

Reforms for Educational Inclusion in the Philippines

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18678079

Isaias S Sealza, PhD.

Vice President for Academic Affairs, Valencia Colleges (Bukidnon), Inc.

Lita P Sealza, PhD.

Research Director, Valencia Colleges (Bukidnon), Inc.

Atty. Grace Isanor G Larona, DPA

Executive Secretary to the President, Valencia Colleges (Bukidnon), Inc.

Abstract

The world is falling behind on its education targets, according to reports, and the Philippines is trailing on the 2030 basic education goals, including inclusive education. This paper examines Philippine policy reforms and measures aimed at achieving educational inclusion objectives. What are these reforms, and have they cascaded down to the classroom level? This paper examines whether policy reforms address the aims of educational inclusion, and whether learners with special education needs (LSENs) and indigenous peoples are not left out in the actual implementation. Social reproduction theorists would expect skewed implementation in a democratic environment, such that reforms are unlikely to reach the lower rungs of the public school system. Data were from office records, service statistics, and published sources, and from key informant interviews with special education teachers at a public secondary school and government officials. Data were analyzed on the theme of inclusive education. Efforts for educational inclusion appeared funnel-shaped: wide-ranging national legal pronouncements narrowed at the department level of governance, narrowed further at the curriculum level, and even more at the implementation level. Efforts were constrained due to the education department's funding challenges. The curriculum was not systematized. A few types of LSENs were covered. Ground-level provisions for indigenous peoples were unknown. Reforms cascading down to the classroom were limited, lending credence to the social reproduction theory. Some recommendations may be advanced: increase funding for education; treat indigenous peoples as a special sector due to their cultural idiosyncrasies; systematize the LSEN curriculum; and expand services to cover all disabilities.

Key Words: Educational Reforms, Education for All, Learners with Special Educational Needs

Introduction

Children's education needs attention. The Global Education Monitoring (GEM) reported that “with the current trend, the world is 50 years late in meeting its education targets”, and that

“The Philippines is one of the 148 countries, out of 157, which are lagging behind in the basic education goals for 2030... set by world leaders spearheaded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization” (Philippine Information Agency, 2016:1; cf. UNESCO, 2019; 2022).

This concern cuts across all learner categories. Against this backdrop, the case of children with disabilities should be a point of interest. That is, with the gigantic task of meeting global education targets, children with disabilities could easily be left out of the Education for All (EFA) scheme. This is what Goal Number 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, “*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*”, must have been trying to avoid. Inclusive education means education for all, and this is achieved when all children join and study together, without discrimination, in the same classes. This implies that children of similar age groups, despite differences in status categories, ethnic groups, ability status, and other socio-demographic characteristics, are in the same classroom, learning from materials common to all.

In line with Goal 4 of the SDGs, the government has taken decisive steps to reform Philippine education across legislation, planning, and actual implementation. The research problem being addressed by this paper is: “Have educational reforms in the Philippines cascaded down to the level of the classroom?” Its objectives are to determine whether: 1) the policy reforms address the aims of educational inclusion; and 2) learners with special education needs (LSEs), and indigenous peoples are not left out in the actual implementation, such that accordingly it could be said that these reforms are able to reach all the levels of the public school system.

This study is significant in several ways. First, it brings to the fore issues that may arise with a democratic form of government when confronted with “social reproduction” (Kamanzi, 2019; Bourdieu, 2013). Second, it provides the legislative branch of government with information on how legislation has been translated into action. And third, it helps create public awareness of social inequality and inclusion issues in education.

Although per-student spending decreased from PhP22,979 in 2017 to PhP19,943 in 2021 (Angelo, 2024), the Philippine government manifested some serious efforts towards educational reforms. First, it increased the number of years for basic education from ten to twelve years; and second, it enacted laws and policies and developed strategies in pursuit of quality education. The newly promulgated MATATAG Curriculum looks to the future, in line with *Ambisyon Natin 2040*, to address the needs for 21st-century skills.

