

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 3843



Introduced by Rep. Eulogio "Amang" R. Magsaysay

EXPLANATORY NOTE

School gardens, as a principle and tool of learning, is considered to be an important long-term contributor to national health and food security. This has caused many countries world-wide to implement and adapt this educational focus among schools.

According to UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), school gardens can help provide healthy school meals and generate income for school funds. But they are primarily a platform for learning - learning how to grow food for a healthy diet, improve the soil, protect the environment, market food for profit, enjoy garden food and, not least, influence others.

School gardens program however has not been institutionalized in our country. At their own initiatives, a number of schools have come up a school garden set up especially those situated in rural or sub-urban areas. There are efforts though to have it implemented in our public elementary and high schools like the *Gulayan sa Paaralan Project* of the Department of Education. This vegetable garden project is aimed to address malnutrition which affects one in every three public school children and to promote self-help food production activities and values appreciation of agriculture. At present, there are around 6,000 public elementary and high schools presently involved in this project. DepEd Secretary Luistro noted that it is a huge figure but may not be significant as it represents only 15% of all public schools in the country.

This bill seeks to establish a School Gardens Program within the Department of Education (DepEd) to promote and institutionalize its implementation in our public basic education schools. Once enacted, this measure will lay down policy directions relating to schools gardens as a principle of learning and an instrument of nation-building.

Approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Em", located above the printed name of the representative.

EULOGIO "AMANG" R. MAGSAYSAY

House of Representatives

House Bill No. **3843**

Introduced by Rep. Eulogio "Amang" R. Magsaysay

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A SCHOOL GARDENS PROGRAM

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

SECTION 1. Establishment – A School Gardens Program (SGP) is hereby established within the Department of Education.

SECTION 2. Formation of the SGP Executive Committee – To undertake the formulation of the program and its implementation, the SGP Executive Committee shall be formed among the respective Secretaries or duly designated representatives of the Department of Education (DepEd), the the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the National Nutrition Council (NNC), and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). Additional members of the committee representing other concerned groups and sectors particularly community organizations, non-government organizations and business groups.

SECTION 3. Objectives - The School Gardens Program shall -

- (1) Coordinate the efforts of public schools, the Department of Education, the Department of Agriculture and other concerned government agencies, and community organizations to establish gardens as integral components of public schools;
- (2) Establish and convene a Garden Advisory Committee at the local levels, composed of community organizations and other interested persons;
- (3) Collect data on the location and types of gardens in public schools;
- (4) Provide agricultural guidance and technical assistance to public schools;
- (5) Coordinate curricula for school gardens and related projects;
- (6) Provide training, support, and assistance for gardens established in public schools.

SECTION 4. Specific Provisions – In the implementation of the Schools Gardens Program, the following shall be specifically provided:

- 1.) Best practices among currently implemented school garden projects shall be identified and recognized as role models in the implementation of School Garden Programs;
- 2.) The University of the Philippines and other identified state universities and colleges shall assist the School Gardens Program by providing technical expertise, curricula, and soil testing for school gardens;

- 3.) As permitted by law, when tests show that the soil is safe and when produce is handled safely, produce grown in school gardens may be identified and served to students at the school, including school canteen. Produce grown in school gardens may be sold and the proceeds from such sales shall be expended for the benefit of the public school where the produce was grown;
- 4.) School gardens shall include a demonstration compost pile when feasible;
- 5.) Inputs from parents, teachers, school administrators, school boards, business and industry leaders, and local governments shall be encouraged;
- 6.) An alternative mode shall be designed for the implementation of school garden projects in schools situated in urban areas;
- 7.) Business and other organizations that may provide support in the form of resources or funding the program shall be identified.

SECTION 5. *Initial Assessment.* - Two (2) years after the effectivity of this Act, a comprehensive assessment shall be made about the current state of school gardens, plans for expanding them, and recommendations for improving the program.

SECTION 6. *Implementing Guidelines.* - The implementing guidelines to realize the provisions of this Act shall be formulated by the SGP Executive Committee thirty (30) days after its effectivity.

SECTION 7. *Effectivity Clause.* This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,