

Management practices on inclusive education in Malilipot District

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Abstract

The study utilized a descriptive survey method to evaluate inclusive education management practices in Malilipot District across five variables: needs assessment, strategies and policies, resource allocation, monitoring and evaluation, and continuous improvement. Data were gathered from 222 respondents—14 school heads and 208 teachers. Secondary sources included published and unpublished research, books, journals, online materials, and official issuances from the Department of Education and the Philippine Government. Relevant documents from other institutions were also examined. Collected data were systematically processed and presented in tables for analysis and interpretation, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of management practices in inclusive education.

Findings: The findings of the study are the following:

Continuous improvement was the most frequently practiced management approach in inclusive education (68.02%), followed by strategies and policies (65.77%). Resource mobilization was least implemented (53.60%). Needs assessment was consistently applied (4.45), with assessment tools as the most used activity (4.56) and surveys as the least (4.32). Strategies and policies (4.54) prioritized pupil participation (4.68) over policy development (4.46). Resource mobilization (4.26) emphasized budget allocation (4.36), while infrastructure access received less attention (4.22). Monitoring and evaluation (4.41) focused on pupil progress (4.50) over stakeholder involvement (4.27). Continuous improvement (4.42) prioritized feedback mechanisms (4.52), with teacher training as the least practiced (4.32). Significant differences existed in strategies and policies ($F=7.38$), resource mobilization ($F=26.96$), and continuous improvement ($F=8.03$), while none were noted in needs assessment ($F=1.26$) and monitoring ($F=0.07$). Challenges included limited assessment tools, engagement difficulties, lack of materials, unclear evaluation frameworks, and minimal parental involvement. Management plans were proposed to address these concerns.

Keywords: Managing; Managing Practices; Practices; Inclusive; Inclusive Education

1. Introduction

Education is a powerful tool for individual and societal growth. Yet, many pupils still face barriers to access, quality, and inclusion, especially learners with special education needs and marginalized groups like ethnic minorities, indigenous populations, and displaced communities. Inclusive education ensures that all pupils, regardless of ability or background, receive quality education and feel fully integrated into the school community.

These initiatives aim to meet each learner's unique needs while promoting inclusivity and support. The success of such efforts depends on the commitment of school heads and teachers to create an inclusive environment and equip all stakeholders with the tools and knowledge needed to support every student effectively.

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International frameworks emphasize the right to equitable and accessible education, guiding nations in creating inclusive systems. This study examines these frameworks and analyzes their role in promoting diversity and equity in education, particularly in the Philippines.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)¹ established education as a fundamental right, with Article 26 mandating free and compulsory elementary education. It underscores education's role in promoting understanding, tolerance, and unity among nations and diverse communities. This foundational principle not only emphasizes education's importance in advancing human rights but also lays the groundwork for future frameworks on inclusivity and equity.

Furthermore, UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 (2015)² commits to achieving inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all by 2030. It targets eliminating gender disparities and ensuring equal access for vulnerable populations, including Indigenous peoples and disadvantaged children. SDG 4 highlights education's intersection with global challenges like poverty, gender equality, and sustainable development.

Complementing these frameworks is the Education 2030 Agenda, which serves as a roadmap for achieving SDG 4. It outlines strategies to overcome barriers faced by marginalized groups, such as language, ethnicity, and poverty, and emphasizes collaboration among governments, civil society, and international organizations. Together, these frameworks advocate for diverse and equitable education systems, aiming to ensure quality education for all and empower individuals to reach their full potential.

The Philippines' government has enacted several laws to address the diverse needs of learners and ensure inclusivity, equity, and quality in education. These laws collectively reflect the country's commitment to providing accessible and inclusive education for all learners, regardless of their circumstances or challenges.

One key legislative measure is Republic Act No. 105334, known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. This law introduced the K-12 curriculum with inclusive education as a core principle, ensuring equitable access to quality education for all learners, including those with disabilities. By incorporating strategies to address diverse needs, the Act fosters an environment where every student has the opportunity to succeed.

Building upon this, Republic Act No. 116505, also known as "An Act Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support of Inclusive Education," establishes a legal framework to support learners with disabilities. The Act mandates the nationwide creation of Inclusive Learning Resource Centers (ILRCs) and promotes collaboration among educators, families, and communities to ensure full inclusion. By codifying these provisions, RA 11650 strengthens inclusive education and enhances opportunities for learners with disabilities to reach their potential.

Additionally, Republic Act No. 115106, the Alternative Learning System (ALS) Act, extends educational opportunities to out-of-school youth and marginalized learners, including those with disabilities. This law exemplifies the inclusive ethos of Philippine education by providing flexible and tailored learning options for individuals who are unable to attend formal schooling.

These legislative measures collectively demonstrate the Philippines' commitment to fostering an inclusive educational system. They address the multifaceted challenges faced by learners and provide a robust framework for ensuring equitable access to quality education.

Beyond legislation, the Department of Education (DepEd) has taken proactive steps to advance inclusive education through various policies and programs. DepEd Order No. 44, s. 20217, for instance, outlines Policy Guidelines on the Provision of Educational Programs and Services for Learners with Disabilities in the K-12 Basic Education Program. This policy ensures equitable, inclusive, and quality education by implementing measures to address disparities and promote equal opportunities for learners with disabilities.

Anchored on this is DepEd Order No. 21, s. 20198, which provides a comprehensive framework for implementing inclusive programs. These include Madrasah Education, Indigenous Peoples Education, Special Education, the Alternative Learning System, and specialized curricular programs. Covering a wide range of marginalized groups—including Muslims, indigenous peoples, out-of-school children, and children in conflict with the law—this policy reinforces DepEd's commitment to ensuring inclusivity in the basic education program.