Basic education in the country used to have ten years of basic education under the Department of Education (DepEd). Republic Act No. 10533, or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, provided for the shift to a 12-year basic education curriculum (K to 12). The reason for this Act was to improve the quality of basic education (DepEd, 2015).

Previously, Grades 1 to 4 were designated as primary education (pre-school was optional); 5 to 6 as elementary; and 7 to 10 as secondary or high school. Under the K-to-12 program, preschool for five-year-old children is free, mandatory, and compulsory (RA 10157, Kindergarten Act). So, Kindergarten to Grade 3 is designated as primary education, 4 to 6 as elementary, 7 to 10 as Junior High School, and 11 to 12 as Senior High School.

The basic idea behind the K to 12 law is “to create a functional basic education system that will develop productive and responsible citizens equipped with the essential competencies, skills and values for both life-long learning and employment” (DepEd, 2015: 6).

Review of Literature and International Accords

In his Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln made democracy's rhetoric famous as government of the people, by the people, for the people (ter Haar, 2018). Democracy presupposes equality, in which every citizen is equal to any other in sharing political authority and in reaping benefits therefrom. For this reason, the principles enshrined in the constitution of truly democratic countries have always offered equal opportunity and benefit for all citizens irrespective of race, color, or creed. In one of his speeches, Pericles, the Athenian leader, was said to have declared the theory of democracy as one founded in a constitution “which favors the many instead of the few...” He went on to say,

“If we look to the laws, they afford equal justice to all in their private differences; if to social standing ...class considerations not being allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way... The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life.” (Dahl, 2020)

Embedded in the tenets of democracy, therefore, is the sacrosanct uprightness of equality. In practice, however, the reproduction of inequality in social life could get in the way of realizing democratic ideals. This paper draws on the theory of “social reproduction,” which posits that society reproduces social structures and systems that seek to maintain and perpetuate existing social relations of inequality. In the process, social reproduction of inequality resulting from the responsibilities assumed by both the state and the families creates a counterforce to the goals of equality and inclusion in a democracy (Kamanzi, 2019; Tzanakis, 2011; Social Reproduction, 2020; Bourdieu, 2013).

If “partial democratization” is evident in the data, such that a limited few of the planned educational reforms or affirmative action do not address the aims of educational inclusion, or such reforms have not cascaded down to the level of the public-school classroom, attribution may be made to the inertia posed by social reproduction. The study by Kamanzi (2019) found that inferior inputs (plans, activities, programs, etc.) in public schools indeed resulted in the social reproduction of inequality.

In the past, children with disabilities were consciously being segregated from what was considered normal children. Many parents supported the scheme in the belief that children with disabilities learn nothing alongside the general population of children their own age, that their disability would worsen as they could not keep pace with the others, that they would slow down the pace of other children, and that they would suffer bullying. (Li and Mao, 2022; Cf., Inclusive Education and Its Benefits, n.d., United Nations Toolkit, 2016).

But studies have identified the benefits of inclusive education. These benefits could include a sense of belonging to a group like anyone else, the opportunity to participate meaningfully in common endeavors, and the chance to learn useful skills with others, thereby helping a child with a disability develop a positive understanding of himself and others. This should be the vision of parents and family: that every member lives a life of full participation in society. Inclusive education, therefore, cultivates the making of a tolerant society. (Macionis, 2004).

This is not to argue that the severity of disability, and external factors that may affect a child's socialization, such as bullying, should not be considered. For example, those who need special education can start programs in a segregated learning environment with the objective of transitioning them into the regular classroom. For this, careful program planning and curriculum design are imperative. The program can resort to the use of educational technology for children with disabilities. The problem of bullying can be addressed through teaching, counselling, and legislation that would discourage it.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, framed and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, served as the basis of subsequent moves, including the rights of children (UN, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). This was further articulated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, which entered into force in 1976 (United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, 1976)

The Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policies and Practice in Special Education Needs, of which the Republic of the Philippines was a signatory, insisted that EFA must include all types of learners in a single environment (UNESCO, 2018).

