

## THE PHILIPPINES' SPECIAL EDUCATION SITUATION: CHALLENGES AND PROGRESS

*by:*

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A vital component of the Philippine educational system, special education (SPED) aims to give learners with disabilities (LWDs) high-quality learning opportunities. In order to guarantee that children with special needs receive the proper support, attempts have been made over the years to incorporate SNED programs into regular education. The system still has a number of issues that prevent inclusive and accessible education from being fully realized, notwithstanding these efforts.

The creation of SNED centers in numerous schools across the country is one notable advancement in SNED. Initiatives have been started by the Department of Education (DepEd), including DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019, which guarantees that children with disabilities are not left behind and promotes inclusive education. Furthermore, more public schools have started incorporating SNED classes, which enables Special needs students should study with their classmates. Additionally, teacher training programs have been put in place to improve their capacity to effectively serve a diverse student body.

The Philippine Special Education system still faces a number of difficulties in spite of these developments. The absence of resources, including specialized teaching materials, assistive technology, and well-equipped classrooms, is one of the main issues. Additionally, there is a lack of qualified SNED teachers, which leads to big class sizes and inadequate student-centered attention. Accessibility is still a major concern in rural areas because some schools do not provide special education programs, which forces parents to travel great distances or, in certain situations, pull their kids out of school.

The government must boost funding for SNED programs in order to improve infrastructure, supply essential learning resources, and hire more specialized teachers in order to address these issues. In order to increase support for students with special education needs, collaborations between the public and private sectors as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) ought to be reinforced. The Philippines can get closer to a fully inclusive educational system that accepts all students, regardless of ability, by strengthening policies and making sure they are implemented correctly.

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