

## ***Is Government Spending on Education Working?***

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Every year, the government announces billions of pesos allocated for education, a promise repeated in every State of the Nation Address. But for students and teachers in public schools, these figures often feel distant and disconnected from the challenges they face every day. The gap between the money spent and the actual learning experience in classrooms is a unseen reality that cannot be hidden by impressive statistics.

In many public schools across the Philippines, children are squeezed into overcrowded rooms, their voices drowned out by the noise of too many students crammed into one space. According to Betty & Aya (2035), the heat in classrooms without enough electric fans, or the rain leaking through rusted roofs, makes it difficult for them to focus, much less to dream. Teachers do their best to create an environment of hope, but when supplies run short and salaries don't match their hard work, even the most dedicated educators feel worn down. This is the daily struggle that cannot be erased by numbers in a budget report.

Yet behind every crumbling wall and missing textbook is a student with a name, a family, and a dream. In a study by Galut (2025), learners in rural schools shared how they walk kilometers daily just to reach school, often on an empty stomach, clinging to the hope that education will one day lift them out of poverty. These stories, often untold, reveal how children absorb more than just lessons—they carry the weight of a broken system that demands resilience beyond their years. As Madeleine (2008) pointed out, teachers in these communities are not only educators but also deeply respected leaders, especially in rural settings where professionals are few and far between.

Meanwhile, Gui et al. (2020) notes that teachers are not just professionals—they are surrogate parents, counselors, and community leaders all at once. The unseen reality is that many educators spend their own money for classroom supplies, snacks for hungry students, or to print learning modules when school budgets fall

short. These silent sacrifices rarely make headlines but are the lifeblood of the public school system. Their emotional and financial labor is what holds classrooms together, long after the funding has failed them.

Money alone cannot fix these problems if it doesn't reach the people who need it most. Too often, funds are tied up in bureaucracy, wasted on projects that never get finished, or spent on equipment that gathers dust because no one was trained to use it. Classrooms remain broken and libraries stay empty while reports boast of "increased funding." This leaves teachers and students feeling unseen, frustrated, and convinced that no one is really listening to what schools need most.

If the Philippines truly wants its education system to serve every Filipino child, there must be more than just budget announcements and empty promises. As supported by Rahman (2023), the government and local leaders must confront the waste, demand accountability, and ensure that funds reach the classrooms where they belong. Every peso misspent is a future stolen from a child who deserves better. This is a wake-up call, education spending must be more than a political talking point, it must become a concrete reality because the future of the nation depends on it.

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