Strategies for inclusive teaching to reach far-flung areas include multi-grade classes where two or more classes are held in one room under one teacher (Cf. Miller, B. A., 1991).

Methodology

This paper used the case study approach, an empirical, descriptive inquiry into a person, group, event, policy, institution, or system within a real-life context (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). Key informant interviews (KII) were conducted with seven public secondary teachers in a school offering special education and with four government officials. The following criteria served as the basis for key informant selection among secondary school teachers in Cagayan de Oro City: 1) regular employee of the school; 2) teaching LSENs, or special education subjects; 3) articulate; and 4) willing to sign the informed consent form and be interviewed more than once when necessary.

The teachers were asked in in-depth interviews about how inclusive education, particularly in relation to children with disabilities and children from ethnic minority groups, was being carried out. Prior to the interviews, ethical protocols were discussed with the informants to obtain their informed consent. For example, they were informed of the study's objectives, their right to refuse to answer questions they find offensive, and their right to terminate the interview at any time.

Office records and service statistics were examined for the curricula, class schedules, class sizes and compositions, facilities, plans, and so on. The legal provisions and enactments were gathered from published sources.

The flow of data analysis was as follows: first, legal provisions and policy pronouncements about educational equality and inclusion were compiled and examined. Second, interviews were conducted. Third, the provisions and policies were juxtaposed with what could be found in the school and with the interview data. Focus was given to LSEs and the ethnic minorities.

Findings

Legal bases have already been established in support of agreements such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ICESCR, 1986). Notably, of course, was the 1987 Philippine Constitution, particularly Section 13, Article II, and Section 13, Article XIII, Republic Act No. 7277 (RA 7277), otherwise known as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability (1992), and Presidential Decree No. 603 (PD 603), also known as the Child and Youth Welfare Code.

The constitutional right to free basic education among the population of school-age and young adults to “provide them with skills, knowledge, and values to become caring, self-reliant, productive, and patriotic citizens” was affirmed by RA No. 9155 or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001. In order to provide the necessary basic education, affirmative action to children with special needs, and utilize technology in expanding the reach of basic education, the Philippine EFA (Education For All)

2015 National Plan of Action that took off from the Basic Education

Reform Agenda (BESRA) was implemented. (DepEd, 2015: 7).

The plan outlined the strategies to attain the educational reform targets

(DepEd, 2015:45):

- 1) A 12-year basic education cycle as provided by RA 10533, which increased basic education by two years.
- 2) Preschool for all that offers a full year of preschool in public schools.
- 3) Madaris education that makes EFA available to Muslim Filipinos children.
- 4) Technical-Vocational education to link schooling to local industry.
- 5) A reader by Grade I that targets children’s ability to read upon completing Grade I.
- 6) Science and math proficiency, which provides infrastructure in schools to encourage students to go into science and technology fields for global competitiveness in industry and manufacturing.
- 7) Private schools as partners that tap private schools through the Educational Service Contracting Scheme to admit students who otherwise could not afford private education by expanding the Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education Program.
- 8) Medium of Instruction which allows trilingual teaching and learning: English to connect with the world, Filipino to connect with the country, and local dialect to connect with local heritage.
- 9) Quality textbooks that aim to eliminate poor quality textbooks.
and,
- 10) Build more schools with the local government units (LGUs) to realize EFA in areas where there are no private or public schools.

To reach more children, DepEd continues to implement Department Order No. 38 s. 1993 (DO 38 s. 1993) on the Multigrade Program, where there are two or more grade levels that attend one classroom under one teacher. This is especially designed for schools in far-flung and disadvantaged areas. A report that reviews the EFA program noted that “In the Philippines, multi-grade schools comprise around 33 percent of the total number of public elementary

schools that serve 8 percent of the elementary students.” (DepEd, 2015, p. 145). This addresses the problem of incomplete grade levels in isolated schools.

