMENTARY AND
SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Instructional gardens expand the landscape of learning for children and the youth by allowing them opportunities for hands-on learning outside of the classroom. Aside from hands-on learning on how to grow plants and the process of growth of plants in an outdoor setting, they also provide a variety of corresponding lessons like composting, weather gauging, plotting and graphing, food varieties, food preservation and nutrition that span the whole curriculum. In sum, instructional or learning gardens enhance academic instruction and enables learners to acquire a more holistic education.

Researches have also shown that instructional gardening programs with young learners help improve dietary quality and nutritional status and prevent obesity. Improving learners' awareness and ability to identify specific fruits and vegetables, as well as how they grow, increases their willingness to try and consume these foods more often. Repeated positive experiences with fruits and vegetables, increasing their accessibility and availability, and gaining knowledge about where these foods come from through instructional gardening experiences increase preferences for and intake of fruits and vegetables, and consequently, lead to improving the weight and nutritional status of children as well as their level of physical activity. (Davis, K. and Bran, L. *Examining the Benefits and Barriers of Instructional Gardening Programs to Increase Fruit and Vegetable Intake Among Pre-school age Children*. Journal of Environmental and Public Health, Vol. 2017(May, 2017).

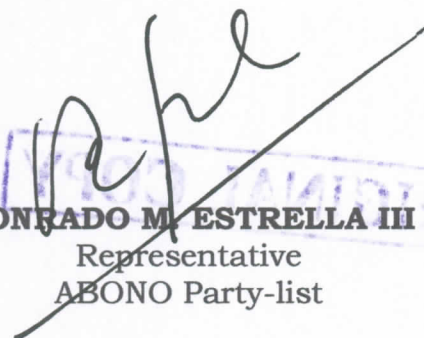
In the Philippines, the thrust towards quality education underscores the need for expanding the learning landscape to include learning experiences

outside the classroom. Instructional gardens meet the need for out-of-classroom hands on learning that help make education more holistic, thereby enhancing its quality.

Moreover, the obesity prevalence among the young has been increasing from 1.9% to 3% (among those with ages from 1 to 4), 2.9% to 5.1% (among those with ages 5 to 9), from 3.6% to 7.1% (among those with ages 10 to 14), and from 3.4 % to 6.4 % (among those with ages 15 to 19) for the period 1990 to 2013. Obesity renders young people to the risks of diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure, cardio vascular diseases, among others. Instructional gardens can help prevent obesity by providing young learners with opportunities to better appreciate the value of consuming more nutritious food especially when done hand in hand with classroom instruction that underscore the importance of improved nutrition for improved health.

The success of the "*Gulayan sa Paaralan*" program which has been implemented since 2007 to supplement feeding programs intended to alleviate malnutrition and hunger in selected localities encourage confidence that institutionalizing instructional gardening programs in all public and private elementary and secondary schools is a huge step in the right direction not only to achieve quality education, but as importantly, to advance hunger mitigation, improve nutrition and dietary quality and promote good health among young people in our country.

Under the premises, the immediate passage of this bill is strongly recommended.


CONRADO M. ESTRELLA III
Representative
ABONO Party-list

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Be it enacted by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

Section 1. – Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Instructional Gardens Act of 2020”.

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. – The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education. It shall also protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

Toward the attainment of these goals, all public and private educational institutions shall include nutrition and health consciousness in their elementary and high school curriculum. They shall also include opportunities for out-of-classroom hands on learning by establishing instructional gardens for the growing of vegetables and other plants of nutritional value, and shall reserve and devote a reasonable portion of their school lots for the purpose.

Section 3. Definition. – The term “Instructional Garden” refers to a plot of land or an area within a school’s premises devoted to the growing of vegetables and other plants of nutritional value and intended to promote interactive, hands on learning for skills and knowledge on planting, composting, waste management techniques, fundamental nutrition concepts, health consciousness, and such other related skills and knowledge on food, health and nutrition as well as agriculture and its significance to the national economy.

Section 4. Instructional Gardens Program. -The Instructional Gardens Program (IGP) shall be implemented in all public and private elementary and secondary schools in the country. They shall reserve and devote a portion of their school lots or a specific area in their school grounds for the planting of vegetables and other plants of nutritive value as identified by the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Education (DepEd) and other concerned agencies.

Schools lacking or without any available lot or land area, or located in urban areas, shall apply and use hydroponic gardening and other organic or sustainable gardening technologies with the assistance of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the Department of Agriculture (DA), and other relevant government agencies.

The Instructional Gardens Program shall include a continuing system of involving parents and the community at large in instructional gardening activities as well as in promoting awareness of the nutrition, health and the economic benefits of establishing school, household and community gardens.

Section 5. Identification of Instructional Garden Site. – No private or public elementary or secondary school shall be established without first securing a certification from the Division Superintendent attesting that a plot of land or area in the school premises has been designated as instructional garden site or has been reserved as the site for an instructional garden using hydroponic gardening methods or other organic and sustainable gardening technologies. This provision shall also apply to schools seeking the issuance of permits for their academic programs.

Section 6. Nutrition and Health Consciousness. - It shall be mandatory for all public and private elementary and secondary schools to include nutrition and health consciousness in their curriculum as well as the significance of agriculture to national food sufficiency and the development of the national economy.

Section 7. Tax Incentives. - All donations or contributions, grants, endowments, and technical assistance and services provided by private individuals, groups or corporations to schools and other educational institutions for the purpose of supporting the Instructional Gardening Program as certified

by the DepEd or duly authorized officials thereof, shall be exempt from taxes and duties.

Section 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The DepEd and the DA, in consultation with other relevant agencies and groups shall issue the implementing rules and regulations within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act.

Section 9. Appropriations. – The amount needed for the initial implementation of this Act shall be taken from the current year's appropriation of the DepEd. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

Section 10. Repealing Clause. – Any law, decree, executive order, instruction, rule or regulation inconsistent or contrary to the provisions of this Act shall be deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 11. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect within fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,