Making agri-related field work fun and engaging

The thought of rice farming usually equates to mud, getting dirty, and staying long under the scorching heat of the sun. These are things that (beauty-conscious) students don't usually like. Hence, it proves a challenge to the agenda relating to engaging young people in agriculture. For Kto12 teachers offering agri-related tracks, this will surely be a major challenge that must be addressed.

In this KSL Tips, we share some of the strategies that might work in doing agri-related field work with and for high school students. These are drawn from our close to half a decade work in the Infomediary Campaign, an initiative to engage young people in agriculture in partnership with the Department of Education. The Campaign is being implemented in more than 200 high schools nationwide.

Done in groups

Creativity surfaces when young people are in groups. They enjoy and learn at the same time. Likewise, students who are not quite sure of what they are doing are able to compare their outputs with their classmates.

Have a good mix of boys and girls

Agriculture must be promoted as not just a male's enterprise. We've seen that girls can do equally well on field. In fact, it should never be a question of who does it better, as the framework should be how can young people be engaged in agriculture regardless of their gender.

Fix the schedule

Doing field work early in the morning or late in the afternoon is preferred over doing it when the sun is already high up. The idea is that these times are tolerable for fieldwork. This is understandable as even farmers take a break from fieldwork from around 9am onwards.

PPEs, please!

For safety reasons, the students and teachers alike must ensure that they are wearing their personal protective equipment (PPE). This is important to ensure that they are safe from any harm while on field. A good example is on machine operations. The tryouts, while necessary, can be dangerous. Hence, the strictest level of compliance must be observed!

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Edutainment methods

The teachers must be very creative in devising activities that would ensure that the students learn and enjoy at the same time. Traditional modes of offering agriculture-related subjects might not work with young people who prefer to keep themselves occupied with quite a lot of things all at the same time. For instance, combining practicals with games was found effective in several Campaign sites.

Study tour

This should be seriously considered by teachers as there is a mindset issue that must first be addressed before young people can embrace agriculture. For the longest time, agriculture in the Philippines has been equated to drudgery, indebtedness, or poverty in general. The task is to show that there is money in agriculture. A visit to a farm that showcases diversified farming system, an agri-entrepreneur will surely help bridge the mindset issue.

Knowledge Sharing and Learning Tips (KSL Tips) is an initiative of PhilRice's Devcom Division. It aims to facilitate learning, trigger innovations, and inform decision making. In particular, KSL Tips provides useful and practical pieces of advice and ideas to successfully access, exchange, and promote information and knowledge based on the division's years of experience in doing development communication work and research.

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