Inclusion covers children with special needs, such as the gifted students, and those with disabilities. This is recognized by a DepEd Department Order (DO No. 26 s. 1997). DO No. 24 s. 2012 provided financial support for elementary Special Education (SPED) centers; and DO No.

98 s. 2011 provided the finances for programs in secondary schools. DepEd (2015:11) reported that nationwide, only 15 percent of pupils with disabilities from SPED classes had been mainstreamed into regular classes, while 85 percent did not avail themselves of SPED services.

A subsector of society that needs special attention for inclusion in the EFA scheme is the Indigenous Peoples (IPs). Estimates for Mindanao show that they comprise about 15.0 percent (excluding the Islamized natives) of the total population (Reyes, Mina, & Asis, 2017:15) and about 8.6 percent of the total population of the country (Reyes, Mina, & Asis, 2017:15). Generally, they occupy the highlands and mountains. Hence, they are difficult to reach. But an increasing number are now in urban centers because of insurgency in remote areas.

The Philippine constitution provides for the protection and development

of IPs, pursuant to which the National Indigenous Peoples Educational Policy Framework through DO No. 62 s. 2011 was constructed. The framework aimed to make the education culture responsive. It sought to adopt the indigenous peoples’ learning system and to use culturally appropriate learning resources and environments. (RA 8371, IPRA Law, 1997)

Noteworthy also is the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, which protects children from all forms of abuse, cruelty, and exploitation. (RA 10627, 2013)

The discussion will now shift to learners with disabilities in secondary schools in Cagayan de Oro City, who are the focus of this paper.

Cagayan de Oro City

Cagayan de Oro City in the southern Philippines is a highly urbanized city with a household population of about 700,000, growing at about 2.12 percent per annum in 2024. The current city administration supports the education sector by building additional classrooms that allow even students with disabilities access to them. (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2015; 2024).

A government official said that DepEd provided the curriculum for children with special needs, especially those with disabilities. Alongside the curriculum, it provided for child assessment, procedures for admission, retention, and graduation, classrooms, teachers, and student support. She continued,

“The elementary schools (Grades 1 to 6) have been reported to have complete curricula for children with special needs. This means the elementary schools have programmed subjects for children by grade level and disability type. The high school (Grades 7 and 10, Junior High School; and Grades 11 and 12, Senior High School) level does not have a complete curriculum, not in a complete prospectus form that distributes courses over the grade levels and type of disability, but as general standards and guidelines.” (Female, 32 years old, KII).

A schoolteacher said, “We have yet to receive the curriculum. What we have are curricular objectives and guidelines. Nevertheless, we are using the guidelines for performance standards and learning competencies as we design our lessons for students with disabilities”. (Female, 28 years old, KII)

Office records had also been revealing. Looking closely at the curricular standards and guidelines, one finds five skill areas for Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSENs) covered: 1) Care Skills; 2) Career

Skills; 3) Life Skills; 4) Livelihood Skills; and 5) Pre-Vocational Skills. (DepEd 2015).

Care skills are a foundation of the transition curriculum. Care skills include health habits, good grooming, motor skills, self-help skills, and personal safety skills. Upon acquiring these skills, the LSEN can transition to one of the exit outcomes of the transition program, namely: Career, Life, Livelihood, and Pre-vocational skills.

Career Skills are meant to help LSENs transition from home to school, from school to community, from school to career, and from school to additional education and training. The learning standards are career awareness, career goals, career information, knowledge and skills to achieve career goals, and employment readiness.

Life skills focus on eight components: communication (ability to share messages, thoughts and feelings with others); health care (hygiene, freedom from hostility, etc.); home care (performance of daily routine activities); community skills (establish interaction and rapport with others); practical money skills (understand and use coins and bills); leisure and recreation (engage in spare-time activities); positive self-concept (identify own strengths and weaknesses and make independent decisions); and, mobility (move about safely, identify areas, recognize modes of transportation, etc.)

