

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN BATAAN

by:

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Republic Act. No. 11650, Inclusive Education Act establishes a Policy of Inclusion and services for learners with disabilities in the Philippines. Inclusive Education (IE) Implementation in the Philippines is still an ongoing goal, and Bataan, like the other regions are still working toward its full realization both in elementary and secondary schools. It aims to cater to all kinds of learners, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities; and to give them the same chance for real learning experience and attain optimum development.

In our region, the focus adheres to the mandate set by the Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 72,s. 2009(Inclusive Education as a Strategy for Increasing Participation Rate of Children),supported by the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Republic Act No. 7277(Magna Carta for Disabled Persons),Republic Act No. 10533(enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013)-No child is left behind in the education system, Republic Act No. 11650(Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and services for Learners with Disabilities),UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities(CRPD)-IE as a Human Right, Individuals with Disabilities Education act(IDEA) in the United States, and UNESCO and the Education 2030 Agenda(the Philippines is committed to the sustainable Development Goal 4(SDG),which ensures inclusive and equitable quality education for all; but the specific developments may vary by school. Key points of emphasis are:

Special Education (SPED) Programs- are being developed and are expanding to all municipalities to embrace students with diverse special needs, such as those with autism, intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments, physical impediments, and those with

multiple conditions. Sped centers work hand in hand with regular teachers to integrate them into mainstream schools. These programs often involve well-trained teachers and appropriate resources to make sure that these learners' needs are addressed well in class, that they are treated equal with the regular students.

Teacher Training and Professional Development-educators are honed to recognize and patch up the varied needs of students in their classes. This includes training/upskilling on using differentiated instruction, assistive technologies, and adaptive learning strategies. Last August 22-25,2023 seminar on IE and SPED Content and Pedagogy was done, orientation as hoped will be applied in their own respective localities. As of 2024, DepEd has been providing workshops and seminars to SPED and regular teachers or receiving teachers- regular teachers handling learners with special educational needs (LSENS) in regular classes to help educators upgrade their competencies in managing inclusive classrooms.

Assistive Technologies and Learning Materials. Schools are now using more assistive technologies and maximizing the use of more adaptive learning materials in their lessons to support students with special needs. These can include tools like screen readers, hearing aids, and specialized learning apps. Studies are also done to be able to explore more ways in assisting LSENS.

Infrastructure and Accessibility-some school facilities are improved to make them more accessible for students with mobility impairments, physical modifications like ramps, accessible toilets, and wider doors to cater to children with disabilities are prioritized.

Curriculum Adaptation- some schools gear towards a more inclusive, supportive curriculum by providing modified learning modes, such as visual aids, hands-on activities, and peer-based support-buddy system, mixing LSENS with the regular kids, individualized support.

Collaboration with Parents and Communities- schools in Bataan are also getting more in touch with families and communities through mapping or census of every barangay to pinpoint (LSENS), more information dissemination/awareness about IE's importance to both LSENS and regular classes, trainings of parents and guardians for at home interventions; to uphold inclusive education. As it takes a village to raise a child, what more of those LSENS? Thus, collaboration between LGU's (Local Government Units) and NGO's (Non-government Organizations) especially with allocation of finances is a must.

Challenges- despite these efforts, obstacles remain. Some schools in far flung areas or those with scant resources may still face hardship in fully executing inclusion. This is worsened by lack of appropriate and enough facilities, funding, few specialized teachers, limited access to assistive technology and even real acceptance of children with special needs in a regular class and in the community in general or social stigmas prevail.

Bataan has made recognizable developments, compared to then and now situation, but in its implementation of Inclusive education both in elementary and secondary schools, there are more works to be done. The fulfillment of these efforts depends on the rigid trainings/workshops for educators and their application in real life, enough budget and resources, as limited or no material and professional support in most schools thus identifying and assessment problems of LSENS is a main problem; and full support of all stakeholders-community and parental involvement and a continuous, sustainable, long-term policies. As a region, we are in the right path but still barriers towards the full inclusion of all learners in needs need more emphasis and apt changes. May that time come that we are at par with other countries in adhering to a real, full inclusion.

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