

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 1426



Introduced by **ABONO Party-list Representative**
HON. ROBERT RAYMUND M. ESTRELLA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Instructional gardens expand the landscape of learning children and youth by allowing them opportunities for hands-on learning outside of the classroom. Aside from hands-on learning on how to grow plants and its process 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 an entire curriculum. In sum, instructional or learning gardens enhance academic instruction and enable 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 to 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 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. & 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).

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, according to the FNRI there was a relatively low prevalence of overweight at 2.9 percent among Filipino children under five years old and a medium prevalence of 9.1 percent and 9.8 percent among children aged five to 10 years old and 10 to 19 years old, respectively. They add that among Filipino adolescents, overweight has tripled in the last 15 years, with a higher rate of overweight children in urban areas in the country. Through instructional gardens, young learners are provided with the opportunity to better appreciate the value of consuming food that is more nutritious, especially when done hand-in-hand classroom instruction that underscore the importance of improved nutrition.

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 schools is a huge step in the right direction not only to achieve quality education, but more importantly, to advance hunger mitigation, improve nutrition and dietary quality, and promote good health among young people in our country.

As such, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



Rep. Robert Raymund M. Estrella
ABONO Party-list

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

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

1 **SECTION 1. Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “*Instructional Gardens Act.*”
2

3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens
4 to quality education. It shall also protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill
5 health consciousness among them.
6

7 Toward the attainment of these goals, all public and private educational institutions shall
8 include nutrition and health consciousness in their elementary and high school curriculum. They
9 shall also include opportunities for out-of-classroom hands-on learning by establishing
10 instructional gardens for the growing of vegetables and other plants of nutritional value, and shall
11 reserve and devote a reasonable portion of their school lots for the purpose.
12

13 **SEC. 3. Definition.** – The term “Instructional Garden” refers to a plot of land or an area
14 within the school’s premises devoted to the growing of vegetables and other plants of nutritional
15 value and intended to promote interactive, hands-on learning for skills and knowledge on planting,
16 composting, waste management techniques, fundamental nutrition concepts, health consciousness,
17 and such other related skills and knowledge on food, health and nutrition, as well as agriculture
18 and its significance to the national economy.
19

20 **SEC. 4. Instructional Gardens Program.** – The Instructional Gardens Program (IGP) shall
21 be implemented in all public and private elementary and secondary schools in the country. They
22 shall reserve and devote a portion of their school lots or a specific area in their school grounds for
23 the planting of vegetables and other plants of nutritive value as identified by the Department of
24 Agriculture (DA), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Education (DepEd) and other
25 concerned agencies.
26

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

5
6 The Instructional Gardens Program shall include a continuing system of involving parents
7 and the community at large in instructional gardening activities as well as in promoting awareness
8 of the nutrition, health, and economic benefits of establishing school, household, and community
9 gardens.

10
11 **SEC. 5. *Identification of Instructional Garden Site.*** – No private or public elementary or
12 secondary school shall be established without first securing a certification from the Division
13 Superintendent attesting that a plot of land or area in the school premises has been designated as
14 instructional garden site or has been reserved as the site for an instructional garden using
15 hydroponic gardening methods or other organic and sustainable gardening technologies. This
16 provision shall also apply to schools seeking the issuance of permits for their academic programs.

17
18 **SEC. 6. *Nutrition and Health Consciousness.*** – It shall be mandatory for all public and
19 private elementary and secondary schools to include nutrition and health consciousness in their
20 curriculum as well as the significance of agriculture to national food sufficiency and the
21 development of the national economy.

22
23 **SEC. 7. *Tax Incentives.*** – All donations or contributions, grants, endowments, and
24 technical assistance and services provided by private individuals, groups or corporations to
25 schools and other educational institutions for the purpose of supporting the Instructional Gardening
26 Program (IGP) as certified by DepEd or duly authorized officials thereof, shall be exempt from
27 taxes and duties.

28
29 **SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – The DepEd and the DA, in consultation
30 with other relevant agencies and groups shall issue the implementing rules and regulations within
31 sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act.

32
33 **SEC. 9. *Appropriations.*** – The amount needed for the initial implementation of this Act
34 shall be taken from the current year's appropriation of the DepEd. Thereafter, such sums as may
35 be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

36
37 **SEC. 4. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, executive orders or parts thereof
inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

38
39 **SEC. 5. *Separability Clause.*** – If any part or provision of this Act is declared invalid or
unconstitutional, the other parts not otherwise affected shall remain in full effect and force.

40
41 **SEC. 6. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect within fifteen (15) days following its
publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,