The office records also show that the pre-vocational skills are intended for those deemed capable of pursuing livelihoods and entrepreneurship. This is a prerequisite for the livelihood skills curriculum, intended for those deemed capable of transitioning into a curriculum that supports possible employment or entrepreneurship. The livelihood skills curriculum develops specific skills such as cookery, bread and pastry, housekeeping services, handicraft, and computer servicing, among others.

Admission, Retention, and Graduation

LSENs, of course, have different levels of needs. For this reason, the DepEd has a provision for child assessment. In Cagayan de Oro City, schools, in partnership with the city government, are commissioning a developmental pediatrician to conduct disability assessments and placement consultations with parents and the LSEN.

The Philippine Statistics Authority defined disability as

“... (A)ny restriction or lack of ability (resulting from an impairment) to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being. Impairments associated with disabilities may be physical, mental, or sensory motor impairment such as partial or total blindness, low vision, partial or total deafness, oral defect, having only one hand/no hands, one leg/no legs, mild or severe cerebral palsy, retarded, mentally ill, mental retardation and multiple impairment.” (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2010)

One is recognized to be with disability if that person has or is (Garcia,

2014): blind and visually impaired, deaf, orthopedically challenged, intellectual disability, learning disability, autism, multiple disabilities, serious emotional disorder, communication disorder, speech and language impairment, and/or deafblind.

The faculty who were taking charge of the LSENs program said that their school caters only to students who are deaf, with intellectual disability, or orthopedically challenged. They have no provision for other types of needs.

The deaf learners are accommodated from Grades 7 to 10. They are assigned to two levels in the multi-grade arrangement: Grades 7 and 8 under one teacher, and Grades 9 and 10 under another. The teachers are trained in special education (SPED) and are Licensure Examination for Teachers passers. One of them is deaf herself.

According to one SPED teacher, the LSENs in this category are well accepted by other students. (Female, 25 years old, KII)

“There are 25 SPED students in this school this school year. LSENs are protected by anti-bullying law. All students are being oriented at the beginning of the school year on how to deal with LSENs. What we do is provide each hearing-impaired student with a ‘buddy’, a non-LSEN volunteer who knows sign language. This volunteer would accompany the LSEN to the canteen or to the store.”

“So far, there was only one hearing-impaired student who was able to transition to senior high school, that is, to the Alternative Learning System (ALS) that offered cookery, handicraft making, and other skills.”

Another informant said, (Female, 29 years old, KII)

“LSENs with intellectual disability are placed in another section. Now, there are ten of them, the youngest is 16 years old, and the oldest is 23 years old. They are all at the preschool level. Since age is the basis for promotion, they should all finish Junior High School at age 25. Depending on the level of intellectual disability, some would get subjects for credit from the regular classroom. Otherwise, they take everything at SPED.”

LSENs who are orthopedically challenged are assisted by an ordinance requiring all buildings to have ramps and special toilet facilities. They are generally enrolled in full mainstream classes.

Issues and Problems

The issues identified by the study respondents include the refusal of some parents to accept that their children are LSEN, and the lack of time for some parents to arrange for their children to undergo an ability assessment. Also, some parents enroll their children without having their children undergo a learning ability assessment. These parents say they do not have the time to complete this registration process. The refusal of a parent to come to terms with the child's condition means the child must go directly into the mainstream curriculum without a transition. Both cases were reported to be disadvantageous to the child.

Problems also abound, including a lack of tailored curriculum for LSENs; a shortage of SPED teachers; a shortage of teachers who know sign language; and a lack of properly furnished classrooms.

The curriculum being used now is an outline of the program rather than a well-mapped-out arrangement of subjects by the hour and year level. The teachers had to make do with what they understood the learning contents should be. This inhibits the formulation of learning assessment tools.

The shortage of teachers trained in SPED is evident at both the Junior High School and Senior High School levels. At the lower level, there are more learners than the recommended number per classroom, and multi-grade classes become necessary. At the upper level, the system cannot accommodate the LSENs who are able to transition to Senior High School.

