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DepEd, GK build homes for teachers

The Department of Education (DepEd) partners with Gawad Kalinga (GK), Pag-ibig Fund and Local Government Units (LGU) in laying the groundwork for an affordable housing program for public school teachers.

Pioneering local government unit partners in the program are Mayors Sony Coscolluella of Murcia and Jose Lacson of San Carlos City in Negros Occidental who have provided sites for this project which will enable public school teachers and DepEd employees to acquire houses of their own.

Mayors Recom Echiverri of Caloocan City and Celso Lobregat of Zamboanga City have also committed to support the project. Iriga City is another site for the pilot implementation of the project.

Aside from public school teachers, rank and file personnel of the Department of Education are also expected to benefit from this project.

“It is an irony that teachers who perform a noble role in our society are still included among those who do not own their own homes,” Education Secretary Jesli A. Lapus said.

In 1999, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Center for Innovation in Technology and Education (SEAMEO-INNOTECH) came out with a survey showing 22% of the more than 400,000 teachers at that time do not have their own house. This translates to more than 90,000 teachers who either rent a place or stay with relatives.

Under the partnership, LGUs will apply for a loan from Pag-ibig Fund’s Special Loan Facility and use its internal revenue allotment (IRA) as collateral. The LGUs will also identify and commit at least 5 hectares of land for the community site. Construction in Murcia and San Carlos City is set to start early next year. For its part, Pag-ibig Fund, through its executive director, Mr. Luis Oquinena, allotted P20 million for each of these sites.

One hectare of the 5 hectare land will serve as academic, recreation and productivity areas. Under GKs SIBOL or “to grow” program, it will build a pre-school to be run by DepEd to cater to the children of the beneficiaries. Partner organizations will build a multipurpose hall and playgrounds or basketball courts for the sports and creative component of SIBOL.

To be built on a 150 square meter lot, a typical house will have 46 sqm floor area with high ceiling and a 26 sq m loft. House to be turned over will have finished walls, and tiled kitchen and toilet. Roads and drainage will be part of the construction with the support of the LGU who will also maintain them.

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Future home owners are expected to take active roles in the construction of their houses as well as that of their neighbors. Designs for the houses will be provided by DepEd. A monthly amortization of only P1,300.00 per month for 25 years will be paid by the recipients of the houses through the Automated Salary Deduction System of DepEd.

“Our teachers are assured of the most affordable cost and payment terms under the program,” Secretary Lapus said.

Priority will be given to married personnel occupying permanent DepEd items, had rendered at least 10 years of service, and not more than 50 years old. Employees who are already owners or co-owners of residential units or have previously availed of housing loans from GSIS or Pag-ibig as principal or co-borrower are not qualified to benefit from the project.

Qualified recipient are required to be committed members of the GK Kapitbahayan where they will be asked to invest “sweat equity” under the TATAG community development program.

Considering the big number of homes required for qualified DepEd personnel, the department has also tapped Habitat for Humanity which is also famous for its similar housing technology, viable partnership formulas and affordable schemes.

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