Furthermore, DepEd Order No. 13, s. 20199, enhances the Alternative Learning System (ALS) program to further inclusivity. It introduces flexible and accessible learning opportunities tailored to out-of-school youth, adult learners,

and individuals with disabilities. By integrating inclusive strategies and materials, the program actively addresses barriers faced by marginalized groups, upholding education as a fundamental right for all.

In addition, DepEd Order No. 41, s. 201710 provides guidelines for Madrasah Education under the K to 12 program. It aims to improve education for Muslim learners by integrating Islamic values and Arabic language into the curriculum. The policy ensures access to quality education while respecting cultural and religious identity. It covers the Standard Madrasah Curriculum (SMC) and supports both public and private Madrasah schools.

Likewise, DepEd Order No. 32, s. 201511 establishes the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) Curriculum Framework. This framework ensures that the education system respects and includes indigenous knowledge, culture, and traditions. Schools must design lessons that reflect the unique experiences of indigenous communities. It promotes mother tongue-based learning and community involvement in education. The goal is to provide inclusive, culture-sensitive, and quality education for indigenous learners.

Moreover, DepEd Order No. 72, s. 200912, institutionalizes inclusive education programs for children with special needs, providing a framework for creating supportive and adaptive learning environments. It promotes individualized instruction and specialized services to ensure learners with disabilities can fully participate in the educational system and reach their potential.

These DepEd orders collectively underscore the Philippines' dedication to inclusive education. They provide a comprehensive approach to addressing learners' varied needs and fostering an educational system that upholds equity and social justice.

Regional educational authorities play a vital role in implementing national policies and ensuring their consistent application across districts. They collaborate with division and district offices to provide guidance, monitor progress, and address region-specific challenges in inclusive education. In addition, they organize professional development programs for school heads and teachers, equipping them with the necessary skills to implement inclusive practices effectively.

For example, Regional Memorandum No. 25, s. 202413, under R.A. 11650, implements the Online Teacher Enhancement Program (OTEP), initiated by the LINK Center for the Deaf in partnership with Misereor, starting in 2022-2023. With the theme "Sustaining Inclusive Education in the Now Normal," the program invites teachers from the Divisions of Albay, Ligao City, Sorsogon, and Sorsogon City to participate. OTEP 2024 supports DepEd's full implementation of Inclusive Education and aligns with the MATATAG Agenda. It focuses on sustaining inclusive education by providing teachers with the necessary support to enhance their ability to care for diverse learners.

Similarly, Regional Memorandum No. 133, s. 202414, addresses issues identified in the 2023 Year-End Program Implementation Review and Performance Assessment (PIRPA), particularly concerning the mainstreaming of Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) learners. It clarifies that mainstreaming IPed learners should not be categorized as a bottleneck or challenge. Instead, the focus is on developing instructional materials tailored to their needs, grounded in the four minima: Indigenous Knowledge, Skills, and Practices (IKSP), and Indigenous Learning Skills and Culture, in preparation for SY 2024-2025.

The Division of Albay translates regional guidelines into actionable plans for schools under its jurisdiction. Division administrators oversee resource allocation, coordinate teacher training, and ensure compliance with national and regional mandates. Moreover, they facilitate collaboration among schools, local government units, and stakeholders to effectively implement inclusive education practices.

An example of such initiative is Division Memo. No. 188, s. 202415, which outlines the Division Training on the Indigenous People's Education (IPed) Component of the Matatag Curriculum. By providing technical assistance to school heads in IP-implementing schools across the Bicol region, this initiative ensures that indigenous learners receive education that meets their specific needs.

Inclusive education supports global and national efforts to uphold the rights of all pupils. Schools within the district encounter unique challenges and opportunities shaped by their culture, economy, and institutions. However, strong management practices remain crucial in initiating, maintaining, and improving inclusive education programs over time.

Educators committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment frequently witness the challenges and barriers that marginalized learners—particularly those with disabilities, indigenous backgrounds, and economic

disadvantages—face in accessing quality education. These experiences have fueled a growing interest in researching inclusive education, as it is widely recognized that every child, regardless of background or abilities, deserves an opportunity to learn and thrive.

Inclusive education is not merely an aspiration but a fundamental right recognized in international and national policies. However, despite legislative efforts and educational reforms, disparities in implementation persist, particularly at the district and school levels. Schools in the Malilipot District, like many others, encounter difficulties in translating policies into effective management practices. Limited resources, inadequate teacher training, and societal perceptions often hinder the successful integration of inclusive education. As a result, many learners continue to be excluded or struggle within the system due to insufficient support structures.

This study is driven by a commitment to bridging these gaps by examining the management practices on inclusive education within the Malilipot District. It aims to identify practical, actionable strategies to improve school leadership, teacher preparedness, resource allocation, and the overall development of a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. By shedding light on these management practices, this research seeks to contribute to the continuous improvement of inclusive education, empowering educators and policymakers to ensure that no child is left behind.

2. Conclusion

School heads and teachers focus most on making continuous improvements in their inclusive education practices. They always practice important steps like needs assessment, planning strategies, checking progress, and improving, but they do resource mobilization a little less, especially teachers. There is a big difference between school heads and teachers in how they handle strategies, resource gathering, and improvement, but no big difference in needs assessment and checking progress. Both face problems like not enough tools for different learning styles, struggles in helping students with special needs, missing teaching materials, unclear assessment plans, and low parent involvement. To help with these problems, special management plans were made for school heads and teachers with easy, useful strategies.

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