A teacher noted the lack of teachers who know sign language: “There are no teachers in Senior High School who know sign language to be able to accommodate the hearing-impaired students properly.” (Female, 26 years old, KII).

Similarly, there should be self-contained classrooms for specific disabilities, where the teacher-student interaction is facilitated by technology. In self-contained classrooms, teaching is enhanced (Saint Joseph University, 2018).

Not much has been said hitherto about the indigenous peoples. In fact, inclusive education policy should keep them in the loop. Madaris education that could have made EFA available for Muslim Filipinos was not at all pursued in Cagayan de Oro City; much less the case of other ethnic groups in the city or even the island of Mindanao. The indigenous peoples (IPs) of Mindanao constitute a specific sector. They have their language and way of life. Asked whether the school addressed the needs of this sector in matters of language and culture, a government official said no.

Summary and Discussion

In response to the UN's SDGs and other international accords, the Philippine government introduced educational reforms, including those for LSENs and children of indigenous peoples. In summary, the effort for educational inclusion appeared funnel-shaped, beginning with wide-reaching legal pronouncements, narrowing at the department level of governance, providing specific strategies, further narrowing down at the level of the curriculum, and narrowing even more at the level of implementation. The legal provisions seemed to have covered almost, if not all, the angles of educational inclusion: increased years of basic education, assistance to kindergarten pupils, provision for the needs and protection of LSENs and the children of IPs, and funding for EFA. Obviously, on the funding front, the efforts must have started to narrow down as DepEd began to struggle with financial constraints. The curriculum had not been completely systematized at the secondary school level. And only three categories of LSENs were reportedly served.

The reforms are particularly important for the public schools attended by children on the margins of society. One major reform was the K to 12 program, which increased the number of years of basic education from the usual 10 to 12. With Kindergarten required before entering Grade 1, the total years of schooling were 13.

In support of this reform, there were legal provisions and enactments. The Philippine constitution guaranteed free basic education for the school-age and young adult population to provide them with skills, knowledge, and values to become caring and self-reliant, a goal pursued by Republic Act No. 9155, or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001. The education sector's budget was correspondingly increased.

The necessary basic education and affirmative action for LSENs were provided by the Philippine EFA (Education for All) National Plan of Action, and, pursuant thereto, the DepEd crafted a series of department orders. These department orders provided financial support to special education programs in both elementary and secondary schools. To protect LSENs, an Anti-Bullying Act was promulgated.

In Cagayan de Oro City public secondary schools, LSENs were admitted after medical assessments. They were provided with a curricular framework upon which to base learning lessons and experiences. The objective was to equip LSENs with various skills to transition into the regular classroom in the K to 12 structures. However, they can provide only for three special needs: hearing impairment, intellectual disability, and orthopedic deficiency.

The learners were provided with classrooms and SPED teachers in a multi-grade scheme. Grades 7 and 8 are in one classroom under one teacher, and Grades 9 and 10 are in a separate classroom with another teacher. If the challenge is only orthopedic, the learners proceed directly to the regular curriculum. And so, with that whose intellectual disability or hearing impairment is manageable. Otherwise, they go through the LSENs transition curriculum.

While the program for the LSENs in the secondary schools in Cagayan de Oro City is underway, a specific program of study needs to be crafted. This will facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of learning competencies and the school policies for graduation and transition into the regular classroom.

The education budget has decreased and is insufficient. There is a need for more SPED teachers and classrooms. Similarly, technology could have helped expand the capacity to deliver basic education to LSENs. But that, too, is lacking. For example, a classroom for hard-of-hearing students should include at least the following systems: a system for projecting sound from an instructor's microphone, C-Print, a speech-to-text computer system, a speech synthesizer that converts typed words into speech, and personal amplification systems.

In general, the educational reforms have been adequate at the policy level. But at the implementation level, it still leaves much to be desired. For example, only three types of disability needs were addressed in Cagayan de Oro. There could be at least six or seven more.

Noticeable for its absence are the educational programs that target indigenous peoples (IPs) with learning disabilities. The IPs are mostly situated in far-flung areas. Their learners are mostly in multi-grade classrooms.

But even for those who are in the urban center, there are no explicit educational provisions that address their needs. This is a specific gap in policy implementation for inclusive education. Unless this is purposively attended to, funds, short as they are, will be dedicated solely to the dominant student population, and the IPs will remain underprivileged and underserved.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The policy reforms addressed the objectives of educational inclusion. The legal provisions were wide-ranging, aimed at educational reforms that promote democratic values of inclusion. “Have educational reforms in the Philippines cascaded down to the level of the classroom?” The results were mixed. Implementation at the ground level had been wanting, which manifested as “partial democratization”. Few planned educational reforms seemed to have cascaded down to the classroom level, and many LSEs and IPs remained left out. These lent credence to the social reproduction theory made manifest in many ways, including:

- 1) Parents from the lower margins of society had been slow, if at all, to cooperate with school authorities in the education of their children with learning issues.
- 2) The educational system had been lackadaisical in preparing a complete curriculum, in providing qualified teachers and good quality textbooks, in arranging schedules, and in providing learning facilities for the LSEs.
- 3) The practice of multi-grade classrooms in far-flung schools persisted, and
- 4) Very limited effort tailored for the LSEs and children of minority groups had been evident.

It is therefore recommended that:

- 1) Funding should be increased to meet the education needs of the fast-growing population of learners, and of diverse geographic areas and peoples.
- 2) Indigenous peoples should be treated as a special sector in education because of LSEs and cultural differences.
- 3) Curriculum for LSEs should be systematized
- 4) Services for LSEs should be expanded to include all types of disabilities.

This study is limited by a small sample size. Subsequent research may pick a larger sample size to cover wider geographic areas and diverse school settings that would permit quantitative analysis of the following hypotheses, among others: 1) parents of children at the lower margins of society are not as cooperative as the parents of children from the more affluent groups in terms of collaborating with the school system for the advancement of children education; and, 2) Educational reform system in the public schools tend to be lackadaisical in carrying out its mandates when compared with its counterpart in private schools.

References

- Angelo, F. A. L. (2024, March 1). PHL underspending on education - study. Daily Guardian, <https://dailyguardian.com.ph/phl-underspending-on-education-study/>
- Li, S. Mao, Y. (2022). Advantages and Disadvantages of Special Needs Children in Regular Classroom. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, Volume 664, 834-839.
- Dahl, R.A. (2020). Democracy. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/democracy>
August 27, 2020
- DepEd (2015). Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Philippines. Manila: Department of Education.
- Garcia, G. F. (2014, March 19-21). Persons with Disabilities: Status in the Philippines. First International Conference of Public Librarians, Manila.
<http://web.nlp.gov.ph/nlp/sites/default/files/20Mar2014/Persons%2>

0with%20Disabilities%20by%20Edgardo%20garcia.pdf

Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001. (2001). An Act Instituting a Framework of Governance for Basic Education, Establishing Authority and Accountability, Renaming the Department of Education, Culture and Sports as the Department of Education, and for Other Purposes.

<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2001/08/11/republic-act-no-9155/#:~:text=Republic%20Act%20No.-,9155,EDUCATION%2C%20AND%20FOR%20OTHER%20PURPOSES>

Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, R., & Mills, J. (2017). Case Study Research: Foundations and Methodological Orientations. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*. 18 (1) <https://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/2655/4079>

Inclusive Education and Its Benefits. (n.d.) New Brunswick Association for Community Living. <https://nbac.ln.ca/module-pages/inclusive-education-and-its-benefits/>

Kamanzi, P. (2019). School Market in Quebec and the Reproduction of Social Inequalities in Higher Education. *Social Inclusion*, 7(1), 18–27. <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v7i1.1613>

Macionis, J. J. (2004) *Society the Basics*. Seventh Ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson.

Miller, B.A. (1991, March 17-20). A Review of the Qualitative Research on Multigrade Instruction. ^[5]Reaching Our Potential: Rural Education in the 90s. Conference Proceedings, Rural Education Symposium, Nashville, TN. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED342563.pdf>

Philippines. (2013). *Anti-Bullying Act 2013* (Republic Act 10627). <http://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2013/09/12/republic-act-no->

Philippines. Philippine Information Agency, DepEd boosts innovative strategies to achieve universal basic education (2016). https://ppp.gov.ph/?in_the_news=deped-boosts-innovative-strategies-to-achieve-universal-basic-education

Philippines. (1992). *Magna Carta for Disabled Persons*. (Republic Act 7277). <https://www.ncda.gov.ph/disability-laws/implementing-rules-and-regulations-irr/irr-of-ra-7277/>

Philippine Statistics Authority. (2010). National Census of Population and Housing. <https://psa.gov.ph/tags/persons-disability>

Philippine Statistics Authority. (2015). National Census of Population and Housing. <https://psa.gov.ph/content/population-region-x-northern-mindanao-based-2015-census-population>

Philippine Constitution 1987. Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines. <http://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/constitutions/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines-article-xiv/>

Philippines. (1976). Child and Youth Welfare Code. (Presidential Decree 603). <https://www.ncda.gov.ph/disability-laws/implementing-rules-and-regulations-irr/irr-of-ra-7277/>

Presidential Communications Office. (2024). Education remains a top priority in P6.32 Te nat'l budget. https://pco.gov.ph/news_releases/education-remains-top-priority-in-p6-32t-natl-budget/

- Reyes, C.M., Mina, C.D. & Asis, R.R. (2017). Inequality of Opportunities Among Ethnic Groups in the Philippines. Discussion Paper Series No. 2017-42. Philippine Institute for Development Studies. pidswebs.pids.gov.ph/CDN/PUBLICATIONS/pids1742.pdf
- Saint Joseph University. (2018). Modern Teaching Techniques for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students. <https://online.sju.edu/graduate/masters-special-education/resources/articles/modern-teaching-techniques-for-deaf-students>
- Sealza, I. S. (2013). Women Empowerment Through Learning and Livelihood Project. Ch 8 in A. Singh, E.T. Gonzalez and S.B. Thomson (Eds.), Millennium Development Goals and Community Initiatives in the Asia Pacific (107–120). Springer.
- Social Reproduction Pierre Bourdieu (2020). Routledge. <http://routledgesoc.com/category/profile-tags/social-reproduction>
- ter Haar, B. (2018). Government of the people, by the people, for the people. Clingendael, Netherlands Institute of International Relations. Retrieve August 2020 from <https://www.clingendael.org/publication/government-people-people-people>
- The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines. (1987). <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/constitutions/1987-constitution/>
- The IPRA Law 1997. Republic Act 8371. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1997/10/29/republic-act-no-8371/>
- The K to 12 Basic Education Program 2013. Republic Act 10533. Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/k-12-old/#RA10533>
- The UNESCO Salamanca Statement. (2018). Center for Studies on Inclusive Education. <http://www.csie.org.uk/inclusion/unesco-salamanca.shtml>
- UNESCO Institute of Statistics. (2019). New Projections Show the World is Off Track in Meeting Its Education Commitments by 2030. <https://uis.unesco.org/en/news/new-projections-show-world-track-meeting-its-education-commitments-2030>
- UNESCO. (2022). The world will not reach new education targets by 2030 unless financial efforts are stepped up. (Updated). <https://world-education-blog.org/2015/03/11/the-world-will-not-reach-new-education-targets-by-2030-unless-financial-efforts-are-stepped-up/>
- United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (1986). Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>
- United Nations Toolkit on Disability for Africa: Inclusive Education. Division of Social Policy Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2016). <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2016/11/toolkit-on-disability-for-africa-2/#:~:text=A%20Toolkit%20on%20Disability%20for,African%20context%20and%20aims%20to%3A&text=Offer%20examples%20of%20good%20practices%20from%20many%20countries%20in%20the%20African%20region.>
- United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948. http://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf